



FACT SHEET

National action to reduce Indigenous smoking rates

What the Australian Government is doing

The Australian Government is funding the rollout of a national network of regional tobacco coordinators and tobacco action workers to work with Indigenous communities to reduce the number of people smoking. This workforce will implement a range of community-based smoking prevention and cessation support activities tailored to local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

How this will work

- A National Coordinator, Tackling Indigenous Smoking, Mr Tom Calma, has been appointed to lead the initiative.
- A national network of regional tobacco coordinators and tobacco action workers will be employed and trained.
- This tobacco action workforce will have access to training, funding and other supports to develop and implement anti-smoking social marketing campaigns at regional and local levels.
- The tobacco action workforce will be trained over time to deliver smoking cessation programs and supports in Indigenous communities. In addition, the existing health workforce will be trained in brief interventions.
- The tobacco action workforce will work closely with new healthy lifestyle workers (see Helping Indigenous Australians Reduce their Risk of Chronic Disease fact sheet) in a team-based approach.
- Nationally, quit smoking role models and ambassadors – people who have kicked the habit – will also be available to talk with and help smokers give up.
- Quitline services will be enhanced to be more accessible and provide more appropriate services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- The Australian Government will work closely with state and territory governments, Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations, the Australian General Practice Network and other stakeholders in implementing the partnership to ensure the measure is implemented appropriately and builds on existing efforts in tackling smoking in Indigenous communities.
- Social marketing campaigns will be designed and delivered to help manage the culture of smoking.

How this will benefit Indigenous Australians

- Smoking is responsible for one in five of all Indigenous deaths and is the most preventable cause of poor health and early death among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- Around fifty per cent of the combined Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population are current smokers, more than twice the prevalence among the Australian population as a whole.
- It has been estimated that if all tobacco-related deaths among Indigenous Australians could be eliminated, then life expectancy would increase by 2.5 years for males and 1.7 years for females.

Who will implement the new approach

- Under the leadership of the National Coordinator - Tackling Indigenous Smoking, the Australian Government will work with Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations and state and territory governments.