

May 28, 2014

‘A Walk in the Park’ towards quitting smoking

Fairfield residents are encouraged to take a ‘Walk in the Park’ on Friday 30 May 2014, the day before World No Tobacco Day.

Smoking rates have decreased over recent decades in Australia, however in south western Sydney they remain higher than average at more than 16 per cent.

South Western Sydney Local Health District has joined with Fairfield City Council and the Cancer Council NSW to encourage local residents to join the walk around Endeavour Park in Fairfield West – highlighting activities smokers can get involved in to help them on their quit journey.

Acting Director of the South Western Sydney Local Health District Health Promotion Service, Mandy Williams, said it was important to help residents who are ready for help but may not know how to get started.

“We know that the majority of smokers in our community are considering or have decided to quit smoking in the next six months,” she said.

“If you have tried quitting before but returned to smoking, you are not alone.

“Family support, calling the QuitLine or visiting www.icanquit.com.au for more support are all ways community can get started.”

Cancer Council NSW Greater Western Sydney Regional Manager, Rory Alcock, said helping residents in south western Sydney was critical to helping reduce the burden of tobacco related illness.

“Tobacco is the greatest preventable cause of cancer with smoking causing between 20 per cent and 30 per cent of all cancers. Reducing smoking saves lives,” Mr Alcock said.

“Lung cancer survival rates for example - the cancer most commonly associated with smoking - remain low at 15 per cent.

However, due to a reduction in males smoking rates – annual lung cancer deaths have fallen by 2,154 compared with what we could have expected if late-1980s trends had continued.

“With 16.3 per cent of residents in South Western Sydney Local Health District still smoking there is more that can be done to reduce smoking rates and save lives.”

Fairfield City Mayor Frank Carbone said this day followed a range of measures by the council aimed at reducing smoking rates.

“Smoke-free zones are in place to break the link between smoking and sport and to encourage our local community to stop smoking around children,” he said.

"The council has always taken a strong stand against smoking and will continue to do so in our aim to provide a healthier environment”.

World No Tobacco Day aims to protect present and future generations from the devastating health consequences of tobacco and the social, environmental and economic impacts of tobacco use and exposure to tobacco smoke.

Water and fresh fruit will be on offer for Walk participants to help them along.