Tackling smoking among Aboriginal youth

Community organisation Glebe Youth Service has been awarded a grant to help staff tackle smoking and encourage local youth to quit.

The grant is one of five recently awarded by the Aboriginal Tobacco Control project, of which Sydney Local Health District is a key partner.

The project has a community grants scheme that assists organisations and workers to fund activities, events or resources that contribute to reducing rates of smoking among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members.

The acting director of Sydney Local Health District’s Health Promotion Service, Mandy Williams, said incorporating community groups was key to the success of programs aimed at reducing smoking rates.

“Local community organisations and workers have strong and established foundations within the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, and play a central role in encouraging community members to quit smoking,” Ms Williams said.

“Tobacco smoking remains the greatest single cause of premature death and is a leading preventable cause of morbidity in NSW, highlighting the importance of helping the almost one-in-two Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults who are reported to be smokers in NSW,” she said.

A youth worker at the Glebe Youth Service, Keiran Kevans, said the community grants scheme was an opportunity to address youth smoking within the community.

“A lot of young people in the area smoke and we saw the community grants as an opportunity to address the issue and encourage local youth to quit smoking. We aim to do this through the design of original artworks and healthy choice taglines that come from young people. We believe this will create powerful messages of lasting legacy.

“Artworks that address smoking will be created with the help of a visual artist. One of the artworks will be selected for use as a t-shirt design and will be printed for local youth to wear and continue to spread the word about quitting smoking,” he said.

The Aboriginal Tobacco Control project partners look forward to tracking the progress of all grant recipients as plans are implemented to encourage and assist Aboriginal community members to quit smoking.

For more information, or to interview Mandy Williams, please contact Caline Haddad on 9515 9606 or at caline.haddad@sswahs.nsw.gov.au
About the Aboriginal Tobacco Control Project

The Aboriginal Tobacco Control project “I Quit Because...” campaign launched in October 2011 and aims to reduce smoking rates in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population of Sydney Local Health District by 5 per cent by June 2013.

The project has featured a range of social marketing and advertising channels including billboards, broadcast community service announcements, bus shelter and bus advertisements located in Redfern, Bankstown, Liverpool and Macarthur.

Quit groups are also planned for the project for interested community members with the Babana Men’s Group and the Redfern Aboriginal Medical Service throughout June.

The “I Quit Because...” website provides information, support services and features video content of Aboriginal community member quit stories. To find out more about the Aboriginal Tobacco Control Project, visit www.iquitbecause.org.au.

For further details about the community grants scheme please contact Natasha Poder on 02 4640 3544.