

Blair Boyer MP Minister for Education, Training and Skills

Thursday 15 December

Education Ministers consider national vaping action

State and Territory Governments will today consider a paper from South Australia to take further action to tackle vaping, at the Education Ministers' Meeting.

Minister Boyer will table the Vaping in Schools report – a piece of work South Australia has led in coordinating a national approach to reduce and respond to youth vaping.

Among the findings of the report, states and territories were found to use a number of strategies to support young people to help improve health literacy around vaping and e-cigarettes.

This includes policy, partnerships with health organisations, education resources and school behaviour management.

The discussion among Education Ministers will centre around views taking the most effective additional action to reduce vaping among young people.

Ministers will consider the Chair of Education Ministers Meeting – Minister Clare – to write to Health Ministers across the country to express support of the proposed new National Tobacco Strategy 2022-30 and ask that it be finalised as a matter of priority, and to include actions aimed at reducing the rates of vaping and e-cigarette use among children and young people.

Ministers will also seek a national vaping advertising campaign – developed by Health and Education Ministers – to address misinformation and prevent the take-up of vaping. This would be developed with children and young people.

This work follows a survey conducted by the South Australian Commissioner for Children and Young People Helen Connolly this year, that revealed 2 of the 3 respondents – of 1000 young people – had tried vaping.

It also revealed that young people believed there was a multitude of misinformation surrounding vaping and felt restricting supply and providing support programs would help their peers.

It is illegal in Australia for persons under the age of 18 to buy any e-cigarette or vaping device and products and it is against the law for anyone to promote, market or sell e-cigarettes to people under the age of 18.

Quotes attributable to Blair Boyer

It's critical that we are proactive in addressing this issue and respond with resources and education in a preventative manner – which is what this plan does.

All states and territories are taking action to reduce vaping in their schools – which would be backed-up by national action.

All levels of Australian governments have existing commitments to combat vaping in schools and here we have an opportunity to utilise the resources we have across states to bring together a national strategy.

I am pleased to see such strong collective support for this issue among our state and territory education ministers and am keen to see it prioritised from a health perspective as well, to ensure we are tackling this with the most up-to-date health and education resources.

We know vaping is increasingly an issue in schools, which reflects a broader societal problem. Including vaping in the National Tobacco Strategy is a significant step towards acknowledging its impact in our community.

The best approach to addressing this issue is to educate young people on the health impacts of vaping and have them be part of the decision making and design of a plan, so they are motivated to make informed decisions.