

Northern Territory Tobacco Control Advisory Committee

Annual Report 2014

Northern Territory Tobacco Control Advisory Committee

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The Committee thanks Tania Roberts and Leeann Ramsamy for providing secretariat support.

We also thank Sharon Mununggurr, Jonathan Hermawan, Gwen Paterson-Walley and Liam O'Sullivan who finished their terms on the Committee in 2013.

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Key Messages

Legislative changes announced by the Northern Territory and Australian Governments in the last year will make a significant contribution to reducing the harm that smoking causes in the Territory. We called for both these changes in previous reports.

- In February 2014, the NT Government announced that it will legislate to prohibit smoking in cars whilst children are present. This is a belated but significant positive decision to help protect our children from second hand smoke.
- The Australian Government introduced the first of four 12.5% increases in the tobacco excise in September 2013, to be followed by further increases in December 2014, 2015 and 2016. Increasing tobacco taxes is the most effective way a country can reduce smoking.

The Australian Government continued to fund more new full-time positions in NT Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services last year, but following the election of the new government there has been great uncertainty about the future of this Tackling Smoking program. Our committee is greatly concerned by the impact of this uncertainty on tobacco control activity, and supports continuing this program.

On 1 July 2013, the Northern Territory became the first Australian state or territory where all correctional facilities are entirely smoke free. Smoke free prisons have the potential to significantly improve the health of prisoners, a particularly disadvantaged group of Territorians with very high rates of smoking and smoking-related diseases. The implementation of the new policy has been smooth and well-supported.

Introduction

This is third annual report provided by the Northern Territory Tobacco Control Advisory Committee.

The Northern Territory Tobacco Control Advisory Committee was established in 2011 to oversee the implementation of the NT Tobacco Action Plan 2010-13¹, and provide leadership and advice on tobacco control in the Territory. The NT Tobacco Action Plan has been updated for 2014-15, and will be completely reviewed and revised in 2015.

The Committee provides a report on progress in reducing smoking and its harms in the NT on World No Tobacco Day, 31 May, each year.

This report provides an overview of the most recent indicators on the prevalence of smoking in the Territory with comparisons to national statistics, stories on anti-smoking community initiatives, and information on health services and resources supporting Territorians to quit smoking.



Smoking - The size of the problem

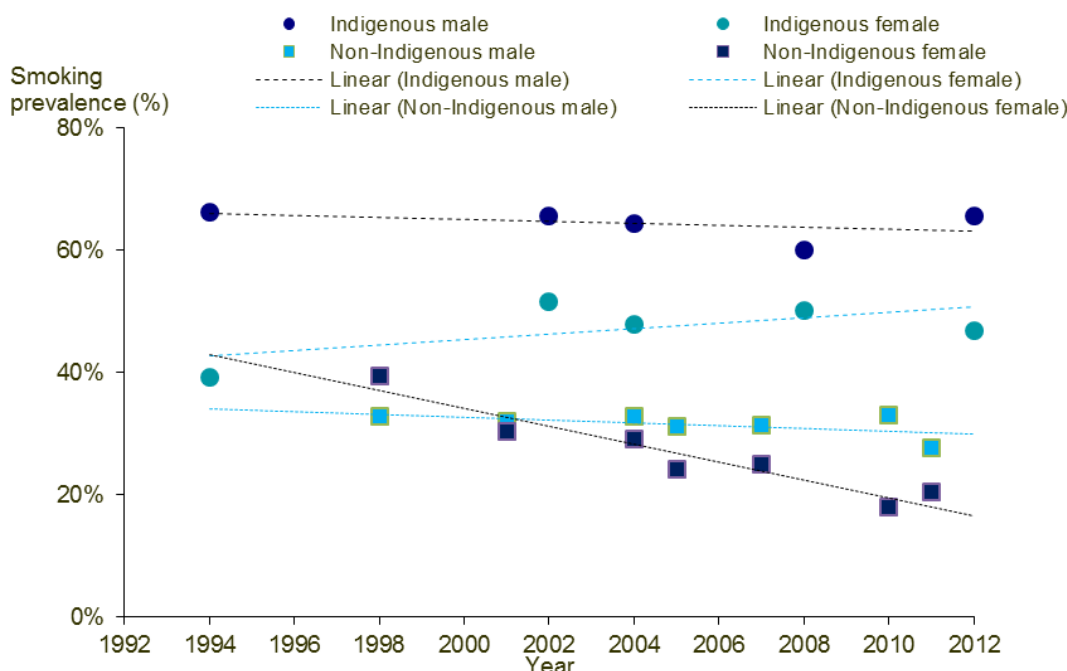
The Northern Territory has the highest Indigenous and non-Indigenous smoking prevalence in Australia. It is estimated that smoking caused 169 extra deaths and cost the Territory \$764 million in the Northern Territory in the year 2005/06². Smoking is a significant factor in the Life Expectancy gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Territorians. Smoking is responsible for 21% of this gap for men and 14% for women³.

