

23/8/2022

Kei te rangatira, tēnā koe,

This submission on the Smokefree Environments and Regulated Products (Smoked Tobacco) Amendment Bill is writing on behalf of Youth Voice Canterbury member organisations;

Christchurch Youth Council / Runaka Taiohi o Ōtautahi
Environment Canterbury Youth Rōpū
Selwyn Youth Council
Waimakariri Youth Council

We have been surveying rangatahi from Waitaha regarding their thoughts on the three proposed to the bill;

Smokefree generation (amending the age limit for sale of smoked tobacco products),
reducing retail availability and,
reducing the appeal and addictiveness of smoked tobacco products.

We also asked some other general aspects regarding smoking, and vaping.

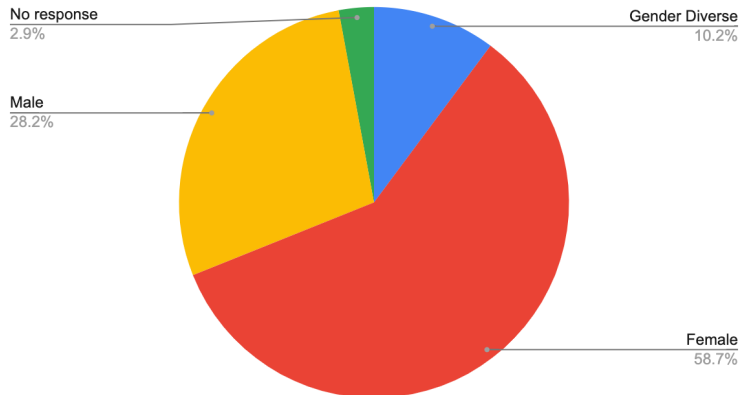
We have had **206 survey responses**. This submission is based on the survey responses, discussions we had internally with our membership groups, and conclusions drawn from the Christchurch Youth Action Plan (YAP). We are not representative of all of the young people in Waitaha and would expect some rangatahi may disagree with the statements made throughout this submission. We would expect and value this as no two people have the same voice or opinion.

You will find the raw data for our submission attached for your interest.

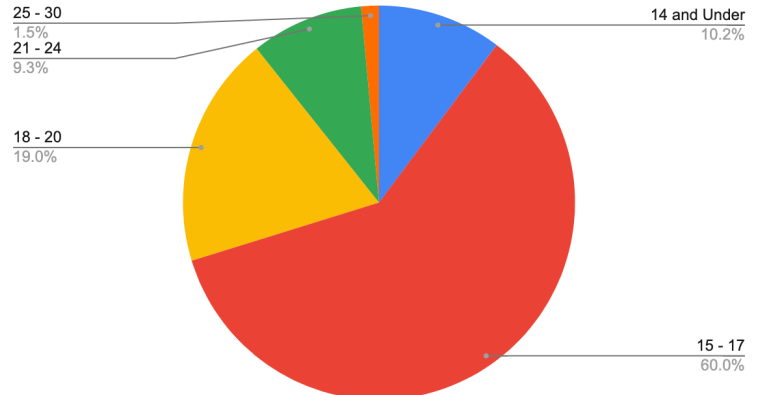
We would like this submission to be given the due weighting, taking into consideration the number of rangatahi whose voices are represented in this submission.

