



**Cancer Society New Zealand
Te Kāhui Matepukupuku o Aotearoa**

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Politicians, retailers complicit in tobacco deaths

If politicians don't ban tobacco displays they are tacitly supporting cigarette industry marketing activities that consign nearly 8,000 Kiwi kids a year to a lifestyle that will ultimately kill half of them, the Cancer Society said today.

Supporting calls by Associate Health Minister, Tariana Turia, for a ban on tobacco displays, Cancer Society chief executive, Dalton Kelly, says it is unconscionable that cigarettes can still be marketed at Kiwi children through retail displays.

“Displays of tobacco products in shops and other retail outlets are the most insidious form of tobacco advertising.

“Those displays normalise tobacco and they deliberately target children, the young ‘replacement’ smokers whom the tobacco industry needs to capture to continue to make sales.

“It’s imperative that politicians ban these displays.”

Mr Kelly says the tobacco industry and tobacco retailers will respond with a variety of arguments about why displays of cigarettes should not be banned.

“These arguments will all be contrived and based purely on their own commercial gain.

“The bottom line is the industry, the retailers who support tobacco displays and the politicians who decline to ban them are all complicit in an activity that leads to the death of 14 New Zealanders everyday.”

A recent national survey of 15 and 16-year olds found a significant association between displaying tobacco in shops and the uptake of smoking by young people.

“The national year 10¹ survey found teenagers who, two to three times a week visit stores displaying tobacco, were twice as likely to be susceptible to smoking as those who visit less than weekly.

¹ National Year 10 Snapshot Smoking Survey, conducted by ASH annually. Survey of 30,000 school children in NZ

“That’s an incredibly powerful piece of research that highlights just how effective an advertising medium tobacco displays are.

“It also highlights just how important it is to ban tobacco displays if we are serious about protecting our young people from a drug that will kill one in two of all people who take it up.”

Mr Kelly said Maori children in particular are at risk. Research shows that the median age at which Maori children start smoking is just 11.6 years old.

“Our politicians need to ask themselves if they are happy to continue to allow young children to be exposed to cigarette advertising in this way.

“Any responsible parent would say ‘no!’ Let’s see what our politicians say.”

Mr Kelly said research also shows that 59% of smokers also support a ban on cigarette displays.

For further information contact Dalton Kelly, telephone (04) 494-7270