



Pacific Peoples' Nicotine-Free Futures

Understanding Pacific Peoples'
perceptions and practices of vaping

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Te Whatu Ora
Health New Zealand

Te Hiringa Hauora | Health Promotion Agency was a Crown entity established under the New Zealand Public Health and Disability Amendment Act 2000.

As at 1 July 2022 it was disestablished as a separate entity and moved into Te Whatu Ora – Health New Zealand.



Matada is a social enterprise specialising in transformative research, consultation, evaluation and program development to positively impact legislation, policy and practices to help improve Pacific peoples' health and well-being.



Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	2
Executive Summary	3
Background and Objectives	5
Pacific Methodology	16
Collective Knowledge	20
1 Pacific peoples expressed concern about the broader social impacts of vaping	21
2 Pacific peoples' knowledge of vaping is based on personal and social experiences	26
3 Pacific peoples' decisions to vape are influenced by their social circles	29
4 Pacific peoples can identify vaping culture and practices	31
5 Cost and health are the main drivers for changing from smokes to vapes (ENDS)	38
6 Pacific peoples have mixed results using vaping/ENDS to quit smoking	41
Recommendations	44
Strengths and Limitations	47
Conclusion	48
References	49



Ko e tau mena mitaki ka taute e koe to monuina ai e tau atuhau anoiha

*The good things you do will benefit
generations to come*

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Knowledge is created in relation with others, and this report has been no different.

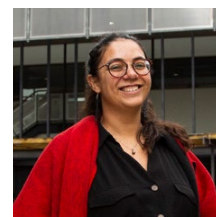
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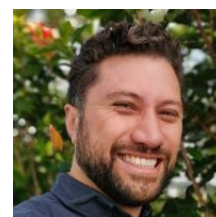
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Executive Summary

Increased rates of smoking (nicotine use through tobacco) amongst the Pacific population¹ have resulted in an urgent need to explore possible harm reduction techniques.

This report uses Pacific research methodologies to present Pacific peoples' attitudes towards vaping, in Aotearoa New Zealand.² This report intentionally draws attention to vaping as an Electronic Nicotine Delivery System (ENDS),³ as this reflects what vaping is in practice.

The findings are based on talanoa conducted from March to May 2022 with 60 Pacific peoples aged 17 to 62 from across Aotearoa by Matada, a Pacific research and evaluation social enterprise.

Findings

Pacific peoples are concerned about vaping in their community

- Pacific peoples are concerned about the wider impacts of vaping on their communities, including:
 - health implications
 - generational accessibility
 - ease of access
 - ongoing addictions
- Pacific peoples report a health sector that has not supported spreading knowledge about vaping.
- Pacific peoples recognise that there is a lack of 'official' information to help form ideas and opinions about vaping.
- Consequently, Pacific peoples form their understanding of vaping through personal and social experiences.

¹ Pacific population refers to people with Indigenous Pacific ancestry living in Aotearoa New Zealand.

² This report refers to Aotearoa New Zealand when referring to the whenua/land that is Aotearoa New Zealand and uses New Zealand when referring to the settler state of New Zealand.

³ Electronic Nicotine Delivery System (ENDS) reflects the language commonly used in scholarship and public health spaces to enable recognition that vaping is widely understood to contain the addictive drug, nicotine.

Nicotine delivery through vaping

- Pacific peoples' uptake of vaping is influenced by their family, friends and community.
- Pacific peoples can identify distinct vaping practices, including its look, social attitudes, spaces for vaping and purchasing practices.

Changing nicotine delivery from smokes to vapes

- Pacific peoples identify cost and health as significant motivations to change from smoking to vaping. Money saved by using cheaper vaping products increased overall family budgets, and the perception of better health outcomes through vaping (and no longer smoking) was understood to mean longer lives for our Collaborators.
- Pacific peoples have successfully moved away from smoking to vaping, and are now considering ways to quit vaping in order to live nicotine-free lives.

Recommendations

1. Immediate programming aimed at Pacific peoples, with information and health messaging about Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems (such as vaping) is developed and implemented.
2. Clear guidelines about safer Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems/ vaping practices for the harm reduction of vaping are created for the vaper and their communities.
3. Further regulation that limits the availability of Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems is explored.
4. Targeted smoking cessation programmes that utilise Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems are developed as a health system response to nicotine-free lives.
5. Further research into Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems within the different demographics of Pacific communities is undertaken.
6. More opportunities for Pacific peoples to participate in decision-making, policy-making, and community-led quit-nicotine initiatives.



Background and Objectives

This report has been funded by Te Hiringa Hauora to expand our understanding of Pacific peoples' perceptions and attitudes towards vaping.



Context

This initial context provides important background information through which to understand the following research. Pacific peoples' perceptions and attitudes towards vaping and nicotine use, do not exist in a vacuum. Instead, they are shaped by the economic realities, cultural drivers and lived experiences of Pacific peoples.

Pacific Peoples in Aotearoa New Zealand

Pacific peoples in Aotearoa New Zealand arrived in four waves of migration

The first wave of migration was approximately 1200 years ago when Eastern Pacific peoples explored and settled in Aotearoa New Zealand to become tangata whenua. This whakapapa cemented Pacific peoples as extended family to Māori and created bonds and relationships through culture and genealogy across Te Moana Nui a Kiwa (greater Oceania kinship connections).⁴

The remaining migrations occurred as part of the colonial project across The Pacific Ocean, Te Moana-nui-a-Kiwa. In the battle for Pacific resources, the British won control of a number of dominions for periods of time, including parts of Samoa, parts of Papua New Guinea, Niue, Tonga, Kiribati, Nauru, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Pitcairn Islands, Tokelau, Fiji, Tuvalu and the Cook Islands. To further their colonial project, The British established a government structure in (then) New Zealand, through which policies were formed to encourage and entice Pacific peoples to migrate to New Zealand.⁵

It was through purposeful immigration policy that the third wave of migration occurred. In the mid-to-late 1940s, Pacific peoples who had served in the colonial armed forces or as civil servants in the British-colonial governments of 'Pacific territories' were permitted to relocate to post-war New Zealand in order to address labour shortages.⁶

⁴ Health Research Council of New Zealand, *Pacific Health Research Guidelines*, May 2014, 2, https://gateway.hrc.govt.nz/funding/downloads/Pacific_health_research_guidelines.pdf; Health Quality & Safety Commission, *Bula Sautu – A window on quality 2021: Pacific health in the year of COVID-19*, July 2021, 9-10, https://www.hqsc.govt.nz/assets/Our-data/Publications-resources/BulaSautu_WEB.pdf.

⁵ Cluny Macpherson, Melani Anae, and Paul Spoonley, *Evolving identities of Pacific peoples in Aotearoa/New Zealand* (Palmerston North: Dunmore Press, 2001), np; Alice Te Punga Somerville, *Once were Pacific: Māori connections to Oceania* (London: University of Minnesota Press, 2012), xxii.

⁶ Augie Fleras and Paul Spoonley, *Recalling Aotearoa: Indigenous politics and ethnic relations in New Zealand* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), np



The fourth migration wave occurred in the 1970s for economic reasons, and Pacific peoples found work primarily in the manufacturing and service sectors.⁷ It is this migration that most people are familiar with, as many Pacific peoples in Aotearoa New Zealand today participated in, or are descendants of this migration wave. This genealogy is visible in census data that notes that most Pacific migrants arrived more than 20 years ago.⁸ This fourth wave is associated with the Dawn Raids, where Pacific peoples were unjustly targeted in what has been acknowledged as racist immigration policies in Operation Pot Black.⁹ There has been increased public awareness of this wave of migration outside of the Pacific community due to a recent government apology for the Dawn Raids.¹⁰

Pacific peoples in Aotearoa New Zealand are a young and diverse population

Contemporarily, the 2018 census recorded approximately 381,600 people living in Aotearoa New Zealand who identified as Pacific, comprising around 8% of the country's total population.¹¹

Pacific peoples in Aotearoa New Zealand are a particularly young population, with a median age of 23.4 years, compared to a median age of 37.4 years for the total population.¹²

The Pan-Pacific label encompasses over 17 distinct ethnic groups. The 10 largest Pacific populations in Aotearoa New Zealand are: Samoan (47.9%), Tongan (21.6%), Cook Islands Māori (21.1%), Niuean (8.1%), Fijian (5.2%), Tokelauan (2.3%), Tuvaluan (1.2%), i-Kiribati (0.8%), Tahitian (0.5%) and Papua New Guinean (0.3%).¹³

⁷ Te Punga Somerville, *Once Were Pacific*, xxii; Macpherson, Anae, and Spoonley, *Evolving Identities*, np; Fleras and Spoonley, *Recalling Aotearoa*, np.

⁸ Stats NZ, "Pacific peoples ethnic group," Stats NZ, 2020b, <https://www.stats.govt.nz/tools/2018-census-ethnic-group-summaries/pacific-Peoples>.

⁹ Paul Spoonley, *Racism and Ethnicity: Critical Issues in New Zealand Society* (Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1988), np; Jacinda Ardern and Aupito William Sio, "Government offers formal apology for Dawn Raids," August 1, 2021, <https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/government-offers-formal-apology-dawn-raids>.

