
National Best Practice Unit Tackling Indigenous Smoking

National TIS Workers Workshop 2023

Nation-to-Nation Café: Vaping Same but Different

8th March 2023

Darwin Convention Centre, NT



Introduction

The World Café ® is a format developed to support collaborative conversations to answer questions that matter. It is built on the belief that:

- people have the wisdom and creativity to confront even the most difficult challenges;
- the answers we need are available to us;
- we are **Wiser Together** than we are alone.

NBPU TIS is founded on the principle of shared wisdom and a collaborative approach to evidence-based problem solving, making the World Café ® format the ideal model for addressing the complex issue of youth vaping.

Rebranded as a 'Nation to Nation Café' to signify the many Aboriginal and Torres Islander Peoples represented in the room, the café addressed the following 'question that matters':

What activities are you doing that are working to change youth attitudes and behaviour about vaping?

The Café

Twenty café tables were hosted by NBPU TIS staff and workshop presenters. In honour of the workshop taking place on International Women's Day, the tables were named after influential Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women. Participants engaged in two rounds of conversation at different tables, following the principles of the World Café ® including focusing on what matters, being open, honest and collaborative – but also having fun (see Appendix 1).



Participants

A total of 198 staff from 38 of the 39 organisations funded under the Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care's Tackling Indigenous Smoking Program participated in the 'Nation-to-Nation Café'.

Shared wisdom



Café discussions emphasised the extent of vaping as a 'wicked' public health problem that needs to be addressed across Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Whilst some remote communities have only had limited experienced of vaping (FIFO workers, contract workers and - increasingly - non-Indigenous staff) this is changing. Once vaping becomes accepted in a community it increases very rapidly. As one participant noted 'it's going to be everywhere'. Age is also no barrier to vaping, with children under 10 accessing vapes in some regions. Youth access vapes either by purchasing them online, from servos or from other youths – or they are given vapes by friends at school or by family (notably parents). Reasons for youth vaping include:

- peer pressure;
- coping with social anxiety;
- thrill seeking/ adrenalin rush;
- seeing vaping as harmless fun (fruit flavours, just water).

Discussions focused on the main café question - **What activities are you doing that are working to change youth attitudes and behaviour about vaping?** - described collaborative efforts that include youth, their parents and families, community members, schools and teachers.



Education, according to TIS teams is key to tackling vaping, with a focus on providing information about vaping alongside information on smoking. It was suggested that using the term 'e-cigarettes' rather than vapes would help youth make the connection. A range of educational activities, carried out in different settings and to different audiences were described. These are summarised in Figure 1 and described briefly below.

Who?

Educating youth is seen as important, however it was also acknowledged that influential adults (teachers, parents, Elders) also needed more knowledge of the harms of vaping. This would allow them to provide ongoing support for the 'no vaping' stance. Adult and youth lack of knowledge about vapes was seen as a major challenge to addressing youth vaping. Education was especially important where parents were the ones supplying the vapes to their children. Educating young children – hopefully before they start vaping – was also seen to have merit. Young children will start the conversation at home and share what they know with their parents. Mandated education for teens suspended from school for vaping was also described by a number of teams.

Where?

Delivering the message in the places youth hang out is key to effective education. This includes schools, but also other places such as community events, youth groups, sporting events and social media. Bush camps led by respected Elders were also valued.



How?

The right approach to message delivery had also been considered by teams and included:

- seeking out and using peer leaders, ambassadors and role models to relay the message;
- yarning with youth and adults;
- involving youth in the design and delivery of messages;
- fun interactive activities (e.g., Amazing Race, Kahoot Quizzes, designing posters);
- sharing real and relatable stories of actual harms suffered by Australian youth;
- using age-appropriate resources - animations, videos, posters with impact;
- building relationships so youth feel safe and supported during discussions;
- working in partnership with others – e.g., schools, Police Citizens Youth Clubs.

What?

Material covered during education sessions included skills training as well as information about vapes and their content:

- information about the harm vapes can cause both on the person vaping (e.g., burns from exploding vapes, seizures from vape content) and the impact of aerosol on others;

- myth busting – e.g., vapes don't just contain water, the power of marketing and combating the 'cool' image;
- using role play to give youths the skills to resist peer pressure to vape;
- teaching youth to respect and value themselves and make better choices for the future.

In addition to education, teams described the importance of having supportive smoke and vape free environments for youth – homes, cars, workplaces, events and sporting venues. Clear signage banning vaping as well as smoking can help with the implementation of these 'clean' spaces. Schools can also play a part by investing



in vape detectors and checking schoolbags to keep schools vape free. It was also noted that vaping is an issue that must be addressed at the policy level as well as the community level, with strong legislation that is enforced by authorities. Reporting retailers who are selling vapes illegally was described as one way that teams can help support implementation of the law. Lobbying for change (a voice to parliament) was also endorsed as this is seen as an issue that needs to be addressed federally. Suggested solutions included:

- requiring plain packaging that displays warning labels about unknown ingredients;
- harsher penalties for illegal suppliers/stores selling to minors etc;
- regulate/ban certain flavours;
- prohibiting online sales of vapes;
- better regulation of imports (e.g., enforce 'prescription only' legislation for nicotine vapes);
- greater consistency across state and territory legislation;
- addressing industry marketing of vapes directed at young people;
- a national mass media campaign to address both smoking and vaping.

What next?

