

Successful buy-in by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to reduced tobacco use and mental health initiatives

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It is understood that a reduced rate of tobacco use among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people would make a significant contribution to their improved health and wellbeing. The Australian Government has world's best practice approaches to reducing smoking and this includes targeted approaches for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Some of the good news stories about reducing tobacco use among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people will be described and illustrated through video presentations. The specific programs involved are providing benefits in their own right and demonstrating some of the principles more generally applicable to culturally appropriate, community empowerment health promotion.

The address will also cover some of the national developments with work on social and emotional wellbeing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, some of which is now being led by an initiative that brings together government departments and mental health and suicide prevention interest groups. An understanding of these high-level national initiatives will provide a useful background for some of the more detailed presentations at the Conference in concurrent sessions relating to Indigenous mental health and wellbeing.

Tom will also describe the work of the Rural Health Education Foundation, which is a key provider of general health and wellbeing information (through Channel 600) to many thousands of health service centres and households in more remote areas, as well as of specific professional development material.

The successful strategic approaches and buy-in by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and individuals to reduce tobacco use and take-up mental health initiatives need to be sustained for the longer term.