The Department of Health has recently updated its fact sheet summarising trends in smoking prevalence in the Territory since 1994⁴.

In 2012, it is estimated that nearly 60,000 or 32% of adult Territorians smoked; more than 22,000 Indigenous and 27,000 non-Indigenous Territorians. The age-adjusted Indigenous smoking prevalence was 2.1 times that in non-Indigenous Territorians.

Among Indigenous Territorians, 66% of men and 47% of women smoked in 2012/13. Since 1994, there has been little change in Indigenous male smoking prevalence, and female smoking prevalence has increased but may now be starting to fall. Smoking is more common among Indigenous men in remote (68%) than non-remote areas (49%) of the Northern Territory, but little different among Indigenous women.

In 2011/12, 28% of non-Indigenous men smoked, and 20% of women in the Territory. NT non-Indigenous smoking prevalence has been falling in the last 20 years, especially among women.

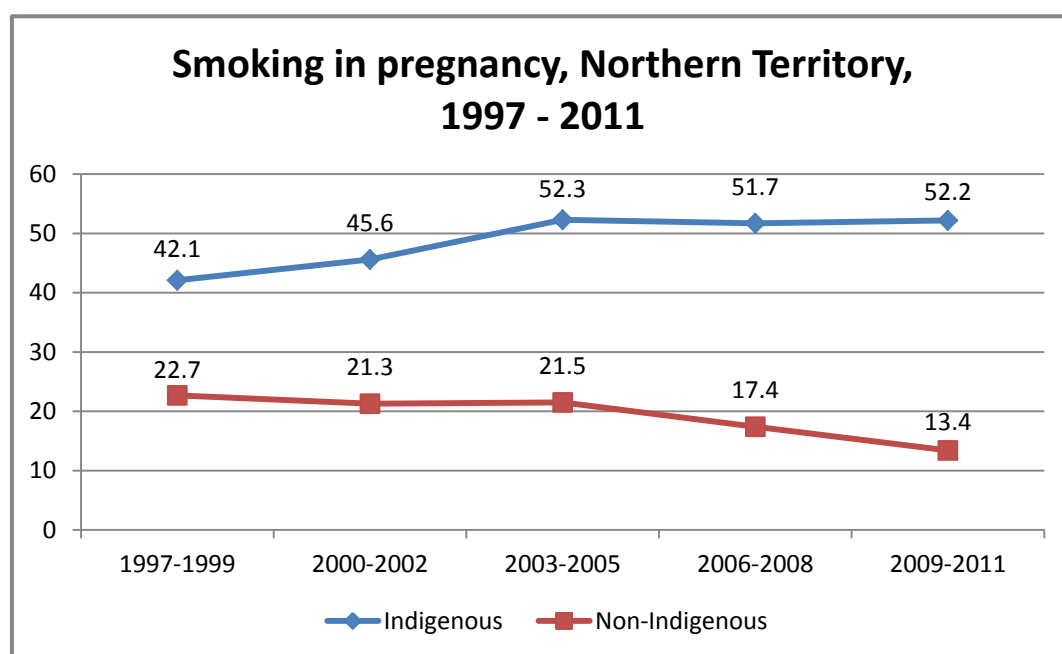


Source: Northern Territory Department of Health. Smoking Prevalence, Northern Territory - 1994 to 2013. Health Gains Planning - Fact Sheet. Darwin: Northern Territory Department of Health, 2014.