¹⁰ Ardern and Sio, "Government offers formal apology."

¹¹ Stats NZ, "Pacific peoples ethnic group;" It should be noted that the 2018 census had a poor response rate, particularly for Pacific peoples (65% compared to 83% of the total population) which resulted in data being pulled from New Zealand's Integrated Data System raising concerns about data sovereignty.

¹² Stats NZ, "New Zealand," Stats NZ, 2020a, <https://www.stats.govt.nz/tools/2018-census-place-summaries/new-zealand>; Stats NZ, "Pacific peoples ethnic group."

¹³ Ministry for Pacific Peoples, *Pacific Aotearoa status report: A snapshot 2020*, October 2021, 18, <https://www.mpp.govt.nz/assets/Reports/Pacific-Peoples-in-Aotearoa-Report.pdf>.





Importantly, the Realm Countries of New Zealand (Cook Islands, Niue and Tokelau) have significant proportions of their population living within New Zealand. The majority of the Cook Islands Māori and Niue groups reside in New Zealand (90% and 94%, respectively), and over half of the Tokelauan population live in New Zealand (54%).¹⁴

Pacific peoples in Aotearoa New Zealand experience a range of socio-economic inequities...

Pacific peoples are eight times more likely than NZ Europeans to live in a crowded house¹⁵ and are the least likely ethnic group in Aotearoa New Zealand to own their own homes.¹⁶

Pacific peoples' unemployment rate is higher than that of Aotearoa New Zealand's total population (7.1% and 4%, respectively).¹⁷

Further, Pacific peoples have a median annual income of \$24,300, significantly lower than the \$31,800 median annual income of the total Aotearoa New Zealand population.¹⁸

Pacific peoples experience an ongoing pay gap. For every \$1 that Pākehā men earn, Pacific men earn \$.81 and Pacific women earn \$.75.¹⁹ This gap is not entirely explained by observable characteristics such as educational attainment and job-related characteristics.²⁰ Instead, existing literature suggests that other biases are at play, including racism and sexism.²¹

¹⁴ Ministry for Pacific Peoples, *Pacific Aotearoa*, 19.

¹⁵ Health Quality & Safety Commission, *Bula Sautu*, 22.

¹⁶ Health Quality & Safety Commission, *Bula Sautu*, 22.

¹⁷ Stats NZ, "Pacific peoples ethnic group."

¹⁸ Stats NZ, "New Zealand;" Stats NZ, "Pacific Peoples ethnic group."

¹⁹ Bill Cochrane and Gail Pachego, *Empirical analysis of Pacific, Māori, and ethnic pay gaps in New Zealand*, New Zealand Human Rights Commission, July 2022, 7, <https://secureservercdn.net/45.40.152.202/76v.71b.myftpupload.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/PPG-Inquiry-Empirical-analysis-of-Pacific-Maori-and-ethnic-pay-gaps-in-New-Zealand.pdf>.

²⁰ Cochrane and Pachego, *Empirical Analysis*, 1.

²¹ Matada Research Group, *Pacific pay gap inquiry literature review*, New Zealand Human Rights Commission, July 2022, 2-3, <https://secureservercdn.net/45.40.152.202/76v.71b.myftpupload.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Pacific-Pay-Gap-Inquiry-Literature-Review.pdf>.



... and these inequities adversely affect the health outcomes of Pacific peoples

On average, life expectancy for Pacific peoples is six years lower than that of non-Māori non-Pacific peoples²² and is slightly lower for Pacific males than Pacific females.²³

Chronic and preventable illnesses such as cardiovascular disease and diabetes are major contributors to these differences in life expectancy²⁴, and Pacific peoples experience these long-term conditions at a younger age than the country's total population.²⁵

Pacific adults experience disproportionately high rates of health risk factors such as obesity, smoking, alcohol consumption, less physical activity and mental illness.²⁶

Despite having high rates of enrolment in primary health services, Pacific peoples present to urgent care with preventable and long-term health conditions more often, reflecting systemic barriers to accessing high-quality and culturally adequate healthcare.²⁷

Pacific Peoples and Nicotine Use

One-fifth of Pacific peoples smoke regularly

The 2018 census recorded approximately 21.2% of Pacific peoples as regular smokers, with a slightly higher rate amongst males than females.²⁸ Although this rate has declined marginally since 2013, the Pacific population of regular smokers is significantly higher than that of the total Aotearoa New Zealand population at 13.2%.²⁹

²² Health Quality & Safety Commission, 26.

²³ Health Quality & Safety Commission, 13.

²⁴ Michael Walsh and Corina Grey, "The contribution of avoidable mortality to the life expectancy gap in Māori and Pacific populations in New Zealand—a decomposition analysis," *New Zealand Medical Journal* 132, no. 1492 (2019): 46.

²⁵ Ministry of Health, *Ola Manuia Pacific health and wellbeing action plan 2020-2025*, June 2020, 13, https://www.health.govt.nz/system/files/documents/publications/ola_manuia-phwap-22june.pdf.

²⁶ Ministry of Health, *Ola Manuia*, 13.

²⁷ Ministry of Health, *Ola Manuia*, 13.

²⁸ Stats NZ, "Pacific peoples ethnic group."

²⁹ Stats NZ, "Pacific peoples ethnic group."





For Pacific adults, smoking status is predictive of having tried, or being a current vaper

Using the New Zealand Health and Lifestyles Survey, Li et al.'s findings indicated that within the general population smoking status is a greater determinant of vaping status than ethnicity. 50% of current smokers had tried vaping and 4.1% of smokers concurrently vaped. 12.2% of Pacific peoples had tried vaping and 0.5% currently vaped. Pacific peoples surveyed had the lowest rate of currently vaping compared to other ethnicities.³⁰

Vaping is nicotine use

Vaping is an electronically-powered way to use the addictive drug, nicotine. Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems (ENDS), colloquially known as vaping, take an 'e-liquid' (containing propylene glycol, vegetable glycerine, nicotine, and usually flavouring), and vaporise that liquid by heating it until it can be inhaled by users.³¹ ENDS are regarded as having fewer health risks than nicotine delivery systems which rely on cigarettes.³²

Pacific youth are also vaping...

In a study using Action for Smokefree 2025 Year 10 Snapshot Survey data from 2014-2019, 14-15-year-old students identifying as Pacific peoples were around 1.5 times more likely to have tried vaping or smoking compared to non-Māori non-Pacific students.³³ In a similar study using data from the Youth Insights Survey 2014-2018, young Pacific peoples were found to have engaged in past-month vaping 1.8 times more than non-Māori non-Pacific young people.³⁴

³⁰ Judy Li, Rhiannon Newcombe, and Darren Walton, "The prevalence, correlates, and reasons for using electronic cigarettes among New Zealand adults," *Addictive Behaviours* 45, (2015): 248-9.

³¹ Guiney, Hayley, Alana Oakly, and Greg Martin. "E-cigarette use and perceptions among current and ex-smokers in New Zealand" *Health Promotion Agency*. (2019). https://www.hpa.org.nz/sites/default/files/Final%20Report%20-%20E-cigarette%20use%20and%20perceptions%20among%20current%20and%20ex-smokers%20in%20NZ_Jan%202019_0.pdf; Li, Newcombe, and Walton, "The prevalence, correlates, and reasons," 245.

³² Ball et al., "New Zealand Youth19 Survey," 546; Guiney, Oakly, and Martin, "E-cigarette use," 6; Tucker et al., "Using a Cigarette Purchase Task," 109.

³³ Natalie Walker et al., "Use of e-cigarettes and smoked tobacco in youth aged 14-15 years in New Zealand: findings from repeated cross-sectional studies (2014-19)," *Lancet Public Health* 5, (2020): e208.

³⁴ Mokalagi Tamapeau and Sydney Kingstone, *Tau Amanaki Onoono Ki Mua*, Health Promotion Agency, 2020, 22, https://www.hpa.org.nz/sites/default/files/Pacific%20Youth%20Substance%20Use_Design_Final.pdf.



Young people who identified as Samoan, Tongan, or Māori-Pacific had a significantly higher proportion of vaping in the last month compared to non-Māori non-Pacific young people.³⁵ However, young Pacific peoples were more likely to have used other substances than to have vaped in the last month.³⁶

A study using Youth19 survey data found that 13-18-year-old students identifying as Pacific peoples were the second-highest ethnic group to have ever tried vaping (44.4%). In contrast, those students identifying as Pacific peoples were the second-lowest ethnic group (7.3%) of regular vapers.³⁷

...and their vaping is related to friends' cigarette and alcohol use, and to low connectedness to parents and family

For Pacific young people, higher vaping rates were seen in those with friends who smoke, and who drink alcohol. Higher vaping rates were also seen in those reporting a low level of connection to parents and family.³⁸ As with Pacific adults, social factors were more related to vape use than ethnicity, when looking at Pacific young people as a whole.³⁹

Young Pacific peoples are at risk of serious nicotine addictions

The Asthma and Respiratory Foundation NZ warns the proliferation of specialist vape retailers in New Zealand⁴⁰ is putting rangatahi at risk of serious nicotine addictions, and that primary care professionals need to be equipped to deal with vaping harms.⁴¹

Pacific peoples are a youthful population, and this intersection of ethnicity and youth exposes future generations of Pacific peoples to a greater risk of harm from nicotine addiction.

