

COMMUNITY SMOKE-FREE PROJECTS PROGRAM: Starting Point Neighbourhood House

Starting Point towards smoke-free

Project background

Starting Point Neighbourhood House provides a safe and friendly place for the communities of Ravenswood, Waverley and St Leonards as well as the wider Launceston neighbourhood.

Ravenswood, an area of the Northern Suburbs of Launceston, has a high proportion of its community experiencing health inequity.¹ The priority population of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islanders is 10.7% compared with 5.4% for Tasmania and 3.2% for Australia. Starting Point is passionate about changing the health of the community. The project's goal was to prompt people to consider why they smoke and be open to other choices.

What did we start with?

Starting Point had experience running a smoking cessation program and understood that small steps are crucial for success (see Quit Tasmania's Community Service Workers Toolkit [Help Your Clients Quit for Good](#)).

Starting Point successfully secured \$5,000 through the TasCOSS Community Smoke-free Projects Program to enable a refresh of a seven-session education program.



Including goodie bags packed with NRT (Nicotine Replacement Therapy) along with fidget and mindfulness items, toothpaste, water bottles, mints, and snacks resonated well with the participants. These takeaways not only supported their smoke-free journey but also served as tangible reminders of their progress and determination.”

— HAYLEY SHAW, COMMUNITY ADVOCACY NETWORKER
AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICER (CANDO!)



Starting Point's aim was to get people thinking about why they smoke and being open to other choices.

Successes

- Each participant accrued a total of 14 hours smoke-free time
- Collective total of 70 hours smoke-free time.
- Individual quit plans for five participants, including support people within their social circles and Quit Tasmania [resources](#).

Learnings

- Social determinants of health influence health equity – allow more time to address potential triggers and tailor support and the organisation ready for change



Celebration and Graduation Day



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¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics. [Ravenswood 2021 Census](#).

What did we finish with?

Five people participated in the seven-session program that focused on:

- **Education and awareness** – covering addiction, triggers, financial implications, health effects, and the dangers of vaping.
- **Coping mechanisms and craving management** – introducing practical, low cost, five-minute craving busters, e.g. chewing gum, sour lollies, and smiling in a mirror.
- **Support systems and individualised plans** – adopting a personalised approach to quitting, supported by resources and the My QuitBuddy App from Quit Tasmania.
- **Positive diversions** – organising outings to the cinema and beach to demonstrate alternative activities to extend the amount of time between cigarettes.
- **Engagement and participation** – fostering active peer support in discussions, brainstorming, and interactive activities.

Over the seven sessions:

- Each participant achieved a total of 14 hours smoke-free time – five hours across five one-hour sessions and nine hours during two diversion trips.
- The group collectively accumulated a total of 70 hours of smoke-free time.

What were the successes along the way?

- Developed individual quit plans for five participants, including support people within their social circles and Quit Tasmania resources.
- A total of 70 hours of smoke-free time.
- Introduced practical craving busters and positive diversions.
- Created an engaging learning experience that balanced information-sharing with interactive games and open conversations.

What were the challenges?

The social determinants of health, such as socioeconomic background, mental ill health, and alcohol and substance use, may disadvantage people from full participation. Programs should be designed to be trauma-informed, people-first, and inclusive.

Sharing what we learned

Ongoing financial support is required to ensure sustainability of the program, to provide necessary elements such as nicotine replacement therapy options, diversion trips, and to maintain the fun and engaging components of the program.



Great idea

Use visual aids, quizzes, and interactive activities like smoke bingo to create a diverse and engaging learning experience about smoking and vaping.

Summary

Starting Point refreshed a seven-session education program to encourage people to consider why they smoke and to be open-minded to other choices. Through the program, each participant gained 14 hours of smoke-free time and learned about supports available to them. The program was designed to be a fun and engaging way to impart information about smoking cessation.

Community Smoke-free Projects Program

Part of the TasCOSS **Supporting Smoke-free Community Services** project was to provide 10 community service organisations (CSOs) with \$5,000 each to conduct a small project to progress towards smoke-free work areas and services. The trust-based funding model for the grants was simple and equitable for organisations with limited time and resources. TasCOSS and Quit Tasmania collaborated with each CSO to develop an idea that was relevant to that organisation and the people who used their services.



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