

Smokefree Public Places Policy

Why have smoke free public spaces?

Each year in New Zealand, approximately 5,000 people die from smoking related illnesses. As the most common age for smoking to start is 14, many of our young people become addicted to tobacco before they ever really understand the consequences.

Smokefree environments is an effective way to reduce the number of young people from starting smoking. The less children and young people see adults smoking around them, the less likely they are to take it up.

Smokefree public spaces have wide support in the community including the Bay of Plenty District Health Board, sporting groups and parenting groups.

What is the policy?

The Western Bay of Plenty District Council has adopted this policy to discourage smoking in public areas. The Smokefree policy covers parks, playgrounds, reserves, halls, sportsfields and beaches in the Western Bay of Plenty area which covers Waihi Beach, Katikati, the Kaimai area, Te Puke, Maketu and Pukehina.

The Council wants to encourage people not to smoke in public spaces and empower people to ask someone who is smoking to stop. **The policy is not a ban**, but an educational policy and although Council will not take action against people for smoking in public spaces, it does ask that people respect the intent of the policy.

How will we know about the policy?

Smokefree signs will be erected in popular parks, reserves, beaches, sports fields, and playgrounds across the District.

If the policy is not enforced will it work?

Twenty four other councils in New Zealand have introduced similar Smokefree public spaces policies. Studies conducted by Toi Te Ora – Public Health Service in Opotiki and Rotorua saw a reduction in cigarette butts following the policy in public spaces and high public support for the policy. National research also shows high support for Smokefree public spaces indicating that most people are happy to respect the policy.

