Positive stories to help develop drug and alcohol prevention program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are being asked to share their stories as part of a new project to develop a culturally inclusive school-based drug and alcohol prevention program.

The Australian Government Department of Health has funded the Centre of Research Excellence in Mental Health and Substance Use (CREMS) to develop the program based on their successful Climate Schools health education courses, which are proven to reduce harm and improve student well-being.

Dr Mieke Snijder said the prevention of adolescent substance use has been identified as a key priority in improving the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal people.

“We’re working with Indigenous design agency Gilimbaa to create illustrations for the program that follow a group of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal friends aged 13 (year seven), as they transition into their teenage years,” Dr Snijder said.

“To inform the storylines in the program we are travelling around the country to consult with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth and hear about everyday lived experiences in their communities.”

Young people can also participate online by entering the Positive Choices Story-Telling Competition.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth aged 12-14 are invited to share a written story, video, speech or song about a time when they made a positive choice.

“We hope the competition will allow Indigenous youth around Australia to contribute to the program by sharing their own stories about people they look up to, why they choose not to drink or smoke, or what they love about their community,” Dr Snijder said.

The competition closes on 30 March 2018 and the winner will receive a MacBook Air.

In September 2017, CREMS launched an extension to their popular Positive Choices portal with resources specifically for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, their teachers and parents.

Both the Positive Choices Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander portal and school-based prevention program are funded by the Australian Government Department of Health.

For more information or to enter the Positive Choices Story-Telling Competition please visit the Positive Choices website.

Media contacts:
Morgaine Wallace-Steele: (02) 9385 0124 | 0432894776 | m.wallace-steele@unsw.edu.au
Marion Downey: (02) 9385 0180 | 0401 713 850 | m.downey@unsw.edu.au