³⁵ Tamapeau and Kingstone, *Tau Amanaki*, 31-2, 35.

³⁶ Tamapeau and Kingstone, *Tau Amanaki*, 29.

³⁷ Jude Ball et al., "New Zealand Youth19 survey: vaping has wider appeal than smoking in secondary school students, and most use nicotine-containing e-cigarettes," *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health* 45, no. 6 (2021): 549.

³⁸ Tamapeau and Kingstone, *Tau Amanaki*, 22.

³⁹ Tamapeau and Kingstone, *Tau Amanaki*, 44.

⁴⁰ (N=956; more than three times the combined number of KFCs and McDonald's restaurants across the country)

⁴¹ 'Vaping harms are coming for primary care' | [New Zealand Doctor \(nzdoctor.co.nz\)](http://New Zealand Doctor (nzdoctor.co.nz))





Changing nicotine delivery: from smoking to vaping

Vaping/ENDS can be a useful smoking cessation aid as a way to move towards nicotine free lives...

Evidence is increasing that vaping/ENDS can be a useful smoking cessation aid, and that for the best health outcomes, smokers who also vape should aim to use ENDS/vaping exclusively.⁴² This goal is unlikely to be achievable if ENDS are not affordable, satisfying, and easily adopted.⁴³

... however, there is a need to ensure that ENDS/vapes are carefully regulated

There is a fine balance between ensuring current nicotine-users can easily change from smoking to vaping, while protecting young non-smokers from the social appeal and addictive harm of nicotine use through vaping.⁴⁴ Research suggests that applying the same restrictions to ENDS/vapes, as are on tobacco sales (e.g., banning display at retail outlets, graphic warnings,⁴⁵ restricting certain flavours,⁴⁶ and banning use in smokefree areas⁴⁷), may be effective in ensuring that ENDS are only accessed as stepping stones to nicotine-free lives, and are not taken up by young non-smokers. When considering this option it is important to learn from other nations such as Australia who recently implemented a similar law but failed to ensure that there was robust customs resourcing to stop the importation of 'Black Market' vaping products⁴⁸.

Information on vaping, and the long-term effects of nicotine use through vaping, is hard to find

In a recent qualitative study with nine Māori, five Pacific peoples, and two Māori-Pacific participants, frustration was expressed about the lack of accessible scientific information online about the safety of vaping or any benefits of vaping as a smoking cessation tool. Because of this, participants found information from friends and whānau who had their own vaping experiences and knowledge.⁴⁹

⁴² Guiney, Oakly, and Martin, "E-cigarette use," 6; Strickett et al., "A Qualitative Analysis," 551.

⁴³ Strickett et al., "A Qualitative Analysis," 551.

⁴⁴ Ball et al., "New Zealand Youth19 Survey," 552; Li, Newcombe, and Walton, "The prevalence, correlates, and reasons," 250.

⁴⁵ Li, Newcombe, and Walton, "The prevalence, correlates, and reasons," 250.

⁴⁶ Gendall and Hoek, "Role of flavours," 110.

⁴⁷ Tucker et al., "Using a Cigarette Purchase Task," 113

⁴⁸ Mendelsohn, C, "A 12-month review of Australia's prescription-only regulations for nicotine vaping – a predictable policy failure," (2022): 10

⁴⁹ Elizabeth Strickett et al., "A Qualitative Analysis of Maori and Pacific people's Experiences of Using Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems (ENDS)," *Nicotine & Tobacco Research* 23, no. 3 (2021): 553-4.



Satisfaction with the vaping experience influences changing from smoking to vaping

This same study found that changing from smoking to vaping relied heavily upon how satisfactory the experience of vaping was and the ability to source a vaping device that met nicotine needs.⁵⁰

Māori and Pacific peoples have reported vaping to be a partially-acceptable substitute for smoking and reported vaping to be more satisfying than NZ Europeans did.⁵¹

Satisfaction from vaping characteristics such as flavour is highly varied

Some Māori and Pacific peoples reported that specific characteristics of vaping, such as a sweet flavour, made the change from smoking to vaping easier. Others found that the flavours available in vaping were a barrier to changing from smoking to vaping.⁵² Of former smokers who vaped, Māori and Pacific peoples were more likely than NZ European/ Other ethnicities to cite flavour as a reason for vaping.⁵³

Vaping devices need ongoing care and maintenance

Some participants reported vaping device maintenance could be tedious and take a lot of effort compared to the ease of using cigarettes. Despite the extra maintenance needed, those participants were, nonetheless, exclusive vapers.⁵⁴

Changing to vaping is hard when smoking is the norm in social groups and practices

Māori and Pacific peoples reported struggling to change from smoking to vaping because many of their social situations involved smoking. The social nature of smoking is specifically difficult to navigate when at gatherings with close friends and whānau who smoke.⁵⁵

⁵⁰ Strickett et al., "A Qualitative Analysis," 554.

⁵¹ Tucker et al., "Using a Cigarette Purchase Task to Assess Demand for Tobacco and Nicotine-containing Electronic Cigarettes for New Zealand European and Māori/Pacific Island Smokers," *New Zealand Journal of Psychology* 46, no. 2 (2017): 111-2.

⁵² Strickett et al., "A Qualitative Analysis," 553.

⁵³ Philip Gendall and Janet Hoek, "Role of flavours in vaping uptake and cessation among New Zealand smokers and non-smokers: a cross-sectional study," *Tobacco Control* 30, (2021): 109.

⁵⁴ Strickett et al., "A Qualitative Analysis," 553.

⁵⁵ Strickett et al., "A Qualitative Analysis," 553-4.





Having connections with other vapers can support a change from smoking to vaping

In this regard, Māori and Pacific peoples identify that having social connections with other vapers, particularly those also changing from smoking to vaping, is essential to their continuing to vape rather than smoke. Also, in non-smoking social spaces, Pacific peoples described feeling less ostracised when vaping because it is considered cleaner than smoking.⁵⁶

The high cost of smoking is an important factor in changing to vaping...

The high cost of smoking is a notable factor in the uptake of vaping. Māori and Pacific smokers, especially males, are more likely to avoid smoking in favour of vaping due to cost.⁵⁷ Māori and Pacific peoples note that the money they save by vaping rather than smoking creates more financial freedom and opportunity for themselves.⁵⁸

...as are the perceived health benefits of changing from smoking to vaping

The perceived health benefits of vaping, as opposed to smoking, are important to Māori and Pacific peoples. Māori and Pacific peoples see vaping as applicable to their personal health, and vaping is used as a means to avoid the tobacco-related health problems they have seen friends and whānau experience. Pacific peoples also recognise vaping as beneficial to the health and well-being of their families, such as being able to physically keep up with their children when playing together.⁵⁹ However, Guiney et al. found that only 30% of Pacific current and ex-smokers perceived vaping as less harmful than smoking, compared to 42% of Māori and 50% of NZ European/Other vapers.⁶⁰

⁵⁶ Strickett et al., "A Qualitative Analysis," 554.

⁵⁷ Tucker et al., "Using a Cigarette Purchase Task," 111.

⁵⁸ Strickett et al., "A Qualitative Analysis," 554.

⁵⁹ Strickett et al., "A Qualitative Analysis," 554.

⁶⁰ Hayley Guiney, Alana Oakly, and Greg Martin, *E-cigarette use and perceptions among current and ex-smokers in New Zealand*, Health Promotion Agency, January 2019, 18, https://www.hpa.org.nz/sites/default/files/Final%20Report%20-%20E-cigarette%20use%20and%20perceptions%20among%20current%20and%20ex-smokers%20in%20NZ_Jan%202019_0.pdf.

The overall context of Pacific peoples in Aotearoa New Zealand and nicotine use suggests a significant need to better understand how Pacific peoples engage with and perceive nicotine use through vaping, or Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems. While we have some understanding of the harms and patterns of nicotine use, there is little qualitative information to improve our understanding of nicotine use in Pacific peoples' communities.

This report contributes to our evidence base on nicotine use in Pacific peoples' communities, presenting qualitative findings on their perceptions and practices of vaping, and recommendations for Pacific peoples' nicotine-free futures.





Pacific Methodology

Pacific research methodologies form the basis for this knowledge building process.

Our three guiding principles were:

- **Relationality** (e.g., locate Collaborators through our wider Matada community)
- **Respect** (e.g., centre Pacific voices)
- **Reciprocity** (e.g., confirm findings with our Collaborators)

This approach included the participation of our Pacific Community Ethics Board, which ensured the inclusion of community voices throughout design, implementation and reporting.

Our Team

Our commitment to intersectional analysis, broad representation and capacity and capability building for Pacific research means that our Matada Research team is a mixture of Pacific ethnicities, including from Niue, Samoa and Fiji. We are from a diverse age range and gender identities. Our research skill levels vary from emerging researcher to established researcher.

Finding our Collaborators

With relationality as a guiding principle, our Collaborators were found through personal relationships and ongoing snowball sampling; Collaborators helped to find new Collaborators through their own relationships. This approach enabled meaningful sharing between Collaborators and the Matada research team.

