



Tobacco Control Position Statement

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Tobacco is the only consumer product that kills its consumers when used as the manufacturer intended. Recognising that there are cancer risks linked with using too much of certain consumer products, the Cancer Society notes that smoking is unique because it is addictive, toxic, carcinogenic, and lethal to half of its long-term users.

Tobacco industry products are not regulated like other consumer products and historically they have been exempt from food and drug legislation, consumer product safety legislation and hazardous product legislation.

The number of people harmed by tobacco worldwide is of epidemic magnitude.

Tobacco Control Vision- To work towards and contribute to an Aotearoa New Zealand that is free from harm caused by tobacco.

Tobacco Control Mission- To campaign and advocate for measures that will improve the health and wellbeing of all New Zealanders by eliminating the disease and premature death caused by tobacco.

Rationale

Effects on Health

- Tobacco use is responsible for the death of one in ten of all adults worldwide. Globally, 1.3 billion people smoke. Each year tobacco causes five million premature deaths. By 2020 this is projected to rise to 10 million deaths (1).
- Tobacco use is responsible for about 25% of cancer death in Aotearoa New Zealand (2-3).
- Smoking is responsible for the deaths of 5,000 New Zealanders each year (4,700 smokers and 300 from second-hand smoke (4).
- Tobacco-related costs to the health system are estimated to be about \$1.7 billion per year (about 1.1% of GDP) (5).
- On average, smokers lose 15 years of life (6).

Effects on Populations

- Half of the people who smoke today and continue smoking will eventually be killed by tobacco (7). Half of them will die in middle age (8).
- Lung cancer was the most common cause of cancer death in 2010, accounting for 19.2% of all deaths from cancer (9).
- Tobacco plays a significant role in health inequalities within Aotearoa New Zealand with higher smoking prevalence seen among low-income groups, Māori and Pacific peoples.
- Smoking among young people in Aotearoa New Zealand is declining; however, one in ten young people currently smoke (10).

Secondhand Smoke

- Around 300 New Zealanders die each year because of exposure to other people's tobacco smoke. This makes second-hand smoke the leading environmental cause of death in this country (11).
- Children who breathe second-hand smoke are admitted to hospital more often compared with children who do not, and second-hand smoke causes a range of health problems in children, including asthma and infection (12).

Achieving a Smokefree Aotearoa New Zealand by 2025

Aotearoa New Zealand is committed to the goal of a smokefree Aotearoa New Zealand by 2025. This will mean:

- our children and grandchildren will be free from tobacco and enjoy tobacco free lives,
- almost no-one will smoke (less than 5% of the population will be smokers), and
- it will be very difficult to sell or supply tobacco.

This will be achieved by:

- protecting New Zealanders, particularly children, from exposure to tobacco marketing and promotion,
- cutting the supply of, and demand for tobacco, and
- people quitting smoking.

The proposed measures will protect children, cut supply and demand for tobacco products and inspire smokers to quit. The Cancer Society will advocate towards ensuring that plain packaging is implemented and mandatory, that legislation for smokefree cars is introduced and there is a significant increase in smokefree environments. These actions will ensure that the country will be on track to achieve a smokefree Aotearoa New Zealand by 2025. Measures will be supported by the tobacco control sector and more importantly, by the Aotearoa New Zealand community.

How the Cancer Society will help achieve Smokefree Aotearoa New Zealand 2025

The Cancer Society carries out its work in tobacco control through a health promotion programme which includes working in collaboration with other agencies involved in tobacco control nationally and regionally to:

- support efforts to reduce harm caused by tobacco use in Aotearoa New Zealand,
- support efforts to reduce current inequities caused by tobacco use- e.g. among Māori, Pacific and low income groups,
- support a smokefree Aotearoa New Zealand by 2025 at National Office and in all Divisions,
- advocate for smokefree indoor and outdoor areas,
- support leadership and empowerment of individuals and communities to help achieve a smokefree Aotearoa New Zealand by 2025,
- develop and share Aotearoa New Zealand based tobacco control knowledge and expertise,
- advocate and promote evidence based strategies and legislative change to reduce tobacco related harm,
- support research to achieve smokefree Aotearoa New Zealand by 2025,
- develop ways to prevent the uptake of smoking, and
- support all smokers to make successful quit attempts.

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