

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Q: What is the benefit of smoke and vape-free zones?

A: Smoke and vape free zones support our community by:

- Protecting community from second hand smoking and aerosols
- Reducing uptake of smoking and vaping in children and young people by modelling non-smoking behaviour
- Providing a supportive environment for people who smoke, are trying to quit or have recently quit; and
- Reducing tobacco and e-cigarette related litter and improving public amenities.

Q: What is the prevalence of smoking in Gippsland local government areas?

A: Smoking rates in Gippsland local government areas vary among the adult population. Bass Coast stands at 17.9%, Baw Baw 15.7%, East Gippsland 14.7%, Latrobe 22%, South Gippsland 17.9% and Wellington 21.4%. For context, the Victorian average is 12.3%. Additionally, smoking rates among pregnant people in Gippsland stand at an alarming 17.9%, compared to Victoria's 8.0%.

Q: What are the current trends of vaping among young people?

A: Recent data from the Cancer Council Victoria reveals upward trends in e-cigarette use broadly, but specifically among young people. Between 2018-19 and 2022, the percentage of males aged 18-24 years who report vaping increased from 10.8% to 19.4%, while females in the same age group saw an increase from 2.8% to 15.2%. Emerging data is continuing this upward trend. Further, young people who vape are three times more likely to start smoking.

Q: When will the online survey be open?

A: The survey will be open for participation from July to late November 2023.

Q: Who can complete the online survey?

A: We welcome people 12 years and over who live, work or study in Gippsland to complete the survey and provide their feedback. People aged between 12-15 years require parent or guardian consent prior to completing the survey.

Q: Is the survey anonymous?

A: Yes! While we ask some demographic questions such as your age and gender, all results are de-identified and confidential.

Q: What kind of questions will be asked?

A: The survey will ask general questions about you (e.g. age, gender etc.), how you feel about smoke and vape free zones and more being done locally to reduce tobacco and e-cigarette related harm and if you smoke or vape. There are also specific questions for people who own or manage a business in Gippsland. As your responses are anonymous, we will not collect any identifying information, such as your name, email address, address or phone number.

Q: Do I have to take part?

A: No, your participation is voluntary, and you can refrain from answering any questions you wish. Once you hit the 'submit' button, your data cannot be removed as it is anonymous.

Q: Have other councils implemented smoke-free zones and policies?

A: Yes, many councils have successfully implemented smoke and vape free zones, which were warmly received by their communities. Notable examples include the City of Melbourne, Mornington Peninsula Shire and City of Vincent. In fact, the City of Melbourne now receives requests from local business owners to designate their operating streets as smoke and vape-free zones.

Q: Why approach this issue as a whole region?

A: Coordinated action allows us to maximise our impact and offers a remarkable opportunity for regional collaboration. Collective efforts to reduce smoking and vaping in regional Australia are essential to create healthier environments for our community and pave the way for other regional areas to follow suit.

Q: Who can I contact if I have more questions?

A: If you have any questions about this survey, you can contact the research team at the Gippsland Region Public Health Unit on grphu.prevention@lrh.com.au or reach out via our Facebook page, [Breathe Easy Gippsland](https://www.facebook.com/Breathe.Easy.Gippsland).