



Why New Zealand is giving free vape kits to adult smokers to help them quit?

Ben Youdan

Director ASH New Zealand

The background of the slide features abstract, wavy shapes in shades of blue and green. On the left side, there are several overlapping, curved bands in various tones of blue, ranging from light to medium. On the right side, there are similar curved bands in shades of green, also overlapping. The overall effect is a modern, clean, and organic design.

I have no conflict of interest to declare.

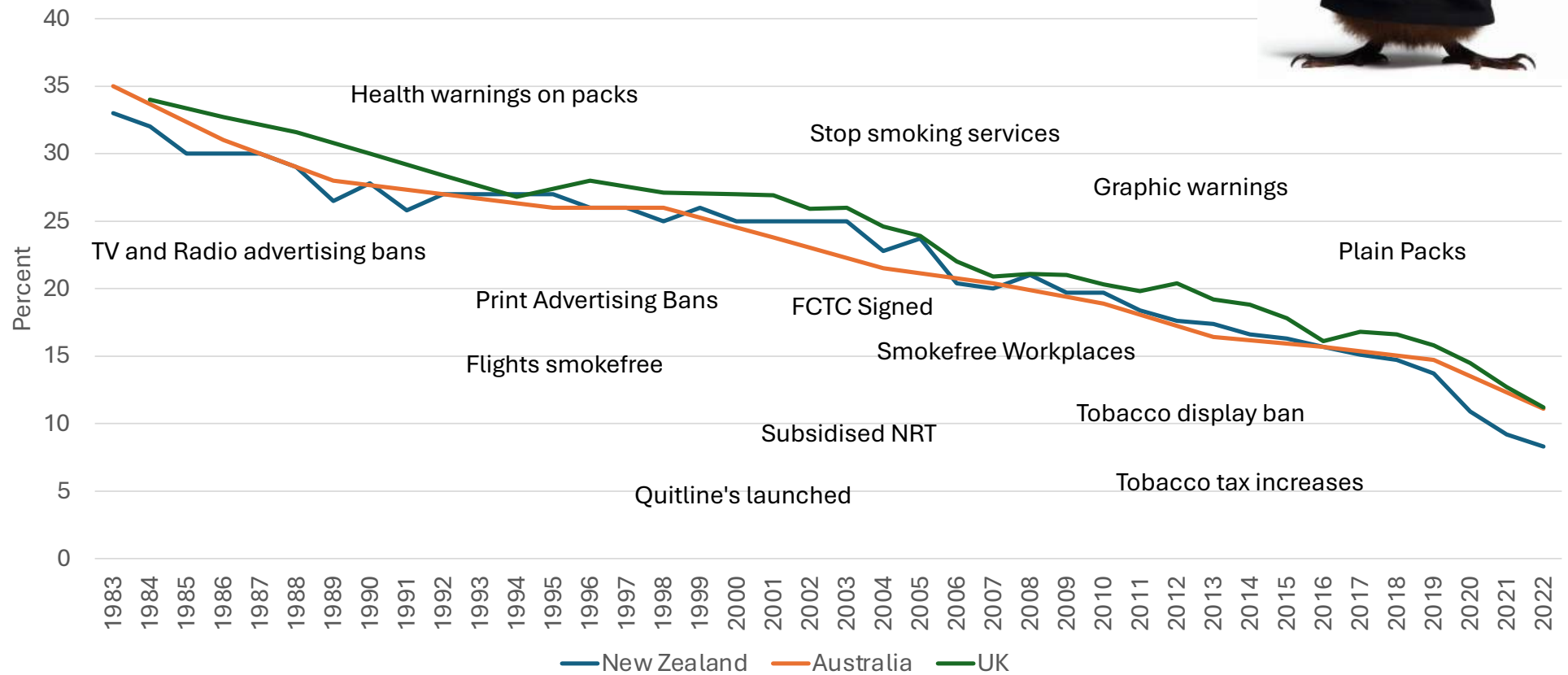
ASH Aotearoa New Zealand has no conflicts of interest, and has never received funds or donations in kind from tobacco, gambling, vape or pharma industries.



Some context on Aotearoa New Zealand

- Geographically isolated
- Population of roughly 5,000,000
- 1 in 3 live in Auckland
- 1 in 4 are of Māori descent

New Zealand, : A shared history of aggressive tobacco policy





Daily smoking
prevalence <5% for
all. Including
indigenous and
disadvantaged
groups by
2025

I.10A



Inquiry into the tobacco industry in Aotearoa and the consequences of tobacco use for Māori

Report of the Māori Affairs Committee

Forty-ninth Parliament
(Hon Tau Henare, Chairperson)
November 2010

Presented to the House of Representatives

Harm reduction potential was identified early on

I.10A



Inquiry into the tobacco industry in Aotearoa and the consequences of tobacco use for Māori

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We heard from many submitters that there should be wider access to nicotine delivery devices that are safer than smoked tobacco as part of a “harm reduction” approach to tobacco use. Examples included the “e-cigarette”, a smokeless nicotine delivery device which is inhaled like a cigarette, and “snus”, a moist powder tobacco product which is placed under the lip for extended periods. According to many submitters, giving smokers access to alternative tobacco products would encourage quitting and reduce the use of smoked tobacco. This would help achieve the main goal of tobacco control: a reduction in the illness and death caused by smoking.

New Zealand had some early adopters...

