



# SUPPORTING WORKERS TO *Quit Smoking*

**It's never too late to quit. Quitting smoking is the best thing you can do to improve and protect your health.**

Supporting workers to quit smoking is one of the most effective actions a workplace can take to improve worker's health.

There are plenty of benefits for the individual as well as the business. When you quit smoking you reduce the risk of life-threatening health problems, including cancer and heart disease. Businesses may also experience reduced costs, increased productivity and a healthy, positive image for their workplace.

While at first it might seem that many smokers aren't interested, research shows that most smokers want to be non-smokers.

#### **An overwhelming majority of smokers want to quit.**

Over a one year period, about 75% of smokers will try to change their smoking behaviour by making either a quit attempt or reducing the amount they smoke.<sup>1</sup>

## Quit Smoking Support Strategies

### 1. NSW Quitline 13 7848 (13 QUIT)

NSW Quitline is a free, confidential and individually tailored telephone service to assist smokers in the process of quitting smoking. Quitline advisors have specialist training to support smokers with preparing to quit, avoiding slip-ups and staying quit.

Callers to the NSW Quitline can receive a free 'Quit Kit', talk to an advisor or choose to join the free call-back service. Quitline services and resources are available in Arabic, Vietnamese and Chinese (Cantonese/Mandarin).

The NSW Aboriginal Quitline provides culturally sensitive support to assist smokers to quit.

For online support visit [icanquit.com.au](http://icanquit.com.au). You can request a call, and find ideas and forums to help you quit.

Your workplace can support workers to quit smoking by allowing them to call Quitline (or arrange to be contacted by Quitline) during work hours.

### 2. Provide information and self-help materials

Support workers to quit smoking by providing them with information on the health benefits of quitting, smoking cessation services, quitting methods, understanding triggers and preventing relapse.

Provide workers with this information by:

- Displaying posters and factsheets on message boards and in common areas (Download a resource order form from [www.icanquit.com.au](http://www.icanquit.com.au)).
- Include articles on quitting smoking in your staff newsletters and staff emails.
- Order 'Quit Kits' from NSW Quitline (Call 13 7848 or visit [www.icanquit.com.au](http://www.icanquit.com.au)) and distribute to workers who want to quit smoking.
- Refer workers to local smoking cessation support services, telephone counselling and support groups.
- If needed, download resources from the Multicultural Communications website.

