

# Hā Collective Vaping Survey

Summary Report  
July 2022

cogo

curative\_

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# Background



# Introduction

Curative are a creative agency that delivers social change campaigns. Their latest project – the Ha Collective – is aimed at preventing young people from vaping and is funded by the Te Whatu Ora (Health New Zealand). Later this year, Curative will be launching a social campaign and resources that support young people to make critical decisions about their use of vaping products.

The 2022 ASH survey included, for the first time, questions on vaping but there is still a lot more to learn about what is going on for young people when it comes to vaping and the place it currently holds in their lives, in their school community and at home. To fill this knowledge gap, Curative collaborated with Cogo to design online survey research for Year 9 to Year 13 students.

Cogo is a research agency which since 2014 has been working for social change across the public, private and not-for-profit sectors in Aotearoa. Cogo's recent work has been delivering insights research and programme evaluation in disability, family violence, youth development, gender equity, mental health and wellbeing, alcohol harm, and diversity and inclusion.

The insights from this research will feed into the social campaign and resources that Curative, and the team of young co-designers they assembled, will be creating.



# Methodology

Using advanced online survey software, 'Alchemer', Cogo designed an online survey with extensive logic and branching. Cogo worked in collaboration with Curative to design the survey, ensuring that the survey questions collected specific information Curative was interested in – based on the early conversations they had had with key informants and project stakeholders. Curative also assisted with ensuring that the language used was appropriate and familiar to rangatahi.

The survey was designed to investigate the following research questions:

- How are young people currently vaping? How often? Where? With whom? How are they obtaining vaping products?
- Why do young people vape? At first? As an ongoing behaviour? What might they do in place of vaping if it weren't available to them?
- What is important to young people that vape? What is important to young people that don't vape?

The survey also collected detailed demographic and psychographic data to segment the research findings, where sample allows, in order to deliver more meaningful and directive insights. To avoid sample bias, all language around vaping behaviour was neutral so that respondents felt comfortable to complete the survey and be honest in their response.

The survey was distributed to Year 9 – 13 students at eight schools using an online link (one unique link per school). Curative assisted the schools with a communications campaign that Principals and/or other relevant staff members shared to encourage their students to participate. This involved posters with QR codes linking to the online survey, and a short video featuring key team members from Curative and Cogo that provided assurances that the survey was anonymous and that the information rangatahi provided would not be shared with anyone else, particularly not to anyone at their school.



# Results for all rangatahi



# Online survey sample

A total of 2,021 rangatahi responded to the online survey across eight schools in Auckland (4), Dunedin (3), and Gisborne (1).

During data cleaning, 46 responses were removed, and 1,975 valid responses were included in the analysis. Response rates varied from 11% to 59% for each school. Respondents are currently studying in Years 9 through to 13 (see Figure 1).

1,928 respondents answered the question about how comfortable they felt, overall, answering the questions in the survey and 88% reported feeling “Very comfortable”, “Comfortable” or “Neutral”. 1,629 rangatahi responded to the question as to whether, overall, they could be open and honest when answering the survey and 92% said “yes”. We inspected the remaining responses and verified that they could still be included. Given the topic of the survey was vaping, illegal for the majority of respondents being under 18, and against school policy, this level of comfort and honesty is an excellent result.

Respondents were able to select more than one gender/cultural identity, with 47% identifying as female, 49% as male, and 7% identifying as one or more of: non-binary, gender-fluid, genderqueer, takatāpui, transgender, intersex, a self-entered term, and/or selected both male and female, or selected “Don’t know/questioning/unsure” (see Figure 2).

59% of respondents are NZ European/Pākeha, 18% NZ Māori, 21% Pasifika, 18% Asian, 6% Other European and 2% other ethnicities not listed in the survey (see Figure 3).

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## Key Insight

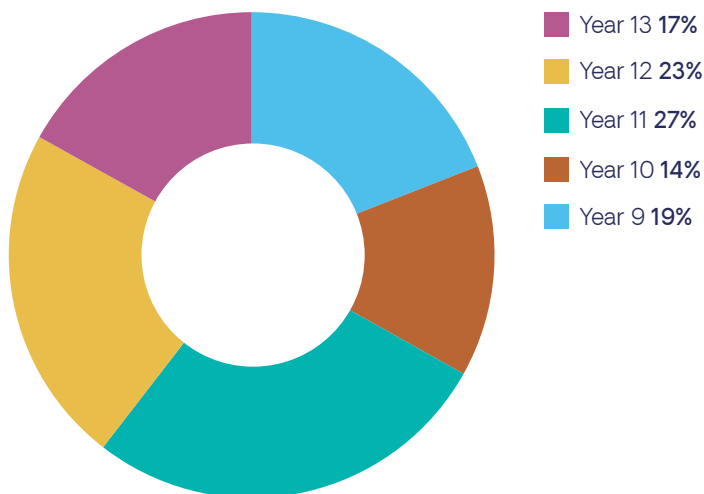
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**Fig. 1**

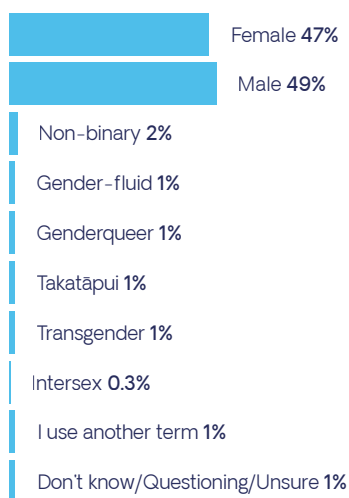
Sample by year  
group (n=1,938<sup>1</sup>)

<sup>1</sup>Please note sample for  
each question differs  
as we do not include  
"Prefer not to answer"  
responses



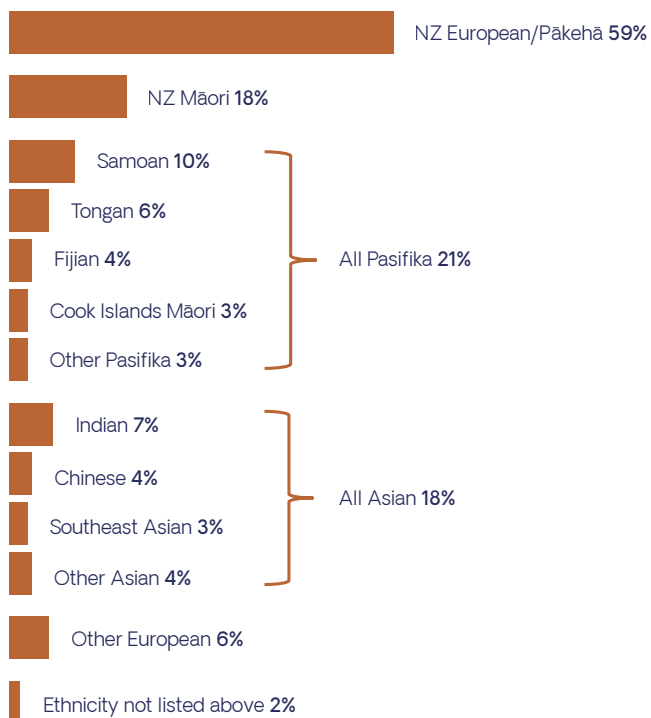
**Fig. 2**

Sample by  
gender/cultural  
identity (n=1,928)



**Fig. 3**

Sample by  
ethnicity  
(n=1,912)



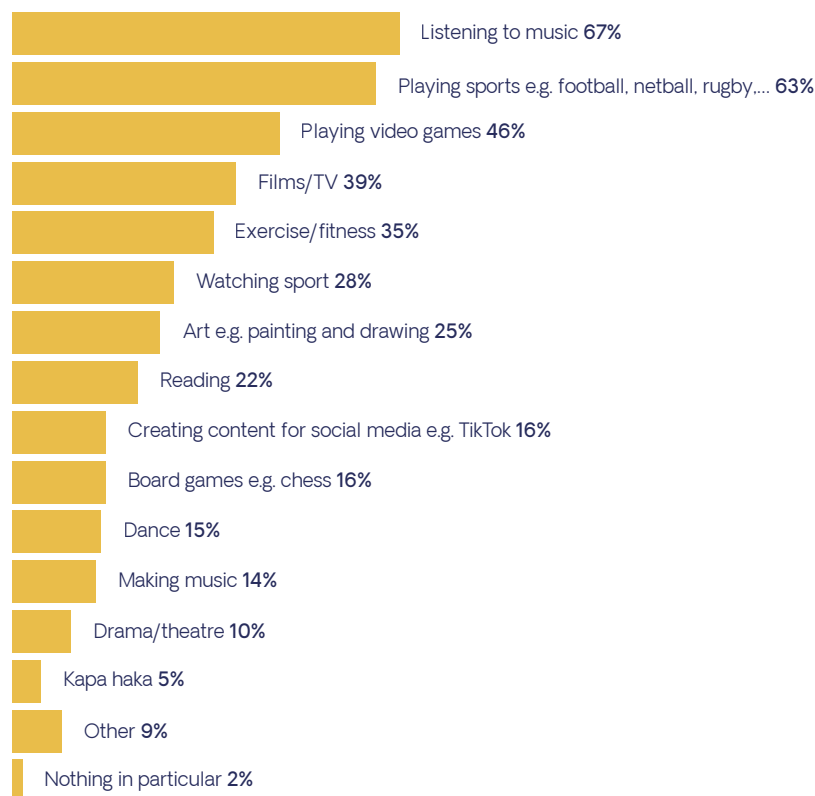


# Rangatahi and their interests

The top 3 things that rangatahi in our sample are interested in, and like doing, are “Listening to music” (selected by 67%), “Playing sports” (63%), and “Playing video games” (46%) (see Figure 4). 58% get to do things that interest them and that they like doing every day, 33% a few times a week (see Figure 5).