- Independent safety testing of 1st gen Ruyan e-cigarettes in 2008
- Clinical trials for acceptability and cessation in 2008/9

NEW ZEALAND

No smoke, no fire, just nicotine

By [Martin Johnston](#), Martin Johnston

8 Dec, 2007 05:00 AM ⌚ 2 mins to read

🔖 Save | ➦ Share

Several toxicants in
been found, specific
those determined to
US Public Health S

The results obtained
Ruyan® e-cigarette
in absolute terms of

30 October 2008



The e-cigarette will be tested in Auckland next year to see if it is worth releasing in New Zealand.

Some tests,
levels below
pted by the

at the
rs to be safe

NEW ZEALAND

Fake aims to kill the urge to puff

By [Brooke Donovan](#)

27 Feb, 2008 05:00 AM ⌚ 5 mins to read

🔖 Save | ➦ Share



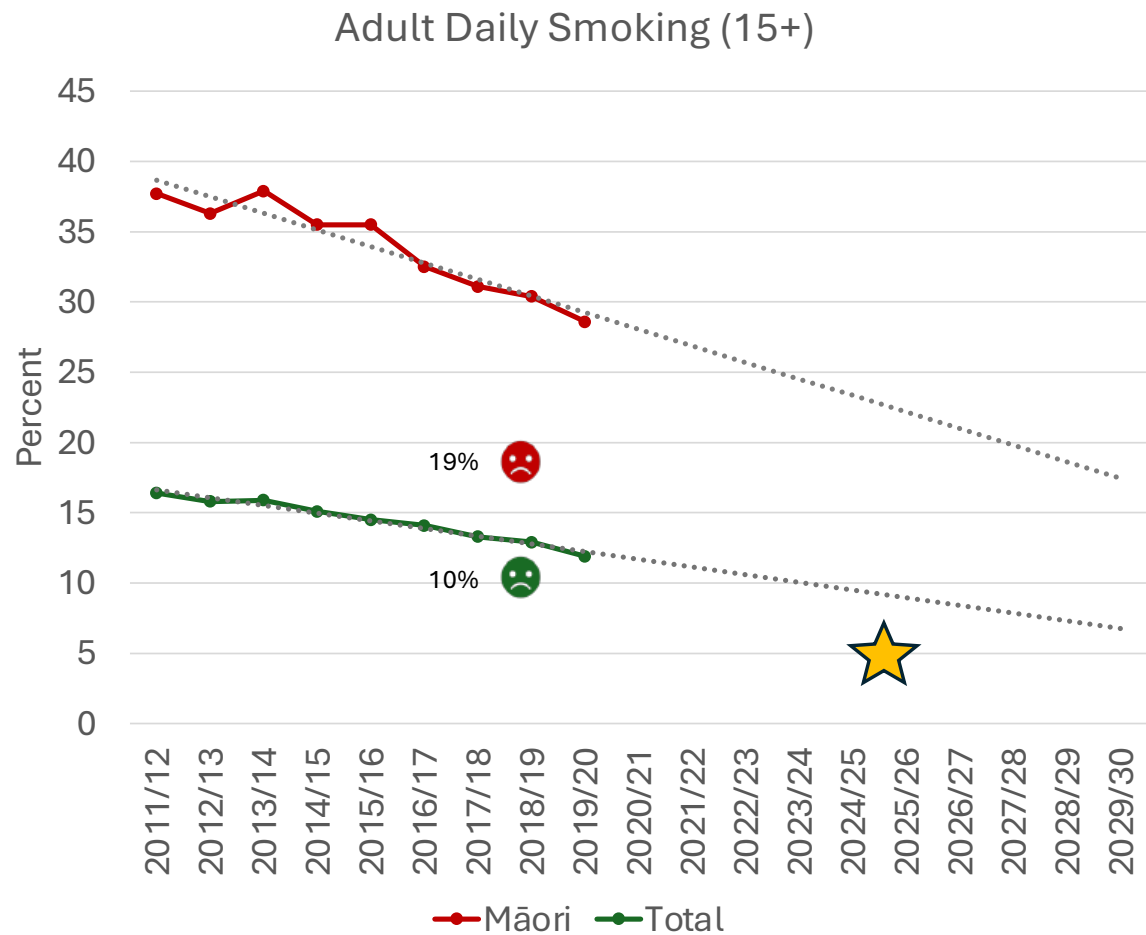
The new E-Cigarette does extinguish Brooke Donovan's need for nicotine. Photo / Paul Estcourt



