



Friday 12 April 2024

Senator Marielle Smith  
Chairperson, Community Affairs Legislation Committee  
PO Box 6100  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Senator Smith,

**RE: *Therapeutic Goods and Other Legislation Amendment (Vaping Reforms) Bill 2024***

The Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) is writing to the Community Affairs Legislation Committee to express our strong support for the *Therapeutic Goods and Other Legislation Amendment (Vaping Reforms) Bill 2024*.

SHPA is the national, professional organisation for more than 12,000 pharmacists, pharmacy technicians interns and students working across Australia's hospitals system, advocating for their pivotal role improving the safety and quality of medicines use. SHPA convenes several Specialty Practice Groups which have a strong interest in curbing the impacts of nicotine-related illnesses and disease, including Emergency Medicine, Respiratory Medicine, Women's and Newborn Health, Paediatrics and Neonatology, Oncology and Haematology, Mental Health, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health and Medicines Information.

The tobacco and vape industry has deliberately marketed vape products to young people, and vaping rates in Australia have increased significantly over recent years, particularly among children and young people<sup>1</sup>. The Bill will close the loophole that is currently exploited by the tobacco and vape industry, whereby retailers sell falsely labelled "non-nicotine" vapes to children. The Bill will protect Australian children and young people, while still ensuring that people who smoke can access vaping products for smoking cessation through a prescription model.

SHPA is concerned about vaping among Australian children and young people and its potential as a gateway to smoking in adulthood. Hospitals play a crucial role as intervention points for smoking cessation in adults, as many patients present with health issues stemming from smoking, such as respiratory ailments and cancer. Hospital pharmacists, who witness firsthand the impact of smoking-related illnesses, are increasingly encountering patients who have turned to vaping products under the misconception that they pose minimal health risks.

As frontline providers of smoking cessation services within hospital settings, hospital pharmacists are acutely aware of the urgent need to address this issue. The proposed Therapeutic Goods and Other Legislation Amendment (Vaping Reforms) Bill is therefore paramount in safeguarding Australian children

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<sup>1</sup> Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. National Drug Strategy Household Survey 2022-23: Electronic Cigarettes and vapes. Supplementary data tables. Canberra: AIHW, 2024.



and young people and ensuring they do not experience serious health issues related to their ongoing vaping as adults.

- Over recent years, the rate of vaping in Australia has increased significantly, particularly among young people<sup>2</sup>.
- One in ten Australian children aged 14-17 years currently vape<sup>3</sup>.
- There are numerous established health harms from vaping. These include exposure to toxins<sup>4</sup> and adverse effects on the cardiovascular system and lungs<sup>5</sup>.
- Exposure to nicotine during adolescence has been associated with cognitive and behavioural impairment and lasting structural changes in the brain<sup>6</sup>.
- One in ten vape shops are located close to schools<sup>7</sup>.
- Most teenagers say it is easy to access vapes<sup>8</sup>.
- 87% of Australian adults support prohibiting the sale of vapes (with or without nicotine) to people under 18 years of age<sup>9</sup>.
- Most teenagers try vapes out of curiosity, not to quit smoking<sup>10</sup>.

SHPA supports the Australian Council on Smoking and Health's goal to create a tobacco-free and vape-free Australia. If you have any queries, please feel free to contact Jerry Yik, Head of Policy and Advocacy

Yours sincerely,

Kristin Michaels  
Chief Executive

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<sup>2</sup> Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. National Drug Strategy Household Survey 2022-23: Electronic Cigarettes and vapes. Supplementary data tables. Canberra: AIHW, 2024.

<sup>3</sup> Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. National Drug Strategy Household Survey 2022-23: Electronic Cigarettes and vapes. Supplementary data tables. Canberra: AIHW, 2024.

<sup>4</sup> Larcombe A, Allard S, Pringle P, et al. Chemical analysis of fresh and aged Australian e-cigarette liquids. *Med J Aust* 2022;216(1):27-32.

<sup>5</sup> Banks E, Yazidjoglou A, Brown S, et al. Electronic cigarettes and health outcomes: umbrella and systematic review of the global evidence. *Medical Journal of Australia* 2023;218(6):267-75.

<sup>6</sup> Castro EM, Lotfipour S, Leslie FM. Nicotine on the developing brain. *Pharmacol Res* 2023;190:106716; Wood L, Greenhalgh EM, Hanley-Jones S. 5.4 Adolescence and brain maturation. In: Scollo M, Winstanley M, eds. *Tobacco in Australia: Facts and issues*. Melbourne: Cancer Council Victoria, 2019.

<sup>7</sup> Tuson M, Lizama N, Kameron C, Gazey A, Wood L. Vape stores in Western Australia: growth, proximity to schools and socio-economic gradient of density. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health*. 2024:100118.

<sup>8</sup> Watts, C., Egger, S., Dessaix, A., Brooks, A., Jenkinson, E., Grogan, P., & Freeman, B. (2022). Vaping product access and use among 14–17-year-olds in New South Wales: a cross-sectional study. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health*, 46(6), 814-820.

<sup>9</sup> Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. National Drug Strategy Household Survey 2022-23: Electronic Cigarettes and vapes. Supplementary data tables. Canberra: AIHW; 2024.

<sup>10</sup> Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. National Drug Strategy Household Survey 2022-23: Electronic Cigarettes and vapes. Supplementary data tables. Canberra: AIHW; 2024.

