



# Indigenous smoking double the average

**INDIGENOUS** smoking rates are more than double the national average, a new study has found.

The study shows that while smoking rates had fallen among the general population since the 1970s, they had remained the same for indigenous people.

Report co-author Dr David Thomas, from the Menzies School of Health Research, said about half of all indigenous people smoked and social disadvantage was the major factor.

"The poorest and most socially-disadvantaged indigenous people were those most likely to smoke, when compared with other indigenous people," he told ABC Radio.

Little had been done to spread anti-smoking messages among

indigenous communities, he said.

"Some of the things that we know have worked in the rest of the Australian population ... like smokefree areas ... haven't spread as widely into indigenous communities."

Manager of The Centre for Excellence in Indigenous Tobacco Control in Melbourne, Viki Briggs said the report highlighted the need for anti-smoking campaigns that target indigenous people.

"We need an indigenous tobacco control campaign that's run across the country," Ms Briggs said yesterday.

"Everybody needs to come on board to address this really serious issue."