

Ban tobacco displays if you're serious about reducing youth smoking – Health group call to Government

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The Smokefree Coalition is calling on the Government to show it is serious about reducing youth smoking rates by banning displays of tobacco packets.

Coalition Director Mark Peck says exposure to so-called tobacco 'power walls', like other tobacco advertising, increases the likelihood a child will start to smoke.

"The Government has until the end of February to respond to a Health Select Committee recommendation that the display on these deadly products be banned at retail outlets.

"For a country that has led the world in tobacco control, it's become an embarrassment that New Zealand still allows cigarettes to be advertised in such a blatant fashion to our most vulnerable citizens.

"Health groups are unanimous in their calls to ban displays, and prominent public figures, such as Dame Cath Tizard, are now adding their voices to these calls."

Mark Peck says cigarette displays are a very effective marketing tool for the tobacco industry.

"New Zealand banned most types of tobacco advertising in 1990, but not retail displays. This loophole needs to be closed.

"With restrictions on other types of advertising and promotion, cigarette displays have become an essential part of the tobacco industry's marketing strategy. Cigarette displays are considered the tobacco industry's most 'important sphere of influence'."

He says a New Zealand survey of nearly 30,000 14- and 15-year-olds showed a significant association between tobacco displays and smoking susceptibility.

"Young people who visit stores two to three times a week have double the likelihood of becoming a smoker compared to someone who visited stores less than weekly.

"For the sake of our children's future health, we urge the Government to make the right decision and ban tobacco displays."

For further information:

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