

Re: Free vape scheme to encourage Somerset adults to stop smoking

Happy to help in any way Brian.

And avoid a pr mess on disposables and pods. It is being said by several people that Philip Morris is behind the broadening of the definition of disposables!!?

Ng■ mihi

Robert

Sent from my iPhone

On 21/08/2024, at 10:54 AM, Brian Watson <Brian.Watson@parliament.govt.nz> wrote:

Thanks Robert

I'll get back to you, but it's likely the Minister will take you up on the offer given the feedback from the regional forums she participated in with smokefree providers.

Talk soon

Cheers

Brian

From: Robert Beaglehole <r.beaglehole@auckland.ac.nz>

Sent: Wednesday, August 21, 2024 9:55 AM

To: Brian Watson <Brian.Watson@parliament.govt.nz>

Cc: 'Ben Youdan' <s 9(2)(a)>

Subject: Free vape scheme to encourage Somerset adults to stop smoking

[BBC article: Free vape scheme to encourage Somerset adults to stop smoking](#)

Hi Brian

This sort of approach might be of great interest to the Minister. We can provide more details, if it would be useful.

Cheers

Robert



Re: Updated/recent comparative data on international smoking rates

From

Date Fri 9/6/2024 11:59 AM

To Brian Watson <Brian.Watson@parliament.govt.nz>

Cc Ripine Tito <Ripine.Tito@parliament.govt.nz>; Ben Youdan s 9(2)(a)

3 attachments (1 MB)

Submission to Addiction 9Aug2024[38].pdf; UK Smoking-Statistics-Fact-Sheet.pdf; US smoking rate hits historic low as young adults drive decline.html;

Hi Brian Here is some summary and more detailed information to begin with. Note differing time period, age groups and definitions, I suggest you keep it rather general – NZ doing very well against countries we usually compare ourselves with. 1. A comparison of NZ and Australia contained in a paper which is under review for publication in Addiction. I am sure you can use the info. In brief, latest NZ adult daily smoking at 6.8% v Aus at 8.3% see figure 1 page 16. Vaping differences may have contributed to the lower smoking rates in NZ. I attach the paper. 1. Latest UK data from ASH (UK) for 2022 shows that 12.9% population over 18 years are current smokers see table I of attached ASH UK newsletter. Cf NZ current smoking rate for 15+ is 8.3%. 1. In 2023, 11% US adults smoked cigs in last week. See attached press story based on CDC data. 1. Most recent and detailed WHO Global data is in the attached report for every country with estimates of current smoking for 2022. Let me know if you need further info or help in digesting this material. Best wishes Robert From: Brian Watson Date: Thursday, 5 September 2024 at 2:48?PM To: Ben Youdan , Robert Beaglehole Cc: Ripine Tito Subject: Updated/recent comparative data on international smoking rates Hi Ben and Robert Richard is preparing a couple of speeches for the Minister and has asked me to follow up with you both about a question he has. As part of the messaging, he'd like to be able to show NZ's progress relative to other countries, and if we remain on the current trajectory what might that mean relative to other jurisdictions. He'd like to know if there's such up to date comparative data available and have access to he could use? Cheers Brian

[cid:image001.png@01DAFFA1.C3693340] Brian Watson | Health Private Secretary | Office of Hon Casey Costello Minister of Customs | Minister for Seniors Associate Minister of Health | Associate Minister of Immigration | Associate Minister of Police 2.058 PH, Parliament Buildings, Wellington 6160, New Zealand M: s 9(2)(a) | +64 4 817 8347 E: Brian.Watson@parliament.govt.nz The information in this email (including attachments) is confidential and may be legally privileged. If an addressing or transmission error has misdirected this email, please notify the author by replying to this email and destroy the message. If you are not the intended recipient, any use, disclosure, copying or distribution is prohibited and may be unlawful.

Re: ASH 10 year Snapshot Survey ETA

From Ben
To Brian Watson and Robert
Subject Re: ASH 10 year Snapshot Survey ETA

Kia ora Brian,

The data is now with our bio-statistician. We hope to have something preliminary by the end of October, but this will depend on how much data cleaning is needed. I will keep you posted.

Ben

Original message

On 2 Oct 2024, at 10:25 AM, Brian Watson <Brian.Watson@parliament.govt.nz> wrote:
Kia ora Ben and Robert
I hope that you're both keeping well.
The Minister is appearing before the Health Committee on Monday regarding the proposed vaping amendments.
As back pocket information for her, Richard asked me to follow up about the release of the 2024 ASH survey results. Can either of you provide me with a date, even if approximate, for the release of the survey results please?
Cheers
Brian

Brian Watson | Health Private Secretary | Office of Hon Casey Costello
Minister of Customs | Minister for Seniors
Associate Minister of Health | Associate Minister of Immigration | Associate Minister of Police
2.058 PH, Parliament Buildings, Wellington 6160, New Zealand
M: s 9(2)(a) +64 4 817 8347
E: Brian.Watson@parliament.govt.nz

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New paper on HNB in Japan

From Ben Youdan, ASH
To Brian
Subject New paper on HNB in Japan

Attachment Cummings et al Japan TC November 2024.pdf

Kia ora Brian,

Trust you are well. I've attached a short paper just published that may be of interest. It is an independent look at trends in cigarette consumption in Japan and the impact of heated tobacco products. The authors are all extremely highly regarded and independent of industry.

It concludes:

"Halving the cigarette market in Japan in just over a decade is a remarkable achievement and figuring out how to replicate this type of change elsewhere should be a priority for public health research. Clinical trials are needed to test if HTPs can help addicted cigarette smokers transition away from smoking."

We would support their conclusions, and the considerations for additional research.

Ng■ mihi

Ben Youdan
ASH

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BREAKING NEWS: Swedes First in World to Become Smoke Free - It's a Lesson for the World Says Smoke Free Sweden | Morningstar

From Robert

To Brian

Subject BREAKING NEWS: Swedes First in World to Become Smoke Free - It's a Lesson for the World Says Smoke Free Sweden

Kia ora Brian

Hopefully we won't be far behind. The full press release indicates that for all adults it is actually 5.3% in Sweden.

Cheers

Robert

Link in original email

<https://www.morningstar.com/news/business-wire/20241113569960/breaking-news-swedes-first-in-world-to-become-smoke-free-its-a-lesson-for-the-world-says-smoke-free-sweden>

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ASH yr10 and NZ health survey

From Ben Youdan, ASH
To Brian
Subject ASH yr10 and NZ health survey

Hi Brian,

Apologies to be slow getting back to you on yr10.

We hope to have survey results by the end of the year. They need to go through our advisory group, then get sign-off by the PHA as per our contract. They want 2 weeks (and I think will also update the Minister's office). However, we are aiming to have something early December. I'll keep you updated, but we expect things to be going in the right direction.

We are also preparing a media release and some statements in advance of the Health Survey tomorrow. Hopefully good news, and a chance to put some focus on progress reducing smoking. I am hoping it follows the census trend as we are preparing on the basis of getting closer to 5%, and further declines for Māori and low SES.

Can I ask if the Minister's office will be issuing a media statement? Would it be possible to be added to any circulation list.

Many thanks

Ben Youdan
ASH

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Re: SF 2025 plan

From Robert Beaglehole
To Brian Watson
Cc Ben Youdan
Subject Re: SF 2025 plan

Thanks Brian,

It looks better than it sounded on RNZ, but it will need more cash and less dependence on services!

Ben, what do you think?

Cheers

Robert

Earlier message

From: Brian Watson <Brian.Watson@parliament.govt.nz>
Date: Wednesday, 27 November 2024 at 2:30 PM
To: Robert Beaglehole <r.beaglehole@auckland.ac.nz>
Cc: Ben Youdan <s 9(2)(a)>
Subject: RE: SF 2025 plan

Hiya Robert

Here you go.

The link is:

<https://www.tewhatuora.govt.nz/publications/getting-to-smokefree-2025-the-final-push-to-achieving-the-smokefree-2025-goal>

Cheers

Brian

Original message

From: Robert Beaglehole <r.beaglehole@auckland.ac.nz>
Sent: Wednesday, 27 November 2024 2:23 PM
To: Brian Watson <Brian.Watson@parliament.govt.nz>
Cc: Ben Youdan <s 9(2)(a)>
Subject: SF 2025 plan

Kia ora Brian

We are being asked to comment on the new plan but haven't been able to locate it.

Any chance you could send it to us?

Thanks

Ngā mihi

Robert



Outlook

Letter from ASH New Zealand

From

Date Wed 1/22/2025 10:38 AM

To Casey Costello (MIN) <C.Costello@ministers.govt.nz>

Cc Brian Watson <Brian.Watson@parliament.govt.nz>

 1 attachment (172 KB)

ASH New Zealand letter Jan 2025.pdf;

Kia ora Minister Costello, Please find attached a letter from ASH New Zealand. We congratulate you on the move to increase access to evidence based smoking cessation tools to New Zealanders who smoke via stop smoking services. We also wish to use this opportunity to draw your attention to an upcoming Medsafe classification meeting that will discuss the stop smoking medication cytisine. This is another potentially important addition to the tool box for smoking cessation services. Nga mihi, Ben Youdan Director ASH New Zealand

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22 January, 2025

By Email

Tēnā koe Minister Costello

RE: Vape starter kits and increased access to smoking cessation treatments

On behalf of Action for Smokefree 2025 (ASH) we congratulate you on the New Year announcement of vape starter kits to be made available via stop smoking services.

This is a positive move to provide access to vapes for people who smoke as quit aid, and to do so with behavioural support and advice from a smoking cessation specialist. It encourages adults who may benefit from using a vape, including people who may have tried other methods to quit.

ASH also sees this as an important and useful initiative to address the considerable misinformation and misconceptions about vaping for people who will benefit. Stop smoking services will play an important role in helping people access accurate information and support about vaping to quit smoking.

