The Tobacco Story
Objective

This flipchart is designed for use by health professionals, tobacco workers, community workers, educators, mental health workers, alcohol and other drug workers, students and community members. It is not a treatment guide but is instead, an education and information resource.

It is presented in three sections (quitting, your health and the facts) to correspond with sections on the No Smokes website (www.nosmokes.com.au), where the pages are also available as separate fact sheets.

It is designed for use mainly with young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in urban, rural and remote settings. The flipchart uses plain English language and informative images to provide straightforward information about:

- how to quit smoking cigarettes
- the effects of smoking cigarettes on your health
- the history of and facts related to smoking cigarettes amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Facilitators can choose to use this resource as a whole, or select sections of the flipchart to focus on, depending on the needs of their students, clients or personal uses.
Acknowledgements

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### Need help? Useful phone numbers and websites
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Tips for facilitators

• Read the flipchart a couple of times before you use it with others. This will help you to educate yourself and/or refresh your knowledge.

• Ask a doctor or nurse to explain anything that you do not understand.

• You may need an interpreter if using the flipchart with different language groups.

• When using the flipchart, the image page faces the clients or students and the text page faces the facilitator.

• The text is a guide to the images.

• Refer to the images regularly.

• Feel free to elaborate or add familiar examples and stories.

• Encourage comments and questions from the clients/students.

• You may choose to select certain parts of the flipchart to focus on if you prefer, rather than going through the whole resource in one go.
The **brain** is important because it helps us make decisions that keep us strong, happy and healthy.

When we do things that are healthy for our body and mind, the **brain** makes a natural chemical called **dopamine**.

**Dopamine** is like a reward for the **brain**. When we make healthy lifestyle choices, it thanks us by making us feel good.

That’s why when we do exercise and learn something new, we feel good!

**Dopamine** rewards the **brain** for making healthy and smart choices and helps us feel good and survive.

There are many healthy things we can do that make us feel good like:

- eating healthy foods
- getting enough sleep
- spending time with family
- learning at school
- playing sport or going hunting
- working everyday.

There are also unhealthy things we can do that feed **dopamine** in the **brain**, then the **brain** gets tricked into wanting to do the unhealthy things over and over again. Smoking cigarettes is one of them.
When we do things that are healthy for our body and mind, the brain makes a natural chemical called dopamine.

Dopamine makes our brain feel good and that makes us feel good.
When you smoke, the brain makes a lot more dopamine than it needs.

This can make you feel very good for a short time. It may even help you concentrate and have more energy.

But when people smoke cigarettes for a long time, the brain starts to think it needs even more dopamine to make it happy. This means smokers want to smoke more and only another smoke will make them feel better.

This is called addiction or getting addicted to cigarettes.

Being addicted to cigarettes means that people can’t stop smoking, even when they know it is not good for them. This can make them sick and can even kill them.

Addiction is a powerful thing. It can force the brain to make decisions that are unhealthy, like smoking cigarettes.

That’s why it's important to help the brain to remember how to be happy and healthy, without cigarettes.

Quitting smoking can help the brain and body feel happy and healthy again.

There are lots of ways the brain can remember how to be happy without cigarettes.
When you smoke, the brain makes a lot more dopamine than it needs. Then the brain starts to think it needs even more dopamine to make it happy. This means you want to smoke more, and only another smoke will make you feel better. This is called addiction or getting addicted.
To quit smoking, it is necessary to break the addiction. This is hard because the brain feels like it needs the nicotine from cigarettes to feel good. It has forgotten how to feel good without cigarettes.

When someone stops smoking, they feel bad for awhile because the brain and body are missing the cigarettes. This is called withdrawal (from nicotine). The brain has forgotten how to make dopamine on its own and it’s like the brain is screaming for more cigarettes.

This can be painful and can make people go back to smoking even though they want to quit. This is because the withdrawal is very hard.

These are some of the things that can happen in withdrawal.

— **Cravings:** a strong desire or urge to smoke again. All you can think about is having another cigarette.

