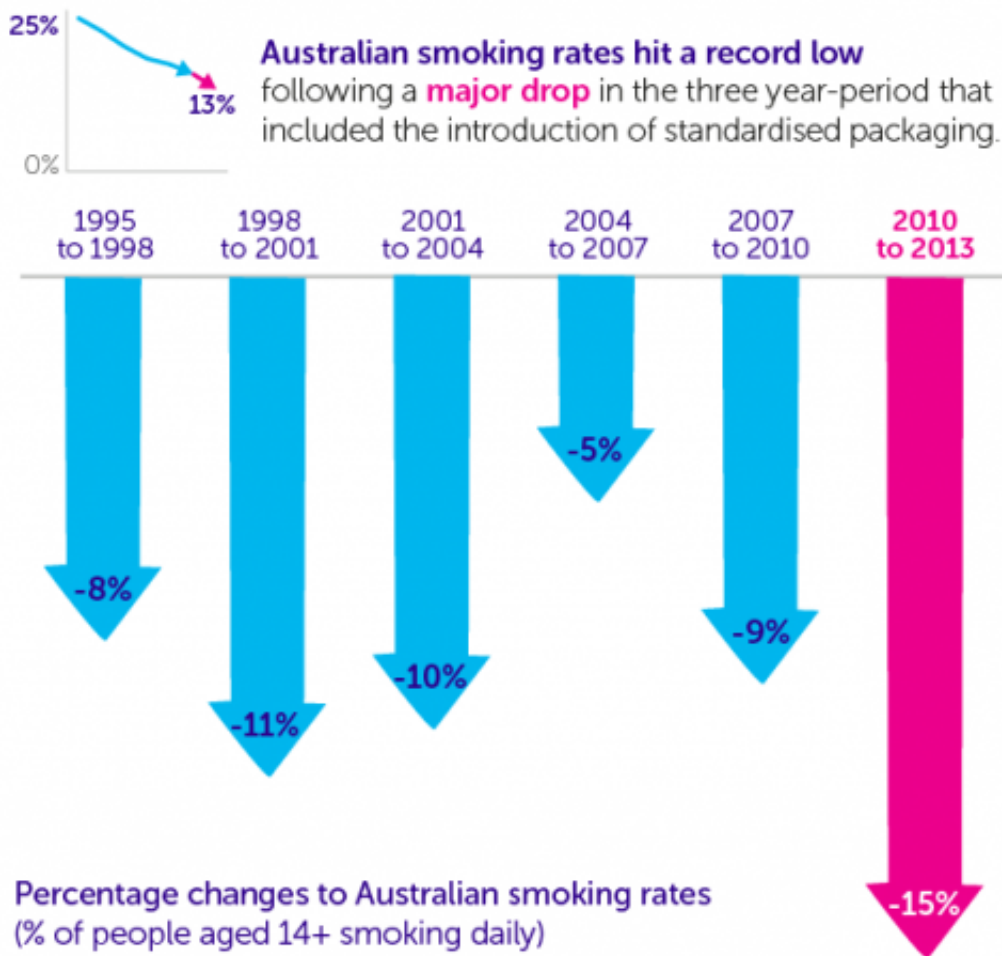


Major drop in Australian smoking rates

July 18 2014

Success of tobacco control in Australia



Smoking rates in Australia have fallen 15 per cent over a three-year

period that included the introduction of standardised packaging laws for tobacco products.

In 2011, Australia became the first country in the world to make it illegal to sell [tobacco products](#) in anything but standardised packets, when it passed the Tobacco Plain Packaging Act.

Figures from governmental body the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) for 2010 to 2013 show that the number of daily smokers aged 14 or older dropped from 15.1 per cent to 12.8% - an absolute fall of 2.3 per cent and a relative drop of 15 per cent.

AIHW spokesman Geoff Neideck also said there was a fall in the average number of cigarettes smoked per week, from 111 cigarettes in 2010 to 96 cigarettes in 2013.

Alison Cox, Cancer Research UK's head of tobacco policy, said: "It's great to see that measures aimed at reducing the harm caused by tobacco, including standardised packaging, are having such a dramatic impact to reduce the numbers of smokers in Australia. The record drop in [smoking rates](#) demonstrates that governments who follow evidence-based policy can make a real difference to public health.

"In the UK, smoking rates are going down but we've still a long way to go. Half of all long-term users will die from smoking and reducing the number of young people who start smoking must remain a focus in the UK.

"Standardised packaging is key to protecting children from tobacco marketing, and it would be a great health legacy for this parliament to make it a reality without delay."



Standard packs have been introduced in Australia

The study of 24,000 people across Australia also found that:

- The age at which 14 to 24-year-olds smoked their first full cigarette rose from 14.2 to 15.9.
- The proportion of 18 to 24-year-olds who had never smoked rose from 72% to 77%.

Deborah Arnott, chief executive of health charity ASH said: "The UK government is currently consulting on standardised packaging before deciding whether to proceed and has asked for new and emerging evidence. Well here it is and it demonstrates a massive decline in [smoking](#) prevalence in Australia following introduction of standardised [packaging](#). This is exactly the strong and convincing evidence the tobacco industry said was needed."

ASH also pointed out that the drop had nothing to do with a dramatic hike in [tobacco](#) tax levelled by the Australian government, as this

occurred in December of 2013 - after the survey was conducted.

Provided by Cancer Research UK

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