



Cancer Society New Zealand  
Te Kāhui Matepukupuku o Aotearoa

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## MEDIA RELEASE

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### A lost voice for Maori women

The Cancer Society Chief Executive, Dalton Kelly, is extremely concerned that an important select committee inquiry starting on International Women's Day has no women on the panel.

The Māori Affairs Select Committee convenes on Monday to hear submissions on *'the tobacco industry in Aotearoa and the consequences of tobacco use for Māori.'*

"This is such an important inquiry and what concerns me is there are no women on this committee - where is their voice in all this? We know decisions made by the select committee will largely affect the health of women and generations of children to come - so shouldn't women be playing a part in this?"

"International Women's Day 8 March is a global celebration for the economic, political and social achievements of women past, present and future. Wouldn't it be wonderful if it also became a significant date in wiping out smoking in New Zealand? Smoking is the very opposite to the values women fought so hard to attain so long ago."

"I think a great solution would be for a Māori woman to take the reins in this particular case - become the voice of all Maori women demanding that smoking rates amongst their people drop. She would be a strong advocate for Māori - someone who will gain the ear and respect of her people and really make a difference to their future health."

Tobacco has impacted on the lives of hundreds of thousands of New Zealanders but Māori health is the most affected because of their higher than average rates of smoking. It has caused great pain, suffering and death among Māori and impacted negatively on their economic, developmental and social aspirations over the past century and beyond.

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