

Briefing  
August 2006

## SMOKING RATES IN SOUTH AUSTRALIAN SCHOOL CHILDREN: RESULTS FROM THE 2005 AUSTRALIAN SCHOOL STUDENTS' ALCOHOL AND DRUGS SURVEY

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- The Preliminary findings from the 2005 Australian School Students' Alcohol and Drug Survey (South Australian smoking results) will be released in the coming weeks by the Tobacco Control Research and Evaluation Program, based at the Cancer Council South Australia.
- Key results:
  - **Smoking rates are dropping** among South Australian young people and are the lowest ever recorded.
  - Smoking rates have more than halved in the 2 decades from 1984 – 2005.
  - Smoking rates for **boys and girls are virtually the same** (both for 12-15 year olds and 16-17 year olds).
  - Experience of **smoking increases with age** -  
Among 12 year olds, 89% of boys and 91% of girls have never smoked at all.  
By the age of 17, 54% of boys and 51% of girls have at least tried smoking.
    - **Regular smoking rates** (current smoker=smoked in the past week)<sup>1</sup>  
There was a statistically significant decline in 'current' smoking rates among 12-15 year olds from 12% in 2002 to 5% in 2005.
    - There was no statistically significant decline in 'current' smoking rates among 16-17 year olds from 19% in 2002 to 15% in 2005.
  - In 2002, 19% of children **bought their last cigarette** which is less than in 2002 (23%); however the difference is not significant and other sources (such as friends and family compensated).
- About the survey:
  - It is part of a national survey coordinated by the Cancer Council Victoria every 3 years, locally the survey is run by The Cancer Council South Australia.
  - In 2005, 2873 students from 50 schools (Catholic, Independent and Government) participated.
- All states and territories release their own results in their own time. National data is usually published in a peer-reviewed journal by the Cancer Council of Victoria. Timing of release by other jurisdictions is currently unknown.

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<sup>1</sup> Data are presented by 12-15 and 16-17 year age groups to account for changing school retention rates in the older age group which allows for more accurate comparisons over time. Raw data however shows that in 2005, 7.4% of 12-17 year olds were current smokers.