

Health Select Committee  
Parliament  
Wellington

### **Smokefree Environments and Regulated Products (Smoked Tobacco) Amendment Bill**

Hei Āhuru Mōwai Māori Cancer Leadership is a national network of Māori Cancer Specialists who are committed to -

- rangatiratanga in cancer control
- eliminating cancer inequities between Māori and non-Māori, and
- the oranga of whānau Māori.

Tobacco exposure is a major cause of ill-health for those living in Aotearoa. Tobacco is related to cancers of the lung, oral cavity, oesophagus, stomach, kidney, bowel, pancreas, ovaries and bladder. We would like to submit our whakaaro about the aforementioned Amendment Bill.

#### **Take matua/primary points**

- We affirm the commitment to honouring Te Tiriti o Waitangi in the Bill and the Smokefree Aotearoa 2025 Action Plan's focus on eliminating inequities in smoking and smoking related illness
- This bill may have the largest legislated impact on tobacco related harm for Aotearoa
- We are fully supportive of endgame policies for smoking and the wawatā of a smokefree future.
- We endorse the overall aspiration of the Bill and its commitment to implement the three main policy measures: (nicotine removal in smoked tobacco, supply reduction and the tobacco/smokefree generation).
- We strongly recommend Māori leadership and decision-making to ensure the effective delivery of the Bill's intentions. This includes an independent Māori governance group and Māori operational leadership at every level including nationally and at locality and community level.
- We welcome that the bill SFG policy applies to the sale or supply of Smoked Tobacco products and not to the purchase of Smoked Tobacco products.
- The bill can be strengthened with these revisions and additions:
  - Te Tiriti o Waitangi and The Treaty of Waitangi are used interchangeably, we recommend that you refer only to Te Tiriti o Waitangi which is the authoritative text
  - The maximum level of nicotine is specified in the Bill itself and that nicotine reduction is expediated
  - That the bill specifies equity focussed targets and directs that resourcing of independent monitoring and progress reporting is enabled

- we support targeted, disproportionate and ongoing resourcing for whānau to transition out of smoking.

### **Me āta whakaaro ki te hā**

Tobacco exposure is related to many ill health diseases and cancers, however the largest contributor to overall cancer inequities between Māori and non-Māori is lung cancer. We have focussed our submission on the Bill's potential impact on lung cancer and te ora o te hā.

*“Lung cancer is the single largest contributor to the life expectancy gap between Māori and non-Māori”.<sup>1,2</sup>*

### **The burden of tobacco exposure in Aotearoa is most directly seen via lung cancer mortality.**

In Aotearoa, an estimated 20% of all cancer deaths, and 60% of lung cancer deaths were attributed to tobacco.<sup>3</sup> Lung cancer is responsible for over 18% of cancer deaths in Aotearoa – more than any other cancer type.<sup>4</sup> Only one in three of those diagnosed with lung cancer survives more than one year.<sup>5</sup> Five-year survival rates are only 19%.<sup>6</sup>

### **Māori are more likely to be diagnosed with and die from lung cancer than non-Māori.**

Lung cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer among Māori.<sup>5</sup> Māori are diagnosed with lung cancer at a rate more than three times the rate of non-Māori<sup>7</sup> and the death rate from lung cancer is also more than three times higher for Māori than non-Māori.<sup>4,5</sup>

In most countries lung cancer is a disease mainly of men, but due to tobacco smoking, in Aotearoa lung cancer equally affects Wāhine Māori.

### **Smoking continues to play a major role in lung cancer incidence, particularly for Māori.**

In the last decade (since committing to Smokefree Aotearoa 2025) progress has been made in tobacco control in Aotearoa, with smoking rates gradually declining. However, inequities remain in Māori, Pasifika, and socio-economically deprived areas.<sup>8</sup>

Although the prevalence of smoking is declining, the impact of this on lung cancer incidence and mortality is still to be seen. This is due to the continued risk of development of lung cancer associated with smoke exposure, and the gradual reduction in risk over time.<sup>9</sup> Lung cancer develops among Māori at lower smoking exposures and six-eight years earlier compared to non-Māori.<sup>10</sup>

### **The most effective method to reduce lung-cancer incidence and mortality is to end smoking.**

Dismantling the structures that allow harmful tobacco products to be sold and normalised as well as encouraging whānau to not start smoking and supporting those that do to quit is essential in reducing



lung cancer incidence and death among Māori.<sup>12</sup> Additionally, reducing the harm of tobacco, as seen in second hand/passive smoking (estimated risk 20-30%) is imperative.<sup>12,13</sup>

**Hei Āhuru Mōwai supports the Smokefree Environment Bill.**

We are fully supportive of endgame policies for smoking and the wawatā of a smokefree future. Smokefree 2025 will have the single greatest impact on cancer related inequities.

We recognise that the changes the Smokefree Environment Bill will enact will be of benefit to whānau Māori, who are more likely to be diagnosed with, and die from lung cancer than non-Māori.

Āhuru atu

A handwritten signature in grey ink, appearing to read 'Moahuia Goza', written in a cursive style.

Moahuia Goza, Dr Hayley Arnet  
CEO /Tumuaki  
Hei Āhuru Mōwai Māori Cancer Leadership



## References

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