

## **School Based Youth Health Nurse Led Targeted Vaping Education in Secondary Schools.**

### **Authors:**

Cuffe E<sup>1</sup>, Kelly S<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>School Based Youth Health Nurse – Brisbane South, Children’s Health Queensland.

### **Background:**

The prevalence of vaping among high school students has become a pressing public health concern, with significant implications for both physical and mental well-being. Our submission outlines a School Based Youth Health Nurse (SBYHN) led educational session designed to equip high school students who have been identified as vaping with the knowledge and skills necessary to make informed health decisions.

The program pilot commenced in April 2024 to 10 schools and at the time of writing, 79 young people attended the program.

### **Approach:**

Our educational session takes a harm minimisation approach, incorporating an interactive workshop with facilitated discussion. The session begins with a decisional balance exercise to explore reasons behind vaping, before further exploring science behind vaping, the potential risks and long-term health consequences. Drawing on the latest research, we debunk common myths and misconceptions surrounding vaping, empowering students to critically evaluate marketing messages and peer influences.

Furthermore, students identify healthier coping strategies, as well as further support options.

### **Outcome:**

By the conclusion of the session, young people gain a greater understanding of the risks associated with vaping and the factors influencing their decision-making process. They acquire practical tools for navigating social pressures and resisting substance use, empowering them to make healthier choices for themselves and their peers.

Full evaluation is still to be completed but preliminary data is indicating that the program is effective in reducing vaping behaviours.

### **Innovation and Significance:**

Our innovative targeted education session represents a proactive and holistic approach underpinned by the health promoting schools framework, to address vaping among high school students. SBYHNs are ideally positioned to deliver such programs as they have established partnerships with DoE and are visible and known within the individual school communities. They are also able to offer further brief intervention on a one-to-one basis and facilitate outgoing specialise referrals where needed.

### **Disclosure of Interest Statement:**

The SBYHN Team recognise the contribution of key stakeholders in developing this Quality Improvement project, and the literature generated in the academic community that supports this. We recognise the need for transparency around conflict of interests, and acknowledge these relationships in presentation and publication.