

Time to clamp the boot down on the throat of big tobacco

Smokefree Coalition

30 May 2008

For Immediate release

The Smokefree Coalition welcomes results from the Ministry of Health's 2006/7 Health Survey and says they show it is time to clamp the boot down firmly on the throat of the tobacco industry.

Smoking rates have fallen to 19.9 percent for current smokers (aged 15 years and over) – the first ever time they have been under 20 percent.

Smokefree Coalition Director Mark Peck says the results show that health and tobacco control initiatives do make a difference and they must be strengthened to ensure rates keep falling.

"Lower smoking rates translate directly into saved lives. The more we can reduce them, the more New Zealand families will be spared the suffering and death accompanying use of this addictive and deadly product."

Mr Peck says more can be done to dis-empower Big Tobacco and de-normalise smoking to spare the next generation.

"Tobacco companies have no qualms about profiting from a product which kills their customers and enslaves new young lives through addiction.

"Even smokers agree we should protect the young and vulnerable from cigarettes."

He says tobacco displays must be removed from point of sale, and a licensing system introduced for retailers which could be revoked if they sell to underage customers. Tax on tobacco should also be increased, and the revenue generated spent on education and cessation programmes.

For further information:

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