**Fig. 4**

What are rangatahi interested in? What kinds of things do they like doing? (n=1,943)



**Fig. 5**

How often do rangatahi get to do things that interest them and that they like doing? (n=1,931)



# Rangatahi & their mental wellbeing

Please note the measures reported in this section were designed to measure self-reported indicators of stress in rangatahi and as such do not represent clinical measures of mental health.

Nonetheless, these self-reported indicators provide valuable insights into what is going on for specific groups of rangatahi, how they are experiencing feelings of stress and worry, and how they are responding.

We asked rangatahi “What do you think about often” and top of mind for them is “Keeping tight with my close friends” (74% saying they think about this often – see Figure 6). Similarly, 57% often think about “The Health and/or happiness of my close friends”. “Doing well in my schoolwork” (58%), “Having money to buy things that I want” (55%), and “My health and wellbeing” (51%) join these to make up the top five things that rangatahi think about often, with more than half of rangatahi often thinking about these topics. Being popular however, either at school or by getting likes on social media are not things that many of these rangatahi think about often (8% for both).

We then presented rangatahi with the list of things that they selected in the previous question that they think about often, and asked them to select the things that “stress you out or make you feel worried”. The top three things that cause rangatahi to feel stressed out and worried are “Doing well in my schoolwork” (41% of respondents selecting this option), “Keeping on top of my schoolwork” (34%), and “Keeping tight with my close friends” (29%) (see Figure 7). 80% of respondents selected at least one topic that stressed them out or made them feel worried.

“Doing well in my schoolwork” and “Keeping on top of my schoolwork” are in the top three for all year groups but “Keeping tight with my close friends” is replaced by “Knowing what I want to do when I leave school” for Year 12s, and by “Getting into university (or other education) when I leave school” for Year 13s.

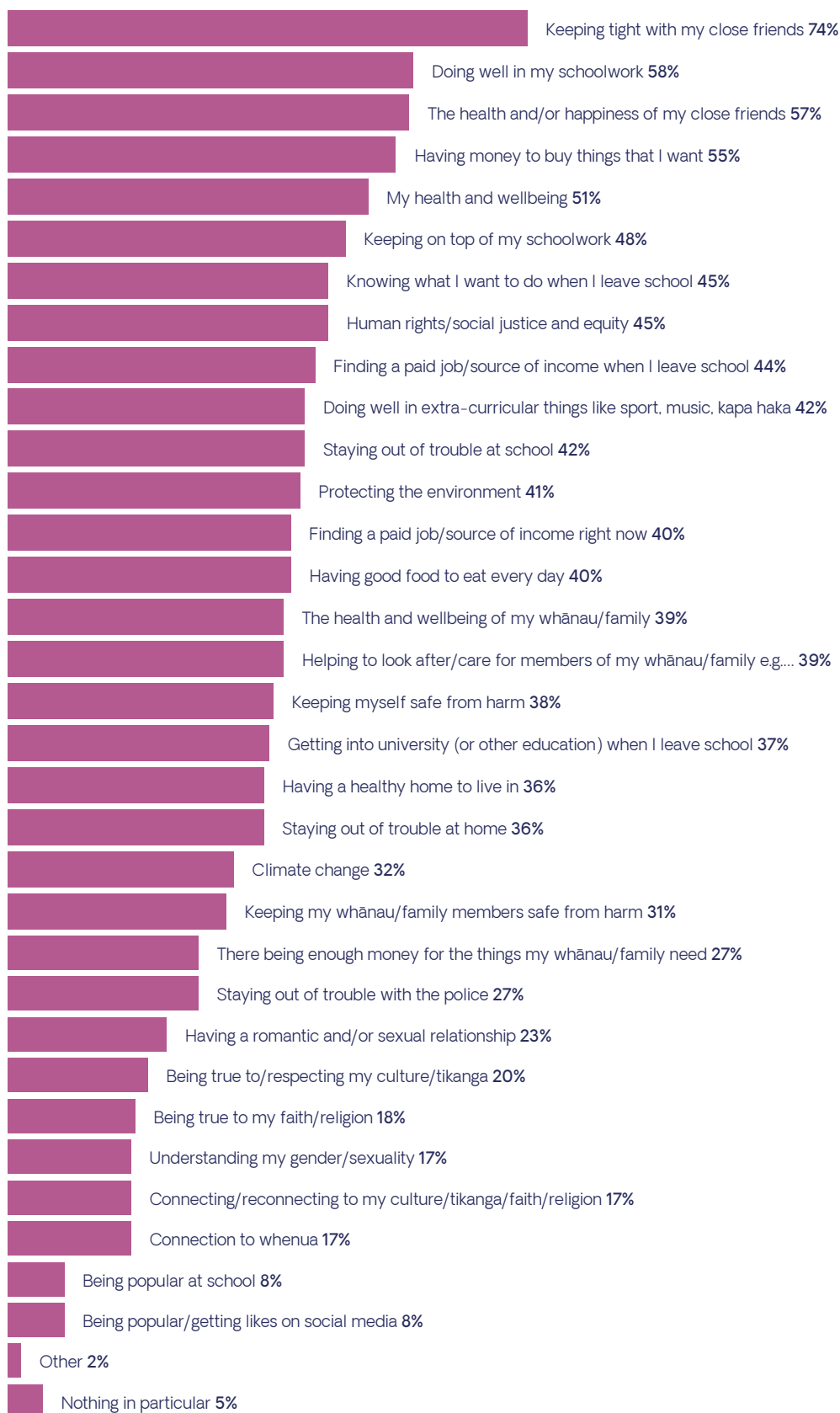
When it comes to how frequently rangatahi report feeling stressed out or worried, 37% feel stressed out “Every day”, and a further 31% “A few times a week” (see Figure 8). Year 10s are the year group most likely to feel stressed out “Every day” (44%, compared to 28% of Year 9s). Just 6% of rangatahi presented with this question “Never” feel stressed out or worried.

62% of rangatahi in our sample reporting feeling stressed out or worried have an adult they said they might talk to if they were feeling stressed out or worried about things. 51% might talk to their parent(s), 52% might talk to a friend(s) at school, and 37% to a friend(s) outside of school. 8% might talk to a teacher or coach at school and 9% to a school counsellor, while 16% of these rangatahi have no-one to talk to when they feel stressed out or worried about things. 23% of these rangatahi said talking to these people in the past had helped them to feel less stressed out or worried “a lot”, and 43% “a little bit”.

The top five things that these rangatahi do when they feel stressed out or worried are “Listen to music (73%)”, “Scroll through social media” (39%), “Exercise” (39%), “Hang out with friends” (39%), and “Gaming” (38%) (see Figure 9). 16% of these rangatahi vape when they feel stressed out or worried.