Smoking and Territory babies and children

Many Territorian babies are affected by smoking in pregnancy: smoking during pregnancy can result in poor health outcomes for the newborn persisting into early childhood. More than half (52%) of NT Indigenous and 13% non-Indigenous women reported smoking during their pregnancies from 2009-2011.

Smoking in pregnancy has been falling among NT non-Indigenous women and rising among NT Indigenous women, consistent with the trends in smoking among all women⁴.



Source: Northern Territory Department of Health. Smoking prevalence, Northern Territory - 1994 to 2013. Health Gains Planning - Fact Sheet. Darwin: Northern Territory Department of Health, 2014.

Smoke-free homes protect children and babies from the dangers of secondhand smoke. Research published this year, showed an increase in the numbers of Indigenous Territorians making their homes smoke-free⁵. From 2004 to 2008, the percentage of NT Indigenous children living in homes with no daily smoker in the household increased from 15% to 23%; and among those living in a household with a smoker, the percentage of children who lived in homes where no one usually smoked inside increased from 40% to 48%. But this is still much less than the percentages of all Australian children protected from secondhand smoke in smoke-free homes.

Health Care and Community Programs

We applaud the continued increase in the number of full-time health staff employed to focus on reducing smoking in the NT. This report includes some of the stories from this group of tobacco action workers. In 2013, the Australian Government funded more new full-time positions in NT Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services.

However, there has been great uncertainty about the future of this Tackling Smoking program, which has led to reduced morale, the loss of experienced staff to more secure positions, and an inability to plan future work. This uncertainty began with the election of the new Australian Government in 2013, and seems likely to continue for another year until a review of the program is completed in 2014/15.

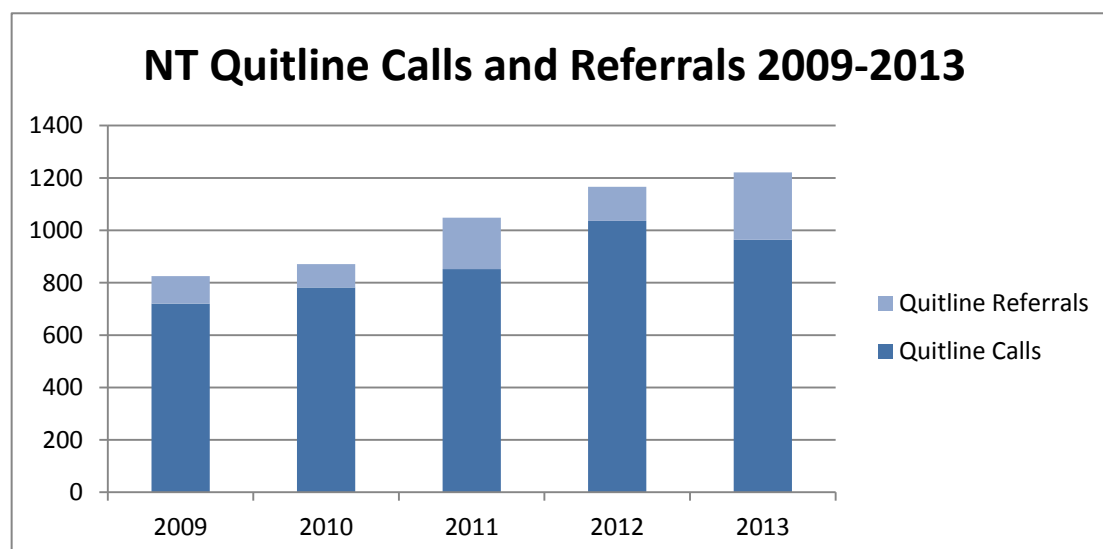
A recent report suggests that just over half of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients of NT primary health care centres had their smoking status recorded in their patient records. This is low, but there are concerns with the completeness of the data.

