

Speech by Dr Prudence Stone, Director, the Smokefree Coalition, welcoming Dr Jeffrey Wigand to the high tea organised in his honour at the Wellesley Hotel, Wellington, 23 June 2010

Kia Ora Tatou Tena Koutou Katoa,

Welcome everybody and thank you so much all of you for coming today. I see some very esteemed faces amongst the crowd assembled today. The Minister of Whānau Ora, Tariana Turia, who also made a profound presentation to the Māori Affairs Select Committee before Dr Wigand, and also the Select Committee's Iain Lees-Galloway. Welcome.

There are many members of the Smokefree Coalition here today, but I also see some new faces which is very exciting. Welcome to you all, and of course we are all here today to honour Truth – truth-telling – because Dr Wigand, that is what you embody for us all. Welcome especially to you today.

I want to let you know that most members of the Smokefree Coalition – there are now 35 of us and we're growing

– like you, made submissions to this Māori Affairs Select Committee on the tobacco industry and the consequences of tobacco use for Māori. And I want to reiterate something you said to one of the guests to the event organised last night, by Te Reo Marama in your honour. It was declared by one of the guests that you are a hero... to which you responded, most humbly, "I am no different from anyone who values truth."

In that respect I'd like you to know that you are in very good company here today. There are nothing but truth tellers and valuers of the truth in this room. But that guest last night was nevertheless right: you are a hero, and in our age, isn't it a very simple thing we do that makes us heroes?

I was lucky enough to attend the hearing presentation you gave today, but for those here today who weren't able to be there, we have arranged a [livestream recording](#) of it linked from the Smokefree Coalition's website. I urge you to take a look at the information Dr Wigand offered the Select Committee: as an Insider employed by the industry to design cigarettes, he has a wealth of knowledge regarding the scientific tactics behind the most "efficient" nicotine delivery, not to mention the most maximised profit margins of the industry's shareholders and owners.



Dr Wigand speaking at the high tea, 23 June 2010

I saw you make a profound impact upon unlikely members of the Māori Affairs Select Committee. As the honourable member Simon Bridges said, you gave testimony to the fact that marketing is embedded in the very design and manufacture of the cigarette. It was good to see him so convinced.

I guess this information you have is why, as we all know

from seeing the movie made about your life, you were intimidated, threatened, ostracised, and made to feel your life would end if you told what you did.

For those of you here today who have not yet seen *The Insider*, starring Russel Crowe – now alleged a non-smoker – thank the lord! – I’ve been told by Dr Wigand it is very factual. There really did appear a bullet in his letterbox. Death threats were addressed to his daughter. In fact, now having met you I believe I shall go back and watch *The Insider* again. I believe it will have new meaning for me having met you. I must admit I watched it the first time purely for entertainment value.

Now I’m going to ask you to speak, but I’m not going to ask you to recount all that you said, so well already: I’m hoping you can take this opportunity to catch your breath, and tell us how you’re feeling it went. Do you feel you made the impact you thought you would? Perhaps a little more of your gut feeling about what’s next? What’s likely to happen?

In closing Dr Wigand, on behalf of all the members of the Smokefree Coalition, I’d like to present you with a token of our gratitude. Of course you don’t need to open it here but I’m going to spoil the surprise for you because I’ve chosen something with some symbolic value, which I’d like to take the liberty to talk about. What we’ve chosen for you is a carving of te Matou – this is Te Reo for “the fish hook”. Te



Those attending the high tea included Labour MP and Māori Affairs Select Committee member Iain Lees-Galloway.



Dr Wigand accepting Te matou (as yet unopened) from Smokefree Coalition Director Dr Prudence Stone

matou has great symbolic value for te tangata whenua o Aotearoa, the indigenous people of this land. And it is poignant with this symbolic value for your situation, Dr Wigand.

You are our fish hook.

And you are so, in possibly three important ways. First of all – we are already thrilled at the catch you've brought in of public attention. And while we're speaking of this, can I ask everybody here to also acknowledge the efforts of ASH in maximising Dr Wigand's visit in the media and other forums.

Secondly, we have cast you into the deep political waters of the Māori Affairs Select Committee Inquiry, and we are confident that there you can help us catch some big fish: pieces of legislation that will change the nation's health and create future generations freed from exposure to tobacco. At the very least, we hope we can catch in these waters the heart, the bravery, the commitment of the Select Committee members that they will need to resolve this legislation all the way through parliament.

And thirdly, I hope I have captured more members for our Coalition! Because at this time, more than ever, we need more and new voices to advocate our position and our vision for 2020: that future generations of New Zealanders can have freedom from tobacco. We can ensure that for New Zealanders of the future, with a voice growing louder and stronger in the present.

So from all of us here, who represent so many more who couldn't make it today, I give you this small token to show our thanks.