Teams were clear about the need for:

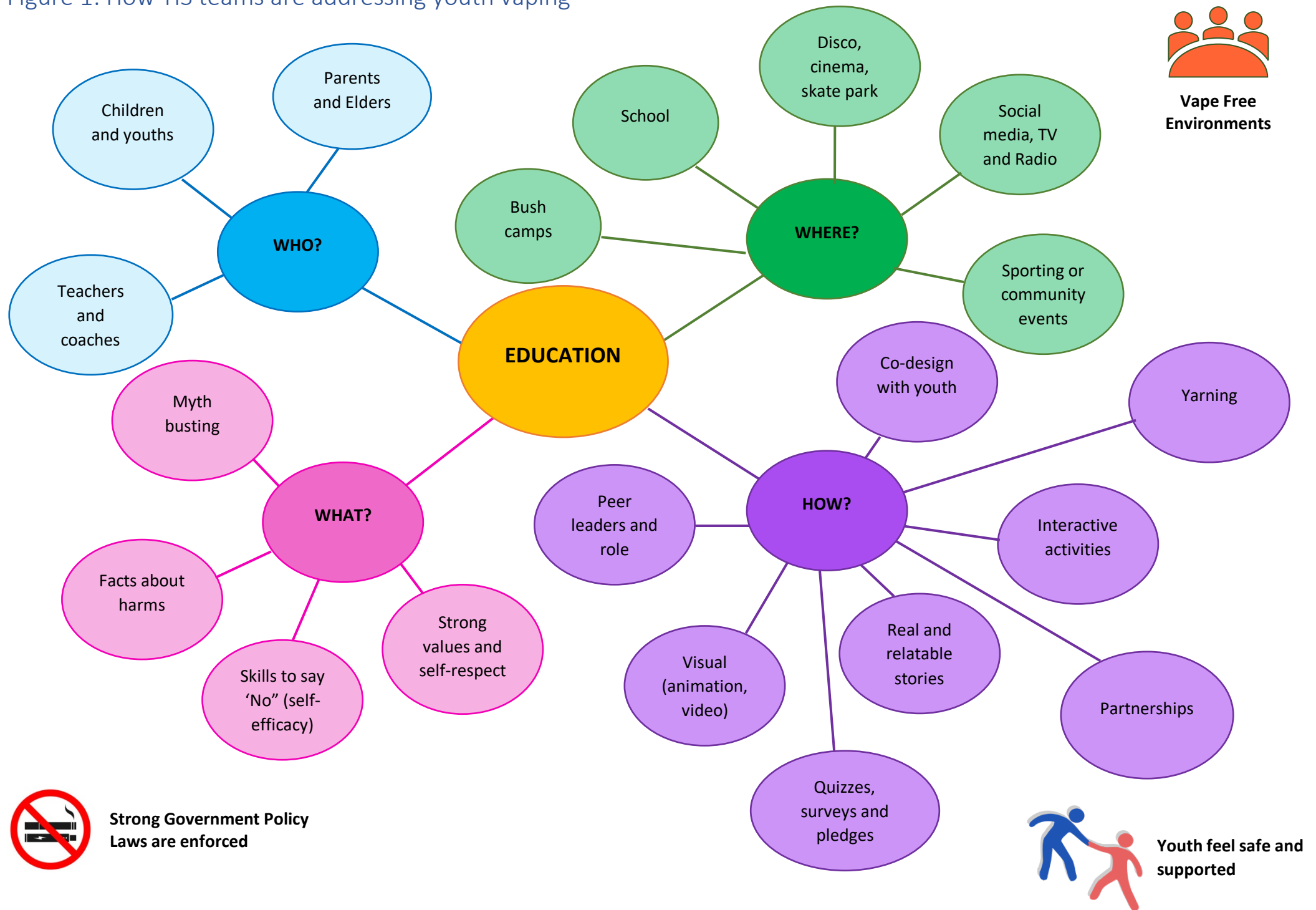
- access to vaping cessation support for youth;
- better education for health professionals;
- schools to invest in teacher training, support for pupils (counsellors) and better signage;
- smoking and vaping information to be integrated with wellbeing/alcohol and other drugs education sessions.

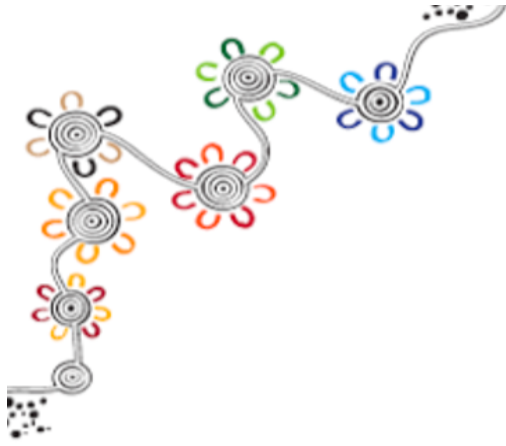
Teams also wanted:

- more research/information about vaping, particularly its impact on health and vaping in the Australian context;
- access to more vaping resources.

NBPU TIS will continue to assist teams to stay up to date with the evidence by ensuring that emerging research is provided on the website and National TIS Workers Yarning Group on Facebook, as well as through factsheets and tailored education sessions. During the café teams described a number of innovative activities and resources that they use with youth. We will work with teams to make as many of these 'home grown' resources available through the TIS website, the Yarning Group and other appropriate communication channels.

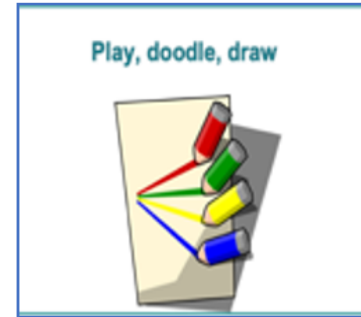
Figure 1: How TIS teams are addressing youth vaping





NATION TO NATION CAFÉ

NATIONAL BEST PRACTICE UNIT
TACKLING INDIGENOUS SMOKING



CAFÉ ETIQUETTE