A similar scheme has been successfully piloted locally in New Zealand with the “vape to quit” initiative and has been rolled out at a national scale in the United Kingdom.

ASH also encourages you to support similar schemes to provide starter kits for high-risk smoking patients on hospital discharge, and in mental health settings. Both of which have been trialled with favourable evaluations in the UK National Health Service.

The Cochrane living review of e-cigarettes concludes with high certainty that they effective for smoking cessation, and access via a stop smoking provider is a good move supported by evidence.

Cytisine

We would also like to draw your attention to a Medsafe agenda item on the classification of the stop smoking medication cytisine as a pharmacist only medication. This is scheduled for the medicines classification committee meeting on 26 February 2025.

Cytisine is a natural product found in plants such as Golden Rain and New Zealand Kōwhai. It has been used as a smoking cessation treatment in several European countries since the 1960s, and modern clinical trials have shown it to be superior to nicotine-replacement therapy in helping smokers quit smoking. Local clinical trials have demonstrated high efficacy and potential for Māori and Pacific populations.

ASH is strongly encouraging Medsafe to classify Cytisine as a pharmacist only medication, and to agree extended access via an accredited stop smoking provider.

New Zealanders have had access by prescription to Champix (Varenicline), another partial nicotine agonist for more than 15 years. However, use fell from 30,000 people in 2019 to 133 in 2022 due to the manufacturer ceasing production. There is now a significant gap in this treatment type for smokers trying to quit.

Classification of Cytisine as a pharmacist only medication will increase options for all adults who want to stop smoking, and for whom existing medications or vaping are not suited. New Zealand would join 15 countries that already classify Cytisine as pharmacist medication. This includes Australia (from 2024) and Canada (where it is classified as a herbal stop smoking aid).

Allowing access via pharmacist and accredited stop smoking practitioners will expedite this process and in turn contribute to the goal of 60,000 additional quitters required to get daily smoking rates below 5%.

If Cytisine is successfully classified for use in New Zealand as pharmacist only medication, we strongly encourage you to consider options to minimise the cost to patients and maximise access.

Once again. We welcome the move to provide access to evidence based cessation options to all New Zealanders trying to stop smoking.

Your sincerely,

Emeritus Professor Robert Beaglehole

Chair

s 9(2)(a)

Ben Youdan

Director

s 9(2)(a)

What We Can Learn from New Zealand's Pragmatic Approach to Vaping Policy

From Robert
To Brian
Subject What We Can Learn from New Zealand's Pragmatic Approach to Vaping Policy

Hi Brian

Here is a nice story about NZ.

CHEERS

Robert

Link in original email

[https://urldefense.com/v3/__https://policyandprogressinthe.substack.com/p/what-we-can-learn-from-new-zealands?utm_medium=email__!!Asq5-8xVch3Reg!qYMEunK5IVEHI2kXN5ZwD3T2EKugc5BIWsBZ8cNLJlIipUPh0z3TlnxKm_pTtv46Jahx0Mvql_89pmxy5p5-nPh5SzSpKvEFoCw\\$](https://urldefense.com/v3/__https://policyandprogressinthe.substack.com/p/what-we-can-learn-from-new-zealands?utm_medium=email__!!Asq5-8xVch3Reg!qYMEunK5IVEHI2kXN5ZwD3T2EKugc5BIWsBZ8cNLJlIipUPh0z3TlnxKm_pTtv46Jahx0Mvql_89pmxy5p5-nPh5SzSpKvEFoCw$)

Sent from my iPhone

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Opinion: NZ is on the cusp of smokefree history, we should celebrate - Robert Beaglehole - NZ Herald

From Robert
To Brian
Subject Opinion: NZ is on the cusp of smokefree history, we should celebrate - Robert Beaglehole - NZ Herald

Kia ora Brian,

You, Richard and the Minister might be interested in this Herald Op-ed published this morning.

Ben is a co-author - his name was unfortunately omitted.

Best wishes

Robert

Link in original email

<https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/opinion-nz-is-on-the-cusp-of-smokefree-history-we-should-celebrate-robert-beaglehole/IU3Q4GXCFBBEVMYRZPQSVKZM3Y/>

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Re: Vape 2 Quit project

From Robert Beaglehole <r.beaglehole@auckland.ac.nz>
Sent Tue, 09 Sep 2025 03:51:21 +0000
To Richard Ninness <Richard.Ninness@parliament.govt.nz>
Cc Geoff Kira <drgeoffkira@pai.org.nz>, Ben Youdan s 9(2)(a)
Subject Re: Vape 2 Quit project

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Thanks Richard,

The info from the lead investigator, Geoff Kira, is in the message several below.

It would be best to talk directly with Geoff. Unfortunately, I don't have his number but I am copying him and Ben on this message.

Cheers

Robert

From: Richard Ninness <Richard.Ninness@parliament.govt.nz>
Date: Tuesday, 9 September 2025 at 3:14 PM
To: Robert Beaglehole <r.beaglehole@auckland.ac.nz>
Subject: RE: Vape 2 Quit project

Apologies, Robert, I'm back now and keen to talk about this when it suits. (I'm also happy if you want to link others into the conversation.)

If it's a phone call - s 9(2)(a)

Richard

From: Robert Beaglehole <r.beaglehole@auckland.ac.nz>
Sent: Tuesday, 2 September 2025 11:58 AM
To: Richard Ninness <Richard.Ninness@parliament.govt.nz>
Subject: Re: Vape 2 Quit project

Kia ora Richard,

Are you back at work? If so, I would like to follow up on our recent conversation.

What is the best number to call you?

Cheers

Robert

s 9(2)(a)

From: Richard Ninness <Richard.Ninness@parliament.govt.nz>
Date: Thursday, 28 August 2025 at 9:09 AM
To: drgeoffkira@pai.org.nz <drgeoffkira@pai.org.nz>
Cc: Robert Beaglehole <r.beaglehole@auckland.ac.nz>, 'Ben Youdan' s 9(2)(a)
Subject: Re: Vape 2 Quit project

Kia ora Geoff and thanks all for the connection.
I'm away from work this week but will get in touch as soon as I'm back.
Richard

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From: drgeoffkira@pai.org.nz <drgeoffkira@pai.org.nz>
Sent: Wednesday, August 27, 2025 12:14:44 PM
To: Richard Ninness <Richard.Ninness@parliament.govt.nz>
Cc: 'Robert Beaglehole' <r.beaglehole@auckland.ac.nz>; 'Ben Youdan' s 9(2)(a)
Subject: RE: Vape 2 Quit project

Kia ora Richard,

We are keen to collect evidence and develop processes around the use of vaping for smoking cessation. We have regions ready to rollout our planned cessation system including testing a quit vaping programme for youth. I am available to meet most days, please feel free to contact me when convenient.

Ngā mihi

Dr Geoff Kira
Director, Pai Research
Adjunct Professor, Te Herenga Waka Victoria University of Wellington

-----Original Message-----

From: Ben Youdan s 9(2)(a)
Sent: Wednesday, 27 August 2025 10:07 am
To: Richard Ninness <Richard.Ninness@parliament.govt.nz>
Cc: drgeoffkira@pai.org.nz; Robert Beaglehole <r.beaglehole@auckland.ac.nz>
Subject: Vape 2 Quit project

Kia ora Richard,

Good to see you last week, and thank you to the Minister and yourself for coming to meet with us.

I want to connect you with Dr Geoff Kira. Geoff is the lead on the Vape to Quit 2 (V2Q2) proposal we discussed. He was involved in the first pilot study that saw very encouraging outcomes for Māori participants. There has been a lot of work building engagement with community services in the project, and a full research and evaluation plan developed. Unfortunately, securing funding has been a challenge. ASH has been part of the wider support network for the project, however it has very much been led by a network of Māori researchers and community services.

Geoff is based in Whangarei, but I believe he is Wellington from time to time. I hope there is an opportunity to follow up with him.

Ngā mihi

Ben
ASH

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FW: New Research Positions Nicotine Pouches as Game-Changer for Global Public Health

From Robert Beaglehole <r.beaglehole@auckland.ac.nz>
Sent Thu, 23 Oct 2025 02:37:23 +0000
To Brian Watson <Brian.Watson@parliament.govt.nz>, Richard Ninness <Richard.Ninness@parliament.govt.nz>
Cc Ben Youdan s 9(2)(a)
Subject FW: New Research Positions Nicotine Pouches as Game-Changer for Global Public Health

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Kia ora kōrua

This paper might be of interest – link in press release. At least it is one view!

Ngā mihi

Robert

From: Federico N. Fernández <ffernandez@weareinnovation.global>

Date: Wednesday, 22 October 2025 at 8:45 PM

To: Robert Beaglehole <r.beaglehole@auckland.ac.nz>

Subject: New Research Positions Nicotine Pouches as Game-Changer for Global Public Health

[View online version](#)

New Research Positions Nicotine Pouches as Game-Changer for Global Public Health

Brussels, Belgium (October 22, 2025) — We Are Innovation, a global network with more than 50 partners around the globe, just published a new Position Paper on “[The Global Case for Nicotine Pouches](#).” The document evaluates the role nicotine pouches can have in the process of building a smoke-free society, highlighting the importance of evidence-based regulation.

In the present day, smoking remains one of the world's most pressing public health problems, claiming more than 8 million lives every year. Although several tobacco control measures have been implemented - such as taxation, restrictions or cessation programs - many regions are currently struggling with stagnated smoking rates. A significant case is the European Union (EU), with a smoking rate of 24%. Moreover, some Low and Middle Income countries (LMICs) are witnessing an increase in their number of smokers.

In an effort to redefine anti-smoking strategies, Innovative Nicotine Products (INPs) are being increasingly recognized as safer alternatives to smoking. The nicotine pouch is one of the products that stands out the most, due to its ability of simultaneously addressing various policy dimensions such as public health, environmental concerns, as well as social and gender neutral suitability.

