



14 May 2009

Members  
Health Select Committee

## **Inquiry into creating a smoke-free generation of young New Zealanders by 2020**

The Health Committee has been asked to conduct an inquiry into “creating a smoke-free generation of young New Zealanders by 2020”. This paper has been prepared to assist the Committee with its examination. Issues are identified and possible lines of inquiry are provided for the committee to consider. The Committee may also wish to raise these matters with the witnesses who have been asked to appear before the Committee to give evidence on this inquiry.

### **Smoke free practice**

Young people in New Zealand are leading the way towards being smoke-free. The 87% youth (14-15 years) smoke-free rate significantly exceeds the 80% adult smoke-free rate (Ministry of Health 2006a; Paynter 2008). These rates have been calculated based on not smoking monthly or more frequently. The New Zealand Youth 2000 and Youth’07 studies (Adolescent Health Research Group 2003, 2008) of over 8,000 secondary students identified that 92% were smoke-free and only 8% of students reported smoking cigarettes weekly or more often in 2007 compared to 16% in 2001. Fewer students had ever tried smoking cigarettes - down from 52% in 2001 to 32% in 2007.

The 2006/07 New Zealand Health Survey found that 22% of young men and 23% of young women age 15 to 24 identified as current smokers. Smoking rates differ by gender and ethnicity as show in Figure 1.

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**Figure 1. Ethnicity and youth (14-15 years) smoke-free rates (1) in 2008**

	Females	Males
European	90%	92%
Maori	78%	82%
Pasifika	84%	88%

(1) not smoking monthly or more frequently  
(Paynter 2009)

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## **Benefits of being smoke free**

Non-smokers live on average 15 years longer than long-term smokers (The Quit Group and the Ministry of Health 2009). With the tangible health impacts of smoking estimated at \$1.7 billion per annum and 5,000 New Zealanders dying from smoking related causes every year there is much to celebrate when young people are smoke-free. There is a significant productivity gain when more people are smoke-free (Health Sponsorship Council 2009). Those who are smoke-free take less breaks and less sick leave than smokers (McGuire 2010). Half of all long-term smokers will die from a smoking-related disease (The Quit Group & Ministry of Health 2009).

## **Starting smoking, starting being smoke-free**

There is good reason to focus resources on young people to create a smoke-free country as most New Zealanders start smoking before they are fourteen and a half years (Ministry of Health. 2006a). For Maori the average age of smoking initiation is 11.6 years contributing to a difference in life expectancy and other health indicators. Almost all New Zealanders who smoke, start smoking and become addicted before they are 18 years old, before the legal age to purchase cigarettes in New Zealand. Very few people start smoking as a mature adult. This means if young people negotiate adolescence smoke-free they are likely to stay smoke-free.

Being around others who smoke is a significant influence on initiation of smoking. The New Zealand Youth Tobacco Monitor (Health Sponsorship Council 2009) found that for those aged 14-15 years who smoked 44.7% had other close friends who smoked, and 26.0% of their mothers and 26.3% of their fathers smoked. Also 'current smokers' usually got their cigarettes from friends (59.8%) or from someone else who bought them (45.7%). Buying cigarettes themselves came a distant third at 29.8 %, highlighting issues associated with the social supply of tobacco. The Monitor found close to half of 'current smokers' (47.0%) reported they wanted to stop smoking at the time of the survey. It takes the average person 14 quit attempts before they successfully quit. This is largely because the nicotine in cigarettes is highly addictive.

## **A brief history of tobacco control in New Zealand**

Since 1963 efforts to control the supply, reduce the demand and limit the problems associated with tobacco have increased. This is highlighted in Figure 2. Moves to tighten promotion of and access to tobacco have followed increased understanding of the health effects of tobacco. In 1988 the sale of tobacco to those under 16 years was banned and in 1997 the age was increased to 18. As part of the Smoke-free Environments Act advertising was banned and many areas were made smoke-free.

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### **Figure 2. Timeline of Tobacco control in New Zealand**

1948	First Department of Health posters linking lung cancer with smoking
1963	Cigarette advertising banned on NZ television and radio.
1973	Industry agrees to ban billboard and cinema screen cigarette ads.
1974	First health warning on cigarette packets.
1988	Toxic Substances Act bans sale of tobacco products to under 16s.
1990	Parliament passes Smoke-free Environments Bill into law, (1) restricting smoking in offices, the public parts of workplaces, and in public and eating places and transport; (2) banning advertising of tobacco products, tobacco sponsorship, and tobacco advertising on other goods and establishing a Health Sponsorship Council.

1993	Parliament, in a rare all-party consensus, agrees to end tobacco sponsorship in 1995.
1995	All tobacco sponsorships to end and sponsorship signs to come down.
1995	Tax on loose tobacco raised by 39 %.
1996	Media campaign targeted at youth begins.
1997	The Smoke-free Environments Amendment Bill no. 2 is passed. Includes ban on sales of tobacco products to anyone under 18 years of age and require retailers to take all reasonable steps to check age.
2000	From 1 January all cigarette packs had to have new health warnings.
2003	Smoke-free Environments Act 1990 amended to ban smoking in virtually all workplaces including clubs, bars, casinos, restaurants, factories.
2010	On 28 April 2010 legislation was passed with an immediate 24 percent increase on the excise rate loose-leaf tobacco and 10 percent for factory made cigarettes. The tobacco excise tax will rise again by a further 10 percent on 1 January 2011 and again on 1 January 2012.

