

# Campaign hopes to end maori smoking cycle

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**A government-funded trust says early results from its latest initiative give it hope it will finally break the cycle of Maori smoking.**

The Quit Group, set up to help New Zealanders quit smoking, is particularly focused on reducing the number of Maori smokers and launched a text based campaign in June in which smokers received personalised messages to help them quit.

Despite a number of previous Quit Group campaigns, Maori still have the highest smoking prevalence rate in the country.

Auckland Tobacco Control Research Centre director Marewa Glover thinks the new text option will appeal to young urban Maori.

"It will be especially attractive for young people because it is so accessible to them.

"They already text on a day to day basis and it is one of the main ways they communicate.

"It also requires less from them in terms of travel and talking to people and it is less invasive.

"The fact that it is one step removed may also appeal as some people are uncomfortable with face to face contact, meeting a counsellor or ringing up and having to talk to someone."

More than 400 people have already signed up for the service with younger clients using it more than other quitting aids.

Dr Glover said it was important to keep the focus on Maori.

"We're fighting against a historical situation.

"Maori women started smoking with the men in the 1700s so Maori have been smoking for a very long time."

Dr Glover said the situation today was that often both parents smoked in front of their children making the children twice as likely to take up smoking.

She said Maori women of child bearing age need to be targeted the most.

"We need them to stop smoking early on so they are not addicted before they get pregnant.

"It is shocking that the Maori smoking rate among women and pregnant women is so bad -- we need to do more."

"I'm hopeful this initiative will appeal to people where other campaigns have not."

NZPA