



National Best Practice Unit –
Tackling Indigenous Smoking

NATIONAL CEO WORKSHOP REPORT

Held on the lands of the
Gadigal people of the Eora Nation
(Sydney)
2 September 2025

Introduction

The Tackling Indigenous Smoking (TIS) jurisdictional workshops are an important way in which the National Best Practice Unit Tackling Indigenous Smoking (NBPU TIS) provides support to the TIS teams located in the Regional Tobacco Control Grant (RTCG) organisations. The aims of TIS workshops include:

- reviewing Grant Recipient priorities and the appropriate support that the NBPU needs to provide.
- sharing evidence and best practice, and strategies for adaptation at local and regional levels.
- resolving implementation challenges.
- enhancing support, collaboration, network building and communication.
- providing training and tools to assist in program delivery.
- support for performance reporting and evaluation methods and skills.
- dissemination of information and tools on performance reporting, data collection and evaluation; and
- supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leadership in tobacco control.

The NBPU TIS organises and delivers one national TIS workshop for CEOs and TIS coordinators per year.

Attendance

The workshop was attended by 59 participants, including 40 representatives from 24 out of the 26 Grant Recipients. See [Attachment A](#) for a list of participants.

Program

The 2025 National CEO Workshop was held over a full day on 2 September 2025 on the lands of the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation (Sydney). See [Attachment B](#) for an outline of the program as distributed to participants ahead of the workshop.

Summaries of the Workshop sessions are as follows – please see participant presentations on the TIS Website¹ for details of some of these.

1. Evaluate and Prepare for 2027-31 Funding Bid: Who’s up for the challenge? (Prof Tom Calma AO, National Coordinator TIS)

Professor Calma described the history, achievements and challenges of the TIS Program. He gave an overview of what to expect beyond 2027, highlighting the importance of organisations spending allocated funding and creating impact that can be validated across multiple data sources. He also provided information on innovation, impact and recommendations for CEOs and TIS Coordinators, including the importance of brokering partnerships to facilitate greater reach of TIS program.

¹ See <https://tacklingsmoking.org.au/resources/national-ceos-workshop-presentations/>

2. Department of Health, Disability and Ageing update (Katherine McHugh, Department of Health, Disability and Ageing)

Katherine McHugh, Assistant Director, Preventative Health & Communicable Disease Section, made a presentation with information on smoking rates, key priorities for TIS, the TIS Guidelines, and changes to tobacco products from 1 July 2025. She also stressed the importance of transparency with regards to inter-organisation communication and budgeting.

3. Preserving Innovation, Celebrating Impact: Introducing the TIS Digital Repository (Dr Penney Upton, NBPU TIS)

This presentation included information about the digital repository that is being created to showcase the history and evolution of the Tackling Indigenous Smoking (TIS) Program. The repository will be launched in February 2026.

4. Our People, Our Strength – The National TIS Workforce Development Framework (Kerindy Clarke, Workforce Development Manager NBPU TIS)

This interactive session focused on the CEOs reflecting on supporting and funding career pathways for TIS workers. The CEOs each contributed a unique insight into supporting their TIS workforce and the importance of workforce development in driving worker retention.

5. Stronger Together: How Partnerships Flip the Vape (Lionel Austin, Victorian Aboriginal Health Service)

Lionel provided information about The Koori Way's *Flip the Vape* campaign, including their events, video tutorials, mailing list, campaign development and rollout, partnerships, and the impact of the campaign.

6. Goodbye Social Chaos - Tools and tips to collaborate and coordinate 30 days of content ahead of time (Claudine Thornton, Director Claudine Thornton Creative)

Claudine Thornton, a leading Indigenous expert in visual content marketing and strategy, delivered a session focused on the development and posting of TIS social media posts, emphasising the importance of CEOs empowering their TIS workers to reduce bottlenecks and gaps in the process.