Survey Demographics

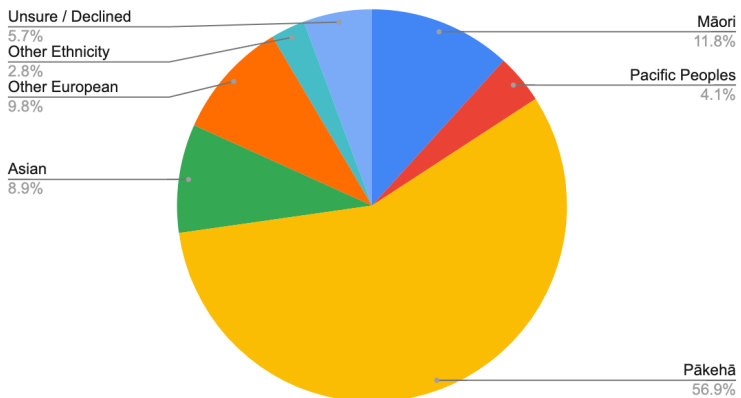
Gender of Respondents



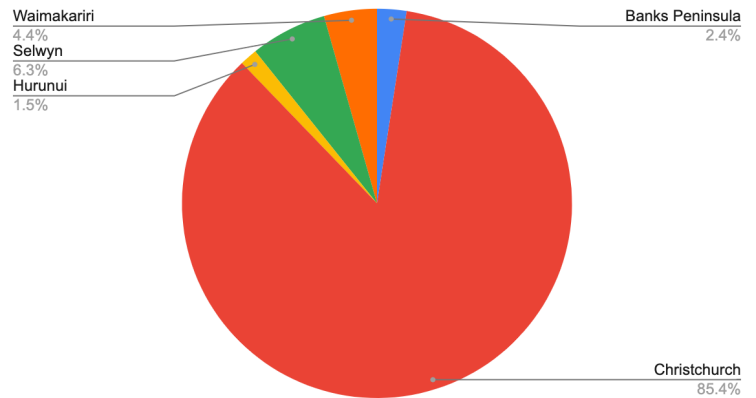
Age of Respondents



Ethnicities of Respondents

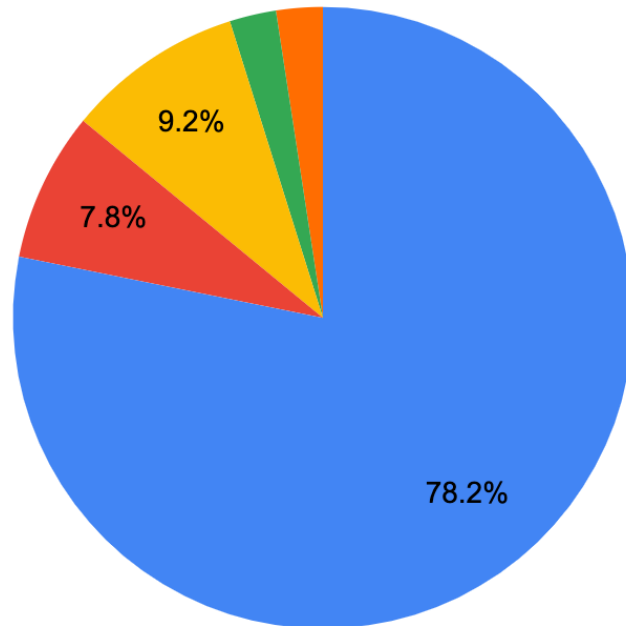


Living Area of Respondents



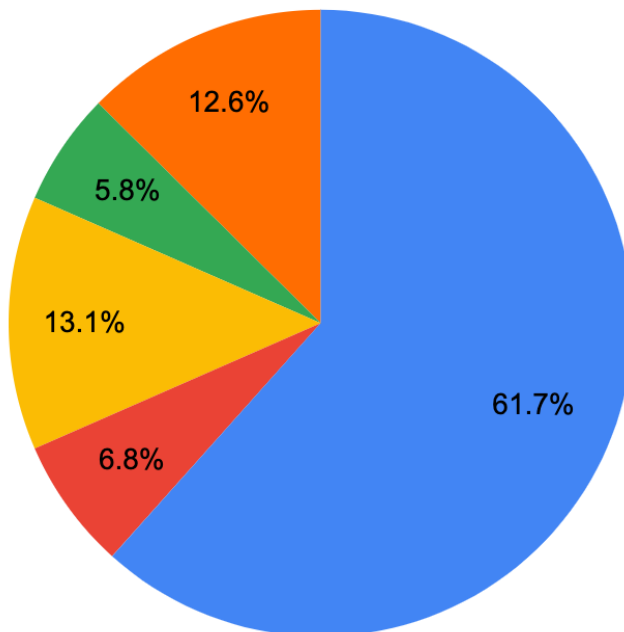
Tobacco Smoking Status

- No - I have never been a smoker
- No - But I am an ex smoker
- Yes - Occasionally (once a month)
- Yes - Often (weekly)
- Yes - Regularly (Daily)



