

Now you're speaking my language: Anti-smoking video translated into Indigenous languages

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A popular anti-smoking animation has been translated into three of the most commonly spoken Central Australian Aboriginal languages in an effort to tackle high smoking rates in remote communities where mainstream anti-smoking campaigns are failing.

Head of the Menzies School of Health Research (Menzies) No Smokes program, Associate Professor Sheree Cairney said there had been little change in smoking rates among remote Aboriginal communities despite a nationwide decline of Indigenous smoking rates from 45 to 41 per cent over a four year period.

"Remote Indigenous smoking rates are at 50 per cent which is in stark contrast to the national smoking rate of 17 per cent," she said.

The successful anti-smoking animation produced by the Menzies' No Smokes program and funded by the Australian Department of Health has been released in Central Arrernte, Pitjantjatjara and Walpiri languages. These languages are spoken and understood by the vast majority of Aboriginal people across Central Australia.

"Translations of this video offers teachers and health professionals an accessible, relevant tool to use in remote areas where mainstream messages and English-based education tools don't have a lasting effect," she said.

One third of Indigenous children in remote areas speak an Indigenous language at home and Indigenous people in remote areas are three times more likely to speak an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander language than those living in urban areas.

"People learn more readily when the messages are in their first language. Despite this there has been a clear gap in anti-smoking resources available in Indigenous languages," Associate Professor Cairney said.

The three-minute video hosted on the NoSmokes.com.au website stars a charismatic brain caricature who 'kicks the habit' by understanding the science behind nicotine addiction.

"The original English language version has been a hit with young people because it uses humour to communicate a serious message. Now the video has been translated, it will reach a whole new demographic," she said.

"With dozens of Aboriginal languages spoken across Australia in hundreds of dialects, we decided to start with three of the most commonly spoken languages in the Central region."

Assoc Professor Cairney said she would like the video translated into other Indigenous languages to further improve the anti-smoking campaign in remote communities.

"Because the animation is narrated it can easily be dubbed with region specific translations," she said.

“We look forward to reviewing its success in assisting health workers to turn around the rate of smoking among remote Indigenous populations and finding new opportunities to apply the same principle to other health campaigns.”

To view translated videos visit <http://quit.nosmokes.com.au/teachers-and-health-workers/translations/>

Fast facts

- Aboriginal Australians are 2.6 times more likely to smoke than their non-Aboriginal counterparts
- Smoking rates in remote Aboriginal communities are reported to be as high as 70 per cent
- 73 per cent of Indigenous people aged 15+ years who live in remote areas of Australia speak an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander language
- The Tobacco Addiction Story is an animated three-minute video hosted on the No Smokes site <http://quit.nosmokes.com.au/quitting/addiction> and is available in English and three Indigenous languages
- No Smokes is a national anti-smoking project that uses videos, animations, storytelling and online games to empower young Aboriginal people to quit or make the decision to never take up smoking
- NoSmokes.com.au was launched on 31 May 2012, and has an average of 1,000 page views each month.

Relevant links:

No Smokes website: www.nosmokes.com.au

Facebook: facebook.com/nosmokes.com.au

Twitter: twitter.com/no_smokes

YouTube Channel: youtube.com/user/nosmokestv

Menzies School of Health Research: www.menzies.edu.au

Media note: Interviews are available with Head of No Smokes, Associate Professor Sheree Cairney.

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Menzies Background

Menzies School of Health Research is Australia’s only Medical Research Institute dedicated to improving Indigenous health and wellbeing. We have a 28-year history of scientific discovery and public health achievement. Menzies works at the frontline, partnering with over 60 Indigenous communities across Northern and Central Australia. We collaborate to create resources, grow local skills and find enduring solutions to problems that matter.