



**Health**  
South Eastern Sydney  
Local Health District

Public Health Unit

## **Tobacco and E-Cigarette Control**

### **Annual Report, 2023-2024**

South Eastern Sydney Local Health District

August 2024

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## 1 NSW LEGISLATION

Tobacco and e-cigarette retailing laws in NSW (New South Wales) can be found in the **Public Health (Tobacco) Act 2008** and the **Public Health (Tobacco) Regulation 2022** (NSW Health, 2022).

Key inclusions:

- A notification (registration) and negative licensing scheme for retailers selling tobacco products or non-tobacco smoking products or e-cigarettes (electronic cigarettes) – known as a RIN (retailer identification number).
- A ban on the sale of tobacco products, non-tobacco smoking products, e-cigarettes, and e-cigarette accessories to anyone under 18.
- Tobacco and e-cigarette products and their accessories cannot be sold from temporary and mobile premises such as a market stall or stand, a tent or a car, and cannot be given out as a free sample (NSW Health, 2022).
- A ban on the display of tobacco products, non-tobacco smoking products, smoking accessories, e-cigarettes, and e-cigarette accessories in shops.
- All tobacco sold must be packaged correctly with appropriate health warnings.
- Allowing only a single point of sale (POS) for tobacco products, non-tobacco smoking products, smoking accessories, e-cigarettes, and e-cigarette accessories in retail outlets – if more than one POS is present within the retailing premise signage must indicate which POS will be dedicated for tobacco retailing.
- Tobacco and/or e-cigarette vending machines at licensed venues restricted to over 18s.
- Ensuring that tobacco or e-cigarette vending machines comply with product display bans and are only activated by a staff member or by a token which is only available from a staff member.
- A ban on tobacco products, non-tobacco smoking products and e-cigarette products in shopper-loyalty programs.
- Displaying health warnings and a notice regarding sales to minors at the point of sale. For more information, see **How to display the compulsory warning signs**.

It has been noted many tobacco retailers are also selling e-cigarettes (or ‘vapes’). These products are often found to contain liquid nicotine. The sale and supply of schedule 4 drugs such as nicotine is set out in the **NSW Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Act 1966 and NSW Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Regulation 2008**. This means e-cigarettes containing nicotine cannot be sold or supplied in NSW without a prescription. The retailer must also be an authorised and registered health practitioner (i.e., a pharmacist) licensed to dispense nicotine.

E-cigarettes containing nicotine cannot be purchased by individuals without a prescription from a medical doctor to support smoking cessation efforts. The regulations state:

- From 1 October 2021, e-cigarettes and e-liquids containing nicotine are a prescription only medicine.
- It is illegal for retailers (other than pharmacies) to sell e-cigarettes or e-liquids that contain nicotine, including online sales.
- Retailers can only sell e-cigarettes and accessories from a single point of sale in each retail outlet and cannot promote or include these products in a shopper loyalty program.

Smoking tobacco and using e-cigarettes are banned in all enclosed public areas and certain outdoor public areas, under the **Smoke-free Environment Act 2000** and the **Smoke-free Environment Regulation 2016** (NSW Health, 2022).

- The Regulations extend to cover areas within 4 metres of a pedestrian entrance to or exit from a public building. For example: shopping centres and malls, schools, colleges and universities, childcare facilities, community centres, halls and places of worship, theatres, cinemas, libraries and galleries, accommodation hotels and motels, restaurants, and cafes.
- Using e-cigarettes on public transport vehicles (e.g., trains, buses, light rail, ferries) is banned under the *Passenger Transport (General) Regulation 2017*.

## 2 SOUTH EASTERN SYDNEY LOCAL HEALTH DISTRICT

South Eastern Sydney Local Health District (SESLHD) is the most densely populated health district in NSW with a resident population of over 979,000 in 2021. Moreover, it includes the Sydney CBD with a daily inflow, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, of over 500,000 workers, students, and other visitors. The current tobacco retailer notification database lists **2,820 tobacco retailers** located within SESLHD boundaries.

