



# Annual Report 2023

Prevention Education & Research Unit

Research and Education Network Western Sydney Local Health District



Western Sydney  
Local Health District



Connect  
Collaborate  
Cultivate



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
SYDNEY



## Prevention Education and Research Unit (PERU)

Research and Education Network, Western Sydney Local Health District

Faculty of Medicine and Health, The University of Sydney

PO Box 533, Westmead NSW 2145

T: +612 88906505 | E: [wslhd-westmead-peru@health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:wslhd-westmead-peru@health.nsw.gov.au)

This report is available at <https://peru-programs.sydney.edu.au/>

### Team

Clinical Professor Smita Shah - Director

Kym Rizzo Liu - Project Manager

Catriona Lockett - Research Officer

Lance Leung - Administration Officer

### Acknowledgements

We appreciate the financial support from Western Sydney Primary Health Network, and other contributions from Eastern Creek Principals Network, NSW Department of Education, NSW Ministry of Health and Daniel McAlary.

We thank the Blacktown, Hills, and the Mt Druitt Medical Practitioners Associations for their support of schools.

Special thanks to Professor Peter Hockey, Professor Mark McLean, Helene Abouyanni and Dalia Younan and the administrative staff of Research and Education Network for their ongoing guidance and support.

### Acronyms

BEAT	Breathe Easy All Together	PERU	Prevention Education and Research Unit
BMPA	Blacktown Medical Practitioners Association	REN	Research and Education Network
FMH	Faculty of Medicine and Health	SALSA	Students As LifeStyle Activists
GWS Giants	Greater Western Sydney Giants	SPL	SALSA Peer Leaders
MDMPA	Mount Druitt Medical Practitioners Association	Triple A	Adolescent Asthma Action
MoH	Ministry of Health	TSANZ	The Thoracic Society of Australia and New Zealand
MRFF	Medical Research Future Fund	UoW	University of Wollongong
NHMRC	National Health and Medical Research Council	USyd	The University of Sydney
		WSLHD	Western Sydney Local Health District

# Table of Contents

<i>Foreword</i> .....	4
<i>Prevention Education &amp; Research Unit</i> .....	5
<i>2023 at a Glance</i> .....	6
<i>The SALSA Program</i> .....	8
<i>Unpacking Vaping in Schools Project</i> .....	16
<i>Teaching</i> .....	27
<i>Collaborations and Partnerships</i> .....	28
<i>Conferences and Publications</i> .....	29
<i>Digital Channels</i> .....	44

## Foreword

The best examples of health promotion and community education always focus on empowerment of individuals - to manage their own health and to facilitate others to do the same. The inspiring work of Professor Smita Shah and the PERU team is doing exactly this with the young people of Western Sydney's school communities. The PERU programs on healthy eating and lifestyle, e-cigarettes and smoking, among others, are delivering demonstrable benefits. Importantly, their education and engagement model enable students to find their own voice and to have positive influences in their schools, families and broader communities. Most importantly, students are motivated to tackle issues that are meaningful to them and to adopt approaches that are most impactful for their peers. The scale and effectiveness of the PERU programs is growing year by year and they are becoming a model which is being adopted in many other regions. I congratulate all involved in the success of the PERU initiatives and look forward to another year of collaboration and achievement.



**Professor Mark McLean**

Executive Director of Research, WSLHD  
Conjoint Professor of Medicine,  
Western Sydney University  
Honorary Professor  
Faculty of Medicine and Health  
The University of Sydney

## Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Dharug people as the traditional custodians of the land covered by Western Sydney Local Health District upon which our work was conducted, and pay respect to Elders past, present and emerging.

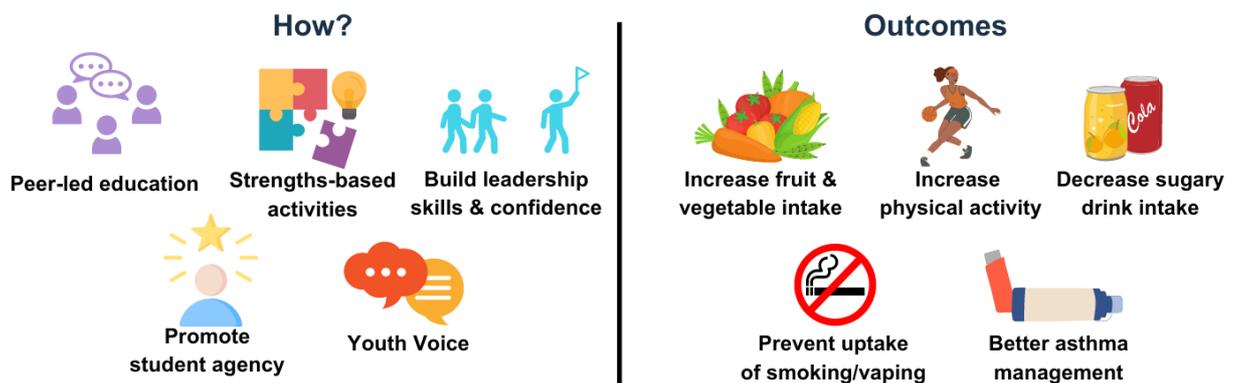


# Prevention Education & Research Unit

We are pleased to share with you the ongoing work, achievements and highlights from the Prevention Education and Research Unit in 2023.

Established in 1995, PERU continues to be at the forefront of delivering innovative community and school-based prevention and health leadership programs. We work in partnership with schools, universities and a range of organisations, including general practitioner associations to deliver evidence-based prevention programs and interventions to improve the health and wellbeing of young people.

## What do we do?



**PERU Team, 2023**

*Lance Leung, Kym Rizzo Liu, Catriona Lockett and Professor Smita Shah OAM*

## 2023 at a Glance



### The SALSA Program

- 11 high schools
- 46 university students trained as educators
- 330 students trained as SPLs

#### Outcomes:

- ↑ Confidence, teamwork & communication skills
- ↑ Vegetable, fruit and physical activity behaviours



### SALSA Youth Voices

- 5 high schools
- 43 students
- 5 School Action Plans

#### Outcomes:

- ↑ Advocacy, leadership & communication skills



### SALSA Regional

- 4 high schools
- 11 university students
- 77 students trained as SPLs

#### Outcomes:

- ↑ Confidence, teamwork & communication skills





### Unpacking Vaping in Schools study

- 13 presentations
- 7 individualised school reports
- Manuscript submitted

### BEAT Pilot

- 4 high schools
- >90 students
- Years 9 and 10

#### Outcomes:

- ↑ Asthma knowledge
- ↑ Awareness of e-cigarette prevalence



### Inaugural Health Hackathon

- 4 high schools
- 27 Yr 9 & 10 students
- 19 industry reps

#### Outcomes:

- 7 plans presented
- The winner: Tik Tok theme video



- School of Public Health retreat, The University of Sydney
- New partnership formed with Eastern Creek Principals Network



### Teaching, conferences & presentations

- 7 workshops
- 256 university students
- 5 conferences
- 11 presentations

## The SALSA Program

The Students As LifeStyle Activists (SALSA) is a peer-led leadership program designed to motivate high school students to increase physical activity and improve diet. University students are trained as SALSA Educators to deliver a one-day workshop to Year 10 students. Year 10 students are trained as SALSA Peer Leaders and deliver activities linked to the Stage 4 NSW Personal Development, Health and Physical Education curriculum.

### SALSA Educator's Workshop

We held two workshops for 35 university students from The University of Sydney, University of Western Sydney and Macquarie University. An additional workshop was held for 11 university students at the Department of Rural Health, University of Newcastle, Tamworth in partnership with HealthWISE. Students were from a range of faculties including allied health, education, medicine, pharmacy and public health.



