



Makara patapa / quit smoking

Podcast transcript

Introduction

The makara patapa program is a TAC initiative, as part of our holistic approach to health and wellbeing, supported by the Department of Health Tasmania.

Episode 3: Scott Wells

Introduction:

Ya everyone. Nunami here, in 2022, I was asked to travel across Lutruwita and record our community stories of quitting smoking.

I heard so many great success stories of our people who managed to quit and got a good picture of why our people chose to quit, how they did it, and what supports they were able to access along the way.

This is the makara patapa podcast.

Scott:

Scott wells. Palawa man. Trawoolway. That's pretty much how I go, How I run with it.

Other than that, all the other labels don't matter. I've got too many other labels to be just one label, like artists, boiler maker, welder, tattooist, teacher, child carer, health worker. I've got lots of labels, yeah, and I just. It sort of feels weird being just like pinned on one.

Nunami:

Do you remember when you started smoking? How old were you and why Did you start?

Scott:

It was kind of funny. My sister pitched some cigarettes out of dad's packet, and I found her out the back and she's got this, a couple of Marlboro cigarettes there and she's smoking one.

Coughing her little heart out and going 'go on you try, you try'. 'Cause like I'm laughing at her and thinking you know, you idiot, you are coughing. What are you doing with Dad's smokes?

And so, she's like go on, have a go so I thought OK, I'll have a crack at it. So, I've had a puff on it. And it made me feel really sick, didn't make me feel really good at all. We got away with it, kept on nicking the odd smoke out of Dad's pack. And going away and trying it because it was like this, this thing, I wanted to get used to it. I didn't want it to hurt me anymore. So, it was like the challenge of seeing if it didn't hurt me anymore.

And eventually when I got used to it, it was then a little bit hard to stop.

I mean, when I when I started smoking, you could get cigarettes for like a dollar a packet. Some of them you could get for under a dollar. Like a little pack of Albany I think was like \$0.96 or a



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pack of a pack of Peter Jackson was about three bucks and the packet of rolyly Tobacco for under 10 bucks easy.

So, I used to smoke rollies because all the guys at work where I worked, they all smoked rollies. I started when I was about 14/15, but I wasn't really seriously into it. But by the time I got to about 20 I started again and that's when I started smoking the rollies when I was working.

I suppose probably till about 30 or 35 I would have been and everyone around me sort of smoked, so the access to them was pretty easy and they were pretty cheap. It was a lot about.

Nunami:

What made you wanna quit smoking?

Scott:

Well, that's an interesting one.

My grandfather, he got lung cancer and I can remember sitting in hospital with him and he said to me "I want you to stop smoking". I'm like 'Ok' and he's like, "no, I'm serious. You gotta promise me you're going to stop smoking. It's killed me and I don't want to kill you". And I was like, wow, OK, fair enough. It was a really hard thing to do.

But at the same time, cigarettes become much more expensive. They'd gone up to like about over \$10 for a packet of rolyly tobacco or something. I can remember saying then if I have to pay more than this for a packet of cigarettes, I don't think I can.

I'm paying too much money to kill myself. Yeah, I just decided to stop, so just stop buying them. It was not so much I'm going to stop smoking but I'm going to stop buying them.

I did find myself, you know, like hitting up a few mates every now and again and smoking some of their tailor makes because I was hanging in the you know, the nicotine withdrawal and everything.

But that went away after a few days and it wasn't so bad. But I was pretty occupied with playing sport, working so, you know, had a lot to take my mind off it.

But I think the main reason was yep, about what my grandfather asked me to do and also because I was a cheap bugger and did not pay too much money for them. That was the first time I seriously tried. I just went okay I'm not going to do it and just stopped. can't do it and just stopped.

Nunami:

And how long have you been not smoking cigarettes for now?

Scott:

Yeah, over 20 years, yeah. Did I notice a difference? It was like, yeah, obviously I can breathe a lot better. There's other benefits, I suppose. You know you don't smell like an ashtray. Save a lot of money, 'cause my wife still smokes and I see how much she pays for smokes.

And it's like, like. Wow, nearly 100 bucks for packet of rollies. So, you know, compared to when I sort of stopped and the price they are now, it's like wow, so it's gotta be a good thing in that



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sense but it's also a bad thing - charging people so much for something. But then, yeah, they can give them up.

I sort of look at it like, it's me. I don't need to have that person there stop as well; you know? And do I stop visiting my friends because they're smoking? I didn't worry about that.

I was just more hung up on - I'm not paying that much money for a packet of cigarettes, just it just didn't make sense to me when I coupled that with the knowing like, yes, you're killing yourself.

It is a poison.

Nunami Outro:

Ya Everyone, Nunami again - thanks for listening to the makara patapa podcast. A podcast series by the Tasmanian Aboriginal Center with support from public Health Services Tasmania.