## 3 KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

The Ministry of Health implements key performance indicators (KPIs) for public health units in relation to the tobacco and e-cigarette compliance requirements. All KPI data is sourced from the Public Health Issue Management System (PHIMS).

Retail stores include tobacconists, convenience stores, supermarkets, newsagents, and service stations.

*Table 1. Key Performance Indicator targets for South Eastern Sydney Public Health Unit*

Local Health District	KPI - sales to minors inspections	KPI - point of sale inspections
South Eastern Sydney	84	168

### 3.1 Sales to Minors Compliance Testing

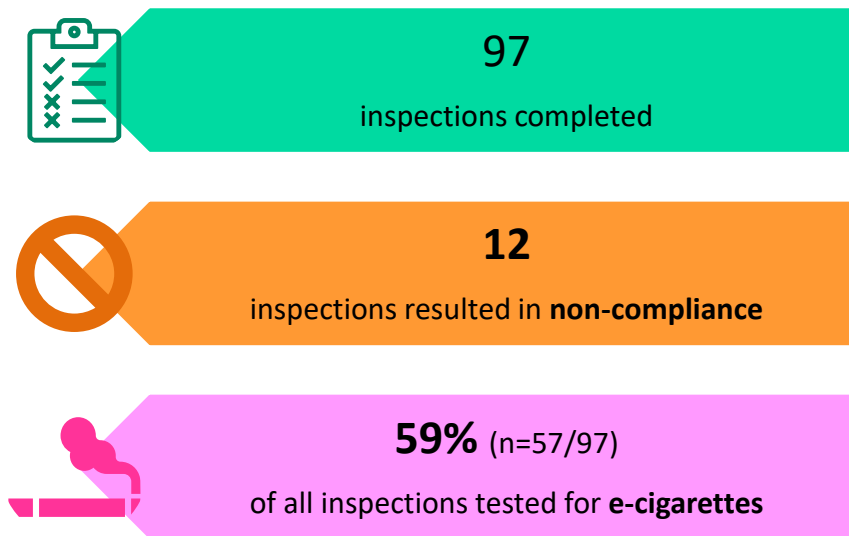
In NSW it is illegal to sell tobacco, non-tobacco smoking products, e-cigarettes, or e-cigarette accessories to a person under the age of 18. The maximum penalty for selling any of these products to minors differs between individuals and corporations (Section 22) (NSW Health, 2022).

	For individuals:	For corporations:
<b>First offence</b>	up to \$11,000	up to \$55,000 (max. penalty)
<b>Second or subsequent offence</b>	up to \$55,000	up to \$110,000

*Table 2. KPI: Sales to minors inspection target (1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024)*

Local Health District	Target	Actual
South Eastern Sydney	84	97

Figure 1 Sales to Minors compliance inspections key findings (1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024)



A retailer or employee must ensure the customer is over 18 before selling these products to customers. Proof of the customer’s age must be requested and checked before any tobacco product, e-cigarette or e-cigarette accessory is sold to any young person (NSW Health, 2022).

The law is monitored through the NSW Sales to Minors Program. The recently reviewed *Monitoring Compliance with the Sales to Minors Prohibition - Procedures Manual 2023* sets standards for Authorised Inspectors and others in undertaking compliance monitoring activities relating to sales to minors. Retail outlets are randomly visited to test their compliance with the law. Employers and staff working in newsagents, tobacconists, convenience stores, supermarkets and petrol stations have been prosecuted for selling tobacco products to people under the age of 18. *Figure 1* shows the sales to minors compliance tests conducted by South Eastern Sydney Public Health Unit (SES PHU) in 2023-2024.