SALSA Educators workshop, USyd



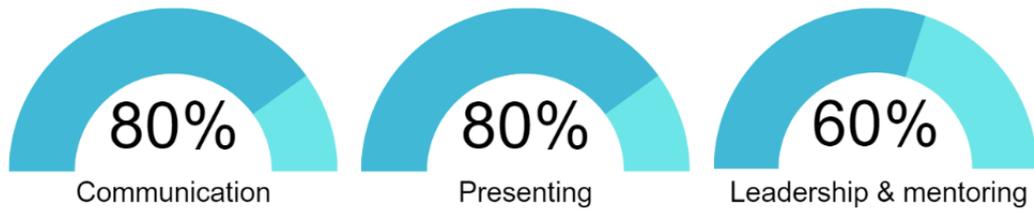
SALSA Educators workshop, USyd



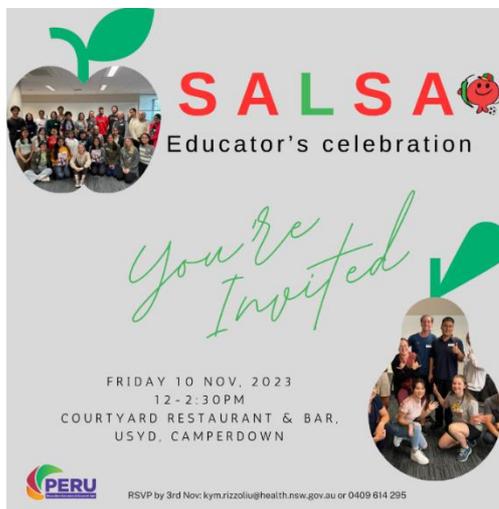
SALSA Regional Educators workshop, University of Newcastle

## Project Outcomes

The top 3 reported gains by SALSA Educators



## SALSA Educators Celebration



The volunteerism of the university students was acknowledged at the annual SALSA Educators' celebration. They were awarded a certificate of contribution in appreciation of their delivery of the SALSA Peer Leader workshop in at least one high school. The students were presented their certificate by Associate Professor Julie Mooney-Sommers, School of Public Health, The University of Sydney.

*"The SALSA program opened my eyes to programs that can be implemented within schools in developing leadership skills and empowering students to make healthy changes in their lives." – SALSA Educator, Faculty of Medicine and Health, University of Sydney*

*"It was such a great experience overall and the abilities and skills learnt throughout will be beneficial for careers in the future. The chance to go to smaller/rural towns and provide education and help those within such communities is a wonderful opportunity."*

*– SALSA Educator, Faculty of Nutrition and Dietetics, University of Newcastle*

## SALSA Peer Leader Workshops

We held eleven peer leader workshops in 2023, with 330 Year 9/10 students trained. The SALSA Program was delivered by the peer leaders to Year 7 or 8 students.



SALSA Peer Leaders, Blacktown Girls HS



SALSA Peer Leaders, Model Farms HS



SALSA Peer Leaders, Narrabri HS

## SALSA Peer Leader Debrief Sessions

To ensure program acceptability, currency, and relevance we hold a debrief session in each school with the peer leaders. Students complete a post questionnaire to measure changes in behaviours, such as vegetable intake, and the skills developed from being a peer leader. During the debrief session, students also reflect on their experiences as SALSA Peer Leaders in relation to what worked well, what was challenging, what they gained, and their School Action Plans. This data helps us to reassess the program and make any necessary changes.

## Project Outcomes

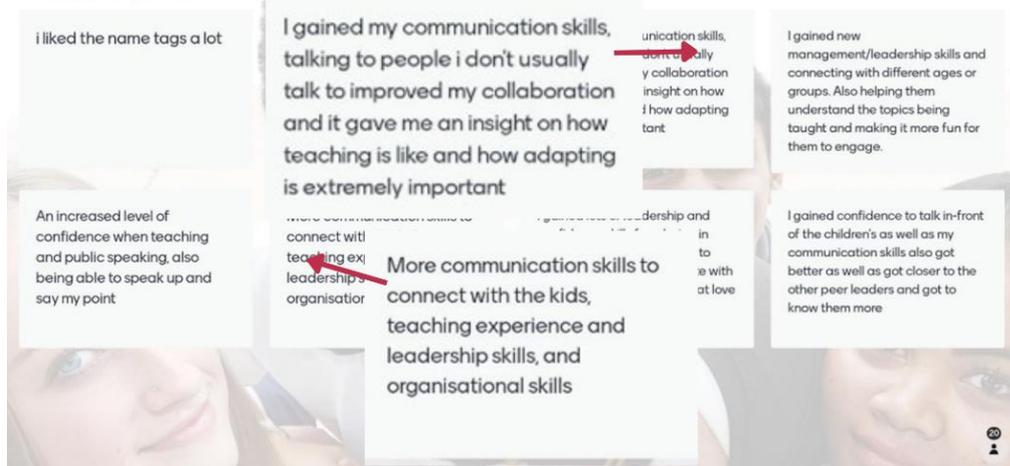
### The top 3 reported gains by SALSA Peer Leaders



### Changes in behaviours



### What did you GAIN from being a peer leader?



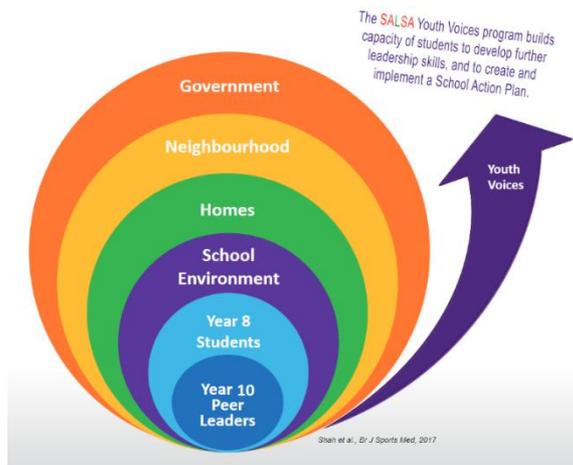
### SALSA Peer Leader Feedback



SALSA Peer Leader Debrief Session, Colyton HS

## SALSA Youth Voices

SALSA Youth Voices is an extension of the SALSA program providing students with an opportunity to create a supportive school environment to increase physical activity and/or healthy eating. It is underpinned by the Socio-Ecological Model and the Positive Youth Development Framework.



The SALSA Program Model



Giants player Finn Callaghan speaks to students

## SALSA Youth Voices Leadership Workshop

This year, the GWS Giants generously hosted the workshop at Sydney Olympic Park. SPLs eagerly volunteered for the Leadership Day, driven by their aspirations to refine their leadership abilities, develop and execute a school action plan, and embrace a healthier way of living.

The workshop happened to coincide with the Giants preparing for their semi-final against Port Adelaide (which they coincidentally won). As such, the SPLs were privileged to witness an elite AFL training and recovery session. This firsthand account will surely stay with them for the rest of their lives.

SPLs enjoyed fun activities like human bingo, mind-teaser challenges, an exclusive tour of the Giants facilities, practicing their AFL skills on the field, and receiving motivational talks from Giants players Wade Derksen, Ryan Angwin, and Finn Callaghan. Additionally, they engaged in small group brainstorming sessions to identify barriers and enablers to adopting a healthy lifestyle, uncovering opportunities for instigating change within their school environment, developing school action plans, and presenting these innovative ideas for feedback.

These plans' impact have the potential to reach 5,135 high school students.



# SALSA

Students As LifeStyle Activists



GREATER WESTERN SYDNEY  
**GIANTS**

## The 7th Annual Youth Voices Leadership Day, 2023

Hosted in collaboration with GWS Giants and supported by western Sydney Primary Health Network

SALSA Peer Leaders (n=43)

The SALSA Youth Voices program provides peer leaders with an opportunity to identify and develop an action to create a supportive school environment for healthy eating and physical activity.

### Schools



### What was involved?



Interactive games and activities



Collaborative learning



Developing school action plans



Inspirational guest speakers

### After participating in Leadership Day, students gained the following skills:

Advocacy (12%)

Communication (29%)

Increased confidence (22%)

Leadership (28%)

Problem solving (23%)

Team work (31%)

### School Action Plans developed by students:



Push-up Day



Whole School Tournament



Senior Olympics



Smooth Steps Walking Challenge



School Sunscreen Stations

### Why is it important to listen to Youth Voice?

*"We're the future. When we grow up, it will be us that are in the workforce making changes for the world so we should start getting a say now. Not only do we learn about the world, but we can also influence the world we head into..." – Blacktown Boys student.*

## SALSA Youth Voices Action Day

The Action Day was a huge success as youth voices were integrated throughout all aspects of the program including a student MC, the Acknowledgment of Country, and shared reflections on their experiences peer leaders. Six schools shared their plans and actions to an audience of health and education professionals, including a presentation from Glen Innes and Oxley High Schools. Student plans were generously supported by Western Sydney Primary Health Network and HealthWISE.



SALSA Youth Voices Action Day



SALSA Youth Voices Action Day

## Project Outcomes

In collaboration with Mt Druitt Medical Practitioner's Association we hosted the Water Refill Stations ceremony at Mt Druitt Medical Centre, 8<sup>th</sup> August 2023. This event was key to ensuring continued partnerships between local doctors and schools.