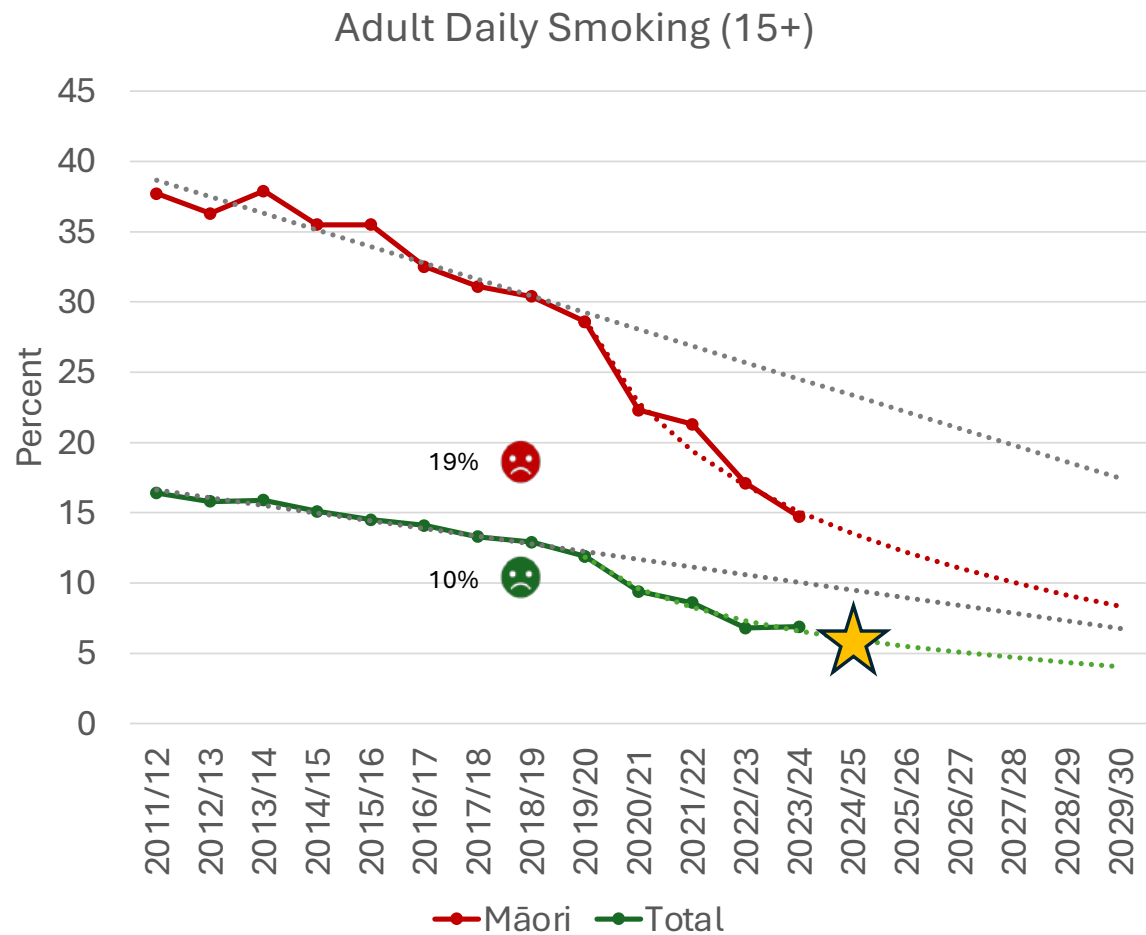
By 2018:

- Daily Smoking to fall from 16.4% in 2011 to 10%
- Half Māori and Pacific rates from 38% in 2011 to levels to 19%

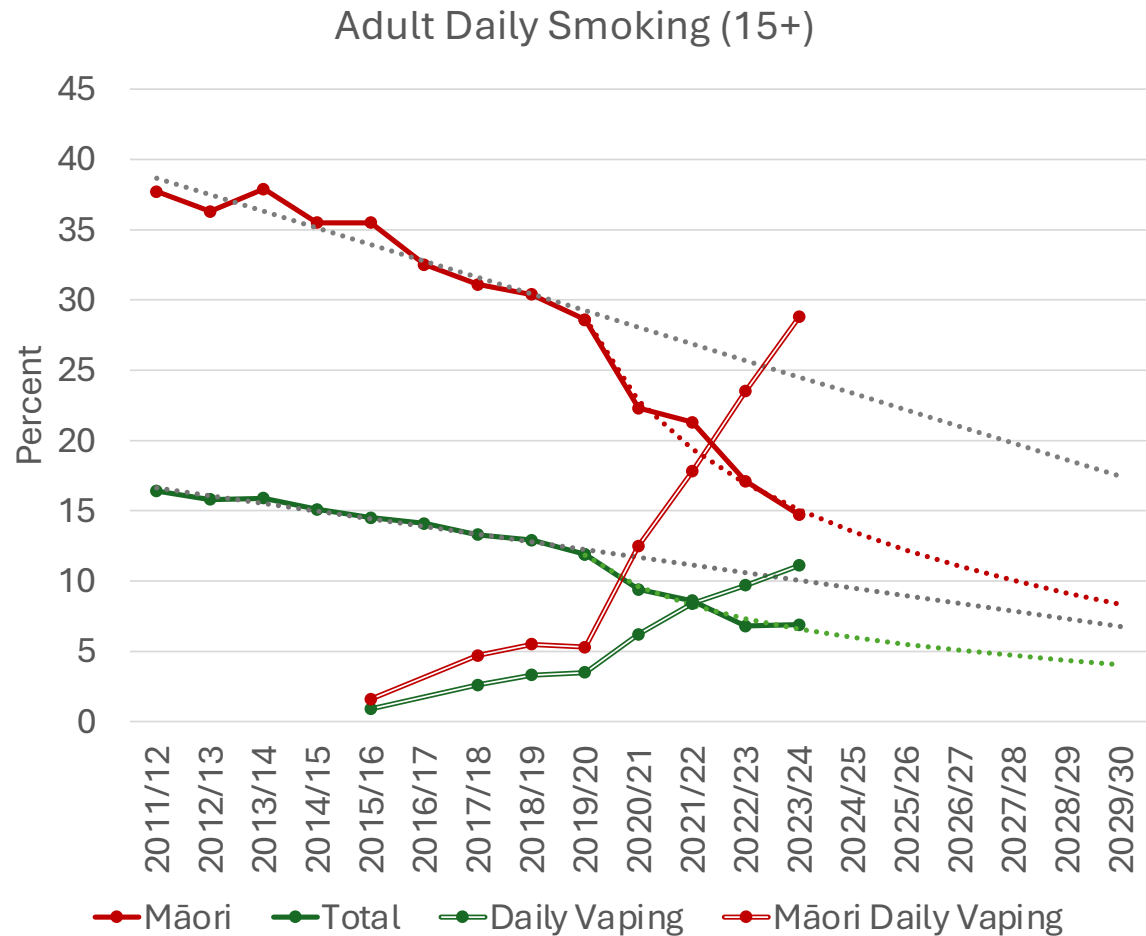
We were
not doing
very
well....