Talanoa

Talanoa is an established Pacific research method that enables Pacific community members to share openly and authentically. Talanoa is a form of narrative enquiry developed from Pacific peoples' oratory traditions:

which affords value to, for example, kinship, land, tradition/custom, relationships, ancestors, ceremony, cosmology, space, language, ethics, the chiefly system, systems of faith, and protocols. Talanoa encompasses behaviours/manners such as openness, patience, tolerance, flexibility, silence, humility, generosity, gifting, reciprocity, humour, empowerment, listening, sharing, forgiveness, and subjectivity.⁶¹

⁶¹ Rochelle Stewart-Withers, Koli Sewabu, and Sam Richardson, "Talanoa: A contemporary qualitative methodology for sport management," *Sport Management Review* 20, no. 1 (2017): 59.



Collective Knowledge Building

- 60 Talanoa (30 – 90 minutes; one-to-one)
- held over two months (01 March 2022–16 May 2022)
- by phone and Zoom (due to COVID-19 restrictions)

Alongside Talanoa, we have used relevant literature to build a rich and complex understanding of Pacific peoples and nicotine use through vaping/ENDS.

Talanoa transcriptions were analysed by three team members (including the team lead). Overall themes were identified through consensus, and each talanoa was analysed to identify instances where dialogue was shared on those themes. This ensures reliability occurs through peer assessment, and our three guiding principles (relationality, respect, reciprocity) are present in our methodology.

A summary of findings was shared with all Collaborators, for validation and feedback.

Demographics

Pacific peoples are a heterogenous population, so it is important to acknowledge the different demographics that make up a Pan-Pacific project.

Ethnicity

When Collaborators selected more than one ethnicity, their data were counted for each ethnicity selected, enabling Pacific peoples to reflect their complex and important self-identified ethnicities. Of our Collaborators 11% identified as Tokelauan, 11% as Fijian, 15% as Tongan, 15% as Niuean, 21% as Cook Islander, 27% as Samoan and.

Gender

Collaborators had the option of identifying as male, female, or gender diverse. No Collaborators identified as gender diverse, 37% identified as female and 63% male. The lack of gender diverse Collaborators indicates a need for further research with this community, particularly at the intersection of Pacific and gender diverse.

Region and New Zealand Born

Collaborators were asked if they were born in New Zealand or the Pacific region. 23% of Collaborators identified as region born and 77% identified as New Zealand born.





Vaping Status

Collaborators were asked to identify their vaping status which resulted in six different identities within vaping status. 13% of Collaborators identified as ex-smoker/ex-vaper, 18% as smoker, 22% as vaper, 13% as non-smoker/non-vaper, 28% as a smoker & vaper, and 5% as ex-smoker

Terminology

This report switches between using the terms 'ENDS' and 'vaping'—where we use vaping it reflects our Collaborators' language, whereas ENDS reflects the language commonly used in scholarship and public health spaces to enable recognition that vaping is widely understood to contain addictive nicotine.

The **addictive nature of vaping** is also reflected in our talanoa:

They're quite... they're frequent... they're addicted to cigarettes. But when the price gets a bit too much for them, smoking 3 packets a week, \$35, they start to look at other avenues for just how to deal with the habit. By going to the tapaka Tonga, which is cheaper, and vaping. **Vaping is another option for trying to cut back on... Trying to get their fix**, but also in a way that's not going to be hurting them in the pocket.

ANON, TONGAN, NON-SMOKER/NON-VAPER

I don't think vaping is cool. I just think, I said it's a cheap option and **it takes the urge off smoking when you've got no smokes** or you've had a smoke and you need something for them.

ANON, TONGAN-MĀORI, SMOKER & VAPER

Whereas with the vape, just have a puff. **Have a couple of puffs, and that satisfies your nicotine craving.**

ANON, COOK ISLAND/SAMOAN, SMOKER & VAPER

There was also an indication from the talanoa that Pacific peoples equate smoking and vaping:

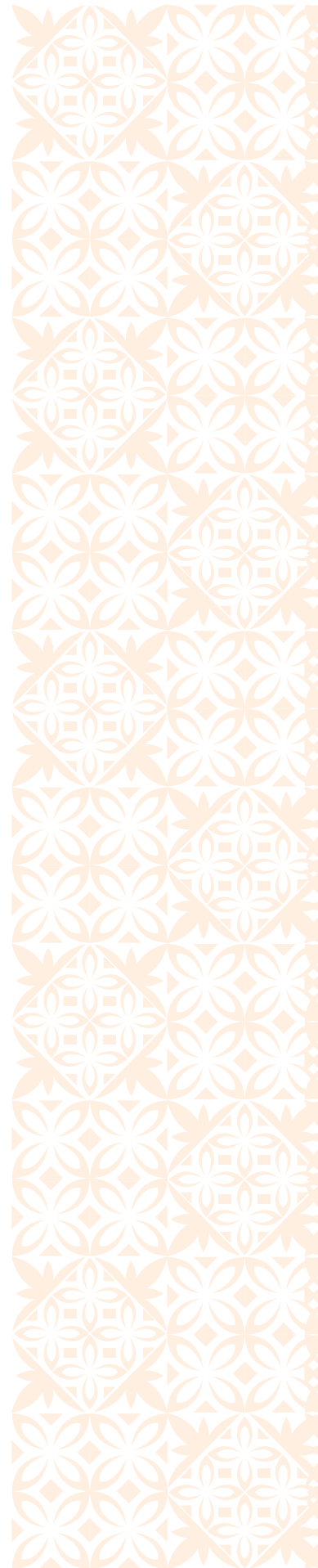
The majority of my circle growing up have not been smokers, and whether it's vaping or cigarettes.

ANON, COOK ISLANDER/TAHITIAN, NON-SMOKER/NON-VAPER



Quotes

Throughout this report, quotes are attributed either to 'Anon' or a named individual, like 'Litia'. This reflects an ethics process where Collaborators were able to indicate that they wished to remain anonymous, to only be named in the acknowledgement section or to have their quotes attributed to them. This practice ensures that Pacific peoples who wish to be recognised for the knowledge that they contributed to this report can be.





Collective Knowledge

Overall, six key themes were identified that expand our understanding of Pacific peoples' attitudes and perceptions towards vaping and Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems:

1. Pacific peoples express concern for the wider social impacts of vaping.
2. Pacific peoples' knowledge of vaping is based on personal and social experiences.
3. Pacific peoples' decisions to vape are influenced by their social circles.
4. Pacific peoples can identify vaping culture and practices.
5. Cost and health are the main drivers for changing from smokes to vapes (ENDS).
6. Pacific peoples have mixed results using vaping/ENDS to quit smoking.

Each theme has subthemes that provide further depth on the overall theme.





1 Pacific peoples expressed concern about the broader social impacts of vaping

There was caution around not knowing enough about the long-term health implications of vaping.

Pacific peoples were also worried about how different generations had access to vaping and how that would impact their community's future health outcomes. Further, Pacific peoples were concerned about the increasing ease of access to vaping and that this might lead to community exploitation, as has occurred with other industries.

Pacific Peoples have concerns about the unknown health effects of vaping

Pacific peoples were concerned about the health implications of vaping. In particular, Pacific peoples were worried about unknown health implications.

Immediate-concerns...

Did not help my husband. My son is asthmatic, and he says vaping is way better than smoking, but his asthmatic is bad, and I think it's his vape. **I don't believe it's healthy at all.**

ANON, SAMOAN/COOK ISLANDER, SMOKER

... long-term...

It's not a risk-free solution. I still see it in a positive light, like I want to, but there's definitely still a risk, especially since you know vaping been hasn't been around since like as long as smoking has, so **we really don't know the long-term effects of vaping** on someone who's been, you know, using it for 10 years plus or something.

NAREAH, SAMOAN, VAPER

The whole smoking, or like kids vaping, we don't know the effects to our body like 50 years later. **It's a waiting game now.**

DESMOND, SAMOAN, SMOKER & VAPER





... and about any delay in legislation catching up to the harms.

I was working at rehab, Odyssey House, for young people, when this was going through a few years ago. The synthetic cannabis? A while ago. And how that was... **You were just allowed to get that at the counter. Then that finally... Health issues caught up with everybody... They [government] shut that down.** I'm still a bit cautious about this synthetic stuff and how it might affect people because we don't really hear much about that.

ANON, TONGAN, NON-SMOKER/NON-VAPER

Pacific peoples are concerned about the addictive nature of vaping

Pacific peoples were concerned about the addictive nature of vaping. This worry extended to people becoming addicted to vaping after having transitioned from smoking.

Pacific people recognised the addictive nature of vaping.

I think the biggest downside or the **negative of vaping** is it's so convenient because it lasts a lot longer than a cigarette. So I will sit there puffing a lot longer than what I should actually be puffing on. And I think now that I no longer smoke cigarettes, **I've become somewhat addicted to the convenience of a vape.** So yeah, it makes me want to stop.

ANON, SAMOAN/MĀORI, SMOKER

The thing with the vape is like **I've got to constantly have it.**

FELICITY, SAMOAN / TOKELAUAN EX-SMOKER, VAPER

Pacific people noted that vaping was switching from one addiction to another.

