

CEO Workshop



September 2026

Strengthening TIS

Priorities for 2026/7 and beyond

Session Overview

This session provided an opportunity for CEOs to reflect on their experience of delivering the Tackling Indigenous Smoking (TIS) Program, share learning across organisations, and identify the key strategies for contributing to national tobacco control priorities. The discussion built on the previous year's focus on legacy and what organisations had created through TIS. This year, participants were asked to focus on [what we need to get right to achieve the national tobacco control priorities](#) set by the National Preventive Health Strategy 2021–2030 and the National Tobacco Strategy 2023–2030:

- Reduce daily smoking among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over to [27% or less by 2030](#)
- [Strengthen and expand efforts and partnerships](#) to prevent and reduce tobacco use among First Nations people, with recognition of the importance of targeted investments such as TIS

Last year we used the analogy of a campfire to build a picture of TIS successes and the program's legacy. Keeping with the same analogy, this time the focus was on how to keep the flame burning brightly:

- [Tending the fire](#): Baseline monitoring and maintenance to keep the fire alive – in terms of the program, preserving what works.
- [Stoking the fire](#): Active intervention to boost the fire so the flame doesn't die – in terms of the program, what should be done differently.
- [Feeding the fire](#): Adding new logs to expand the fire and make it last longer – in terms of the program what new features, products, or ideas would strengthen program impact.

Participants were asked to reflect on these three challenges and write their ideas on Post-it notes. They were then invited to add their ideas to three posters (one for each challenge) that had been placed around the room. Facilitators at each poster encouraged participants to share their ideas with each other. Contributions to each poster were then themed, and the top three themes from each poster collated. Participants then voted for their top three themes.

Priorities identified by CEO workshop participants

1. Collaboration with other teams (18 votes)
2. Local workforce – community for community (16 votes)
- =3. Focus on Youth (15 votes)
Developing workforce skills (15 votes)

Themes emerging from the discussion

TEND: what is working, what should we protect?

Community-controlled, culturally safe and locally responsive delivery

Participants strongly valued community-controlled organisations and the ability of local teams to deliver culturally safe, community-informed activities that respond to local priorities. Strong community connections, local relationships, outreach and partnerships were seen as central to the strength of TIS, alongside the flexibility to respond locally.

A strong Aboriginal and local workforce

The Aboriginal workforce was identified as a critical strength of TIS, bringing community knowledge, relationships and connections to the work. Participants emphasised the importance of investing in, supporting and retaining staff through professional development, leadership opportunities, recognition and wellbeing support.

Community engagement and trusted messaging

Participants valued community events, outreach, music, video and social media as important ways of engaging communities and communicating tobacco control messages. They emphasised maintaining trusted, effective and evidence-based messaging while continuing to respond to emerging issues such as vaping.

Organisational and network strength

Participants valued the connections between TIS teams and the support provided through NBPU TIS, including data, feedback, workshops and opportunities to share learning. Maintaining investment in TIS and strengthening the network were seen as important to ongoing improvement and the program's longer-term contribution to tobacco control.

STOKE: what we have learnt that means we may need to change?

Strengthen prevention, particularly for young people

Participants identified a need to place greater emphasis on preventing smoking and vaping uptake among young people. This included rebuilding school relationships and increasing engagement with both primary and secondary schools.

Take a broader view of tobacco use

Participants highlighted the importance of recognising the social and environmental factors that influence tobacco use. They called for a more holistic approach that considers issues such as poverty, trauma, overcrowding and broader social determinants alongside individual behaviour change.

Strengthen integration and partnerships

There was a strong call for better integration between TIS, clinical services and broader health promotion activity. Participants identified opportunities to strengthen partnerships with health services, Local Health Districts and other organisations, and to better support TIS teams to work effectively with partners.

Keep evolving with the tobacco and media environment

Participants recognised that the tobacco and vaping environment continues to change and that TIS needs to evolve with it. Social media was identified as increasingly important, alongside the need to keep messaging fresh, relevant, evidence-based and responsive to changing trends. Participants also supported continued innovation, learning and sharing of approaches that work.

Strengthen measurement and learning

Participants identified a need for clearer measures of impact, regular review points and stronger processes for identifying and sharing what works. There was interest in being better able to demonstrate the outcomes and broader value of TIS, including its potential contribution to health and economic outcomes.

FEED: what should we add to strengthen TIS and increase its impact

Increase reach

Participants identified the need to increase reach, particularly in regional, remote and very remote communities where improvements in smoking rates have been slower. This included reaching people who may not regularly engage with ACCHOs or other health services, expanding community outreach and using social media to extend reach.

Invest in workforce capability and career pathways

Participants identified workforce development as an important area for further investment. This included strengthening skills in health promotion, social media, research, marketing and project management, alongside creating career development opportunities within TIS. The importance of developing and retaining a local workforce - including through a “grow your own” approach - was emphasised..

Strengthen collaboration and sharing across TIS

Participants called for greater collaboration between TIS teams, regions and jurisdictions, including more systematic sharing of resources, knowledge and approaches that work. There was also interest in developing stronger national approaches where these could add value, while retaining the ability to adapt resources and approaches to local communities.