Nicotine pouches are the INPs with the lowest health risk. In a paper where a risk score from 0 to 100 was calculated for different nicotine products, nicotine pouches were classified with a risk of 0,1 - while cigarettes were calculated with a risk of 100. Another study accessing the number of potentially toxic substances in nicotine products found nicotine pouches to have 5 of these substances, while cigarettes had 84. In addition, the absorption of nicotine takes longer with pouches than with smoking, which reduces dependence and eventually helps quitting.

Besides health, nicotine pouches also appear to be better for the environment. Unlike cigarettes, pouches are not associated with the persistent pollution caused by filters, butts, smoke, ash and residual pollutants. While compared with other INPs, like vapes, their environmental impact remains low, as they do not produce any electronic waste.

Another argument for nicotine pouches are real success stories, mainly the one coming from Sweden. Sweden is currently smoke-free - with a smoking rate below 5 percent - which coincides with an evidence-based approach that makes INPs accessible, affordable, and acceptable.

Nicotine pouches, in particular, had a significant impact in the decline of smoking rates among Swedish women, mainly because of their adaptability to social contexts. The absence of smoke, stained teeth and overall mess makes pouches way more immune to social stigma than cigarettes.

In addition, LMICs find in nicotine pouches an opportunity to arrange a solution to tackle smoking despite infrastructure limitations. Since they are simple to distribute and maintain, pouches can become a cost-effective nicotine alternative for these countries, as well as helping reduce future healthcare burdens. They can also end up replacing unregulated and carcinogenic oral smokeless products that are popular in some parts of Africa and Asia, like nasvay, gutkha and khaini.

The co-authors of the report share their insights on nicotine pouches:

Federico N. Fernández, the CEO of We Are Innovation, claims, *"The future of the fight against smoking may well depend on our collective ability to embrace innovation as a powerful ally—and to craft policies that unleash its potential to accelerate progress toward smoke-free societies."*

Dr. Karl Fagerström, a founding member of the Society for Research on Nicotine and Tobacco and the creator of the Fagerström test, explains, *"In a paper where a risk score was calculated for different nicotine products, cigarettes were set to 100, and no nicotine use was set to 0. The risk for cigars was set to 30, snus to 6, and nicotine pouches to 1. In another study from the UK, harmful and potentially harmful constituents were measured, and no difference was found between NR lozenges and gums and four different nicotine pouches."*

Carissa Düring, the Director of Considerate Pouches Sweden, shares, *"One of the most potent things I hear from pouchers - especially women - is that they finally feel in control. Nicotine pouches offer precise dosing, no social stigma, and no mess. They fit into professional settings, family life, and public transit - all without friction."*

José Alberto León, Project Director at Fundación Internacional Bases and We Are Innovation, adds, *"For policymakers worldwide developing comprehensive environmental strategies, this zero-electronics approach offers particular advantages. It aligns with circular economy principles by eliminating complex waste streams and avoiding the growing challenge of electronic waste management."*

Beatriz Santos, the Chief Communications Officer of We Are Innovation, says, *"The Swedish experience proves that 'smoke-free' is not just a slogan. Innovation is already delivering safer alternatives to smoking, now regulation must rise to meet them. With nicotine pouches, the EU has an unprecedented opportunity to plummet its 24 percent smoking rate and accelerate its progress towards its goal to become smoke-free by 2040."*

Tetiana Rak, the Chief Operations Officer of We Are Innovation, comments, *"Nicotine pouches represent a rare public health innovation that matches scientific evidence with real-world feasibility. For low- and middle-income countries, they offer an infrastructure-independent alternative to smoking, capable of preventing millions of deaths if policies follow evidence."*

Indeed the evidence shows that nicotine pouches have multiple benefits while compared to cigarettes - whether for public health, for the environment, for social harmony or for economy. Yet, they keep facing multiple misconceptions fueled by misinformation.

We Are Innovation hopes its new report highlights the case for nicotine pouches, in order to help building smart regulatory frameworks, making Innovation stand out against prohibition and working towards a smoke-free future.

ENDS

ABOUT WE ARE INNOVATION

We Are Innovation is a dynamic network of individuals and institutions who deeply believe in innovation's power to drive progress and solve the world's most pressing problems. With over 50 think tanks, foundations, and NGOs based worldwide, We Are Innovation represents the diverse voices of a global civil society committed to advancing human creativity, adopting new technologies, and promoting innovative solutions. Through our collaborative approach and cutting-edge expertise, we are driving global transformative change. To learn more about our work, visit us at <https://www.weareinnovation.global/>

ABOUT PATH TO SMOKE-FREE

Path to Smoke-Free is a comprehensive analytical platform developed by We Are Innovation that reveals how countries can harness innovation to defeat smoking and accelerate their journey toward smoke-free status. Drawing from Sweden's remarkable success in dramatically reducing smoking rates far below global averages—we identified three key elements: Accessibility, Acceptability, and Affordability of innovative nicotine products. Our platform combines comprehensive policy data with real insights from Swedish ex-smokers, offering interactive tools to compare how countries are harnessing innovation to defeat smoking. The platform features powerful forecasting charts that project smoking prevalence and when countries will reach smoke-free status under three scenarios: current policy trajectories, outcomes if countries matched Sweden's success rate, or results following the combined pace of leading nations. Policymakers, researchers, and health professionals can explore evidence-based strategies that could help their countries reach smoke-free targets faster, guided

by proven success stories. Discover how your country could accelerate its journey to smoke-free status at <https://pathtosmokefree.global/>.

Image removed by sender.

This e-mail has been sent to r.beaglehole@auckland.ac.nz, [click here to unsubscribe](#).

[Image removed by sender.](#)

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Outlook

The WHO ~~拒~~ Campaign Against Safe Nicotine ? Brownstone Institute Roger Bate

From

Date Wed 12/3/2025 10:24 AM

To Brian Watson <Brian.Watson@parliament.govt.nz>; Richard Ninness
<Richard.Ninness@parliament.govt.nz>

<https://brownstone.org/articles/the-whos-campaign-against-safe-nicotine/> This might be of interest. And did you see some of the ASH Yr 10 media coverage on Monday? If not, let me know and I will send it through. Cheers Robert

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Personal notes on WHO FCTC COP 11.

From Robert Beaglehole <r.beaglehole@auckland.ac.nz>
Sent Fri, 12 Dec 2025 03:40:07 +0000
To "Casey Costello (MIN)" <C.Costello@ministers.govt.nz>
Cc Brian Watson <Brian.Watson@parliament.govt.nz>, Richard Ninness <Richard.Ninness@parliament.govt.nz>
Subject Personal notes on WHO FCTC COP 11.

Dear Hon Minister,

Many thanks for encouraging me to attend this meeting.

It was in equal parts fascinating and frustrating; but also, a little encouraging in that several countries were interested in the NZ experience with tobacco harm reduction or, as we now refer to it as, "public health-led, evidence-based, industry protected programmes".

You might be interested in my attached personal summary of the meeting and the key issues discussed.

I look forward to our de-briefing on Monday morning.

With best wishes

Robert Beaglehole

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Personal notes on WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC)¹

11th Conference of the Parties (COP11), Geneva, 17–22 Nov 2025

Executive Summary

New Zealand's delegation to COP11 worked cohesively and consistently promoted New Zealand's strong Smokefree progress as public health-led, evidence-based, and industry-protected. While the delegation was effective and collegial, there was disappointingly little interest from WHO, the Secretariat, or most Parties in New Zealand's achievements or in balanced discussions of harm reduction. Constructive discussions were held with delegations from Canada, the United Kingdom and Australia all of whom have taken varying steps to regulate vaping products.

The overall tone of COP11 was sceptical of harm reduction. Alternative nicotine products were frequently portrayed as unsafe and industry-driven, with little consideration of differential risk or real-world evidence. Emotional narratives predominated over scientific analysis. New Zealand's data, including rapid declines in smoking and significant progress among Māori and Pacific peoples, was largely overlooked.

The most important agenda item for New Zealand—Agenda 4.5—became polarised and procedurally unmanageable, ultimately being suspended and deferred to COP12. This presents both a challenge and an opportunity: meaningful progress at COP12 will require a stronger, more balanced evidence base that recognises the experience of high-performing countries such as New Zealand.

Engagement with WHO staff showed some interest but indicated misconceptions about New Zealand's trajectory and the role of regulated smokefree alternatives. Further effort will be needed to clarify the evidence-base ahead of COP12.

The Pacific context remains challenging, with many countries influenced toward vape bans rather than proportionate regulation. Operational concerns at COP11—inefficient processes, imbalance in presentations, and inconsistent management—added to the difficulty of advancing evidence-based dialogue.

Overall, while representing New Zealand was a positive experience and the delegation performed strongly, the broader environment was resistant to the harm-reduction evidence base. A coordinated and strategic approach will be required to shift discussions ahead of COP12 and build on the minority view that the FCTC Secretariat's anti-tobacco harm reduction view is no longer sustainable.

¹ Robert Beaglehole, Emeritus Professor, University of Auckland; Member of the NZ Delegation.

Personal reflections

- The New Zealand delegation worked cohesively and effectively, with strong leadership and mutual support.
- NZ consistently promoted its successful Smokefree journey as public health-led, evidence-based, and industry-protected.
- Interest from WHO, the FCTC Secretariat, and many Parties in NZ's achievements was limited apart from Canada, the United Kingdom and Australia.
- The dominant COP11 narrative focused on combating the tobacco industry and youth nicotine uptake, with little attention to the broader FCTC objective—reducing harms from smoked tobacco—or to harm reduction as a legitimate strategy.
- Significant effort will be required to encourage WHO and the Secretariat to adopt a genuinely evidence-informed approach.

In **summary**, it was an honour and a pleasure to be a member of the NZ delegation. The NZ delegation made constructive inputs into the COP deliberations, despite the experience being, at times, frustrating.

