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**Smokefree Coalition applauds smokefree campaign plank**

The Smokefree Coalition is saying "Good on you," to Wellington mayoral candidate John McGrath for featuring smokefree parks as part of his campaign.

John McGrath announced today that he will make all Wellington City Council-owned sports grounds and parks smokefree if elected mayor.

"Smoking should not be seen as fashionable and it has no place on our sports grounds.

Upper Hutt sports grounds have been smokefree for over a year and the move has the resounding support of the local residents."

Coalition director Mark Peck says it's good to see a candidate who recognises the great benefits smokefree parks could bring to Wellington, and urges other candidates to take a similar stand.

"Not smoking where children play is a wonderful opportunity to present good role-modelling, and to send the message to young people that smoking is not healthy, and not a normal part of being a grown-up.

"It also reinforces the pride Wellingtonians take in their clean, green and tidy outdoor areas."

Mr Peck says that other areas of New Zealand, such as Upper Hutt, Timaru and South Taranaki have made their parks smokefree, and councillors in those places say there are no problems with enforcement or compliance.

"Not even smokers wish this addiction upon their children, and when they understand that it's all about the kids, they have no problem putting off a smoke for a while.

"Smokefree park policies also empower non-smokers to speak up and politely request that cigarettes be put out. Generally, smokers are considerate and quickly agree not to smoke."

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