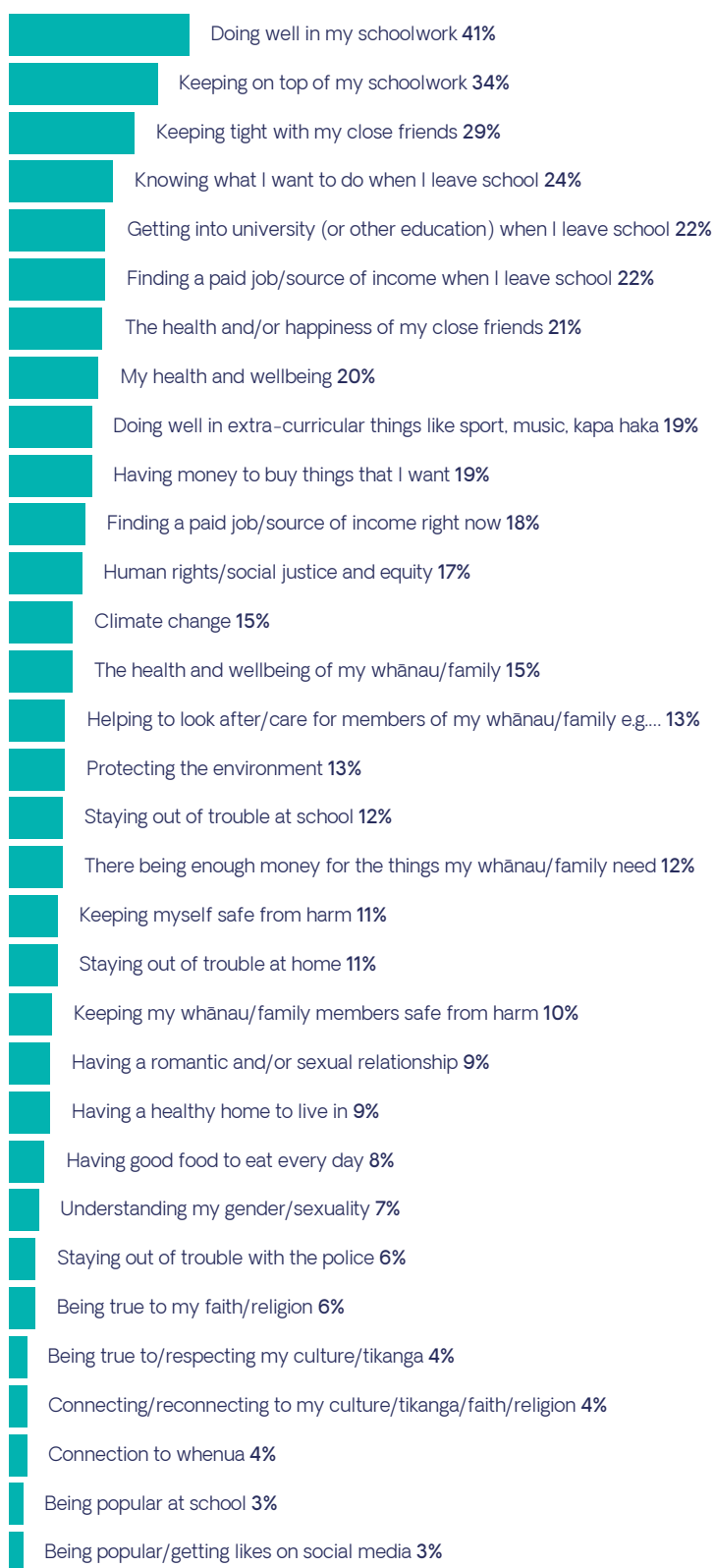
**Fig 6.**

What do you think  
about often?  
(n=1,975)

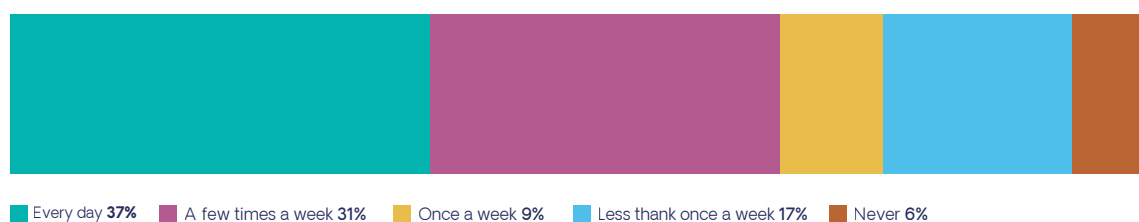


**Fig. 7**

What stresses rangatahi out, makes them feel worried?  
(n=1,975)

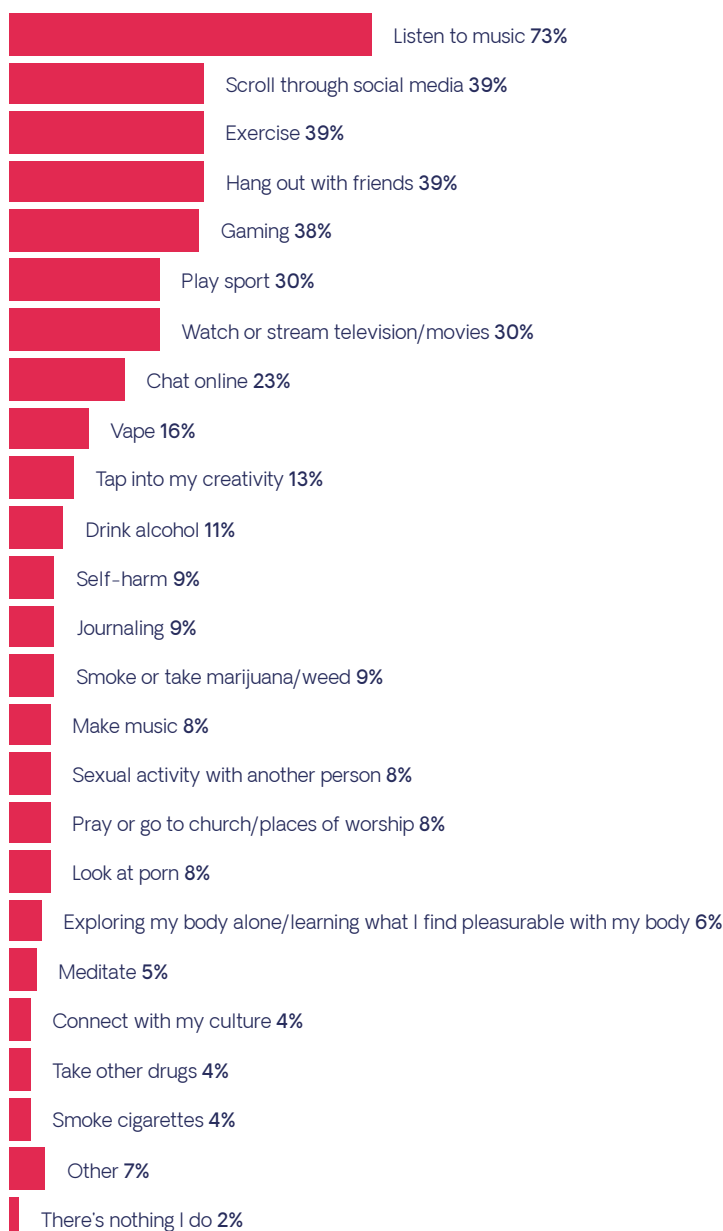
**Fig. 8**

How often do rangatahi feel stressed out or worried?  
(n=1,877)



**Fig. 9**

What do rangatahi tend to do when they feel stressed out or worried? (n=1,756)



**Key Insight**

Year 10s are most likely to feel stressed out "Every day"

Year 10s are  
most likely to  
feel stressed out  
"Every day"

## How rangatahi cope when they are stressed out or worried

14% of rangatahi feel that they cope “Very well” when they’re stressed out or worried, 30% “Well”, 34% “OK (just managing)”, 12% “Not very well” and 7% “Not at all well” (3% “Don’t know/Not sure” – see Figure 10).

We compared the results for those that feel they cope “Very well” and “Well” when they are stressed out or worried (n=780) with those that feel they cope “Not very well” and “Not at all well” (n=344).

Those that say they do not cope well when they feel stressed out or worried are experiencing stress very frequently – 76% feeling stressed out or worried “Every day” compared to just 18% of those saying they cope well. They generally feel stressed out about similar things to those saying they cope well (listed in Figure 6) but selected twice as many things that stress them out on average – 7.4 things on average selected by those saying they do not cope well compared to 3.6 by those saying they cope well.

60% of those saying they cope well might talk to their parent(s) when they feel stressed out or worried, compared to just 36% of those who say they do not cope well. Those saying they do not cope well were more than twice as likely to say they have no-one to talk to (25% compared to 11% of those saying they cope well). Those who are not coping well, but who are talking to someone, are half as likely as those who are coping well to say that talking helped “A lot” (15% of those not coping well compared to 29% of those saying they cope well).

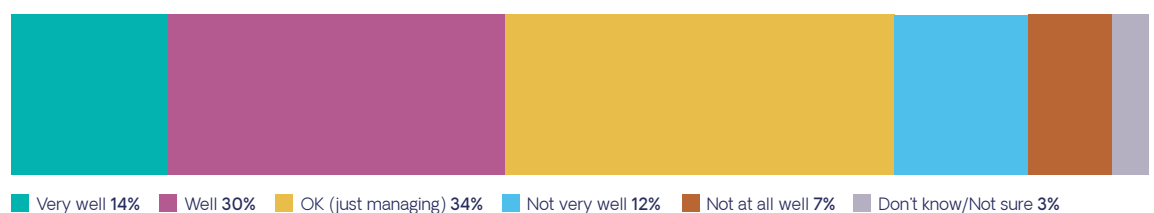
“Listening to music” was top for both groups in terms of what they do when they feel stressed out or worried. “Gaming” and “Hanging out with friends” was also in the top five things for both groups, but “Exercise” and “Play sport” were in the top five for those saying they cope well, while “Scroll through social media” and “Watch or stream television/movies” were in the top five for those saying they do not cope well. 24% of those saying they do not cope well said they self-harm when feeling stressed out or worried, compared to 3% of those coping well.