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1. New Zealand's Contributions

- NZ's opening statement (Attachment 1 below) was early, clear, and strong—emphasising NZ's rapid progress toward a smoke-free nation.
- NZ highlighted the full implementation of FCTC MPOWER interventions and the more recent role of regulated smokefree nicotine alternatives (vaping) in accelerating the decline in smoking rates.
- Despite our repeated references—formal and informal—to the NZ experience, the level of interest from WHO and the Secretariat was disappointing.
- Some Parties assumed NZ's repeal of the 2022 legislation represented backward movement, reflected in an NGO awarding NZ the “Ashtray Award” on day one.
- NZ reaffirmed its support for the full objectives of the FCTC, including demand reduction, supply reduction, and harm reduction (Article 1(d)).
- The delegation emphasised harm reduction as an established public-health approach, presented using the language “public health–led, evidence-based, and industry-protected” to avoid mischaracterization.

2. Delegation

- The NZ team operated cohesively, led ably and diplomatically by Jane Chambers.
- Key contributions were made by Rebecca Ruwhia-Collins; the administrative and other support by Olivia Bar was excellent.
- Matt Allen, while not part of the delegation, provided valuable intelligence and support through his role as co-chair of the Expert Group on Forward-Looking Measures (Agenda 4.1).

3. Tone and Orientation of COP11

- WHO, the Secretariat, and most Parties expressed strong opposition to harm reduction.
- Harm reduction was framed as a tobacco-industry strategy to expand nicotine markets, particularly among youth.
- Alternative smokefree products were portrayed as unsafe and ineffective for cessation.
- Little distinction was made between the risks of cigarettes and the far lower risks of smokefree nicotine products.
- Some Parties expressed support for an eventual “nicotine-free” goal, not merely smoke-free or tobacco-free.
- NGOs present—largely funded by Bloomberg-aligned sources—reinforced these positions.
- Scientific evidence was rarely scrutinised; emotional argument and assertion dominated.

4. Technical Agenda Items (Committee A unless noted)

4.1 Forward-Looking Tobacco Control Measures (Article 2.1)

- Decision: Proposal passed; list of measures is voluntary and not exhaustive.
- Relevance to NZ: Low.

4.2 Liability (Article 19)

- Decision: Parties invited to consider recommendations of the Expert Group.
- Relevance to NZ: Low.

4.3 Environment and Health (Article 18) – Committee B

- Decision: Parties encouraged to strengthen implementation.
- Relevance to NZ: Low.

4.4 Regulation of Contents and Disclosure (Articles 9 and 10)

- Outcome unclear.

4.5 Measures to Prevent and Reduce Tobacco Use, Nicotine Addiction, and Exposure; Addressing “Industry Harm Reduction Narrative”

This was the most important agenda item for NZ; the NZ intervention is Attachment 2

Discussion was highly polarised: - Brazilian proposal: Called for banning or restricting alternative nicotine products and applying the full FCTC framework to all nicotine products. Supported by a majority. - NZ position: Opposed, due to: - proposed bans rather than proportionate regulation; - failure to recognise differential risk across nicotine products; - intention to apply cigarette-oriented measures to all nicotine delivery systems. - St Kitts & Nevis proposal: Supported harm reduction and an independent working group. NZ did not support due to an overly broad mandate unlikely to yield an evidence-based outcome.

Process: - Debate became confused; Secretariat struggled to maintain direction. Due to time constraints, Agenda Item 4.5 was suspended and automatically deferred to COP12.

5. Implications for COP12

- Constructive debate will require a balanced background paper including:
 - updated evidence on adult and youth outcomes from public health–led, evidence-based and industry-protected strategies;
 - case studies such as NZ’s use of all three FCTC tobacco control strategies;
 - practical pathways for LMICs with limited capacity.
- During COP11, NZ’s experience was not acknowledged as exemplary; discussion instead focused on countries favouring bans, which are now dealing with illicit trade and stalled progress.

6. Engagement With WHO Tobacco Team

- A productive informal meeting was held with WHO's tobacco team.
- WHO showed interest in NZ's success but attributed it primarily to MPOWER implementation.
- This interpretation underplays the acceleration in the smoking decline following the availability and government regulation of smokefree nicotine alternatives.

7. Indigenous Health Side Event

- NZ co-sponsored the first COP side event on Indigenous approaches, with Australia and Brazil.
- Rebecca Ruwhia-Collins presented powerfully on NZ's experience.
- WHO reported that Indigenous perspectives now inform all WHO policies and should increasingly inform FCTC processes.

8. Pacific Region Considerations

- Many Pacific countries have banned alternative nicotine products, influenced heavily by INGOs and WHO regional actors.
- Nauru expressed interest in NZ's experience but has already adopted bans.
- The Pacific Tobacco-Free 2025 plan (2014) was not discussed.

9. Concerns About Meeting Management

Key issues included: - imbalance of opening presentations; lack of balanced framing; frequent scheduling delays and poor communications.

10. Personal reflections

- The New Zealand delegation worked cohesively and effectively, with strong leadership and mutual support.
- NZ consistently promoted its successful Smokefree journey as public health-led, evidence-based, and industry-protected.
- Interest from WHO, the FCTC Secretariat, and many Parties in NZ's achievements was limited apart from Canada, the United Kingdom and Australia.
- The dominant COP11 narrative focused on combating the tobacco industry and youth nicotine uptake, with little attention to the broader FCTC objective—reducing harms from smoked tobacco—or to harm reduction as a legitimate strategy.
- Significant effort will be required to encourage WHO and the Secretariat to adopt a genuinely evidence-informed approach.

In summary, it was an honour and a pleasure to be a member of the NZ delegation. The NZ delegation made constructive inputs into the COP deliberations, despite the experience being, at times, frustrating

Attachment 1. NZ opening statement delivered by Rebecca Ruwhia-Collins

Greetings and thank you for the opportunity to address the Conference of the Parties. New Zealand has made great strides in implementing the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control.

Since 2012, the adult daily smoking rate in New Zealand has more than halved, and is now 6.9%, amongst the lowest in the world. We are close to achieving our goal of an adult daily smoking prevalence of less than 5%.

The theme of *uniting for tobacco-free generations* resonates strongly. We are committed to this goal and have seen great success. For young people aged 15-24, just 3% are smoking daily, and of those 15–17-years-old, just 0.6% are smoking daily. We are proud to see that our comprehensive tobacco control programme is resulting in generations who will never take up smoking.

Our progress has been made through a sustained and comprehensive programme that has involved smokefree environments, tax increases, plain packaging and health warnings which have been reinforced by social marketing campaigns, cessation support and strong enforcement. Providing people with practical, targeted supports has been key to our approach.

Implementation of harm reduction measures, particularly access to vaping products, has also been a significant driver of our rapid decline in smoking rates, especially for our indigenous population. For Māori, daily smoking has dropped more than 60%, from 37.7% in 2012, to 14.7% in 2024, an unprecedented decline.

At the same time, we are equally focused on the need to protect our youth from vaping and nicotine addiction. We have applied risk proportionate regulation to vaping products to ensure they are available to support people to quit smoking while discouraging youth uptake. New Zealand continues to tighten regulatory controls to protect youth including retail, product and marketing rules with strengthened enforcement. These regulatory controls are working and 2025 data show that youth vaping rates continue to fall.

New Zealand remains firmly committed to reducing the immense harm caused by tobacco utilising all three aspects of tobacco control as defined in Article 1d of the convention: supply, demand, and harm reduction strategies. We look forward to sharing our experiences and learning from others as we work together towards a world where smoking is no longer a leading cause of death and disease.

Attachment 2. NZ intervention on Agenda item 4.5 – harm reduction – delivered by Robert Beaglehole

Madame Chair, distinguished delegates,

New Zealand is firmly committed to the objectives of the FCTC.

New Zealand has implemented strong tobacco control measures that have produced one of the fastest declines in smoking rates. Daily adult smoking is now below 7%, and youth smoking has fallen to historic lows. A new generation is growing up essentially smokefree.

Notably, in the past seven years, the decline in smoking has accelerated markedly. During this period, New Zealand has included regulated, alternative nicotine products—predominantly vapes—as part of a public-health-led and evidence-based approach to help adults who smoke to transition away from cigarettes.

Before New Zealand regulated vaping products, extensive marketing was permitted, and youth vaping rates inevitably rose. We are pleased that with the robust and comprehensive regulations now in place, youth vaping rates are falling from their peak in 2022. In addition, there is no robust New Zealand evidence that youth vaping is leading to youth smoking.

New Zealand accepts the evidence that some alternative nicotine products can assist some adults to quit. However, these products must be tightly regulated, with robust restrictions on their marketing and accessibility. Also, their long-term safety and effectiveness must be monitored and evaluated.

New Zealand fully agrees on the need to protect FCTC policymaking from all forms of tobacco industry interference.

Madame Chair, New Zealand recognises the importance of this Agenda item and thanks the Secretariat and Parties for their work. We note that the two Draft Decisions before us reflect the concerns held by Parties and highlight the complexity of this issue.

Madame Chair, New Zealand stands ready to work with all Parties on a process that will advance this agenda item.

Thank you.

Released under the Official Information Act 1982

FW: [Nicotine Policy] Official: Australian illicit tobacco much more than previously estimated

From Robert Beaglehole <r.beaglehole@auckland.ac.nz>
Sent Sat, 13 Dec 2025 23:23:19 +0000
To Ruth Bonita Beaglehole <r.bonita@auckland.ac.nz>, Brian Watson <Brian.Watson@parliament.govt.nz>, Richard Ninness <Richard.Ninness@parliament.govt.nz>, Michael Colhoun <media@ash.org.nz>, Ben Youdan <s 9(2)(a)>
Subject FW: [Nicotine Policy] Official: Australian illicit tobacco much more than previously estimated

FYI

From: nicotinepolicy@googlegroups.com <nicotinepolicy@googlegroups.com> on behalf of Clive Bates <s 9(2)(a)>
Date: Sunday, 14 December 2025 at 12:04 PM
To: Nicotine Policy <nicotinepolicy@googlegroups.com>
Subject: [Nicotine Policy] Official: Australian illicit tobacco much more than previously estimated

Colleagues

In case you haven't seen this, the Australian Government's Illicit Tobacco and E-cigarette Commissioner (ITEC) published her first report on Australia's illicit tobacco and e-cigarette market last week.