We congratulate the many Territorians who have quit smoking. Most smokers quit successfully by themselves. However there are now more and more ways smokers can be assisted to quit.

In 2013, calls by NT clients to the Quitline decreased slightly, however referrals increased substantially. The service provider managing NT Quitline changed in July 2013 and NT Quitline is now managed by Cancer Council SA who employ Aboriginal Quit counselors and have worked with health services to promote Quitline to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients. The increase in referrals may reflect these changes.



During the six month period from July 2013 to December 2013, there were 205 new client case records created by Quitline. Of these 205 new clients 40, or 19 per cent identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Territorians.



Anyinginyi Tackling Smoking Program and Barkly Regional Council

Purkiss Reserve in Tennant Creek consists of the local swimming pool, the Sport and Recreation buildings and two ovals. Purkiss Reserve had no signage to promote it as a non-smoking area.

With permission from the Anyinginyi Board, the Anyinginyi Tackling Smoking Program began talks with the Barkly Regional Council about Purkiss Reserve installing non-smoking signage.

The Barkly Shire elected Board approved the idea of installing signs for Purkiss Reserve in May 2013 and made arrangements for signs to be drawn up.

In March 2014 signs were installed in the following areas at the Purkiss Reserve:-

- entrance to the Tennant Creek swimming pool
- entrance gates to the Sport and Recreation buildings
- entrance to the main football oval and
- the fence between the main oval and the Sport and Recreation buildings.



In March 2014, the Barkly Regional Council website announced that Purkiss Reserve was now a non-smoking area and that penalties apply as set out in the NT Tobacco Control Act 2002.

Miwatj Tobacco Action

The Miwatj Tackling Smoking Program in East Arnhem Land has continued to grow; addressing uptake amongst youth, smoking during pregnancy, no smoking in public spaces, workplaces and homes, as well as providing community based quit support and referrals to health care providers.

Our message has moved beyond the well-recognised “yaka ngarali” (no tobacco) slogan to specifically address smoking in homes, cars, around children and non-smokers.



The program has maintained a team of seven Yolngu Tobacco Action Workers, telling the chronic conditions story and using motivational interviewing and multi-media resources to promote quitting and discourage uptake. The Tobacco Action Workers continue to walk the beat in their communities on a daily basis, taking every opportunity to spread their message and support people on their journey towards sustainable behaviour change. Their dedication and passion is truly commendable.



To integrate community health data into clinical information systems, we developed a user-friendly iPad survey with prompts and icons to ensure consistency and continuity of care between community based and clinical efforts.

The World No Tobacco Day celebration in Galiwin'ku included a radio interview, an information stall, mums and bubs group, a marathon race and a night time concert, featuring a song written for the occasion.

Miwatj and Yirrkala senior students developed a drama production that has become an interactive teaching resource, and was part of the Youth Forum at the Garma Festival.

We are working with people to help them to stay quit after they leave prison, which is now smoke-free.



Kalu Bong Bong in Milikapiti

Kalu Bong Bong is the QUIT 100 smoking program that had been established in Milikapiti for quite some time, with a men's and women's program where people came together to support each other and talk about smoking. During this program the clinic provides support with NRT and health check-ups as well as brief interventions to those who were interested.

The final session of the QUIT 100 program was completed during a visit by Aimee Riley from Alcohol and Other Drugs Program in May 2013. The program was handed over to the Catholic Health Workers as well as the Clinic Health worker. This program will assist in future delivery of Kalu Bong Bong and the ladies will also support program delivery in Bathurst Island.

Video footage and stories have been taken and transcribed of community members who were smokers and have now quit. This is their story they would like to share.