— **Change in feelings:** you might start to feel cranky, angry, frustrated, anxious, sad and even depressed. You may even find it hard to concentrate, become restless, and not be able to sit still for very long.

— **Changes in the way you sleep:** you may start waking up more at night and not sleep as well after quitting.

— **Weight gain/getting fat:** you may start eating more food than before and putting on weight.

The good news is that the withdrawal gets easier as time goes by. To quit smoking it is important to get past the withdrawal, and let the brain learn to make dopamine, (the feel good chemical) on its own again.
Withdrawal happens when you quit

When someone stops smoking, they feel bad for awhile because the brain and body are missing the cigarettes.

This is called withdrawal (from nicotine).

The brain has forgotten how to make dopamine on its own and it's like the brain is screaming for more cigarettes.
Dealing with cravings

It is important to deal with the cravings and get through the withdrawal, so the brain can learn to make its own dopamine and live without smoking again.

When people get through these cravings they will feel good again. This will take awhile.

There are some things that can help teach the brain to make its own dopamine and feel good again without smoking, like:

— exercise and eating healthy food; and
— using Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT) products like patches, lozenges and gum.

Beating addiction is one of the most difficult things smokers will ever have to do. They will have to make hard choices every single day.

This could mean choosing to stay away from places and situations that make them want to smoke — even staying away from family and friends.

It can take a long time to give up unhealthy addictions but in the end the brain will be healthier and happier.

Remember, everyone has the choice to beat addiction.
To quit, you must deal with the **cravings** and get through the withdrawal, so the brain can learn to make its own dopamine and live without smoking again. These things can help:

- **Doing exercise and eating healthy food.**
- **Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT) products** like patches, lozenges and gum.
If you want to quit, it is important to change the way you think.

It is important to understand which triggers make you want to smoke. These might be:

**Situations:**
- spending time with family or friends who smoke
- drinking tea, coffee or alcohol
- talking on the phone
- having a smoke break at work (‘smoko’)
- when other people smoke
- after eating
- certain places where you hang out with friends.

**Emotions:**
- feeling stressed, bored, sad, angry, relaxed or tired.

When these triggers happen, learn to ignore them and do something else instead of smoking. You could go for a walk, exercise or spend time with children or a non-smoker.

When quitting, it may be best to avoid these triggers completely.

It can take a long time to think like a non-smoker and be around these triggers and not feel like a smoke, but it will get easier over time.
QUITTING

Change your thinking
People don’t have to quit on their own, there are many things that can help them quit smoking. It is important to work out which one works best for you.

Health workers or tobacco workers can help smokers work out the best way to help them quit, and give support.

These are some of the main ways to quit:

— **Cold turkey**: quitting smoking suddenly without getting help.

— **Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT)**: different types of medicine that feed the brain nicotine for a short time to help with the cravings while getting off the smokes. Different types of NRTs are patches, chewing gum, lozenges, tablets or an inhaler.

— **Quitline (Call 131 848)**: this is a telephone coaching service that offers help when smokers are finding it hard to stay off the smokes.

— **Quit as a group**: finding other people who want to quit and doing it together, to support each other during the withdrawal and cravings.

— **Hypnosis**: a type of treatment where a trained hypnotist can work deeply with your beliefs to help you think and act like a non-smoker.

— **Acupuncture**: a treatment that has helped many people quit smoking using very small needles that act on different parts of the body and mind.

— **Quit text message services**: receiving free text messages on your mobile phone to provide support during quitting.

— **Cutting back**: smoking less and less each day may help some people work towards quitting.
Ways to quit

- Nicotine gum
- Lozenges
- Quit Line 131 848
- Patches

Aboriginal Health Centre
Quit Smoking
Health Centre
When someone tries to quit and then starts smoking again, it is called **relapse**.

When someone wants to quit, they go through lots of different stages on the road to quitting. This is sometimes called the “stages of change” as shown in this picture.

This explains why **relapse** can be a normal part of quitting. A relapse can help a person learn how to quit successfully in the future.

