



Galnya Angin (Good Air)

The community newsletter of the
**Centre for Excellence in Indigenous
Tobacco Control (CEITC)**

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About the CEITC

The Centre for Excellence in Indigenous Tobacco Control, based within the Onemda VicHealth Koori Health Unit at the University of Melbourne, was established in September 2003. Funded over three years by the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing, the CEITC seeks to improve health outcomes related to tobacco smoking among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people by building national capacity for effective Indigenous tobacco control programs.

Australia is considered to be a leader among developed nations around the world in the area of tobacco control. Well-coordinated and sustained tobacco control programs have resulted in long-term health gains, including a decrease in death rates from cardiovascular disease, and subsequent increases in life expectancy.

However, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples continue to suffer high death and illness rates from conditions related to tobacco use. More than 50 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders aged thirteen plus smoke, and there has been no decline in this rate since 1994. Compare this with a figure of 21 per cent in the general population nationally.

From the Manager

Welcome to the first edition of *Galnya Angin*, the first of three newsletters we plan to publish each year. In each edition we will have information on what's happening at the Centre for Excellence in Indigenous Tobacco Control (CEITC), including updates on our projects and progress that's been made throughout the year. The Centre currently employs five staff and we are working in a variety of ways to boost the profile of Indigenous tobacco control and to encourage others to undertake work in this area. The CEITC's largest projects will focus on Health Worker training and resource development – an article on these projects is included in this newsletter.

Partnerships in Indigenous Tobacco Control

The 'National Strategic Framework on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health' states, in regard to tobacco control, that mainstream strategies should ensure the inclusion of actions that focus on Indigenous tobacco control. This project looks at the activity of mainstream tobacco control organisations in regard to Indigenous tobacco control. The final report, which will be available in June 2005, includes descriptions of partnerships established between mainstream and Aboriginal organisations to develop programs in Indigenous tobacco control. The findings indicate that mainstream organisations with Indigenous representation on boards, advisory committees or within partnerships are more likely to be successful in implementing Indigenous tobacco control projects. Ten recommendations have also been developed from the available evidence and the CEITC has begun to plan and implement some of these.

CEITC Consortium

The Centre is based on a consortium of both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and tobacco control agencies from around Australia. This consortium of organisations' model enables the CEITC to tap into existing infrastructure, and also allows for expert input from consortium members into our work.

Consortium Members

- Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (VACCHO)
- The Cancer Council Victoria
- Quit Victoria
- VicHealth Centre for Tobacco Control
- Aboriginal & Islander Health Worker Journal
- Apārangi Tautoko Auahi Kore (ATAK) – Maori Smokefree Coalition
- Australian Indigenous HealthInfoNet
- National Heart Foundation Australia
- James Cook University
- Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) for Aboriginal Health
- The Cancer Council Australia
- The Cancer Council NSW
- Victorian Health Promotion Foundation (VicHealth)
- Queensland University of Technology

Australian Secondary Schools' Drug and Alcohol Survey

The Australian Secondary Schools' Drug and Alcohol Survey (ASSDAS) has been conducted on seven occasions since 1984. The survey was initially carried out by Cancer Councils nation-wide to better understand the alcohol and tobacco usage of secondary school students. From 1996 the ASSDAS included additional questions about illicit drug usage and was expanded so that it could be conducted collaboratively by Cancer Councils and State, Territory and Federal governments. Since 1993, a question asking participants if they are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander has been included on four occasions. The responses of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students has never been analysed beyond documenting how many Indigenous Australians have participated in the survey. The CEITC is working in partnership with the Australian Secondary Schools' Drug and Alcohol Survey project to analyse and evaluate Indigenous Australian students' responses to the survey and compare these with the non-Indigenous responses.



The CEITC Website

The CEITC website, based within the Indigenous HealthInfoNet at Edith Cowan University, will be an important resource for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, Indigenous and non-Indigenous health researchers, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers, health professionals and other researchers who wish to access information on all aspects of tobacco control, both in Australia and overseas. Major content areas of the website will include:

- The history of CEITC – the work that the Centre does and contact details.
- Major CEITC projects and other national projects.
- Research publications – our own and others.
- CEITC news and events – the newsletter and media releases.
- Government policy.
- International research and links.
- A brief history of tobacco use and Indigenous people – including the numbers of people who smoke and why.
- Links to information on the health effects of smoking and the benefits of quitting.

It will also provide an opportunity for people to share information on-line via a listserve, leave comments in the guestbook and develop on-line discussions on topics of interest.

Indigenous Tobacco Control Training

The National Aboriginal Health Worker Training Package is currently in a draft stage and the final package is due to be completed in June this year. The draft training package includes tobacco control content in many areas, particularly in the Certificate IV and Diploma levels. The CEITC plans to conduct consultations with training providers to better understand their needs in regard to resources and training materials with tobacco control content. This information will assist the CEITC about the best ways to support training providers in this area.