You're just swapping one addiction for another.

MARGARET, NIUEAN, SMOKER

Just to help people because, like, if they're trying to move over to something to help them get rid of something. **If they're moving over to something that's just as bad addiction wise, then they're never going to get over it.**

ANARU, COOK ISLAND, EX-SMOKER/EX-VAPER



Pacific people wanted to give up vaping, but the addictive nature meant it was difficult.

Oh, God. But yeah, so I've gone to this point where **I'm really addicted. I really want to give it up, and I really can't.** I get really anxious, real bad anxiety, when I don't have it.

KATRINA, FIJIAN/PALAGI, VAPER

Pacific peoples have concerns about the growing ease of access to vaping, and the exploitation of Pacific communities

Pacific peoples raised concerns about the growing ease of access to vaping in their communities and how this could reflect exploitative practices they had seen in other industries.

Pacific peoples expressed concerns about the growing ease of access in their communities...

But I mean **vape's everywhere.** It's fully easy. Way more easier, which is... **Vaping is way worse than smoking.**

LITIA, FIJIAN, SMOKER & VAPER

Seeing it. I mean, **I look at vaping shops, and I think, oh God, not another one.**

ANON, FIJIAN, NON-SMOKER/NON-VAPER

... and what that might mean for their loved ones.

I think because I think of my son. He's 18. He's at that age where he'll be wanting to try different things. So having the vape shop, I suppose, close to us will sort of make... If it wasn't, there may be less chance of him thinking, "Oh, I'm going to try this vape." That's how I sometimes see things. **So since it's there, it'll just give him more easy access to try it,** where I think that if it wasn't there, maybe it won't be something that'll come into his mind.

ANON, COOK ISLANDER, EX-SMOKER





Pacific peoples were worried that, as with other unhealthy industries such as alcohol and fast food, Pacific communities were becoming a target of exploitation.

I do worry about what it means for people who are in for less fortunate situations. For me, morally, **it's not right**. It's not morally right to exploit people. **It feels like they're exploiting people, because they're, there's Shosha shops everywhere, vaping stores everywhere.**

ANON, NIUEAN, NON-SMOKER/NON-VAPER

What do I know about vaping? **I see shops all over the place in areas that are lower socioeconomic, like booze shops as well.** Very, very prevalent in those areas... ..Same reason as I don't like seeing the alcohol shops in those low socioeconomic areas. **It targets the people that are... Without being rude, that can't afford it.**

ANON, FIJIAN, NON-SMOKER/NON-VAPER

Pacific Peoples have identified different generational concerns about levels of access to vaping

Pacific peoples had concerns about generational accessibility. There were two contrasting views: first, Pacific peoples were worried that vaping was too accessible to younger generations, and second, that vaping was not accessible enough to older generations as a smoking cessation tool.

Pacific peoples saw the potential of vaping as a step towards nicotine-free lives but were concerned that vaping was not accessible enough to older generations to help them quit smoking.

I think our **younger generation should like bring more knowledge for the elders with vaping to help switch them over.** If I can do it with my mum... I'm still shocked to this day that she's a vaper 'cause she's a hard nut to crack!... For her to follow her kids and for us to lead the way for her to go on for a different journey, she actually went off it, and she hasn't touched a cigarette, like, since she stopped. Now she can't stand the smell of cigarettes as well.

AKANESE, TONGAN, EX-SMOKER/EX-VAPER

I think, because the oldest they'll probably see a lot of kids doing it, and they don't want to like follow what the little kids do. As a kid, you want to do what the elders do, but now it's like the **elders don't want to do what the kids do...**

DESMOND, SAMOAN, SMOKER & VAPER



Pacific peoples were worried that vaping was too accessible for, and targeted towards, younger generations.

One Collaborator shared how her children (under 10) engage with and access vapes:

They already know it, but **they love it**. They like to smell. They like to inhale it. I mean, they'll see the juice just sitting there, and they'll want to smell it. They pick up the vape.

ANON, FIJIAN, SMOKER & VAPER

In part, Pacific peoples attributed this to targeted marketing.

So, they've **marketed it so well** that it almost looks more popular than cigarettes now, because it's also such a cool thing. **The ages that they're targeting are, I think, younger**, because everyone loves to see all this big smoke coming out. And then, again, there's the flavours, there's the cool vaping, the tools, you've got different pipes, you've got the pen and you've got the big one that....And it won't smell like a cigarette, you can do it in your car, and it'll smell like mango or Coca-Cola or something.

ANON, COOK ISLAND/MĀORI, NON-SMOKER/NON-VAPER

Pacific peoples also noted that their younger generations were picking up vaping without having smoked.

My niece has never touched a cigarette in her life, but she starts vaping, and I just think that's stupid.

ANON, SAMOAN/COOK ISLANDER, SMOKER





2 Pacific peoples' knowledge of vaping is based on personal and social experiences

Pacific peoples' perceptions of vaping are shaped primarily by their relationships with other people, as opposed to government and commercial communications. Pacific peoples noted that the health sector had not been supportive in spreading knowledge about vaping. As a result, there is a significant lack of official knowledge and data about vaping in the community, and Pacific peoples learn about vaping through personal experiences and relationships.

Personal experiences and relationships shape Pacific peoples' knowledge of vaping

Pacific peoples often referred to how they knew things about vaping because they had experienced it or had a friend or family member who had told them about it. This sub-theme is particularly concerned with what Pacific people 'know' about vaping, and not how they practice vaping.

Personal experiences shaped Pacific peoples' knowledge of vaping.

I notice sometimes if the juices from the vape actually come out of the vape, instead of just the smoke... **I had a reaction to it, my tongue, because of the juice. It's like, oh, that's not good.**

ANON, FIJIAN, VAPER

All I know is once I gave up alcohol, gave up cigarettes, **I am more sick than I was during all that.** Maybe I should have just carried on.

ANON, COOK ISLANDER, VAPER

Pacific peoples also build their understanding of vaping based on their relationships with others and what they share.

And I've actually **had somebody say that yeah, it is actually more expensive.**

ANON, FIJIAN, NON-SMOKER/NON-VAPER

But I tried the vape and **when I see my mates, he burnt himself, his back is really bad, burnt from the vape.** And I was like, "Nah. I'm not smoking that anymore." And. And now back just to the smoke.

PALENAPA, TONGAN, SMOKER



Pacific peoples also share knowledge drawn from both their own experiences and what others tell them.

Well, no, I've just never thought... when I first smoked a vape, I just choked on it. Started hard out coughing on it. But **they say when you start, they tell me, friends tell me, that's how it starts.** You smash a vape, you're just going to hard out cough, but you'll get used to it.

MIRIAM, TOKELAUAN, SMOKER

The health sector has not been supportive in spreading knowledge about vaping

Pacific peoples reported negative experiences with health professionals around vaping and noted a significant lack of information from the health sector about vaping. This mirrors Strickett et al.'s finding that information on the long-term health impacts on ENDS (vaping) was hard to find compared to information on the practicalities of using ENDS devices.⁶²

Oh no. Doctors only tell me that I need to give up [smoking]. **They don't actually suggest that I vape.**

LINA-TIANA, COOK ISLAND MĀORI -SAMOAN, SMOKER

Even, like, those old-school TV ads. I haven't really seen too many of the smoking ones these days compared to before, but **there's definitely nothing in terms of the vaping ones too.**

ANON, SAMOAN, NON-SMOKER/NON-VAPER

Pacific peoples identified a lack of information and data about vaping

Pacific peoples noted that there were a number of unanswered questions and knowledge gaps about vaping in the community. These ranged from topics such as understanding the difference between smoking and vaping, to the short- and long-term impacts of vaping.

Pacific peoples identified a knowledge gap on the differences between smoking and vaping.

To be honest, **I don't know what the difference is in between, or what's better** in between smoking cigarettes and vaping.

SAM, TONGAN, VAPER

⁶² Strickett et al., "A Qualitative Analysis," 552-3.





Pacific peoples had unanswered questions about vaping.

But the thing is, I want to know, **can people die through vaping as well?**

MIRIAM, TOKELAUAN, SMOKER

I don't think any of us know enough about vaping and what's in them, and you know these advertisements and stuff on if you want to quit. But we don't really know what's in them. We know what is in cigarettes, but we don't really know what is in them, these vapes.

ANON, COOK ISLAND/SAMOAN, SMOKER & VAPER

There were also indications that the community had accessed some health information on vaping, but it was perhaps not official.

I just hear people, like "Oh, why you vaping for, it's going to give you **popcorn lungs**?⁶³".

IVY, TONGAN/PALAGI, SMOKER & VAPER

Pacific peoples were also concerned about the lack of information about the long-term impacts of vaping.

I think of the two, vaping and smoking, just off what I know about it now, my understanding is that it's less harmful than cigarettes. But I also think that because vaping's still relatively new, **there's not enough information.** There's **not enough data to support the long-term effects** of it.

ANON, COOK ISLANDER/TAHITIAN, NON-SMOKER/NON-VAPER

⁶³ Popcorn lung is the common name for bronchiolitis obliterans which results from damage of the lungs' small airways. Diacetyl is a food additive connected to bronchiolitis obliterans and is sometimes found in vaping products.



