

# Reducing Tobacco Smoking among Aboriginal People

## Project 216: Monitoring and evaluating Aboriginal tobacco control

### What's the project about?

Tobacco smoking caused an estimated 20% of all Indigenous deaths nationally in 2003. Smoking is twice as common among Indigenous Australians compared with non-Indigenous Australians. This project will increase knowledge about Indigenous smoking by describing:

- Indigenous perceptions of why people smoke or quit
- the social determinants of tobacco smoking in Indigenous populations
- national and local trends in Indigenous tobacco smoking rates

The project will increase knowledge about tobacco control activities for Indigenous people by:

- evaluating tobacco control projects
- monitoring tobacco control activities in remote Indigenous communities.

### Who's involved?

- CRC for Aboriginal Health and National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) are funding the project
- Menzies School of Health Research
- Aboriginal people and organisations in remote communities
- Stores and takeaway outlets in these remote communities
- Wholesalers to these stores and takeaway outlets
- Northern Territory Department of Health & Community Services (NT DHCS)
- Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance NT (AMSANT)
- Office of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health

- Arnhemland Progress Association
- Outback Stores
- National Heart Foundation
- The University of Melbourne
- University of Wollongong

### Outcomes

Tobacco smoking was estimated to be responsible for 17% of the health gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians in 2003. Evidence-based tobacco control policy will be necessary to close this gap.

This research will add important new evidence about Indigenous perceptions of smoking and quitting in remote communities, the social determinants of smoking and quitting, local and national trends in Indigenous smoking, and evaluations of tobacco control interventions.

It will also establish the feasibility of monitoring tobacco consumption trends in remote Indigenous towns, using store and takeaway sales of tobacco. Such monitoring (and local feedback) is analogous to the established monitoring of infectious disease notifications. It will enable timely policy responses to local changes in tobacco consumption, and will facilitate the evaluation of the local impact of new tobacco control activities and policies.

## Implications of findings for policy and practice

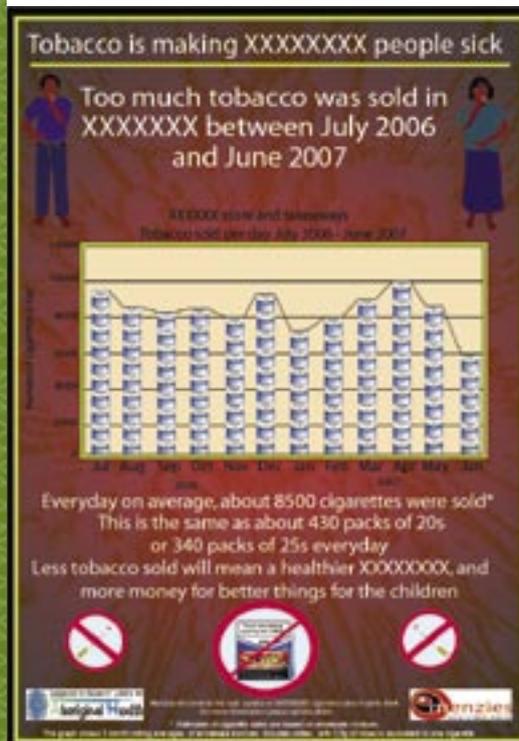
The project will monitor tobacco consumption trends in remote Indigenous towns, using store and takeaway sales of tobacco. By February 2008, Ten Northern Territory communities were on board and consultations progressing in many more communities. Already, feedback posters are being sent to each participating community every six months.

The study has conducted interviews with staff and community members in two remote communities to describe Aboriginal perceptions about smoking and tobacco control. The tobacco

consumption trends and further interviews are being used to evaluate a NT DHCS tobacco control project in six remote communities.

The team will also re-analyse Australian Bureau of Statistics national surveys to understand both national Indigenous smoking trends and the social determinants of smoking among Indigenous people.

The project started in February 2007 and is due to finish in 2009.



A poster describing local tobacco consumption from the first round of feedback.



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