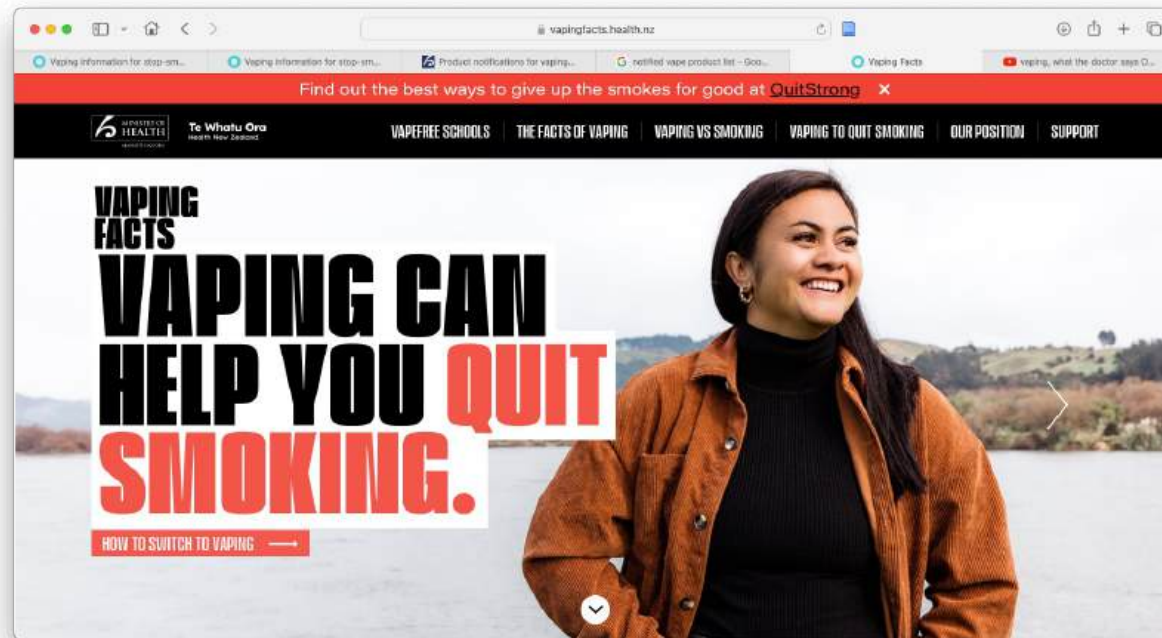
Until
the last
5 years



Although a
strong
correlation
with vaping



What does the New Zealand health system say about vaping?



Ben Youdan. Director Action for Smokefree Aotearoa New Zealand





**VAPING'S WAY
LESS HARMFUL
THAN SMOKING.**

 [vaping facts](#)



**VAPE
TO QUIT
STRONG**

Vaping isn't harmless.
If you don't smoke, don't vape.

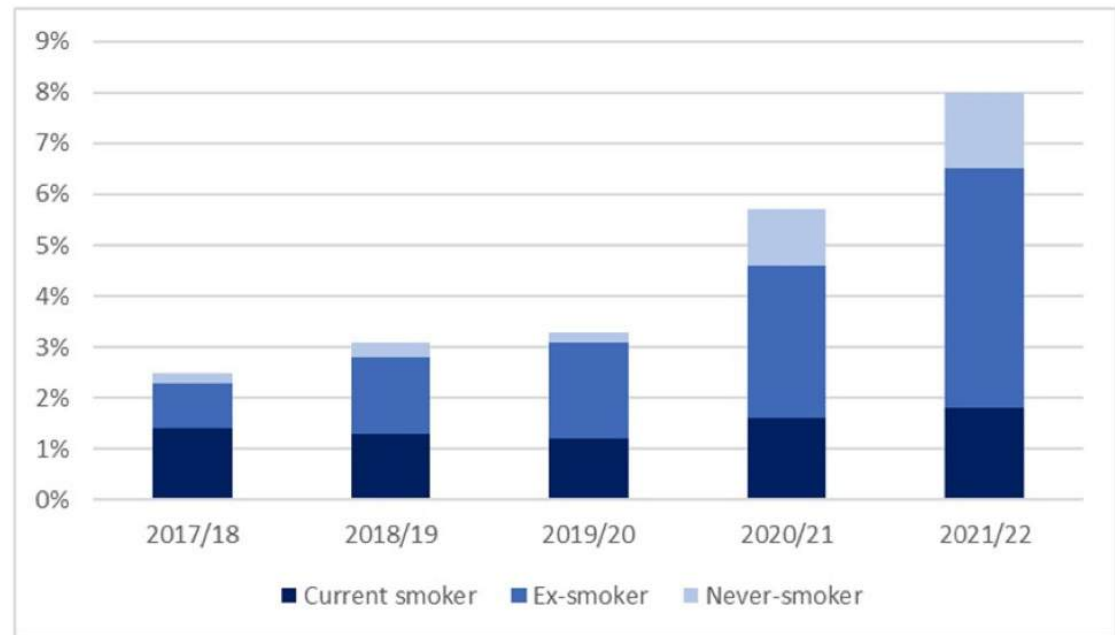
How do adults access vapes – New Zealand?