In the picture, you can see these ‘stages of change’ for the smoker:

- doesn’t care about quitting
- starts to think about quitting
- starts planning to quit
- quits
- either stays quit, or relapses and goes through the cycle again.

On average, it can take 3 to 4 tries before a smoker successfully quits smoking forever.

Things like stress and depression are reasons that people **relapse**.

Out of every 100 people who try to quit on their own (cold turkey), only 4 people make it through.

Smokers are less likely to **relapse** when they have support from health workers and use NRT medication like patches and gum.

Getting support will help you quit forever.
SMOKER STARTS HERE

- Staying Quit Forever
- Not Thinking about Quitting
- Relapse
- Staying Quit
- Quit
- Planning to Quit
- Thinking about Quitting
When a smoker is ready for a change, a health worker or tobacco worker can help them quit using the following steps. This is sometimes called a brief intervention.

**Ask:** Talk to your client about their smoking habits. This may be things like when they smoke, what they smoke, how much they smoke and why they think they smoke.

**Advise:** Talk to your client about giving up smoking in a way that does not shame them. Give them information that may help them decide.

**Assess:** Show the client the Stages of Change picture and together, work out their smoking habits and levels of dependence.

**Assist:** Talk with your client about what they think about their smoking habit, both the good and bad things. Educate them about quitting, make a quit plan together and then talk about ways to help stop relapse.

**Arrange:** Once the client is thinking about quitting or has tried to quit, organise a follow-up visit.

- It is very important for tobacco and health workers to continue to support a smoker once they quit, otherwise they are in danger of relapse.

- Support from family and friends will also help the smoker quit and stay off the smokes for good.
It is very important for tobacco and health workers to continue to support a smoker once they quit, otherwise they are in danger of relapse.

Support from family and friends will also help the smoker quit and stay off the smokes for good.
The smoke from cigarettes is bad for everyone, even the non-smokers. Children and teenagers can breathe in smoke and it can cause health problems for them (called passive smoking).

Smokers often ask their non-smoking family and friends for money to pay for their cigarettes. This is stressful for everyone, especially old people.

There are many things that families and communities can do to help stop the sickness that comes from smoking.

One of the things is to change the way people think about smoking.

It is important to teach people that smoking is not a normal part of family life, homes and culture.

A good way to do this can be to make ‘smoke free zones’. This means not letting people smoke in certain places like the house or the car.

This will keep the air fresh in the house and car, keeping all of the family healthy, and making it harder for the smokers to smoke. It can also help smokers cut down on smoking or quit altogether.

It is also important that health and tobacco workers become good role models for the community by not smoking.

Help your family and community to become healthier and happier by thinking of ways to stop the smoking sickness where you live.
Quitting

Smoke free zones
What's in a cigarette?

- Smoking causes many health problems for smokers and people around them.
- This is because of the dangerous **poisons (chemicals)** that are in cigarettes.
- Cigarettes are mainly made up of leaves from a **tobacco** plant that has a very strong chemical in it called **Nicotine**.
- **Nicotine** is addictive and makes smokers want more (and more and more)!
- But cigarettes also have about 4,000 other chemicals in them and most of them are poisonous.
- These chemicals are also used in things like:
  - insect spray
  - toilet cleaner
  - lighter fluid
  - white ant poison
  - rocket fuel
  - paint stripper.
- Smoking cigarettes sends these poisonous **chemicals** into the body. These chemicals are too strong for the body. If you smoke them in a cigarette the body has to fight them.
Cigarettes are mainly made up of leaves from a tobacco plant that has a very strong chemical in it called Nicotine.

Nicotine is addictive and makes smokers want more (and more and more)!

But cigarettes also contain about 4,000 dangerous poisons (chemicals).

Smoking cigarettes sends these poisonous chemicals into the body.

These chemicals are too strong for the body and the body has trouble fighting them off.
When people smoke, the chemicals go through their mouth, into their lungs and get into their blood. Then the blood carries the chemicals to their brain and it makes them feel good and want more cigarettes.