### 3.1.1 Enforcement Actions

Table 3. KPI: Sales to Minors enforcement (1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024)

Education and Verbal Warning	Warning Letters Issued	Prosecution
12	4	8

### 3.2 Point of Sale Inspection

A key requirement under the tobacco and e-cigarette retailing laws in NSW is allowing only a single point of sale for tobacco products, non-tobacco smoking products, smoking accessories, e-cigarettes and e-cigarette accessories in retail outlets. In addition, retailers must display health warnings and other notices in retail outlets where tobacco products, e-cigarettes or e-cigarette accessories are sold, including vending machines (NSW Health, 2022).

Environmental health staff are authorised under the *Public Health (Tobacco) Act 2008* to monitor point of sale compliance with the legislation. Inspectors educate retailers and can issue verbal and written warnings, fines or initiate prosecutions against retailers that do not comply with the legislation.

If during an inspection, retailers are found to have display breaches, for example public display of tobacco and/or e-cigarette products, smoking accessories OR no display of health warnings and sales to minors signage, they expose themselves to regulatory action. There are significant penalties for display breaches including \$1,100 penalty infringement notice (PIN) for individuals and \$5,500 for corporations.

In addition, if retailers are found to be selling illegal e-cigarette products, the products can be seized and destroyed, and the retailer prosecuted. There are significant penalties for selling e-cigarettes containing nicotine, which includes up to 6 months in prison, or a fine of up to \$1,650, or both.

Table 4. KPI: Point of sale inspections (1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024)

Local Health District	Target	Actual
South Eastern Sydney	168	171

Table 5. Point of Sales compliance (1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024)

Premises Inspected*	Total Number of Inspections**	Inspections Not Compliant	Inspections Compliant	Compliance Rate (%)
171	196	91	105	53.6 (105/196)

\* Individual premises \*\*Total number of inspections includes follow up inspections

### 3.2.1 Enforcement Actions

Table 6. Point of Sales enforcement (1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024)

Provided Education or Verbal Warning	Warning Letters Issued	PINs Issued	Reinspection Leading to Seizure	Prosecution
91	64	6	25	6*

\* 2 concluded and 4 pending before the courts. See Table 7 Concluded Prosecutions for detail.

Figure 2 Seized product totals (1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024)



### 3.3 Smoke Free Environment

Smoking and using e-cigarettes are banned in all enclosed public areas and certain outdoor public areas. These bans protect people from harmful second-hand tobacco smoke and e-cigarette vapour. There is no safe level of exposure to second-hand smoke.

There are no reportable KPIs for the Smoke Free Environment matters in NSW.

There is an [online reporting form](#) to report complaints about smoking at indoor public places, as well as certain outdoor public places such as transport stops or spectator areas of sports grounds.

**All enclosed public areas:** includes shopping centres, cinemas, libraries, trains and buses.

**Outdoor public areas:** Smoking and using e-cigarettes is banned in the following outdoor public areas.

- [Within 10 metres of children's play equipment in outdoor public places](#)
- [Public swimming pools](#)
- [Spectator areas at sports grounds or other recreational areas used for organised sporting events](#)
- [Public transport stops and platforms, including ferry wharves and taxi ranks](#)
- [Within 4 metres of a pedestrian access point to a public building](#)
- [Commercial outdoor dining areas](#)

Smoke-free guide: No smoking within 4 metres of a pedestrian access point to a building provides information on which buildings are applicable.

## 4 PROSECUTIONS

Table 7. Concluded Prosecutions (1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024)