Ben Youdan. Director Action for Smokefree Aotearoa New Zealand

Smoking Status of Daily Vapers in New Zealand

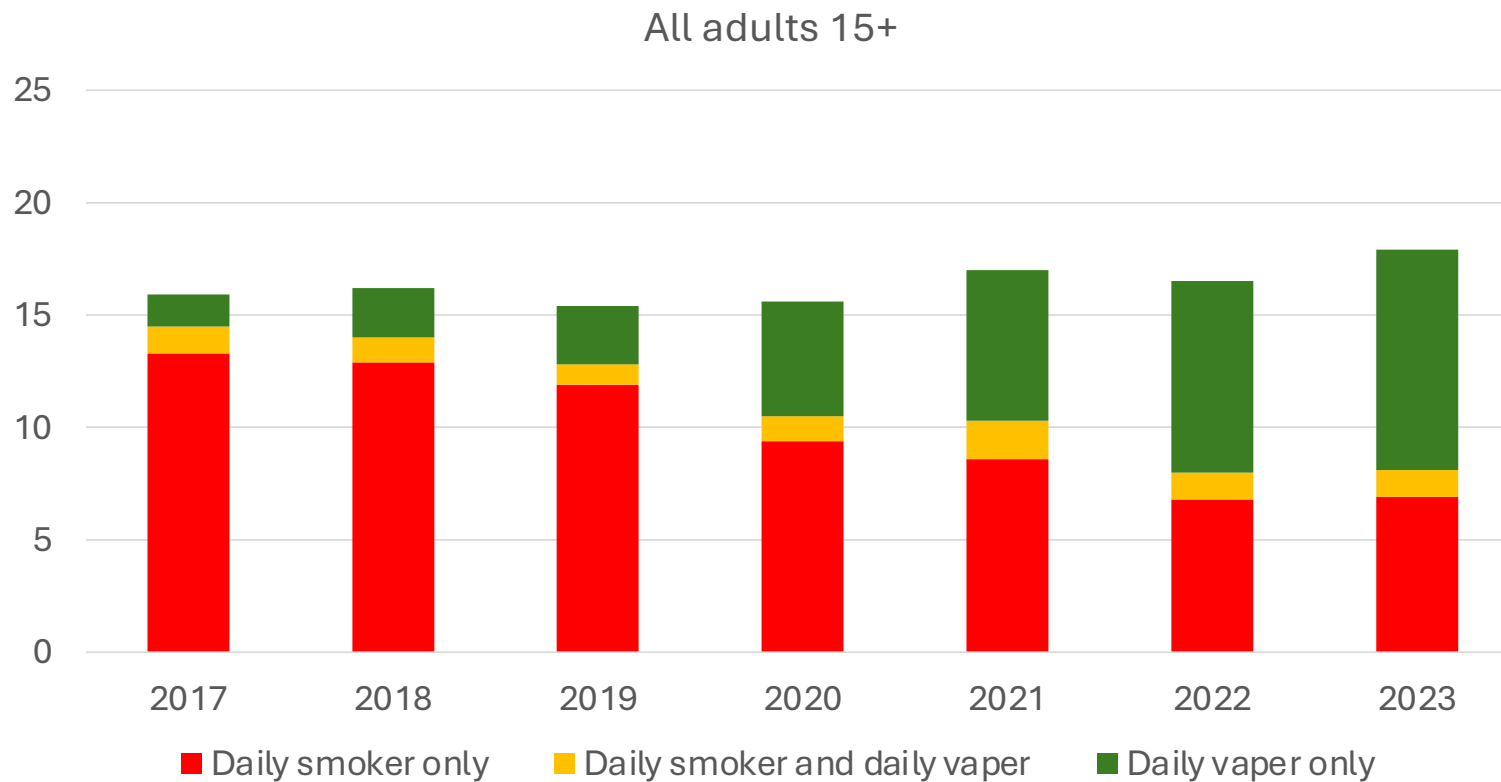
Figure 5: Daily vaping in people aged 15 and older, by smoking status, 2017/18 to 2021/22



