

**Friday 30 May 2025**

**Tobacco and nicotine industry exploits young people as new data reveals 1 in 5 young adults regularly use nicotine products**

Ahead of World No Tobacco Day, the latest national data from the Generation Vape study, led by Cancer Council, reveals that nearly 1 in 5 (18%) young adults aged 18-24 regularly vaped (daily, weekly, or monthly) during October to December 2024, an early indicator that vaping is becoming less socially acceptable. Similarly, the data shows that 1 in 5 (18%) regularly smoked.

Alecia Brooks, Chair of Cancer Council's Tobacco Issues Committee says Australia has been world-leading in tobacco control, so now most young Australians don't want to smoke because it's unattractive and belonging to generations past.

This new data points to a similar trajectory for vaping as it becomes less socially acceptable among young Australians.

"While these are early signs that the current vaping laws are working, evidence shows that young people are five times more likely to smoke if they vape. The tobacco and nicotine industry has used vaping to hook young people who didn't want to smoke to nicotine."

"With our effective vaping and tobacco control laws now in place, this harmful industry is constantly reinventing itself to attract more young people and make their products palatable to them."

"From creating new flavours, to illegally targeting vape ads through common social media platforms, these products are driving the perception that more people are using these products than they actually are. With a fifth of young adults regularly using a tobacco or nicotine product, we need to ensure we're protecting young Australians from all the ways they're being targeted by the industry."

The study also found that of young adults who regularly smoked, 1 in 3 (34%) smoked menthol cigarettes and 1 in 5 (22%) had tried nicotine pouches.

Professor Becky Freeman, Chief Investigator of the Generation Vape project, says, "We know that menthol makes smoking a more pleasant experience, and teenagers who use these products are more likely to smoke in future. The phased ban on menthol will help ensure we're continuing to reduce smoking rates among Australians, particularly young people."

"We also found a fifth of young adults who regularly smoked had tried nicotine pouches. Often packaged in colourful containers and available in a variety of flavours, they are clearly designed to appeal to young people. These illegal products are often high in nicotine and are incredibly addictive."

With this year's [World No Tobacco Day](#) theme – "Unmasking the appeal" – Cancer Council is advocating that the most effective way to protect young Australians from the harms of tobacco and nicotine is to safeguard current public health policies, including tobacco control policy, from vested commercial interests.

Ms Brooks says, “We have safeguards in place for products like nicotine pouches that industry tries to skirt around. It’s important that we protect and enforce the policies we have implemented now to combat these tactics and reduce the harms of tobacco, vaping and nicotine.”

“What’s really encouraging to see is that these policies have challenged the perception of tobacco and nicotine, and quitting now is top of mind for young adults. Half of regular vapers surveyed reported having tried to quit before, and over half of regular vapers are seriously thinking about quitting in the next 30 days to six months.”

“Australia must not take its foot off the pedal now; by staying its course and protecting its tobacco control policies from the commercial interests of industry, we can support young people to quit and continue to protect a future generation from tobacco and nicotine.”

**-ENDS-**

*For support to stop smoking or vaping, connect with Quitline on 13 7848.*

**Notes to the Editor:**

[Generation Vape](#) is the leading Australian study to survey young people aged 14-24 years, parents and teachers about their experiences and perceptions of vapes. It is led by Cancer Council NSW in partnership with the Daffodil Centre and the University of Sydney, and funded by the Australian Government Department of Health, the NSW Ministry of Health and Cancer Institute NSW.

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**About Cancer Council Australia**

Cancer Council Australia is Australia’s leading cancer charity, working to reduce the impact of cancer for all Australians. Cancer Council Australia works with its members, the eight state and territory Cancer Councils to:

- Undertake and fund cancer research
- Prevent and control cancer
- Provide information and support for people affected by cancer
- Shape and influence policy and practice

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