Date of Offence	Tobacco retailer	Offence/s	Court Date	Court	Outcome
11/10/2022, 16/11/2022	TSG Kings Cross, Potts Point	3x Supply of a nicotine containing product without authority (schedule 4 substance). Offence under the <i>Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Act 1966 - section 10.</i>	17/04/2024	Downing Centre Local Court	<b>Guilty.</b> Issued with a 24 month conditional release order. Ordered to pay \$7,180 in court costs.
12/04/2023	Paddington Express, Paddington	5x Supply of a nicotine containing product without authority (schedule 4 substance). Offence under the <i>Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Act 1966 - section 10.</i>  3x Display tobacco smoking products and accessories in public place. Offence under the <i>Public Health (Tobacco) Act 2008 – section 9.</i>  2x Sell tobacco product in a package not marked with a health warning. Offence under the <i>Public Health (Tobacco) Act 2008 – section 7(2).</i>  Display tobacco advertisement in public place. Offence under the <i>Public Health (Tobacco) Act 2008 – section 16 (1).</i>	21/02/2024	Waverley Local Court	<b>Guilty.</b> Fined \$15,750. NB: Initially fined \$24,750 however offender successfully appealed on severity.
24/04/2023	Tob Choice, Sydney	Sell tobacco product to a person under the age of 18. Offence under the <i>Public Health (Tobacco) Act 2008 – section 22(1).</i>	12/12/2023	Downing Centre Local Court	<b>Guilty.</b> Fined \$200.



19/07/2023	CCP Tobacconist, Riverwood	<p>3x Sell tobacco product in a package not marked with a health warning. Offence under the <i>Public Health (Tobacco) Act 2008 – section 7(2)</i>.</p> <p>Supply of a nicotine containing product without authority (schedule 4 substance). Offence under the <i>Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Act 1966 - section 10</i>.</p> <p>Display tobacco smoking accessories in public place. Offence under the <i>Public Health (Tobacco) Act 2008 – section 9</i>.</p>	06/02/2024	Sutherland Local Court	<b>Guilty.</b> Fined \$3,500.
28/09/2023	Waverley Tobacco, Waverley	<p>3x Supply of a nicotine containing product without authority (schedule 4 substance). Offence under the <i>Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Act 1966 - section 10</i>.</p> <p>2x Sell tobacco product in a package not marked with a health warning. Offence under the <i>Public Health (Tobacco) Act 2008 – section 7(2)</i>.</p> <p>Display tobacco advertisement in public place. Offence under the <i>Public Health (Tobacco) Act 2008 – section 16 (1)</i>.</p> <p>Display tobacco smoking accessories in public place. Offence under the <i>Public Health (Tobacco) Act 2008 – section 9</i>.</p>	07/05/2024	Waverley Local Court	<b>Guilty.</b> Fined \$17,600. NB: Offender failed to appear at court but was fined in their absence and a bench warrant issued for their arrest.



06/10/2023	Tom's Tobacco Terrain, Sydney	Sell e-cigarette to a person under the age of 18. Offence under the <i>Public Health (Tobacco) Act 2008 – section 22(2A)</i> .	12/12/2023	Downing Centre Local Court	<b>Guilty.</b> Fined \$300. NB: Offender failed to appear at court but was fined in their absence
06/10/2023	Barber For Life, Sydney	Sell e-cigarette to a person under the age of 18. Offence under the <i>Public Health (Tobacco) Act 2008 – section 22(2A)</i> .	14/02/2024	Downing Centre Local Court	<b>Guilty.</b> Fined \$500.
15/01/2024	Tobacco Town, Sydney	Sell e-cigarette to a person under the age of 18. Offence under the <i>Public Health (Tobacco) Act 2008 – section 22(2A)</i> .	30/04/2024	Downing Centre Local Court	<b>Guilty.</b> Fined \$3,500.
15/01/2024	City Tobacconist, Sydney	Sell tobacco product to a person under the age of 18. Offence under the <i>Public Health (Tobacco) Act 2008 – section 22(1)</i> .	20/05/2024	Downing Centre Local Court	<b>Guilty.</b> Fined \$990.
15/01/2024	SussexCig, Sydney	Sell e-cigarette to a person under the age of 18. Offence under the <i>Public Health (Tobacco) Act 2008 – section 22(2A)</i> .	22/05/2024	Downing Centre Local Court	<b>Guilty.</b> Section 10(1)(A). No conviction recorded.
22/01/2024	Woolworths Metro, Cronulla	Sell tobacco product to a person under the age of 18. Offence under the <i>Public Health (Tobacco) Act 2008 – section 22(1)</i> .	09/05/2024	Sutherland Local Court	<b>Guilty.</b> Issued with a 6 month community corrections order.
22/01/2024	CTC, Cronulla	Sell tobacco product to a person under the age of 18. Offence under the <i>Public Health (Tobacco) Act 2008 – section 22(1)</i> .	06/06/2024	Sutherland Local Court	<b>Guilty.</b> Fined \$2,000.

