

Wellington City Council

# Smokefree Wellington Action Plan

“Kia wātea te ātea” - me auahi kore a Pōneke



# **Wellington's Smokefree Goal:**

Less than  
5 percent of  
Wellingtonians  
will smoke.

## **Acknowledgements**

The Council is grateful to numerous individuals and agencies for their participation in developing this plan; including the Cancer Society, Otago University, the Health Promotion Agency, Takiri Mai te Ata Whānau Ora Collective, the Ministry of Health, Greater Wellington Regional Council, Hutt City Council, Healthy Families Lower Hutt, the Hutt Valley and Midcentral District Health Boards, Regional Public Health, and Kaiwhakahaere Tupeka Kore Hāpai Te Hauora Māori Public Health (Auckland). Sustainable Coastlines Aotearoa, Surf Lifesaving New Zealand and Residents associations have also participated in the discussion about smokefree beaches.

# Introduction

The Smokefree Wellington Action Plan (the Action Plan) re-affirms Wellington City Council's commitment to the nationwide Smokefree Aotearoa 2025 goal (the Smokefree Aotearoa goal) set by the Government in 2011 and updates and replaces the Smokefree Wellington Action Plan 16/17.

The Smokefree Aotearoa goal is that fewer than 5 percent of New Zealanders will be smokers. The government approach is that this will be achieved by:

- protecting children from exposure to tobacco marketing and promotion
- reducing the supply of, and demand for tobacco, and
- providing the best possible support for quitting.

The Smokefree Aotearoa goal was set to tackle the significant harm caused by smoking<sup>1</sup>. Smoking kills more than 50 percent of long-term smokers – around 5,000 New Zealanders a year, nearly 13 every day<sup>2</sup>. Frontline medical staff report that smokers first present with complications due to smoking-related diseases in early middle age.

About 529,000 New Zealanders still smoke daily, some 13.8 percent<sup>3</sup> of the population. Wellington City has the lowest overall rate of smokers in New Zealand at 9.5 percent<sup>4</sup>.

## Context for Wellington City Council - smokefree outdoor public spaces

The Smokefree Aotearoa goal is about reducing smoking and preventing smoking related deaths and other smoking related harm. Many agencies are working together on tobacco control, stop smoking support, regulation, and building public support nationwide. New taxes for tobacco will continue to be rolled out until 2020, and standardised packaging of tobacco products has been introduced. There are ongoing mass media campaigns, and smokers who wish to quit can access free stop smoking support.

The Wellington City Council contribution is focussed on the creation and management of smokefree events and outdoor public spaces. These help smokers who are trying to quit and remain smokefree, and help prevent young people from taking up smoking, by reducing the visibility of smoking.

*The less smoking young people see around them, the less likely they are to become smokers themselves. Not seeing people smoking tells young people that being smokefree is a normal way of life, and smoking is the exception not the rule<sup>5</sup>.*

The smokefree spaces in Wellington are:

- All playgrounds
- All skate parks
- All sports fields
- All bus stops
- Te Ngākau Civic Square
- Entrances of all Council buildings out to 10 metres; eg libraries, community centres, recreation centres and swimming pools
- Waitangi Park, the Botanic Gardens, Otari Wilton Bush, Truby King Park, Bolton Street Cemetery, and Midland Park
- Laneways<sup>6</sup>, currently Cable Car Lane, Eva St, Leeds St, Egmont St and parts of Chew's Lane
- Zealandia and the Wellington Zoo

Added in this Action Plan are

- All beaches (effective from September 2019)
- Grey Street pocket square (after redevelopment work is completed in mid-2019)

All Council events are smokefree. New and refurbished Council housing and the communal areas of Council housing complexes (smoking areas provided) are also smokefree.

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.smokefree.org.nz/smokefree-environments/why-do-we-have-smokefree-environments>

<sup>6</sup> Laneways were designated smokefree in the Smokefree Wellington Action Plan 2016/17, progressed on a case-by-case basis. This Action Plan adds criteria for considering any space, including laneways.

<sup>1</sup> Māori Affairs Committee, 2010. Inquiry into the tobacco industry in Aotearoa and the consequences of tobacco use for Māori. New Zealand House of Representatives.

