

Friday, May 27, 2016

## Smoking rates halve in the South Eastern Sydney Local Health District

The number of people who smoke daily in the South Eastern Sydney Local Health District has more than halved in recent years, new figures from Health Stats NSW showed.

In 2015, 10 per cent of people in SELHD smoked daily, compared to 20.3 per cent in 2002.

The decline was driven by younger people in the 16-24 and 25-34 age groups, with the most impressive fall among 35-44 year-olds, dropping more than 14 per cent since 2003.

Director, Planning Population Health and Equity, Julie Dixon, said with World No Tobacco Day approaching on May 31, many may be thinking of quitting.

“Quitting smoking is by far the best thing you can do for your health. It can reduce your risk of many smoking related diseases, improve your general wellbeing and that of your family and save you money,” Ms Dixon said.

“While the figures for smoking are low across the state, there are still certain groups within the community who have higher levels.

“We will continue to make a concerted effort to help people in these groups, including people with severe mental illness, Aboriginal people and some groups within the CALD community.”

The NSW Quitline offers access to specially trained advisors who can assist smokers with preparing to quit, avoiding slip-ups and staying quit.

This World No Tobacco Day, the NSW Quitline is sharing some top quit tips:

### 1. Set a quit date

World No Tobacco Day provides an opportunity for smokers to quit together.  
The day before your quit day, throw out all cigarettes, lighters and ashtrays.

### 2. Think about your triggers and change routines and habits

Think about when and where you like to smoke, then plan to temporarily change your habits accordingly. In the early days, avoid situations where you used to smoke.

### 3. Reduce caffeine and alcohol intake

The effects of higher caffeine levels can be confused with tobacco withdrawal symptoms. Plan to halve the amount of caffeine (coffee, tea, energy drinks and cola) that you drink.

Drinking alcohol can make quitting harder and can make you forget your reasons for wanting to quit. Instead of meeting friends for drinks, suggest something else, for example, going for a walk or doing some exercise

### 4. Organise a quit support team

Decide who you will ask to give you support. Ask them not to smoke around you and not to give you cigarettes even if you ask for them. Make your home a smoke free environment.

Join the iCanQuit.com.au online community and learn from others quit stories and experiences. Talk to your doctor or pharmacist about products and strategies to help you quit.

#### 5. Plan some rewards

A pack a day smoker will save around \$6,400 a year if they don't smoke. Think of how you can use the money you save, and plan short term rewards.

Call the Quitline on 13 7848 for support and encouragement before and during your quit attempt.

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