

Accelerating declines in tobacco use among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

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Tobacco Free

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Group

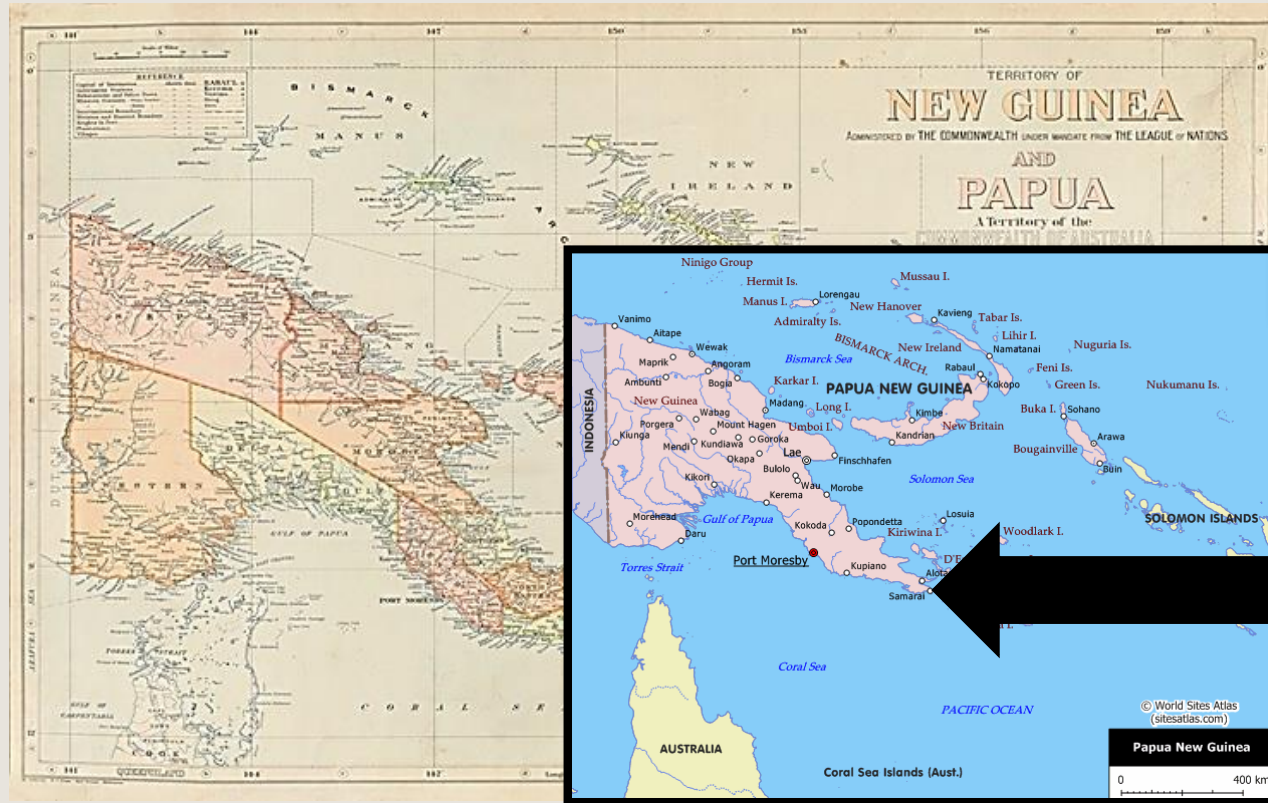
National Centre for Epidemiology and Public Health

