

**Smokefree Coalition suspects tobacco industry involvement in tobacco displays campaign
Sunday 30 March**

The Smokefree Coalition is challenging the Stay Displays Coalition of Retailers to reveal its funding sources. Stay Displays is challenging moves by health groups such as the Cancer Society to have the display of tobacco packets in shops banned. The Ministry of Health is currently reviewing the tobacco display provisions of the Smoke-free Environments Act 1990.

Smokefree Coalition Director Mark Peck says he strongly suspects the tobacco industry is providing support to the Stay Displays Coalition.

"I have asked the Stay Displays Coalition several times point blank whether they are being assisted by funding from a particular tobacco company. Twice they did not reply and the third time their reply did not answer the question.

"I strongly suspect that they are being supported or funded by the tobacco industry.

"Tobacco displays are one of the few forms of promotion still available to the tobacco industry, so we would expect them to fight any display restrictions tooth and nail. It is a typical industry tactic.

"All we ask of the Stay Displays Coalition is to be upfront about who its tobacco industry supporters are."

Mr Peck said tobacco products are highly addictive and cause thousands of deaths each year, unlike the papers, milk and confectionery alongside which they are sold.

"Children and young people are particularly vulnerable to tobacco advertising which is aimed squarely at these 'potential' smokers. Removing tobacco products from sight also reduces the temptation to light up for smokers who are trying to quit and for former smokers wanting to stay smokefree.

"Do the retailers supporting this campaign really want to be involved in the promotion of a product that, when used as the manufacturer intends, kills half its consumers?"

"We suspect this campaign has the tar-stained fingers of the tobacco industry behind it."

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