



# Smokefree TIMES

Action on Smoking and Health

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Kia ora! Hello! Kia orana! Talofa! Malo e lelei! Bula! Aloha! Fakaalofa ahi atu! Alii! Gaoi! Mauri! Yokwe! Nga'aiho! G'day!

## New Zealand smokefree by 2025

The Government has adopted a goal of a smokefree New Zealand by 2025.

The Government's full response to the recommendations of the Māori Affairs committee report on its inquiry into tobacco was tabled in parliament.

The inquiry ran throughout 2010 with the Māori Affairs select committee receiving 260 submissions, 96 oral submissions and over 1700 letters throughout the process. This led to forty-two recommendations from the committee.

Associate Health Minister Tariana Turia, who has portfolio responsibility for tobacco, described it as a "landmark moment in the history of New Zealand" and congratulated the Māori Affairs select committee for the work it has done over the past 18 months on tobacco.

"It is about us asserting our own identity as a nation and defining for ourselves the role tobacco is allowed to play in the life of this country – this is not something we are just going to leave in the hands of the tobacco industry."

Health groups reacted positively to the announcement with Te Reo Marama Trust saying, "We commend and congratulate Minister Turia on her courage, commitment and leadership by demonstrating to the tobacco industry that their opportunity to recruit future generations of Māori in order to continue the industry's longevity is coming to an end."

The Smokefree Coalition said "The smokefree community in New Zealand is thrilled that the Government now shares its vision and looks forward to working with the Government to make it a reality."

**"It is about us asserting our own identity as a nation – this is not something we are just going to leave in the hands of the tobacco industry."**

– Associate Health Minister  
Tariana Turia

Cancer Society chief executive Dalton Kelly said, "The Government made tremendous headway when late last year it banned powerwall displays of tobacco, by a date yet to be announced; now New Zealand could lead the world by committing to a Smokefree country by 2025."

Smokefree Nurses Aotearoa/New Zealand director Grace Wong said "This couldn't come at a better time."

ASH health promoter Boyd Broughton said the inquiry was triggered by Māori, as Māori have among the highest smoking rates and suffer disproportionately in terms of tobacco related harm.

"This report is ambitious, and needs to be, to combat the high level of Māori smoking. It is one of the most ambitious from any government in the world and is aimed at reducing the death and disease

### In this issue

- Government adopts smokefree 2025
- Menthol cigarettes opposed
- Prisoners quit ahead of smoking ban
- Schools help students quit smoking
- Australia faces tobacco challenges

associated with tobacco use," said Mr Broughton.

Minister Turia was emphatic that the goal could be reached, "There is still so much to be done, but I'm more confident than ever that we can reach the goal of New Zealand being a nation free of tobacco."

World-renowned tobacco and nicotine expert Dr Richard Hurt, who recently visited New Zealand told TV ONE's *Breakfast*, "In New Zealand, since it's a developed economy and a developed country, I'm hopeful that you all will be able to change this quicker than other places will be."

### The government has agreed to:

- The goal of New Zealand becoming smokefree by 2025
- Mid-term targets for reducing tobacco consumption
- Review information disclosure regulations for tobacco products
- Investigate using existing regulatory powers to reduce additives and nicotine
- Investigate measures relating to the supply and availability of tobacco

## Call for menthol to be given the flick

A call to ban mentholated cigarettes in the US is being supported in New Zealand.

The Tobacco Products Scientific Advisory Committee wants menthol outlawed, saying it leads to increased experimentation and raises the risk of smoking addiction.

ASH director Ben Youdan says the menthol is added to cigarettes for two reasons.

“One is to mask the naturally harsh flavour of tobacco, and the other is it helps open the lungs more and helps the nicotine get absorbed to the body better – which makes it more efficiently reach the brain and maintain addiction.”

Mr Youdan says the Government is investigating a ban on menthol cigarettes in New Zealand, following a recommendation by the Māori Affairs select committee

## Schools roll out cessation help

There has been recent media discussion around school students access to NRT.

At Porirua’s Mana College students can access nicotine patches, gum and lozenges at school.

