



Proposal to

Wellington City Council
Strategy and Policy Committee

Smokefree Outdoor Public Places

18 February 2010

Background

In 2008, the Cancer Society and Regional Public Health submitted a recommendation to Wellington City Council to adopt a Smokefree Parks and Playgrounds Policy. The proposal outlined the potential policy, rationale for the policy and implementation options. This was followed up with an oral submission.

Considerations

Reasons for considering a smokefree parks policy

Tobacco smoking is a major public health problem in New Zealand. It is estimated that smoking kills around 5000 people in New Zealand every year¹.

Smoking is one of the most significant determinants of health status. The 2006 Census indicates that the prevalence of regular smokers (one or more cigarettes per day) within Capital and Coast District Health Board is 17.3%.²

Smokefree environments focus on reducing smoking, therefore reducing health inequalities. Children and young people often learn by observing others, and the frequency with which young people observe smoking has an association with the perception that smoking is socially acceptable and normal.

Public Health is turning its attention towards what impact seeing people smoking has on the future smoking behaviour of children and young people. Research shows that the longer the onset of smoking is delayed, the less likely a person is to become a daily smoker³.

Trends

Appendices 1 and 2 show media coverage of this issue and evidence a trend of moving toward more smokefree outdoor areas. There is also growing intolerance by the public for discarded cigarette butts.

New Zealand experiences

An increasing number of local authorities in New Zealand have implemented Smokefree policies in public places, and in all cases these have been successful. Authorities have reported a high level of public compliance and very little resistance or need for enforcement. Appendix 3 shows councils who have adopted Smokefree Outdoor Public Places policies.

¹ Ministry of Health (2006). Tobacco Trends 2006: Monitoring tobacco use in New Zealand. Wellington.

² Smoking Prevalence Rates Census 2006. Ministry of Health. District Health Board Report Capital and Coast.

³ NFO CM Research, 2001a 2001b, Stanton W et al, 1989; US Surgeon General, 1994.

Wellington region

Upper Hutt City Council introduced a Smokefree Parks Policy in 2006 covering all parks, playgrounds and sports fields. Research indicated that amongst both smokers and non-smokers there is a great deal of community support for the Upper Hutt Smokefree Parks Policy⁴.

Kapiti Coast District Council introduced a Smokefree Parks Policy in 2008 covering all playgrounds and sports fields. Recent evaluation of this project indicated a high level of compliance, with a 70% reduction in cigarette butts after six months⁵.

Proposed policy**It is proposed that...**

Wellington City Council adopts an educational Smokefree Parks Policy for the Wellington region. The policy will be implemented through education and will promote awareness through signage in parks.

An educational policy, reinforced with encouraging signage and messages, empowers non-smokers to be more vocal about not wanting to be around smoking and being positive role models for our young people and children. An educational policy is favourable, rather than enforcement.

Partnership and resource

The development and implementation of the policy will be a collaborative process with the health sector; commonly a working group is established. Regional Public Health, Capital and Coast District Health Board and the Cancer Society will contribute budget towards the implementation of the policy. Wellington City Council's contribution to this initiative would be to adopt the policy, contribute towards budget and cover the erection of signage and maintenance.

⁴ SMOKES 2007, Smoking Outdoor in a Kids Environment: Evaluating the Upper Hutt Smokefree Parks Policy, Wellington School of Medicine, 2007.

⁵ Regional Public Health (2009). Kapiti Coast Smokefree Outdoor Public Places Evaluation Report. Wellington. Regional Public Health.

Implementation

The working group will be responsible for providing the health promotion messages, which will encourage compliance. There is a template communications plan to ensure the benefits of this initiative are maximized, and this would be implemented in conjunction with Wellington City Council's communications team.

Signage

Effective and prominent signage is key to a successful educative smokefree outdoor public places policy.

Wellington City has around 102 playgrounds in total – 44 sports grounds with fields, skate parks, recreation centres, and swimming pools. Due to the large number of recreational facilities it would be practical to prioritise signage to those areas most frequented. However, the policy would cover all parks and areas specified in the region. Once more funding becomes available, it may be practical to erect more signage at those parks not previously prioritized.

Recommended signage sites

Our recommendation is:

- To erect signage at the 20 most frequented playgrounds to begin with. (eg. Botanic Gardens, Katherine Mansfield Park, Shortland Park, Freyberg Park, etc).
 - To erect signage at the ten most frequented sports grounds. Some of these may be covered in the playgrounds list so more grounds could receive signage.
 - To erect signage at five of the most frequented skate parks (eg. Waitangi Park, Ian Galloway Park, Island Bay, etc).
 - To erect signage in Midland Park on Lambton Quay. This park has a high concentration of people (especially during weekday lunchtimes) and non smokers should be able to visit this park without having to be in close proximity to smokers. (NB: Astoria Café in Midland Park has designated half of its outdoor seating as non-smoking.)
 - To extend the policy to include all four recreational centers (Karori, Kilbirnie, Nairnville and Tawa).
 - To extend the policy to include the seven Wellington City swimming pools and their surrounding outdoor areas.
 - To extend the policy making all Wellington City Council organised and supported events promoted as Smokefree. Some events will be covered as they will be held in a park, but we would like to see the Smokefree logo alongside the Wellington City Council logo for all events. (As an example, Regional Public Health has received numerous complaints from members of the public attending *Summer City* events at The Soundshell advising that their enjoyment of a particular event had been significantly diminished due to smokers in attendance. This is a situation where individuals are in very close proximity to each other and non-smokers (the majority of attendees) *should* be able to enjoy an event in a smokefree environment.
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Signage around the country

