

3 May 2023

IEU-QNT welcomes government action on vaping

The union representing over 17,000 teachers and staff in Queensland and Northern Territory non-government schools has welcomed the federal government's stronger regulation of e-cigarettes amid a surge of vaping among Australian school students.

Independent Education Union – Queensland and Northern Territory (IEU-QNT) Branch Secretary Terry Burke said action was urgently needed to tackle the scourge of vaping, which poses a significant public health risk, particularly to school children.

"Vaping and the use of e-cigarette products by students at school is an issue increasingly raised by our members," Mr Burke said.

"While the long-term issues of vaping remain to be seen, research shows children who vape are three times more likely to take up smoking, which is highly concerning.

"Vapes were introduced as a therapeutic tool for adults transitioning off cigarettes in a bid to quit smoking.

"Instead, vapes have been made readily available for recreational use by children, sold cheaply over the counter at corner shops and marketed with flavours, colours and packaging designed to appeal to young people.

"Our members are concerned at the number of young people engaging in the habit at school, who are at risk of addiction and adverse health outcomes.

"School staff are struggling to combat the issue and report they feel ill-equipped to educate students about the long-term dangers of vaping," he said.

"The federal government's reforms through stronger legislation, enforcement, education and support will hopefully curtail the uptake of vaping, which has exploded in popularity during the last five years.

"Our members know this is a serious issue in schools, and the federal government's moves will be a significant step in addressing the situation," Mr Burke said.

ENDS

Contact: Emily Campbell IEU-QNT Communications Officer: ecampbell@ieuqnt.org.au / 0400 746 175