



Australian Indigenous HealthInfoNet

## Alcohol and Other Drugs Knowledge Centre

### **Media Release – Continued Deadly Progress: New review finds declines in tobacco use among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population with self-determination and leadership critical to reducing tobacco use further.**

24 June 2020

The Alcohol and Other Drugs Knowledge Centre has published a new [Review of tobacco use among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples](#). The review was led by Emily Colonna and Ray Lovett of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Program at the Australian National University. The review shows substantial progress has been made, with significant reductions in tobacco use among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and that further reductions are achievable. To accomplish this will require Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander guidance and leadership in legislation and policies; social marketing; comprehensive programs; and research and evaluation.

Lead author Ms Emily Colonna says, “Substantial progress has been made in reducing tobacco use which will translate to substantial reductions in tobacco-related morbidity and mortality”.

Co-author Associate Professor Ray Lovett says, “Expanding the evidence base on what works to reduce tobacco use, incorporating knowledge from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and service providers is essential. All Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples need to have access to effective and appropriate tobacco reduction programs and initiatives”.

The review points out that the reasons why people start to smoke, continue smoking, and try to stop smoking are complex, influenced by historical and contemporary systemic factors. Associate Professor Ray Lovett says, “there is no silver bullet to reducing tobacco use at the population level. We need a suite of culturally safe, holistic approaches that address the social determinants of tobacco use as well as including multiple facets of health care and education at the community and individual level to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to be smoke free”.

HealthInfoNet Director Professor Neil Drew says, “It is worth noting that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples experience discrimination and barriers to both education and employment, at least in part due to colonisation and its lasting impacts. As outlined in this review, these factors can contribute to smoking, or make it harder to quit”.

The review is accompanied by a plain language [summary](#), a [factsheet](#) of key findings and a [video](#) of the key findings.

Information about the harms of tobacco needs to be readily available to empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to make choices about tobacco use.

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