3 Pacific peoples' decisions to vape are influenced by their social circles

Pacific peoples' practices using vaping devices (ENDS) are influenced by their social circles.

Pacific peoples' family, friends and communities significantly influence how and when vaping is practised, as they introduce, suggest and set social norms for vaping. Pacific peoples' decisions to vape are driven by family and friends alongside wider community norms.

Family and friends shape Pacific peoples' decisions to vape or not

Close family and friends can introduce Pacific peoples to vaping.

No, my friend vapes too and my daughter-in-law vapes as well, but I think lately we've all just been on the smoking bandwagon, **we all start vaping, and no one smokes.**

IVY, TONGAN/PALAGI, SMOKER & VAPER

I started vaping, my son came home with a vape, and I had a try of it. I coughed my lungs out and then found out because they were using the tobacco juice, and the strength on it was really harsh. He told me that there was other flavours, I did not have to have tobacco in it.

ANON, TONGAN, SMOKER & VAPER

Mum brought me one for, I think it was my birthday, and I just kept on going. I first started off on mint tobacco, but now I'm into peach ice.

LUKE, MĀORI/FIJIAN/TONGAN, VAPER





Pacific peoples' wider community also shape decisions to vape or not

Pacific peoples identified that their wider community had a role to play in their decisions to vape or not.

Pacific peoples' community can include kava groups...

I think it has to do with a lot of their peers, the social group, the kava groups. **Usually, if somebody's already in the vaping thing, or one person will give it a try, you know,** "Have a little smoke on my vaper", vape, and then they'll start talking about "How did you get it? How much? How do you do it?"

ANON, TONGAN, NON-SMOKER/NON-VAPER

... church...

The majority of my circle growing up have not been smokers, and whether it's vaping or cigarettes. But we all grew up and encouraged to do the same, because we're to be involved in other kinds of things. A lot of sports through the church, their program, which is similar to scouts, camping and things like that. **All of that stuff would take up a lot of our time anyway, so we didn't have time for drinking or smoking.** So, it was all just to promote a healthier way of living and lifestyle.

ANON, COOK ISLANDER/TAHITIAN, NON-SMOKER/NON-VAPER

... and social media circles.

I see more people on my Facebook page or friends who I follow who are vaping and smoking. So, it kind of, like, interests me to be like, "What are they vaping? What the device called? I want to try it." Or "Is it nice?"

JOANNE, TOKELAUAN/ MĀORI, SMOKER & VAPER



4 Pacific peoples can identify vaping culture and practices

Pacific peoples identified specific vaping culture and practices, including the look, feel and experience of vaping and that social attitudes towards vaping could shape vaping practices.

Pacific peoples also shared where and how vaping merchandise is purchased and where and when people vape.

The look and experience of vaping make it attractive

Pacific peoples described the look and feel of vaping as being connected to the types of devices they could purchase, the smell, the flavour options, the feel of the stores and being able to blow large smoke plumes.

Flavours and different devices were identified as a key part of the experience of vaping.

I just jumped on vape, because just, like, the **flavours**, like I just started getting sick of like cigarettes... The tobacco taste and all of that. Even the smell it just sticks on you, like, you don't want that, like you want to smoke, but it's like... You don't want the smell to stick on you.

DESMOND, SAMOAN, SMOKER & VAPER

Just helps me release the stress, and I calm down after a long day. Vaping to me sometimes just feels like nothing and especially because **there's so many different flavours and different vape products**. I'm always trying to find one that's right, but I always switch a vape and then I switch a flavour.

JOANNE, TOKELAUAN, SMOKER & VAPER

Pacific peoples also noted the lack of cigarette smoke smell with vaping was important.

Yeah, your clothes, your clothes aren't, you know, **I'm not gonna stink of it afterwards**, you know. So, like, if something if you're standing next to someone who smokes and they, you know, they spark up in the car or something, you're gonna smell of it when you leave the car. But I guess vaping, you don't.

ANON, SAMOAN, NON-SMOKER/NON-VAPER





The ease of vaping was a key part of the experience of vaping.

They just said **it's easier**. You just pull it out, just charge it, and then away you go. You don't have to go outside. I know people that are happy to just vape inside. Just learning about those little things. And those are only from people that I know vape.

ANON, COOK ISLANDER, EX-SMOKER

Pacific people also noted that the shops that sell vaping products were inviting.

It seems to be one way, I suppose, getting people not to smoke. It's by making it a lot more visible because, I mean, vaping stores are like, as I'm thinking about it now. How many vaping stores are there as I'm driving along. Yeah they're all next to each other and **they all look so inviting**. They're well lit. They look pretty and everything, it's not a seedy little thing. It actually does look inviting. Some of them look really flash it's not until you actually go up to the stores because they've all got different names. There is one **I thought was so lovely it looks like a jewellery store**. Because it's all white and **it looks so pretty** and as I get closer to the door I'm thinking, **oh my gosh, it's a vape shop**.

MARGARET, NIUEAN, SMOKER

Social attitudes to vaping shape when and how Pacific peoples vape

Social attitudes to vaping captured how Pacific peoples think others perceive vaping and how this shapes vapers' and/or smokers' decisions to vape. Often, this sub-theme revolved around deciding to vape around their community.

Pacific peoples reported that others did not mind when they vaped around them...

With vaping, you can just sit there and just do it, **they don't really mind vaping**.

IVY, TONGAN/PALAGI, SMOKER & VAPER



... and that this meant that they would choose to vape around family members who did not approve of their smoking.

Smoking stinks, and it's absolutely... like it's... yeah. It's horrible. Like I said earlier, my teeth. Oh, my God. Yeah, my teeth and skin. And with vaping, it's nice. **When I'm around my family, they don't have problem with it, and my friends.** It's not just as much as cigarettes do. **My nan would never let me smoke around her, and I never would, so I have had a vape.**

ANON, FIJIAN/TONGAN/MĀORI, SMOKER & VAPER

Pacific peoples felt that they were less likely to be told not to vape, even in spaces where vaping was not allowed.

I guess vaping is, it's a little bit more convenient aside from the fact that you have to charge your vape. I guess it's more convenient. So, **even though you see signs up and it says no smoking, no vaping, I feel like you are not going to get in as much... not necessarily trouble,** but you're not going to get so many people look at you on the side of the street like, "Hey, you are not supposed to be vaping here." Versus if I was to be smoking, smoking definitely has a big no-no way more than vaping. They kind of don't feel as bad to be vaping.

ANON, SAMOAN/PALAGI, EX-SMOKER & VAPER

Some Collaborators noted that they hid their vaping from their community.

Definitely. For me, it's like when I go to church, **I'm a good girl, I have a quick vape in the car or at a place where they can't see me.** And then I walk into church like nothing has happened and no one would know any difference.

ANON, SAMOAN, SMOKER & VAPER

The preference to be around vapers, rather than smokers, was confirmed by non-smokers/non-vapers.

Like if it was, if I have a choice between standing next to a smoker than someone that vapes... Like if that was the only place where I could stand, then **I'll probably stand next to the vaper.**

AMBER-LEE, NIUEAN/MĀORI, NON-SMOKER/NON-VAPER





Pacific peoples' patterns of purchasing vaping merchandise are varied

Pacific peoples' patterns of purchasing vaping merchandise are particularly varied, reflecting the wide range of possibilities in flavours, nicotine levels, devices, prices and locales.

Pacific peoples recognise there are differences in the quality of juices and devices...

I have a **really good device**, and I **only buy really good juice**. I find it depends on what you buy. If you buy the cheapy kind of stuff or a leaky machine, then obviously, you're going to go through juice quite fast.

KATRINA, FIJIAN/PALAGI, VAPER

...however, their preferences are not always available and this can result in consuming higher nicotine levels.

I'd prefer to buy 40s, but sometimes you go into the vape store and they don't have 40s. There weren't any 40s. So kind of have **no choice but to buy a 50**.

SAM, TONGAN, VAPER

The wide variety in quality also led some outlier Collaborators to note that vaping costs more because of poor-quality devices.

If you drop your smokes, then you can just go buy another pack, but **if you drop your vape and it cracks, that's it**. And it might even add to more money. And you'll be like, oh, I'm going to **spend another \$30** on a f***ing vape because I **guarantee you everyone that does vape that's not their first one**. That's their second or third.

DESMOND, SAMOAN, SMOKER & VAPER

The levels of choice can be overwhelming, and vaping retailers do not always answer questions and seem to lack knowledge.

Maybe I need to find the right one to carry on, maybe. But now there's so many to choose from. I asked at shops, **they don't really seem to know anything about them**. I have to go to the... like, you know, the Shosha shops or the proper shops, which I can't always just go down and do it and ask a lot of questions about them, but **they're not very helpful**.

JAYE, NIUEAN/MĀORI/PALAGI, SMOKER



Price was a consistent theme...

But as soon as I tasted those nice flavoured ones, I was like, "Ah, f***, I'm just going to get these." **Then I found out how much they are, and I was like, "f***, I'm definitely getting these."**

ANON, COOK ISLANDER/TONGAN, SMOKER & VAPER

... however, Pacific peoples also recognised that price often reflected quality.

