

**Public Accounts and Estimates Committee
Inquiry into Vaping and Tobacco Controls**

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Health Portfolio**

**Department of Health
Monday 29 April 2024**

Witness

Dr Clare Looker

Legend

All questions are in **red text**.

The context, as per the Unverified Transcript, is in **black text**.

QUESTION: How much does the government depend on tobacco for its taxation revenue?
Page Number: 2
SOURCE: Not referenced
COMMITTEE MEMBER ASKING QUESTION: Bev McARTHUR
HEARING: Health Portfolio
RESPONSE
Answer: The Commonwealth Government levies an excise duty on tobacco products that is collected by the Commonwealth Government. The Victorian Government does not directly receive the excise paid on tobacco.
Source: Advice provided by Legislative and Regulatory Reform, People, Operations, Legal and Regulation Division

QUESTION: I was interested actually just in the ADHD. There was some evidence of linkages with e-cigarettes. Do you want to just expand on that a little bit further if possible?
In terms of the research, is the research looking at black market e-cigarettes or those e-cigarettes that are not regulated and the product is unknown that is inside them, or is it looking at those ones that are just regulated? Population ones would take that into account.
Page Number: 4
SOURCE: Not referenced
COMMITTEE MEMBER ASKING QUESTION: Mathew HILAKARI

HEARING: Health Portfolio

RESPONSE

Answer:

There are some studies indicating an association between ADHD and higher e-cigarette use among young people, however more research is needed to understand and confirm this. Three studies from the United States, which do not distinguish between regulated or unregulated products, are:

- Benyo E.B., T. Bruinsma, E. Drda, J. Brady-Olympia, S. Hicks, S. Boehmer and R.P. Olympia, Risk factors and medical symptoms associated with Electronic vapor product use among adolescents and young adults. *Clinical Pediatrics*, 2021 June; 60(6-7): 279-289. Available from: <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/33896217/>
- Kaplan, B., A.V. Marcell, T. Kaplan and J.E. Cohen, Association between e-cigarette use and parents' report of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder among US youth. *Tobacco Induced Diseases*, 2021. 19: p. 44. Available from: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/34140843>.
- Dvorsky, M.R. and J.M. Langberg, Cigarette and e-cigarette use and social perceptions over the transition to college: The role of ADHD symptoms. *Psychology of Addictive Behaviours*, 2019. Available from: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/30869922>.
- Do, E.K., K. Aarvig, G. Panigrahi and E.C. Hair, Past-year mental illness diagnosis and e-cigarette use status among a college-aged sample: Findings from the National College Health Assessment (2017-2019). *American Journal of Health Promotion*, 2023: p. 8901171231224864. Available from: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/38146733>

The key message from these studies:

- further research is needed on this topic – especially Australian research.
- ADHD may be one of a number of mental health conditions associated with e-cigarette use.
- it is important for healthcare providers to be screening youth for e-cigarette use, especially youth who are diagnosed with ADHD.

Source:

Advice provided by Public Health Promotion Programs, Community and Public Health Division.

QUESTION: You obviously work closely with councils through various programs. We heard from schools in Shepparton that the Department of Education provides them with a lot of public health materials to share with students. Does that originate from the Department of Health, or do you have a relationship with them regarding the development of messages?

Page Number: 5

SOURCE: Not referenced

COMMITTEE MEMBER ASKING QUESTION: Lauren KATHAGE

HEARING: Health Portfolio

RESPONSE

Answer:

The Department of Education contributed to the drafting of the Department of Health's submission to the PAEC Inquiry into Vaping and Tobacco Regulation. The submission included a number of examples of work undertaken in schools to address tobacco and vaping

use by students. Much of this work is aligned and associated with VicHealth and Quit Victoria programs.

In addition to the school-based activities identified in the submission, the Department of Health is aware of a new anti-vaping curriculum aimed at years 7-9 which was launched in January 2024 and is being rolled out to public schools in Victoria. This curriculum is the product of a collaboration between Quit Victoria, the Department of Education and several other partner agencies.

Source:

Department of Health submission to PAEC Inquiry into Vaping and Tobacco Regulation.

Advice provided by Legislative and Regulatory Reform, People, Operations, Legal and Regulation Division

QUESTION: My questions also relate to health and prevention education. What support does the Department of Health provide to primary and secondary schools? What we heard at the Shepparton hearing was quite concerning – primary school kids at grade 5 starting to use vapes. That is actually very concerning as a parent. But are you aware of any programs or success stories?

Page Number: 6

SOURCE: Not referenced

COMMITTEE MEMBER ASKING QUESTION: Meng Heang TAK

HEARING: Health Portfolio

RESPONSE

Answer:

Please see response to previous question, as well as:

The *Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2023-2027* ('the Plan') is a key whole of Victorian government policy framework guiding Victorian Government departments, funded agencies, and other partners to implement activity that aims to prevent illness and promote and protect health and wellbeing. Preparation of this plan is a legislative requirement under the Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 ('the Act'). There are ten priorities in the Plan, of which one is reducing harm from tobacco and e-cigarette use.

The Act requires local councils to have regard to the priorities of the plan when developing their municipal public health and wellbeing plans and all councils undertake tobacco-control activities, many of which are focused on school-aged children. The department also has an expectation that health promotion funded services, including Local Public Health Units (LPHUs) and Community Health Services, also align their work with priorities of the plan. This supports collaborative action and effort to address smoking-related issues and promote public health within their communities, including school communities.

The Victorian Health Promotion Association (VicHealth) is funded to deliver a range of health promotion initiatives including actions to reduce harms from tobacco and, more recently, e-cigarettes. Some of VicHealth's work, through Quit Victoria, is aimed at school-aged children.

Source:

Department of Health submission to PAEC Inquiry into Vaping and Tobacco Regulation.