But the blood also carries the chemicals from the cigarette all around the body, which changes the way it works. These are some of the things that can happen to the body:

— the smoke goes into the mouth — here the chemicals can make the breath smell bad and stain teeth a yellow-brown colour

— if people keep smoking for a long time, this can give them gum disease, tooth loss and mouth cancer

— as the smoke moves into the throat it can give them more coughs and colds. After a long time, they may get throat cancer.

Smoking causes many other serious health problems. These are described in other pages.
YOUR HEALTH

Smoking and the body

- Stained teeth
- Tooth loss
- Gum disease
- Mouth cancer

Chemicals from smoke get into the blood
Smoking and the lungs

On the walls inside the lungs, there are tiny little hairs called cilia. These hairs keep the lungs clean and protect them from dust, dirt and germs (like a broom sweeping out the dirt and dust).

Cigarette smoke kills the cilia and they cannot clean the lungs properly. This makes it harder to breathe.

When this happens, mucus or phlegm builds up and can block the nose, throat and lungs.

Because the lungs are weak, smokers can get infections like pneumonia.

They also have other breathing problems like a bad cough, wheezing and they can become short of breath.

Slowly after years of smoking, the lungs have more and more problems working and can be damaged permanently. This can cause illnesses like asthma or emphysema.

When you breathe, fresh air carries oxygen into the lungs. The lungs then send the oxygen to the heart so the blood can carry it around the body.

When the lungs are not working properly, there is not enough oxygen carried to the heart and to the rest of the body. This means the other organs will not work properly.
YOUR HEALTH

Smoking and the lungs
When people smoke, the poisons from cigarettes get into the blood and it has trouble carrying oxygen around the body. The body needs oxygen to survive.

Smoking makes the heart work harder (beat faster) to pump blood and oxygen around the body.

Then the organs don’t get as much oxygen as they need to work properly and they can get sick.

When the heart doesn’t get enough oxygen and has to work harder, it gets weak.

This can cause heart disease or a heart attack.

Smoking can also cut down the oxygen that gets to the brain and this can cause a stroke. A stroke is like a heart attack in the brain.

A heart attack or stroke can leave someone with a permanent disability or it can kill them.
Poisonous chemicals from smoking are carried by the blood to the heart and brain.

This can cause heart disease, a heart attack or stroke.

These things can permanently damage or kill you.
The chemicals from smoking can poison the body and over time, can cause small lumps called **tumours** to grow anywhere in the body.

These **tumours** can spread around the body and can make people very sick and eventually kill them.

These tumours are called **cancer**.

Many smokers die from **cancer**, especially lung **cancer**.

Other types of **cancers** you may hear of are:

— throat and mouth cancer
— pancreas cancer
— ovary and cervix cancer
— stomach cancer
— bone marrow cancer
— cancer of the kidneys, liver, bladder and bowel
— breast cancer.

If you smoke you are more likely to get one or more of these cancers.
Chemicals from smoking can cause small lumps called **tumours** to grow anywhere in the body.

These **tumours** are called cancer and can spread around the body and make you very sick. They can even kill you.

Many smokers die from **cancer**, especially lung **cancer**.
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have high rates of a disease called **type 2 diabetes**.

This type of **diabetes** happens when a chemical in the body called insulin is out of balance.

Insulin can get out of balance for many reasons. Some of the main ones are eating too much sugar or junk food, and not exercising enough. These things can make your insulin get out of balance and may cause **diabetes**.

Smoking can also make it easier to get **diabetes** because the chemicals in cigarettes change the blood sugar and the way insulin works in the body.

When someone has diabetes, the body has trouble getting energy from food.

If you have diabetes and you smoke, it will have a negative effect on your health. You are more likely to have a stroke or eye problems, and your kidneys may stop working.
Smoking can also make it easier to get diabetes.

If you have diabetes and smoke, smoking can make diabetes worse.
Men who smoke are more likely to:
- have a low sperm count which makes it harder to make a baby
- have problems getting an erection
- have sleeping problems
- have a sore throat all the time
- get acid reflux, which feels like a burning in the chest
- grow ulcers in their digestive system.