<sup>2</sup> Health Effects of Smoking. Ministry of Health <https://www.health.govt.nz/your-health/healthy-living/addictions/smoking/health-effects-smoking>

<sup>3</sup> Health Promotion Agency, Tobacco Data Repository, <https://www.tcddata.org.nz/>

<sup>4</sup> Census 2013 count, Census 2018 results are due in 2019.

Outdoor dining and bar venues receive a discount on the fees for using public space if they are smokefree. About a third of outdoor dining venues using pavements are now smokefree<sup>7</sup>.

The Smoke-Free Environments Act 1990 prohibits smoking in workplaces and certain public areas, but smoking is not illegal. While the Action Plan is designed to make Wellington progressively smokefree, it is implemented through signage, general communications and education. This approach seeks to reduce smoking in our city, and support smokers who would like to stop. It does not seek to punish smokers.

*Vaping products, also known as e-cigarettes, are devices that produce a vapour by heating a solution (e-liquid). The Council asks that people not vape in smokefree spaces or at smokefree events.*

## Smokefree Wellington – research and the next steps

In 2018 the Council conducted a survey of public attitudes, following on from a similar survey in 2015. Some key points from the 2018 survey are:

- nine out of 10 non-smokers, and nearly half of current smokers support Wellington City becoming increasingly smokefree
- support for smokefree spaces is highest from non-smokers, but many smokers also support some of our smokefree spaces; 90 percent of smokers support smokefree playgrounds, 82 percent of smokers support smokefree entrances to Council buildings, and 65 percent of smokers support smokefree bus stops
- there is relatively poor knowledge about smokefree outdoor public spaces in the city; the best known are the entrances to public buildings and playgrounds at around 60 percent, and train stations<sup>8</sup> at around 54 percent, but public knowledge of all the other areas was 33 percent or less.

<sup>7</sup> A discount was introduced for licence fees in the Annual Plan 2017/18.

<sup>8</sup> Smoking on railway land is regulated under the NZ Railways Corporation(General) Regulations 1982 and under the Smoke-free Environments Act 1990. The Council collected information on train stations in 2018 for comparison with other smokefree areas and potentially to collaborate on education campaigns.

A copy of the survey findings is published on the Council's smokefree webpage. The Council also receives complaints about cigarette butt litter and smoke, and comments made in survey responses also show problem areas where people are bothered by smoke.

In this context the Action Plan has three focus areas; to:

- make Wellington progressively smokefree
- improve awareness about smokefree outdoor public spaces and why we have them, through signage, education, promotion and community engagement
- resolve problems in areas affected by cigarette butt litter, smoke entering buildings, or smoke affecting or putting off other users of a space.

The ultimate goal is for Wellington City to be considered smokefree (when the smoking rate is less than five percent). Census results provide the best indicator for Wellington City and will be publicised whenever updates are available. Other measures of success are increased public support, improved public knowledge of smokefree areas and events, and reduced visibility of smoking.

A cross-Council Smokefree Working Group implements the Action Plan, key teams are; Communications, Strategy Policy and Research, Parks Sports and Recreation, Public Health, City Housing, Community Services, City Events and the Council Wellness Programmes. Elected members will lead on advocacy.

# Smokefree Wellington Action Plan

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## Make Wellington Progressively Smokefree

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1. Designate Wellington beaches smokefree.
  2. Designate the Grey Street pocket park (a pedestrian area between Grey Street and Lambton Quay) smokefree.
  3. Increase the number of smokefree places in the city, considering these criteria:
    - public support and smoker support
    - if nearby businesses or residents support smokefree status
    - if the area is commonly used by young people, children or is crowded
    - if there are smoke and litter problems
    - if an area is being redeveloped or upgraded, and
    - take account of unintended or unwanted consequences (eg smokers concentrate elsewhere).
  4. Promote the opportunity to be smokefree to outdoor-dining and bar licence venues, to support their continued voluntary uptake of smokefree outdoor dining and bar areas. As smoking rates drop consider options to make all outdoor-dining and bar venues smokefree.
  5. Encourage non-Council event organisers to consider smokefree events and initiatives.
  6. Seek to collaborate with community organisations, particularly from groups and areas most affected by smoking, who wish to create and promote smokefree spaces and events. Related to this, promote and facilitate the inclusion of stop smoking service providers at public events.
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## Improve Awareness of Smokefree Spaces and the Action Plan

