

Tobacco Smoking in Australia, 2007-08

Smoking is a significant risk factor for chronic disease. It is important to monitor rates of smoking in the population to identify high risk groups, and recognise patterns in smoking behaviour.

Trends over time

- ◆ Rates of smoking in Australia are steadily decreasing over time.

Smoker status by sex, 1989-90 and 2007-08

Current smoker	Male	Female	Total
1989-90	31%	24%	28%
2007-08	23%	19%	21%

Never regularly smoked	Male	Female	Total
1989-90	38%	58%	48%
2007-08	47%	58%	53%

Source: National Health Surveys, 1989-90 and 2007-08

- ◆ Young people were less likely to smoke in 2007-08 than in 1989-90, with a drop from 36% to 24% in rates of current smoking for men aged 18-24 years, and a drop from 36% to 22% for women of the same age.

In 2007-08...

Smoker status by sex, 2007-08

Smoker status	Male	Female	Total
Current daily smoker	21%	17%	19%
Irregular smoker	2%	2%	2%
Ex-smoker	34%	25%	30%
Never smoked	43%	56%	49%

Source: National Health Survey, 2007-08

About the information...

The article draws on data from the 2007-08, 2004-05, 2001, 1995 and 1989-90 ABS National Health Surveys (NHS). Data are also taken from the 2008 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Surveys (NATSISS) and the 2004-05 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey (NATSIHS). The analysis is for people aged 18 years and over, unless stated otherwise.

Current smokers are those who reported smoking cigarettes, cigars or pipes at the time of interview. Current daily smokers are those who reported regularly smoking one or more cigarettes, cigars or pipes per day.

Ex-smokers are those who reported they had smoked at least 100 cigarettes, or smoked cigars or pipes at least 20 times in their lifetime, but did not currently smoke. Prior to 2004-05, ex-smokers were those who had previously smoked regularly but were not current smokers. The definition of 'regularly' was left up to the respondent.

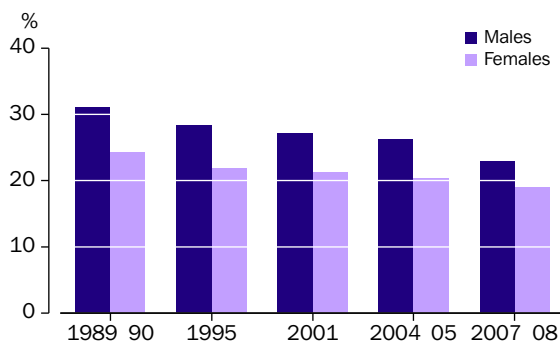
Time series data are age-standardised to the 2001 estimated resident population (ERP).

- ◆ Around a third of all current smokers reported their smoking had decreased in the past 12 months (30% of men and 34% of women), while just over half said their smoking habits were unchanged.
- ◆ Younger smokers were the most likely to have increased the amount they smoked in the past year, (23% of 18-24 year olds compared with an average of 15% of all smokers).

Location

- ◆ People living in outer regional and remote areas were more likely to be daily smokers than people living in inner regional areas and major cities (26% and 18% respectively). They were also less likely to have never smoked (41% compared with 50%).

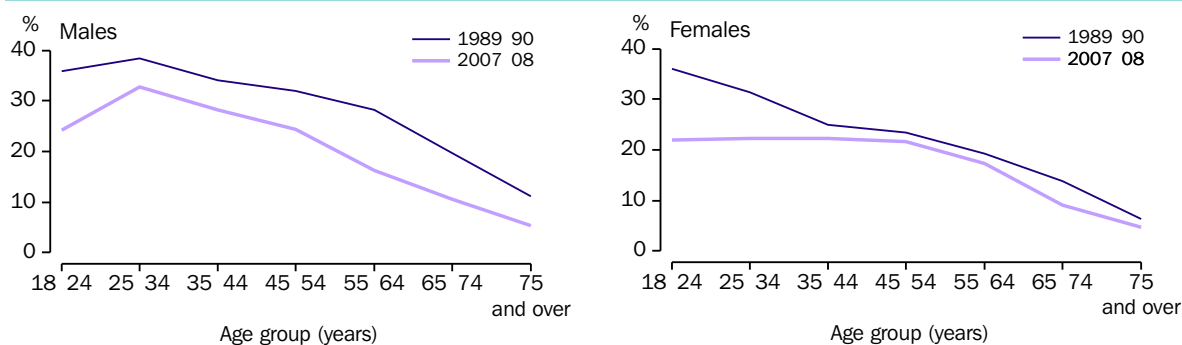
Current smokers over time, Australia(a)



(a) Persons aged 18 years and over. Includes current daily, weekly and other current smokers.

Source: ABS National Health Surveys, 1989-90, 1995, 2001, 2004-05, and 2007-08.

Rates of smoking, 1989-90 and 2007-08(a)



(a) Persons aged 18 years and over. Includes current daily, weekly and other current smokers.

Source: ABS National Health Surveys 1995 and 2007-08.

Socio-economic status

- ◆ After adjusting for differences in age structure, people living in areas of most disadvantage were much more likely to be daily smokers (33% of men and 26% of women), compared with those in areas of least disadvantage (12% and 11% respectively).

Occupation

- ◆ Labourers, trade workers, technicians, drivers and machinery operators were the most likely to smoke daily (29%), compared with people in the following occupations:
 - Service, clerical and sales workers (18%).
 - Managers and professionals (13%).
 - Health professionals and health care workers (12%).

Mental health

- ◆ People with high/very high levels of psychological distress (31%) were more likely to be daily smokers than people with moderate (22%) or low levels of distress (16%). They were also more

likely to have smoked at some time in their lives (63% compared with 54% and 47%).

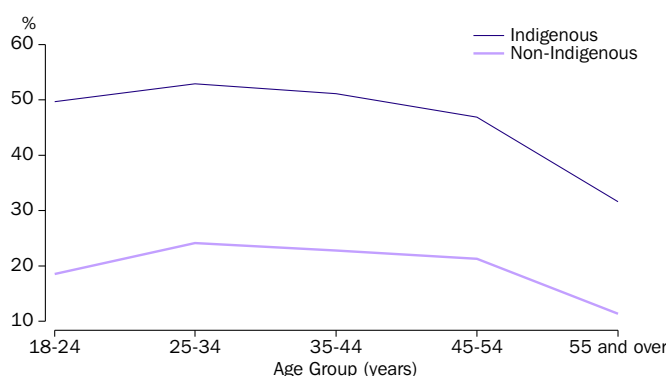
Adolescents

- ◆ More than 58,000 adolescents (aged 15 to 17 years) said that they were current smokers (7%), and more than 30,000 said they were ex-smokers (4%).
- ◆ Adolescent boys (9%) were almost twice as likely to be current smokers as adolescent girls (5%).

Indigenous Australians

- ◆ In 2008, almost half of Indigenous Australians aged 18 years and over were daily smokers (45%).
- ◆ After adjusting for differences in age structure, Indigenous Australians were still more than twice as likely to be daily smokers as non-Indigenous Australians (45% compared with 19%).
- ◆ Over half the Indigenous people living in very remote areas were daily smokers (53%) compared with those in cities and other non-remote areas (46%).

Daily smoking by Indigenous status and age, 2007-08(a)



(a) Persons aged 18 years and over.

Source: ABS National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey 2008 and ABS National Health Survey 2007-08.