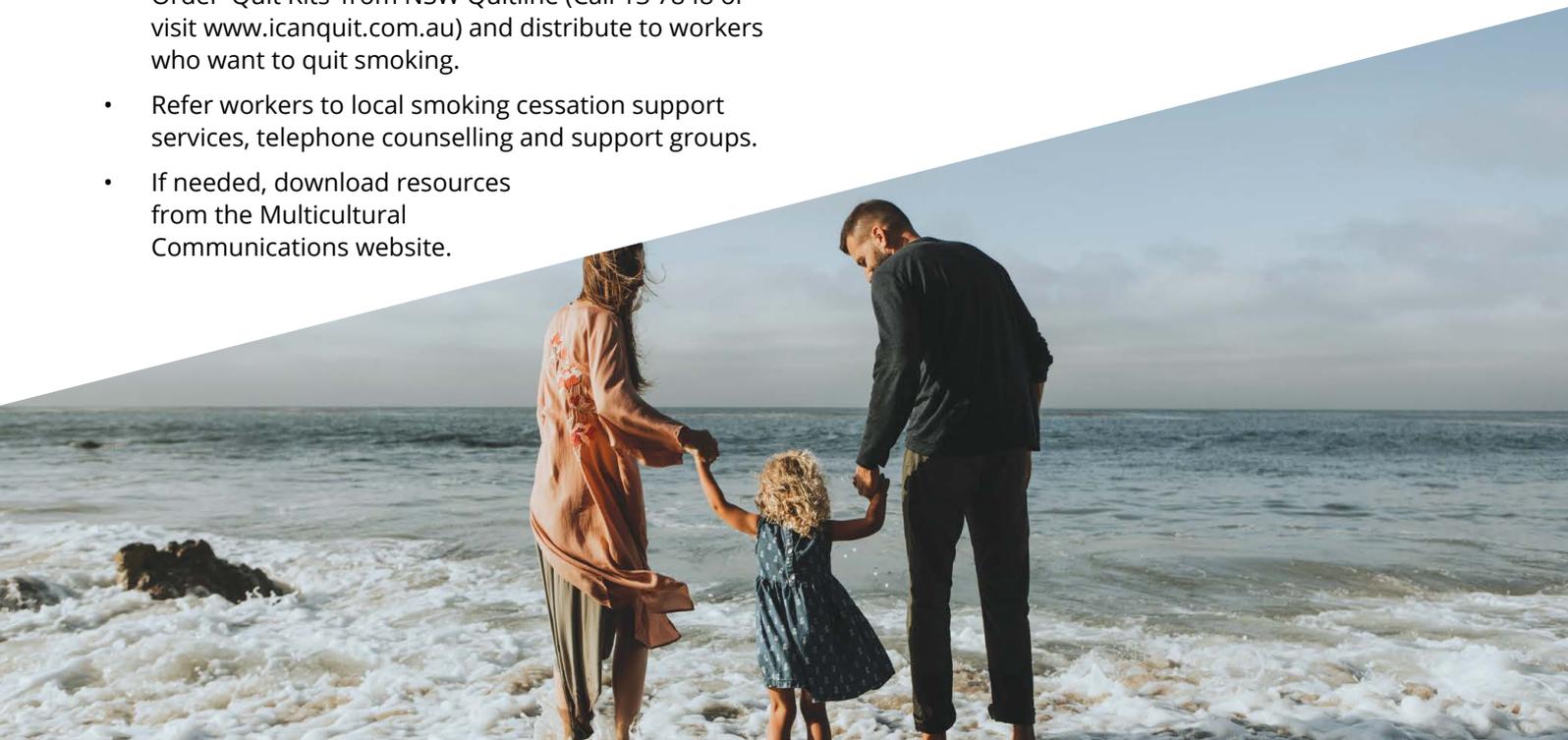
### 3. Nicotine Replacement Therapy

Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT) is a safe and effective way to quit smoking. NRT has a measured amount of nicotine to help wean smokers off their addiction and reduce nicotine withdrawal symptoms and cravings. Research indicates that NRT can increase the chances of quitting smoking by 50 – 70% compared to unassisted quitting<sup>2</sup>.

A range of NRT products are available including patches, gum, lozenges, mouth spray, oral strips, and inhalers.

NRT is available over the counter and some NRT patches are available at a cheaper price on prescription through the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS). Visit the PBS website or call the PBS Information Line on **1800 020 613** for more details.

NRT can have side-effects and may not be suitable for everyone. It is important that smokers discuss their NRT requirements with their doctor or pharmacist. Support workers to do this by allowing flexible working arrangements or time off for appointments.



### 4. Non-nicotine medication

There are currently two non-nicotine medications available in Australia to help people stop smoking:

- Zyban®: An oral prescription drug to reduce cravings and other withdrawal symptoms.
- Champix®: An oral prescription drug that reduces withdrawal symptoms and reduces the satisfying effects of smoking.

Smokers should always talk to their doctor about the appropriateness of these medications. They are not suitable for all smokers and some have serious side-effects.

Provide flexible working arrangements to encourage workers to speak to their doctor to help decide which product is best for them.

### 5. Smoking cessation interventions and workplace training

Smoking cessation interventions and workplace training to help workers quit smoking is available in NSW.

The service can be tailored to meet your organisation's requirements. Services include:

- Smoking policy advice
- Seminars on quitting smoking
- Support quit groups
- Advice and counselling on quitting smoking
- Smoking cessation training
- Attendance at workshops and health fairs.

Providing training on Health and Wellbeing or Occupational Health & Safety in Smoking Cessation Skills or Group Behaviour Therapy can also be helpful.



## 6. Websites and smartphone apps

Provide workers with links to a number of websites and mobile applications for information and support.

**iCanQuit.com.au:** an online support community providing resources, discussion forums and stories from people who have successfully quit smoking. Online 'Quit Kits' can also be downloaded for free.

**Quit Coach:** free online tool developed to assist smokers to quit and stay smoke free. By answering questions about smoking habits and lifestyle, QuitCoach will provide useful ideas and suggestions.

Visit [www.quitcoach.org.au](http://www.quitcoach.org.au).

**My QuitBuddy app:** a free, personalised app to help quit smoking. Smokers can set their own goals, record their reasons for quitting, and include photos and recordings of loved ones.

Participants receive motivational tips, share success stories, celebrate milestones and can use the quit savings calculator to see how much money they have saved. My QuitBuddy is available for download on Apple, Windows and Android smart phones.

More information is available at [www.quitnow.gov.au/internet/quitnow/publishing.nsf/Content/quit-buddy](http://www.quitnow.gov.au/internet/quitnow/publishing.nsf/Content/quit-buddy).

## Quitting smoking is the best thing you will ever do for your health.

- **In 12 hours** – excess carbon monoxide is out of your blood, your heart rate slows and your blood pressure becomes more stable
- **In 5 days** – most nicotine is out of your body
- **In 1 week** – your sense of taste and smell improves
- **In 12 weeks** – your lungs regain the ability to clean themselves
- **In 3 months** – your lung function begins to improve
- **In 1 year** – a pack-a-day smoker will save around \$10,000<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. National Drug Strategy Household Survey detailed report: 2013. Tobacco chapter. Online data tables. Table 3.14: Changes to smoking behaviour, smoker(s) aged 14 years or older, by sex, 2007 to 2013 2014. Available from <http://aihw.gov.au/WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=60129549644>.

<sup>2</sup> Stead LF, Perera R, Bullen C, Mant D, Hartmann-Boyce J, Cahill K, Lancaster T. Nicotine replacement therapy for smoking cessation. Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews 2012, Issue 11. Art. No.: CD000146. DOI: 10.1002/14651858.CD000146.pub4.

<sup>3</sup> Quit Victoria. The Health Benefits of Quitting Smoking. Accessed 28 May 2019. <https://www.quit.org.au/articles/the-health-benefits-of-quitting-smoking/>