

31 May 2021

Commit to Quit on World No Tobacco Day

There's no better time for residents in south western Sydney to 'Commit to Quit' than on World No Tobacco Day on Monday 31 May.

After a year like no other, tobacco smokers wanting to improve their health and quit the habit may be facing the added social and economic pressures felt from the COVID-19 pandemic.

South Western Sydney Local Health District Health Promotion Service Acting Director Karen Wardle said a range of local resources were available to help people who wanted to quit smoking but were not sure of where to start.

"I recommend people talk to their GP or call the NSW Quitline, even if they are not quite ready to quit," Ms Wardle said.

The NSW Quitline is a free confidential telephone service with smoking cessation counsellors in English, Arabic, Chinese and Vietnamese, with Aboriginal Quitline Advisors also available.

Ms Wardle said smoking prevalence remained high in the community and people needed to continue to support those who wanted to quit for good.

Tobacco smoking remains the leading preventable cause of death and disease in Australia.

Smoking leads to diseases including cancer, heart disease and stroke. Two in three lifetime smokers will die from a disease caused by their smoking.

Ms Wardle said it was never too late for smokers to kick the habit and improve their health.

"Even after years of smoking you can still improve your health within minutes of your last cigarette. The longer a person goes without smoking, the more benefits they reap in the years to come," Ms Wardle said.

The NSW Government is committed to reducing the prevalence of smoking, including the use of e-cigarettes. In 2020-21, the NSW Ministry of Health and Cancer Institute NSW will invest \$17.3 million on tobacco and e-cigarette control.

This includes public awareness and education campaigns, quit smoking support, compliance and enforcement of strong smoke-free and retailing laws, and targeted programs for vulnerable groups with high smoking rates.

For information, tips and tools to support people to quit, see the below services:

Ring the NSW Quitline on 13 7848. It offers a free confidential service with fully trained counsellors. Arabic, Chinese, Vietnamese and Aboriginal Quitline counsellors are also available.

- Visit the website www.icanquit.com.au for up-to-date information and personalised quitting advice.
- Talk to a healthcare professional such as your GP.
- NSW Health hospitals also offer support for patients to manage their nicotine dependence while in hospital. Patients will be assessed for their level of nicotine dependence and if appropriate, offered support, which may include free Nicotine Replacement Therapy.
- South Western Sydney Local Health District provides a Quit For New Life smoking cessation program that supports any family who are pregnant or have had a child under 3 years of age. The program provides vouchers for free Nicotine Replacement Therapy with the main aim of reducing the rate of smoking in pregnancy and beyond for families in the district. For more information, call (02) 4634 3054.