7. Beyond the Numbers: How Strategic Planning and Reporting Drive Sustained Impact and Legacy (Dr Penney Upton and Kerindy Clarke, NBPU TIS)

An interactive session on what things have sustained each organisation's TIS program in the past, what might they do differently now, and what they wish to achieve in the future. This presentation highlighted the role of strategic planning and reporting in ensuring that the TIS program grows stronger, leaves a lasting impact, and continues to evolve for communities.

8. Partnership Panel (Lionel Austin – Victorian Aboriginal Health Service, Sinon Cooney – Katherine West Health Board, facilitated by Prof Tom Calma)

This session was an opportunity for CEOs share success stories and work through common issues together as the panel responded to questions and discussed themes including:

- establishing partnerships

- conflict resolution and building trust and consensus
- maintaining partnerships and expanding them long-term
- national/interstate partnership-building.

9. How's the TIS Program going so far? Learnings from CIRCA's bird's eye view (Lena Etuk, Director CIRCA)

Lena provided information on CIRCA's evaluation of the implementation of TIS, including methods, areas of strength, opportunities for improvement, levers for improvement and change, and what's next.

10. Truth, Power and Prevention: Indigenous Excellence in Tackling Indigenous Smoking (Dr Raglan Maddox, Australian National University)

Raglan's presentation provided information on Indigenous-specific evidence on tobacco control, why it is needed, and how ANU is evaluating the TIS program.

11. Q&A Panel (Prof Tom Calma, Dr Raglan Maddox, Katharine McHugh)

The panel responded to questions from the participants around issues including:

- empowering the TIS workforce and succession planning
- leaving a legacy of impact and cultural safety at TIS organisations
- transparency of budgets and spending of allocated funding
- creating local success stories
- the future of TIS funding beyond the current funding period
- changes to guidelines post-contract and what was needed to secure funding beyond 2027.

12. Closing remarks (Prof Tom Calma AO, National Coordinator TIS)

Professor Calma summarized the key points of the workshop, thanked participants for their attendance and wished them safe travels on their return to their services.

Participant Evaluation

Each TIS workshop includes participant evaluation, with both quantitative and qualitative feedback. This assists the NBPU TIS to ensure that future workshops are of most use to Grant Recipients and their TIS teams.

A total of 27 responses to the survey were received from the representatives of Grant Recipient organisations (response rate of 68%). When asked to rate the workshop on a scale of 1-10, respondents gave the workshop an average rating of 8.05 out of 10.

Overall almost all (95%) of participants who responded to the survey were satisfied or very satisfied with the workshop content.



Figure 1: On a scale of 1-10, how did participants rate the workshop overall?

Just over half of the respondents were also happy with the length of sessions (52%), with the remaining respondents being somewhat satisfied (48%).

Most respondents were happy with the overall length of the session (62%), whilst the remainder were somewhat satisfied (33%) or not at all satisfied (5%).

