



HOW MANY PEOPLE HAVE TO DIE? - SMOKEFREE COALITION

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Smokefree Coalition Director Mark Peck wonders how many people have to die before the Government increases tobacco tax.

“There was no sign of a tax increase in today’s budget. While this was not exactly a surprise, it is extremely frustrating.”

Mr Peck says tobacco tax increases are an effective way of getting people to smoke less or quit.

“Around 5000 New Zealanders die every year because of tobacco use. Increasing the price of tobacco results in people quitting smoking and discourages young people from starting.

“Tax increases are particularly valuable when the extra revenue gathered is directed back into tobacco control programmes – for example, helping people to quit smoking, undertaking research, or running smokefree media campaigns.”

He says if the Government is serious about reducing demand on hospital services, it needs to reduce smoking rates – and tax increases are one of the best ways of doing this.

“On average, a price rise of 10 percent would be expected to reduce demand for tobacco products by about four percent in a country like New Zealand.

“By not increasing tobacco taxation in the budget, and directing this funding to tobacco control programmes, the Government has missed a golden opportunity to save lives.”

For more information:

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