65% of those saying they cope well get to do something that interests them every day compared to 49% of those saying they do not cope well.

22% of rangatahi would be interested in learning some new ways to help them to cope when they feel stressed out or worried.

**Fig. 10**

Overall, how well do you feel like you cope when you’re stressed out or worried? (n=1,796)



# Rangatahi & vaping

53% of rangatahi in our sample have never vaped, 22% have tried it just once or twice, 6% used to vape regularly, but don't anymore, and 19% currently vape "occasionally" or "regularly" – 10% vaping every day and 9% vaping less frequently (see Figure 11).

Those that vape every day are most commonly vaping "as soon as I wake up" (60%), and then "for most of the day, whenever I can" (58%).

In comparison, 74% of rangatahi in our sample have never smoked, 16% have tried smoking just once or twice, 2% used to smoke regularly, but don't anymore, and 6% currently smoke "occasionally" or "regularly". 9% of those who don't vape have tried smoking at least once, compared to 76% of those who vape every day and 46% of those who vape less frequently.

72% of Year 9s have never vaped compared to 59% of Year 10s, 52% of Year 11s, 42% of Year 12s and 40% of Year 13s. 4% of Year 9s vape every day, compared to 8% of Year 10s, 11% of Year 11s, 13% of Year 12s and 13% of Year 13s.

Vaping rates differed substantially between schools, with between 11% and 33% of rangatahi vaping, and between 5% and 18% vaping every day, across the schools in our sample.

Most commonly, rangatahi first tried vaping when "Someone gave or shared their vape with me" (80%). For just under half of these rangatahi, this was someone at school (45%), while for 17% it was a whānau/family member and for 34% someone else outside of school/whānau/family who provided a vape for them to try.

Those that continue to vape now most commonly said "Someone gives/shares their vape with me" (50%), while 37% said "I buy it myself", and 32% said "Someone else buys it with my money". Those who are buying their own vaping products generally buy them from vaping stores (71%) and dairies (43%), and most commonly get the money to do so by working a paid job (68%).

Of those who get someone else to buy vaping products for them, 27% get someone from school to buy it for them, 34% get an adult whānau/family member to buy it, 15% a whānau/family member of a similar age, and 50% someone else they know outside of school/whānau/family.

Flavour and nicotine content are by far the most important factors when choosing a vape (44% and 43% saying these factors were "Very important" respectively – see Figure 12).

The top five reasons why rangatahi do vape are:

- It helps me to relax/chill out on my own (65% of vapers)
- I like the way it tastes (38%)
- It's a way to connect/relax with my friends (34%)
- It's fun to learn vaping tricks (33%)
- I just really like it (24%)

The top five reasons why rangatahi don't vape are:

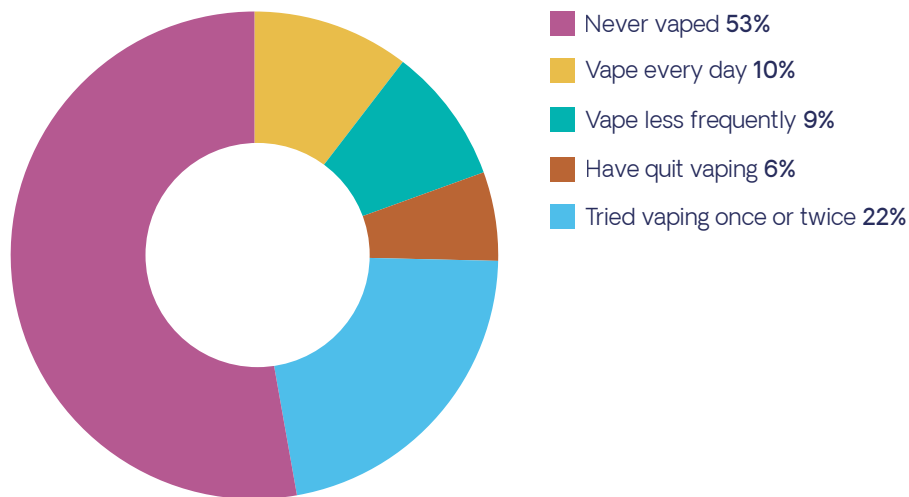
- I've heard about the health risks (63% of non-vapers)
- It would interfere with my fitness/health (54%)
- I don't want to get addicted (54%)
- It just doesn't line up with who I am/my values (53%)
- I could get in trouble at home (48%) (43% are also worried about getting into trouble at school)

59% of those who vape/have tried vaping wouldn't want their parents to find out, 41% would not want their teachers to find out and 38% wouldn't want other adult whānau/family member(s) to find out. 22% were OK with anyone knowing.

35% of vapers think it would be "Very easy" for them to stop if they wanted to, and 22% "Quite easy". 6% don't think they could stop and 5% don't think they would ever want to. Of those rangatahi who haven't yet been offered, only 7% said they would be "Likely" to try vaping in the future and 0% "Very likely".

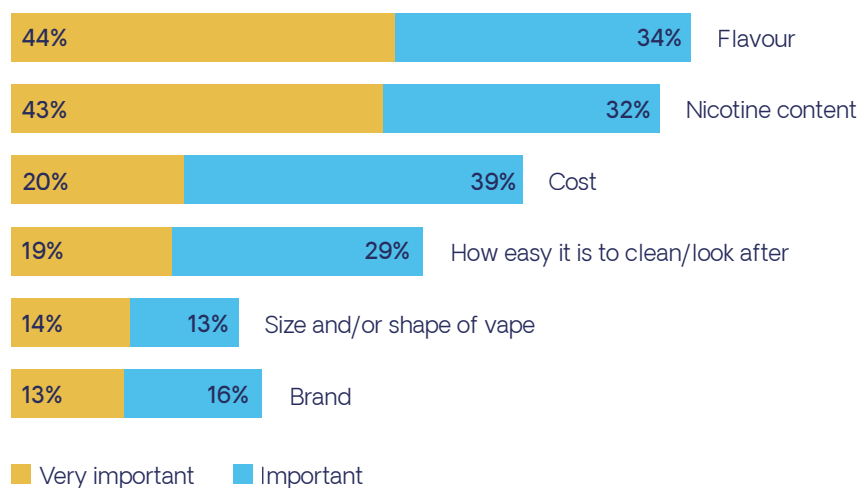
**Figure 11**

Current vaping status (n=1,900)



**Figure 12**

What is important to rangatahi when choosing a vape (n=356)





## Vaping within friendship groups

62% of vapers said that all or most of the people from school who they hang out with vape, meaning that 38% of vapers are mostly hanging out at school with people who do not vape. Similarly, 64% of vapers said that all or most of the people they hang out with who are not from their school vape. 93% of vapers were ok with their friends knowing that they vape.

## Rangatahi who sell/give vapes to other people

Excluding those who said they sell vapes as part of their job (mostly working in dairies), we heard from 140 rangatahi who sometimes sell vapes to other people (4% of all respondents), buy them for other people with their money (3%), and/or give them to other people for free (2%).

75% are selling/giving vapes to people at school, and 53% to people outside of school. Around two-thirds buy the vaping products themselves to sell/give to others, and just under half are given them by someone to sell on their behalf.

A quarter of these rangatahi do not vape regularly themselves.

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### Key Insight

59% of those who vape/have tried vaping wouldn't want their parents to find out, 41% would not want their teachers to find out and 38% wouldn't want other adult whānau/family member(s) to find out.

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# How do results differ for daily, casual and non-vapers?

We analysed the survey results separately for non-vapers (n=1,554), daily vapers (n=199) and casual vapers (those who vape “occasionally” or “regularly”, but not every day, n=171).

“Listening to music” and “Playing sports” are the top two interests for all groups, but a notably larger percentage of non-vapers than vapers are interested in “Playing video games”, “Films/TV”, “Art”, “Reading” and “Board games”. For example, 50% of non-vapers are interested in playing video games compared to 32% of daily vapers and 24% of non-vapers are interested in reading compared to 8% of daily vapers (see Figure 13).

“Exercise/fitness” was selected as an interest by progressively fewer rangatahi as vaping frequency increased (37% of non-vapers, 30% of casual vapers and 26% of daily vapers) and similarly, 55% of non-vapers think about “My health and wellbeing” often, compared to 46% of casual vapers and 35% of daily vapers. 56% of daily vapers get to do things that interest them and that they like doing every day (60% of non-vapers, 48% of casual vapers).

Daily vapers are generally experiencing stress more frequently than non-vapers with 53% of daily vapers feeling stressed out or worried every day, compared to 46% of casual vapers and 33% of non-vapers (see Figure 14).