Dr Kean-Seng Lim, Principal Jennifer Boyall Erskine Park HS and Professor Smita Shah

Model Farms HS ran their project Smooth Steps in Term 4 2023. This initiative was a tremendous success and will continue in 2024. All other plans are projected to be implemented early in 2024.



**SMOOTH STEPS**  
A COMPETITION TO IMPROVE YOUR HEART HEALTH AND TO KEEP YOU ACTIVE AT LUNCH TIME. YEARS 7-10  
Week 6 - Week 9  
Thursday Lunchtimes

**STEP 1**  
COLLECT A Pedometer FROM 501 AT LUNCHTIME. BE QUICK TO MAKE SURE YOU GET ONE

**STEP 2**  
WALK AROUND THE OVAL TO SEE HOW MANY STEPS YOU CAN GET AT LUNCHTIME

**STEP 3**  
RETURN YOUR Pedometer TO 501. SEE WHO Clocked THE MOST STEPS IN WEEK 9

4 X GIFT CARDS UP FOR GRABS!

\$50 **rebel**

\$100 **rebel**



# Unpacking Vaping in Schools Project

Continuing from work started in 2021, we maintained our commitment to work in collaboration with schools and other stakeholders to tackle the issue of adolescent e-cigarette use. This included several established activities, such as the Unpacking Vaping Prevention and Cessation Special Interest groups, and culminated in the development and testing of the Breathe Easy All Together (BEAT) peer-leadership program.

Building on the learnings of our comprehensive listening phase in 2022, we shifted our focus to the next phase of 'Actions in Prevention' in 2023. As a result, we successfully updated the Unpacking E-cigarettes online course and developed the BEAT program, including the co-design of an animation to empower students as advocates of respiratory health. Implementing these actions was informed by the literature, stakeholder input and data from the Unpacking Vaping in Schools study.



*Moving Waves through community action*

## Unpacking Vaping Special Interest Groups

### Prevention Group

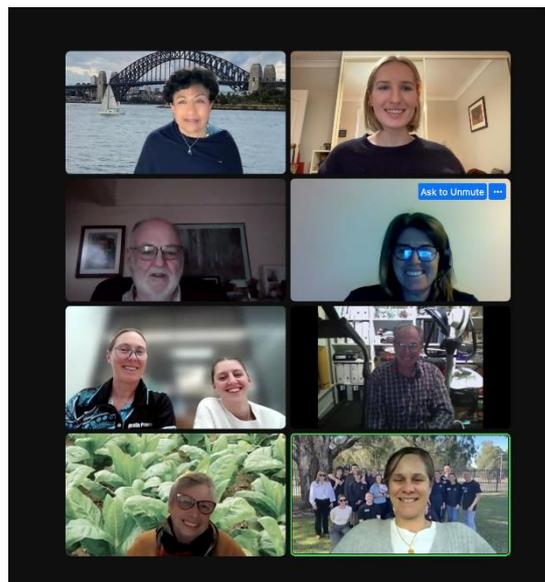
We convened monthly meetings for the Unpacking Vaping Prevention Special Interest Group with health and education stakeholders to discuss the prevention of e-cigarette use in adolescents.

The purpose of the prevention SIG is to:

1. Share and discuss the latest information from schools, and what is needed to prevent adolescent e-cigarette use
2. Provide a safe space for open discussion
3. Identify opportunities for collaboration

Speakers and their topics in 2023 included:

- Local school staff shared what was happening in schools regarding e-cigarette use
- Ballarat Community Health, Central Coast, Illawarra Shoalhaven, Mid-North Coast, Murrumbidgee, Northern Sydney, Western Sydney, Multicultural Health, The Matilda Centre, Tackling Indigenous Smoking and LifeEd shared their grassroots activities to prevent e-cigarette use
- Dr Arthur Chesterfield shared the successes of the BUGA-UP anti-smoking campaign
- The Cancer Institute presented the NSW Health social marketing campaign
- The University of Wollongong presented their study on the chemical analysis of confiscated e-cigarettes



Participants in the Unpacking Vaping Prevention Special Interest Group

## Cessation Special Interest Group

We also convened monthly meetings for the Unpacking Vaping Cessation Special Interest Group for health professionals. The membership includes GPs, paediatric and adolescent specialists, academics, university students, public health and school staff.

The purpose of the cessation SIG is to:

1. Share and discuss the latest information, strategies and what is needed to support e-cigarette cessation in adolescents
2. Share university student-led research
3. Provide a safe space for open discussion
4. Identify opportunities for collaboration

Speakers and their topics in 2023 included:

- Dr Habib Bhurawala and Dr Rajiv Singh: GPs perceptions of providing e-cigarettes cessation support
- Jessica Twyman: Harnessing student support officers as navigators for e-cigarette cessation in schools
- Dr Krista Monkhouse and Mel Jackson: E-cigarette cessation text-messaging intervention
- Tara Lawson: E-cigarette cessation training workshops for WHINs
- WSLHD Youth Health: Cessation workshop in schools
- Dr Moya Vandeleur: The effects of e-cigarette use on respiratory cilia
- Dr Renee Bittoun: The effects of nicotine and the brain, passive e-cigarette use, and advocacy in young people
- Dr Caroline Sharpe: Revised clinical guidelines for e-cigarette cessation
- Minderoo Foundation: National 'UNCLOUD' anti-vaping campaign
- The JED Foundation: How to quit vaping
- Dovetail: Vape Check Tool
- Student supervision projects; Aaron Lipovic, Naima Nimmi, David Le



## Unpacking Vaping in Schools Study

The end of 2022 into 2023 was productive. The data collected from seven schools as part of our Unpacking Vaping in Schools study was cleaned, categorised, analysed and reported by the Research Officer, Catriona Lockett, and Associate Professor Julie Mooney-Sommers, School of Public Health, The University of Sydney.

### Study Findings

A manuscript was submitted to the Health Education Journal that explores the findings from the study. Below are some of the findings from the study.

#### What participants want to know about vaping



#### Reasons why young people vape

At first glance, students, staff and parents perceived that young people might vape for some similar reasons such as the social normalisation of vaping as ‘cool’ and peer pressure. However, students gave greater emphasis to reasons such as coping with mental health issues and sensation seeking, which were scarcely or not at all touched on by staff and parents.

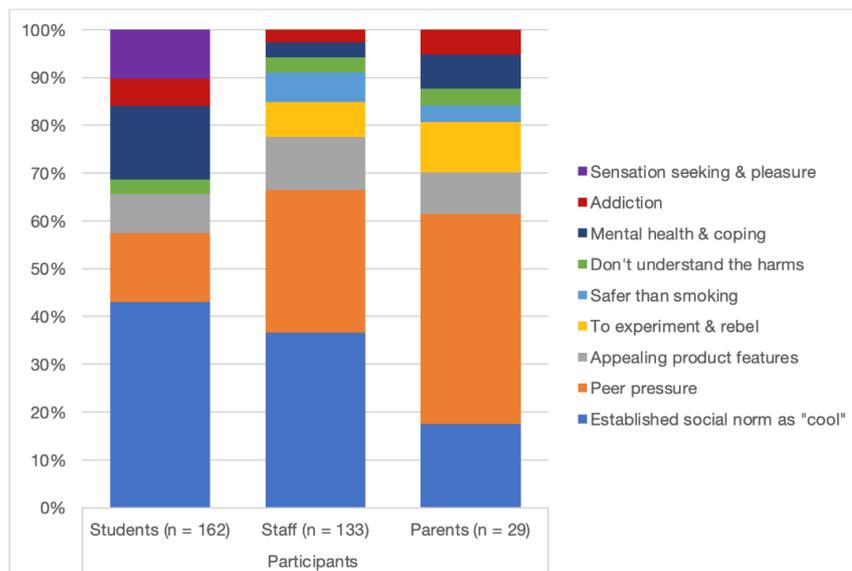


Figure. Participant responses to ‘In your opinion, what is the main reason that adolescents vape?’

In small group discussions, participants provided further reasons, which included:

- Students perceived that young people might vape due to a lack of confidence to refuse e-cigarettes from their peers, to ‘fit in’ with *and* ‘stand out’ from their peers, and to cope with mental health issues.
- School staff and parents perceived that young people vape to experiment, rebel, or because it is not like smoking – although the latter was not an important touchpoint for students.

