

NEW FUNDING WILL HELP PEOPLE QUIT SMOKING - SMOKEFREE COALITION

24 May 2007

The Smokefree Coalition is welcoming an increase in funding for tobacco control, announced today by Associate Minister of Health Damien O'Connor.

Director Mark Peck said tobacco control had been under-funded for years, despite tobacco being the largest single cause of preventable death in New Zealand.

"At last we are getting a chunk of funding that starts to recognise the size of the problem. An additional \$43.6 million over four years will enable New Zealand's very capable quit smoking providers to offer quit advice to more people who really need it."

He said funding to increase the number of health professionals who could provide smoking cessation support and advice would provide smokers with more opportunities to quit.

"Ideally, smokers should be encouraged to quit every time they see a health professional - whether that's their practice nurse, GP, pharmacist or dentist. Coupling this with increased access to nicotine replacement therapy, and increasing the capacity of the Quitline, has got to mean more successful quit attempts.

"These initiatives and the graphic new television campaign about the effects of smoking may just provide the incentive for many smokers to quit. It may also have the effect of discouraging smoking initiation thus providing a double whammy," said Mr Peck.

New funding is also going towards:

- reducing the number of young people taking up smoking, with a focus on young Maori women
- expanding smokefree pregnancy services
- piloting tobacco control initiatives for mental health consumers
- evaluation of the effectiveness of tobacco control programmes.

For further information:

Mark Peck, Director Smokefree Coalition, 04 472 0157, 0274 461 650.