

Smokefree Nurses Aotearoa/New Zealand
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22.6.12

Committee Secretariat (Finance and Expenditure Select Committee)
Parliament Buildings
Wellington

To the Committee Secretariat,

Re: Consultation on the Customs and Excise (Tobacco Products – Budget Measures) Amendment Bill 2012.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit.

Smokers and smokers' families live with the health and financial consequences of tobacco use every day. Nurses work to alleviate the symptoms of diseases caused by tobacco use and to help smokers quit. Smokefree Nurses Aotearoa/New Zealand supports tax increases and the removal of the duty-free tobacco allowance to reduce the uptake of smoking among youth; to stimulate quit attempts; and to support quitters to stay quit (MacFarlane, Paynter, Arroll, & Youdan, 2011; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2012).

Given the effectiveness of tobacco tax increases it is good news that they are proposed. It would be best to get the maximum health gain from any such increase. Incremental increases, such as 10 percent annually for four years, may be absorbed by people who smoke (Glover & Cowie, 2011). Therefore Smokefree Nurses supports:

Increasing tax by 40% in 2013 followed by three annual increases of 20% to 2016

Laugesen (2012) has calculated that this will reduce the number of smokers by 100,000. Hospital admissions for heart attacks would noticeably decrease from 2013.

Duty-free cigarettes are a cheap way to acquire an addictive carcinogenic substance which acts on users and those in their vicinity long-term. Duty-free cigarettes mitigate the effect of tobacco tax price increases on improving health. For this reason Smokefree Nurses supports:

Removing the duty-free tobacco allowance

Yours sincerely

Grace Wong
Director
Smokefree Nurses Aotearoa/New Zealand

Glover, M. & Cowie, N. (2011). *Intermittent Smoking Snapshot*. Centre for Tobacco Control Research. The University of Auckland.

Laugesen, M. (2012). One billion fewer cigarettes, 100,000 fewer smokers. *The New Zealand Medical Journal*. 125 (1356), 103-104.

MacFarlane, K., Paynter, J., Arroll, B., & Youdan, B. (2011). Tax as a motivating factor to make a quit attempt from smoking: A study before and after the April 2010 tax increase. *Journal of Primary Health Care*, 3(4), 283-288.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2012). *Preventing Tobacco Use Among Youth and Young Adults: A Report of the Surgeon General*. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health.