

# Palmerston North Smokefree Outdoor Areas Policy 2013

(incorporating amendments made in June 2015)

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## Introduction

Concerns about the risks of smoking have been central to health policy in New Zealand for decades. Countless studies have examined the links between smoking and a range of diseases including cancer and cardiovascular disease. Controls on cigarette sales, advertising, and sponsorship, and the use of cigarettes in confined spaces, have contributed to a decline in smoking rates – the current estimate is that 20% of New Zealanders smoke regularly. The rate of smoking for Maori women is particularly high, estimated at 41.5% (2006 Census).

Local government typically has a minimal role in health policy, largely restricted to sanitary concerns. However, Palmerston North City Council led the way in 1989 with the Clean Indoor Air Bylaw, which was a forerunner to the Smokefree Environments Act 1990, which banned smoking in indoor workplaces, schools, and preschool establishments. The legislation was extended in 2004 to include all indoor hospitality venues, and all external areas on the grounds of schools and early childhood centres.

With the advance of parliamentary legislation, local government has recently focussed on smokefree policies around facilities commonly associated with children, such as parks and playgrounds. The rationale for these policies is largely driven by the desire to de-normalise smoking, and reduce the uptake of smoking by young persons who are likely to imitate adult smokers. Such policies are unable to be enforced directly through punitive responses, so are generally enforced passively or through varying degrees of signage and education. In 2009, the Palmerston North City Council agreed to make its parks and playgrounds smokefree, and signage was erected in these areas to encourage people not to smoke in these areas.

This policy has been developed largely in response to the central government's stated policy to make New Zealand smokefree by 2025. 'Smokefree', in this context, is defined as less than 5% of the population regularly smoking.

## Strategic alignment

The Palmerston North City Council vision is that "Palmerston North is recognised as a vibrant, caring, innovative and sustainable city." This vision is supported by three City Goals:

- Palmerston North is a socially sustainable city where people want to live because of its safe and easy lifestyle and its many social, cultural and recreational opportunities.
- Palmerston North is a leading city in the quest to become environmentally sustainable.
- Palmerston North is an economically sustainable city which attracts, fosters and retains businesses and jobs to create a prosperous community.

A smokefree outdoor areas policy is consistent with the Council's vision and goals as described above. It represents Council's commitment to being a caring city,

displaying innovation amongst other local authorities, and working towards its sustainability goal. A city free from smoking could become more vibrant and attractive to visitors, both within New Zealand and around the world.

In 2010, the Palmerston North City Council adopted the Sustainable City Strategy. One of the Strategy's aspirations is to "achieve a safe and healthy city." In particular, the Strategy discusses air pollution as a contributing factor for a safe and healthy city. While air pollution is not yet a significant issue for Palmerston North – the Strategy acknowledges that "there are no obvious signs of severe air pollution, such as smog" – Mid Central District Health Board has identified smoking as a significant contributor to bronchial complaints. Research by the University of Otago indicates that smoking in outdoor areas contributes to air pollution. Though smoking in indoor areas has an obvious and immediate impact, with visible evidence of smoke concentration, smoking in outdoor areas nevertheless can increase the levels of fine particulates in the air. The University of Otago study in Lower Hutt in 2012 found that "mean fine particulate levels were 1.7 times higher when smoking was observed, than when it was not." A smokefree policy on smoking in outdoor areas is therefore aligned with the Sustainable City Strategy's goal to achieve a safe and healthy city.

## **Policy principles**

This policy is developed and will be implemented with regard to the following principles:

### **Sustainability**

The policy will contribute to the social, cultural, economic and environmental wellbeing of the community, both now and in the future.

### **Leadership**

The Council has a leadership role within the community, and can contribute to the wellbeing of the community by championing health and wellbeing goals for the City as a whole.

### **Strategic direction**

The policy is aligned with Council's strategic direction, and will contribute to achieving its vision and goals by supporting the Council's desire to see Palmerston North recognised as a vibrant, caring, innovative and sustainable city.

### **Participation**

The policy supports and encourages residents to participate fully in Palmerston North's community life, to contribute to the City's direction, and to help shape the future of the City.

