

CHANGING ATTITUDES TOWARDS VAPING

Vaping rates in rangatahi have been increasing dramatically since vape products were introduced to New Zealand as a smoking cessation device.

In response, Behind the Scenes was developed to give students knowledge and skills to make informed choices when it comes to vaping. Behind the Scenes uses Theatre-in-Education to explore themes of peer pressure and decision making, specifically around vaping and the wider context of how social media influences our thinking and behaviour.



Developed with input from students, the performance follows a social media influencer and her friend as they explore the rights and wrongs of paid promotion and the health risks of vaping.

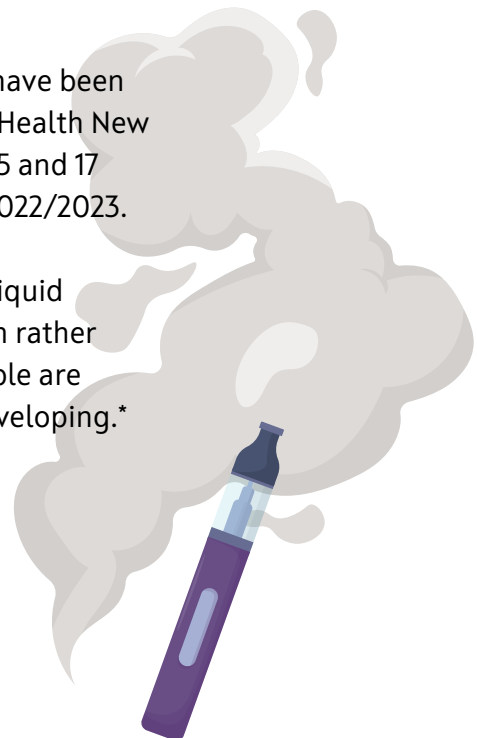
During the performance, the actors interact with students through workshop style components, exploring the key learnings by encouraging deeper thought and discussion.

WHY RANGATAHI NEED VAPING EDUCATION

Though smoking rates among rangatahi have been declining, vaping rates have been on a continual incline, rapidly causing a public health crisis. The Ministry of Health New Zealand Health Survey shows the daily vaping rate of those aged between 15 and 17 years old almost doubled in just a year, from 8.3% in 2021/2022 to 15.4% in 2022/2023.

The long term impacts of vaping on health are still largely unknown. Vape liquid contains hazardous chemicals and ingredients that are designed to be eaten rather than inhaled, and many vapes include highly addictive nicotine. Young people are especially at risk of potential health effects because their bodies are still developing.*

As well as health impacts, schools and whānau are seeing subsequent behavioural issues. According to Ministry of Education data the number of students stood down for vaping or smoking increased by almost 19 percent from 2022 to 2023.



PROGRAMME REACH



FEEDBACK

Teachers reported:

100%

Believe it is extremely important or important that students learn more about vaping and social media influences.

88%

Reported students knowledge improved on the topic as a result of the theatre and workshop.

98%

Strongly agreed or agreed it was important for students to learn more about vaping and social media influences.

“Lots of food for thought that we can build on. Feedback from students is that they had lots of questions in class for their teachers afterwards, that to me is a success criteria ticked!”
- DP Tokoroa High School

Students shared the most important thing they learnt was:

“That when people start vaping you can get addicted to it easily and it will be hard to stop.”

“To stand up for myself and not let peer pressure get to me.”

“I think the fact that no one knows the damage it does yet because we are the generation that will find out.”