Men will be healthier and have healthier children and families if they do not smoke cigarettes.
Your Health

Men’s health
Women’s health

When women smoke:
— they may have trouble getting pregnant
— if they take the contraceptive pill, they are more likely to get heart disease.

When pregnant women smoke:
— they are in danger of losing their baby (miscarriage)
— it hurts the baby
— the chemicals from the smoke go through the mother’s body and into the baby’s body
— their baby could be born too early or be born sick.

Once the baby is born and the mother is still smoking, many problems can still happen like:
— the baby can get sick all the time, especially with lung infections and asthma
— the breast milk is not very good (poor quality)
— the baby is at higher risk of dying from something called Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).
Women who smoke may have trouble getting pregnant.

If you smoke when you are pregnant, you can hurt the baby.
Smoking and your looks

Smoking can change the way you look.

It can:

- stain your fingers a yellow-brown colour
- make your hair and clothes smell of cigarettes
- make your hair lose its natural shine (look dull)
- make your skin become wrinkly, even if you are still young
- make your lips get wrinkles around them from sucking on the cigarette
- make you look older than you are
- stain and damage your teeth.
Smoking makes you look older more quickly.
Mental health is about how people think, feel and respond to the people and situations they live and work in.

Just like smoking can change the body, smoking can also change a person’s mental health.

Smokers may feel that smoking makes them feel better — this is usually because they are addicted to the cigarettes. But often after smoking for a long time, smoking can make people feel more depressed, angry and anxious.

If they start to feel like this, they may need to talk with a health worker who can help.

Smoking can also make someone with a mental health problem feel worse.

Smoking can affect the way some mental health medicines work, so people who smoke may need to take more medicine than they would if they didn’t smoke.

If people have to take more medicine for mental health problems because they smoke, the side effects can also become worse. For example, they may have problems controlling the way their body moves.

If you have a mental health problem, it will help the problem if you don’t smoke.
Smoking and mental health

Smoking can make people feel more depressed, angry and anxious.
Passive smoking

- People can get sick just from being around smokers. They don’t even have to smoke! This is called **passive smoking**.
- Of all of the people who die from sickness caused by smoking, 1 out of 4 don’t even smoke!
- This ‘second-hand’ smoke comes from the burning end of a cigarette and from the smoke that the smoker blows out after inhaling.
- If people are around smokers in a room or car where it is hard for the smoke to escape, they can inhale all that poisonous smoke.
- Children are in danger of becoming very sick if they are around smokers. This is because:
  - they are breathing in and out a lot more than adults do
  - their lungs are still growing
  - they can’t easily move away from someone who is smoking
  - the smoke from cigarettes gets into carpets, blankets, pillows and floors and other things that children have a lot of contact with.

- Next time a smoker lights up a cigarette, ask them to move outside away from non-smokers and children.
Passive smoking

People can get sick just from being around smokers. They don’t even have to smoke!

Passive smoking can make children and babies sick.
As soon as you quit smoking, your body starts to recover straight away. Here are the good things that happen to the body from the day you stop smoking.

— **After 12 hours:** More oxygen starts to get to the heart and muscles. If you are NOT using nicotine replacement therapy, almost all of the nicotine is out of the blood 12 hours after quitting smoking.

— **After 1 week:** The lungs feel better and begin to clean out the mucus, tar and dust. The blood will also become healthier and better at fighting germs. Your taste and smell is improved.

— **After 2 months:** The immune system will get better. This means that the body will find it easier to fight off common sicknesses like the flu, colds and sores. The blood will start moving through the body more easily and help the heart and other organs to work better.

— **After 6 months:** Exercise becomes easier as more air is getting into the lungs.

— **After 1 year:** The blood pressure goes back to normal and the risk of heart disease halves.

— **After 5 years:** There is much less chance of having a heart attack or stroke.

— **After 10 years:** There is much less chance of getting lung cancer.

— **After 15 years:** The risk of heart attack and stroke is now almost the same as a non-smoker.

