

Media Release

Report highlights the priorities needed to tackle Indigenous smoking rates

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A new report highlighting the need for greater research and resources to tackle Indigenous smoking rates will inform and support the COAG commitment to addressing the key risk factors for chronic diseases, the single largest contributor to the 17-year life expectancy gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

The Centre for Excellence in Indigenous Tobacco Control (CEITC) has released the report: *Indigenous Tobacco Control in Australia: Everybody's Business National Indigenous Tobacco Control Research Roundtable Report, 2008*.

The report documents the gaps and priorities in research into Indigenous tobacco control as determined by a roundtable gathering of 66 health professionals, which CEITC held with the support of the Cooperative Research Centre for Aboriginal Health.

According to CEITC manager Viki Briggs, the latest research indicates that smoking-related illnesses are responsible for at least 20 per cent of all Indigenous adult deaths.

"The roundtable report highlights that the best way to address such appalling statistics is through a coordinated approach to research, implementation and evaluations to advance Indigenous tobacco control," says Ms Briggs.

"Participants recognised the complexity of the work in getting priorities right, but believe inroads will be achieved through improved knowledge of best practice interventions; empowering our Indigenous health workforce and through genuine partnerships with government."

The five key areas which have emerged are:

- Creating positive environments for smoking cessation;
- Improving our understanding of motivations for smoking and non-smoking;
- Improving our knowledge of best practice interventions;
- Empowering and supporting the health workforce; and
- A cost-benefit analysis of various interventions that would enable the best use of resources.

"So now we wait for the finer details of the COAG announcement of \$161million to address key risk factors for chronic disease and hope that the funding will support



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the priority areas set out by this roundtable report on Indigenous tobacco control,” says Ms Briggs.

Mick Gooda, CEO of the CRC for Aboriginal Health, commended the timely release of this report given the recent COAG Communiqué on targeting the causes of chronic diseases including smoking.

“The report is being sent to Minister Roxon and all State and Territory health ministers as part of our commitment to developing appropriate research agendas to ensure health policies and interventions are informed by evidence and reflect the real priorities of those working on the ground to address Aboriginal health,” says Mr Gooda. “The expertise provided by CEITC and others working towards reducing Indigenous tobacco use will be critical to the success of COAG’s efforts.”

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The report: *Indigenous Tobacco Control in Australia: Everybody's Business National Indigenous Tobacco Control Research Roundtable Report, 2008* can be downloaded from the CEITC website: www.ceitc.org.au