### Concerns about vaping

In addition to being concerned about the health and wellbeing related harms of vaping,

- Students were concerned about the misuse of vaping to cope with mental health issues, addictiveness, and the gateway effect of vaping. Importantly, the long-term effects of vaping were seen as a distant concern.
- School staff were concerned about the impact of vaping on students’ education, learning and behaviour. Staff worried that students did not take the consequences of vaping seriously.
- Parents were concerned about their capacity to engage their children in informed, open, and honest conversations about vaping.

### Key messages moving forward

- The differences in how each group understood and experienced vaping was reflective of their relationship in the lives of students. This lends value to the development of targeted prevention strategies. There is no **‘one size fits all’** approach.
- We found that how we engage with young people is just as important as the content of the messages being delivered to them. It was overwhelmingly suggested by participants that they would prefer interventions which promote student agency through peer-led initiatives and co-designed prevention messaging.
- We need a whole-school and whole-community approach to support the prevention and cessation of e-cigarettes in students.
- And, to make this happen, we must foster the development of a strong partnership between health and education – including schools – to ensure the delivery of effective strategies.

## Presentation to schools

Presenting the preliminary results to the study schools was key to ensuring the data was both relevant and actionable.

When school staff were asked ‘what do they see as the important findings?’, they included:

- The differences in perceptions around adolescent e-cigarette use between students, staff and parents; particularly in relation to students’ reported use of e-cigarettes to cope with mental health issues and understanding of addiction.
- Interventions to effectively address e-cigarette use amongst students should be short, clear, and focus on the immediate impacts of e-cigarette use.

When asked ‘how do you think your school will use these findings?’:

- Further development of educational practices which place emphasis on building student agency and prioritising student-led initiatives to address the issue.
- Implement PDHPE lessons informed by the data and what is needed.
- Drive conversations about e-cigarette use amongst parents and school staff.

*“I think this is a starting point. This shows the information and views of the community and would be interesting to see how it can be implemented” – School Principal*



Unpacking Vaping in Schools Study event with school staff

Using input from this meeting, a report was developed for each study school and shared with them in a face-to-face meeting. See the following page for an example school report.

## Example of a report personalised for schools involved in the study

### Findings from a high school at a glance

Smita Shah<sup>1,2</sup>, Catriona Lockett<sup>1,2</sup>, Kym Rizzo Liu<sup>1</sup>, Julie Mooney-Somers<sup>2</sup>

1. Prevention Education and Research Unit, Research Education Network, Western Sydney Local Health District  
2. Faculty of Medicine and Health, The University of Sydney

#### Introduction

In response to school principals concern for the increasing prevalence of e-cigarette use observed in students, the study:

- 1) Explored student, school staff and parental knowledge, attitudes and experiences of e-cigarette use
- 2) Determined strategies to effectively communicate e-cigarette prevention messages

#### Results



24 students



13 school staff



11 parents

#### What would you like to know?



**Students** want to know more about the impacts of e-cigarettes, and the how & why behind them.



**Parents** want to know why e-cigarettes are so accessible and why there has been little government action on the issue.



**Staff** would like more general knowledge on e-cigarettes, including the pathway to addiction and cessation.

#### Recommended prevention strategies



**More education & engagement** tailored to the needs of the whole school community. Staff and parents would like to be upskilled in the knowledge and strategies needed to prevent vaping.



**Mixed learning approaches** including consistent messaging around the school, collaborative learning activities, peer-led initiatives, guest speakers, and social media campaigns.



**Prevention messaging from young people** who students relate to. Messaging should be communicated through a variety of sources, like student created posters or influencers.

#### Key messages for your school

- **Students** would like to know the how and the why of e-cigarette use and its effects. Moreover, they would like to receive this education through a diverse range of communication methods.
- **Staff** perceived that e-cigarette use is prevalent across the school, explaining that "even the good kids are trying [e-cigarettes] and it's not just the typical kids who you would expect to smoke."
- **Parents** feel disempowered to address vaping at home due to a lack of knowledge and general public awareness around the issue.

#### How can PERU help?

##### Students

- 1 Unpacking Vaping online module for Stage 4 students
- 2 Breathe Easy All Together (BEAT) workshop to improve asthma management and prevent e-cigarette use through student led actions

##### School staff

- 1 For more information, go to: <https://www.cancercouncil.com.au/cancer-prevention/smoking/electronic-cigarettes/>
- 2 Training Student Support Officer's in e-cigarette cessation strategies through a one-day workshop

##### Parents

- 1 Watch Dr Moya Vandeleur's video on *e-cigarettes and teens*.



*"We don't know what the harms are. We don't know enough about it. We don't know where to look."*  
parent

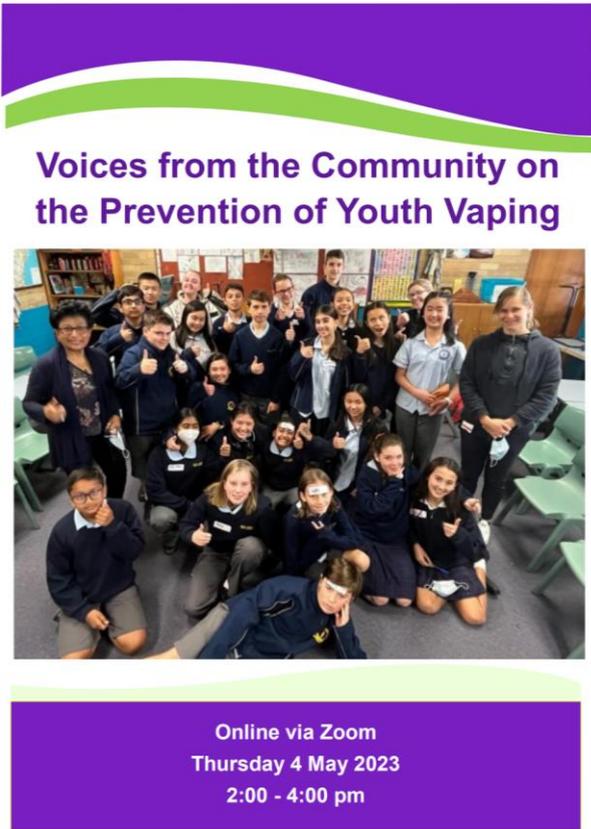
For more information please contact the Prevention Education and Research Unit:  
WSLHD-Westmead-PERU@health.nsw.gov.au

## Voices from the Community on the Prevention of Youth Vaping live zoom event



Flyer to promote the event

This was a live zoom event attended by (n=144) participants and a wide range of presenters. The study findings from the Unpacking Vaping in Schools study were presented, in conjunction with current actions that were taking place in health and education. Click [here](#) to view the live recording.



**Voices from the Community on the Prevention of Youth Vaping**

Online via Zoom  
Thursday 4 May 2023  
2:00 - 4:00 pm

### Program

MC: Kym Rizzo Liu

2:00pm	Acknowledgement of Country	Tori Middlebrook
2:05 pm	Welcome	Prof Smita Shah OAM
2:10 pm	Addressing Adolescent E-cigarette use	Dr Moya Vandeleur
2:25 pm	Unpacking Vaping in Schools Study Findings	Prof Smita Shah OAM A/Prof Julie Mooney-Somers Catriona Lockett
2:55 pm	School Response	Student & staff video John Meng Parent
3:10 pm	Actions for the prevention & cessation of e-cigarette use	PERU team Visionary Digital Studios Student video
3:25 pm	Community Response	Dr Celine Kelso Dr Michael Burke Sarah Ip Daphne Shakespear, Renee West
3:45 pm	Concluding Remarks	Prof Renee Bittoun Prof Matthew Peters

## Co-design projects

### Vaping just BEAT it

In collaboration with Visionary Digital studios, and Erskine Park and Blaxland high schools an animation was created as the empowerment activity for the Breathe Easy All Together (BEAT) program. The animation follows the quit journey for Zac, supported by his good friend Jasmine, to BEAT the vape.

All students played a vital role in ensuring the video's acceptability for the BEAT program.



Snippet from Vaping just BEAT it



Student collaborators

### E-cigarette infographic

Following requests from schools, we partnered with University of Wollongong and NSW Health to test confiscated vapes collected from high schools. In September 2023, results from the commissioned e-cigarette analysis study were released. To ensure the information shared with stakeholders was clear and relevant, we visited high schools to ask for their input. Using this information collected from seven schools, a two-page infographic (see Appendix 1) was developed in partnership with schools. This was then shared with high schools and stakeholders.