If you can quit smoking and stay quit, your body will have the chance to recover and become healthy again.
Getting better after quitting

**After 12 hours**
- Almost all nicotine is out of the blood
- More oxygen gets to heart and muscles

**After 1 week**
- Lungs feel better
- Blood is healthier
- Sense of smell improves

**After 2 months**
- Immune system is better which helps to fight off colds and the flu
- Blood starts moving through the body and helps the heart and organs to work better

**After 5 years**
- Less chance of getting a heart attack or stroke

**After 6 months**
- More air gets in the lungs
- Exercise gets easier

**After 10 years**
- Less chance of getting lung cancer

**After 15 years**
- Risk of heart attack and stroke is almost the same as non-smoker

**After 1 year**
- Blood pressure back to normal
- Risk of heart disease halves

**After 2 months**
- Immune system is better which helps to fight off colds and the flu
- Blood starts moving through the body and helps the heart and organs to work better

**After 6 months**
- More air gets in the lungs
- Exercise gets easier

**After 10 years**
- Less chance of getting lung cancer

**After 15 years**
- Risk of heart attack and stroke is almost the same as non-smoker
Tobacco use by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

- Smoke and smoking is an important part of many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander traditional practices.
- The custom of ‘smoking’ people at ceremony time is still practiced today in many places. The smoke is said to have healing qualities and to ward off bad spirits.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were introduced to smoking cigarettes only in the last 200 years.
- We now know that people can get sick and die from smoking tobacco.
- But many people still smoke. In fact, twice as many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders smoke tobacco as non-Aboriginal Australians.
THE FACTS

Tobacco use by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
Historically and still today, Aboriginal people from desert regions use wild tobacco plants that are known by different names including Pituri and Mingkulpa.

**Pituri** is a natural plant that grows from Queensland right across the desert to Western Australia. In Central Australia the leaves from this plant are used for chewing.

The scientific name of the family of **Pituri** plants is *Nicotiana spp*. Scientific names for the different types of pituri that are most popular in Central Australia are *N. ingulba*, *N. excelsior* and *N. gossei*.

The leaves and stems from the **pituri** bush are dried and then mixed with burnt ash from specific trees. The mix is then chewed and held in the mouth for long periods of time.

**Pituri** is shared among the group and traded widely.

Because **pituri** isn’t burnt it doesn’t contain all the poisonous chemicals that cigarettes do, but it still has high levels of nicotine that make it addictive and it may also cause health problems.
Wild desert tobacco: Pituri or Mingkulpa

Pituri plant growing wild in the desert (N.goodspeedii)

Close up of pituri plant (N. gossei)
On the northern shores of Australia, visitors from Indonesia first introduced the practice of smoking native tobacco to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Fishermen from Macassar in Indonesia, known across northern Australia as Macassans, sailed to Australia in search of pearls and trepang (sea cucumbers).

The Macassans acknowledged the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander’s ownership of their land and seas, and exchanged tobacco, pipes and other valued goods in exchange for the right to fish in their waters.

The Macassans smoked tobacco through a long-stemmed pipe made from a crab claw, hollow root or a reed.

This type of smoking became part of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social and ceremonial life and is still practiced today in some places.

Tobacco from the Macassans also doesn’t contain the poisonous chemicals that are in cigarettes, but it still has high levels of nicotine that make it addictive and may also cause health problems.
THE FACTS

Tobacco from Indonesia (Macassans)
When Europeans arrived in Australia in 1788, they introduced tobacco to many Aboriginal people. They gave it as a gesture of goodwill.

In the decades that followed, Aboriginal people were moved from traditional lands to church, government or private missions. Tobacco was exchanged for work and to reward good behaviour.

Many Aboriginal people worked in the cattle industry and defence forces where they were paid with rations of tobacco and food instead of money.

Tobacco was often used to influence people to give up traditional lifestyles and to attend church. People would travel long distances to access tobacco, bringing many people to missionary settlements. It was a very popular item to sell and trade.

Over the following years, tobacco use spread more with Aboriginal people paid in tobacco rations for services by explorers, missionaries, pastoralists, cattle farmers, miners, fishermen and anthropologists.