Vaping Status

- No - I have never been a vaper
- No - But I am an ex-vaper
- Yes - Occasionally
- Yes - Often (weekly)
- Yes - Regularly (Daily)

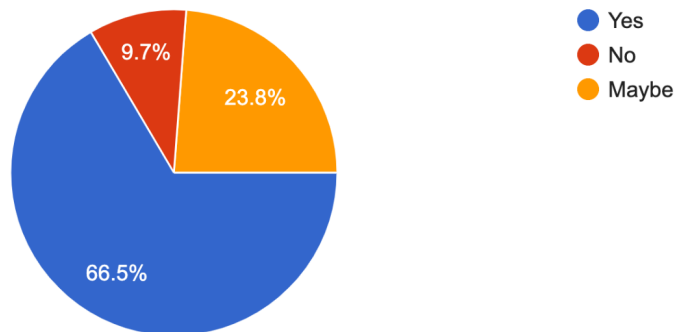


Section 20 - Smokefree generation policy

We strongly support the intent of section 20 to prohibit supply of smoked tobacco products to future generations.

This 66.3% of survey takers support, our organisations' members also support this in their understanding of harm reduction, and have vested interest in youth and future youth. We also understand that tobacco related harm disproportionately affects Māori, and this bill will bring about significant health improvements for Māori communities.

The bill will introduce a “smokefree generation” policy to stop the sale of smoked tobacco products to those born after the 1st Jan 2009, which means ...f introducing the “smokefree generation” policy?
206 responses



Feedback from rangatahi (123 people) who answered **yes**:

One of the most common responses by survey takers who supported the bill was that young people won't miss something that was never available to them (tobacco). The bill would be an effective way to stop young people before they can even start. *“As an ex-smoker who started at a young age (14/15) I think that if I had not had access to it until I was older I would never have started.”* Meaning that they can avoid the addiction and live healthier and happier lives. Another common response was that young people shouldn't have the option to start something so detrimental to their health. These same responders were especially concerned about children under the age of 13 because that is too young to be smoking. Respondents were also writing that we now know what the negative health impacts of smoking are, (second hand smoking, pollution, lung cancer), therefore there is no reason for young people to be smoking. Other respondents shared their own experiences of themselves or family members smoking/vaping which is why they don't want this generation going down the same path. *“Gotta do it for the next gen. Would have so much more money in our fam if no one even started*

smoking.” Also of note: “Smoking affects Māori and pacific families worse . . . Another colonisation issue, would be great to have a new generation where this isn't the problem.”

Feedback from rangatahi (41 people) who answered **maybe**:

Respondents do agree with the bill but believe that individuals have the right to choose to ruin their bodies. As long as the smoker isn't harming others around them then it should be their choice. The biggest concern shared by at least 15 respondents in this section was that young people will still be able to illegally access smokable tobacco products from other parties. If they really want cigarettes they will find some way to get them. Some survey takers worry that spiked cigarettes will be sold by gangs and bad people in a black market fashion. Other concerns were that the bill would receive a lot of controversy and backlash when implemented. Some respondents also thought that the bill will disproportionately affect lower socioeconomic communities.

Feedback from rangatahi (16 people) who answered **no**:

Survey takers wrote that the bill won't change, these respondents felt that rangatahi will find a way to get what they want like they do now. The majority of survey takers who don't support the bill wrote that everyone should be able to make a choice as long as they know the health risks. *“ . . . I think the only real solution to such a problem is education - smoking rates as far as I'm aware are significantly lower than they used to be, due to people being much more aware of the damage it causes.”* Also, a few respondents thought that the bill was completely unfair. If you are 18 years old you have earned the right to do what you want. Abuse could occur later in life between those who just miss the cut off of the bill's effects. *“ . . . In 10 years time somebody's gonna be 24 & 23; the 24 year old can but the 23 can't? Either access to everyone or not, if not & they're going to find a way anyway.”*

In discussions with our youth council members, there was also some confusion around potential penalties for those who smoke tobacco product, when it is not legal, with some young people thinking this may result in arrest or significant legal ramifications. Our rangatahi also highlighted concerns for new refugees and immigrants to New Zealand, and the need to further investigate support for these populations should this bill be passed.