Research School of Population Health

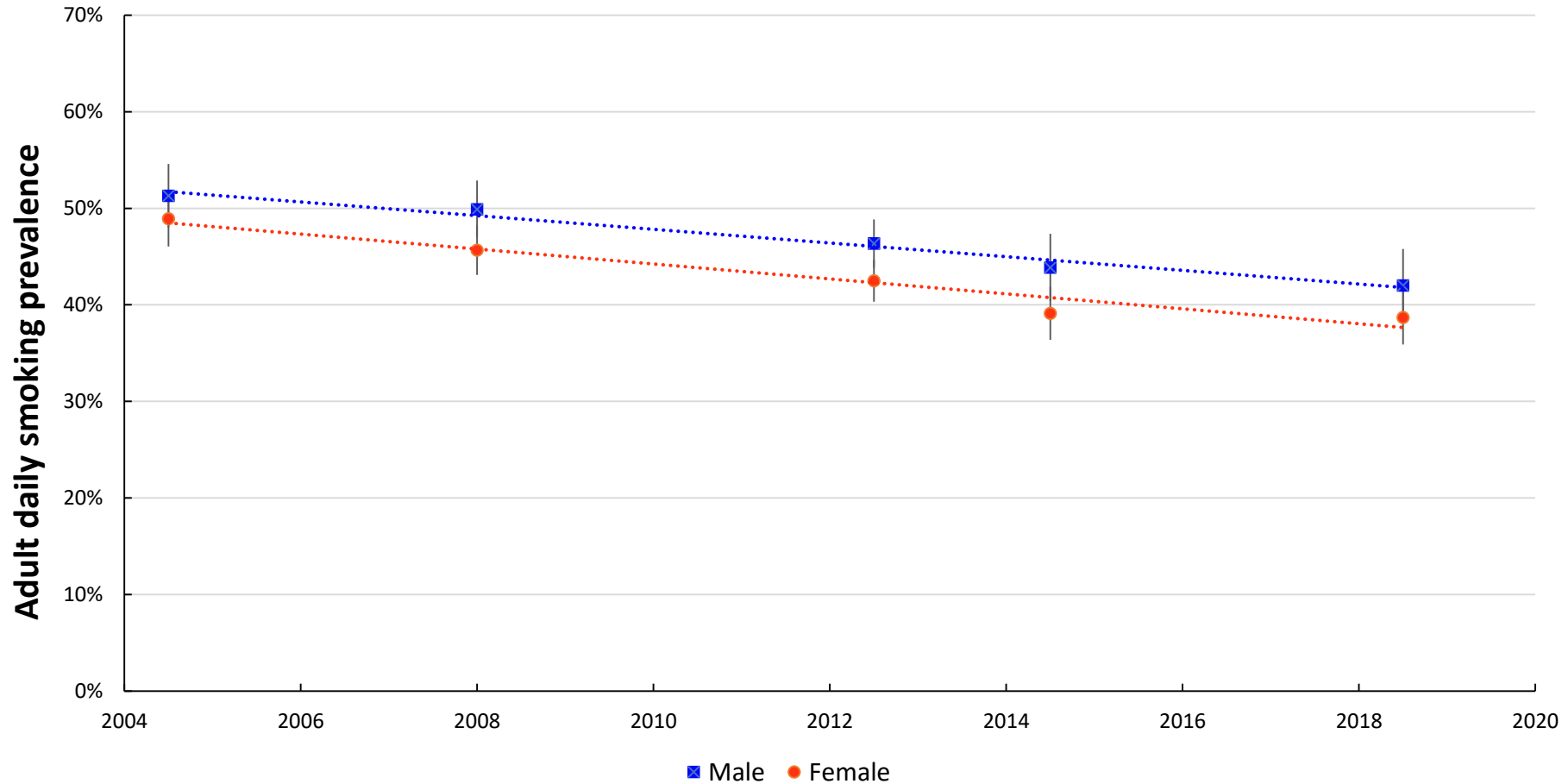
Australian National University

1 October 2021

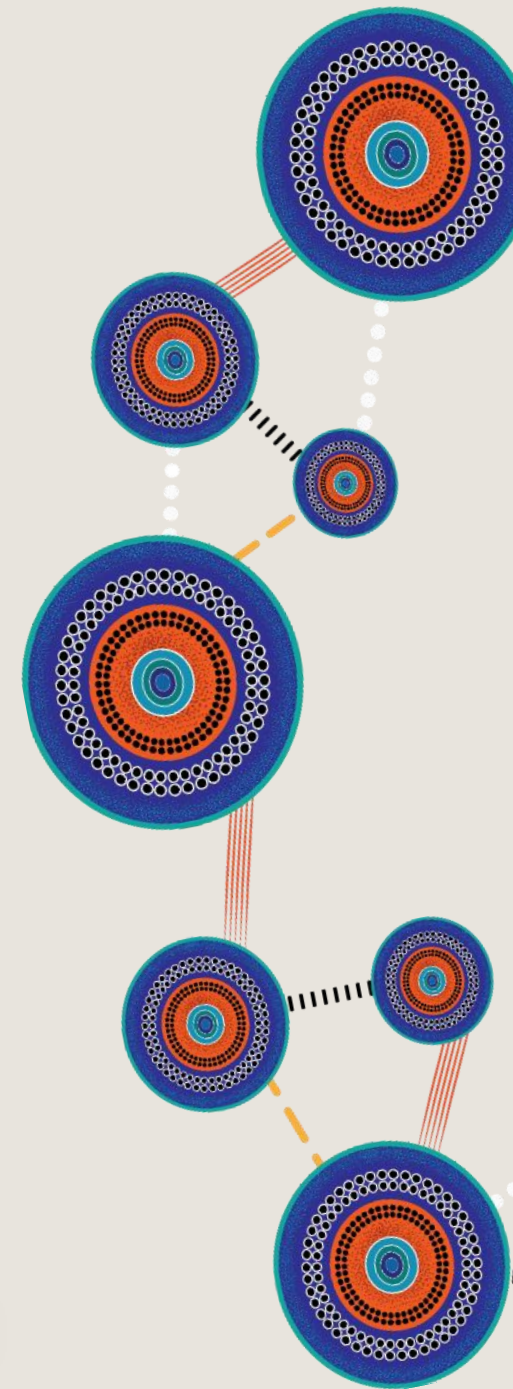
Milne Bay, PNG



Smoking rates are declining among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people



Maddox, R., Thurber, K.A., Calma, T., Banks, E. and Lovett, R. (2020), Deadly news: the downward trend continues in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander smoking 2004–2019. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health*, 44: 449-450. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1753-6405.13049>



Pre-colonization
60,000_{BC}-1788

- Strong connection to country
- No-sedentary lifestyle
- Absence of many common disease in Europe
- Customs and laws to ensure land and people are cared for and protected

Dispossession
1788-1885

- Frontier wars
- Disease epidemics, small pox
- Reduction in population
- Reduced access to Country
- Disruption of social and cultural practices, etc.

Conflict and violence
1788-1928

- Military and Settler violence
- Further reductions in population
- Abduction, rape, poison of water holes and food
- Massacres
- Development of racist constructs (e.g. – primitive, doomed race, savage, etc.)

Protectionism
1838-1970s

- Establishment of government as the protector of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- Limitation of Rights
- Segregation
- Forced Relocation
- Enforced restrictions on mobility, marriage, education and cultural practices
- Enforced welfare dependence – **payment in rations of flour, sugar, tea and tobacco**
- Evidence on the harms of commercial tobacco
- Plain text health warnings introduced
- Phasing out of tobacco advertising and promotion (1970s – bans on TV advertising)

Removal of children
1814-1980s

- Stolen Generations
- Children removed from their families to be 'education and civilised'
- Deaths of children in care
- Fear of removals for children, families and communities
- Bans of outdoor advertising and sports sponsorships (1980s)
- Increased penalties for sales to minors
- Rotating text health warnings
- Smoke free policies in public service and large companies
- NRT gum for sale OTC
- First state based anti-smoking TV campaigns
- NHMRC education poster/leaflet campaign
- Indexation of duties and increases in state franchise fees

Assimilation
1937-1969

- Unequal remuneration and rights for workers
- Deficit based health research on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- Overcrowded living
- Lack of access to clean water, sewerage, and cleaning
- Lack of access to health care

