

## Indigenous hip hop artist hits the road to promote quitting to youth

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Personal experiences of smoking, quitting and how smoking is affecting communities will play out on social media as part of a road trip for a group of leading Indigenous musicians.

Members of the Indigenous health project, No Smokes, will join a crew of Bundjalung musicians from the northern New South Wales coast on a road trip from Lismore (NSW) to Melbourne (Victoria) to promote anti-smoking messages to Indigenous youth.

Indigenous hip hop performer, Blakboi will create and post video diaries and blogs throughout the two-week tour and after the tour Indigenous guest bloggers will rotate monthly to highlight health, smoking and other issues close to their heart.

The blog is a new component of No Smokes, an innovative multi-media project established by the Menzies School of Health Research to curb smoking amongst Indigenous teens.

Blakboi, a Gamilaroi man, Lismore radio DJ and Indigenous activist, remains passionate about promoting healthy lifestyles and anti-smoking to young Indigenous people.

“It sucks to see jarjum (young kids) smoking,” he said.

“Tobacco is a drug and it makes you addicted. Fifty per cent of Aboriginal people smoke which is way too high and we need to do something to empower our people to kick the smokes.

“I feel proud to be part of a tour which will make our people aware of quit smoking options and the support that is available. My mum and dad smoked for many years through the early part of my life, but ended up quitting together.”

Consistent with the No Smokes approach of using music and video to communicate health messages, Blakboi will loop didgeridoo with contemporary instruments and hip hop to speak to people of all ages on the tour.

“I use hip hop lyrics and rhyme to produce positive messages, but keep it grounded and real,” he said.

Indigenous acts SupaFresh, Mixed Ages and Craig Bolt will join Blakboi on the tour which will be highlighted with a stop at the Indigenous Surf Titles at Bells Beach where Blakboi will compete.

The group will perform a free event at the Redfern Community Centre on 16 May, at which No Smokes, the National Centre for Indigenous Excellence and the Aboriginal Health & Medical Research Council will participate.

The tour will culminate on World No Tobacco Day on 31 May with a performance to Victorian Indigenous high school students in Collingwood to promote anti-smoking messages.

For more information including a full tour program please visit [www.nosmokes.com.au](http://www.nosmokes.com.au)

Photos of Blakboi are available on request.

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**Background:** No Smokes, a project of the Menzies School of Health Research and funded by the Australian Department of Health and Ageing, is an anti-smoking website that uses social media, videos, animations and online games featuring Indigenous faces and voices to talk to young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders about smoking.