

Most smokers support smokefree council-owned playgrounds: National survey data

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Abstract

From an international perspective, New Zealand has been one of the world leaders in passing smokefree environment laws to protect the health of nonsmokers and advance tobacco control.¹ It passed a major law in 1990 and the updated 2003 legislation (implemented during 2004) extended smokefree areas to all restaurants, bars and additional indoor workplaces that were not covered by the 1990 law.

There has also been progress in terms of outdoor smokefree areas. Smoking in outdoor settings is prohibited in the grounds of all schools by the 2003 legislation.

“Educative” smokefree parks policies have been currently adopted by 29% (21/73) of the city and district councils in New Zealand. These are policies which rely on signposts, media coverage and public pressure to limit smoking, rather than on legal enforcement. The grounds of some hospitals, some stadiums, and the campuses of at least one university (Massey) are also covered by smokefree policies.

A 2007 survey in Upper Hutt found that 83% of adult park users thought that having a “smokefree parks policy” was a good idea.² There was even majority support (73%) by smokers for the Upper Hutt smokefree park policy. A 2007 national survey gave options of agreeing that smoking in various settings was acceptable anywhere, in set areas, or not at all. Over a third (38%) said that it was not at all acceptable in local parks or reserves, and 76% said it was not at all acceptable in outdoor children’s playgrounds.³ Nevertheless, there has been no national survey data on what *smokers* think about smokefree parks – an issue we address in the results below.

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