The report is here: [Illicit Tobacco and E-cigarette Commissioner Report 2024-25: A national picture of the illicit market.](#)

Some fascinating stuff in here.

The report sets out its method (not in great detail, tbh). It describes some of the negative aspects of handing a large market to organised crime, providing a useful summary of the negative consequences of regulation or taxation that drive illicit trade on pages 7-8.

It also provides an estimate of the size of the illicit market, concluding that 50-60% of the tobacco market (A\$4.1-6.9 billion) and 95.7% of the vape market (A\$1.6 billion) is illicit. Summarised in Figure 4.

Figure 4
 Estimated market size and volume of illicit tobacco and e-cigarette products in circulation in 2024/25⁵

Reporting Period 24-25 Year	Illicit market share	Illicit market value
% / Value of tobacco	If tobacco consumption trends down: 50%	\$4.1 billion
	If tobacco consumption holds steady: 55%	\$5.6 billion
	If tobacco consumption trends up: 60%	\$6.9 billion
% / Value of e-cigarettes	95.7% of the e-cigarette market	\$1.6 billion

That gives an **Australian illicit nicotine market of A\$5.7 to \$8.5 billion.**

A\$1.0 = £0.50, US\$0.67.

So that's a lot of crime in Australia's population of 28 million. If the Australian experience were scaled up to the US population of 340 million, it would be **US\$46-US\$69 billion** or for the UK's 67 million, **£6.8-UK£10.2 billion**.

Has there ever been a public health policy with such spectacular results!?

The situation has deteriorated rapidly over the past two years: "From FY22/23 to FY24/25, legal tobacco clearances have fallen by over half." Even allowing for the success of the largely illegal vape market, that is a very rapid decline in the legal market and corresponding increases in the scale of criminalisation.

The estimated excise losses are even greater than the illicit market estimate.

"Estimated excise evaded ranges from **\$7.7 billion to \$11.8 billion**." The size of the illicit market is estimated on a different basis than the excise loss. ITEC defines the illicit market as: "the estimated net profit accruing to criminal networks. This is based on the estimated street value of illicit tobacco less the estimated cost of manufacture and importation of tobacco products." This will be lower than the excise loss because illicit products have to be sold at a significant discount to the legal tax-paid products.

The new estimates are much larger than the previous estimates from a "Tax gap" methodology, which the Australian Tax Office now accepts to be unreliable ([notice Oct 2025](#)). The [previous estimate](#) was an excise loss of \$3.2 billion in 2023-24, less than half the numbers quoted. Tobacco control activists have relied on the tax gap analysis to downplay the scale of illicit trade.

Illicit nicotine now accounts for 32-41% of the total illicit drugs market in Australia.

The illicit drugs market (not including nicotine) is estimated to be about \$A12 billion. "Taken together, the estimated street value of drugs consumed by Australians for these five drugs (cocaine, methamphetamine, MDMA, heroin and cannabis) totalled \$11,977.4m in 2023-24. [[source](#) - page 5].

Enforcement. One last point... the government is spending what would be gigantic money if this were to be spent on public health.

The March 2025-26 Budget committed \$156.7 million to address key challenges, including strengthening powers to seize criminal profits and assets. This builds on the \$188.5 million package announced in January 2024 to bolster disruption and deterrence of illicit tobacco to Australia.

The ITEC Commissioner's first year of work sits within the context of broader whole-of-government efforts implementing \$345 million Australian Government commitments to combat illicit tobacco and e-cigarettes.

And this has generated a lot of enforcement activity... "A record volume of 2,244 tonnes of illicit tobacco was seized during 2024-25." But what does this actually achieve?

But what does this enforcement activity do? The problem is that all this enforcement activity does not reduce supply by 2,244 tonnes and does not mean that 2,244 tonnes of tobacco

is not smoked, and so people are somehow healthier. It still meant that "*Between 3,312 and 5,397 tonnes*" was shipped illegally. The complex of criminal networks reconfigured the supply to meet the illicit demand, maybe adding a little to the price, maybe reducing the criminal margin, but not fundamentally containing the growing illicit trade.

My example is to ask: what would happen if the authorities shut down the local Sainsbury's supermarket in an English town and destroyed all its food? Would everyone who shops there for food starve? No, obviously not. There would be a short-term response (e.g., shop at Tesco, buy online, travel further) and a medium- to long-term response (e.g., a rival may open a new supermarket). Why would it be different for drugs?

I am not saying there should not be enforcement: it's important to tackle crime for its own sake. Just don't expect it to: (1) have any health benefits; (2) reinforce the policies that create the conditions for illicit trade, (3) protect the tax base.

Finally, a hat-tip to James Martin, Deakin University, for pointers to some of the data. Mistakes are my own!

Clive

Clive Bates

T: s 9(2)(a)

E: s 9(2)(a)

X: @Clive_Bates

W: clivebates.com

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To post, send an email to nicotinepolicy@googlegroups.com

More on-line at <https://groups.google.com/d/forum/nicotinepolicy> including membership, past conversations and user controls

View Nicotine Policy Google calendar: <https://calendar.google.com/calendar/embed?src=fmgcs8cmqa8to2n0a3cfu1dl4o%40group.calendar.google.com>

You received this message because you are subscribed to the Google Groups "Nicotine Policy" group.

To unsubscribe from this group and stop receiving emails from it, send an email to nicotinepolicy+unsubscribe@googlegroups.com.

To view this discussion, visit https://groups.google.com/d/msgid/nicotinepolicy/CADF%3DKzQaoeGrgbj8JkC1xadD6fqng32%2BHUUMdrXt3rL_wRBZqw%40mail.gmail.com.

Re: Possible contacts in London

From Robert Beaglehole <r.beaglehole@auckland.ac.nz>
Sent Wed, 14 Jan 2026 04:25:22 +0000
To Richard Ninness <Richard.Ninness@parliament.govt.nz>, Ben Youdan s 9(2)(a)
Cc Brian Watson <Brian.Watson@parliament.govt.nz>
Subject Re: Possible contacts in London

Kia ora Richard,

Thanks for your request.

Yes, several people come immediately to mind.

How do you want to proceed? Ben is on leave until next week.

I can chat at your convenience or wait until Ben is back. Over to you.

Cheers

Robert

s 9(2)(a)

From: Richard Ninness <Richard.Ninness@parliament.govt.nz>
Date: Wednesday, 14 January 2026 at 1:06 PM
To: Ben Youdan s 9(2)(a), Robert Beaglehole <r.beaglehole@auckland.ac.nz>
Cc: Brian Watson <Brian.Watson@parliament.govt.nz>
Subject: Possible contacts in London

Happy new year, gents.

I was hoping to get some advice from you about smoking harm/cessation experts the Minister could meet with in London.

It's yet to be confirmed, but it's likely she will be there March 18,19, 20 (Wed to Fri). The trip is focused around organised crime, but you've mentioned the vape to quit programme there in the past and I've noted that Cochrane has its head office in London and it would be great if there were people who could help provide insight into what works.

I'm happy to discuss and it could be that a call works better - I just wanted to see if anything comes to mind as the trip will be approved by the end of the month and the itinerary will be set soon after. We don't want to miss the opportunity to talk to good people.

If you could email be back or we can organise a call - I'm s 9(2)(a)

Thanks and regards,
Richard

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Free vape schemes drive smoking rates to record lows - Clearing the Air

From Robert Beaglehole <r.beaglehole@auckland.ac.nz>
Sent Fri, 23 Jan 2026 21:22:43 +0000
To Richard Ninness <Richard.Ninness@parliament.govt.nz>
Subject Free vape schemes drive smoking rates to record lows - Clearing the Air

https://clearingtheair.eu/en/post/free-vape-schemes-drive-smoking-rates-to-record-lows/?utm_campaign=NSP%20News%20Digest%20-%202023%20January%202026

Hi Richard,

This might be of interest, though anecdotal.

Cheers

Robert

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Re: Possible meeting with Hon Min Costello

From Robert Beaglehole <r.beaglehole@auckland.ac.nz>
Sent Tue, 03 Feb 2026 04:10:09 +0000
To Richard Ninness <Richard.Ninness@parliament.govt.nz>
Cc Ben Youdan s 9(2)(a)
Subject Re: Possible meeting with Hon Min Costello

Hi Richard,

I have been out all day - hence the delay in replying.

Yes, Afternoon of Wednesday 18th suits us both.

What time would suit the Minister?

Best wishes

Robert

From: Richard Ninness <Richard.Ninness@parliament.govt.nz>
Date: Tuesday, 3 February 2026 at 11:51 AM
To: Robert Beaglehole <r.beaglehole@auckland.ac.nz>
Subject: RE: Possible meeting with Hon Min Costello

Morning Robert

Apologies, I probably mucked up the process. Would the afternoon of Wed 18th Feb (in Wellington) work for you both?

Richard

From: Robert Beaglehole <r.beaglehole@auckland.ac.nz>
Sent: Monday, 2 February 2026 5:53 PM
To: Richard Ninness <Richard.Ninness@parliament.govt.nz>; Brian Watson <Brian.Watson@parliament.govt.nz>
Cc: Ben Youdan s 9(2)(a)
Subject: Re: Possible meeting with Hon Min Costello

Hi Richard,

We have yet to hear from Otene. Please send me his e-address and I will follow up with him directly.

We are revising the briefing paper from last August.

Cheers

Robert

From: Richard Ninness <Richard.Ninness@parliament.govt.nz>

Date: Wednesday, 28 January 2026 at 3:12 PM

To: Robert Beaglehole <r.beaglehole@auckland.ac.nz>, Brian Watson <Brian.Watson@parliament.govt.nz>

Cc: Ben Youdan s 9(2)(a)

Subject: RE: Possible meeting with Hon Min Costello

Hi

I'm sure the Minister will want to do this. I've passed this on to Otene, the SPS, to see what dates are possible.