(adapted from: <http://www.healthnz.co.nz/smochronol.htm>)

## How to create a smoke-free New Zealand

In 2007 the Smokefree Coalition of 30 agencies commenced work on defining a vision for a tobacco free New Zealand. The initial steps taken were later reviewed by a group of 35 tobacco control experts, academics and health promoters. In early 2010 *Tobacco Free New Zealand 2020: Tupeka Kore Aotearoa 2020* was launched by the Coalition. Figure 3 highlights the key actions in the strategy which are grouped under three objectives.

**Figure 3. Except from: *Tobacco Free New Zealand 2020***

### **Protecting children from exposure to tobacco**

Children will be protected from exposure to smoking and the promotion of tobacco products. This will be achieved using the following policies:

- Tobacco retail displays will be banned.
- Plain packaging and graphic warnings will replace brand imagery.
- All locations where young people are present will be smoke-free.
- Parents and caregivers will be empowered to be smoke-free to protect their children from becoming smokers.
- The tactics and activities of the tobacco industry will be exposed.

### **Reducing the demand and supply of tobacco products**

Tobacco products will be restricted and controlled in line with the harm they cause. This will be achieved using the following policies:

- Tobacco retail prices will increase systematically and significantly; prices will be harmonised for 'roll your own' tobacco.
- Misleading product labelling will be banned.
- The supply and sale of tobacco products will be controlled.
- The range and constituents of tobacco products will be controlled.

### **Increasing successful quitting**

All smokers will be encouraged to quit and will have full access to state of the art quit-smoking support services and products through the following policies:

- A full range of effective quit smoking options will be available to all smokers at minimal costs.

- All health care professionals will understand and implement quit-smoking interventions and referrals.
  - Education will change misconceptions about nicotine that currently act as a barrier to the use of quit smoking products.
  - Product innovation of effective and safe ways to manage nicotine addiction will take place.
  - Cigarettes will be phased out as a consumer product.
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## **Marketing**

Advertising and promotion of tobacco products is restricted in a number of countries, including New Zealand. Several countries have tighter regulation than New Zealand. For example Britain, Ireland, Northern Ireland and parts of Canada have passed legislation banning the display of tobacco products. In April 2010 the Australian government announced plans to be the first country to introduce legislation that would mean only plain cigarettes packs with full colour warnings could be sold from 2012. Cross party support for this legislation has been indicated.

Despite restrictions young people still encounter substantial media content related to smoking across virtually all media channels. Much of this content is incidental portrayals of tobacco. “(P)ro-smoking culture sites that appeal to youth, and glamorize smoking are proliferating” (Kopp 1998). One industry view is; “We (Imperial Tobacco) believe strongly that tobacco should never be marketed to youth. It should only be marketed to adult smokers, in an appropriate way that takes account of its health risks” (Imperial Tobacco website undated).

Whilst tobacco companies no longer have naming rights to events, a provision that allows for ‘exclusive supply rights’ arrangements means that tobacco companies can still sell their products at events. For instance Philip Morris sponsored *Groove in the Park* 2008 and *Rhythm and Vines* 2009, events attended mainly by young people.

The Health Sponsorship Council developed the ‘Smoking Not *Our* Future’ initiative, which promotes de-normalisation, social disapproval, and supportive quitting messages to young people aged 12 to 24 years, via multiple mediums and promotional activities. In an evaluation (Fryer, Lynch & Kalafatis 2008) with 939 participants it was found that the ads give some good reasons not to smoke’ (83 % agreement). ‘The ads make smoking seem less cool’ (74 % agreement) and ‘The ads have put me off smoking’ (59 % agreement). Around two-fifths (41%) of young people who had stopped smoking within the last 12 months said that the TV commercials had lead them to quit smoking, however the sample was small for this aspect (n=47).

## **Taxation**

The World Bank and the World Health Organisation Framework Convention on Tobacco Control both prioritise price increases as a key measure to decrease tobacco use. The 2003-2008 New Zealand Ministry of Health tobacco control plan, ‘Clearing the Smoke’ also prioritised tax increases as a means of reducing prevalence.

Cigarette prices are an effective tool to discourage youth smoking. Young people respond more to economic impacts than they do to informational campaigns that emphasize future health costs (Laing & Chaloupka 2001). Published research shows a ten percent cigarette price increase reduces youth smoking rates by nine to fifteen per cent and adult rates by at least two per cent. (Halverson 2009). The April 2010 tobacco excise changes including an immediate 24 percent increase on the excise rate loose-leaf tobacco and 10 percent for factory made cigarettes indicate acceptance of this evidence.