School partners, Colyton High School

## Breathe Easy All Together Pilot

The Breathe Easy All Together (BEAT) peer-leadership program aims to empower students by providing them with the knowledge, skills and confidence to make informed decisions about e-cigarette use and advocate for respiratory health.

### Project outcomes

BEAT was piloted in four government high schools with 90 students, three Year 9 and one Year 10 class, in western Sydney. There were 41 females (46%) and 47 males (52%). 11% of students identified as Aboriginal, 4 % as Torres Strait Islander, and 2% as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander. The most common language spoken at home was English (66%), followed by Asian (22%), and Polynesian (11%) languages.



Students participating in the BEAT pilot

As part of the BEAT pilot students completed a self-paced online course, participated in a one-day workshop and developed a social marketing campaign. Overall, the program was well received by students and school staff.

By participating in the BEAT workshop students reported improving their knowledge of asthma, its prevention, and management. Students also reported improving their knowledge of vaping harms, the chemical contents of e-cigarettes, and external pressures which influence young people to vape. Importantly, students improved their confidence and skills in decision-making, the management of an asthma emergency, and refusal of e-cigarettes.

*“Having been part of the pilot and evaluation of BEAT in 2023, I know the program not only addresses the immediate issue of e-cigarette use but also fosters student leadership skills and enriches our school community. This approach aligns with the school’s Strategic Improvement Plan and our commitment to supporting the health, wellbeing and holistic development of our students”*

Rebecca Smith, Deputy Principal, Model Farms High School 2023

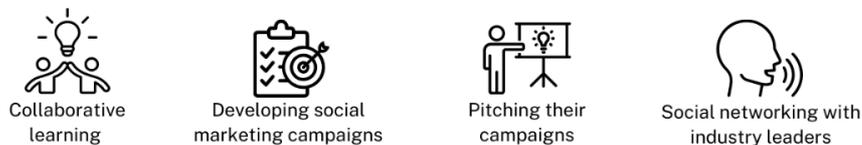
## Inaugural Health Hackathon

To further engage students in developing solutions we hosted the Health Hackathon in collaboration with Regional Industry Education Partnerships, NSW Department of Education and the NSW Ministry of Health. The Hackathon aimed to upskill students through industry connections, broaden students' awareness of careers in health, and empower students to develop a health education campaign. The unique methodology of the two-day workshop provided (n=27) students with the opportunity to engage in concentrated and immersive group work to address their chosen health issue within a clear problem definition-to-solution structure.

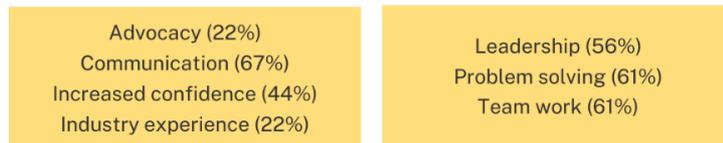
### Schools



### What was involved?



After participating in Health Hackathon, students gained the following skills:



### Social marketing campaigns developed by students:



*"It is such a worthwhile program. It was exciting to see my students really take charge, dive headfirst into their campaign and produce a researched campaign in less than 48 hours. Truly they were stars." School Staff Member, Windsor HS*

## Teaching

### FMH, The University of Sydney, School of Pharmacy, Pharmacy students

We facilitated 7 x 2.5hr Health Promotion workshops for The University of Sydney fourth year and Master of Pharmacy Students (n=256). We highlighted our health promotion programs, including the Adolescent Asthma Action (Triple A) program and the Breathe Easy All Together (BEAT) Pilot for this workshop.

### FMH, The University of Sydney, Western Clinical School, Medical students

- Year 1 Introduction to Respiratory History and examination of a patient with a cough

### PHD, Internship and Work Placement students

- Rachel Chua, Master of Public Health, USyd work placement, *“Evaluation of SALSA University Educators”*
- Sareena Oberoi, Master of Public Health, USyd work placement, *“Sustainability of the SALSA program”*
- Aaron Lipovic, medical student, University of Western Sydney, MD Project *“Scoping review of cessation resources for Health Care Professionals”*
- Catriona Lockett, PhD, 2023-ongoing, co-supervisor, The University of Sydney, *“Unpacking Vaping in Schools: Engaging Peer Influence to Prevent Adolescent E-cigarette Use in High School Students”*
- Fay Karpouzis, PhD, 2019-ongoing, co-supervisor, Deakin University, Melbourne. *“Promoting food literacy, sustainable and healthy eating in children aged 10-12 years: Implementation and Evaluation of OzHarvest’s school-based FEAST (Food Education and Sustainability Training) Program”*
- Naima Nimmi, PhD, 2022-ongoing, co-supervisor, Federation University, Victoria, *“Survey knowledge, attitudes, practices, self-efficacy and perceived barriers of GPs and paediatricians on adolescent vaping support”*
- David Le, PhD, 2023-ongoing, co-supervisor, The University of Sydney, *“Vaping health implications and awareness amongst pharmacists”*
- Dr Rajiv Singh, Paediatric registrar, Nepean Hospital *“Survey on knowledge, attitudes and practice of GPs regarding the use of e-cigarettes in children and adolescents (NSW)”*

## Collaborations and Partnerships



Eastern Creek  
Principals Network



High Schools in  
western Sydney



Western Sydney  
Consumer Council



Population Health  
WSLHD



Ministry of Health  
E-cigarettes &  
Young People



Respiratory  
Journal Club, CHW

## Research Collaborations

- Carson-Chahhoud KV, Tai A, Sandford D, Shah S, Mayer W, Segal L, Perveen S, O'Connor A, Tingey-Holyoak J, Sharrad K, Esterman A, Crutzen R, Hamari J, Cao J, Smith R, Gwilt I, Chong A, Henderson M. *Clinical trial to evaluate a digital self-management and mental health intervention for young people with asthma and their families*. WCH Foundation 2023 Bloom Grant Round. \$1,395,044; 3-years (across 2023-2026)
- MacIntyre R, Shah S et al *The BREATHE Study: A randomised controlled trial of mask use in control of respiratory outcomes during bushfire season*. MRFF- EPCDR Bushfire Impact Research Grant \$473,135
- Carson-Chahhoud KV, Shah S et al *Empowering asthma self-management and therapeutic adherence through a comprehensive evidence-based behavioural support program delivered through augmented reality technology*. MRFF Chronic Respiratory Conditions Grant Opportunity (unsuccessful)
- Jensen M, Shah S et al *Medical Nutrition Therapy targeting overweight and obesity in paediatric asthma – the EAT healthy for Asthma Telehealth (EAT) trial* MRFF Chronic Respiratory Conditions (unsuccessful)

# Conferences and Publications

## Presentations

1. *Unpacking Vaping in Schools: a community approach*, Blacktown Medical Practitioners Association, February 2023, oral presentation
2. *Unpacking Vaping: voices from the school community*, TSANZ Conference Christchurch New Zealand, March 2023, poster presentation (see Appendix 3)
3. *Unpacking Vaping in Schools: preliminary findings*, Rooty Hill High School March 2023
4. *SSOs perceptions of e-cigarette use and preferred strategies to support students in cessation*, April 2023
5. *Voices from the Community on the Prevention of Youth Vaping, live zoom event to share study findings*, 4<sup>th</sup> May 2023
6. *Voices from the Community on the Prevention of Youth Vaping*, E-cigarettes and young people meeting, NSW Ministry of Health, May 2023
7. *Breathe Easy: GPs response to e-cigarette use in young people*, Hills Doctors Association, 18 May 2023, oral presentation
8. *Tackling Vaping in Schools*, Westlab Webinar, 19 May 2023, oral presentation
9. *Unpacking Vaping in Schools: A whole school approach* Exploring National Responses to smoking and vaping in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities June 2023, oral presentation
10. *Unpacking Vaping: voices from the school community*, Westmead Hospital week poster, August 2023, poster presentation
11. *Views of Healthcare Providers on providing vaping cessation support to Adolescents scoping review*, Australian Public Health Conference, September 2023
12. *Moving Waves in E-cigarette Prevention*, Child Safety Conference, Australian Independent Schools (AISNSW), 19<sup>th</sup> September 2023, oral presentation
13. *Moving Waves in E-cigarette Prevention in Schools*, Smoking and Vaping Professional Development Day, Lung Health Promotion Centre, 24<sup>th</sup> October 2023, oral presentation
14. *Moving Waves in E-cigarette Prevention in Schools*, P&C AGM, Nepean CAPA High School, 25<sup>th</sup> October 2023, oral presentation
15. *Vaping Cessation Support to Adolescents by Healthcare Providers*, Asia Pacific Academic Consortium for Public Health Conference, 31<sup>st</sup> October, Oral presentation
16. *Moving Waves in E-cigarette Prevention in Schools*, Western Sydney Deputy Principals Network, 9<sup>th</sup> November 2023, oral presentation
17. *Moving Waves in E-cigarette Prevention in Schools*, Eastern Creek Network Principals Meeting, 21<sup>st</sup> November 2023, oral presentation

