

PHA comment on Public Health Bill Report

26 June 2008

The Public Health Association has welcomed new provisions in the Public Health Bill which strengthen action that can be taken against non-communicable diseases.

The Health Select Committee tabled its report on the Public Health Bill in Parliament today.

However National Executive Officer Dr Gay Keating said there was still a big gap between the action that could be taken against communicable diseases and non-communicable diseases.

"The powers to prevent communicable diseases such as tuberculosis are much greater than the ability to protect against non-communicable diseases, such as obesity. These differences in the ability to act are not logical when you consider the health dangers of a communicable disease like tuberculosis which are rare, compared with the terrible health impacts of an obese population."

She said while the Health Committee recommendation to allow regulation on how goods can be advertising or marketed was welcome, it was disappointing the restrictions could only be exercised two years after the issuing of codes or guidelines.

She said a highlight of the report was reflection of the explicit linking of the Crown's responsibility in relation to the Treaty of Waitangi.

Dr Keating was also pleased the report back was explicit on the relationship between DHBs and local government with regard to their separate but interrelated responsibilities for keeping people healthy.

As well, she welcomed the inclusion of wording that says the purpose of health impact assessments should also include how a proposed action could promote and protect public health.

For further information:

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