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## **NEWS RELEASE**

**4<sup>th</sup> March 2007**

### **Call for cigarettes to be sold from under the counter**

The Cancer Society and ASH want tobacco products to be kept out of sight in all petrol stations, shops and other retail outlets where cigarettes are sold.

“We want cigarette displays off the walls at check-outs and placed under the counter,” Cancer Society tobacco control adviser, Belinda Hughes, said today.

“Recent research shows 66% of adult New Zealanders support a total ban on the visual display of cigarettes, and support is even higher amongst non-smokers.”

“This is much more than a simple commercial issue - the World Health Organisation lists tobacco as the second major cause of death in the world. Getting rid of cigarette displays would save the lives of hundreds of thousands of Kiwis.”

Studies in the 1990s found retail displays of cigarettes increase average tobacco sales by 12% to 28%. They are a causative factor in the decision to smoke, especially for children and people trying to quit.

“Cigarette displays in dairies and supermarkets are advertising and marketing designed to attract our children to take up smoking and this must stop. It is vital to remove these from behind the counter and put them under the counter – what’s out of sight is out of mind,” says ASH spokesperson, Sneha Paul.

“We all know tobacco kills. Recent interviews with kids and teenagers tell us that one of the first things kids see in a dairy is cigarettes. We need to protect our children from this lethal addiction at all costs.”

Around 23% of New Zealanders smoke and the rate is declining at only 0.1-0.2% annually, according to Ministry of Health statistics.

This slow decline in smoking rates reinforces the need to further control cigarette marketing activities.

Ms Paul says a total ban on point of sale cigarette displays would remove an important marketing device used by tobacco companies to sell cigarettes.

## **CONTACTS**

Belinda Hughes  
Tobacco Control Policy Adviser  
Cancer Society of New Zealand  
Phone: 04 494 7274  
Mobile: 027 276 7922  
Website: [www.cancer.org.nz](http://www.cancer.org.nz)

Sneha Paul  
ASH Spokesperson  
Action on Smoking and Health (ASH)  
Phone: 09 5207804  
Mobile: 021 0369579  
Website: [www.ash.org.nz](http://www.ash.org.nz)