

What do we know about the success of social marketing in tobacco control?

What is social marketing?

'Social marketing' involves using the principles of marketing to influence human behaviours to improve the health and wellbeing of individuals and communities. It is a planned strategic approach that is designed to reach a particular target group and to result in a change to their behaviour. It is not just about doing advertising or slogans, but takes a number of approaches to influencing behaviour change¹.

Does social marketing work in tobacco control?

Studies show that mainstream social marketing campaigns have been very effective at reducing smoking among Australians generally. These anti-smoking campaigns are successful because they are part of a multi-pronged strategy made up of a set of comprehensive activities. Social marketing campaigns are also more successful when they are well-funded, repetitive, and on-going². They also give people options to get help to quit (for example, they include the Quitline number as part of the campaign)^{3,4}. Studies show that mass media campaigns that use negative health effects messages—those with graphic images, testimonial stories, and that cause people to have strong emotional reactions—are the most effective at increasing knowledge, changing beliefs, and increasing quitting behaviour².

Do mainstream social marketing campaigns work for Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders?

There is not much information about the effectiveness of mainstream social marketing campaigns on reducing smoking among Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders. Evaluations of the national anti-tobacco campaigns show that Indigenous people remember the advertisements and the messages, and it leads many

to think more about quitting. However, the campaigns have not resulted in increased quitting rates for Indigenous smokers^{5,6,7}. One study in South Australia found that Aboriginal people thought that some mainstream advertisements would be very effective at motivating them to quit. They thought that the most effective advertisements were the ones that were very graphic and included people telling stories about how smoking had affected their health⁸.

What about social marketing designed especially for Indigenous people? Is this successful?

In the past, anti-tobacco social marketing for Indigenous people has generally been part of broader mainstream campaigns, and we don't know if these have been successful or not as they haven't been individually evaluated.

Since 2008 there has been a large increase in money and support available to develop anti-tobacco social marketing activities that are specifically for Indigenous people. These activities are happening at the national level (for example, the 'Break the Chain' campaign)⁹, the state/territory level (for example, the 'Give up smokes for good' campaign in South Australia)¹⁰, and at the local level in individual health services or regions (for example, the 'Smoking No Good Aye' media project in Gippsland, Victoria)¹¹. When these social marketing activities are evaluated, there will potentially be much more information available on the effect of Indigenous-specific anti-tobacco social marketing on smoking rates.

What is likely to work in anti-tobacco social marketing for Indigenous people?

A large study has made recommendations about the types of messages that would probably work best in



anti-tobacco social marketing campaigns for Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders¹². This study suggests that campaigns should put a strong focus on:

- ✧ the importance of family, and the benefits of quitting to families and of not taking up smoking in the first place
- ✧ the financial, health and social costs of smoking for families
- ✧ the negative effects of smoking on health and fitness both on the individual smoker, but also on their families, particularly children.

The study has also found that the message should be delivered using Indigenous people, voices, artwork and images, and put the messages across in a positive and inspirational way. The messages should be clear, jargon-free, in Aboriginal language (where appropriate), use local Indigenous people, use a story-telling approach, and use true stories and real people. To be most effective it is important that this social marketing is part of a comprehensive set of activities, such as health education activities, access to quitting services, training for health service staff, and smoke-free policies¹².

Using social media and mobile phones

It is quite new to use social media (like Facebook and Twitter) and mobile phones to spread social marketing messages, but some Indigenous communities are already doing this. Getting the message out using social media is cheap and can be spread quickly throughout the community. Many Indigenous people already use this technology and several projects and organisations are beginning to use social media websites to produce and spread messages about quitting (and not taking up) smoking¹³.

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13. For examples of videos, websites and Facebook pages, see <<http://www.skinnyfishmusic.com.au/site/programs/102-no-smoking-videos/402-miwatj-health-no-smoking-videos->>>; <<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Tharawal-Aboriginal-Corporation-Airds/104220079641154?ref=ts;>>; <<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Kick-the-Habit/303274051400>>; <<http://www.youtube.com/user/nosmokestv?feature=mhee>>; and <<http://www.nosmokes.com.au/>>



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