

Tobacco Control News

Research Roundup April 2025

Promoting Smoke- and Vape-Free Environments



Hello TIS teams!

This month's research roundup focuses on best practices for promoting smoke and vape-free environments. We know from the 'Talking About the Smokes' [study](#) and Indigenous-led 'Mayi Kuwayu' [study](#) that there is strong support among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples for smoke-free environments. Creating and maintaining smoke and vape-free environments is important for achieving the aims of the TIS program, including:

- Preventing uptake by reducing the visibility and social acceptability of smoking and vaping.
- Encouraging people who smoke to make a quit attempt.
- Providing a supportive environment for people making a quit attempt.
- Protecting the health of people who do not smoke or vape.

The first paper ([Cuthbert et al., 2019](#)) is a case study describing how Apunipima TIS Team worked with three Aboriginal Shire Councils to create more smoke-free spaces. The study highlights the importance of being flexible and allowing plenty of time to engage with local community members and stakeholders to create positive, healthy, smoke-free environments.

The second paper ([Stevenson et al., 2017](#)) looks at the strategies that work for creating smoke-free homes in Indigenous communities across Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the United States. It also looks at what helps or makes it harder to create smoke-free homes. People who used these strategies with confidence and clear communication were more successful at making their homes smoke-free.

The last paper ([Wynne et al., 2018](#)) looks at how smoke-free signage, policy awareness and smoking bans help enforce smoke-free policies in places like healthcare services, schools, workplaces and public areas. The review covers 26 studies from several countries including Australia. The review found that for smoke-free policies to work well, it's important to allow time for promoting the policy, putting up signage, deciding how to deal with non-compliance, and considering how the policies might affect daily activities in the workplace or other area.

Although these papers don't specifically address vaping, it is important that environments are vape-free as well as smoke-free, to protect people from the harms of second- and third-hand aerosols. You can read my in-depth reviews of these papers below.



Promoting smoke- and vape-free environments is a powerful way to protect community from the harmful effects of second- and third hand smoke and vape aerosols.



Take-home message for TIS Teams

Promoting smoke- and vape-free environments is a powerful way to protect community from the harmful effects of second- and third-hand smoke and vape aerosols. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people strongly support this initiative. Creating and maintaining smoke- and vape-free environments takes time and meaningful collaboration with local communities and stakeholders. This includes identifying the most appropriate strategies, resources, and steps needed to implement effective smoke- and vape-free policies. Building relationships with local community and other stakeholders cannot be rushed—it requires flexibility, respect, and a commitment to partnership.

For more information on smoke-free activities and resources, including guidance on developing or reviewing smoke- and vape-free workplace policies and supporting smoke- and vape-free homes and cars, visit the TIS website [here](#).



TACKLINGSMOKING.ORG.AU

In depth Paper Reviews

Cuthbert, K. E., Brown, C., Hammond, M., Williams, T. A., Tayley, D., Deemal-Hall, E., & Thomas, D. P. (2019). Engaging with Aboriginal Shire Councils in remote Cape York communities to address smoke-free environments. *Australian Journal of Primary Health*, 25(5), 419.
<https://www.publish.csiro.au/py/Fulltext/PY19023>



Stevenson, L., Campbell, S., Bohanna, I., Gould, G. S., Robertson, J., & Clough, A. R. (2017). Establishing Smoke-Free Homes in the Indigenous Populations of Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the United States: A Systematic Literature Review. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 14(11), 1382.
<https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph14111382>



This paper describes how Apunipima TIS team worked with three Aboriginal Shire Councils to raise awareness about the harms of tobacco smoking and create more smoke-free environments in their communities. This work was part of a broader initiative called the 'Healthy Communities Project'.

At the start, the TIS team focused on building relationships with the Councils through regular meetings and ongoing conversations. This led to the creation of a Community Advisory Committee (CAC). The committee's role was to:

- Provide cultural advice and guidance
- Develop community-led strategies
- Suggest effective ways to promote the project
- Take part in evaluation activities

As the project progressed, CAC members recommended involving more stakeholders and community members. This helped bring in a wider range of ideas and actions. These included raising awareness about the harms of tobacco smoking, promoting the benefits of smoke-free spaces, creating signage, and strengthening smoke-free policies.

Take Home Message

Building strong relationships with local councils and stakeholders is key to the success of the TIS program. Forming a CAC is also valuable, as it ensures cultural guidance and community leadership. These relationships take time to develop and require flexibility, as each council or stakeholder may have different ways of working. Taking the time to have genuine conversations and stay connected helps raise awareness and support action to create smoke- and vape-free spaces, events and policies in the community.