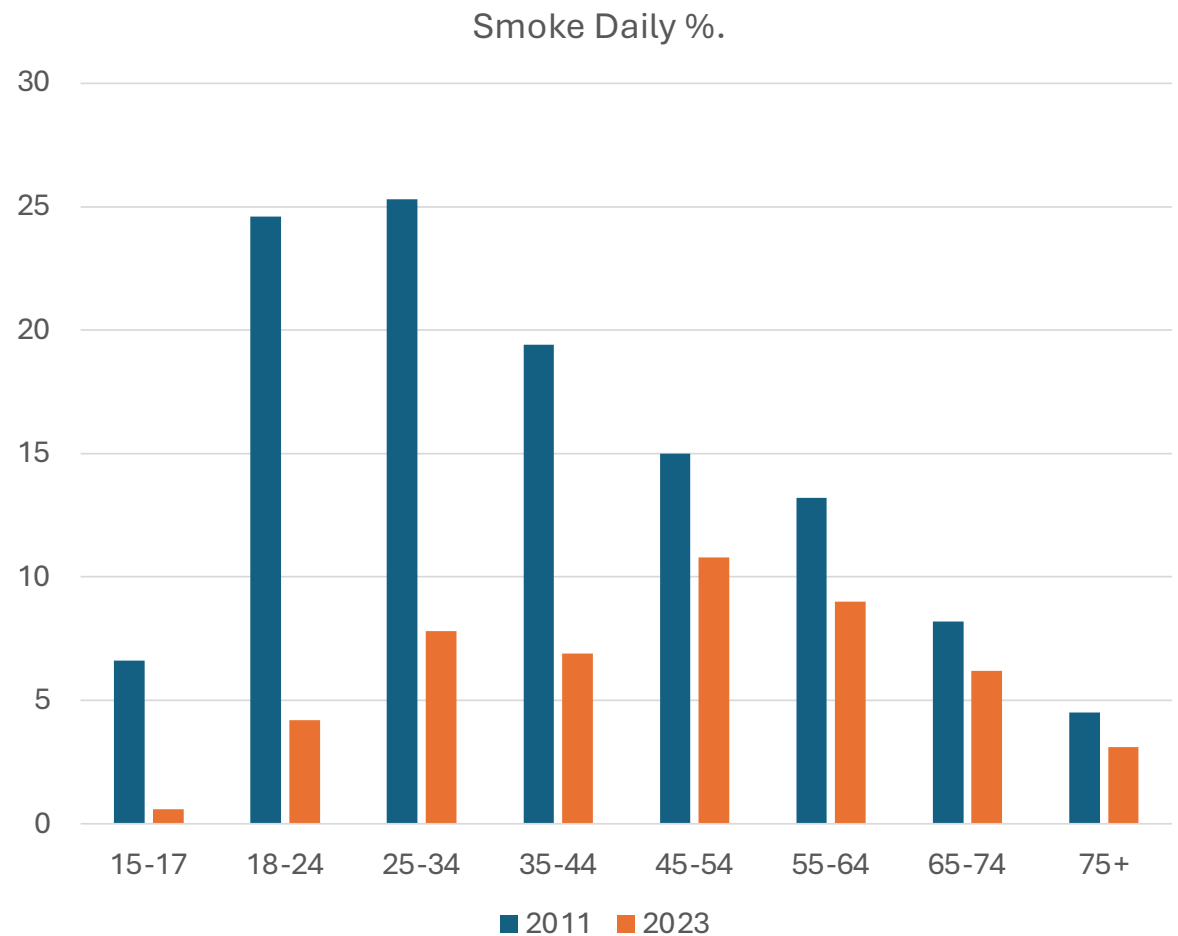
Note: excludes the Other smoking group, so percentages do not sum to daily vaping estimates published in the *Annual Data Explorer 2021/22* (Ministry of Health 2022a)

New Zealand Ministry of Health. 2023. Smoking Status of Daily Vapers. Wellington: Ministry of Health.

