

# Use of four major tobacco control interventions in New Zealand: a review

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## **Abstract**

**Aims:** To identify the extent to which four major population-level tobacco control interventions were used in New Zealand from January 2000 to June 2007.

**Methods:** We selected the four population-based tobacco control interventions with the strongest evidence base. For each intervention, we undertook literature searches to identify the extent of their use in New Zealand during the study period and made comparisons with the other 29 OECD countries.

**Results:** *Increasing the unit price of tobacco:* New Zealand has high tobacco prices, but the policy on tax has several limitations relative to best practice within OECD countries. In particular, the high price appears to be shifting many smokers from factory-made cigarettes to loose tobacco, rather than stimulating quitting.

*Controls on marketing:* While New Zealand compares favourably with most other OECD countries for tobacco marketing controls, some jurisdictions have made more progress in specific areas (e.g. eliminating point-of-sale product displays and removing misleading descriptors on packaging).

*Mass media campaigns:* The country routinely invests in these campaigns, but the budget is only around \$1.2 per capita per year. Some design aspects of the campaigns are progressive, but comparisons with other countries indicate potential for improvements (e.g. learning from counter-industry campaigns in the USA).

*Smokefree environments regulations:* New Zealand was one of the first OECD countries to implement comprehensive smokefree workplaces legislation (including restaurants and bars) and it still compares well. But gaps remain when compared to some other OECD jurisdictions (e.g. no smokefree car laws).

**Conclusions:** There is still substantial scope for New Zealand to catch up to OECD leaders in these key tobacco control areas. In particular, there needs to be higher tax levels for loose tobacco (relative to factory-made cigarettes) and the elimination of residual marketing. There are also important gaps in exploiting synergies between interventions in this country.

## **Recommended Citation**

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