Smoke-free signage has been erected at a number of buildings including the Milikapiti Shire Office, Safe House and Clinic and the Store.

Expanding Smoke-free Areas

Secondhand smoke, also known as passive smoking, causes much sickness and many deaths. This has led many governments and organisations to introduce smoke free laws and policies to protect non-smokers, especially children, from secondhand smoke. These laws have also been shown to increase the numbers of people who make their homes smoke free and to increase the numbers of smokers who quit.

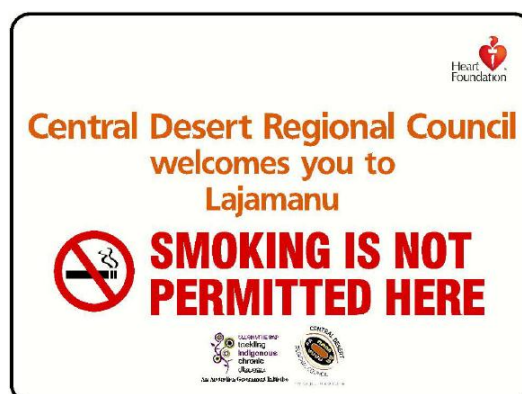
Smoke-free NT Local Government

Local councils can provide leadership to improve the expansion and implementation of smoke-free areas. The Heart Foundation Northern Territory and the Local Government Association of the Northern Territory (LGANT) held the Tobacco Free Initiative Forum in August 2013 attended by CEOs, Mayors, Presidents and nominated representatives of 18 Councils from across the Territory.

As a result of the Forum, 8 out of the 18 Councils, which did not previously have smoke-free policies, have since developed policies and have implemented (or are currently in the process of implementing) these policies. The remaining 10 Councils used the opportunity to review their policies, to ensure they are clear and consistent with current legislative requirements. The Heart Foundation provided funding for “no smoking” signage for all Councils, with signage orders already placed by six Councils.

In November 2013, LGANT resolved at its AGM to support councils adopting policies which:

1. ban smoking in local government buildings and open space areas
2. require the erection of signage to indicate that the areas are smoke free
3. ensure that events run or sponsored by Councils are smoke free



Smoke-free Prisons

On 1 July 2013, the Northern Territory became the first Australian state or territory where all correctional facilities are entirely smoke-free. Smoking prevalence among prisoners is approximately 85%, among the highest of all population groups, and prisoners are 2-3 times more likely to die early of cardiovascular disease or smoking-related cancer. Smoke free prisons have the potential to significantly improve inmate health.

"I'm glad 'cause I wouldn't have quit. I would have kept on smoking...But yeah, I'm glad for my health. I don't get up coughing and spluttering in the morning anymore."
(Inmate, former smoker)

A preliminary independent evaluation is being undertaken by the Menzies School of Health Research. It is finding that the introduction of the policy was very smooth, with no major incidents arising, and it is well supported by both staff and inmates. Many noted the health benefits of being smoke free, as well as the increased cleanliness of the correctional centre.

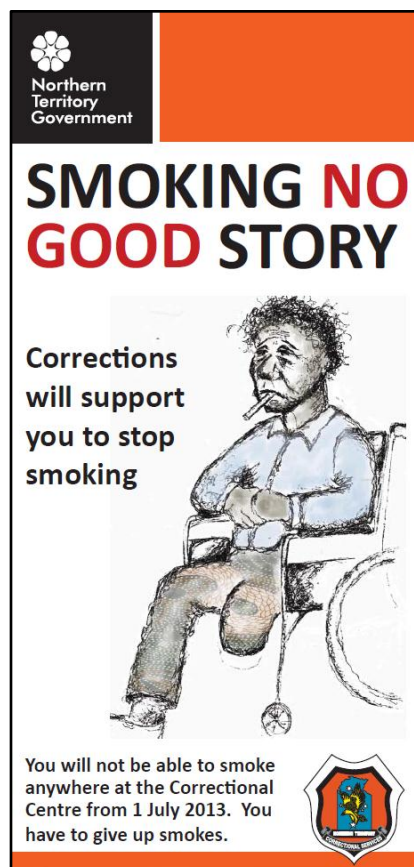
Modelled on a similar ban in New Zealand in 2011, the success of the policy can be attributed to the comprehensive approach, including an extensive communication strategy, cessation support including free nicotine replacement therapy, healthier food options, and sport and recreational programs. Some Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services are also providing support to inmates following release to remain smoke free.