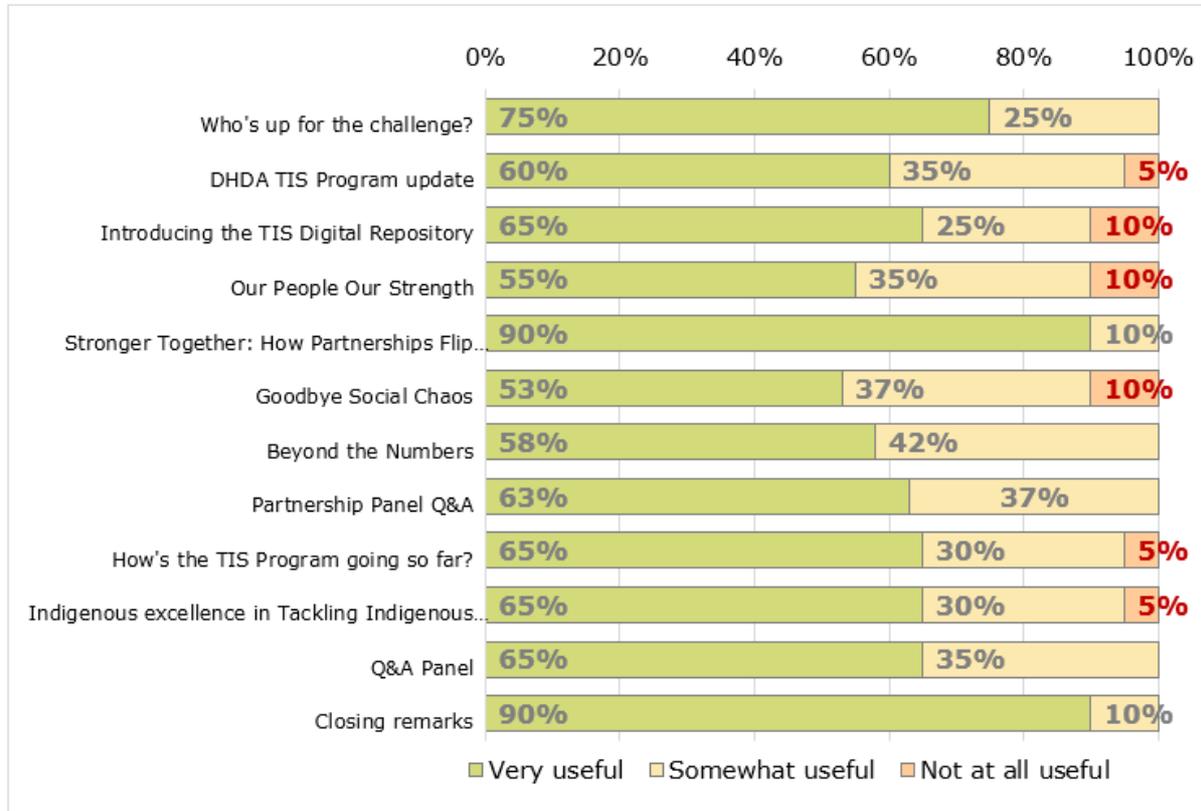


Figure 2: Participant evaluation of National CEO workshop sessions, September 2025

Overall, qualitative feedback from participants was very positive:

It was my first time attendee I found the workshop very interesting and enlightening. Thank you 😊

I enjoyed these sessions they were very informative and great to meet with other program leads and gain more insight on how they run their TIS programs.

Great to have such innovative interaction and networking opportunities. Thank you NBPU

Great day that really enthused me. Important to continue this meeting every year

Excellent workshop. Enjoyed it

Asked about the one thing they liked best about the workshop, the participants identified the opportunity to hear about success stories across the country (the VAHS presentation was especially appreciated); hearing about the progress of the sector to date; and the opportunity for interaction and networking with other participants.

However, there were some suggestions for improvements:

we needed more conversation from [CEOs] on what the future of TIS could look like, what the organisations can be doing to support the budget bid, a breakout

room for remote organisations to discuss what more can we do to reduce the prevalence rate ... and more showcasing scenarios where TIS program is having an impact.

Suggest the digital resources session is either run once it is established or run as a session to get input into how it will work. I didn't really get much from the workforce session.

It would be good to get all the CEOs together and get them to agree on one collective effort/action e.g. One shared social media campaign with a standard message which could be localised.

Asked to nominate the one thing they would change about the workshop, a number of responses were received including:

We should have spent more time on the future funding issue and how we prepare for this as a collective.

Brainstorm on solutions on workforce challenges.

The morning sessions were a little generic. Suggest there is more interaction and use the knowledge of the room to get input into things.

I have heard a lot of this content this year, different topics or strategies or new ideas would be great.