## Abstracts

1. Lockett C, Shah S Rizzo Liu K, Mooney Somers J. *Moving Waves in E-cigarette Prevention in Schools: A Pilot Study of the Breathe Easy All Together (BEAT) Peer-Led Program*. Abstract submitted for the TSANZ Conference 2024
2. Rizzo Liu K, Lockett, C and Shah, S ‘*Stories from the Schoolyard: Youth Voices Solving Physical Activity Challenges*’, and Rizzo Liu K, Lockett, C, Irani, F, Slepcev, V, Assanti, C, Shah, S ‘*Tik Tok Fortnite and Graphic Novels: Students Deliver Solutions to Health Problems*’. Abstracts submitted for the PHAA Preventative Health Conference 2024

## Publications

1. Shah, SS, Rizzo Liu, K, Lockett, CL, Sainsbury, E (2023) “*Youth Voices creating healthy eating and physically active environments in schools*” Health Education Journal, vol82, no 5, pp 542-554 [doi: 10.1177/00178969231173266](https://doi.org/10.1177/00178969231173266).
2. Karpouzis, F, Lindberg, R, Walsh, A, Shah, S, Abbott, G, Ball, K (2023) “*Impact and process evaluation of a primary-school Food Education and Sustainability Training (FEAST) program in 10-12-year-old children in Australia: pragmatic cluster non-randomized controlled trial*” BMC Public Health, 4a525562-6948-4f58-bb91-1569cef8bd15
3. Karpouzis, F, Lindberg, R, Walsh, A, Shah, S, Abbott, G, Ball, K (2023) “*Primary-school-aged children inspire their peers and families to eat more vegetables in the KiDSAY Project: A qualitative descriptive study*” BMC Paediatrics, 1a7c2c9c-4214-470a-bbfe-0e59e5f51cae
4. Seale, H, Trent, M, Marks, G.B, Shah, S, Chughtai, A.A, MacIntyre, C.R (2023) “*Exploring the use of masks for protection against the effects of wildfire smoke among people with preexisting respiratory conditions*” BMC Public Health <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-023-17274-3>
5. Stone E, Evison M, van Zyl-Smit RN, Andarini S, Shah S, Vandeleur M (2023) “*Recreational vaping ban in Australia – policy failure or masterstroke?*” Lancet, [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(23\)02298-5](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(23)02298-5)
6. Singh R, Bhurawala H, Shah S, “*Exploring General Practitioners' Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices towards E-cigarette Use/Vaping in Children and Adolescents: A Pilot Cross-sectional Study in Sydney*”, European Journal of Pediatrics 3debdc64-e254-428e-8da0-a468ee8dfdf0
7. Lockett, CL, Shah, SS, Rizzo Liu, K, Towns, S, Smith, R, Mooney-Sommers, J “*Unpacking Vaping in Schools: Voices from the School Community*” HEJ (under review)
8. Nimmi, N, Joseph, B, Bhurawala, H, Shah, S, Munoz, A, Aziz Rahman, M “*Vaping cessation support to adolescents by healthcare providers: scoping review*” (manuscript submitted to Addictive Behaviour Journal)

## Media Articles and other

1. “Actions speak louder than words: Western Sydney Local Health District’s Professor Smita Shah receives esteemed OAM, 13 Jan 2023 (see Appendix 3)
2. “SALSA Youth Voices Actions in Western Sydney,” The NSW Doctor, [NSW Australian Medical Association, January 19 2023](#)
3. “HealthWISE collaboration brings students’ health to the forefront,” [The Northern Daily Leader, 10 May 2023](#)
4. “‘Eye-opening’: Western Sydney Local Health District leads the way on new key research about vaping in schools”, [The Pulse, 17 May 2023](#) (see Appendix 4)
5. “Western Sydney high school students say ghost it to vaping,” [The Pulse, 31 May 2023](#)
6. “Not just a young person’s habit: Western Sydney Local Health District workshop tackles e-cigarette problem,” [The Pulse, 31 May 2023](#)
7. SALSA kicks off, 7 Prime Tamworth
8. “Empowering students to build healthier futures”, [WentWest, June 8 2023](#) (Appendix 5)
9. “Water campaign,” [Hills to Hawkesbury Community News, June 22 2023](#)
10. “Peer led health program launched in local high schools,” [New England Times, 23 June 2023](#)
11. “The Research Files Episode 84: Empowering young people to prevent e-cigarette use,” [ACER Podcast, July 20 2023](#)
12. “Empowering Youth for Health and Career Success,” [HealthWISE News, 19 May 2023](#)
13. “Empowering students for health and leadership: SALSA Program launches at Glen Innes High School,” [HealthWISE News, 22 June 2023](#)
14. “Building confidence and leadership skills with SALSA at Narrabri High School,” [HealthWISE News, 28 June 2023](#)
15. “Gunnedah and Oxley High School students become lifestyle activists in SALSA workshop,” [HealthWISE News, 3 July 2023](#)
16. “Tik Tok videos and online games could boost youth health,” [The Grenfell Record, 14 Nov 2023](#)
17. “Future health innovators: Western Sydney students take centre stage at Westmead Hospital ‘Health Hackathon,’ [The Pulse, 15 Nov 2023](#)
18. “Could a video stamp out vaping? Western Sydney students share ideas at first Health Hackathon”, [The Pulse, 28 Nov 2023](#) (see Appendix 6)
19. “Youth health message cuts through at Hackathon”, [NSW Education News, 30 Nov 2023](#)
20. “Voices of the future: Western Sydney students become health advocates at SALSA Youth Voices Leadership Day at Westmead Hospital”, [The Pulse, 11 Dec 2023](#) (see Appendix 7)

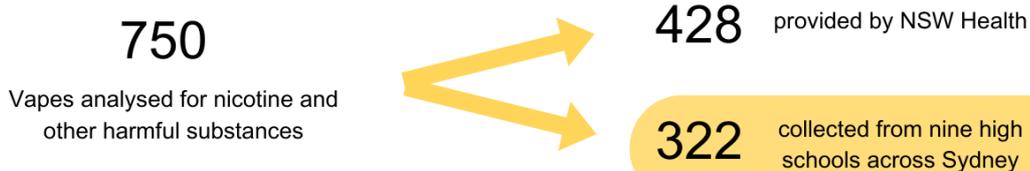
# Appendix 1

## NSW E-cigarette Chemical Analysis Project Summary Report

### What?

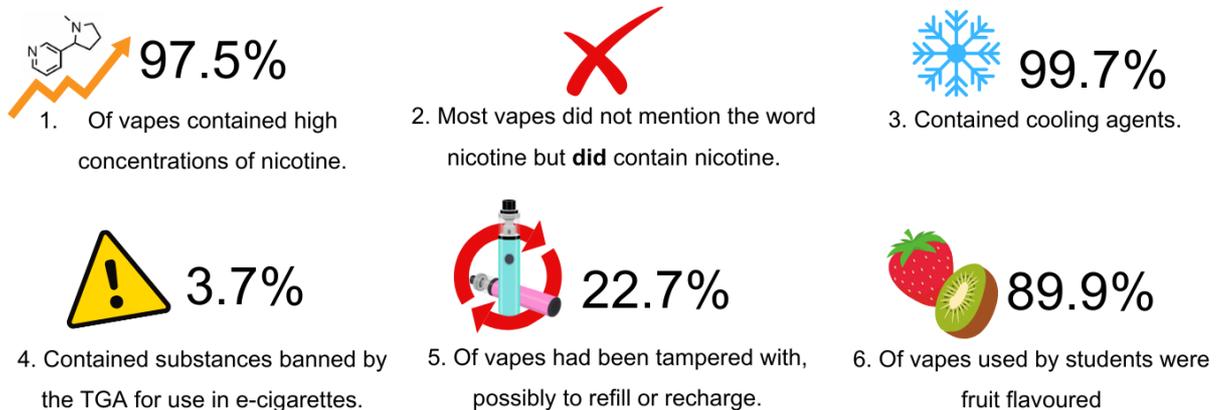
NSW Health collaborated with the University of Wollongong to conduct the NSW e-cigarette analysis project. The project aimed to enhance understanding of e-cigarette devices ('vapes') available in NSW, and to inform future awareness campaigns and enforcement activities.