Self-determination
1972-1996

- 'Top down' approach to self-determination
- Rise in racial violence within the criminal justice system
- Escalation of incarceration rates and suicide
- Widespread smoke free policies
- ACT bans smoking in public places
- NRT patches approved for sale
- Minimum age of purchase - 18 years
- Federal court ruling against the Industry for advert that downplayed health harms
- Tobacco Advertising Prohibition Act (1992)
- Excise increases

Intervention and apologies
1996-2010s

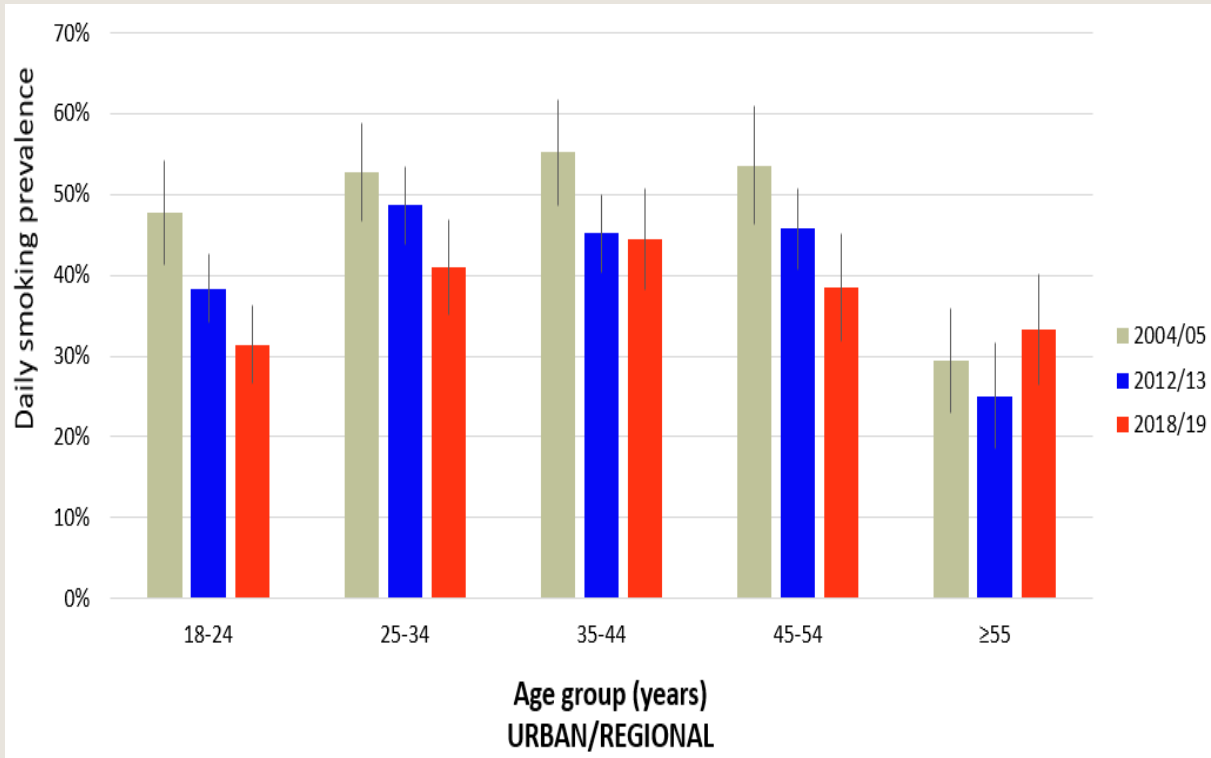
- Political denial of colonial wrongdoing
- Abolition of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission
- Northern Territory Intervention
- Discrimination
- Infringement on the right to self-determination
- 2005 Social Justice Commissioners' Report
- Point of sales display bans
- Varenicline on PBS
- Rotating Graphic Health Warnings
- Low tar, lights and mild product descriptors dropped
- General NRT sales permitted
- Increasing smoke free policies
- National Tobacco Campaign and More Targeted Approach
- WHO FCTC
- Reduced fire risk standards