Each Council around New Zealand has erected different signage, depending on the key messages, demographics of their community and internal Council requirements. Some examples from the Wellington region are below.

**Enforcement**

As mentioned above, authorities have reported a high level of public compliance and very little resistance or need for enforcement. With signage, education and media coverage around Smokefree places, individuals are empowered to ask smokers not to smoke in these designated areas. There is no requirement to police; rather, it is more about changing people's attitudes.

Evaluation

An evaluation can be carried out by the working group progressing Smokefree Parks in Wellington, with a report presented to Council once complete. As previously mentioned, Regional Public Health recently completed the evaluation report for Smokefree Parks in Kapiti, a copy of which is available on request.

Further information

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APPENDIX 1

Media coverage

The following appeared on Stuff's website on 5 February 2010. Of particular note is the final paragraph of this article along with the photo caption. As one of New Zealand's major cities, it is becoming evident that Wellington is at risk of being left behind by other city and regional Smokefree initiatives.

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Outdoor smoking ban promoted

NZPA

Last updated 08:20 05/02/2010

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FAIRFAX

SMOKING BAN: The Auckland health service wants the law banning indoor smoking at workplaces extended to playgrounds, outdoor eating areas, beaches, the area outside buildings, cars when a child under 16 is present, public transport stops and pedestrian malls.

Having a puff on a cigarette at the beach may become a thing of the past under a proposal to ban smoking in many outdoor areas

The Auckland Regional Public Health Service will urge tougher measures in a submission to the Maori affairs select committee's inquiry into the tobacco industry and the effects of tobacco use on Maori.

Public health campaigners say they want to make it easier for the Government to adopt radical measures to make New Zealand smokefree within 10 years by focussing the debate on tobacco.

The Auckland service wants the law banning indoor smoking at workplaces extended to playgrounds, outdoor eating areas, beaches, the area outside buildings, cars when a child under 16 is present, public transport stops and pedestrian malls, The New Zealand Herald reported today.

From January 1 Auckland University became a smoke-free campus, including areas once designated as smoking areas which it said would allow staff and students to work and study in a healthier, cleaner environment.

The latest proposals would reduce smoking opportunities for workers and bar patrons, forced outside or onto the street by the smokefree environments law.

A tax increase on tobacco may be considered in this year's budget, said Prime Minister John Key.

Already many local authorities have banned smoking in areas used by children, such as playgrounds, sports fields and beaches.

Campaign highlights cigarette litter problem

By ALEXANDRA JOHNSON - The Wellingtonian
Last updated 05:00 27/08/2009



FILTHY HABIT: Celia Wade Brown says many people think stormwater goes into a treatment plant but instead it goes straight into the sea.

FILTHY HABIT: Celia Wade Brown says many people think stormwater goes into a treatment plant but instead it goes straight into the sea.

Smokers who throw their cigarette butts onto the street are coming under the scrutiny of Wellington City Council.

Councillor Celia Wade Brown said she and Wellington City Council staff are working on an education campaign to raise awareness of where cigarette butts end up after being tossed into gutters.

Forest and Bird's marine advocate Kirstie Knowles said the butts go straight into the harbour.

"When it rains, the butts get washed down into the gutters, into the drains and down into the sea," she said. People know it's not okay to throw away crisp packets but smokers are doing the same thing throwing away their cigarette butts.

"They are actually a fibrous plastic. They may look soft and fluffy but they stay in the environment for many years."

During Sea Week earlier in the year, six volunteers collected 2000 cigarette butts from Oriental Bay in a couple of hours, "and that's a groomed beach" Ms Knowles said.

"There is not a lot of evidence yet about what happens to the butts in the sea whether they are eaten by marine animals or not for example. But we do know they stay in the marine environment for a long, long time."

She says not only do smokers need to get wise to the fact that cigarette butts are damaging the marine environment, but everyone needs to pull people up on it if they see someone tossing their butt away.

"If I see people doing it they get an ear-bashing."

Wellington City Council planning engineer Nicola Wood says the council have jurisdiction to fine people for throwing their cigarette butt onto the street. She understands the maximum penalty for throwing away a cigarette butt is \$100.

"We are going to start rolling out 250 grates over the storm water drains with a motif of a fish on it, to draw people's attention to the fact that whatever goes down there goes straight out to sea." The council have also designed a fish-engraved medallion to go alongside the grates.