I've gone through heaps because they're, like, **cheap \$9 ones**. And **they always seem to stuff out**, like if not where they charge them, or something happens to them. And I just end up with these heaps of vapes around the house, you know?

ANON, SAMOAN, VAPER

Pacific peoples vape everywhere, and addiction can drive the choice to vape

Pacific peoples vape in the workplace, at home and when they are out with friends. Pacific peoples also vape inside and in cars, which many noted that they would not do with smoking. Pacific peoples reported an addictive nature that determines how and when they vape, pointing out that vaping is habitual and frequent.

Pacific peoples noted that while smoking was not acceptable in the workplace, vaping was.

You kind of have to have like a designated area for smokers. And vaping, **you can literally stand at the warehouse and vape**, and no one will give two s***s.

SAM, TONGAN, VAPER

Because with working, for me to go outside and have a cigarette, I'm actually leaving my desk. Wherefore if I'm vaping, **I can just vape at my desk.**

ANON, SAMOAN, SMOKER & VAPER





Pacific peoples saw vaping as something that could be done anywhere...

Anywhere, anytime. You could be in the toilet and you could vape. If we go right back to basics, that's what you could do. You could even vape in the shower, I'm sure. Because it's not electronic, is it?

MARGARET, NIUEAN, SMOKER

... and some activities meant higher levels of vaping.

And then **when I'm on the phone, I'll vape more so then**, you know? Like, I've been sitting here vaping the whole time pretty much.

ANON, SAMOAN, VAPER

Vaping was seen as a reward at the end of the day.

Depending, like usually for me, the last time I vaped, usually when I finish work, because I'm like, "Yes, I'm done." It's like **I reward myself with a vape.**

ANON, FIJIAN, VAPER

Pacific peoples reported mixed responses to vaping around children. Some believed that there was no impact on children and others refused to vape around children.

When he's in bed, we can vape in the lounge because he's upstairs, and **there's no after effect, there's no lingering effect** after having a vape.

ANON, SAMOAN, SMOKER & VAPER

But not like if I have the kids around here or around me, **I wouldn't.**

ANON, TONGAN, SMOKER & VAPER

Oh, totally. Yeah. Yeah. **We don't vape around our child.**

ANON, SAMOAN, SMOKER & VAPER

Pacific peoples recognised the addictive nature of vaping and how it drove their behaviour.

I think the biggest downside or the **negative of vaping is it's so convenient** because it lasts a lot longer than a cigarette. **So I will sit there puffing a lot longer than what I should actually be puffing on.** And I think now that I no longer smoke cigarettes, **I've become somewhat addicted to the convenience of a vape.** So yeah, it makes me want to stop.

ANON, SAMOAN, SMOKER



Some.. mates... Just so addicted. Not even five minutes and they keep vaping. But I heard there was someone who vaped so much he had to go to the hospital. Just too much vaping in one sitting. Like... two juice bottles in one day! For me one juice bottle is enough for two.. Three weeks. If you go through two... what're you up to?

DESMOND, SAMOAN, SMOKER & VAPER

But it's **highly addictive and it's way easier to vape.** I mean, you can do that s*** in the bathroom with nobody knowing it. It's just you don't have that smell. **It's very dangerous because it's that f***ing easy to do it.**

LITIA, FIJIAN, SMOKER & VAPER





5 Cost and health are the main drivers for changing from smokes to vapes (ENDS)

Pacific peoples often spoke of cost and health as driving reasons for changing from smoking to vaping.

A deeper analysis of this theme showed that health and cost were viewed as key to contributing to and supporting their families. The decreased cost of vaping meant more money for the family budget, and the health implications meant they could be there for their family.

It costs less to vape, which means money is available for other things

Most Pacific peoples identified that the cost of vaping was less than smoking and that this was more of a reason to vape than health. Pacific peoples also noted that lower cost is a motive to vape because it leaves more money in the family budget each week.

The cost of cigarettes was identified as a key driver for switching from smoking to vaping...

I cannot afford it. **It's a luxury to get a packet of cigarettes.** Absolutely. Me renting and having to... you know, with the gas prices these days and having to make ends meet just to fill up the cupboards.

LITIA, FIJIAN, SMOKER & VAPER

I know my friends are vaping now because **they can't afford to smoke.**

LINA-TIANA, COOK ISLAND/SAMOAN, SMOKER

...as that meant there was more money for the family budget.

It's more acceptable because... and the money. Again, the money. **A packet of cigarettes could feed a family.**

ANON, TONGAN/FIJIAN/MĀORI, SMOKER & VAPER



If I can use the money to buy something else, food for the family or something that would be more prudent, then I would do that. I will do that. So, if I don't spend it, then I'll spend it on something else and not cigarettes, and it's actually good for me. **I like that. I would prefer to use the money on something that would benefit in a healthy way for me and my family, rather than buying it on cigarettes.**

ANON, SAMOAN, SMOKER & VAPER

But Pacific people still noted that cost saving did not mean they were 'winning' as they did not know what was in the vape.

And it costs him \$33. So I feel like I'm winning, but at the same time, I kind of don't know what I'm putting into my lungs type of thing. **So I don't know if I'm winning, but I do know I'm saving.** That's one thing I do know.

SAM, TONGAN, VAPER

One Collaborator noted it was not cheaper to vape.

No, I'm not vaping now. Because what's the point? You buy two something for 30 dollars and you buy that.....because you buy 10 dollars there, 10 dollars there, 10 dollars there and the 10 dollars of a liquid. It's like 20 plus of your liquid, everything come together it's like 35 dollars... **But if you keep buying the coil when it burn and burn, and burn, it's come up at 60 dollars. It's the same as the two packets when you buy it.**

ANON, TONGAN, SMOKER

Vaping is perceived as healthier

Pacific peoples identified that vaping was healthier than smoking and that this meant they could be around for their families longer.

Healthwise has been really beneficial to me, and I've only just noticed it recently, just with my breathing, my fitness levels. I've gone back to the gym. I was gymming while I was smoking, and I'm still gymming, but **having quit the smokes, I notice a difference of, I can breathe better and last longer.**

ANON, NIUEAN/COOK ISLANDER, EX-SMOKER/EX-VAPER





I want to be around for them because I can honestly see nobody else around for them, because I've gotten them back off of Oranga Tamariki. The urges for the smoking, I just can't seem to kick. That's the reason why I do not want to lose my kids (moko). They don't know where they're going to go to.

ANON, TONGAN, SMOKER & VAPER

My son was five years old. I come home from work and he just said, **"Dad, someone told me that you're going to die if you keep smoking. And I don't want you to die."** And he was crying.

ANARU, COOK ISLAND, EX-SMOKER/EX-VAPER





6 Pacific peoples have mixed results using vaping/ENDS to quit smoking

Pacific peoples have experienced mixed results changing from smoking to vaping.

This theme expands on Strickett et al.'s findings that Māori and Pacific peoples successfully changed from smoking to vaping depending on how satisfactory the experience of vaping was, and the ability to source a vaping device that met their nicotine needs.⁶⁴ Our larger Pacific-specific report reflects these findings and builds our understanding of how Pacific peoples utilise vaping as a step towards a nicotine-free lifestyle.

It is not always possible to change from smoking to vaping

Unsuccessful attempts to change nicotine delivery from smoking to vaping can be connected to vaping not meeting nicotine delivery expectations or experiences.

Oh, because I was going through this broke stage of "I can't afford cigarettes," so I figured, "Oh yeah. I'll vape." **But vaping doesn't have the same kick as smoking.**

LINA-TIANA, COOK ISLAND/SAMOAN, SMOKER

For the anxiety **I need the real thing, not vape.** I'm just so addicted to the tobacco cigarette.

MIRIAM, TOKELAUAN, SMOKER

The cost of vaping played a role in changing from smoking to vaping, but price alone was not a predictor of a successful switch partly because Pacific peoples perceived vaping as not 'hitting right'.

Price definitely was one of the common trends across all boards and... what else... I would say pricing, and yeah, guess that **vaping was more affordable.** But then I found a trend where majority of them would vape to get off smoking. **Some of them have been successful and just stay on the vape, and then the other half just go back to smoking because they think it's not the same.**

MERITIAN, COOK ISLAND/SAMOAN/NIUEAN, VAPER

⁶⁴ Strickett et al., "A Qualitative Analysis," 553.





Sometimes the vaping it's... How do you say it? It just doesn't hit properly like smoking does, especially if I've had a long day, then I go into vaping, and **it just doesn't hit right**, if you get what I mean.

JOANNE, TOKELAUAN, SMOKER & VAPER

Pacific peoples do change nicotine delivery system from smokes to vapes

Pacific peoples recognised the value of vaping for supporting a shift away from smoking.

Often, the value of vaping as a shift from smoking was in still getting some nicotine but in a way perceived as healthier.

What I have noticed is that a lot of the vapers I've met, **a lot of them not looking to actually go down to zero**, because obviously there's options for zero mg no nicotine and to actually finally get off, but most people that I've met who have been vaping or smoking for ages, they are just happy to stick on the vape for good.

