

## **Tobacco displays aren't teaching aids**

**Smokefree Coalition media release 19 September 2010**

Smokefree Coalition Director Dr Prudence Stone says she was shocked to hear National Party MP Katrina Shanks shows tobacco products to her children.

Ms Shanks was on a parliamentary panel at the Parenting Forum hosted by Parents Centres NZ at Te Papa during the weekend. She told its 300 delegates she lined tobacco products up for her three children, aged 9, 11 and 13, so she could talk to them about smoking. She was responding to a question from an audience member about her Party's position on Labour MP Iain Lees - Galloway's private members' bill to remove tobacco from retail displays.

Dr Stone said members of the Smokefree Coalition work day and night spreading the message that children need protection from exposure to tobacco products, particularly when they are young and impressionable.

"It may be well-intentioned to show children tobacco products in order to warn them against smoking, but this is exposure nonetheless, and Ms Shanks is actually increasing her children's likelihood of taking up smoking by as much as three times.

"The fact is tobacco displays encourage smoking, and that kills people. To think they can be justified as some sort of visual teaching aid is ridiculous."

At the Smokefree Coalition's stall more than 100 delegate signed a petition asking MPs to vote in favour of the display ban bill and signed Cancer Society's Out of Sight, Out of Mind campaign postcards, addressing them to Katrina Shanks and Minister of Health Tony Ryall.

Green Party MP Sue Kedgley confirmed her party would vote in favour of the retail display ban bill, agreeing that parents need assurance from government that it will help them protect their children from daily exposure to tobacco products

"This bill is extremely important for children in particular because the economic inequalities dividing families are reflected in parents' time spent with their children, leaving poorer children with far greater exposure than those better off," Ms Kedgley said.

Labour MP Sue Maroney said bill was also a measure of support for ex-smokers making quit attempts.

"Exposure to tobacco products at the point of sale makes shopping a taunting experience for those in the midst of quitting, enough to provoke relapses for many sufferers of smoking addiction," she said.

United Future MP Peter Dunne and Act MP Heather Roy were also on the Parenting Forum's parliamentary panel, but did not respond on the issue. The Māori Party did not send a representative to the Forum.

Lees-Galloway's private members bill to ban tobacco retail displays was drawn from the ballot two weeks ago. He is expected to call its first reading in parliament this Wednesday.

-Ends-

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For more information on banning tobacco's retail display:

[www.protectourchildren.org.nz](http://www.protectourchildren.org.nz)

[www.labour.org.nz/tobaccodisplays](http://www.labour.org.nz/tobaccodisplays)