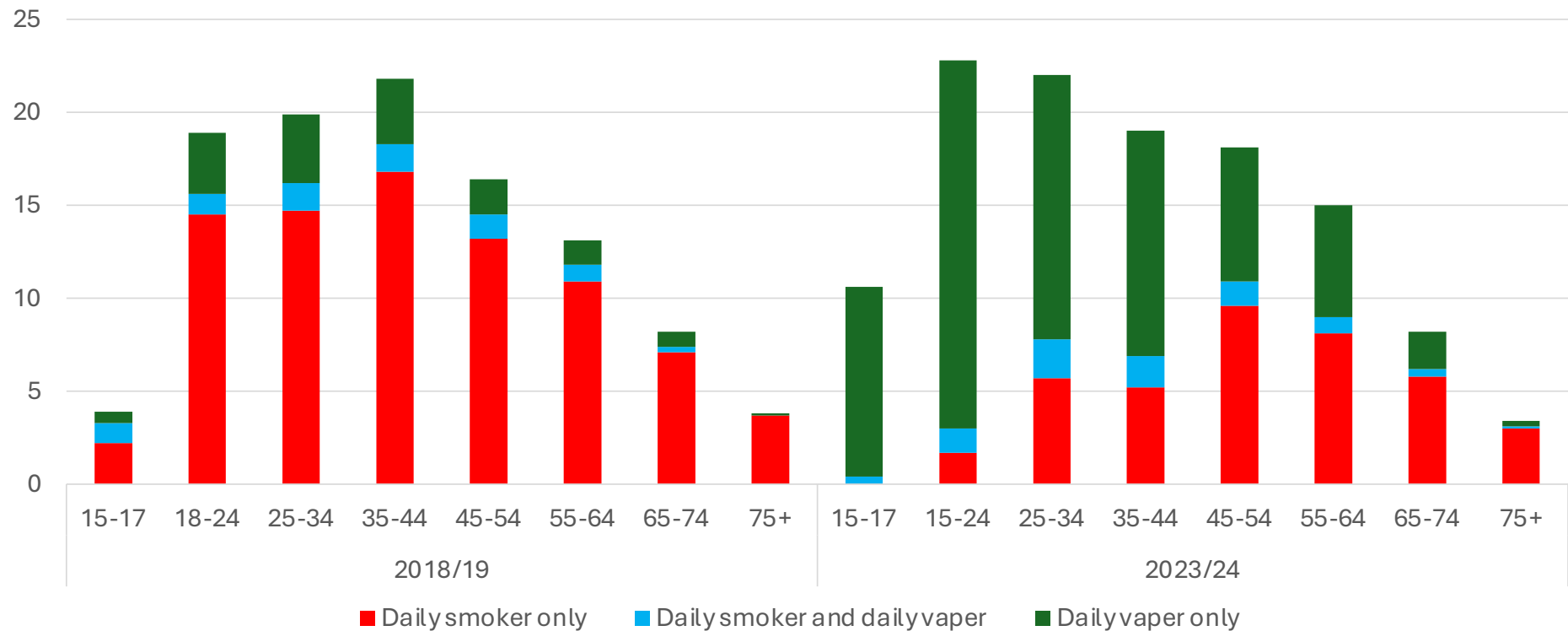
Nicotine users in New Zealand

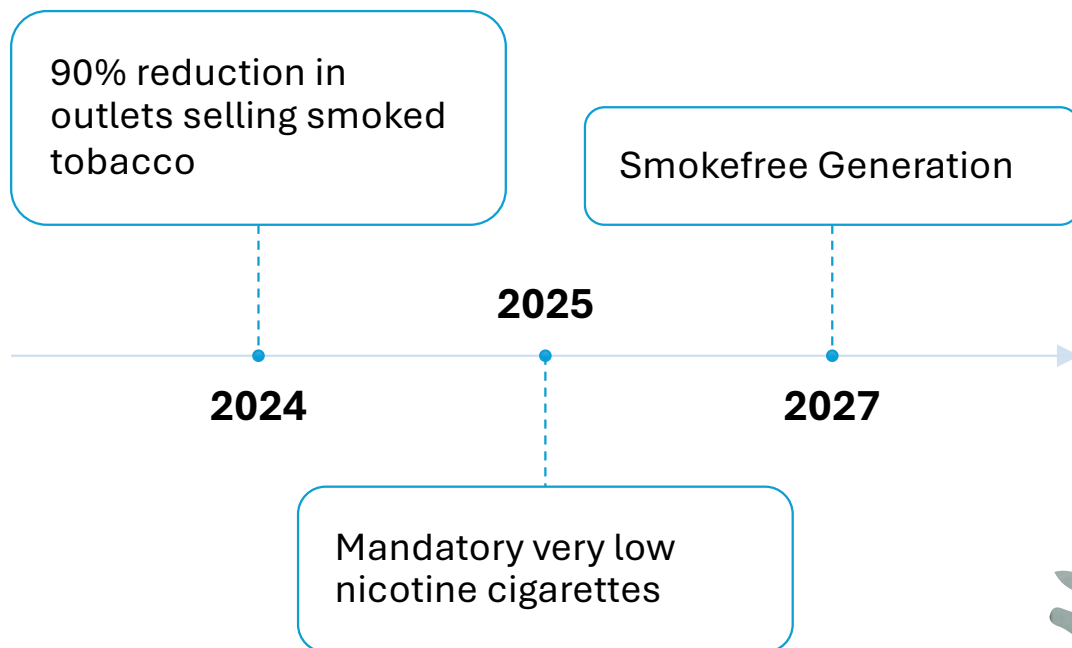


Daily smoking is at
6.8% of adults,
and
<1% of under 18s



Nicotine Use from Smoking and Vaping New Zealand





90% reduction in
outlets selling smoked
tobacco

Smokefree Generation

2025

2024

2027

Mandatory very low
nicotine cigarettes



Amohia ake te ora o te iwi
ka puta ki te whei ao

Kingi Tuheitia Pōtatau
Te Wherowhero VII



Smokefree Laws 2.0 & a new plan for Smokefree 2025

- Banned disposable vapes
- Increase penalties for sales to kids
- Banned vapes being visible from outside
- Banned new vape shops within 300m of early childhood
- Ban on direct to consumer advertising
- Tax cuts to heated tobacco
- Signaling plan to un-ban oral nicotine
- Signaled plans for harm proportionate regulations in New Year.

Health New Zealand
Te Whatu Ora

Getting to Smokefree 2025

The final push to achieving the
Smokefree 2025 goal



Vape starter kits

From January 2025:

Stop Smoking Services providers will offer free vape kits through a pilot initiative as an additional support option alongside nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) and prescription medications for adults looking to quit smoking.

Govt to give out vaping kits to help smokers quit

 1298  19 

News > National

Based on sound rationale

"We know that more people try and quit over Christmas and New Year and smoking cessation providers are getting more tools to help smokers quit," Costello said.

"Vaping has played a key role in reducing smoking rates and the government supports adults switching to vaping because vaping is far less harmful than smoking cigarettes.

"Those using quit-smoking services are four times more likely to successfully stop smoking compared to those who receive no support, and this initiative provides the services with another tool."



What is being provided?



- 3430 vape kits have been distributed
- 24/29 stop smoking providers have received the vape kits.
- The total expenditure by Health New Zealand on vape kits and vape pods is \$575,000
- The flavours of the vape pods being provided are tobacco, mint and watermelon.
- The nicotine strength in the vape pods is 28.5 mg per mil.

Increasing stigma and decreasing trust



Welcoming people



The challenge is not people who smoke

- 5 Providers have refused to participate
- Undermining harm reduction initiatives



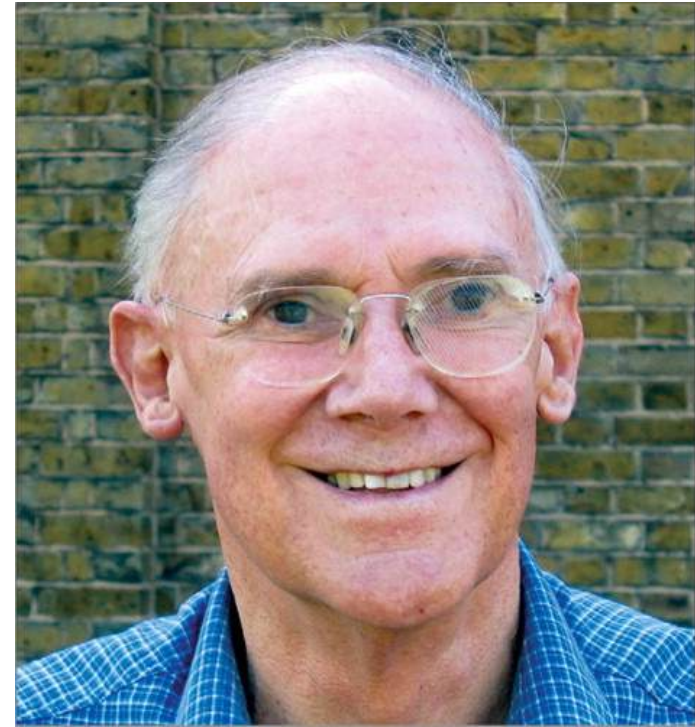
Bribe allegations about NZ vape kits in employee secret recordings