ASH director Ben Youdan says the school is getting good results by recognising that students want to quit smoking.

“I think it’s a really good model that could be rolled out and should be rolled out to a lot of other schools.”

Mr Youdan stresses that children being sick from taking NRT should not be confused with young people using NRT to manage tobacco dependence.

“If kids are smoking, and addicted to nicotine in cigarettes, I would consider the provision of NRT as an ethical responsibility. They are already addicted to nicotine in the most potent and

harmful form of delivery. NRT will not harm them as smoking does – it will not addict them as smoking does.”

For many young smokers, their parents do not know they smoke. Getting parental consent for using NRT should not be mandatory, as it reveals they smoke, and can be a barrier to using effective quit treatment.

Also in Porirua, at Brandon Intermediate Principal Nicki Sturgeon told the *Dominion Post* his school provides nicotine gum and lozenges to a handful of pupils on a quit programme each year. “We recognise some of our students are regular smokers who may not understand the implications it will have on their health now or in the future.”

## Hope for kowhai-related quit trial

Auckland University’s Clinical Trials Research Unit (CTRU) has started testing a quit-smoking tablet from Eastern Europe with links to the kowhai tree.

The Bulgarian manufactured cessation product ‘Tabex’ is believed to contain chemicals related to the kowhai tree.

The active ingredient in Tabex is the chemical cytosine, extracted from golden rain.

Head of the research, programme director of addiction at the CTRU Dr Natalie Walker told the *New Zealand Herald* she is uncertain whether the cytosine molecules in kowhai and golden rain are identical. The university’s Pharmacy School is conducting further research on this.

Dr Walker emphasises people must not experiment by consuming any part of the kowhai because it is poisonous.

Tabex is available from international websites but is not permitted to be sold in New Zealand as it is a medicine and is not yet registered by the Ministry of Health.

Dr Marewa Glover, director of the Centre for Tobacco Control Research, says in a recent paper published in *Nicotine & Tobacco Research* that if cytosine meets New Zealand safety and efficacy requirements “cytosine could be very appealing to Māori as a novel smoking cessation product and could boost quitting activity among Māori”.

## MIT goes smokefree

Manukau Institute of Technology (MIT) has introduced a comprehensive smokefree policy.

The policy prohibits smoking on all MIT premises, including areas previously designated as smoking areas.

MIT’s director of student affairs Julie Wood told the *Manukau Courier* “It’s just the natural progression to not only promote a healthy campus, but a healthy community.”

A statement on MIT’s website says “The primary purpose of the smokefree policy is to eliminate the serious risk to students and staff’s [sic] health and well being through passive smoking. MIT is not attempting to convert people who smoke into non-smokers. It does, however, recognise that smoking is an addiction and is keen to encourage those who wish to quit smoking and to offer support to them, whilst also not wishing to marginalise those who wish to continue to smoke.”

Students and staff who want to smoke will need to leave the campus and light up in carparks and public areas outside.

Student and staff feedback prior to implementation indicated that 59 percent agreed with and supported the implementation of the policy, 29.8 percent disagree and 11.1 percent strongly disagree with its implementation.

## ASH presents on Smokefree Bill

Last month ASH presented to the Health select committee on the Smoke-free Environments (Controls and Enforcement) Amendment Bill 2010.

The Bill is just one step towards the Government’s goal of a smokefree New Zealand by 2025.

ASH highlighted the need to remove vending machines, duty-free tobacco and advance plain packaging.

The Bill takes on even greater importance in establishing a way forward to the country’s goal of being smokefree by 2025.

We need to keep up the pressure to get this legislation passed before parties move into election campaign mode.

Let’s set our sights on ensuring a smokefree New Zealand is a core health commitment from those campaigning for office. That means not just accepting the goal, but rising to the challenge of actually implementing it too.

At the time of going to print, the committee was due to report back to Parliament with their recommendations on the Bill.

# End Smoking NZ in fundraising big leagues

New Zealand rugby league star Manu Vatuvei lent his not inconsiderable weight to End Smoking New Zealand's participation in the Oxfam Trailwalker 2011 fundraising event.

