

Higher prices mean less smoking, less tobacco production/importation

Smokefree Coalition Media release
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New Zealanders are smoking 1.3 billion fewer cigarettes a year than ten years ago, according to data produced by Statistics New Zealand for the Smokefree Coalition.

In the last quarter, since tobacco's tax rise, New Zealanders consumed 280 million manufactured tobacco products, and 243 tonnes of loose tobacco.

Smokefree Coalition Director Dr Prudence Stone said last year's fourth quarter result was 757 million or so cigarettes, while this fourth quarter it was 405.5 million.

"That's 351.5 million fewer cigarettes consumed than the same quarter last year."

Dr Stone believes the drop in consumption resulting from April's excise tax increase, has also led to significant drops in production and imports for domestic consumption.

"Consumption looked to be slowly climbing at the end of 2009's financial year with production and imports reaching \$3.4 billion (up from \$2.8 billion in 2008). The tax increase has nipped that frightening trend in the bud.

"That the last significant drop in production levels occurred in 2000 when tobacco's excise tax was also increased significantly, by 20 percent, shows how effective price is as a tobacco control measure."

Dr Stone says she's confident the next tobacco tax increases scheduled for January 2011 and 2012 will force similar drops in tobacco production and imports over the next two years.

- Ends

For more information:

Dr Prudence Stone, Director
The Smokefree Coalition
04 472 0157, 027 648 2020