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7. Promote awareness of Wellington's smokefree outdoor public spaces and events, to residents and visitors:
  - Develop and publish print and online resources about our smokefree areas and why we have them, and include information and links to stop smoking support.
  - Tailor resources and communications for specific audiences particularly; youth, Pacific communities, mana whenua and other Māori communities and visitors to the city.
  - Provide signs in smokefree outdoor spaces where it is practical to do so, and in line with best practice for Council signs and effective smokefree signs.
  - Provide regular public communications about smokefree outdoor spaces and the Smokefree Aotearoa goal, at events, through Council social media and other Council communications.
  - Ensure appropriate frontline staff and contractors are aware of smokefree areas and events and are able to have respectful conversations with smokers.
  - Mark World Smokefree Day 31 May with activities and/or announcements about the Smokefree Aotearoa goal and the Action Plan.
  - Ensure Council staff are informed of the Action Plan and the free stop smoking support that is publically available.
  - Work with Greater Wellington Regional Council to promote awareness of smokefree bus stops and train stations.

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**Problem Solving**

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8. Resolve problems on a case-by-case basis, in areas affected by cigarette butt litter, smoke entering buildings, or smoke affecting or putting off other users of a space.
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**Research and Advocacy**

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9. Conduct public attitude surveys in 2021 and 2024 to see what people know and think about smoking, vaping and smokefree outdoor public spaces, and monitor changes in attitudes.
10. Advocate for more controls on the supply of tobacco products, and controls on vaping and the supply of vaping products. In 2018 the Government announced the intention to review the Smokefree Environments Act 1990, which is likely to provide opportunities to participate in consultation.

# Advice from health agencies about quitting smoking

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Visit the Ministry of Health website [health.govt.nz/your-health/healthy-living/addictions/smoking/stop-smoking](https://www.health.govt.nz/your-health/healthy-living/addictions/smoking/stop-smoking) for general information on quitting.

## Get help to quit

If you are ready to quit smoking you don't have to do it alone and you can find support in the way that best suits you, online, by phone, or face-to-face. Finding support can be the key to quitting, for example, you are five times more likely to quit with Quitline than quitting alone.

## Meet face-to-face with a Stop Smoking Service

Find a specialist service for a face-to-face meeting with someone through Stop Smoking Services [smokefree.org.nz/help-advice/stop-smoking-services](https://www.smokefree.org.nz/help-advice/stop-smoking-services).

The local provider for Wellington is the Tākiri Mai Te Ata Regional Stop Smoking Service [www.takirimai.org.nz/Home](https://www.takirimai.org.nz/Home), call on 0800 926 257.

## Call Quitline on 0800 778 778 or visit their website [www.quit.org.nz](https://www.quit.org.nz)

You can talk to a Quitline advisor who will help you: create a personalised quit smoking plan, understand your smoking addiction, and set a date to stop smoking - your Quit Date.

They'll also send you a Quit Pack - with supportive information and your Quitcard that you can use at your local pharmacy to get subsidised nicotine patches, gum and lozenges. Quitline also offers online tools like the Quitblog [quit.org.nz/en/blogs](https://www.quit.org.nz/en/blogs), where you can read about people's stories and success, and share your own.

## Talk to your doctor or pharmacist

Doctors and pharmacists can provide advice and discuss nicotine replacement therapy.

## Vaping as a way to stop smoking

The Ministry of Health provides general information and advice about the use of vaping [www.health.govt.nz/our-work/preventative-health-wellness/tobacco-control/vaping-smokeless-including-heated-tobacco](https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/preventative-health-wellness/tobacco-control/vaping-smokeless-including-heated-tobacco). Vaping may help some people to stop smoking, and a stop smoking service provider will be able to discuss if vaping could help you.

**Absolutely Positively**  
**Wellington City Council**

Me Heke Ki Pōneke

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