Ms Wood said rubbish bins around the city already have cigarette disposal sections on them, but many smokers don't consider cigarette butts to be litter.

In 2000, a Victoria University master's student researched the harbour floor near the overseas passenger terminal stormwater outfall and found 162 cigarette butts per square meter. Ms Wood believes this number will have increased markedly since then, owing to the Smoke-Free Environments Amendment Act which cast smokers outside.

Imperial Tobacco corporate affairs assistant Catherine Rawnsley said consumers had a responsibility to properly dispose of their cigarette butts. She said the company supported local initiatives to reduce waste and change people's behaviour with littering.

"Our cigarette butts are biodegradable over a month to three years, depending on environmental conditions and we will continue to evaluate any developments in filter research that leads to a more rapid breakdown," she said. Ms Knowles said she is not aware of any hard evidence as to how long a butt takes to break down, and research varies from 12 months to 12 years, "depending on who is doing the research". Cigarette butts take longer to break down in sea water than in fresh water she said.

Ms Wade-Brown said the council has yet to decide who will fine people for littering.

"But's it's an easy fine to avoid," she said. "You just don't litter." She said she would welcome any cost-efficient suggestions from the public as to how they can make it a successful campaign.

Comments

Merino 11:21 am Aug 30 2009

Cigarette butts are not the only problem in Wellington city. The second hand smoke is really a pain in the ass. You walk down the streets of Wellington city, you will be breathing in second hand smoke almost every second. If you want to improve your city image, start by targeting the root of the problem. Educate our children to prevent them from being a smoker.

What I have just said is unfair to the smokers. But I am just voicing my opinion.

Chris Y 11:39 am Aug 27 2009

Hmm.... obviously cigarette butts are a waste product from people who enjoy smoking.

Like most people I enjoy a beer, wine and good food, you don't see any of us (well almost) disposing our waste products from the products we enjoy on the streets. You can image the stink if most of us did that.

Can't you be arrested if you did get caught?

I guess if you smoke you don't really have much care about your own health, let alone care for the environment and other people.

Matt 10:52 am Aug 27 2009

It's long overdue for anti-littering messages on the packaging. I know smokers don't give a damn for anyone but themselves and think nothing of trashing New Zealand, but maybe, just maybe, it'll make some difference. And a dob in webpage like there is for Police Watch for dobbing in out the car-window litterers would also be welcome.

It's either all that or a complete ban on smoking in public places. Actually a complete ban in public places is what we need.

g 08:39 am Aug 27 2009

Every morning on the commute into the city i witness countles idiots throwing butts out their cars, this most certainly ends up in the Harbour.

Combine this with the mountain of discarded butts behind the office block i work and that most be thousands per day.

Offenders most certainly should be fined, as they do in Sydney.

Disgusting !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

APPENDIX 2

Wellington City Council e-Petition results

The following two screenshots, taken direct from WCC's website on Wednesday 10 February 2010, give a comparative view of support and opposition for smoke free environments generally. The petition was for a "Ban on smoking along the city's Golden Mile". Public support for this ePetition in less than four months was **672** signatures. Opposing this ban via ePetition over a similar period were only **28** signatures. These figures clearly show that Wellingtonians require some action.

Petition	
Title:	Ban on smoking along the city's "Golden Mile"
Opened:	25 September 2009
Closed:	25 January 2010
Submitted by:	Charlie Dickson charlie.dickson@clear.net.nz
Petition Details:	A proposal to ban smoking along the streets making up the city's Golden Mile - Lambton Quay, Willis Street, Manners Street/Manners Mall and Courtenay Place.
Background information:	<p>The majority of people walking down Wellington's very busy Golden Mile object to having to negotiate second-hand smoke from smokers walking in front of them or sitting outside cafes. A lunch break outside the office can turn into a not so pleasant experience.</p> <p>Let's make the Golden Mile more attractive to city workers, visitors/tourists, etc.</p> <p>It has been shown that official enforcement is not required after smoking bans are put in place; they become self-policed by the general public.</p> <p>http://www.smokefreecouncils.org.nz/fileadmin. http://www.thefreelibrary.com/BURBANK+EYES</p>
Signatures:	672
Status »	
View Signatures »	

Petition	
Title:	Continue to allow smoking along Wellington's Golden Mile
Opened:	19 October 2009
Closes:	19 March 2010
Submitted by:	Quentin Leon Sciascia hammett@orcon.net.nz
Petition Details:	Smoking is not illegal, nor should it ever be, and as such I have called this e-petition to give a balance point against an e-petition on this site for banning smoking along Wellington's Golden Mile. I do not smoke, but I support the right of any Kiwi to do so.
Background information:	An e-petition on this website has been called to ban smokers from smoking along the Golden Mile in Wellington. This is an equal call to arms to counteract the rhetoric and show that it is time to draw a line in the sand.
Signatures:	28
View Signatures »	
	Sign Petition >

New Zealand Councils with Smokefree Outdoor Public Places policies