Recommendations:

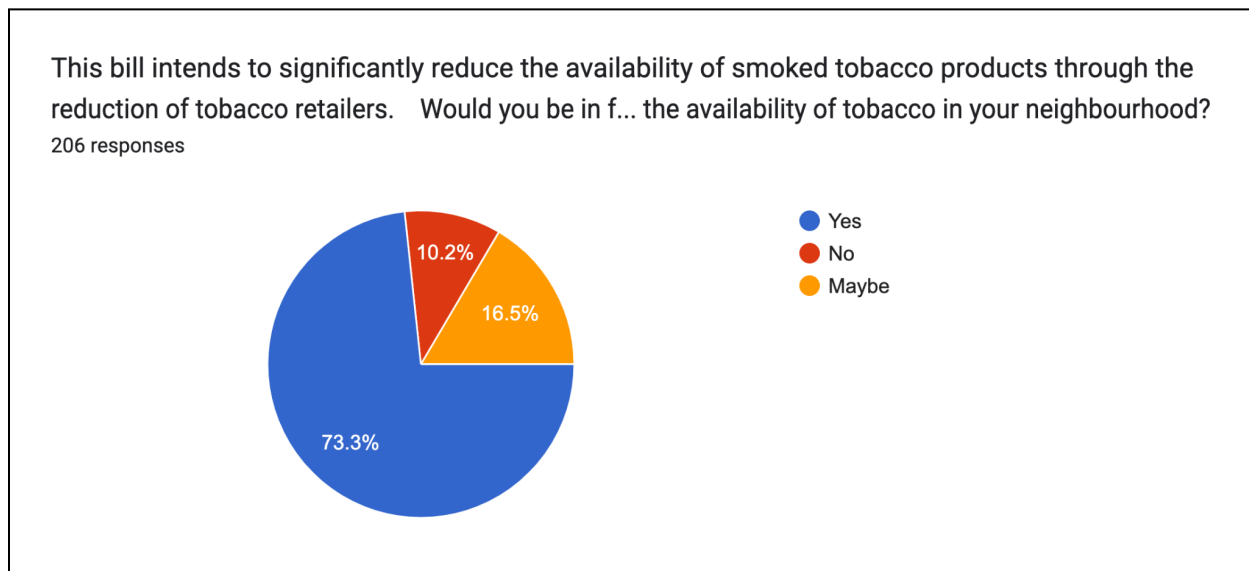
- The amendment is passed with the addition of the following considerations;
 - Provide clear and youth friendly information about what the consequences would be for rangatahi who purchase/ are found with/ or smoke tobacco products after this bill comes into effect.
 - Giving plenty of notice about the bill. This could be accomplished by:
 - Promotional material at least six months prior to enactment

- Holding talks in schools (when age appropriate) about how the bill will affect them
- Providing clear and youth friendly information to the next generation around why smokable tobacco products are unhealthy.
- Work with refugee and migrant communities to provide appropriate planning for these future populations for when this change comes into effect.

Section 13 - New Part 1B - Reduced retail availability

We support significantly reducing the number of tobacco retailers.

73.3% of survey takers support this amendment, as well as our organisations' members during discussion and research into this submission. There is a correlation between higher deprivation and tobacco retailer density, for example, tobacco retailers are concentrated in areas of higher deprivation including on the East side of Christchurch. This area also contains more Māori and Pacific young people relative to the rest of the city. This negatively affects our communities who are already more vulnerable in the smokefree space, and we feel this change will mitigate some of these issues.



Feedback from rangatahi (151 people) who answered **yes**:

Common points discussed here were that having higher tobacco retailer density encourages more smoking by making cigarettes more accessible and available, and therefore reducing this would in turn reduce smoking tobacco. *"As an ex smoker...I fully believe that reduced availability would have prevented me from smoking."* There was also discussion about the link between tobacco availability and socio-economic deprivation, *"big tobacco preys on low socio-economic areas and saturates the area. Get them outta here!"* Another common thing discussed by rangatahi was the effect on the

environment, and keeping their neighbourhoods clean by reducing tobacco product waste *“Its bad for the environment, because people just throw them on the ground step on them and then leave it there.”* In this section rangatahi again discussed the negative health effects of smoking, second hand smoke and that they would like to see future generations smokefree.

