

## **Wellington City Council still not leaders in smokefree policy**

Smokefree Coalition media release, 14 April 2016

The Smokefree Coalition applauds the Wellington City Council's Smokefree Action Plan, which was amended yesterday to work more closely with the sector and with Palmerston North City Council in their advocacy to Central Government.

However, Smokefree Coalition Director Dr Prudence Stone the Capital city still lags behind many councils across New Zealand that have already introduced smokefree town squares, beaches and waterfronts.

"I was pleased to see the committee amend the plan yesterday in response to some of our submissions," she said.

"We told them there's no point reinventing the wheel when it comes to developing a comprehensive communications strategy around the policy. The end result was an amendment to work with our sector, who have already done the research and know how to effectively engage with communities and support quit attempts."

The Smokefree Coalition told the councillors that face-to-face engagement must be the founding pillar of the policy's promotion.

When questioned about enforcement, Dr Prudence Stone reminded the Council that the overwhelming public support for the policy was its own enforcement strategy.

"We have to stop seeing the setting of smokefree environmental policy as something we're doing to punish and alienate people who smoke from our community. The Council's own surveys found that people who smoke support it too, because it helps them with their ongoing journey to quit.

"Wherever children are, their caregivers should be supported by policy to protect them from second-hand smoke.

"With adequate signage that clearly promotes the Council's partnership with our quit smoking services, children and their guardians will be empowered to enforce this protection by themselves, while showing support to addicted members of their community to find support to stop smoking."

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For further information, contact Dr Prudence Stone, 027 648 2020.