



## **NEW ZEALAND RISKS BREACHING INTERNATIONAL TREATY, SAYS SMOKEFREE COALITION**

**Media statement, 28 February 2006**

New Zealand is in danger of breaching its international obligations if it doesn't pick up the pace on the introduction of larger health warnings on tobacco packets, says Smokefree Coalition Director Mark Peck.

"Australia is introducing graphic new health warnings on tobacco packets tomorrow. Whereas in New Zealand, moves to follow suit seem to have fallen into a big black hole."

He says under the terms of the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) – a global World Health Organization treaty - New Zealand has three years from the time the Treaty came into effect to comply with its requirements relating to health warnings. The existing New Zealand health warnings do not comply because they are too small.

"FCTC requirements include health warnings that are a minimum of 30 percent of the principal display areas of a tobacco pack; but warnings that are 50 percent or more are encouraged.

"The FCTC entered into force on 27 February 2005, when the 40th Party ratified. Therefore New Zealand needs to fully comply with the health warnings requirements by early 2008.

“We still have considerable work ahead of us before new warnings can be introduced. At this rate, we’re not going to make it. That would be hugely embarrassing for New Zealand internationally – particularly given our status as one of the world leaders in tobacco control.

He says that people need to be fully aware of the health effects of smoking. “Our warnings should not only comply with the FCTC, but exceed its requirements. They should be large and use pictures that graphically show the damage caused by tobacco.

“The Ministry of Health needs to make the introduction of larger, stronger health warnings on tobacco packs a top priority.”

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