The top five stressors for non-vapers were:

- “Doing well in my schoolwork” (45%)
- “Keeping on top of my schoolwork (37%)
- “Keeping tight with my close friends” (29%)
- “Knowing what I want to do when I leave school” (24%)
- “Getting into university (or other education) when I leave school” (23%)

The top five stressors for daily vapers:

- “Keeping tight with my close friends” (26%)
- “Knowing what I want to do when I leave school” (22%)
- “Finding a paid job/source of income when I leave school” (21%)
- “The health and/or happiness of my close friends” (21%)
- “Doing well in my schoolwork” (21%)

<sup>2</sup> These "non-vapers" reported only vaping once or twice in the past, or that they used to vape but have given up

Casual vapers generally selected similar stressors to non-vapers, but "Finding a paid job/source of income right now" replaced "Getting into university (or other education) when I leave school" in this group's top five stressors.

Daily vapers are more likely than non-vapers and casual vapers to think about "Having a romantic and/or sexual relationship" (45% for daily vapers compared to 18% of non-vapers and 35% of casual vapers) and for 19% of daily vapers this causes them stress (compared to 17% of casual vapers and 7% of non-vapers).

Daily vapers are more likely to talk to their friends at school than anyone else when they feel stressed out or worried (50%). Daily vapers are less likely than non-vapers to say they might talk to a parent when feeling stressed out or worried about things (29% of daily vapers, 37% of casual vapers and 56% of non-vapers). 66% of non-vapers might talk to an adult compared to 58% of casual vapers and 43% of daily vapers.

When stressed out or worried, non-vapers are most likely to "Listen to music" (75%), "Gaming" (42%), "Exercise" (40%), "Scroll through social media" (39%) and "Hang out with friends" (39%) (see Figure 15). Daily vapers do similar things to non-vapers (i.e. listen to music, scroll through social media, hang out with friends), but when they are stressed they are more likely to also be vaping (90% vs. 3% of non-vapers<sup>2</sup>), smoking or taking marijuana/weed (50% vs. 3%), drinking alcohol (46% vs. 4%), having sexual activity with another person (34% vs. 4%), smoking cigarettes (25% vs. 1%) and self-harming (24% vs. 6%). Daily vapers are half as likely as non-vapers to say that they choose "Gaming" when they feel stressed out (21% of daily vapers compared to 42% of non-vapers). On average, non-vapers selected 4.1 things that they do when they feel stressed out or worried, casual vapers selected 5.3 things and daily vapers 6.2 things.

Despite experiencing stress more frequently than the other groups, daily vapers are more likely to say they feel like they cope "Very well" when stressed or worried (21% of daily vapers, 11% of casual vapers and 13% of non-vapers).

When asked why they vape, daily vapers are more likely than casual vapers to say "It helps me relax/chill out on my own" (79% vs 49%), and "I just really like it" (35% vs. 9%, see Figure 16). Almost one in five casual vapers (18%) said they have "no particular reason/I don't know why" they vape compared to just 4% of daily vapers.

Only 1 in 5 casual vapers buy vaping products themselves and over half (56%) only ever vape when someone else gives/shares their vape with them. This is compared to daily vapers, 52% of whom buy vaping products themselves and 41% of whom get someone else to buy them on their behalf (only 12% of daily vapers vape only when someone else gives/shares their vape with them). Unsurprisingly, just 33% of casual vapers therefore know exactly how much vaping products cost, compared to 76% of daily vapers.

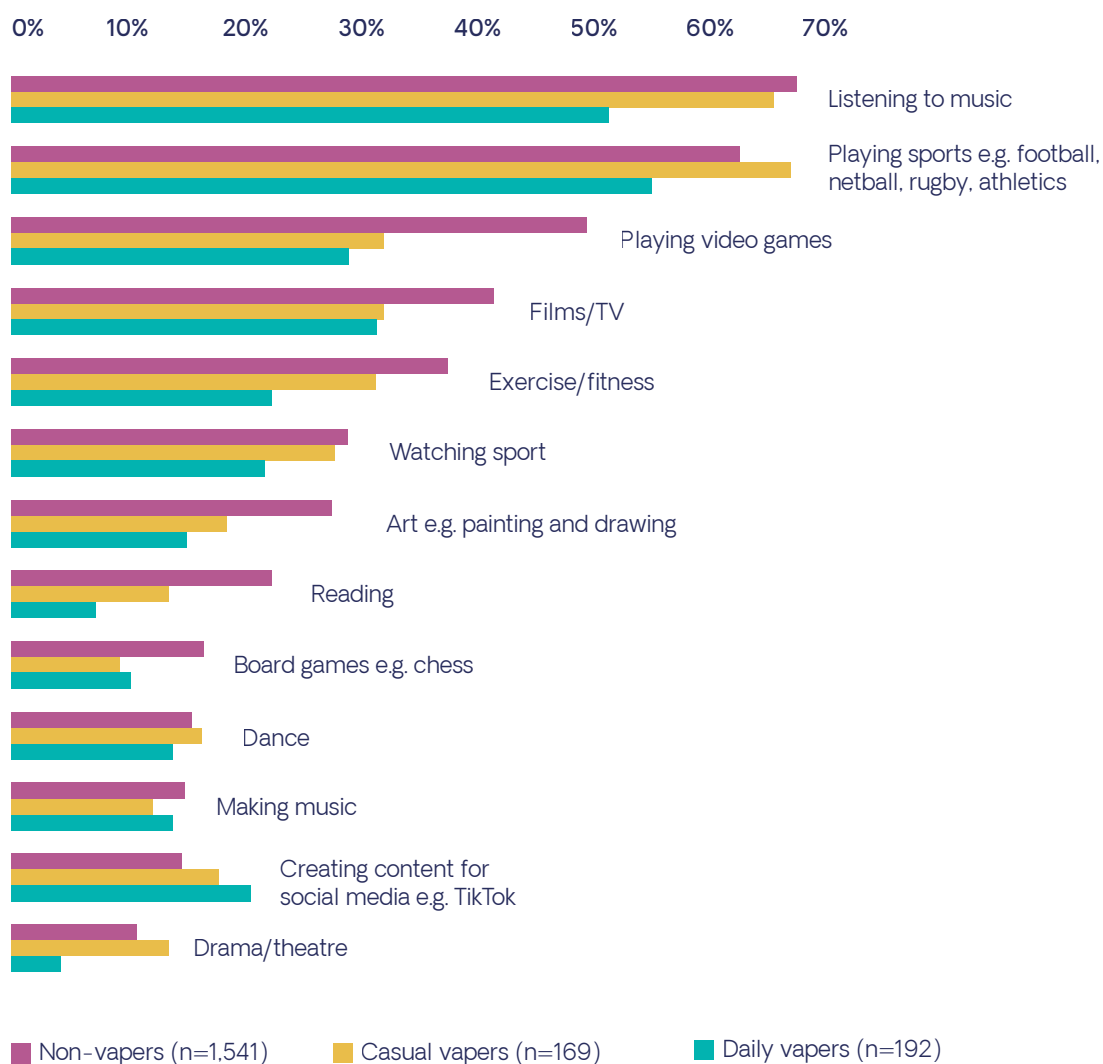
Nicotine content is far more important to the daily vapers (61% saying nicotine content was "Very important", compared to 22% of casual vapers). 54% of casual vapers have never smoked, compared to 24% of daily vapers. 23% of daily vapers smoke occasionally or regularly, compared to 4% of casual vapers and 1% of non-vapers.

31% of daily vapers are OK with anyone knowing they vape, compared to 17% of casual vapers, and 37% of daily vapers wouldn't want their parents to know compared to 64% of casual vapers.

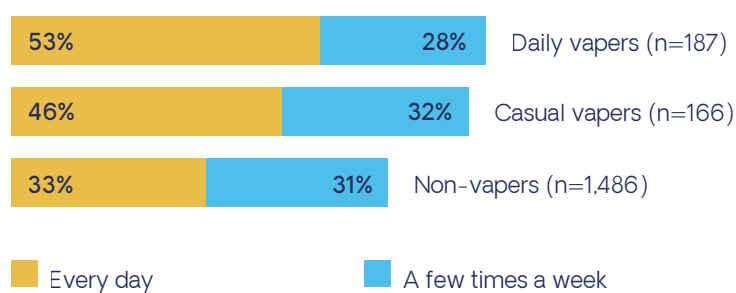


**Figure 13**

"What are you interested in?  
What kinds of things do you like doing?"

