

## **Indigenous celebrities back new national 'NoSmokes' website to slash youth smoking**

Comedian Sean Choolburra, Bangarra dance troupe performer Rarriwuy Hick, and hip hop singer Corey "Yung Nooky" Webster have teamed with the Menzies School of Health Research on an innovative multimedia anti-smoking project targeting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teens.

Going live on World No Tobacco Day, 31 May, the NoSmokes.com.au website features animations, games, video messages, a quit quiz, interactive hip hop dance-off, a smoking calculator and comedy – such as Choolburra performing 'All the cigarettes', a take-off of Beyoncé's 'All the Single Ladies'.

"The NoSmokes site is about providing positive role models for Indigenous youth and helping them understand the detrimental physical effects of tobacco," says Dr Sheree Cairney from Menzies.

Smoking causes one out of every five deaths among Australia's Indigenous population. More than half of Australia's Indigenous people smoke; compared to less than one fifth of non-Indigenous Australians who do.

NoSmokes is a project that has been two years in the making for Cairney and her team. Inspired by encouraging results from New Zealand – where quit rates of 60% were achieved using multimedia strategies – the researchers held extensive focus groups with young Indigenous people, teachers and youth workers to discover what would work best here.

As suspected, Menzies found that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people did not identify with most traditional anti-smoking campaigns and therefore easily dismissed the campaign's message.

Those Cairney interviewed found a much stronger pull to multimedia, video, social networking, animation, music and mobile phones – media especially useful in overcoming language and literacy barriers. As a result, NoSmokes is rich with interactive content, including mobile phone apps, links with social networking sites and a YouTube channel 'No Smokes TV'.

"Participants said they wanted to see Aboriginal faces and messages that mean something to them. We believe that with NoSmokes.com.au we've created the most relevant and effective site possible," she says.

"NoSmokes is about providing positive role models for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth and helping them understand the detrimental physical effects of tobacco.

"We're aiming to empower young people with knowledge – through functions like the animated brain that shows how tobacco addiction works – as well as to entertain them with features like the hip hop dance-off that lets users upload their own photos."

The NoSmokes site was developed with the help of a \$700,000 grant from the Australian Government's Department of Health and Ageing.

### **For further information and interview opportunities**

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### **Media launch, 31 May at 11:00am**

Kormilda College (School Auditorium), Berrimah Road, Berrimah, Darwin.

### **Background**

Menzies School of Health Research is the national leader in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health research. It is the only medical research institute in the NT and the only one in Australia with a major focus on Indigenous health. Menzies has more than 300 staff working in over 60 communities in Central and Northern Australia, as well as developing countries in the region. Menzies is also a significant contributor to health education and research training. Its major research programs include infectious diseases, chronic diseases, environmental health, health services research, social determinants of health, mental health, and international health. Menzies is largely funded through competitive research grants provided by the Australian Government's National Health and Medical Research Council, in addition to funding from the Northern Territory Government.

### **Extra information**

NoSmokes TV

[youtube.com/user/nosmokestv](https://www.youtube.com/user/nosmokestv)

Rarriwuy Hick and Young Nooky speak about how Rarriwuy successfully quit smokes

[youtube.com/watch?v=5D20TygBb\\_w&list=PL195894BAA4C79D7C&index=5&feature=plpp\\_video](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5D20TygBb_w&list=PL195894BAA4C79D7C&index=5&feature=plpp_video)