One CEO also suggested establishing targeted Communities of Practice to bring together staff with shared roles or responsibilities, such as those working on partnerships, communications or youth-focused initiatives. These could support the development of practical solutions and shared resources, with learning then shared across jurisdictions to support implementation and avoid duplication

Build capacity for innovation and communication

Participants identified a need for greater capacity to develop innovative campaigns, strengthen social media activity and refine and communicate tobacco control messages. Adaptable national resources, developed with the ability to be locally tailored, were seen as useful.

Strengthen evidence of impact

Participants identified opportunities to improve measurement of outcomes and demonstrate the contribution of TIS more clearly. This included better measures of reach, behaviour change and longer-term health outcomes, as well as exploring ways to demonstrate the broader value and return on investment of tobacco control activity.

Provide practical support and reduce administrative burden

Participants identified opportunities to provide more practical support to organisations and staff while reducing reporting burden where possible. The NBPU and other stakeholders were seen as having a role in providing targeted support when teams need additional skills, knowledge or capacity.

Key Take Aways

Across the three themes, several priorities cut across the whole discussion.

1. **Protect the community-controlled foundations of TIS:** Community connection, cultural safety, local knowledge and a strong Aboriginal workforce were consistently identified as core strengths.
2. **Invest in the workforce:** Recruitment, retention, professional development, leadership and career pathways were seen as critical to sustaining and strengthening TIS.
3. **Strengthen collaboration and reach:** Participants identified opportunities to work more closely across TIS and with clinical and other partners, particularly to increase reach in regional, remote and very remote communities.
4. **Keep evolving and demonstrate impact:** Participants want TIS to continue adapting to changes in tobacco and vaping, digital and social media environments and community needs, while strengthening measurement, learning and the evidence of impact.

Conclusion

The workshop highlighted a strong commitment to the foundations of TIS - community-controlled, culturally safe and locally connected approaches - while recognising the need to keep evolving to meet changing tobacco control priorities and community needs.

CEOs identified collaboration, a local workforce, a focus on young people and workforce development as key priorities for strengthening TIS. The broader discussion also highlighted the importance of increasing reach, sharing what works, responding to the changing tobacco and vaping environment, and strengthening evidence of impact.

Together, these priorities provide a clear direction for where collective effort, investment and support could strengthen the contribution of TIS to national tobacco control priorities.

Workshop Participants

NAME	POSITION	ORGANISATION
Eva Pratt	General Manager Primary Health	Aboriginal Health Council SA
Donna Ah Chee	CEO	AMSANT
Pat Braun	Chairperson	Anyinginyi Health Aboriginal Corporation
Janelle Collins	CEO	Anyinginyi Health Aboriginal Corporation
James Doran	Executive Manager, Clinical Services	Apunipima Cape York Health Council
Jody Hansen	COO	Bega Garnbirringu Health Service
Ebony Abbott-McCormack	CEO	Central Australian Aboriginal Congress
Rob McPhee	CEO	Danila Dilba Health Service
Ann Palmer	Contract Lead	Danila Dilba Health Service
Joslyn Eades-Tass	CEO	Derbarl Yerrigan Health Service
Terrence Morrich	TIS Coordinator	Derbarl Yerrigan Health Service
Fiona Stewart	TIS Coordinator	Flinders Island Aboriginal Association Inc
Toni Wood	2IC/Finance	Flinders Island Aboriginal Association Inc
Paul Durante	CEO	Galambila Aboriginal Health Service
Davies Chibale	Business Services and Programs Director	Geraldton Regional Aboriginal Medical Services
Soozie Gillies	Coordinator	Grand Pacific Health
Adam Phillios	CEO	Grand Pacific Health
Jenny Valdivia	Chief Impact & Programs Officer	Grand Pacific Health
James Williams	Integrated Health Services Manager	Griffith Aboriginal Medical Service
Wayne Ah Boo	CEO	Institute for Urban Indigenous Health Ltd
Corey Kirk	Executive Director	Institute for Urban Indigenous Health Ltd
Jessica Hagley	Executive Manager	Katherine West Health Board
Sinon Cooney	CEO	Katherine West Health Board
Zaccariah Cox	Executive Manager Integrated Support Services	Kimberley Aboriginal Medical Service
Gail Badcock	General Manager, SEWB Culture & Community	Nunkuwarrin Yunti of SA
Natasha Brunne	Manager	Torres Health
Renee Williams	CEO	Torres Health
Ethan Penrith	Manager of PHU unit	Victorian Aboriginal Health Service
Janelle Glanville	Deputy Chief Executive Manager	Wellington Aboriginal Corporation Health Service
Francie Kelly	Executive Manager of Programs	Wellington Aboriginal Corporation Health Service
Julie Tongs	CEO	Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health and Community Services
Jessica Whaler	TIS Coordinator	Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health and Community Services
Torrien Lau	CEO	YADU Health
Matthew McArthur	Manager Strategic Partnerships	YADU Health