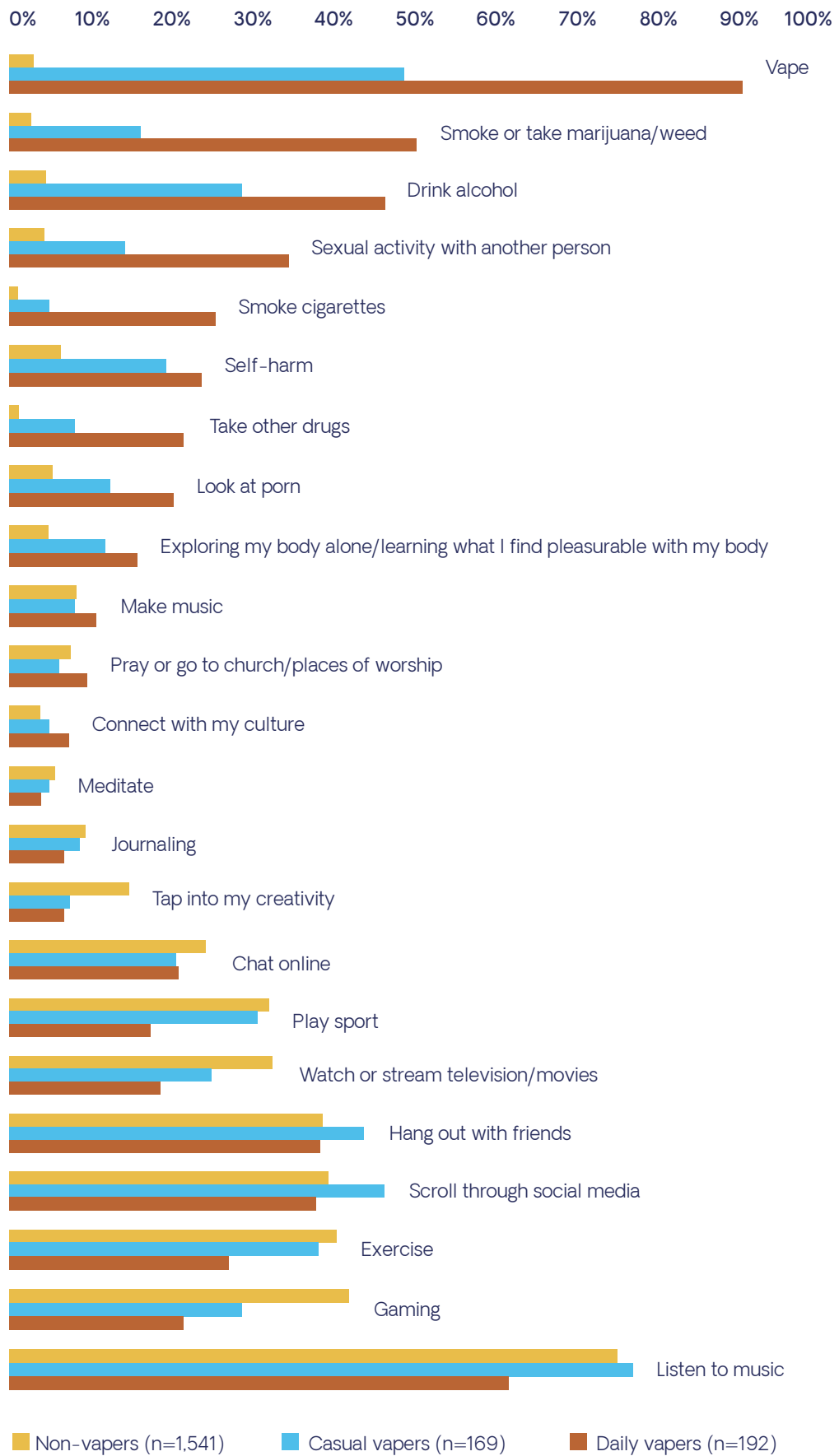
**Figure 14**

"How often do you feel stressed out or worried"



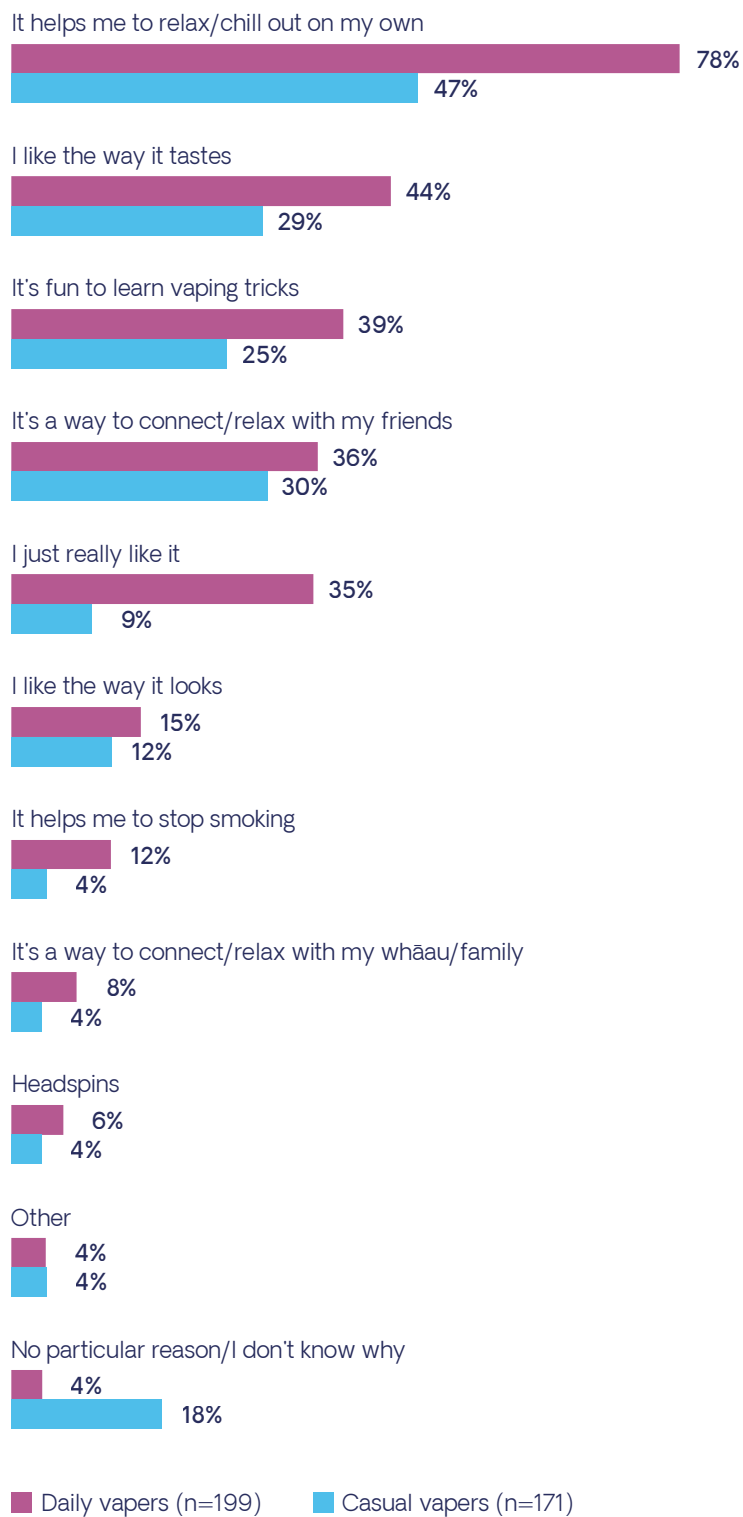
**Figure 15**

"What do you tend to do when you feel stressed out or worried?"



**Figure 16**

"What do you like  
about vaping?  
Why do you  
vape?"



# Results for rangatahi Māori



347 rangatahi Māori responded to the survey with a relatively well-balanced split in terms of gender and year group.

The top three interests for rangatahi Māori in our sample are "Playing sports" (65%), "Listening to music" (65%), and "Playing video games" (47%). 61% get to do things that interest them and that they like doing "every day", and a further 27% "a few times a week". The top three things that these rangatahi Māori think about often are: "Keeping tight with my close friends" (70%), "The health/happiness of my close friends" (55%) and "Having money to buy things that I want" (54%). 47% often think about their own health and wellbeing.

The top three stressors for rangatahi Māori are "Doing well in schoolwork" (34%), "Keeping on top of schoolwork" (28%) and "Keeping tight with close friends" (27%). 36% feel stressed out or worried "every day". When they feel stressed out or worried, 45% said they might talk to a parent, and 46% to friends at school.

The most common activities that rangatahi Māori in our sample do when stressed out or worried are: "Listen to music" (76%), "Scroll through social media" (44%), and "Gaming" (38%). 26% vape when they are stressed out or worried.

44% of the rangatahi Māori sample said that they feel like they cope "Well" or "Very well" when stressed out or worried, and 17% "Not well" or "Not at all well". 20% are interested in learning some new ways to help them cope when they feel stressed out or worried.

37% of the rangatahi Māori sample have never vaped, 27% have tried it just once or twice, 6% used to vape regularly, but don't anymore, and 28% currently vape "occasionally" or "regularly" – 17% vaping every day and 10% vaping less frequently. Those who vape every day are most commonly vaping "as soon as I wake up" (54%), and then "for most of the day, whenever I can" (67%).

