



Tasmanian Youth Smoking: ASSAD 2002 Key Findings Fact Sheet

In mid 2002, The Cancer Council Tasmania (TCCT) coordinated the Tasmanian component of the national Australian Secondary Schools Alcohol & Drug Survey (ASSAD). A total of 1,796 students took part, in the 12–17 year age category, across 28 government, catholic and independent schools statewide. The Cancer Council has conducted surveys to determine the smoking behaviours of Tasmanian students every three years since 1996, with previous years survey data going back to 1984. The Survey was funded by TCCT with support from the Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS)

The Survey Report details the smoking habits of students aged from 12 to 17 years old, showing:

- the number of students who have **ever tried** smoking
- the number of students who have **never tried** smoking
- the number of students who have **smoked more than 100 cigarettes**
- the number of students who have **smoked in the past year**
- the number of students who have **smoked in the past month**
- the proportion of students who are classified as '**current**' smokers (have smoked in the last week)
- the proportion of students who are **committed smokers**, that is, those who have smoked for three or more days in the last week.

How much do Tasmanian students smoke each week?

Based on Survey results, it is estimated that every week in Tasmania, around 6,300 young Tasmanians aged 12-17 years old smoke approximately 213,500 cigarettes.

General Trends in Smoking Behaviour:-

- Smoking prevalence among students aged 12-17 has overall generally declined since 1984 for both boys and girls.
- There was a significant decline between 1999 and 2002 of the proportion of boys and girls aged 12-15 years who smoked cigarettes during the 12 months and four weeks prior to the survey.
- 22% of students had smoked during the four weeks prior to the survey, with slightly more girls (24%) having smoked during this period compared with boys (19.5%).
- The proportion of 'current smokers' increased steadily from the age of 12 to 16 years, and reduced slightly from the age of 16 to 17 years.

Major Statistical changes in Smoking Behaviour:-

- In 2002, 19% of 16-17 year old boys reported smoking during the week prior to the Survey (classified as current smokers) compared to 30% in 1999.
- There is a steady decrease with age for those students reporting to have never tried smoking, starting from 61% at 12 years, dropping dramatically to 41% at 15 and 37% at 17 years old.

- The 2002 results showed the smallest prevalence of male smokers ever recorded in the surveys, dropping to 19% in 2002 from a peak of 33% in 1993.
- In 2002 17% of all students had smoked cigarettes in the week prior to the survey (classified as current smokers). 20% of girls as opposed to 15% of boys reported being a current smoker.
- The average number of cigarettes consumed by **16-17 year old** current female smokers in a week” increased dramatically from an average of 29 cigarettes in 1999 to 42 cigarettes in 2002.

For further information or copies of the Survey Report:

www.cancertas.org.au and click on the *Health Promotion* tab

or contact:

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