Why is public health sabotaging tobacco harm reduction? #1

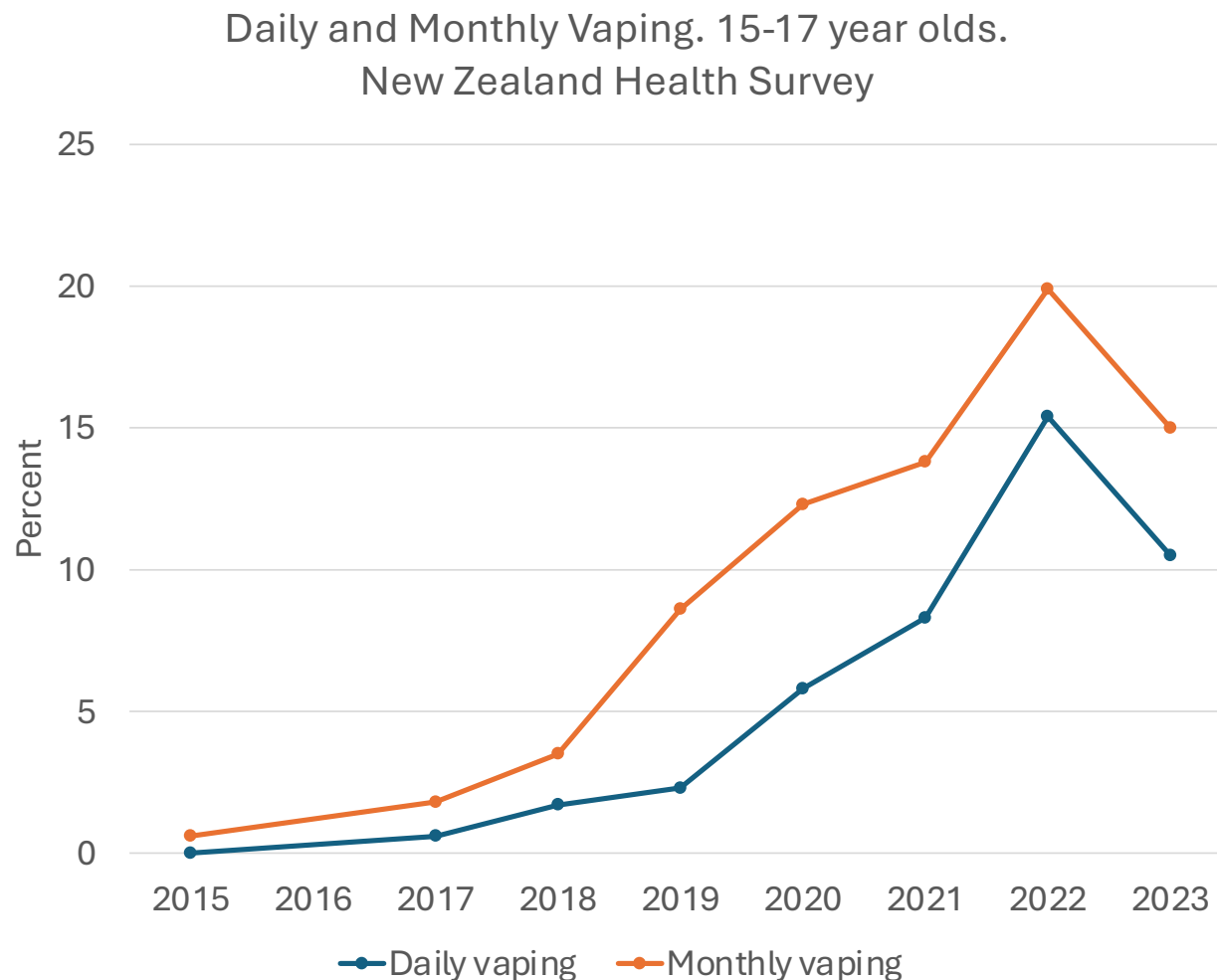
- The health profession increasingly lacks knowledge.
- Poor knowledge of core principles around nicotine and addiction
- People don't understand the basics

Michael Russell. 1932-2009



*“People smoke for the nicotine
but die from the tar”*

Why is public health sabotaging tobacco harm reduction? #2



New Zealand Health Survey. 2011-2024.
<https://minhealthnz.shinyapps.io/nz-health-survey-2023-24-annual-data-explorer/>

Why is public health sabotaging tobacco harm reduction? #3



In conclusion

- Vaping appears to have had a major impact on reducing smoking rates in New Zealand
- This has required successive governments to engage with harm reduction
- Helped by a history of early adoption by New Zealand's research community
- However, success is at risk from poor health professional literacy on tobacco harm reduction, concerns about youth, and offended ideology