The top three reasons rangatahi Māori gave for vaping are: "It helps me to relax/chill out on my own" (73%), "It's fun to learn new vaping tricks" (40%), "I like the way it tastes" (39%).

The top three reasons rangatahi Māori gave for not vaping are: "I've heard about the health risks" (55%), "It would interfere with my fitness/health" (53%) and "I could get in trouble at home" (49%). 49% of vapers would not want their parent(s) to know, and 34% would not want their teachers to know.





# Results for Pasifika young people



407 Pasifika young people responded to the survey with a relatively well-balanced split in terms of gender and year group.

The top three interests for these Pasifika young people are "Playing sports" (70%), "Listening to music" (67%), and "Playing video games" (47%). 53% get to do things that interest them and that they like doing "every day", and a further 35% "a few times a week".

The top three things that these Pasifika young people think about often are: "Keeping tight with my close friends" (73%), "Doing well in my schoolwork" (58%) and "Helping to look after/care for members of my whānau/family e.g. siblings, grandparents" (58%). 53% often think about their own health and wellbeing.

The top three stressors for Pasifika young people are "Doing well in schoolwork" (40%), "Keeping on top of schoolwork" (31%) and "Keeping tight with close friends" (26%). 30% feel stressed out or worried "every day". When they feel stressed out or worried, 43% said they might talk to a parent, and 52% to friends at school.

The most common activities that these Pasifika young people do when stressed out or worried are: "Listen to music" (78%), "Gaming" (39%) and "Play sport" (37%). 20% vape when they are stressed out or worried.

45% of the Pasifika young people in our sample said that they feel like they cope "Well" or "Very well" when stressed out or worried, and 13% "Not well" or "Not at all well". 22% are interested in learning some new ways to help them cope when they feel stressed out or worried.

45% of the Pasifika young people in our sample have never vaped, 26% have tried it just once or twice, 6% used to vape regularly, but don't anymore, and 20% currently vape "occasionally" or "regularly" – 10% vaping every day and 10% vaping less frequently. Around half of those who vape every day are vaping "as soon as I wake up" (51%), and then "for most of the day, whenever I can" (55%).

The top three reasons Pasifika young people gave for vaping are: "It helps me to relax/chill out on my own" (72%), "I like the way it tastes" (30%), "It's a way to connect/relax with my friends" (30%).

The top three reasons Pasifika young people gave for not vaping are: "I've heard about the health risks" (49%), "It would interfere with my fitness/health" (46%) and "I could get in trouble at home" (46%). 60% of vapers would not want their parent(s) to know, and 34% would not want their teachers to know.



# Other segments of interest



# Insights by gender/cultural identity

<sup>3</sup> "Girls" includes all respondents that selected "Female" and not "Non-binary" (regardless of any other selection). "Boys" includes all respondents that selected "Male" and not "Non-binary" (regardless of any other selection). "Non-binary" includes all respondents that selected "Non-binary", and respondents that selected "Genderqueer", "Gender-fluid", "Intersex", "transgender", "takatāpuhi" or "Don't know/Questioning/Unsure" and did not select "Male" or "Female".

Here we compare results by grouped gender/cultural identity – girls (n=901), boys (n=935) and non-binary rangatahi (n=92)<sup>3</sup>.

We noted particularly different results around stress for the different gender groups – with 22% of boys saying that they feel stressed out or worried every day, compared to 48% of girls and 67% of non-binary rangatahi.

On average, boys selected 3.6 things that stressed them out, compared to girls who selected 5.7 and non-binary rangatahi who selected 5.6 things on average. 27% of boys said that nothing on the list of options presented in the survey (see Figure 8) stresses them out compared to 13% of girls and 12% of non-binary rangatahi.

Boys are far less likely to feel stressed out or worried about "Keeping on top of their schoolwork" – 27% of boys, compared to 42% of girls and 41% of non-binary rangatahi. Non-binary rangatahi are more likely to worry about "Human rights/social justice and equity" (42% worrying about this compared to 24% of girls and 8% of boys) and, for 30% of non-binary rangatahi, "Understanding my gender/sexuality" is a cause of stress/worry.

Gender differences in response to stress are also apparent, with 47% of boys saying they exercise when stressed out or worried compared to 34% of girls and 18% of non-binary rangatahi, and similarly 38% of boys play sport when stressed out compared to 26% of girls and 6% of non-binary rangatahi. 29% of non-binary rangatahi, 11% of girls and 4% of boys say they self-harm when stressed out or worried.

56% of boys say they might talk to parents when they felt worried or stressed out, compared to 49% of girls and 35% of non-binary rangatahi. 63% of boys have an adult to talk to, 63% of girls and 52% of non-binary rangatahi. 56% of boys, 34% of girls, and 22% of non-binary rangatahi say that they think they cope "Very well" or "Well" when they are stressed out or worried.

22% of girls, 15% of boys and 16% of non-binary rangatahi vape regularly – 12% of girls vaping every day, 8% of boys and 9% of non-binary rangatahi. 71% of girls vape because "It helps me to relax/chill out on my own" compared to 58% of boys (the sample was too small to present these findings for non-binary rangatahi).



# Regional insights

Although cross-regional analysis would have been of interest, the substantial difference in vaping rates between schools within a region (with vaping rates of between 11% and 33% seen across schools, and between 5% and 18% vaping every day) means any comparisons between regions would not be valuable using the current sample of schools in our dataset.

## Insights by socio-economic status

Survey questions around what rangatahi think about often, and what makes them feel “stressed out or worried”, were designed to identify respondents in our sample who may have a more challenging home life and/or lower socio-economic status.

Options for rangatahi to choose from included: “There being enough money for the things my whānau/family need”, “Keeping my whānau safe from harm”, “Having a healthy home to live in”, and “Staying out of trouble with the police”. We segmented responses for those rangatahi who said they feel stressed out or worried about more than one of those factors (n=260) and analysed results compared to those who selected none of those factors as stressors (n=1,408).

Compared to rangatahi who do not feel stressed out or worried about any of these factors, those who selected two or more of the above indicators are:

- Nearly twice as likely to feel stressed out or worried “Every day” (57% vs 30% of those that selected none)
- More likely to also feel stressed about a wide range of other aspects of life, e.g. 57% feeling stressed about “Keeping on top of my schoolwork” (vs. 28% of those selecting none of the indicators), 69% about “Keeping tight with close friends” (vs. 18%) and 63% about “The health and happiness of my close friends” (vs. 11%)
- Half as likely to say they cope “Very well” with the feelings of stress and worry that they experience (8% vs. 16% of those selecting none of the indicators)
- Reporting similar vaping rates, with 11% vaping every day and 8% vaping less frequently compared to those selecting none of the indicators of whom 10% vape daily and 8% less frequently

# Summary

The methodology used worked well and schools successfully engaged with the distribution process as indicated by the response rates of up to 59% being achieved within each school. The sample of 1,975 complete responses allowed us to segment the data and present valuable insights by demographic and psychographic variables.



# What is important to these rangatahi?

Across all schools and year groups, "Listening to music" and "Playing sports" consistently featured in the top three most common interests, with the third interest being either "Playing video games", or "Films/tv". The majority of rangatahi (91%) get to do things that interest them and that they like doing more than once a week.

Friendships are central in the lives of most rangatahi with the most common thing that they think about often being "Keeping tight with my close friends" (74%). 57% often also think about "The health and/or happiness of my close friends", which was more commonly thought about than their own health and wellbeing (51%). Rangatahi talk to their friends at school for support when stressed out or worried as often as they might talk to their parents (with 52% saying they would talk to friends at school, and 51% to their parent(s)).

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## Key Takeaway

Friendships are  
central in the lives  
of most rangatahi...

# Life is stressful for rangatahi, and many do not have the support they need to cope

High numbers of rangatahi in our sample are regularly feeling stressed, with over two-thirds saying they feel stressed out or worried more than once a week (37% “Every day” and 31% “A few times a week”). Schoolwork is most commonly causing this stress – over half (52%) saying that either “Doing well in my schoolwork”, and/or “Keeping on top of my schoolwork” is a cause of stress for them.

One in five rangatahi (19%) say that they cope “Not very well” or “Not at all well” when they are stressed out or worried, while 44% say that they cope “Very well” or “Well”. Those who say they are not coping well are experiencing stress far more frequently and have many more causes of stress than those saying that they cope well. 76% of those that say they do not cope well experience stress every day (compared to 18% of those saying they cope well), and on average selected 7.4 things that make them feel stressed or worried (compared to those saying they cope well, who selected 3.6 things on average).

Those who say they cope well are more likely to have someone to talk to when they feel stressed out or worried, most notably being more likely to talk to their parent(s) (with 60% saying they might, compared to 36% of those who say they are not coping well). Those saying they cope well were more likely to “Exercise” and “Play sport” when they feel stressed out or worried, while those saying they do not cope well are more likely to “Scroll through social media” and “Watch or stream television/movies”. 24% of those saying they do not cope well self-harm when feeling stressed out or worried, compared to 3% of those saying they cope well.