### Methods



### Results

Of the 322 devices collected from schools, there were 22 models, 15 brands, and 97 flavours. Key findings include:



### Why does this matter?

1. Nicotine use in adolescence is associated with impaired brain development, affecting parts of the brain related to attention, learning, mood, and susceptibility to future addiction.
2. It is impossible for users to know what they are vaping.
3. Cooling agents may make inhaling high doses of nicotine easier which increases the risk of nicotine poisoning and dependence.
4. Banned substances included ethylene glycol, a harmful chemical used in anti-freeze and engine coolant.
5. Tampering with vapes increases the risk of nicotine poisoning and risk of burns as a result of devices exploding.
6. Vapes are designed to target children by using appealing flavours and product features. Fruit flavoured vapes are particularly common in schools.

### References

1. Centre for Population Health, NSW E-Cigarette Analysis Project - Summary Report, 2023
2. Jenkins C, et, al. Chemical Analysis and Flavour Distribution of Electronic Cigarettes in Australian Schools. ChemRxiv, 2023

Updated 2 November 2023

# NSW E-cigarette Chemical Analysis Project Resources

## School staff



Video: [Vaping and young people - PDHPE curriculum resources to address vaping](#), NSW Department of Education



Website: [Vaping resources for teachers](#), Illawarra Shoalhaven LHD



Podcast: [The Research Files Episode 84: Empowering young people to prevent e-cigarette use](#), Teacher Magazine (ACER)

## Students



Video: [Dr Karl's vape truths](#), Queensland Government



Website: [All about e-cigarettes](#), Your Room



Podcast: [E-cigarettes \(vaping\) and young people](#), RACGP and NSW Health

## Parents



Video: [E-cigarettes and teens](#), The Royal Children's Hospital Melbourne



Website: [Electronic e-cigarettes and vaping: factsheet](#), Positive Choices



Podcast: [How to talk to teens about vaping](#), ABC

## For more information



Website: [The Vaping Information Hub](#), Northern Sydney LHD

Website: [Do You Know What You're Vaping? Toolkit](#), NSW Health

Website: [The Unpacking Vaping in Schools Project](#), PERU

Email: [catriona.lockett@health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:catriona.lockett@health.nsw.gov.au), Research Officer, PERU

# Appendix 2

## Unpacking Vaping: Voices From The School Community

Smita Shah<sup>1,2</sup>, Catriona Lockett<sup>1,2</sup>, Kym Rizzo Liu<sup>1</sup>, Nia Luxton<sup>3</sup>, Danielle Hutchison<sup>4</sup>, Bandana Saini<sup>2</sup>, Susan Towns<sup>2</sup>, Brenda Quayle<sup>5</sup>, Julie Mooney-Somers<sup>2</sup>

1. Prevention Education and Research Unit, Research Education Network, Western Sydney Local Health District 2. Faculty of Medicine and Health, The University of Sydney 3. Faculty Health Sciences, Australian Catholic University 4. The Kirby Institute, University of New South Wales 5. Erskine Park High School, NSW Australia

### Introduction

In 2021, school principals expressed concern for the increasing prevalence of e-cigarette use observed among students. In response to this, we started with listening as the first step to address this issue. The aims were to:

1. Explore student, school staff and parental knowledge, attitudes and experiences of e-cigarette use.
2. Determine what information is important to adolescents, and strategies to effectively communicate e-cigarette prevention messages.



### Methods

- Face-to-face or online consultation sessions with students, school staff and parents.
- Data collected through post-it note polls, small-group brainstorming, and open discussions.
- Framework Analysis used to compare the different perspectives across students, school staff and parents.

### Results

- 162 students (aged 12-16 yrs), 133 school staff and 29 parents across 7 high schools.

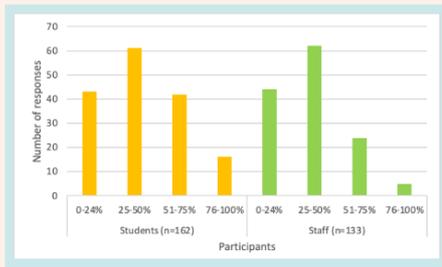


Figure 1. Question 'In your opinion, what percentage of students at your school vape?'

### What do you know about vaping ?

- Vaping is "bad for you"
- The sale of e-cigarettes is illegal to under 18s
- E-cigarettes contain harmful chemicals, including nicotine
- Highly accessible to students

### Why do young people vape?

- Social normalisation & peer pressure
- It's not like smoking
- Mental health
- Incentivising product features
- Lack of knowledge
- Curiosity
- Social connection

### Conclusion

E-cigarette use is perceived to be prevalent in high school students. A community approach starting with listening to students, school staff, and parents helps to inform "best" actions for the prevention and cessation of e-cigarette use in adolescents.

### Recommended strategies to prevent e-cigarette use

- More education & engagement
- Mixed learning approaches
- Prevention messaging from young people

### Scan the QR code to tell us...

- How important is it to prevent e-cigarette use in adolescents?
- Whose business is it to prevent e-cigarette use?
- What do you think is needed to prevent adolescent e-cigarette use?



Visit our website for more information on our work to address adolescent e-cigarette use.



## Appendix 3

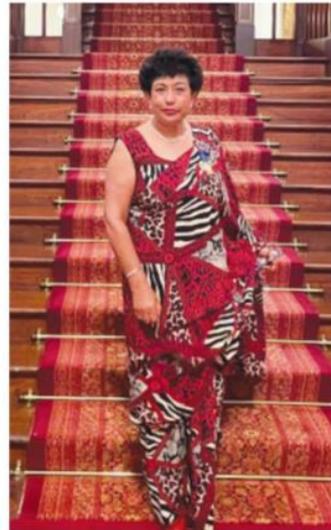
### Actions speak louder than words: Western Sydney Local Health District's Professor Smita Shah receives esteemed OAM

**C**LINICAL Professor Smita Shah OAM is known for her work in education and prevention, and her innovative approach to youth engagement with healthcare in Western Sydney Local Health District (WSLHD).

As a full-time Community Physician and the Director of the Prevention Education and Research Unit (PERU), her work includes award-winning programs that have been running in schools for more than 15 years – and have benefited over 50,000 students.

Acknowledging the success of these programs, this year Smita was awarded an Order of Australia Medal (OAM) for her work in community health.

And with a career at WSLHD spanning over 40 years, it's no wonder Smita's contagious enthusiasm for her work has been recognised on such a prestigious national level.



Smita has primarily focused on prevention of non-communicable diseases, such as asthma, obesity and respiratory issues, through health



leadership programs for high schools and university students.

She is particularly passionate about working with disadvantaged

communities, and is currently working on a WSLHD project about the impact of e-cigarettes on young people.

"The concepts of empowerment, diversity and equity are strongly represented in all the work we do in our team," she said.

"I would like to take this opportunity to thank the executive of WSLHD for their ongoing support."

As an OAM recipient, Smita says the significance of this achievement is not just about acknowledging past work, but the opportunities this hopefully opens up for the future.

"It gives me a wonderful platform to be able to highlight the work we are doing in prevention in the community and schools," she said.

"We work in partnerships with schools, universities and with a range of organisations including general practitioners' associations to deliver evidence-based prevention programs and interventions to improve the health and well-being of young people.

"By delivering evidence-based programs to the community and reducing inequity, we are empowering youth to be agents of change."

---

**“It’s fantastic that my passion for education and research in the community has been recognised. My parents, who arrived in Australia from Tanzania in the 70s, would have been very proud.” Professor Smita Shah**

---

## Appendix 4



Conducted across seven different high schools in greater western Sydney, their leading study presents key findings and preferred strategies to address this pressing issue.

“

I found it very eyeopening. It was a lot of information and how it was presented made it easy to understand everything.

Student feedback

“As educators and health professionals, we are all too aware of the dangers that vaping poses to our young people. Today we have the privilege of hearing what our students, staff and parents have to say on this issue,” Professor Shah said during her opening address at the forum.

More than 160 students, 130 school staff and 30 parents participated in the research, which employed an interactive, strengths-based approach, engaging students, staff, and parents to understand their perceptions and concerns regarding e-cigarette use among adolescents.

“

Everyone was participating and engaging in the work.