Bidders on TradeMe were able to bid for the chance to have the 112kg and 190cm league wing as their maid for a day. The winning bid was \$875 by Glenn from Mount Maunganui and will count towards Team End Smoking's fundraising target of \$2500.

The listing had nearly 9000 views and suggested Manu's services could include; house work, vacuuming, cleaning, cooking, washing, chauffeuring, mowing the lawns, painting, handy man jobs and coaching sports.

Vatuvei's wife is the cousin of End Smoking New Zealand's Angelik Singh. Ms Singh persuaded the giant winger to help out for the cause.

Vatuvei told *Sunday News*, "My wife was worried I'd be dressing up in a maid's outfit at first."

The End Smoking New Zealand team comprised Singh, Louise Wallace, Patricia Fraser and Steve Piner and was led by Dr Marewa Glover, director of the Centre for Tobacco Control Research.

Teams of four walked the 100 kilometres around Lake Taupo on 9-10 April to raise money for Oxfam New Zealand's work.

End Smoking New Zealand said 'Battling the Tobacco Industry is like running a marathon – it just goes on and on. You need to be fit, tenacious and never give up. Smoking is a significant cause of poverty also. So our passion to rid New Zealand of smoking and help Oxfam rid the world of poverty come together in this one event.'

Aside from the star auction, funds were also raised via Dr Glover selling her poetry books on Trademe. Dr Glover also chipped in \$25.00 'From the swear word jar (at) \$1 per swear word.' The final fundraising deadline is 15 June and all proceeds go to Oxfam New Zealand.

Smokefree Warrior: Manu Vatuvei with Angelik Singh.



## Pressure for Australia to ditch tobacco funds as campaign launches

The Australian government's Future Fund has been shown to hold shares in 15 tobacco companies.

The revelation was made possible via Freedom of Information (FOI) requests, an equivalent of New Zealand's Official Information Act (OIA) process.

Over A\$147 million (NZ\$200 million) is invested in tobacco company shares owned by the fund, which provides investment for public sector pensions, including A\$46.4 million (NZ\$63 million) in British American Tobacco, A\$36.5 million (NZ\$49 million) in Philip Morris International and A\$26.1 million (NZ\$35 million) in Lorillard.

Vice-president of the Australian Medical Association Steve Hambleton said it seems incongruous that the government is investing in companies that will not prosper.

"It doesn't make sense when the government has launched the strongest anti-smoking measures in the world."

The Australian government's 25 percent increase in tobacco excise last year raised the cost of a packet of 30

cigarettes by about A\$2.20 (NZ\$3) to about A\$17.70 (NZ\$24).

Health Minister Nicola Roxon expressed a personal view to Melbourne's *Herald Sun*, "No one should invest in products that are such dreadful killers."

In 2007 the Guardians of New Zealand Superannuation fund divested tobacco stocks after making an assessment of tobacco against their responsible investment framework.

Australia also recently launched its first national health TV advertising campaign aimed at Aboriginal people. Currently 50 percent of indigenous Australians smoke and the A\$4 million (NZ\$5.44 million) campaign targets the fact that 20 percent of indigenous Australians die from smoking related diseases.

Minster Roxon launched the campaign along with Indigenous Affairs Minister Warren Snowdon, who said, "Our government is committed to halving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander smoking rates by 2018."

## Prisoners patch up ahead of smoking ban

The Department of Corrections says more than 1800 prisoners have started NRT ahead of July's prison smoking ban.

Corrections estimates that prior to the announcement of the ban last year nearly two-thirds or 5600 prisoners smoked.

Assistant general manager Prison Services, Dr Brendan Anstiss said "Free NRT is part of a number of support initiatives being provided to prisoners in the lead up to the ban, which includes the distribution of factsheets, posters and pamphlets providing information to prisoners and their visitors about the ban and the support on offer in prisons."

Prison nurses and staff who have been trained as 'workplace champions' are also on hand to answer questions about giving up smoking, and the Department is working closely with The Quit Group and the Ministry of Health to ensure all the right resources are in place for the implementation of the ban.

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**Special thanks to the ASH volunteers**



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