Most other states are set to follow the NT's lead, starting with Queensland in May 2014. NT Department of Correctional Services staff are providing advice and guidance to counterparts in other states based on lessons learned in the NT.

"I like the fact that productivity is a lot better. Stress levels are better too. I find that prisoners are a little bit happier, not having to worry about some sort of vice to get through the day."
(Custodial officer)

The video **No Smoking: Good Story** featuring inmates discussing their experiences with quitting smoking is available at: <https://vimeo.com/92798262>

"Yeah, I thought it was a good idea...Like, I was thinking that's good for me, so I can stop smoking now...Easy. No problems...I don't want to smoke (when I get out). Finished."
(Inmate, former heavy smoker)



Anti-smoking social marketing

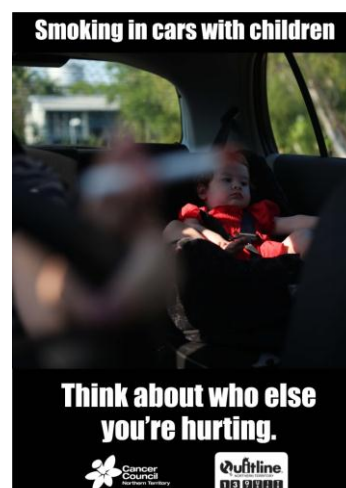
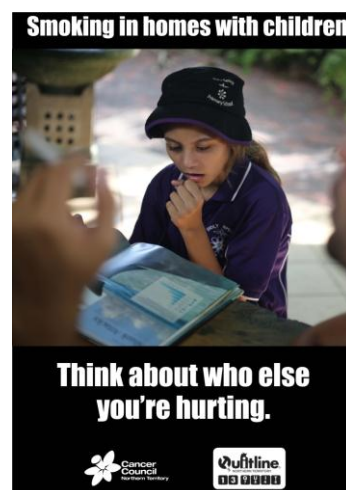
Australia has been a world leader in hard-hitting graphic anti-smoking television advertisements which have been demonstrated to be the most effective types of advertisements in reducing smoking prevalence.⁹

In 2012, Cancer Council NT launched the campaign “*Think about who else you’re hurting*” focusing on the dangers of second-hand smoke for children. The campaign, funded by the NT Department of Health, included television commercials and print materials with graphic imagery of children being exposed to second hand smoke in cars and homes.

Cancer Council NT report that in the second half of 2013 the campaign covered:

- Cinema advertising, 72 airings with over 35,000 admissions
- Airing on five radio stations
- Television spots on Channel 7, Channel 9, Imparja and all associated channels
- Digital screen advertising in medical centres, fitness clinics and tourist parks.

The television ads [cars with kids](#) and [kids in homes](#) can be viewed on youtube and posters at http://www.health.nt.gov.au/Alcohol_and_Other_Drugs/Tobacco/Quitline/



Legislation

The responsibility for legislation protecting people from the harms of second-hand smoke and reducing inappropriate promotion and marketing of cigarettes is shared between the Northern Territory and the Australian Government.

NT Government

Smoking in NT Cars with Kids

In February 2014, the NT Government announced that it will legislate to prohibit smoking in cars whilst children are present. The NT is the last jurisdiction in Australia to implement this legislation. This is a significant positive decision to encourage protection for children from second hand smoke. Our committee has called for this in every previous Annual Report, so we welcome this good news.

