

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

Budget Estimates 2012-2013, 30 & 31 May and 1 June 2012

Question: E12-059

OUTCOME 1: Population Health

Topic: Smoking Statistics

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Senator: Senator Fierravanti-Wells

Question:

How many people smoke? (Queries in relation to ABS numbers/ ANPHA numbers.)

Answer:

There are two national population surveys that measure smoking prevalence in Australia. The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) conducts the National Drug Strategy Household Survey (NDSHS) approximately every three years, and the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) conducts the National Health Survey approximately every five years.

The most recently published NDSHS was conducted between late April and early September 2010 and more than 26,000 people aged 12 years and older participated in the survey.

The most recently published National Health Survey was conducted in 2007-08, and interviewed approximately 20,800 people across all age groups [in each dwelling selected for this survey, one adult (aged 18 years or older) and one child (aged less than 18 years) was randomly selected].

The 2010 NDSHS reports that the proportion of people aged 14 years or older who smoke daily is 15.1per cent (approximately 2.8 million people). This continued the downward trend that began in 1995, and represents a reduction from the daily smoking rate of 16.6per cent of the population (approximately 2.9 million people) aged 14 years and older in 2007.

The 2010 NDSHS reports that the number of smokers aged 14 years and older (including people who smoke but not necessarily every day) has remained stable between 2007 and 2010 at about 3.3 million, primarily due to Australia's increasing population.

The smoking prevalence cited on the Australian National Prevention Health Agency's website (15.9per cent) is from the 2010 NDSHS, and is for daily smokers aged 18 years and older (approximately 2.7 million people).

The ABS's 2007-08 National Health Survey found the daily smoking rate among people aged 18 years and older was 19per cent (approximately 3 million people).