



The Hon Jillian Skinner MP

Minister for Health Minister for Medical Research

MEDIA RELEASE

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SMOKE FREE CULTURES: COMMUNITY PROJECTS TO FIGHT TOBACCO IN MULTICULTURAL NSW

The NSW Government has announced its latest move towards reducing tobacco use - launching targeted anti-tobacco projects to reduce smoking rates among Arabic-speaking, Chinese and Vietnamese communities as well as other culturally diverse populations.

On the eve of World No Tobacco Day, the Minister for Health and Minister for Medical Research, Jillian Skinner, and the Minister for Citizenship and Communities, Victor Dominello, announced the projects at a forum with representatives from multicultural communities at NSW Parliament.

Mrs Skinner said these communities had smoking rates significantly higher than the rest of the population.

“The sweeping reforms the NSW Government announced last February as part of the NSW Tobacco Strategy are already paving the way for real action on a community level,” Mrs Skinner said.

“Multicultural communities across NSW need culturally-relevant support and information to help them heed the anti-smoking message. These projects are about working directly with communities to offer support, information and cessation programs that are culturally meaningful, and will make a difference,” she said.

“Regardless of where you are born or your cultural background, smoking is the most preventable cause of cancers. This deadly habit causes more than 5,000 smoking-related deaths a year in NSW.”

Cancer Institute NSW has allocated \$200,000 to six community projects (attached). Local Health Districts are partnering with community organisations to help people quit smoking – and remain that way.

Mr Dominello said it was important to include multicultural communities in our efforts to curb smoking rates across NSW.

“From working with Arabic-speaking communities in South West Sydney to promote smoke-free living, to quit-smoking programs for multicultural communities in Armidale – these projects create an essential lifeline for those communities carrying the burden of unacceptably high smoking levels,” Mr Dominello said.

“This isn’t about telling people what to do – it’s about responding to their request for help and partnership through practical initiatives that are culturally relevant,” he said.

Chief Cancer Officer and CEO of the Cancer Institute NSW, Professor David Currow, says the high prevalence of smoking is having a devastating impact on many culturally-diverse communities, with smokers at an increased risk of heart disease, stroke and many cancers.

“The degree of smoking in these communities dangerously exceeds the average of 14.7 per cent across the general NSW population,” said Professor Currow.

“Smoking rates among Arabic-born men in NSW is 39.3 per cent and 28.8 per cent in women, while 32 per cent of Vietnamese-born men and 20.3 per cent of Chinese-born men are also smoking.¹ The health burden these smoking levels have is tremendous, with this deadly addictive habit the cause of many diseases including cancer.

“The Cancer Institute NSW is working with the NSW Multicultural Health Communication Service, Local Health Districts and community groups to deliver a life-saving message that is also culturally relevant – quit today and live a longer, healthier life for your family, your community and yourself,” said Professor Currow.

For more information visit www.cancerinstitute.org.au

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¹ New South Wales Population Health Survey 2010 (HOIST). Centre of Epidemiology and Research, NSW Department of Health.