



**THE HON TANYA PLIBERSEK MP**  
MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND WATER

MC23-033312

Miss Madeleine Rose Steendam  
Brunswick North West Primary  
2 Culloden Street  
BRUNSWICK WEST VIC 3055

Dear Madeleine

Thank you for your letter of 17 October 2023 about smoking and vaping and its impacts on human health, the environment and ecosystems. I am really pleased to see you are interested in protecting our environment.

Sadly, cigarette butts are among the most littered items in the world. The World Wildlife Fund Australia estimates that each year as many as 8.9 billion cigarette butts are littered in Australia. As you point out in your letter, single use, disposable vapes are also littered. When used vapes are thrown into bins they can start fires in garbage trucks or at waste management facilities. You are right that both cigarette butts and vapes release nasty chemicals into our environment and water ways.

It is important to reduce the number of people who are smoking and vaping. If less people are smoking and vaping, it means there will also be less litter from cigarette butts and vapes. The Minister for Health and Aged Care, the Hon Mark Butler MP, and his department have a plan to improve all Australians health by reducing the use of tobacco, it is the National Tobacco Strategy 2023-2030. More information is available at [www.health.gov.au](http://www.health.gov.au).

In May this year the government announced we will ban all single use vapes. We are working to do this quickly. We are also going to provide extra support, such as more health services and training for health workers, to help people to quit smoking cigarettes and vaping. The government is going to run ads so people are informed about the harm smoking does to your health and encourage more people to quit.

Thank you again for writing to me about this issue.

Yours sincerely

TANYA PLIBERSEK

19.12.23

PS Madeleine - the most important thing you can do is make sure that you and your friends never vape or smoke.  
Have a happy Christmas.