Collectors, anthropologists and researchers also traded tobacco for artifacts, ceremonial objects, local language, local knowledge, oral history and cultural heritage.

Payment in tobacco rations caused addiction and many health problems for Aboriginal people. Although the practice did slow down from the 1940s, it did not stop completely on cattle stations until the late 1960s.
THE FACTS

Tobacco from Europeans
In 1980, 34% of all Australians smoked.

Due to Public Health Campaigns since the 1980s, now only 16.6% of Australians smoke.

But today, Aboriginal people still smoke just as much as they did in 1980; this is twice the amount of non-Aboriginal Australians.

Now, 47% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people over the age of 15 years smoke daily.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men’s life expectancy is 67 years compared to 79 years of non-Aboriginal Australian men.

The life expectancy for Aboriginal women is 73 years compared to 83 years for non-Aboriginal women.

Much of this difference is due to diseases related to smoking tobacco, such as heart disease, lung and throat disease, and cancers.

In fact, 20% of Aboriginal people die from sickness caused by smoking. That means, smoking kills one Aboriginal person in every five!

If Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people quit smoking or did not smoke so much, they would have far less health problems and would not die as young.
T H E  F A C T S

Tobacco facts 1

Life expectancy difference between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal women and men

Smoking kills 1 Aboriginal person in every 5
Most Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander houses are smoking houses. In fact, 62% of these houses have at least one regular smoker.

That means many Aboriginal children are passive smokers.

This may be why more Aboriginal people start smoking at a younger age when compared with non-Aboriginal smokers.

More Aboriginal women smoke while pregnant compared with non-Aboriginal women.

Many Aboriginal health workers smoke.

Smoking is responsible for more Aboriginal health problems and deaths than alcohol and other drugs combined.

Smoking can lead to marijuana and other drug use.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people experience more sickness and die much younger than non-Aboriginal Australians. Smoking is one of the big reasons for this.
Many Aboriginal people say “smoking is part of our culture” but health workers tell them “traditional smoking heals, tobacco smoking kills.”

Sharing tobacco plays a large part in the social life of many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who think smoking is part of normal everyday life.

People who don’t use tobacco may end up feeling alone and separated from their family and community.

Aboriginal people have suffered much trauma in Australia through colonisation, racism, losing connection to land and breakdown of culture.

All over the world, there are higher rates of tobacco use where there is poverty, trauma and social disadvantage. As a result, there is more disease and death.

For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Australia, it is no different. People use a lot of tobacco where there is pain and suffering and the tobacco use keeps the cycle of pain and suffering going.
Why smoke?

- Sharing smokes, socialising
- Feeling alone and depressed
- People smoke all around the world

THE FACTS
Across Australia, it is illegal to sell cigarettes to people under 18 years of age. People who sell cigarettes to underage smokers can be fined.

Fines can even be given to older people who buy cigarettes and give them to smokers who are younger than 18 years of age.

Smoking in enclosed public places (such as restaurants, cafes, bars and government buildings) is now banned in Australia. The information below tells us why.

It is now accepted that passive smoking (breathing in other people’s cigarette smoke) is a risk to everyone’s health, not just to those who smoke. Smoke-free areas have become common and are now expected to be available for non-smokers in all public places of work and recreation.

There has been a law passed by the Australian Government that smoking is banned in all Australian Government buildings, aeroplanes and airports.

Across Australia, smoking is banned in all closed-in places such as dining areas, public places, pubs, clubs and gaming (poker machines) areas.

Each different state and territory government can decide its own laws on the issue of smoking in public places and workplaces. This means that they can make their own decisions about which public places will be smoke-free, and the laws may be different in different states and territories.
Smoking is now banned in many public places across Australia.
It is law in Australia that tobacco must be sold in packets of 20 cigarettes or more, and that the packaging shows health warnings about the effects of smoking.

Since 1973, as more is understood about the negative effects of smoking, the Australian government has demanded increasingly serious warnings about the effects of smoking on health. From March 2006, most tobacco products sold in Australia have required graphic health warnings.