NAREAH, SAMOAN, VAPER

There are certain times with switching to vaping. **I notice they go to vaping when they have some good awareness that they've going a bit too much on the smoking tobacco side, and then they'll switch to vaping as a way of trying to wean themselves off the tobacco**, to try and put it out. The talk is always, "Yeah, I'm going to stop smoking now, I'm on the vaping now." I always associated the vaping with them trying to wean, get off the smoking tobacco.

ANON, TONGAN, NON-SMOKER/NON-VAPER

I would say the feeling that it [smoking] gives because of the toxins that are in it and also like, like, how is it sometimes it'll make me nauseous, but I don't know there's some other type of way in that area that will make people feel maybe lightheaded? I dunno. But yeah. **Vaping doesn't make you feel like... Sick? Or it's not displeasure as smoking can be.**

VERA, TOKELAUAN/TONGAN, EX-SMOKER AND VAPER

Some Pacific peoples saw the consistency of flavours across from smoking to vaping as helpful for changing.

When I was smoking I was into my menthol and stuff and now I've continued the same flavour because **it was easier to transition to vaping by keeping up with the same menthol flavour.**

ANON, FIJIAN, VAPER



Pacific peoples want to change to a nicotine-free lifestyle

Pacific peoples shared stories about wanting to transition away from vaping. For some people, this goal reflected understanding other ways that vaping impacts their health, and for others, there was concern that vaping still contained addictive substances. Pacific peoples also recognised the difficulty in quitting vaping.

Pacific people who had changed from smoking to vaping indicated an interest in being able to give up vaping too.

So yeah, kind of stuck to vaping. I'm kind of hoping that further on down the line, **I get to just put this behind me** and see what happens.

SAM, TONGAN, VAPER

However, the practice of vaping was difficult to quit when it was so convenient.

Quit vaping? Yes, I'm in the process of quitting vaping. I told myself once I'm no longer needing the vape to forget about cigarettes, that I would stop vaping. And **the thing that's holding me back is, again, the convenience of just having it on me all the time.**

ANON, SAMOAN/MĀORI, SMOKER

Pacific people expressed a desire to give up vaping because there were health implications if they continued to vape.

Vaping deteriorated my oral health more than smoking did, and practically, as well. I noticed changes quite quickly after vaping. So that will be another, after having all this work done at the dentist, wanting to try and move away from vaping altogether. That would be another reason for me to want to kind of stop.

ANON, SAMOAN/PALAGI, EX-SMOKER & VAPER

While Pacific people recognised that vaping could help transition to nicotine-free lives, they were also concerned that this was not how it was being marketed.

The vaping was definitely needed to help me stop smoking, though. **So I do give pros to vaping in that sense, as long as it's being utilised in the way it's supposed to be.** Not utilised in the way that they're going to try market it to keep you going on it.

ANARU, COOK ISLANDER, EX-SMOKER/EX-VAPER



Recommendations

These recommendations should be implemented with an understanding of the nuances and complexities of Pacific peoples' identities and experiences.

1 Immediate programming, aimed at Pacific peoples, with information and health messaging about Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems (such as vaping) is developed and implemented

Pacific peoples identified a lack of official information about what vaping is and how it impacts their health. As a result, Pacific peoples are relying on their interpersonal relationships and own experiences to shape their attitudes and perceptions of vaping. Within the broader context of poor health outcomes for Pacific peoples based on health delivery models, it is increasingly important to hear the calls for more information being made by Pacific communities. In particular:

- Targeted programming for different generations of Pacific peoples to reflect different uses, namely cessation for Pacific youth and adoption for older Pacific peoples who smoke;
- Pacific language resources about vaping;
- Multi-media information availability, including radio, print and social media;
- Programming roll-out that is supported by health professionals in community-facing roles.

2 Clear guidelines about safer vaping practices are created for the vaper and their communities

Pacific peoples identified that they did not receive much communication from health providers about the impacts of vaping. Resultantly, there were mixed approaches to vaping, such as whether to vape with children around. Clear guidelines can be established and communicated via:

- Pacific-specific targeted guidelines;
- Training medical professionals to share these guidelines where applicable;
- Multi-media channels, including radio, print and social media.

3 Further regulation that limits the ease of availability of ENDS/vapes is explored

This report joins a wider call for more regulation around the availability of vaping. Pacific peoples are concerned about the increasing presence of vape stores in their communities and the ease of access for young people. In particular, Pacific peoples are aware of the addictive nature of vaping and concerned about the future implications for youth who begin vaping now. These regulations could include:

- Limiting the retail outlets permitted to sell vaping products;
- Ensuring that anyone born after January 1st, 2009, is unable to purchase vaping products;
- Further limiting the amounts of nicotine available in vaping products;
- Limiting the flavours available in vaping products;
- Limiting the vaping devices available.

These recommendations do not include an increase in the cost of vaping as a deterrent, reflecting concerns from participants that a further 'Pacific tax'⁶⁵ would be added to communities already bearing the brunt of the increased cost of living. To ensure that any regulations achieve their desired outcomes it is important that international experiences are taken into account and learned from.

4 Targeted smoking cessation programmes that utilise ENDS/vaping are developed as a health system response towards nicotine-free lives

Pacific peoples have recognised that vaping is a viable alternative to smoking. The successful use of vaping to cease smoking is a crucial step toward a Smokefree Aotearoa.⁶⁶ However, Pacific peoples have noted that vaping should be seen as a step in the process toward an entirely nicotine-free life, rather than a final solution. As such, this report recommends clear planning for how Aotearoa New Zealand will move to be nicotine-free.

⁶⁵ Pacific tax refers to taxes on goods and services that seemingly target Pacific peoples because of the over-representation of Pacific community members who utilise these services.

⁶⁶ Ministry of Health, *Smokefree Aotearoa 2025 Action Plan*, December 2021, 12, https://www.health.govt.nz/system/files/documents/publications/hp7801_-_smoke_free_action_plan_v15_web.pdf.

5 Further research into vaping/ENDS in the different demographics of Pacific communities is undertaken

As a Pan-Pacific project this report offers insight into Pacific people's perceptions and attitudes, however, as with all Pan-Pacific research it lacks the specificity of different demographic insights which is becoming increasingly important for understanding our Pacific communities and our intersectional experiences. Investigating specific demographics for Pacific communities would provide further insight into Pacific peoples' perceptions of vaping. This richer data would enable an understanding of how to target specific Pacific communities with health messaging. This research should include:

- Building an understanding of vaping store locations across Aotearoa New Zealand and their proximity to Pacific communities over time utilising the data collected by the Director General of Health;⁶⁷
- Youth-specific research to understand how Pacific youth are taking up vaping, to address concerns raised in this research about accessibility for youth;
- Specific research into Pacific peoples changing from smokes to vapes, and beyond, to nicotine-free lifestyles.

6 More opportunities for Pacific peoples to participate in decision-making, policy-making, and community-led quit-nicotine initiatives

During the research process, Pacific Collaborators noted how they felt empowered through sharing their stories and particularly enjoyed being able to provide commentary on their lived experiences.

Pacific peoples particularly enjoyed that this research contributed to the feedback on Smokefree Environments and Regulated Products (Smoked Tobacco) Amendment Bill and that some participants were able to share their own stories through that platform.

Opportunities for Pacific peoples to share their lived experiences provide important and reaffirming moments for Pacific communities. This process aligns with the new *Siu Ki Moana*⁶⁸ and the national *Pacific Wellbeing Strategy*,⁶⁹ which calls for a shift toward Pacific communities being empowered to advocate for change themselves.

⁶⁷ Ministry of Health, *Smokefree Aotearoa*, 24–5.

⁶⁸ Te Whatu Ora, *Siu Ki Moana: Pacific Health Promotion Action Plan*, Te Whatu – Ora Health New Zealand, 2022, 1, <https://www.hpa.org.nz/sites/default/files/Siu%20Ki%20Moana%20Pacific%20Health%20Promotion%20Action%20Plan%202022.pdf>.

⁶⁹ Ministry for Pacific Peoples, *Pacific Wellbeing Strategy*, 2022, 4, <https://www.mpp.govt.nz/assets/Reports/Pacific-Wellbeing-Strategy-2022/All-of-Government-Pacific-Wellbeing-Strategy.pdf>.

Strengths and Limitations

This report is based on data collected in 60 one-on-one talanoa conducted with Pacific peoples across Aotearoa via online means.

Collaborators came from various settings and demographics that shaped their responses and shared stories. There was representation across multiple Pacific ethnicities, genders and birth locales, alongside a wide range of educational experiences and professions.

It should be noted that there was a lack of MVPFAFF+ identified voices within this report and that there could have been even more diverse ethnic representation given the heterogenous nature of Pacific communities. Despite this, the report has identified several recommendations that will likely resonate with the wider Pacific community throughout Aotearoa New Zealand to support Pacific communities in understanding, engaging and disengaging with vaping as a practice.



Conclusion

This report has expanded our understanding of Pacific peoples' perceptions and attitudes towards vaping through 60 talanoa conducted across a diverse representation of Pacific peoples.

There are clear indications that Pacific peoples wish to have access to more information about vaping, clear use of vaping as a health system response towards nicotine-free lives, generational vaping accessibility issues addressed and more opportunities to be heard in order to drive change in our communities.



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