ATTACHMENT A: Attendance

Name	POSITION	ORGANISATION
Prof. Tom Calma AO	National TIS Coordinator	
Payden Samuelsson	CEO	Bullinah Aboriginal Health Service
Paul Durante	CEO	Galambila Aboriginal Health Service
Adam Phillips	CEO	Grand Pacific Health
Soozie Gillies	Program Coordinator	Grand Pacific Health
Raymond Hunt	TIS Officer	Mallee District Aboriginal Service
Mark Burling	CEO	Wellington Aboriginal Corporation Health Service
Craig Ritchie	Chairperson	Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health and Community Services
Adrian Dodson-Shaw	TIS Coordinator	Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health and Community Services
Jamara Maza	TIS Officer	Dhauwurd-Wurrung Elderly & Community Health Service
Lionel Austin	Victorian TIS State Manager	Victorian Aboriginal Health Service
Adelina Stanley	Executive Manager Service Development & Outreach Operations	Apunipima Cape York Health Council
Cynthia Lui	Workforce Manager	Apunipima Cape York Health Council
Wayne Ah Boo	CEO	Institute for Urban Indigenous Health
Corey Kirk	Head of Commercial Operations	Institute for Urban Indigenous Health
Thomas Fujii	Acting CEO	Torres Health Indigenous Corporation
Tanya McGregor	CEO	Aboriginal Health Council of SA Ltd
Eva Pratt	General Manager, Primary Health Programs	Aboriginal Health Council of SA Ltd
Toby Dodd	CEO	Nunkuwarrin Yunti of SA Inc.
Torrien Lau	CEO	Yadu Health Aboriginal Corporation
Joslyn Eades-Tass	Chairperson	Derbarl Yerrigan Health Service
James Christian	CEO	Derbarl Yerrigan Health Service
Davies Chibale	Business Services & Programs Director	Geraldton Regional Aboriginal Medical Service
Brent Walker	TIS Team Leader	Geraldton Regional Aboriginal Medical Service
Deborah Woods	CEO	Geraldton Regional Aboriginal Medical Service
Zaccariah Cox	Executive Manager Integrated Support Services	Kimberley Aboriginal Medical Services
Joan Hicks	CEO	Mawarnkarra Health Services
Braden Fisher	Acting CEO	South West Aboriginal Medical Services Ltd
Erin Lew Fatt	Deputy CEO	Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance Northern Territory
Rohan Corpus	Workforce & Leadership Support Manager	Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance Northern Territory
Taneal Croyden	Board Member	Anyinginyi Health Aboriginal Corporation

Janelle Collins	CEO	Anyinginyi Health Aboriginal Corporation
Donna Ah Chee	CEO	Central Australian Aboriginal Congress
John Boffa	Chief Medical Officer Public Health	Central Australian Aboriginal Congress
Rob McPhee	CEO	Danila Dilba Health Service
Cassi Bonython	Senior Manager - Chronic Disease	Danila Dilba Health Service
Sinon Cooney	CEO	Katherine West Health Board Aboriginal Corporation
Jessica Hagley	Executive Manager, Big Rivers Regional Projects	Katherine West Health Board Aboriginal Corporation
Steve Rossingh	CEO	Miwatj Health Aboriginal Corporation
Rebecca Bond	CEO	Sunrise Health Service Aboriginal Corporation
Nathan Rosas	CEO	Wurli-Wurlinjang Health Service
Katherine McHugh	Assistant Director - Preventative Health & Communicable Disease Section	Department of Health, Disability and Ageing
John Gram	Director	DSS Community Grants Hub
Raglan Maddox	Associate Professor	Australian Nation University
Ly Tong	Senior Research Consultant	Culturally Inclusive Research Centre Australia (CIRCA)
Rod Reeve	Managing Director	Ninti One Ltd
Eileen Van Iersel	Executive Program Lead	National Best Practice Unit - Tackling Indigenous Smoking
Scott McLennan	Communications Manager	National Best Practice Unit - Tackling Indigenous Smoking
Kelly Franklin	Coordinator NBPU Operations	National Best Practice Unit - Tackling Indigenous Smoking
Telita Goile	Executive Officer	National Best Practice Unit - Tackling Indigenous Smoking
Rod Reeve	Managing Director	National Best Practice Unit - Tackling Indigenous Smoking
Astrid Innes	Marketing & Communications Manager	National Best Practice Unit - Tackling Indigenous Smoking
Kerindy Clarke	National Workforce Development Advisor	National Best Practice Unit - Tackling Indigenous Smoking
Nathan Kropinyeri	Program Officer	National Best Practice Unit - Tackling Indigenous Smoking
Onike Williams	Program Officer	National Best Practice Unit - Tackling Indigenous Smoking
Sonette Johnson	Program Officer	National Best Practice Unit - Tackling Indigenous Smoking
Penney Upton	Research & Evidence Lead	NBPU TIS - University of Canberra
Penney Upton	Associate Prof	University Of Canberra/NBPU TIS
Thrishila Parshu Ram	Research Fellow	University of Canberra/NBPU TIS