Tobacco tax revenues amount to approximately \$1 billion per year. The tangible costs of smoking to New Zealand in 2005 were of the order of NZ\$1.7 billion (O'Dea & Thompson 2007). The intangible costs were of the order of 62,800 life-years lost to smoking-induced premature mortality, and 19,000 quality-adjusted life-years lost to smoking caused morbidity. Of the approximate \$1.6 billion per year retail spending on tobacco products, approximately 70 percent is tax revenue, including GST as well as tobacco excises. The average amount spent by New Zealand's 750,000 smokers is approximately \$2,135 each per year and approximately \$1,500 is tax revenue. For those on low incomes, including many young people, tobacco expenditure is a significant proportion of total incomes.

### **Public opinion**

The 2008 *Health and Lifestyles Survey* interviewed 1,608 people aged 15 and over on whether they support the end of tobacco sales within ten years and whether they support fewer tobacco retailers. There was agreement by 49.8% that cigarettes and tobacco should not be sold in New Zealand in ten years time and 65.6% agreed that *'the number of places selling cigarettes and tobacco should be reduced to make them less easily available'*. There was also majority support for plain (unbranded) cigarette packets. Dr George Thomson, from the University of Otago, Wellington, in a 2010 media release said, "The surveys indicate that public support is there for major and rapid changes to the regulation of tobacco, including the end of commercial tobacco supply."

Research showed 38% support for the ban in pubs and bars in 2001, 55% support just prior to implementation in December 2004. By April 2005 support had increased to 70% and two years later to 90% (Ministry of Health, 2006b). Given this, a similar trend in increased support for greater regulation is likely.

### **Industry perspectives**

British American Tobacco (BAT) is the leading supplier of tobacco products in New Zealand. Their website acknowledges the health risks associated with tobacco and accepts some restrictions are needed. However they say all stakeholders including smokers, retailers, suppliers and tobacco companies should have the opportunity for genuine consultation and participation in the regulatory process. "Our desire is to strike a balance between meeting our commercial objectives and satisfying reasonable public expectations" (BAT undated).

Imperial Tobacco are another part of New Zealand's Tobacco industry. They state on their website (Imperial undated), "The risks associated with smoking are well known, and we believe that adults should be allowed to choose whether or not to smoke". Imperial Tobacco also state; "We support tobacco regulation that is reasonable, proportionate and evidence based. ... We are a responsible, legitimate business. We are not willing to accept regulation that is flawed, unreasonable or disproportionate, or regulation that is not based on sound legal foundation".

The New Zealand Association of Convenience Stores (NZACS) have identified that 37.3 % of total sales are generated from consumer demand for cigarettes and tobacco products in members' retail premises. In their submission to the Maori Affairs Inquiry into the Tobacco Industry in Aotearoa 2010 NZACS said, "The stark reality is that, unfortunately, special interest groups lobbying for a retail display ban of tobacco have not owned, managed or run a convenience store business. Their drive for a tobacco-free New Zealand may be a virtuous goal; however as evidenced from overseas, a retail display ban may feel good, but will not actually achieve their desired results". Imperial Tobacco and British American Tobacco are premier members of the NZACS.

## **Smoke-free by 2020**

Young people have made great progress towards becoming smoke-free. If a smoke-free generation is to be created by 2020, coordinated Government action will be required, with further control of the supply, reducing the demand (particularly in relation to initiation) and limiting the problem through support to quit. This applies a consistent harm minimisation framework. The Smokefree Coalition's *Tobacco Free by 2020* plan provides one perspective on the steps required. The challenge for this Committee is to propose steps to achieve the smoke-free by 2020 objective.

## **Report to the House**

The Committee is required to report its findings on this inquiry to the House. The purpose of your report is first to inform the House and inform debate. In doing so your report should reflect both the oral and written evidence the Committee received, the issues the Committee considered in-depth, and the views of the members. From these the Committee should develop conclusions and recommendations to the Government.

Matt Roberts  
Report Writer  
Youth Parliament 2010  
Ministry of Youth Development

## Members may wish to ask:

- Government already regulates tobacco supply and promotion - should this be increased? Yes or no. If no why? If yes why and how? Eg:
  - Should retail displays as a promotional tool be banned?
  - Should cigarette packaging be unbranded?
  - Should cigarette companies be allowed to have 'exclusive supply rights' at events such as Rhythm and Vines?
  - And other points in Tobacco Free New Zealand 2020 (Figure 2)
- Despite a minimum purchase age for cigarettes of 18, many young people under this age are smokers. What could be done to stop the social supply to this age group?
- What is your reaction to the proposals in *Tobacco Free New Zealand 2020*?
- What combination of measures (including messages) do you think would be most effective, particularly for young people? Are there some measures that you would implement immediately?
- Should a smoke-free by 2020 campaign focus on users or suppliers?
- Due to the health effects of smoking, does government have a moral responsibility to protect the public and act to be smoke-free by 2020?

## References (click on underlined titles for hyperlinks)

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## **Useful links search terms**

Smoking  
Smoke-free  
Tobacco  
Tobacco marketing  
Cigarette, Cigarettes  
Ministry of Health tobacco control  
Smoke-free coalition  
Health Sponsorship Council  
Smoking not our future  
British American Tobacco and other manufacturer names  
Smokers rights  
Youth smoking, Teen smoking