
Smoking statistics

Summary

- In 2011, 18,800 Australians died from smoking-related disease – that's 50 preventable deaths every day.
 - Cancer is the number one cause of smoking-related death and illness in Australia (45 per cent of the total burden of disease).
 - Quitting smoking reduces the risk of smoking-related diseases in people of all ages.
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Smoking-related diseases killed 18,800 Australians in 2011. That's 50 preventable deaths every day. Smoking is the leading cause of preventable death and illness in Australia.

Cancer was the number one cause of tobacco-related death and illness, and was responsible for 45 per cent of the healthy years lost due to smoking. Lung cancer currently causes the most cancer deaths in Australia and this is due mainly to smoking.

The major tobacco-related diseases include cancer, heart disease and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (lung disease).

Smoking behaviours in Australia

In 2016, around 14 per cent of people aged 18 years and over smoked. Of particular concern is the smoking rate among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, which in 2014–15 was reported to be 42 per cent among people aged 15 years and over – more than double that of the wider community.

Selected statistics from the 2016 National Drug Strategy Household Survey include:

- In 2016, the male smoking rate was 16 per cent and the female smoking rate was 12 per cent (where current smoking included people who smoked daily and weekly).
- Male smoking rates were higher in all adult age groups.
- People aged 25–29 years and 40–49 years had higher smoking rates than other age groups, with a smoking rate of 18 per cent in both age groups.
- People aged 70 years and over were least likely to smoke (6 per cent).
- Daily smoking rates for Australians aged 18 and over have dropped from 20 per cent in 2001 to 13 per cent in 2016.
- People who have quit smoking outnumber people who currently smoke: in 2016, over 24 per cent of Australians had quit smoking during their lifetime.
- By 2016, 61 per cent of people who had ever smoked had quit.

Smoking in Victoria

The **Centre for Behavioural Research in Cancer** estimates that in 2015, 14.1 per cent of Victorian adults aged 18 and over smoked regularly (on a daily or weekly basis). Also:

- The smoking rate for men (16.5 per cent) was higher than for women (11.9 per cent).
- People who had quit smoking greatly outnumbered people who currently smoked: 28.4 per cent of men and 23.7 per cent of women had quit smoking in Victoria.
- Smoking rates were higher among people with lower education: 21.7 per cent of persons who had not completed year 12, compared to 12.7 per cent of people who had completed year 12 or tertiary education.

The **2014 survey of Victorian secondary school students** estimated that 3 per cent of male and 4 per cent of

female 12–15 year old students currently smoked. Among 16–17 year old students, 10 per cent of males and 12 per cent of females had smoked in the week before the survey. Alarming, the average age of adolescents taking up smoking is around 16 years old.

Smoking costs the Victorian community \$3.7 billion per year. This figure includes costs to businesses, households and healthcare, and losses from fires, litter and money spent on tobacco. If all Victorian smokers quit, they would have \$1.3 billion per year to spend on other goods and services in our economy.

Comparative death rates for people who smoke

Smoking-related diseases killed over 4,400 Victorians in 2011. That is over three times the number of Victorian deaths due to alcohol in the same year. One in eight Victorians killed by tobacco were aged in their 30s, 40s or 50s.

Death rates from tobacco-caused disease are higher among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, who are more likely to die from these diseases at a younger age.

The benefits of quitting smoking

Quitting smoking has immediate health benefits and dramatically reduces the risk of smoking-related diseases, whatever the person's age. Statistics include:

- Quitting before 30 years of age reduces your risk of lung cancer by 90 per cent, compared to someone who continues to smoke throughout their life.
- After 15 years of not smoking, your risk of stroke has reduced to close to that of a person who has never smoked.
- Within two to five years of quitting, there is a large drop in your risk of heart attack and stroke.

Where to get help

- Your **GP (doctor)**
- Your **pharmacist**
- Quitline. Tel. **13 QUIT** (7848)

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Quit

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