

MEDIA RELEASE

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BIG INCREASES IN TOBACCO TAX WILL HELP MĀORI QUIT– PHA

The Public Health Association (PHA) says it's time for the government to get serious about increasing tobacco taxation.

The Public Health Association told the Māori Affairs Select Committee's *Inquiry on the tobacco industry and Māori tobacco use* this morning that efforts to help Māori reduce smoking need to be supported by increases in tobacco taxes.

The PHA's Māori analyst, Keriata Stuart says for tax hikes to work, they need to be regular, substantial and highly publicised.

"Governments need to stop seeing tobacco tax as a source of pocket money they can spend as they wish and start dedicating a bigger slice of it to initiatives that help Māori quit."

Ms Stuart says the Select Committee hearings have shown that tobacco use has devastated Māori society."

"The current approach isn't working for Māori. Smoking rates aren't reducing, and young Māori are still taking up smoking. It's time to bite the bullet and use taxation as a tobacco control tool."

The PHA is calling for a national Māori tobacco control strategy involving co-ordinated action right across government.

"The tobacco tax take should be used to support a national leadership team, to train and support the Māori smokefree workforce, and to resource dedicated social marketing and cessation services for Māori."

In its submission, the PHA also called for the government to ban point-of-sale tobacco displays, introduce plain packaging of tobacco products, and tax roll-your-own and loose tobacco to the same level as tailor-made cigarettes.

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