Regards,
Richard

From: Robert Beaglehole <r.beaglehole@auckland.ac.nz>

Sent: Wednesday, 28 January 2026 2:36 PM

To: Richard Ninness <Richard.Ninness@parliament.govt.nz>; Brian Watson <Brian.Watson@parliament.govt.nz>

Cc: Ben Youdan s 9(2)(a)

Subject: Possible meeting with Hon Min Costello

Kia ora kōrua,

We would very much like to meet again with the Minister to brief her on the next steps on the Smokefree journey.

Is there a possible meeting time, perhaps before she travels to the UK?

We would provide a briefing paper well before the meeting.

Ngā Mihi

Robert

Re: Contacts in London on nicotine research

From Ben Youdan s 9(2)(a)
Sent Thu, 12 Feb 2026 02:54:35 +0000
To Richard Ninness <Richard.Ninness@parliament.govt.nz>
Cc Brian Watson <Brian.Watson@parliament.govt.nz>
Subject Re: Contacts in London on nicotine research

No problem,

Martin has also come back to me. s 9(2)(a) ph: s 9(2)(a) .

He is delivering a lecture about policy professional as research consumers on the 18th at Kings College (where Debbie is based). Using the UK e-cigarette report as a case study. So it will be very timely and hopefully convenient.

s 9(2)(a) , head of E-Cigarettes at the MHRA got back to me and is keen to help. Although as he is civil servant, he has to go via his policy team. s 9(2)(a) can be contacted at: s 9(2)(a) @mhra.gov.uk

Hopefully a good mix of experts for the Minister to engage with.

Ben

On 12 Feb 2026, at 3:47 PM, Richard Ninness <Richard.Ninness@parliament.govt.nz> wrote:

Thanks Ben, much appreciated. We'll be in touch with them soon.

Richard

From: Ben Youdan s 9(2)(a)

Sent: Wednesday, 11 February 2026 12:23 PM

To: Richard Ninness <Richard.Ninness@parliament.govt.nz>; Brian Watson <Brian.Watson@parliament.govt.nz>

Subject: Contacts in London on nicotine research

Kia ora Richard and Brian,

I've got in touch with some UK colleagues about meeting with the Minister in March.

Dr Debbie Robson and Dr Sarah Jackson have both said they can meet. They are both extremely highly regarded experts with a breadth of experience. Debbie had also suggested she may be able to bring together some of their colleagues from the UK Nicotine research group as well. Contact details here and I have linked to their profiles below. Let know how if you'd like me to link you up, or if you prefer to get in touch independently. They are expecting to hear from you so it won't be a 'cold call'.

Dr Debbie Robson: deborah.jrobson@kcl.ac.uk

Dr Sarah Jackson: s.e.jackson@ucl.ac.uk

I have also reached out to the head of E-cigs at the UK medicines agency, and Trading Standards. Hopefully I'll hear back overnight. Finally, I have approach Martin Dockrell who set up the UK swap to stop vape programme in the National Health Service. I will update when I hear back.

Ngā mihi

Ben

[Sarah Jackson |](#)

[About |](#)

[University](#)

[College London](#)

[<image001.png>](#)

profiles.ucl.ac.uk

<image002.jpg>

[Debbie Robson | King's College](#)

[London](#)

kcl.ac.uk

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Re: MEET: Hon Casey Costello, 18th Feb

From

Date Thu 2/12/2026 11:28 AM

To Bella Landon Lane <Bella.Landon Lane@parliament.govt.nz>

Cc Brian Watson <Brian.Watson@parliament.govt.nz>; Richard Ninness <Richard.Ninness@parliament.govt.nz>; Ben Youdan s 9(2)(a)

1 attachment (103 KB)

ASH Briefing 12 Feb.docx;

Kia ora Bella, Here is our briefing for Hon Min Costello for our meeting on 18 Feb. Best wishes, Robert Beaglehole s 9(2)(a) From: Bella Landon-Lane Date: Wednesday, 4 February 2026 at 1:50?PM To: Robert Beaglehole Cc: Ben Youdan Subject: RE: MEET: Hon Casey Costello, 18th Feb You don't often get email from bella.landon-lane@parliament.govt.nz. Learn why this is important Great, look forward to seeing you both then. Warm regards, Bella [cid:image001.png@01DC95DD.2BC69D60] Bella Landon-Lane | Private Secretary - Executive Support Office of Hon Casey Costello Minister of Customs | Minister for Seniors Associate Minister of Immigration | Associate Minister of Health | Associate Minister of Police EW3.3, Beehive, Wellington 6160, New Zealand The information in this email (including attachments) is confidential and may be legally privileged. If an addressing or transmission error has misdirected this email, please notify the author by replying to this email and destroy the message. If you are not the intended recipient, any use, disclosure, copying or distribution is prohibited and may be unlawful.

From: Robert Beaglehole Sent: Wednesday, 4 February 2026 12:52 PM To: Bella Landon-Lane Cc: Ben Youdan Subject: Re: MEET: Hon Casey Costello, 18th Feb Thanks Bella, This works very well for us both. Best wishes Robert From: Bella Landon-Lane > Date: Wednesday, 4 February 2026 at 9:46? AM To: Robert Beaglehole >, Ben Youdan > Subject: MEET: Hon Casey Costello, 18th Feb You don't often get email from bella.landon-lane@parliament.govt.nz. Learn why this is important Good morning, I am pleased to confirm a meeting with Hon Casey Costello with the following details, Date/Time: Wednesday 18 February, 4.15pm – 5.00pm. Location: Office of Hon Casey Costello, EW3.3, Beehive, Wellington. Let me know if this is still suitable for you both. Kind regards, Bella Landon-Lane [cid:image001.png@01DC95DD.2BC69D60] Bella Landon-Lane | Private Secretary - Executive Support Office of Hon Casey Costello Minister of Customs | Minister for Seniors Associate Minister of Immigration | Associate Minister of Health | Associate Minister of Police EW3.3, Beehive, Wellington 6160, New Zealand The information in this email (including attachments) is confidential and may be legally privileged. If an addressing or transmission error has misdirected this email, please notify the author by replying to this email and destroy the message. If you are not the intended recipient, any use, disclosure, copying or distribution is prohibited and may be unlawful.

Completing the Smokefree Goal 2025/26

New Zealand has achieved one of the fastest sustained declines in smoking prevalence ever recorded. Since 2012, adult daily smoking has fallen rapidly across all population groups, with the steepest declines occurring after 2018 associated with the uptake of vaping. These gains have been accompanied by substantial reductions in inequalities, particularly among Māori and people living in high-deprivation communities. Among youth aged 14–15 smoking has been virtually eliminated and vaping is declining.

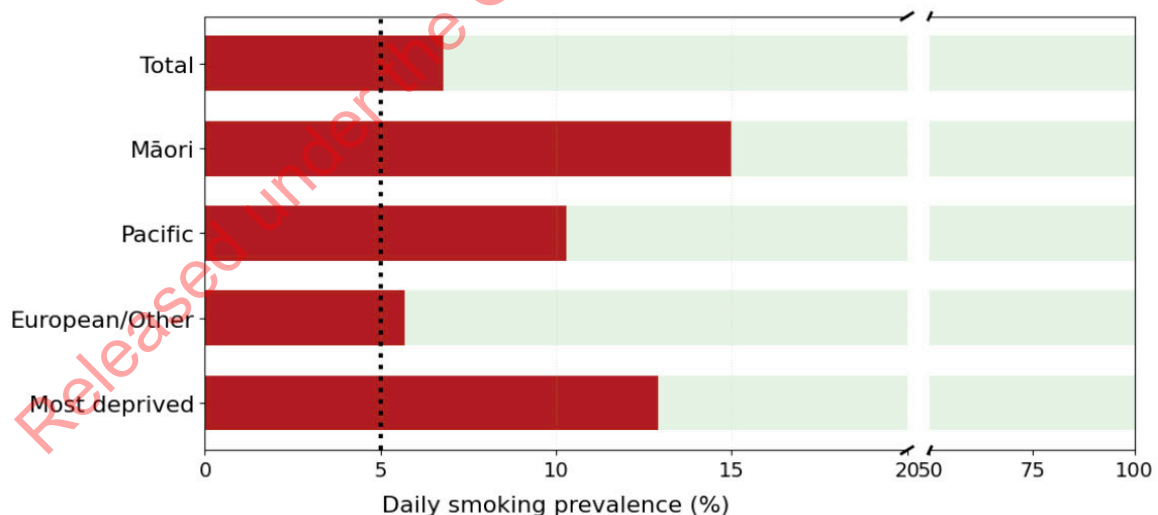
The most recent NZHS data (2025) shows adult daily smoking at 6.8%, meaning New Zealand is now over 93% smokefree overall, and already at or near 95% or more smokefree for several population groups including women, young adults under 25 years, and people living in more advantaged communities.

The slowing in progress since 2023 should not be interpreted as policy failure, but rather reflects success; those most responsive to existing tobacco control and harm-reduction measures, have largely quit smoking or moved away from cigarettes. Smoking is no longer widely distributed across the population; it is now concentrated and predictable.

Of the estimated 294,000 people who still smoke, around 120,000 – 150,000 people have smoked long term and face the highest risk of smoking-related death and disease over the next one to two decades.

What reaching the Smokefree goal now requires

The Smokefree goal is defined as $\leq 5\%$ daily smoking prevalence which equates to 214,000 smokers. The figure shows how far different populations sit above that threshold. Progress toward the goal will be fastest and fairest when action is concentrated where the gap is largest.



