

4 July 2010

Hone Harawira MP Deputy chair and acting chair
Tobacco Inquiry, Maori Affairs Select Committee

Tena koe Hone

Late submission for the Tobacco Inquiry

Suggestion re Accountability of Tobacco Industry

A number of submissions requested that the tobacco industry be held accountable for its actions.

End Smoking NZ trust would like to respectfully suggest that the Tobacco Inquiry recommend thus:

"That the manufacturers and importers be required to report their tobacco product volume sales by product category and by Territorial Local Authority (TLA) and district health board (DHB) area on an annual basis to the Ministry of Health."

Notes:

- Total tobacco sales in cigarette equivalents would be sufficient..
- This need only apply to the top three manufacturers or importers, as these three account for over 98% of the sales.
- As some District Health Boards are amalgamating, the TLA information will provide continuity.
- This recommendation would require a slight rewording of Section 35 of the Smokefree Environments Act 1990, at the next parliamentary opportunity.
- **Making tobacco manufacturers accountable in this way to the health services who have to deal with the health effects of using their products, has not been achieved in any other country to our knowledge.**

Background

The above recommendation

- will hold the big three multinational tobacco companies accountable to every DHB in the country, at the local and regional level where the tobacco smoking product-caused deaths and disease are occurring.
- will also help the public face up to continued high sales of tobacco in their own locality, and help them determine if further action is needed.

- DHBs have responsibility to reduce smoking in their areas, but there is no way currently to know if they are influencing cigarette sales in their areas.

For example in the Far North and Whangarei districts, it is very difficult to judge the success of local efforts to reduce smoking, partly because there are no local statistics on cigarette sales.

- Smoking status will not be asked in the 2011 census.
- Primary Health Organisations will in future collect smoking status by ethnicity and TLA and DHB, but this does not hold the industry accountable for its own actions in selling.
- Smoking prevalence surveys are expensive, and smokers tend to underreport their smoking* The tobacco manufacturers on the other hand will provide sales data for each TLA, which must reconcile with the national tax paid sales totals they already submit.

Rationale

- Once the Tobacco Inquiry reports to Parliament, it is essential that monitoring of sales be put in place as soon as possible, to determine whether the measures recommended are yielding good results in each DHB area.
- Government emphasis is on smoking cessation efforts by DHBs and PHOs. DHBs require more local data before anyone knows if DHBs and PHOs are successful in reducing smoking. Recording sales data requires the industry to account for its sales in every DHB area.
- Moves to raise tobacco tax, reduce supply, or tax or otherwise reduce nicotine, can similarly be monitored in this way.

Nga mihi

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*Laugesen Feb 2010 NZ Med J. www.healthnz.co.nz/News2010.htm

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