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Smoking rates in Northern Sydney lowest in NSW

Smoking rates in Northern Sydney are continuing to fall according to the most recent data on tobacco use.

“In Northern Sydney, the smoking rate among adults is at 9% which is the lowest in the state,” said Paul Klarenaar, Director of Health promotion at Northern Sydney Local Health District.

Mr Klarenaar said supporting smoking bans in public places, promoting the NSW Quitline service, training health workers and working with local councils and youth agencies has helped contribute to this result.

NSW Health’s Executive Director of Population Health Dr Jo Mitchell said the NSW Government’s efforts to curb smoking, the leading cause of disease and premature death across the state, are working.

The NSW Government allocated more than \$6 million in the 2017-18 State Budget for tobacco control including into the Cancer Institute NSW’s Quitline and iCanQuit services. And since 2015, the Cancer Institute NSW has invested more than \$22 million on public awareness and education campaigns for smoking cessation.

“Smoking is a dangerous habit, not just to smokers but those around them, and we are committed to reducing its impact on our lives,” Dr Mitchell said.

“That’s why I’m pleased to see our efforts result in a continued drop in smoking across NSW, from around 20 per cent in 2007 down to 15 per cent in 2016. Importantly, we’ve also seen the smoking rate in Aboriginal populations drop from around 43 per cent in 2008 to 40 per cent in 2016, but we will continue to work to reduce this figure fall much further. The rate of smoking among secondary school students is also at an all-time low of 6.7%.

“Enforcement and tough laws have also played a key role in these results, with more than 2,200 tobacco retailers inspected from July 2016 to June 2017,” Dr Mitchell said.

More than 2,200 inspections of smoke-free outdoor areas were conducted between July 2016 and June 2017, 99 per cent of people in those areas complied with tough anti-smoking laws.

Businesses are also complying with laws at a consistently high level. Of the 900 tobacco retailers inspected in the same period, 94 per cent complied with laws restricting tobacco sales to minors.

NSW Health will continue to explore more ways to reduce smoking rates.