

National Best Practice Unit – Tackling Indigenous Smoking  
Advisory Group Meeting #5  
10 May 2017  
Stamford Plaza Adelaide  
**Communiqué**



The Advisory Group for the National Best Practice Unit for Tackling Indigenous Smoking (NBPU TIS) met in person in Adelaide on 10 May 2017.

The Group had a broad discussion around **strategies to promote collaboration between TIS and mainstream tobacco control**, following discussions at a recent National Expert Reference Group on Tobacco (NERGoT)<sup>1</sup> meeting about the TIS program and its components and aims.

The meeting was briefed on the **findings of the draft preliminary evaluation** of the TIS program conducted by the Cultural and Indigenous Research Centre Australia (CIRCA).

Overall the evaluation finds that, through the grant recipients, the TIS program is demonstrating strong community engagement and support for tobacco control, with evidence that collaboration between grant recipients and other organisations is broadening the population reach and strengthening support for quitting.

While some challenges to collecting and interpreting data remain, TIS grant recipients demonstrate increased confidence and capacity to report on outcomes as evidenced through their use of data to inform program design and quality improvement.

Grant recipients value the support provided by the NBPU TIS, and are using the TIS portal, although some questions about the portal's useability have been raised.

Some TIS activities were affected by a loss of experienced staff due to funding uncertainty, and recruitment and retention remains an issue for many grant recipients, especially in remote areas.

The draft makes sixteen recommendations for consideration of grant recipients (7 recommendations); the NBPU (3); the Department of Health (5); and the National Coordinator (1).

The second wave of the evaluation will take place between July and November 2017, with a final report due in the first half of 2018.

The Advisory Group also received an **update on the TIS program** from the Department of Health. This included discussion of:

- *TIS program funding*, with the Department to brief the Minister in late 2017 about the preliminary evaluation report's recommendation regarding longer term funding;
- *TIS funding parameters*, including for healthy lifestyle activities within the TIS program (appropriate as long as there is an explicit focus on best practice, evidence-

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<sup>1</sup> NERGoT is the formal mechanism for consultation and collaboration between Commonwealth (Health and Department of Immigration and Border Protection) and states and territories. It reports to the National Drug Committee.

based population level interventions that achieve smoking outcomes) and one-on-one smoking cessation support such as NRT (not appropriate as the TIS program is a population-level intervention);

- *Smoke-free environments*, including the need for a long-term approach that engages CEOs and Board members of ACCHSs in effectively implementing smoke-free environments; and
- *National Coordinator*: continued support for the role of National Coordinator as being very important to the success of the TIS program.

The Advisory Group also continued its discussion (from its September 2016 meeting and October 2016 workshop) on **strategic factors affecting the success of the TIS program** and impacting on the ability of TIS organisations to reduce smoking among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, under five themes:

1. Strengthening policy to support Tackling Indigenous Smoking
2. Building linkages between TIS and mainstream tobacco control
3. Promoting a focus on reducing tobacco-related harm
4. Creating and supporting the TIS workforce
5. Supporting regional service delivery

The **next Advisory Group meeting** is planned for late August / early September 2017 (by teleconference).