



## Public Health Association supports Smokefree Aotearoa 2025 announcements by Associate Minister of Health, Dr Ayesha Verrall

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The Public Health Association of New Zealand applauds the proposed raft of changes to tobacco smoking controls by Associate Minister of Health, Dr. Ayesha Verrall. The Smokefree Aotearoa 2025 Action Plan proposals, were released as part of a discussion document last Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> April, 2021. The proposals include sweeping cuts to tobacco retailers, the banning of tobacco sales to new smokers, limiting tobacco sales to specific R18 stores or pharmacies, the reduction of nicotine in products and a prohibition on filters in cigarettes.

These are excellent proposals and are strongly supported by the PHANZ. "Around 4,500 people a year die because of tobacco in New Zealand. This is carnage on an industrial scale, and affects Maori and Pasifika peoples disproportionately. We need to do everything that we can to protect our whanau and our whakapapa," said Grant Berghan, Chief Executive Officer of the PHANZ.

The PHANZ is working with other agencies and individuals to establish a Leadership Group who can strengthen the governance of the tobacco control programme and drive through the actions required under the proposed Smokefree Aotearoa 2025 Action Plan. Time is fast running out.

"It is too easy to buy tobacco, it is not a normal product but it is treated like anything else," says the Cancer Society's Shayne Nahu

During this month, Hāpai Te Hauora engaged with communities who are the ones mostly affected by smoking.

"I really commend our iwi and hapū who stood up and actually mobilised to support their communities. And I think if we can frame it in the same way for achieving a Smokefree Aotearoa, letting our hapū, our iwi, our community leaders and our whānau decide these things for themselves and make those changes. It is the government's responsibility to resource that," says Hāpai Te Hauora's Selah Hart.

Is Smokefree 2025 still achievable? Berghan, Nahu and Hart say yes, but what has been needed is the just released Action Plan.

"We've been promised an action plan for a number of years and for a range of reasons it hasn't come through from the government. The sector developed one and put that out called the ASAP plan but actually you know it would be great to get a government-mandated plan to get us there," says Nahu.

Read the public consultation document and provide feedback using the [online tool](#) or [download the feedback form](#) and email it to [smokefree2025@health.govt.nz](mailto:smokefree2025@health.govt.nz)

The consultation closes at 5pm 31 May 2021.

If you have any issues or need any assistance with participating in this consultation, please email [smokefree2025@health.govt.nz](mailto:smokefree2025@health.govt.nz)

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