### **Partnership**

The Council works with many organisations to deliver on its strategic and policy aspirations, and forms partnerships to ensure that it is working in the most efficient and cost-effective way.

## **Iwi and Maori relationships**

The Council is committed to working with local iwi and the wider Maori community, in a way that is consistent with the Maori Community Strategy.

## **Policy objectives and goals**

The key objective of this policy is to contribute to improving the health of residents and visitors. In working to achieve this objective, there are a number of specific goals that the Council, in partnership with the appropriate organisations and agencies, will work towards. These goals are:

- Fewer people smoke in public places.
- Businesses and organisations designate their premises “Smokefree”.
- Palmerston North is recognised both internally and externally as a “Smokefree City”.
- More smokers try to quit.

## **Policy guidelines**

### **Smokefree areas**

To meet this policy’s objective of improving the health of residents and visitors in Palmerston North, the Council will declare all parks and playgrounds, including the Square and Arena Manawatu in Palmerston North, to be Smokefree areas where people are encouraged to refrain from smoking.

The Council, in conjunction with Tobacco Free Central, will individually assess the outdoor spaces of each of the following facilities or properties, and will declare all or part of the outdoor space of each facility or property to be a Smokefree area:

- a. the Civic Administration Building
- b. the Customer Services Centre
- c. the central library and community libraries
- d. Square Edge
- e. Regent Theatre
- f. Te Manawa and Globe Theatre
- g. The Stomach
- h. Caccia Birch
- i. Council’s permanent depot sites and all recycling centres
- j. Council-owned community centres
- k. Bus terminals and bus stops
- l. Convention Centre
- m. Lido and Freyberg Aquatic Centres

The Council will partner with organisations and agencies to encourage and support any business or organisation to designate their premises as a Smokefree area, where staff and visitors are encouraged to refrain from smoking.

The Council will work with partner organisations and agencies to promote the benefits of becoming a Smokefree area, and to assist businesses and organisations to join together to become a Smokefree block.

### **Smokefree events**

The Council will extend the Smokefree City concept to events funded or supported by the Council, to be designated Smokefree events, by requiring the display and announcement of smokefree messages in advertising and at the event.

### **Smokefree City**

The Council will work with partner organisations and agencies to promote Palmerston North as a Smokefree City, focussing on the benefits of discouraging smoking in public places and the corresponding benefits to residents of breathing clean air. In consultation with communities, Council will provide Smokefree/ Auahi kore signage to promote smokefree streets and public places.

### **Communication and education**

The Council will, in conjunction with Tobacco Free Central, publicise the Smokefree areas. It will do this by incorporating the existing national Smokefree/ Auahi kore brand into appropriate signs, posters, and other communication media. The Council will work with partner organisations and agencies to provide information for smokers who wish to quit smoking, and to raise awareness about this policy.

### **Enforcement**

Council will not pursue any direct enforcement of this policy. However, Council may investigate and adopt measures, including appropriate bylaws, which support the policy objectives and goals.

Council will work with organisations and agencies to support a positive approach to encouraging people to refrain from smoking in public places, and to encourage smokers to quit smoking.

### **Implementation**

A three year implementation plan will be developed by 31 October 2015 and then every three years to enable the Council to give effect to this policy. These actions will identify the scope and scale of Council's involvement, along with the involvement of partner organisations and agencies, the timing for any such actions identified, and who shall be responsible for the identified actions.

### **Monitoring**

The Council will work with partner organisations and agencies to monitor the implementation of this policy, its impact on the community, and on the rate of

smoking in Palmerston North. The following measures of success will be used as the basis of any review of the Policy:

<b>Measure</b>	<b>Method</b>
The number of actively promoted Smokefree areas in Palmerston North increases	Survey of businesses, organisations, and facilities
Awareness of, and public support for, Palmerston North Smokefree Outdoor Areas Policy increases	Email panel survey
The proportion of smokers identified at specified public places decreases	Observational study
The proportion of non-smokers identified at specified public places increases	Observational study
The population rate of smoking decreases	Census data

## **Review**

The policy will be reviewed after one year, and thereafter every three years, or earlier if requested by Council.