2010 & beyond

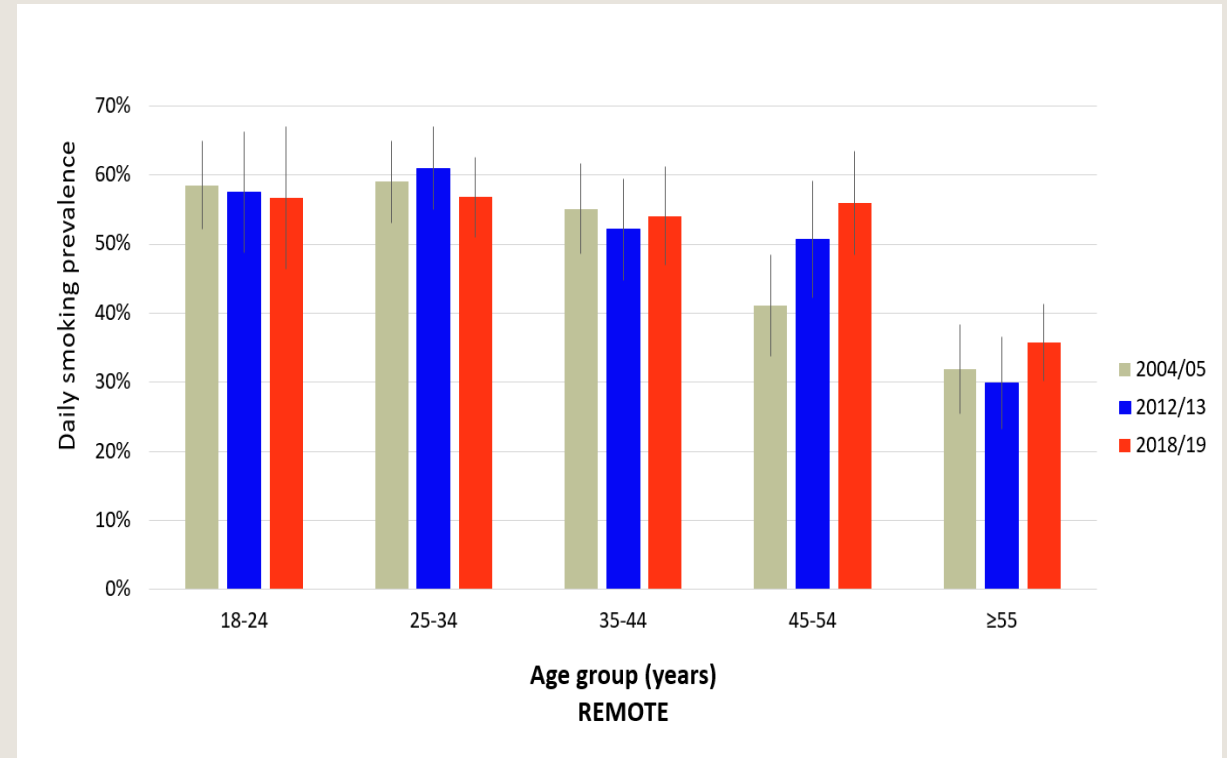
- Rotating graphic health warnings
- Regional Tackling Smoking and Healthy Lifestyle Program ↔ Tackling Indigenous Smoking Program
- NRT on the PBS
- Plain packaging
- Widespread point of sale display bans
- Increased excise
- Tightening restrictions on internet advertising
- COVID-19
- WHERE TO NEXT?



Sources:
 Sherwood 2013; Healing Foundation 2020;
 Lovett et al. (2017). Deadly progress: changes in Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adult daily smoking, 2004–2015;
 Scollo et al. Plain packaging: a logical progression for tobacco control in one of the world's 'darkest markets'. *Tobacco control* vol. 24, Suppl 2 (2015): ii3-ii8. doi:10.1136/tobaccocontrol-2014-052048



*146,300 daily smokers living in urban/regional settings



*49,000 daily smokers live in remote areas

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The Deadly News since 2004...

**Many
lives saved**



9.8% reduction

50k

**Almost 50,000
fewer daily
smokers**

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