

21 October 2016

ACOSH welcomes new anti-smoking data

The latest national survey showing that children's smoking rates are continuing to plummet has been welcomed by the Australian Council on Smoking and Health (ACOSH).

ACOSH acting President, Professor Kingsley Faulkner, said it was heartening to see a decrease in the number of young people smoking.

"This month's Australian Secondary Students' Alcohol and Drug (ASSAD) survey release reveals only 19.5 per cent students aged 12 to 17 reported ever smoking," Professor Kingsley said. "This is down more than three per cent during the reporting period (2011 to 2014).

"This downward trend has been a pattern for some years and we want to see it continue.

"It is also worth noting that smoking prevalence has continued to decline for both males and females aged 12 to 17 and it is now less than one third of what it was in 1993 (16.9 per cent down to 4.8 per cent)."

Professor Faulkner said the encouraging data was the result of several factors.

"The decline can be attributed to long-term public health campaigns, strong tobacco control legislation, annual tax increases, plain packaging and penalties for tobacco sales to children," he said.

Professor Faulkner warned that the community and Government should not be complacent.

"There's still a lot to be done in Western Australia including limiting the availability of tobacco products," he said.

Professor Faulkner said ACOSH's partnership with Smarter than Smoking and QuitVictoria on the *Critics' Choice* competition was another important initiative.

Students watch anti-smoking advertisements as part of the *Critics' Choice* competition and vote for their favourite

Professor Faulkner said the 2016 winner of the *Critics' Choice* competition was Christmas Island District High School. The school will receive a voucher to buy sporting equipment or educational resources.

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The ASSAD survey results can be found on the following link:

http://ww2.health.wa.gov.au/~/_media/Files/Corporate/general%20documents/Chronic%20disease/WA_Tobacco_Results_Bulletin_2014.ashx

Information on Critics' Choice can be found on the following link:

<http://www.quit.org.au/criticschoice/>