



MEDIA RELEASE

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‘Don’t let tobacco industry use shops to reach our kids’, say child advocacy groups

The Paediatric Society of New Zealand, the Royal New Zealand Plunket Society, Barnardos New Zealand and Parents Centres New Zealand have joined forces to put their weight behind calls to get tobacco out of sight in shops.

Tobacco products are highly addictive and kill *three times* the number of Kiwis as die from traffic accidents, SIDS, AIDS, murder, and breast cancer *combined*.¹

“Smoking is often called a paediatric disease because nicotine addiction invariably begins in childhood and adolescence,” said Dr Philip Pattemore for the Paediatric Society of New Zealand. “We need to do everything in our power as a community to protect children from starting smoking.”

Barnardos spokesperson Peter Gerrie says children are much more susceptible to advertising than adults and there is clear evidence that retail displays of tobacco make children more susceptible to starting smoking.

“The simple truth is that we’re letting tobacco companies use shop displays to reach children,” said Mr Gerrie.

Plunket National Policy Analyst Cathy Kern says that a product with such a devastating impact on the community has no place on the shelves of dairies, supermarkets and petrol stations.

“This is the only product that kills when used as intended – it’s not ok to put it in front of our kids as if it is a normal product”, said Ms Kern.

Parents Centres New Zealand Chief Executive, Viv Gurrey says action is required to insulate children from tobacco advertising because despite their best endeavours parents need support.

“Very few parents want their children to smoke, including smokers. But parents can’t do it alone. Often times advertising and displays are positioned close to discretionary spend items such as sweets and chocolate and send a strong message to kids that smoking is ok. It certainly appears to undermine the values that many parents aim to communicate to their children.” said Ms Gurrey.

Over the past year many western countries have moved to get tobacco out of sight in shops. The child advocacy groups say Kiwi kids deserve the same level of protection as their Aussie, British and Canadian cousins.

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1. ⁱ Each year 4700 New Zealanders die as a result of smoking. In comparison there are:

- 652 deaths from breast cancer (2005)ⁱ
- 391 deaths as a result of traffic accidents (2006)ⁱ
- 116 people died as a result of an accident at work (2006/07)ⁱ
- 96 deaths from sporting injuries (2006/07)ⁱ
- 45 deaths from SIDS (2004)ⁱ
- 45 people were murdered (2007)ⁱ
- 15 people died from AIDS (2006)ⁱ