Feedback from rangatahi (34 people) who answered **maybe**:

Those who said maybe were conflicted, many of the respondents could see the positives in the proposal but were also worried about things like the black market, making it more difficult for those who were addicted to tobacco, and its effect on small business owners. *“I’m just worried about what will happen to the black market when we cut retailers. But especially the Pacific and Māori communities, we need education around the subject to mitigate the consequences of doing such actions.”*, another respondent said, *“Depends. There are implications for retailers (e.g. immigrant dairy owners) who will go out of business if they can’t sell cigarettes as it’s the main driver of business into dairies. And while I don’t want to prioritise money over health, these people/stores are part of the community and the people need to make a living.”*

Feedback from rangatahi (21 people) who answered **no**:

Some of those who said no felt like people should be able to make their own choices, *“People (like I said before) should be able to do what they want to their body within it being reasonable & responsible, restricting it might reduce it, but why take control over people in what they personally want to do?”* while others didn’t have opinions on this bill or were indifferent to this section.

Recommendations:

- The amendment is passed with the addition of the following considerations;
 - Consult and work with small business owners and provide additional government support and resources.
 - Review the effects on small business in the first financial years.
 - Giving plenty of notice about the bill. This could be accomplished by:
 - Promotional material at least six months prior to enactment

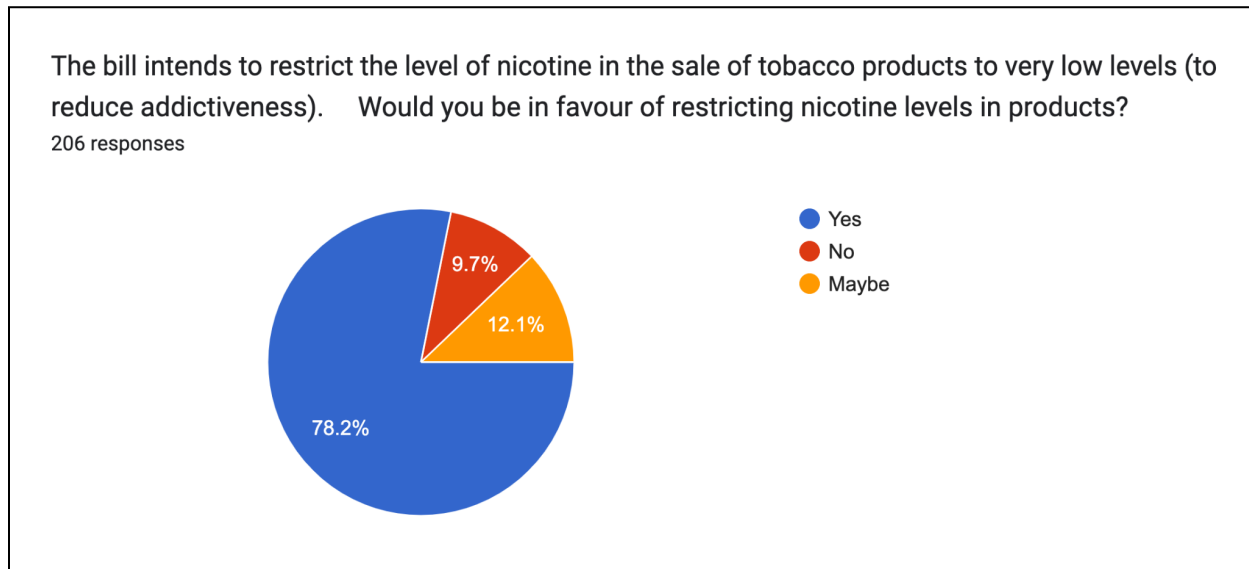
Section 31 – New Part 3 A - Reduce appeal and addictiveness of smoked tobacco products

We support the inclusion of sections in the Bill that aim to reduce the appeal and addictiveness of smoked tobacco products.