ATTACHMENT B: Workshop Program

Tackling Indigenous Smoking National CEO's Workshop



Tuesday 2 September

Pier One
Sydney Harbour



The National Best Practice Unit acknowledge the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation as the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we gather.

We pay our respects to their Elders past and present.

We acknowledge the deep and ongoing spiritual connection with their land and waters.

INFORMATION

Photography

Please be advised that photography and/or video recording will be taking place during the Workshop.

By attending this event, you are providing your implied consent to be photographed and/or recorded, and for those images or recordings to be used by Ninti One Limited in publications, digital media, social media and other communications related to its mission and activities.

If you do not wish to be photographed or recorded, please notify a staff member directly. We will make reasonable efforts to accommodate your request.

Wi-Fi

Complimentary Wi-Fi is available via the Marriott Bonvoy network.

Evaluation

All participants are requested to complete evaluations at the end of the day. Scan the QR Code to provide feedback.



National Best Practice Unit Tackling Indigenous Smoking Newsletter

Don't forget to sign up the NBPU TIS monthly newsletter. Keep up to date with the latest news and events.

We welcome submissions for the newsletter.

Simply email communications@nintione.com.au





- 8.00am
Registration
- 8.45 am
Welcome to Country
Gujaga Foundation
- 9.00 am
Official Welcome, Introduction of the NBPU TIS team and TIS Workers Workshop review
Eileen Van Iersel, Executive Program Lead and Kelly Franklin Coordinator NBPU TIS
- 9.35 am
Evaluate and Prepare for 2027-31 Funding Bid
Who's up for the challenge?
Prof Tom Calma AO, National Coordinator TIS
- 10.05 am
Department of Health, Disability and Ageing update
Katherine McHugh, Department of Health, Disability and Ageing
- 10.25am / Morning Tea
- 10.45 am
Preserving Innovation, Celebrating Impact:
Introducing the TIS Digital Repository
Dr Penney Upton, NBPU TIS
- 10.55 am
Our People, Our Strength – The National TIS Workforce Development Framework
Kerindy Clarke, Workforce Development Manager NBPU TIS
- 11.25 am
Stronger Together: How Partnerships Flip the Vape
Lionel Austin, Victorian Aboriginal Health Service

12.00 pm / Lunch Break



- 12.40 pm
Goodbye Social Chaos - Tools and tips to collaborate and coordinate 30 days of content ahead of time.
Claudine Thornton, Director Claudine Thornton Creative
- 1.35 pm
Beyond the Numbers: How Strategic Planning and Reporting Drive Sustained Impact and Legacy
Dr Penney Upton and Kerindy Clarke, NBPU TIS
- 2.45 pm
Partnership Panel
Lionel Austin VAHS, TIS Partner, TIS CEO, Facilitated by Prof Tom Calma
- 3.10pm / Afternoon Tea
- 3.30 pm
How's the TIS Program going so far?:
Learnings from CIRCA's bird's eye view
Lena Etuk, Director CIRCA
- 3.45 pm
Truth, Power and Prevention: Indigenous Excellence in Tackling Indigenous Smoking
Dr Raglan Maddox, Australian National University
- 4.15 pm
Q&A Panel
Prof Tom Calma, Dr Raglan Maddox DOHDA representative
- 4.40 pm
Closing remarks
Prof Tom Calma AO, National Coordinator TIS
- 5.00pm
Workshop Close