Student feedback

The findings are a beacon of hope for the concerned parents and medical community, with children participating in the study eloquently speaking about the skills they have learned during the program.

As touched on by guest speaker Dr Moya Vandeleur, Respiratory and Sleep Physician, Melbourne Children’s Hospital during the forum, the health impacts of vaping are vast and alarming: dependence, harm to the developing adolescent brain, respiratory problems, permanent lung damage, persistent coughing and even poison from e-cigarette liquid (if swallowed).

“

If you were to sit us down and lecture us for an hour on the dangers of vaping, nothing would get through. This worked because we got involved and it was engaging.

Student feedback

# Appendix 5

## Empowering Students to Build Healthier Futures



SALSA is a peer education and leadership program designed to motivate high school students in Western Sydney to maintain a healthy lifestyle and increase their physical activity. The award-winning project trains university students as SALSA educators, and they, in turn, coach high school students to be Peer Leaders for younger students. The program is run in partnership between the University of Sydney, Western Sydney Primary Health Network, Western Sydney Local Health District, medical practitioners and high schools in Western Sydney. Over the past 15 years, around 50,000 students have benefitted from the SALSA program.

*"At a time when Western Sydney is experiencing a diabetes epidemic, the SALSA program's ability to contact so many young lives and reach into families couldn't be more significant."* – Dr Kean-Seng Lim

### How Does the Program Work?

1. **SALSA Educators** (university students) train Year-10 students as SALSA Peer Leaders in a one-day workshop. Peer Leaders learn to empower younger peers about eating healthier foods and being physically active
2. **SALSA Peer Leaders** form teams to deliver lessons to Year 8 students using videos, games and activities. The four lessons cover: Simple Changes, Movement Matters, Food Choices and SALSA Actions
3. All students are encouraged to create an individual SMART goal and design a **School Action Plan**

### Success Stories

#### Rooty Hill High School

In Rooty Hill High School, where 25% of the students come from low-socioeconomic backgrounds, and 200 of the 1125 students have health plans for chronic poor health, the true impact of this program is being felt. In 2020, Rooty Hill High School successfully updated their school gym as part of its SALSA Youth Voices' School Action Plan to increase physical activity or improve diet. The students used the learning from the SALSA program to identify that a decreased numbers of girls were physically active, develop a solution, and implement their plan. They successfully asked for funding from their Principal, ordered the equipment and renovated the space. The new gym has gender-neutral gym equipment and targeted female-only gym classes. The gym has provided students, particularly females, an extra opportunity to be physically active before school and during lunchtime gym classes.

#### Western Sydney High School

Thanks to the innovative projects being developed from the SALSA program, Western Sydney high school students are enjoying a healthier drink option and reducing their environmental footprint. SALSA participants developed the idea for water refill stations after bubblers were closed due to the risk of COVID-19 transmission. The students wanted to encourage others to choose water as a healthy beverage whilst decreasing the need to purchase plastic bottled water. These students are demonstrating the power of youth voice in advocating for healthy options for their peers and planet.

### OAM for SALSA founder

Dr Smita Shah, who initiated the SALSA program, was awarded an Order of Australia medal for her contributions to health care. Dr Shah, who is the Director of the Prevention Education and Research Unit at the Western Sydney Local Health District, and Clinical Professor at the Sydney Medical School's Faculty of Medicine and Health, shared, *"My best work, is the work I've done with the youth, motivating them to make a difference in their own health and wellbeing. Health habits are initiated in adolescence; to nudge them to adopt good practices now will see them grow into healthy adults as well as health-conscious future parents."*

### Encourage Students

If you have families whose children could benefit from the SALSA program, reach out to [Kym.RizzoLiu@health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Kym.RizzoLiu@health.nsw.gov.au) to find out more information or visit: [peru-programs.sydney.edu.au](http://peru-programs.sydney.edu.au)

Tagged [Child and Family](#) [Chronic health](#) [SALSA](#)

## Appendix 6

News

Top 4

Westmead Hospital

### Could a video game stamp out vaping? Western Sydney students share ideas at first Health Hackathon

📅 28 Nov, 2023, 2:42 pm



Students from western Sydney recently spent two days immersed in a 'Health Hackathon' event at Westmead Hospital, developing campaigns to address key health issues and presenting these ideas to industry leaders.

Western Sydney Local Health District's (WSLHD) Prevention Education and Research Unit (PERU), in collaboration with the Regional Industry Education Partnerships (RIEP) program, the NSW Department of Education, and the NSW Ministry of Health, co-hosted the Health Hackathon at Westmead Hospital.

The first joint project between NSW Health and Education departments, the event was an innovative way to engage western Sydney's young people in career opportunities, pathways, skill building while focusing on improving health.

"We have engaged students to be able to come up with a campaign that addresses a health issue that matters to them in their school community."

Kym Rizzo Liu, Project Manager Prevention Education Research Unit (PERU)

"This is an example of how, when kids lead things by themselves, they can come up with amazing ideas.

"They feel empowered and then really want to make a difference in our schools."

Over two dozen students participated in the event, coming to Westmead Hospital from four local high schools, including Colyton, Erskine Park, Model Farms, and Windsor High Schools.

Students presented a range of ideas, such as a Fortnite based game which highlighted the negative effects vaping has on the character's health and performance, as well as an interactive anime game, aimed at highlighting mental health struggles.

The winners, a team from Model Farms High School, took inspiration from trending TikToks, creating a video with an anti-vape message, that showed a bird's-eye view of students dancing, walking away when one of them started to smoke a vape.

“As students, we know what other students want to know,” one Model Farms High School student, and member of the winning team, said.



# Appendix 7

Featured News Westmead Hospital

## Voices of the future: Western Sydney students become health advocates at SALSA Youth Voices Leadership Day at Westmead Hospital

11 Dec, 2023, 3:26 pm



[Click here to have this article read aloud](#)

'The future is yours,' Western Sydney Local Health District (WSLHD)'s Chief Executive, Graeme Loy announced as he welcomed students to the 'Students As Lifestyle Activists' (SALSA) Youth Voices Leadership Day at Westmead Hospital.

A cornerstone of Western Sydney Local Health District (WSLHD)'s school outreach programs since its establishment 19 years ago, SALSA gives young people a voice and aims to make western Sydney a better place to live through proactive health changes.

The SALSA Youth Voices (SYV) program provides an opportunity for students at schools to build leadership skills and influence the uptake of physical activity and improved diet – empowering them to be health advocates for the next generation.

“Something small can make a big change.

Rouse Hill High School student

Director of Prevention Education and Research Unit (PERU), WSLHD Clinical Professor Smita Shah OAM said the highlight of the program is seeing the students passionately encouraging their peers to make healthy choices.

“The program provides students with the opportunity to create 'positive disruptions' to address health inequities in WSLHD.

Professor Shah OAM

This program empowers students to take charge and make positive improvements in the community – a goal that was summed up by one enthusiastic Erskine Park High School student when saying: “we're just going to teach the new generation to be more active!”

The SALSA Youth Voices Leadership Day is a chance for peer leaders of SYV to come together and present a school action plan on how they will make changes to support a healthier environment while also getting the opportunity to hear feedback from health and education professionals.

“I'd like to take away the knowledge I've given a good presentation about something I cared deeply about.

Model Farms High School student

All schools that participated in SYV were invited to present and for the first time ever, thanks to WSLHD's valued partnership with HealthWISE, the student pitches came not only from western Sydney but also regional NSW. These included:

- Erskine Park High School: 'Whole School Volleyball Tournament'
- Glen Innes High School: 'Inter CLaN Sports Competition'
- Model Farms High School: 'Smooth Steps'
- Rouse Hill High School: 'Challenge Day'
- Rouse Hill High School: 'Sunscreen Stations'
- Glen Innes High School: 'Inter CLaN Sports Competition'
- Oxley High School: 'School vs School'

Professor Shah commented that each of the student presentations highlighted the 'spirit of SALSA' in promoting physical activity, with an emphasis on accessibility and diversity to ensure all members of the school community can participate.

The continued success of the SYV program demonstrates that providing peer leaders with ownership of their actions is successful in creating healthy school environments, while building leadership, teamwork, communication skills and confidence in adolescents.



# FACES OF PERU 2023





# FACES OF PERU 2023





# FACES OF PERU 2023



## Digital Channels



<https://peru-programs.sydney.edu.au/> or scan the QR Code below:



## Social Media



@PERUWSLHD



@peru\_programs



@PERUWestmead



Peru Westmead



PERU: Youth Voices