78.2% of survey takers support this amendment, as well as our organisations’ members during discussion and research into this submission. Many rangatahi mentioned the high levels of nicotine in vapes and smoked tobacco in this section, and the addictive nature of these products being very harmful to

rangatahi. Please be aware that it appears that some of the rangatahi found it difficult to separate the discussion to only smoked tobacco products, and their answers may reflect this.

We support significantly reducing the level of nicotine in smoked tobacco products, we would also like to highlight the significant concern with high nicotine content in vape products.



Feedback from rangatahi (161 people) who answered **yes**:

Many of the respondents here discussed the nicotine addiction, and in particular spoke about how nicotine addiction negatively affects young people, *"Having a addiction at a young age isn't a good outcome in the later life"*, *"Nicotine is addictive and is linked to poorer health outcomes"*, there were also many responses speaking about the cost of purchasing nicotine products *"Because nicotine addiction can cause people to struggle financially as they have to fulfill their addiction rather than important necessities. Less people will become strongly addicted and it may give more the chance to quit easier."*

As mentioned, many rangatahi spoke about the high levels of nicotine in vapes being of significant concern as well *"I have been trying to quit myself and it's really hard when all the products available have a high level of nicotine. There's so many options with vapes particularly and all are such high levels. This an obvious strategy to keep the consumer addicted to ensure repeat customers. Vaping was meant to be an alternative to help quit smoking cigarettes. Instead it's become a trend and people just start vaping because everyone else is. Then the cycle continues with addiction and leading into other forms of smoking."* and another respondent *"50% Nicotine strength is what so many teens vape. It is horrible."* From the significant numbers of responses speaking about vaping, we believe that young people are very concerned with vaping and the high nicotine levels in vape products. We believe this needs to be considered in this bill or in a subsequent bill but with significant haste.

Feedback from rangatahi (25 people) who answered **maybe**:

Some respondents answered this way as they were not sure. Others spoke about difficulties for those who were addicted to nicotine, *“If it's done slowly over time - yes. If one day the nicotine in all products is dramatically reduced - that will probably not help people who are chemically addicted.”* Another respondent saying, *“A good idea in theory. I think for a lot of older people, they won't stop smoking and that's not realistic for us to expect them to. But it's going to be very heavy on their pockets if they have to smoke packets and packets to have their nicotine needs satiated. But for young people who haven't smoked before it makes a lot of sense.”*

Feedback from rangatahi (20 people) who answered **no**:

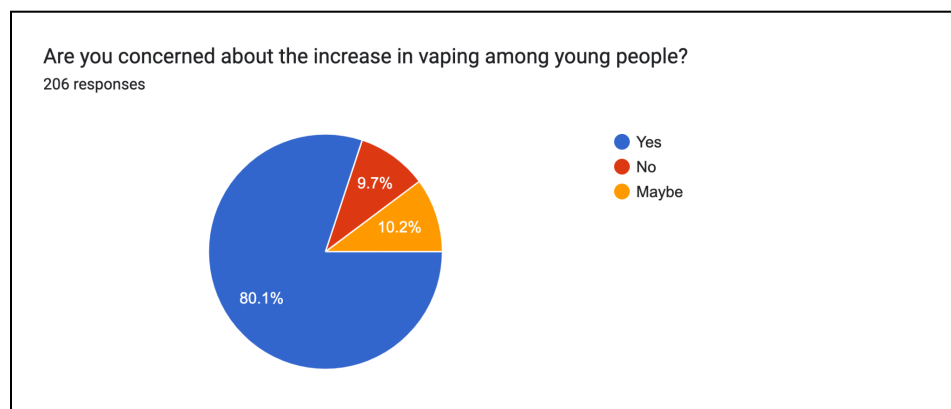
Rangatahi in this section again spoke about personal choice. There were some young people who spoke directly about their personal addiction, *“Because I'm addicted,”* and nicotine effects, *“I need my head spins in the morning”*.

Recommendations:

- The amendment is passed with the addition of the following considerations;
 - There should be immediate investigation and regulation into high nicotine levels in vape products.
 - Youth specific smoking and vaping cessation resources and programmes should be implemented.
 - There should be some consideration for those who are using high amounts of nicotine, to facilitate reduction of nicotine levels, supporting their physical and mental wellbeing.