To reduce adult daily smoking prevalence to 5% or less, around 80,000 additional quitters are required. Progress among Māori and high-deprivation populations will simultaneously deliver reductions across age and sex groups, and for the total population. Achieving the Smokefree target for Māori alone, for example, would require supporting approximately 60–70,000 additional Māori smokers to quit, many of whom are also represented among the most deprived communities and among mid-life men. Roughly one in five daily smokers also vape daily, indicating a large group already transitioning away from smoking and well suited to targeted cessation support.

Addressing misinformation and goal confusion

Despite unprecedented progress, and a clear end in sight, the public narrative has shifted in ways that risk undermining further gains:

- Smokefree is increasingly framed as a failure, rather than unfinished success
- Harm reduction is mischaracterised as a tobacco industry tactic
- Vaping is no longer consistently portrayed as substantially less harmful than smoking
- Youth vaping has come to dominate the smokefree narrative
- The Smokefree goal is increasingly reframed as a nicotine-free goal, with smoking conflated with nicotine use.

This information environment discourages quit attempts, increases relapse risk, and weakens public and political confidence in evidence-based policy.

Supporting 80,000 people to quit smoking

The priority for 2026 is to actively encourage and support increased quit attempts among the remaining high-risk smoking population - especially **mid-life adults living in high-deprivation communities, and a strong overlap with Māori and Pacifica.**

The following interventions, ordered by likely speed of impact, are required:

1. **Targeted public campaigns** to correct the misinformation about nicotine and promote accurate information on the risks of cigarettes relative to smokefree alternatives, while driving more quit attempts.
2. **Expanded quit options**, including scaled-up vape-to quit-programmes, (such as voucher schemes, delivered through specialist retailers) and strengthened partnerships with Māori and Pacific community-led programmes.
3. **Workforce activation**, engaging health, allied and social service professionals to deliver up-to date quitting advice, follow-up, and access to subsidised quit aids, including vaping kits, as first line options for people who smoke.
4. **Regulation**, including licensing cigarette retailers, expanding smokefree options for smoking cessation (e.g. cytisine and nicotine pouches), while strengthening youth protection without undermining adult quitting.

Conclusion

Achieving Smokefree Aotearoa/New Zealand now requires precise and evidence-based interventions directed at the people at the highest risk of smoking-related disease and death. Māori leadership and decision-making alongside strong Pacific and community leadership with honest communications are critical. New Zealand is very close to completing its world-leading smokefree transition.



Robert Beaglehole and Ben Youdan, February 2026

s 9(2)(a) **Trading Standards**

From Ben Youdan s 9(2)(a)
Sent Wed, 18 Feb 2026 00:53:11 +0000
To Richard Ninness <Richard.Ninness@parliament.govt.nz>
Subject s 9(2)(a) Trading Standards

s 9(2)(a)

s 9(2)(a)@warrington.gov.uk

Chartered Trading Standards Institute Lead Officer for Tobacco, Vapes and Nicotine

Sent from my iPhone

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North Yorkshire Council to buy £477k of vapes to help smokers quit

From Robert Beaglehole <r.beaglehole@auckland.ac.nz>
Sent Thu, 05 Mar 2026 22:16:26 +0000
To Richard Ninness <Richard.Ninness@parliament.govt.nz>, Brian Watson <Brian.Watson@parliament.govt.nz>
Cc Ben Youdan s 9(2)(a)
Subject North Yorkshire Council to buy £477k of vapes to help smokers quit

https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c3wlz890d8do?utm_campaign=NSP%20News%20Digest%20%205%20March%202026

FYI

Cheers

Robert

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Outlook

Associations between the national 'Swap to Stop' programme offering free vapes for smoking cessation and quit attempts in England: Results from a population-based survey

From

Date Sat 3/7/2026 10:02 AM

To Brian Watson <Brian.Watson@parliament.govt.nz>; Richard Ninness <Richard.Ninness@parliament.govt.nz>; Nick Chamberlain <nick.chamberlain@tewhatauora.govt.nz>; Selah Hart <Selah.Hart@teakawhaiora.nz>; Ben Youdan s 9(2)(a)

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1111/add.70332> FYI An evaluation of the English "Swap to Stop" programme encouraging. Nga mihi Robert

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Outlook

Re: Associations between the national 'Swap to Stop' programme offering free vapes for smoking cessation and quit attempts in England: Results from a population-based survey

From**Date** Tue 3/10/2026 10:29 AM**To** Brian Watson <Brian.Watson@parliament.govt.nz>**Cc** Robert Beaglehole <r.beaglehole@auckland.ac.nz>; Richard Ninness <Richard.Ninness@parliament.govt.nz>; Nick Chamberlain <nick.chamberlain@tewhatauora.govt.nz>; Selah Hart <Selah.Hart@teakawhaiora.nz>

1 attachment (955 KB)

Addiction - 2026 - Buss - Associations between the national Swap to Stop programme offering free vapes for smoking.pdf;

Kia ora Brian, Here is a PDF of the paper attached. Ben On 9 Mar 2026, at 8:52?AM, Brian Watson wrote: Hi Robert Could you resend please. Myself and Richard cannot open the link From: Robert Beaglehole Sent: Saturday, 7 March 2026 10:03 AM To: Brian Watson ; Richard Ninness ; Nick Chamberlain ; Selah Hart ; Ben Youdan Subject: Associations between the national 'Swap to Stop' programme offering free vapes for smoking cessation and quit attempts in England: Results from a population based survey <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1111/add.70332> FYI An evaluation of the English "Swap to Stop" programme encouraging. Nga mihi Robert

London meetings

From Ben Youdan s 9(2)(a)
Sent Thu, 19 Mar 2026 22:12:34 +0000
To Richard Ninness <Richard.Ninness@parliament.govt.nz>
Subject London meetings

Hi Richard,

I hope the trip has been going well. My colleagues there have enjoyed the productive discussion, and I hope the Minister has got something from them.

One quick question. I hear that MHRA and Department of Health cancelled. That's disappointing. Would be appropriate to ask why?

Many thanks

Ben

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From: Ben Youdan
To: Travis Ancelet
Cc: Robert Beaglehole
Subject: Re: Article
Date: Tuesday, 31 March 2026 11:11:32 am
Attachments: image001.png

Hi Travis,

Hopefully I can send you a copy shortly. I'm not able to access at the moment, but I've ask a colleague via the university. A quick take on the abstract:

There is no question vaping is not harmless, but is substantially less harmful than smoking. However, this type of analysis has considerable limitations, and the way it is framed exaggerates the findings. It's a bio-marker study, so this is a big limitation already as it cannot infer causation.

It relies heavily on rodent and lab based studies, many of which expose subjects to unrealistic concentrations of vapour.

They also note than vapers have 100x cotinine level than non-users. Cotinine is not a carcinogen, but a bio-marker of nicotine.

Vapes are a very diverse range of devices, so the paper does not distinguish if certain devices are more risk, or in the case of some animal studies where mice were found to have carcinogens, the devices were misused or overheated. Likewise the difference between nicotine salts, and freebase, or nicotine strength and frequency of use.

I can't see that they provide any control data, or comparison.

Other large meta analysis of biomarkers have been more rigorous in their approach (see below). They conclude that levels of tobacco-specific nitrosamines, volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), known to contribute to cancer and other smoking-related diseases, are markedly lower.

I would argue strongly that the paper does not change the position that vaping ins substantially less harm than smoking, helps people quit, and is not for never smokers especially kids. I would also add that if you vape to stay smokefree and are sure you won't smoke again then consider quitting vaping.

Hopefully this is of some use, and if I get the paper I will send a copy.

Ben

McNeill A, Simonavicius E, Brose LS, Taylor E, East K, Zuikova E, Calder R & Robson, D. Nicotine Vaping in England: an evidence update including health risks and perceptions. London: Office for Health Improvement and Disparities, September 2022.
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1107701/Nicotine-vaping-in-England-2022-report.pdf

On 31 Mar 2026, at 10:15 AM, Travis Ancelet
<Travis.Ancelet@parliament.govt.nz> wrote:

Hi Ben,

Thanks for the chat just now. Any thoughts you have on this article:<https://academic.oup.com/carcin/article-abstract/47/1/bgag015/85555982?redirectedFrom=fulltext> or if you happen to have the full text version would be greatly appreciated. I've got a request in with the Parliamentary library for it in the meantime.

Cheers,

Travis



Travis Ancelet (PhD, MBA) | Ministerial Advisor | Office of Hon Casey Costello

Minister of Customs | Minister for Seniors

Associate Minister of Immigration | Associate Minister of Health |

Associate Minister of Police

2.054 PH, Parliament Buildings, Wellington 6160, New Zealand

M: **s 9(2)(a)** | DDI: 04 817 9736

E: travis.ancelet@parliament.govt.nz

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Re: Govt endorsement of Swap to stop scheme

From Robert Beaglehole <r.beaglehole@auckland.ac.nz>
Sent Wed, 15 Apr 2026 23:21:43 +0000
To Richard Ninness <Richard.Ninness@parliament.govt.nz>, Brian Watson <Brian.Watson@parliament.govt.nz>
Cc Ben Youdan s 9(2)(a)
Subject Re: Govt endorsement of Swap to stop scheme

Fine Richard.

Your message reminds me that I sent a follow up COP11/COP 12 letter to Andrew Black, the Acting Head of the WHO FCTC Secretariat. I haven't had a response.

Perhaps Hon Minister Costello might be interested in following up?

I will separately forward my letter to Andrew to you.

Cheers,

Robert

From: Richard Ninness <Richard.Ninness@parliament.govt.nz>
Date: Thursday, 16 April 2026 at 11:14 AM
To: Robert Beaglehole <r.beaglehole@auckland.ac.nz>, Brian Watson <Brian.Watson@parliament.govt.nz>
Cc: Ben Youdan s 9(2)(a)
Subject: RE: Govt endorsement of Swap to stop scheme

A belated thanks, Robert. Interesting and helpful. Have passed on to the Minister.