Key Findings

- Working in partnership with councils is important, as they bring local knowledge and play a key role in creating healthier, more supportive environments.
- Community involvement is essential in designing TIS activities to make sure they meet local needs and are culturally appropriate.
- Community members recognise the value of being role models and understand that working together leads to better health outcomes.
- Flexibility and enough time are needed to implement smoke-free initiatives, including raising awareness, creating signage, and developing smoke-free policies.

Study Limitations

This case study focuses on communities in Cape York, so the findings may not apply to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

This paper looks at the strategies that work for creating smoke-free homes in Indigenous communities across Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the United States. A total of 15 studies were reviewed, focusing on people's attitudes, behaviours, and experiences related to second-hand smoke (SHS). Seven of these studies were conducted in Australia, and two were conducted in both Australia and New Zealand.

The paper focused on:

- Personal factors, such as people's knowledge of the health impacts of SHS, strong beliefs about the harm to children and, confidence in managing smoke-free homes
- Behavioural factors, including changes in smoking behaviours at home and success stories
- Environmental factors, such as managing the home's physical and social environment

The findings highlight both the supportive factors, and the challenges involved in making homes smoke-free.

Take Home Message

Understanding the impact of personal, behavioural and environmental factors that influence people's decisions is essential when developing TIS activities to support smoke- and vape-free homes. It is important to prioritise community consultation and work closely with local people to design tailored resources that reflect community strengths and address local challenges.

Key Findings

- Knowledge about the health risks of SHS – particularly its impact on children – was a common theme. Many participants expressed strong beliefs in the importance of protecting children from SHS.
- Families reduced SHS exposure by managing the smoking behaviours of visitors, setting up designated smoking areas away from children, or introducing house rules that prevented smoking indoors. In some cases, children would remove themselves from smoky environments.
- One of the biggest challenges was managing social relationships. Some people felt uncomfortable asking visitors not to smoke inside, as they felt it might be seen as disrespectful.
- Cultural practices added complexity, especially in shared or communal spaces, where cultural protocols guided how land or homes were used and arranged.
- Supportive strategies included clear communication with family and visitors, using signage to show smoke-free areas, and positive role-modelling by Elders and respected community members.
- Barriers to creating smoke-free homes also included factors like unemployment, overcrowded housing, and high levels of stress.

Study Limitation

The review brings together findings from various countries and different Indigenous communities. While the insights are valuable, it's important to focus on your local context—building on local strengths, identifying what supports smoke-free homes in your community, and addressing the specific challenges that may exist.

Wynne, O., Guillaumier, A., Twyman, L., McCrabb, S., Denham, A. M. J., Paul, C., Baker, A. L., & Bonevski, B. (2018). Signs, Fines and Compliance Officers: A Systematic Review of Strategies for Enforcing Smoke-Free Policy. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 15(7), 1386. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph15071386>



This paper explores how smoke-free signage, awareness of policies, and smoking bans help support and enforce smoke-free environments in places like healthcare services, schools, workplaces, and public spaces. The review covers 26 studies from several countries, including Australia, between 1980 and 2017.

Take Home Message

TIS teams can play a key role in reducing exposure to second- and third-hand smoke and vape aerosols. This can be done by promoting the benefits of smoke- and vape-free environments, sharing resources, and working closely with local organisations and services to implement strong smoke- and vape-free policies. Supporting total smoking bans, increasing awareness, and using clear, visible signage can all help improve compliance within the community.

Key Findings

- Community members are more likely to follow smoke-free rules when they know about local laws and policies.
- Total smoking bans are more effective than partial bans in ensuring compliance.
- A combination of strategies—such as policy promotion, clear signage, dedicated enforcement staff, and penalties (e.g. warnings and fines)—helps ensure policies are followed.
- The most effective approach was raising awareness through tools like information packs, community events, and clear, visible signage.
- Effective enforcement takes planning. This includes promoting the policy in advance, installing appropriate signage, developing a clear response to non-compliance, and considering how the policy may affect daily routines in that setting.

Study Limitations

This paper did not include any qualitative studies, so it doesn't reflect people's personal experiences or views on different enforcement strategies.

A combination of strategies—such as policy promotion, clear signage, dedicated enforcement staff, and penalties (e.g. warnings and fines)—helps ensure policies are followed.



Community involvement is essential in designing TIS activities to make sure they meet local needs and are culturally appropriate.

