

Media Release

VAPOUR PRODUCTS ASSOCIATION GETS TOUGH WITH MEMBERS: NO E-CIGARETTE SALES TO U18s

Pretoria, June 2022: The Vapour Products Association of South Africa (VPASA) launched its annual [Youth Access Prevention campaign](#), through which its members in the manufacturing, wholesaling, and retailing of Electronic Nicotine and non-Nicotine Delivery Systems (EN/NDS) pledge to not sell these products to under-18s. In its second iteration, the campaign is aimed at strengthening self-regulation in the sector. This campaign reiterates the following:

- Industry commitment in responding to the controversy around vaping and youth.
- Members reinforcing their commitment to not selling e-cigarettes to under-18s.

The campaign's focus is twofold: to self-regulate to ensure that these products are not sold to underage people and to promote access to these products by existing vapers and adult smokers who are seeking a potentially less-harmful alternative to combustible cigarettes.

“We believe that all EN/NDS role-players have a responsibility to prevent underage consumers from accessing our products and we are taking it upon ourselves to self-regulate to achieve optimal outcomes for all,” says Asanda Gcoyi, CEO of VPASA.

VPASA is currently opposing moves in South Africa to regulate vapour products alongside traditional cigarettes, arguing that vapour products are not the same as combustible tobacco products, and therefore should be regulated separately. Not doing so will deprive millions of South African adult smokers and nicotine users of a potentially less harmful alternative.

The association stands firm on its commitment to excluding young people from its buyer profile.

The updated [Youth Access Prevention campaign guidelines](#) will see VPASA members pledge to refuse all sales to under-18s, with the organisation extending an invitation to others in the industry to also participate to strengthen this commitment. Members who do not abide by the [guidelines](#) may face expulsion from the association. VPASA will continue to leverage mystery shoppers on a more regular basis and similar interventions to ensure compliance. Other interventions expected include retailers being obligated to request visual identification at the point of sale to confirm the age of the purchaser. Sales to youngsters in school uniforms will not be allowed.

In addition, this year's campaign includes an agreement reached by VPASA members to relook the packaging of their e-liquid to ensure it does not appeal to young consumers. Members have been asked not to stock products that may appeal to young people.

"We are aware of some of the stores with the stock of particular brands that may appeal to youth, the new guidelines provide our members with specific requirements, and we request that members desist from stocking such products," Gcoyi explains.

Gcoyi adds that VPASA believes the campaign will provide concrete proof of the depth of the organisation's commitment to helping South Africa meet its objectives in terms of the World Health Organization's (WHO) Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC). This requires member nations to protect future generations from the devastating health, social, environmental, and economic consequences of tobacco consumption and exposure.

"Far from being an industry at odds with this goal, we want to send a very clear message of its willingness to collaborate with government, and that this sector is capable of acting responsibly in areas such as the prevention of youth access to ENDS, where it arguably matters most," Gcoyi concludes.

ENDS