By law, tobacco advertisements cannot appear in print media such as newspapers and magazines.

Tobacco advertising on radio and television is also illegal, and became illegal in online media (the internet) in September 2012.

Point-of-sale advertising is the advertising shown in shops that sell cigarettes. At the moment, this advertising is excused from the national ban. It is the responsibility of state and territory governments to decide laws on the placement and size of these advertisements.
Example of cigarette packaging used in Australia from March 2006 to November 2012

DON'T LET CHILDREN BREATHE YOUR SMOKE
Health Authority Warning

Children exposed to passive smoking experience more serious illnesses such as pneumonia, middle ear infections and asthma attacks. Babies exposed to passive smoking are at greater risk of SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome).

You CAN quit smoking. Call Quitline 13 18 48, talk to your doctor or pharmacist, or visit www.quitnow.info.au

SMOKING DOUBLES YOUR RISK OF STROKE
Health Authority Warning

Smoking narrows the arteries to your brain, causing them to become blocked. This causes a stroke that can result in permanent paralysis, inability to speak, disability or death.

You CAN quit smoking. Call Quitline 13 18 48, talk to your doctor or pharmacist, or visit www.quitnow.info.au

Example of cigarette packaging used in Australia from December 2012

SMOKING CAUSES PERIPHERAL VASCULAR DISEASE

Smoking narrows and blocks your blood vessels, reducing blood and oxygen supply to your extremities (foot, legs, hands, arms). Over time this can result in pain, open sores that don’t heal and gangrene. Gangrene leads to amputation.

Want advice on quitting? Call Quitline 13 7848, talk to your doctor or pharmacist, or visit www.quitnow.gov.au
Buying tobacco is expensive. Smoking costs a lot of money.

Someone who smokes a pack of cigarettes a day is spending about $500 a month on cigarettes...that's around $6000 a year!

Instead of spending $6000 a year on cigarettes, that money could buy household goods like a fridge, more clothes and food for the family; even a car or a holiday!

If everyone who smokes is spending that much money, where does the money go? Tobacco doesn't cost that much to grow.

The tobacco companies who buy and sell the tobacco are making a lot of money! In one year, three tobacco companies made $140 billion dollars!

There are much better ways you can spend your money.
If you buy a pack of cigarettes a day, the above picture shows how much money you will spend in a month. That adds up to $6000 a year!

Imagine how much money you would save if you didn’t smoke!
Useful phone numbers and websites

**Quitline:**
131 848
www.quit.org.au
This is a national telephone information and advice or counselling service for people who want to quit smoking. Quitline has Aboriginal counsellors on the line and other staff are also trained to understand the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. You can call 7 days a week, 24 hrs a day for the cost of a local call from anywhere in Australia (charges may apply for mobile phones). You can also order a free Quit Pack through Quitline for yourself or to help someone else.

**No Smokes:**
www.nosmokes.com.au
No Smokes is an anti-smoking website designed especially for use by young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

**OxyGen:**
www.OxyGen.org.au
OxyGen gives you the whole story about tobacco so you can make your own decisions about smoking. OxyGen is a site specifically for young people. You’ll find hard facts about the tobacco industry, the truth about smoking myths, comebacks if you get pressured to smoke and lots more.

**The Centre for Excellence in Indigenous Tobacco Control:**
www.ceitc.org.au
Information about tobacco control in Indigenous communities by sharing stories about community projects, networking, training and resource development.

**Quit Now:**
www.quitnow.gov.au
Quit Now is a national tobacco campaign that aims to promote quit attempts among smokers and provide support to avoid relapse among quitters.

**The Cancer Council:**
www.cancer.org.au
This website offers information on cancer research, patient support and cancer prevention.
NEED HELP?

Other resources and programs

**Talkin’ Up Good Air:**
This is a tobacco control resource kit for Indigenous Australian Communities that encourages community action.

**Smokecheck (QLD, NSW and the NT):**
This is a brief intervention program that is delivered by health workers to identify, encourage and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who smoke tobacco to make positive and healthy behaviour changes.