

## Media Release

# POOF! Quit for Life

For immediate release, November 1 2006

Gay Men's Health, a program of  
the AIDS Council of South Australia Inc.

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# POOF! Quit for Life

Tobacco smoking is the single biggest cause of premature death, disease and disability in Australia.

Every year, about 19,000 Australians die from diseases caused by smoking. \*

And smoking, more than anything else, contributes to the gap in healthy life expectancy between those who are most advantaged and those who are most in need.

Because of this strong link between smoking and poorer health, *Gay Men's Health* has been funded to commence Phase 2 of the *Gay Men and Tobacco Project*. The project raises awareness of the harms of smoking, and offers information and support around quitting through *Quit for Life* courses aimed at gay and same sex attracted men.

So just how common is smoking among gay men?

Key findings from initial research by the Department of Public Health at the University of Adelaide include:

- smoking is taken up unrelated to gay sexuality (like the general population), but is reinforced and continues in order to cope with the stresses of being marginalised because of gay sexuality;

- risk-taking is prevalent among gay men and the social environment in gay culture relies on smoking as a means of belonging to a 'scene' or community;

- gay men often see mainstream health messages as being irrelevant because they focus on long-term health effects, long-term benefits of quitting and use traditional family imagery. Gay men in the study's focus groups preferred strategies to focus on sexual identity and attractiveness, social environment, improved sexual performance and gay-specific support services.

It isn't easy to quit smoking and often people trying to quit make several attempts.

The first Gay Men's *Quit for Life* course will take place at Darling House, 64 Fullarton Road, Norwood, on two consecutive Wednesday evenings:

Session one: 6 – 8 PM Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> November

Session two: 6 – 8 PM Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> December

The course will offer a range of strategies to deal with the challenges of quitting smoking.

Plus, the course is **FREE**.

If you have queries about the gay men's *Quit for Life* courses, please call Llew Jones at *Gay Men's Health* on Wednesday, Thursday or Friday on (08) 8334 1632 or email [llew.jones@acsa.org.au](mailto:llew.jones@acsa.org.au)

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If you are interested in attending a gay men's Quit for Life course but you cannot make these times and dates, there is a waiting list where you can leave your name and contact details. Courses will be run regularly at a range of times until June next year. Other types of sessions can be arranged to meet specific needs such as community groups wanting a short info session on smoking issues.

Support will also be offered to workers in the HIV and gay community sectors.

Catch the *Gay Men's Health* POOF! float during PRIDE on Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> November from 6.30pm.

For assistance with quitting smoking, call the Quitline on 13 QUIT (13 7848) and mention the Gay Men and Tobacco project.

*The Gay Men and Tobacco project is funded by the Government of South Australia through Drug and Alcohol Services SA, Southern Adelaide Health Service.*

\* Ridolpho B, & Stevenson C (2001). The quantification of drug caused morbidity and mortality in Australia, 1998. Canberra: Australian Institute for Health and Welfare.

Ends.