Smoke-free NT licensed premises

At the same time the NT Government announced it would ban smoking in cars with kids, it announced small changes to legislation about smoking in pubs and clubs. We were disappointed they did not take this opportunity to increase the protection of staff and patrons from the dangers of secondhand smoke, only increasing what can occur in outdoor smoking areas. We remain concerned by the exposure of children to secondhand smoke in pubs and clubs from these outdoor smoking areas. Legislation can support the good work being done by many Territorians to raise awareness of harm from secondhand smoke and the social marketing campaigns assist this awareness.

Australian Government

Four increases to the tobacco tax

The big legislative news from the Australian Government in 2013 was the announcement of four 12.5% increases in the tobacco excise. The first was introduced in September 2013, to be followed by further increases in December 2014, 2015 and 2016. The World Health Organisation states that increasing tobacco taxes is the most effective way a country can reduce smoking⁶. We welcome this decision from the former Australian government, and its support from the new government, which we called for in our previous Annual Report. This follows the Australian government's world-leading legislation for the plain packaging of cigarettes from December 2012.



Appendix

Detailed description of indicators

- All estimates of NT smoking prevalence are from the new fact sheet: Northern Territory Department of Health. Smoking prevalence, Northern Territory - 1994 to 2013. Health Gains Planning - Fact Sheet. Darwin: Northern Territory Department of Health; 2014. This fact sheet describes the data sources and data limitations
- Smoking in pregnancy trends are from the new fact sheet: Northern Territory Department of Health. Smoking prevalence, Northern Territory - 1994 to 2013. Health Gains Planning - Fact Sheet. Darwin: Northern Territory Department of Health; 2014. In last year's report we included 2011 preliminary estimates of smoking prevalence before and after 20 weeks gestation. As these more detailed questions were only asked since July 2010, we have not included trends of this more detailed information about smoking in pregnancy in this Report.
- The report of National Key Performance Indicators for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander primary health care states that only 51% of regular clients of NT PHC services aged 15 and over had their smoking status recorded in June 2013; with 53% smokers, 11% ex-smokers, 36% never smoked.⁷ But the Report notes that these results may not be correct due to changes in the way electronic information systems record smoking status. A report on NT Department of Health remote PHC centres in February 2014, also noted problems due to changes in the PCIS system in 2013, and found 53% of records had smoking status recorded: 53% smokers, 14% ex-smokers, 33% never smoked. This report also looked at variation by region. In the Top End there were 62% smokers, 14% ex-smokers, 24% never smoked. In Central Australia there were 40% smokers, 16% ex-smokers, 44% never smoked.
- NT Quitline calls and referrals

NT Quitline	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
NT Quitline Calls	720	782	852	1036	964
NT Quitline Referrals	105	89	196	130	257
NT Total Calls & Referrals	825	871	1048	1166	1221

References

- ¹ Department of Health and Families. *Northern Territory Tobacco Action Plan 2010-2013*. Darwin: Department of Health and Families; 2010
- ² South Australia Centre for Economic Studies. Harms from and costs of tobacco consumption in the Northern Territory. Adelaide: SACES, 2013.
- ³ Zhao Y, Wright J, Begg S, Guthridge S. Decomposing the Indigenous life expectancy gap by risk factors: a life table analysis. *Popul Health Metr* 2013;11:1
- ⁴ Northern Territory Department of Health. Smoking prevalence, Northern Territory - 1994 to 2013. Health Gains Planning - Fact Sheet. Darwin: Northern Territory Department of Health; 2014
- ⁵ Thomas DP, Stevens M. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander smoke-free homes, 2002 to 2008. *Aust N Z J Public Health* 2014; 38:147-53.
- ⁶ World Health Organization. WHO Report on the Global Tobacco Epidemic, 2008: The MPOWER package. Geneva: WHO; 2008
- ⁷ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. National Key Performance Indicators for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander primary health care: first results June 2012 to June 2013. Cat No IHW 123. Canberra: AIHW; 2014.