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Public Health Association
of New Zealand
**Kāhui Hauora Tūmatanui
o Aotearoa**

PHANZ Seek Immediate Reversal of Proposed Changes to Smokefree Legislation

1. The Public Health Association of New Zealand beseeches the new Government to reverse their decision to repeal smokefree legislation. The move by the Government undermines decades of public health progress and poses a severe threat to the well-being of our communities, particularly our Māori and Pacific populations.
2. Recently lauded internationally as being world-leaders for passing the Smokefree Environments and Regulated Products (Smoked Tobacco) Amendment Act 2022, New Zealand is now on the precipice of reversing its commitment to creating a smoke-free generation, saving lives, and reducing the health system's financial burden.
3. The law, originally designed to protect future generations from the harmful effects of smoking, has been a critical measure in reducing smoking rates and improving public health. The repeal of this law is expected to have a catastrophic impact on our society, with estimates indicating a potential loss of thousands of lives per year. Such a policy reversal is not just a step backwards in public health; it is a direct threat to the lives of our people.
4. New Zealand has made significant strides in reducing daily smoking prevalence, dropping from 16.4% in 2011 to 8% in 2021/22, and nearing the much-anticipated Smokefree 2025 goal. Of grave concern is the potential impact of the proposed repeal on Māori communities, where smoking rates are persistently higher. In proposing this, the new government dismisses the well-being of Māori, forsaking health equity and progress made in tobacco control. It is an unhelpful dismissal of our nation's commitment to a healthier, smoke-free Aotearoa.
5. The proposed rollbacks jeopardise New Zealand's global reputation as a leader in evidence-based public health, imperilling the painstaking progress in reducing smoking rates, particularly among youth and vulnerable populations.
6. The reprioritisation of alleged economic interests over equitable health outcomes is unethical and unfounded. Notably, the projected \$5 billion in health system savings from the 2022 legislation far outweighs any short-term gains from intended tax cuts, underscoring the misguided priorities in this decision and its contradiction to the commitment to a healthier, smoke-free Aotearoa.
7. Statements that reversing the Smokefree 2022 Act will contribute to a decrease in ram raids and hinder potential black-market tobacco sales is unfounded.
8. PHANZ is steadfast as an unwavering leader in public health advocacy in New Zealand. We now call for the new Ministers to seriously reconsider their positions and to repeal the proposed policy changes with urgency, as their decisions now threaten the health and well-being of our nation.

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