Join our Community of Practice (Indigenous Tobacco Control Interest Group)

The CEITC also plans to develop and maintain a Community of Practice (Indigenous Tobacco Control Interest Group), which could potentially include all individuals and organisations throughout Australia with an interest in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tobacco control. Members of the Community of Practice will be included on the CEITC mailing list and listserve (email group), receive the CEITC newsletter and have the opportunity to take part in on-line discussions.

For more information contact Viki Briggs on +61 3 8344 0880 or vbriggs@unimelb.edu.au

Centre for Excellence in Indigenous Tobacco Control Projects

The Centre for Excellence in Indigenous Tobacco Control seeks to improve the tobacco consumption-related health outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The CEITC's goal is to help reduce the health, social and financial burden of tobacco use on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities by building a national capacity for effective Indigenous tobacco control programs. Over the next two years, the CEITC will implement a number of tobacco control programs, including:

- 1. Health Worker Training Program**
- 2. Resource Development Program**

Health Worker Training Program

This is an Indigenous tobacco control program established to resource Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers, Aboriginal community health services and Aboriginal Health Worker trainers nationally. The Health Worker Training Program will assist and support Indigenous Health Workers to become community leaders in the area of tobacco control and practices, such as health promotion and the effects of tobacco use, smoking cessation strategies and brief intervention training. The program will include two key projects:

1. Smoke-Free Workplace Project

This project will involve the development of a series of smoke-free workplace guideline models and corresponding resource materials that can be utilised by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community health services.

2. Aboriginal Health Worker Training Resources Project

This project will involve the development of a series of tobacco control training resource materials that correspond with the units of competency contained within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Worker National competency standards and qualifications.

Resource Development Program

The second area of specific work will focus upon the development of a national Indigenous tobacco control health promotion resource kit. The kit will be developed for use by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community health services and Health Workers primarily to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health service users. The resource kit will incorporate a variety of components that are location specific to each State and Territory, and can be adapted to the needs of the local community.



Violet Sheridan's Story

"Giving up the smokes"

Violet Sheridan has been a Health Worker at the Winnunga Nimmityjah Health Centre, an Aboriginal Health Service in the Australian Capital Territory, working within a substance abuse project. She has also smoked for most of her teenage and adult years. Seeing her mother-in-law struggle with the effects of emphysema, and similarly experiencing trouble with her own breathing, she decided to take advantage of the 'No More Bundah' Program offered by Winnunga Nimmityjah. 'No More Bundah' is an eight-week Quit program run by Winnunga that promotes smoking cessation through the use of counselling and group meetings together with a free two-week supply of nicotine replacement therapy.

Violet felt that the initial support provided by the nicotine patches made the difference this time in giving up smoking. Her body no longer craved the nicotine in cigarettes, which in turn made it easier to change her impulse to reach for a cigarette out of habit. 'When I felt like I wanted a cigarette I knew it wasn't my body needing the cigarette it was just my mind. So I'd tell myself to wait a couple of minutes or go and have a glass of water and the urge would have gone.' It is this change in her behaviour around smoking that Violet feels is the key to her successfully giving up. Even though she is with people who smoke all the time she is able to modify what she does when the urge strikes.

Even when she no longer attended the support groups, Violet was able to apply the skills that she had learned to get through those times when temptation—or simple habit—would have otherwise weakened her resolve.

Now Violet is feeling the benefits of being smoke free for ten months. Her sense of smell

and of taste have returned and her energy level has increased so that she is now able to go for long walks. Her doctor has told her that her heavy cough, a result of thirty-seven years of smoking, will take a little longer to clear but her breathing has improved remarkably.

Asked what she would say to anyone considering giving up smoking, Violet said: 'Have a go and just don't give up hope. It's the hardest thing I've ever done and it took me twenty attempts but I did it with the help I got through 'No More Bundah'. All my friends and family are really proud of me.'

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Onemda
VicHealth Koori
Health Unit



Are you on our mailing list?

If you would like to receive our newsletter, and be informed about projects we are running at the CEITC, please fill in this form and mail or fax it to the address below. All questions are optional but your answers would help us to know what aspects of our work you might be most interested in.

PLEASE PRINT

Name:.....

Organisation:.....

Address:.....

..... Postcode:.....

Tel:(.....)..... Fax:(.....).....

Email:.....

Are you ATSI? Yes No

Do you currently work in an ATSI
community organisation?

Yes No

How would you describe your current
area of work or study:

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.....
.....
.....

Does your work/study involve any of the
following: (Please as many as apply)

Health service delivery

Health policy

Health research

Other research

ATSI education

Other education

ATSI community service

Other (please specify)

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