18/04/2024	Min Min Supermarket, Kogarah	Sell tobacco product to a person under the age of 18. Offence under the <i>Public Health (Tobacco) Act 2008</i> – <i>section 22(1)</i> .	04/07/2024	Sutherland Local Court	<b>Guilty.</b> Issued with a 12 month conditional release order.
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For more information see [Penalties and enforcement](#) fact sheet

## 5 MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS

Table 8. Social and media releases (1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024)

Organisation	Topic	Date
 <b>Facebook</b> <b>(3 posts)</b>	Vaping harms New Cancer Institute NSW campaign aimed at reducing vaping use in young people.	<a href="#">14 March 2024</a>
	Up in smoke: Our compliance officers have been busy Snapshot of SESLHD compliance work completed in FY 22/23	<a href="#">11 December 2023</a>
	Program highlight: Sales-to-minors program	<a href="#">6 September 2023</a>
 <b>Twitter</b> <b>(3 posts)</b>	Vaping harms New Cancer Institute NSW campaign aimed at reducing vaping use in young people.	<a href="#">14 March 2024</a>
	Up in smoke: Our compliance officers have been busy Snapshot of SESLHD compliance work completed in FY 22/23	<a href="#">11 December 2023</a>
	Program highlight: Sales-to-minors program	<a href="#">6 September 2023</a>

## 6 MULTI-AGENCY ENGAGEMENT

The regulation of tobacco and e-cigarettes in NSW involves many stakeholders. The stakeholders regulate compliance on the importation, manufacture, distribution, storage, supply and promotion of tobacco and e-cigarette products and their accessories.

Following the growing concern about e-cigarettes, their contents, increased use and availability, particularly among adolescents and young people, the Australian Government announced in May 2023 plans to strengthen controls surrounding e-cigarette (vaping) products.

Throughout the financial year of 2023-2024 targeted efforts were made to reduce the supply of e-cigarettes in retail settings throughout SESLHD through coordinated blitzes. These efforts incorporated the support and engagement of NSW Police, both metro and local, the Therapeutic Goods Administration and various levels of NSW Health, including the Ministry of Health and staff from multiple local health districts.

SESLHD Blitz		
Date/s	Location	Activity
29/01/2024 – 01/02/2024	South Eastern Sydney Local Health District	49 inspections resulting in 44 seizures of illicit products: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 26,444 e-cigarettes &amp; 231 oral pouches containing nicotine</li> <li>• 110,400 cigarettes, 20.5kg loose leaf &amp; 24.65kg flavoured tobacco</li> <li>• 23 penalty infringement notices issued</li> </ul> TOTAL value of seized goods = \$873,024
SWSLHD Blitz		
Date/s	Location	Activity
19/02/2024 – 22/02/2024	South Western Sydney Local Health District	43 inspections resulting in 40 seizures of illicit products: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 15,302 e-cigarettes containing nicotine</li> <li>• 314,092 cigarettes, 158kg loose leaf &amp; 70kg flavoured tobacco</li> <li>• 19 penalty infringement notices issued</li> </ul> TOTAL value of seized goods = \$895,802
Kings Cross Blitz		
Date/s	Location	Activity
11/04/2024	Potts Point, Sydney	10 inspections resulting in 7 seizures of illicit products: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3,910 e-cigarettes &amp; 53 oral pouches containing nicotine</li> <li>• 21,071 cigarettes, 0.9kg loose leaf &amp; 0.2kg flavoured tobacco</li> <li>• 4 penalty infringement notices issued</li> </ul> TOTAL value of seized goods = \$143,582



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