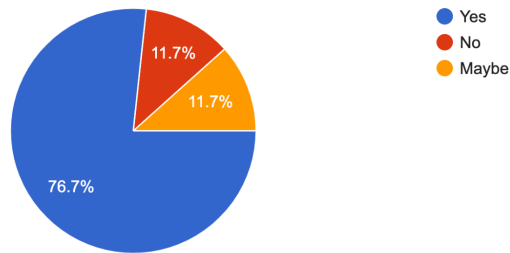
Vaping

Due to the significant concern from our organisations about the increase in rangatahi vaping, we decided to also ask some relevant questions in this survey.



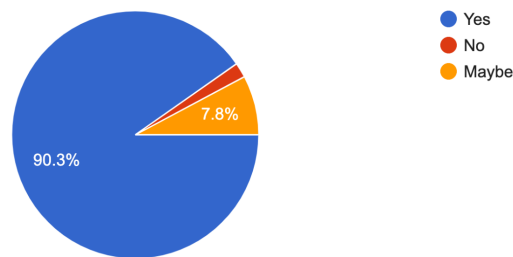
Do you think there should be more regulations around vaping in New Zealand?

206 responses



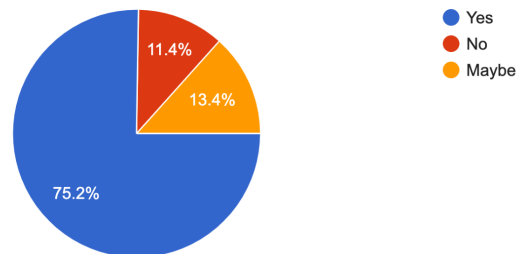
Do you think there needs to be more support for young people wanted to quit vaping?

206 responses



Would you support restricting the sale of vaping products to licenced R18 specialist vape retailers?

202 responses



We found a significant majority of rangatahi were concerned about the rise in vaping amongst youth 80.1%

A large number of these respondents spoke about how worried they are about very young people vaping, *"100% needs to change. It's so sad to see how many kids walk around with vape clouds above them. They're enticed by the vapour and yummy flavours."* another respondent saying, *"It's at the point where I see 11 year olds vaping, why on earth should they be able to have access to that"*. Of the small number who were not concerned, there were some comments around rangatahi always having a desire to experiment, *"I think young people are always gonna try things/experiment. Teens being addicted to vaping"*

is better than them being addicted to cigarettes, weed or harder drugs. Having laws around it isn't going to stop young people doing it."

A high number of rangatahi said that they would support more regulations around vaping (76.7%) with people speaking about not knowing the potential full extent of damage, accessibility being too high with many people voicing concerns of young children vaping, *"too many young people are getting addicted and there needs to be stricter availability/laws in place regarding dairy owners being able to sell vapes as too many dairy owners sell to underage without a care in the world making vaping heavily accessible to young people."* Of those that said no or maybe, some of the concerns were again around freedom of choice, as well as some mentioning that as an alternative to smoking tobacco vaping was less damaging, *"There's less chemicals, and it's the lesser of evils. Alcohol or tobacco is MUCH worse. But it should be strictly id 18+ only."*

Recommendations:

- There should be immediate consideration of amending vaping laws in New Zealand;
 - Reducing the level of nicotine in vape products
 - Limiting retail of all vape products to specialist stores
- Specialised vaping cessation programmes should be developed, with consultation with rangatahi.
- Continue to research the long term effects of vaping, and make leading information available to the public and in youth friendly formats.
- Consider the use GP's and pharmacies rather than vaporiums for potential vape distribution for smoking cessation.

Summary

We are in support of the Smokefree Aotearoa 2025 Action Plan and supports the intention of the three main measures in this Bill, namely:

Smokefree generation (amending the age limit for sale of smoked tobacco products),
reducing retail availability and,
reducing the appeal and addictiveness of smoked tobacco products.

We would like the select committee to consider the recommendations we have stated in the above sections.

We and the wider youth community are very concerned about the prevalence of youth vaping, and would like to see immediate health and governmental responses to these issues.

Thank you for this opportunity to submit to the select committee and look forward to seeing you at the oral submission to answer any and all questions you have.

Ngā Mihi,