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NEW ANTI-SMOKING CAMPAIGN RECEIVES \$100,000 IN FUNDING

South Eastern Sydney Local Health District (SESLHD) is launching a new anti-smoking campaign aimed at helping members of the Arabic-speaking community to stub out their cigarettes.

The project, which will be launched next year, aims to promote the health and financial benefits of quitting as well as helping smokers to give up cigarettes by referring them to tobacco cessation services.

The Cancer Institute NSW has provided nearly \$100,000 to fund the project, which will focus on members of the Arabic-speaking community living in the St George area.

The grant is part of a state-wide funding boost for localised cancer prevention and early detection programs that will focus on groups at higher risk of cancer.

The Arabic-speaking population in NSW has a higher smoking rate than the state-wide average. Research has shown that more than a quarter of Arabic speakers are daily smokers. More than half of Arabic speaking smokers have been unsuccessful in quitting in the past 12 months and more than 80 per cent do not seek support to quit

In South Eastern Sydney, it is also reported that almost 10 per cent of Arabic-speaking women are smoking at prenatal visits, six per cent smoke during pregnancy with a further six per cent smoking during at least half of their pregnancy.

Myna Hua, Manager of the Health Promotion Service at SESLHD, said: "Tobacco smoking is one of the leading causes of premature illness and death contributing to serious medical conditions including heart disease, stroke and cancer.

"Nearly one million Australians have died prematurely because they smoked since clear evidence of its dangers became available more than 60 years ago.

"We need to do all we can to support smokers in kicking this highly addictive and deadly habit and discourage future generations from taking it up.

"We are delighted to have received the funding from the Cancer Institute NSW as it will give us an opportunity to work closely with doctors, nurses and the general Arabic community in the St George area.

"Over the next 18 months, we will work with the Arabic-speaking community and local health service providers to build a strong and sustainable system, particularly to support women of all ages to quit smoking and to raise awareness about how to get the help and support they need to quit."

For more information on the support available to people who want to stop smoking, call the Arabic Quitline on **1300 784 803** or visit www.icanquit.com.au.

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