

Australia moots jail time for illegal vape sellers

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Illegally selling or manufacturing vapes in Australia could spell up to seven years in jail under new legislation proposed Thursday, as authorities moved to toughen rules outlawing the fast-growing habit.

The new rules would allow access to pharmacy-sold therapeutic vapes, notably for people quitting smoking, but those for other uses would be banned.

Health Minister Mark Butler said it was necessary to stop a trend of children getting hooked on e-cigarettes.

He said vapes were currently being sold "alongside [chocolate bars](#) and bubble gum in [convenience stores](#), often down the road from schools".

Vapes were originally marketed as a tool to quit smoking cigarettes, but have rapidly become popular among users for their sweet flavors.

One in six [high school students](#) vape in Australia, data from a 2022-2023 government study shows.

Anti-vape measures began this year when the import of disposable vapes was banned from January 1.

The Australian Medical Association has long called for the government's move to combat the growing trend of vaping.

"The significant rise of vapes in recent years is a catastrophic health concern, with children becoming addicted to nicotine and many young Australians moving on to cigarettes after vaping," said Australian Medical Association president Steve Robson.

"Nicotine is highly addictive, and there is strong evidence to show young people who vape are three times more likely to take up smoking," said Robson.

Aside from [health concerns](#), there is growing worry about the environmental impact of the habit.

In Australia alone, an estimated one million single-use vapes are tossed out each week, according to No More Butts, a group fighting cigarette and vape waste.

Vapes are banned in about 35 countries, according to the World Health Organization.

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