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## Key Takeaway

“It helps me to  
relax/chill out on  
my own.”



# Rangatahi and vaping

One in five (19%) rangatahi in our sample currently vape, 10% vaping every day (daily vapers) and 9% less frequently (casual vapers). Vaping rates differed substantially between schools, ranging from 11% to 33% of rangatahi in the school vaping, and from 5% to 18% vaping every day. Those who vape every day are most commonly vaping “as soon as I wake up” (60%), and then “for most of the day, whenever I can” (58%).

The top reasons why rangatahi vape are: “It helps me to relax/chill out on my own” (65% of vapers), “I like the way it tastes” (38%), “It’s a way to connect/relax with my friends” (34%), “It’s fun to learn vaping tricks” (33%) and “I just really like it” (24%).

Most commonly, rangatahi first tried vaping when someone gave or shared their vape with them (80%) and for just over half of these, this was not someone at school. Over half of casual vapers still only vape when someone shares their vape with them, but daily vapers are more commonly buying it themselves or getting someone to buy it with their money (just 12% only vaping when someone else gives/shares their vape with them).

Therefore, it is understandable that casual vapers tend to be less discerning about choosing vapes – a lower proportion of casual vapers saying that aspects like nicotine content, flavour or brand are important when choosing a vape. For example, 22% of casual vapers said that nicotine was “Very important” to them compared to 61% of daily vapers. Almost one in five (18%) of casual vapers said there is no particular reason why they vape and/or they don’t know why.

Those who are buying their own vaping products generally buy them from vaping stores (71%) and dairies (43%), and most commonly get the money to do so by working a paid job (68%). Daily vapers are less concerned than casual vapers about people knowing they vape – 31% of daily vapers being OK with anyone knowing compared to 17% of casual vapers, and 63% of daily vapers being OK with their parents knowing compared to 36% of casual vapers.

The top three reasons why rangatahi do not vape are: “I’ve heard about the health risks” (63% of non-vapers), “It would interfere with my fitness/health” (54%), “I don’t want to get addicted” (54%). Almost half are worried about getting in trouble at home (48%) and/or at school (43%).

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## Key Takeaway



60% of daily vapers,  
vape “as soon as I  
wake up.”

# Vaping as a stress relief for rangatahi

78% of daily vapers said that they like vaping because “It helps me to relax/chill out on my own” and 36% because “It’s a way to connect /relax with my friends”. Daily vapers report experiencing stress more frequently than non-vapers with 53% of daily vapers feeling stressed out or worried every day, compared to 33% of non-vapers. Added to this, daily vapers are less likely to speak to their parent(s) or another adult about the stress they experience (29% of daily vapers saying they might talk to their parents compared to 56% of non-vapers).

Despite experiencing stress more frequently than non-vapers – and being less likely to talk to an adult about it – daily vapers are more likely to feel like they cope “Very well” when stressed or worried (21% of daily vapers compared to 13% of non-vapers). Possibly, this feeling of coping could be due to the wide range of things that they do when feeling stressed out or worried. Daily vapers do similar things to non-vapers when stressed (i.e. listen to music, scroll through social media, hang out with friends), but they are also vaping (90% vs. 4% of non-vapers), smoking or taking marijuana/weed (50% vs. 3%), drinking alcohol (46% vs. 4%), having sexual activity with another person (34% vs. 4%), smoking cigarettes (25% vs. 1%) and self-harming (24% vs. 6%). Although these behaviours in response to stress may hold higher risk for these rangatahi, they may also be what is giving them a sense that they are coping. With only 16% of daily vapers being interested in learning some new ways to help them to cope when they feel stressed out or worried, changing these coping strategies will be challenging.

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## Key Takeaway

...more likely to be  
concerned about their  
friends’ health more  
than their own...

# Key segments

Boys reported lower frequency stress than girls and non-binary rangatahi (22% of boys saying they feel stressed out or worried “Every day”, compared to 48% of girls and 67% of non-binary rangatahi) and, when feeling stressed out or worried, boys were more likely to talk to a parent and to feel like they cope well (56% of boys, 34% of girls, and 22% of non-binary rangatahi say that they think they cope “Very well” or “Well” when they are stressed out or worried). Girls reported a higher vaping rate than boys and non-binary rangatahi – 22% vaping regularly compared to 15% of boys and 16% of non-binary rangatahi (12% of girls vaping every day, 8% of boys and 9% of non-binary rangatahi), with 71% of girls vaping because “It helps me to relax/chill out on my own” compared to 58% of boys (the sample was too small to present these findings for non-binary rangatahi).

36% of rangatahi Māori in our sample report feeling stressed out or worried “Every day”, most commonly about “Doing well in schoolwork” (34%), “Keeping on top of schoolwork” (28%), and “Keeping tight with close friends” (27%). 45% of rangatahi Māori said they might talk to a parent when they feel stressed out or worried and 46% to friends at school. 26% of rangatahi Māori said they vape when they feel stressed out or worried. Overall, 17% of rangatahi Māori in our survey sample vape every day and 10% are casual vapers, vaping less frequently. The most common reason rangatahi Māori gave for vaping was that “It helps me to relax/chill out on my own” (73% of vapers).

30% of Pasifika young people in our sample report feeling stressed out or worried “Every day”, again most commonly about “Doing well in schoolwork” (40%), “Keeping on top of schoolwork” (31%), and “Keeping tight with close friends” (26%). 43% said they might talk to a parent when they feel stressed out or worried and 52% to friends at school. 20% of Pasifika young people said they vape when they feel stressed out or worried. Overall, 10% of Pasifika young people in our sample vape every day and 10% are casual vapers. The most common reason Pasifika young people gave for vaping was that “It helps me to relax/chill out on my own” (72% of vapers).

Despite feeling stressed more often, and about more areas of life, rangatahi whose survey responses indicated that they may have a challenging home life and/or a lower socio-economic status, were no more likely to vape.

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## Key Takeaway

Daily vapers report  
experiencing stress  
more frequently  
than non-vapers

# Summary of key research insights to guide social campaign development

The research shows that eight out of ten rangatahi first tried vaping when someone else shared their vape with them, and over half of casual vapers (those who vape “occasionally” or “regularly”, but not every day) still only ever vape by using someone else’s. With almost all daily vapers purchasing their own vapes (88% either purchase their own or get someone else to on their behalf), we can assume that it is these rangatahi who are vaping every day who are playing a critical role in how others first try vaping and/or continue to vape casually. Addressing the influential impact of daily vapers on others will therefore be important when considering ways to interrupt the pattern of other rangatahi taking up vaping.

Rangatahi that vape daily generally have one or more easily accessible interests (e.g. listening to music, 56%), and most get to do things that interest them and that they like doing more than once a week (89%). However, stress frequency is high in these rangatahi (53% feeling stressed out or worried every day), and not all of them are turning to, or able to turn to, their interests to help them cope. Instead, they tend to engage in high-risk behaviours (including alcohol, drugs, self-harm, as well as vaping) as coping strategies. Given that daily vapers are more likely than non-vapers to currently feel like they are coping well with their feelings of stress, trying to stop them from vaping would be inadvisable without ensuring beforehand that accessible and appealing alternatives for stress relief have been properly integrated into their lives and made readily available. With only 16% of daily vapers being interested in learning some new ways to help them to cope when they feel stressed out or worried, changing these coping strategies will be challenging.

The important role that friendships hold in the lives of rangatahi could be key to enabling conversations and support around vaping. Rangatahi that vape are more likely to be concerned about their friends’ health more than their own, and more likely to talk to school friends about their stress and worry than to their parents or teachers.

Daily vapers are less likely than rangatahi who do not vape to talk to an adult, particularly their parents, about the things that they are worried about. Given that they are more concerned about topics such as romantic and sexual relationships, and knowing that these topics tend to be more challenging for some adults to talk about, providing guidance for parents and teachers on how to have non-judgmental conversations with rangatahi about challenging topics, including vaping, appears to be important based on the data.

The substantially different vaping rates seen across schools indicates that school-specific solutions may be necessary. We do not know what role school policies and approaches to vaping may play in the rates observed in our sample (this was not within scope at this stage). However, by understanding now more about how vaping is happening within and around school communities from the survey results, it is clear that schools are vital touch points for any campaigns looking to impact on vaping in rangatahi. The data also shows that schoolwork is the top cause of stress for rangatahi, and that stress frequency and vaping rates seem to be correlated. We therefore see a clear role for schools, and possibly the Ministry of Education, within solution design and/or delivery.

Finally, with such frequent stress being evident in rangatahi that vape daily, and many turning to high-risk behaviours to help them to cope (including alcohol, drugs, self-harm, as well as vaping), we would strongly recommend consulting with youth mental health advisors on the insights from the research to ensure that the social campaign and resources are developed with current best practice messaging around youth mental health.



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