

**Media Release**  
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For immediate use

### **Community collaboration leads to smokefree success**

A Christchurch community which has pulled together to encourage its residents to consider the dangers of smoking is beginning to show a shift in attitudes toward tobacco, with almost a hundred people in the process of trying to quit.

Lynore Weeks, on behalf of the Canterbury-West Coast Division of the New Zealand Cancer Society, told the Public Health Association that the project was designed to spread smokefree messages and promote cessation services. Evaluation of the work to date has led to two years more funding to develop it further.

Ms Weeks told the public health delegates in Dunedin today that the Christchurch suburb of Hornby was chosen for the programme, partly because of its high proportion of smokers.

"The rate of smoking in Hornby is estimated to be up to 30 percent, well above the Canterbury average of 18 percent. It also has a high Māori and Pacific community with a large manufacturing workforce. These characteristics offer potential for smokefree messages and cessation support to have a real impact."

She said over the past three years community agencies and workers across Hornby have joined together to deliver the message about the importance of smokefree cars and homes. A community smokefree worker has become the face of the project.

"Plunket nurses, budget advisers, the Salvation Army and other community agencies have all delivered smokefree messages to their clients – information for example about the harm caused by second-hand smoke in cars and homes. They have also provided their clients who want to quit smoking with information about where they could enter a cessation programme."

Ms Weeks said that originally the programme was to have no cessation role itself, but increasingly residents were wanting a local cessation counsellor and/or a support group to help them quit. She said extra funding from Partnership Health PHO has enabled a cessation clinic to be run to complement the project. To date this clinic has more than 90 clients registered, who are at various stages of trying to quit.

A survey carried out at the start of the project in 2006 and followed up in both 2007 and 2008 has reported some important findings.

"Most notable has been the rise in numbers considering it important to be smokefree, and have a smokefree home and car, even among smokers. There are however signs from the project that there are many people who try to quit without any help and are unsuccessful. The project will be looking at ways in which smokers who try to quit on their own can be reached and supported in order to increase their chances of success.

"The Hornby project represents an example of what can happen when health agencies collaborate to develop a project, and more importantly gain the support of a local community. After three years, those involved in the project believe the

signs are positive but recognise that more needs to be done to promote the risks associated with smoking and support more people trying to quit.”

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