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MEDIA RELEASE

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Cancer sufferers call for end to cigarette displays

Mark Scott had a third of his face removed, from his bottom lip to his left shoulder, because of smoking. He has a strong message for policy makers.

"Don't allow another young person to start smoking. Take every piece of temptation out of their way."

Mark is one of the people interviewed in *Out of Sight - Out of Mind: Protect Our Children from Tobacco Marketing*, a DVD launched by the Cancer Society today.

Developed as an education and advocacy tool, the DVD features people personally affected by the effects of smoking, their families, former smokers and researchers talking about the way tobacco is being normalised to our children by shop displays.

A Ministry of Health consultation on tobacco displays in New Zealand received nearly 600 submissions, over 80 percent of which supported completely banning all tobacco displays. One of those submissions came from the Cancer Society.

"The Cancer Society wants an end to tobacco 'powerwalls'. Retail displays are the most prominent form of tobacco marketing in New Zealand today and they have to go," says Cancer Society chief executive, Dalton Kelly.

"Young people are more susceptible to advertising, and tobacco retail displays are no different. Displays have been shown to normalise smoking and promote experimentation among young people."

"They also make it harder for those smokers struggling to quit smoking."

Mr Kelly says it's very rare for adults to start smoking. He says smoking is an insidious addiction which almost always begins in childhood.

Every year 8,000 New Zealanders under the age of 16 start smoking and the average age at which they start is just 14 years of age.

"Most of these children will go on to be lifelong smokers and half will die as a result of smoking. Removing tobacco displays is one way we can change those statistics."

Janet Hoek, professor of marketing at Massey University, believes tobacco marketing is extremely sophisticated. She says point of sale is an extraordinarily manipulative environment.

"What manufacturers are trying to do - and tobacco advertisers will be no different - is to obtain the maximum exposure for their product, because we know in retail environments that visibility is a key criterion for purchase."

Paul McDonald, from the University of Waterloo, Canada, says the tobacco industry is brilliant at cultivating new customers.

"They kill nearly 5,000 people a year in New Zealand. They need to replace those customers and that means doing whatever they can to capture the interest of our 12 year-olds.

He says it's not an accident that tobacco displays are generally situated at eye level for 12 year-olds, or next to sweets.

George Thomson, from the University of Otago, says there is a great deal of evidence that tobacco companies all over the world market to children.

"In New Zealand their major marketing platform to children is to have their products in retail displays everywhere."

Mark Scott says we have a responsibility now to put an end to tobacco marketing.

"We have got to put an end to this addiction and the key to that process is to remove the insidious marketing of tobacco products to protect our children."

Kiwis can become involved in the Out of Sight, Out of Mind campaign by contacting their MP and urging them to support a ban on tobacco displays. Visit the Cancer Society's website www.cancernz.org.nz for more information.

The DVD *Out of Sight - Out of Mind: Protect Our Children from Tobacco Marketing* is available through local offices of the Cancer Society, or you can view it online at www.protectourchildren.org.nz.

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Editors' Note:

- Tobacco displays are an anomaly in a country which banned most forms of tobacco advertising in 1990.
- New Zealanders want more serious action in tobacco. Over two-thirds of all New Zealanders support a ban on tobacco displays.
- It was recently revealed at the NZ Health Select Committee that tobacco companies in New Zealand are paying retailers big money to stock and display tobacco.

YOUTH

- Few adults start smoking. The average age of a new tobacco industry customer in New Zealand is 14 years of age. By age 18, two thirds of New Zealand adolescent smokers regret starting and half have tried to quit.ⁱ
- Young people are more susceptible to advertising and branding. Research has demonstrated that children exposed to tobacco advertising at the point of purchase have inflated perceptions of availability, use and popularity of tobacco.ⁱⁱ
- New Zealand research released last month has shown that there is a clear link between the number of times young people visit stores that sell tobacco and their susceptibility and experimentation with smoking. Teenagers who visit stores that sell tobacco two to three times a week are twice as likely to be susceptible to smoking compared to someone who visited stores less than weekly.ⁱⁱⁱ

SMOKERS

- Displays are not about brand switching. Australian research has demonstrated that only 7% of adult smokers reported making their decision about the brand of cigarettes to buy at the point of purchase and 90% made their decision before they even entered the shop.^{iv}
- Displays undermine quit attempts. Australian research has found that 38% of smokers who had tried to quit in the past 12 months, and 34% of recent quitters, experienced an urge to buy cigarettes as a result of seeing the retail cigarette display. Among the smokers who had tried to quit in the past 12 months and experienced an urge to buy cigarettes when seeing the cigarette display, 61% bought cigarettes, even though they were trying to quit.^v
- Smokers support a ban on tobacco displays. Research also shows that smokers support the move to get tobacco out of sight in shops. A Cancer Society commissioned survey has found that 45% of NZ smokers say that tobacco retail displays make it harder to quit and 59% of NZ smokers support a total ban on tobacco displays.^{vi}

www.ProtectOurChildren.org.nz

ⁱ NZ Tobacco Use Survey, 2006. URL: <http://www.moh.govt.nz/moh.nsf/indexmh/nz-tobacco-use-survey-2006>

ⁱⁱ Jacqueline A. Hickling and Caroline L. Miller, 'Cigarette pack and advertising displays at point of purchase: community demand for restrictions', *International Journal of Consumer Studies* (Online Early Articles)

ⁱⁱⁱ The survey is conducted by Action on Smoking and Health (ASH) New Zealand and the Health Sponsorship Council (HSC) and takes an annual snapshot of smoking behaviour amongst Kiwi teenagers aged 14-15. The 2007 survey saw 29 000 students from more than 240 secondary schools take part by completing anonymous questionnaires, making this one

of the largest surveys of its type. Co-authors: Richard Edwards, University of Otago, Philip Schluter, Auckland University of Technology, Ingrid McDuff, Health Sponsorship Council

^{iv} Jacqueline A. Hickling and Caroline L. Miller, 'Cigarette pack and advertising displays at point of purchase: community demand for restrictions', *International Journal of Consumer Studies* (Online Early Articles)

^v Wakefield M, Germain D, Henriksen L.. 'The effect of retail cigarette pack displays on impulse purchase', Centre for Behavioural Research in Cancer, The Cancer Council Victoria, Australia. *Addiction* 2007 Nov 27.

^{vi} Cancer Society of New Zealand Cigarette Displays Survey, Omnibus Survey Results, March-May 2008, UMR Research. NB. The total sample size of smokers is n=563. The margin of error for sample size of 563 for a 50% figure at the '95% confidence level' is $\pm 4.1\%$.