

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Smarter than Smoking Project has gained a reputation as an innovative and effective campaign that has reduced smoking among young people in Western Australia.

Smarter than Smoking has contributed to a decline in youth smoking prevalence and has had a significant impact on young people's attitudes, intentions and behaviour relating to smoking.

Smarter than Smoking is now gaining national and international recognition due to peer reviewed publications and presentations at national and international conferences. The Project is unique in the world and its youth focused, youth orientated strategy mix is an important contributor to the broader tobacco control body of knowledge.

While youth smoking prevalence in Western Australia shows positive trends, smoking remains unacceptably high among disadvantaged and indigenous youth. This is where the Project will now step up and make a difference.

Over the next three years the Project will have a greater focus on reaching indigenous and disadvantaged youth while continuing to implement tried and tested strategies to achieve further reductions in youth smoking prevalence in WA.

Among identified priority populations, smoking is more likely to occur and start at a younger age. Young people from these populations are also more likely to have family that smoke, have a greater financial burden due to their expenditure on tobacco and have less access and exposure to appropriate smoking prevention resources, messages and services.

The Project will work to denormalise smoking among these groups who often live in households where smoking is the norm. The Project will collaborate with key Aboriginal health professionals and indigenous and disadvantaged youth as well as intersect with important new initiatives under the COAG umbrella to ensure the Project achieves this.

New media materials, culturally specific resources never before developed, use of positive role models and closer collaboration with selected schools where there is a high proportion of disadvantaged students, will assist the Project to address the high smoking prevalence among priority populations.

Smarter than Smoking has established a niche in the 10-15 year-old market which is distinct and complementary to other tobacco control activities. The Project intends to build on this and extend its voice to represent 10-15 year-olds from priority populations.

To continue to protect children from marketing of tobacco products and exposure to tobacco smoke, the Project will collaborate with other tobacco control agencies to bring a child and youth perspective to advocacy.

Targeted advocacy will focus on eliminating remaining influences on youth to smoke (e.g. smoking in movies), protecting children from exposure to side stream smoke and ensuring children receive adequate tobacco education within the health education context.

To deliver an effective, cutting edge program into the future we will continue to invest in formative research. The Project will reassess the trends, interests and the communication styles of young West Australians from both the mainstream and priority population groups to deliver effective strategies over the next three years.

The Project has outlined new initiatives that will see greater focus of strategies and reallocation of funds towards indigenous and disadvantaged youth. The next phase will also see the Project develop an online community to create a strong online presence for the Project to provide active dialogue around tobacco issues that other channels are unable to achieve.

The Project will continue to contribute to further reductions in smoking prevalence in WA and meet the challenge of reducing smoking prevalence among indigenous and disadvantaged youth.