Richard

From: Robert Beaglehole <r.beaglehole@auckland.ac.nz>
Sent: Sunday, 12 April 2026 9:57 AM
To: Richard Ninness <Richard.Ninness@parliament.govt.nz>; Brian Watson <Brian.Watson@parliament.govt.nz>
Cc: Ben Youdan s 9(2)(a)
Subject: Govt endorsement of Swap to stop scheme

Kia ora

This might be of interest.

Cheers

Robert

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FW: COP 11 and COP 12

From Robert Beaglehole <r.beaglehole@auckland.ac.nz>
Sent Wed, 15 Apr 2026 23:23:44 +0000
To Richard Ninness <Richard.Ninness@parliament.govt.nz>, Brian Watson <Brian.Watson@parliament.govt.nz>
Subject FW: COP 11 and COP 12

Hi again Richard,

As mentioned in my earlier message, below is my message to Andrew Black, Acting Head of the WHO FCTC secretariat.

Cheers

Robert

From: Robert Beaglehole <r.beaglehole@auckland.ac.nz>
Date: Tuesday, 7 April 2026 at 10:37 AM
To: blacka@who.int <blacka@who.int>
Subject: COP 11 and COP 12

Dear Andrew,

Greetings from New Zealand.

I hope your position as Head of the FCTC Secretariat has been confirmed.

I am writing to you in a personal capacity after discussions with the New Zealand Minister responsible for tobacco control.

I should say that I am a strong supporter of the WHO FCTC having taken part in 1999 in the early informal discussions on the treaty. The New Zealand FCTC experience has been positive with implementation of all three strategies.

I have several comments on COP 11 and a suggestion for COP 12.

COP 11

I appreciate the strong diversity of views presented by the delegates. Unfortunately, there was a focus in the main presentations on the evils of the tobacco industry and on negating the potential for reducing the harms of smoking by utilising all FCTC strategies - there was no attempt to balance different perspectives or experiences.

Specifically, there was no little or no interest in a structured comparison of countries which have made recent rapid progress in reducing adult smoking rates, for example, New Zealand, UK, USA.

The meeting was dominated by concerns about Big Tobacco and youth vaping with much less attention to the overall goal of reducing the impacts of cigarette smoking.

There was no serious attention paid to tobacco harm reduction (or "evidence-based public health-led programmes independent of the tobacco industry to reduce the harms of smoking"), one of the key FCTC strategies.

Finally, there was little or no attention paid to the importance of regulating nicotine products in relation to the harm they cause.

COP 12

My suggestion for COP 12, is that the meeting agenda and background papers include a better balance of differing opinions and pays greater attention to the COP 11 limitations mentioned above.

With regard to harm reduction, it would be helpful for the Secretariat to present a balanced background paper which recognises the differing views expressed in COP 11 and aims to avoid the unhelpful and divisive discussion that occurred at COP 11.

I would be happy to discuss these issues with you.drew

Best wishes

Robert

Re: Nature Health paper on accelerating progress towards ending smoking

From Robert Beaglehole <r.beaglehole@auckland.ac.nz>
Sent Mon, 20 Apr 2026 21:30:55 +0000
To Richard Ninness <Richard.Ninness@parliament.govt.nz>
Subject Re: Nature Health paper on accelerating progress towards ending smoking

Ok, thanks Richard.

It terms of next steps, it would be good to see more action from Health NZ!

Cheers

Robert

From: Richard Ninness <Richard.Ninness@parliament.govt.nz>
Date: Tuesday, 21 April 2026 at 9:13 AM
To: Robert Beaglehole <r.beaglehole@auckland.ac.nz>; Casey Costello (MIN) <C.Costello@ministers.govt.nz>
Cc: Brian Watson <Brian.Watson@parliament.govt.nz>
Subject: RE: Nature Health paper on accelerating progress towards ending smoking

Thanks Robert,

We'll bring this to the Minister's attention. I'll also see whether it's timely to meet with you and Ben again.

Regards,
Richard

From: Robert Beaglehole <r.beaglehole@auckland.ac.nz>
Sent: Monday, 20 April 2026 9:50 PM
To: Casey Costello (MIN) <C.Costello@ministers.govt.nz>
Cc: Brian Watson <Brian.Watson@parliament.govt.nz>; Richard Ninness <Richard.Ninness@parliament.govt.nz>
Subject: Nature Health paper on accelerating progress towards ending smoking

Dear Hon Minister,

I am writing to draw your attention to a just published Nature Health Comment. The attached paper examines global progress in reducing smoking and considers what may be required to bring the smoking epidemic to an end within a generation.

The paper recognises the substantial gains achieved through established tobacco control measures, with emphasis on the New Zealand experience. It also notes that, internationally, smoking prevalence is declining too slowly to achieve an endgame within a realistic timeframe and explores whether combining existing approaches with proportionately regulated smoke-free nicotine alternatives could accelerate progress.

The central conclusion is that ending smoking globally within a generation is technically achievable but will likely require using all available tools to reduce exposure to smoked tobacco, particularly among populations for whom traditional cessation methods alone have not been sufficient.

I share this in the spirit of informing ongoing policy reflection and would be very happy to discuss the paper or its implications further if that would be useful.

Kind regards,

Robert

*Emeritus Professor,
University of Auckland
Auckland, New Zealand
r.beaglehole@auckland.ac.nz*

s 9(2)(a)



Outlook

Re: World Health Assembly May 18-23 May - will NZ speak?

From Robert Beaglehole <r.beaglehole@auckland.ac.nz>**Date** Thu 4/30/2026 10:18 AM**To** Richard Ninness <Richard.Ninness@parliament.govt.nz>

Hi Richard,

I am not sure why Clive is pushing on this issue. I guess Andrew Old or the DG will be leading the delegation.

Your current preoccupations sound exciting - look forward to the details in due course. And happy to help in any way, if appropriate.

Cheers

Robert

PS hope you are getting enough sleep.

From: Richard Ninness <Richard.Ninness@parliament.govt.nz>**Date:** Wednesday, 29 April 2026 at 10:31 PM**To:** Clive Bates s 9(2)(a)**Cc:** Robert Beaglehole <r.beaglehole@auckland.ac.nz>**Subject:** RE: World Health Assembly May 18-23 May - will NZ speak?

Hi Gents

Sorry, but I have to sidestep this one. Have discovered we have attendees but it doesn't sit within my Minister's responsibilities.

We're also busy on some smokefree and Budget initiatives – hence my still being in the office at this time.

Hopefully I have some things to report/engage on soon.

Richard

From: Clive Bates s 9(2)(a)**Sent:** Wednesday, 29 April 2026 9:48 PM**To:** Richard Ninness <Richard.Ninness@parliament.govt.nz>**Cc:** Robert Beaglehole <r.beaglehole@auckland.ac.nz>**Subject:** Re: World Health Assembly May 18-23 May - will NZ speak?

Hi Richard

The [World Health Assembly](#) is the main governing body of the World Health Organisation, and every country is represented. It sets direction for the WHO and oversees its work and finances. Some member countries send ministerial delegations, some rely on senior officials. In the recent past, New Zealand has generally sent officials at the Director General level.

Clive Bates

s 9(2)(a)

On Wed, 29 Apr 2026 at 02:05, Richard Ninness <Richard.Ninness@parliament.govt.nz> wrote:

Thanks both.

I have no visibility of this conference, though pretty sure it's not in any Ministers' plans. In the first instance I'll check in with officials to see if we're attending.

Regards,
Richard

From: Robert Beaglehole <r.beaglehole@auckland.ac.nz>
Sent: Wednesday, 29 April 2026 9:38 AM
To: Clive Bates s 9(2)(a); Richard Ninness <Richard.Ninness@parliament.govt.nz>
Subject: Re: World Health Assembly May 18-23 May - will NZ speak?

Thanks Clive for including me in this message.

Yes Richard, I would be happy to discuss NZ's plans for the forthcoming WHA.

Cheers

Robert.

From: Clive Bates s 9(2)(a)
Date: Wednesday, 29 April 2026 at 12:54 AM
To: Richard Ninness <richard.ninness@parliament.govt.nz>
Cc: Robert Beaglehole <r.beaglehole@auckland.ac.nz>
Subject: World Health Assembly May 18-23 May - will NZ speak?

Dear Richard

I don't know what plans the government and ministers have to participate in the upcoming World Health Assembly (18-23 May in Geneva), but I think there is a great opportunity for an effective intervention on the world stage.

The non-communicable disease strategy will be under discussion (see item 12.1 in the [Provisional agenda](#)). This is a follow-up to the 4th High-Level Meeting on NCDs held in September 2025 (see [Political Declaration](#)).

There is an opportunity to develop a harm reduction case drawing on NZ experience and possibly on the work of Robert Beaglehole, Ruth Bonita, and Tikki Pang, just published in *Nature*. The first two were at the University of Auckland, and all three are former WHO senior employees.

Beaglehole, R., Bonita, R., & Pang, T. (2026). Smoke-free nicotine products can accelerate the end of the smoking epidemic. *Nature Health*. 20 April 2026. ([Access](#))

If this sounds feasible and appealing, I would be happy to provide more background. Though smoking is by far the largest risk factor for NCDs, the Political Declaration linked above has little to say about harm reduction approaches.

I have copied in Robert Beaglehole, as he will be familiar with the politics from his experience representing New Zealand at the FCTC Conference of the Parties in November last year.

Best regards

Clive

Clive Bates

T: s 9(2)(a)

E: s 9(2)(a)

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Papers of interest

From Ben Youdan s 9(2)(a)
Sent Mon, 25 May 2026 05:06:47 +0000
To Richard Ninness <Richard.Ninness@parliament.govt.nz>
Cc Robert Beaglehole <r.beaglehole@auckland.ac.nz>
Subject Papers of interest

Hi Richard,

Thanks for conversation earlier. All very encouraging.

I've attached a couple of paper that may be of relevance. One is a paper on the Australian situation, with some comparison to New Zealand. The authors are highly regarded independent health, addictions and crime researchers. I contributed some insights on New Zealand.

Second is a comment from Nature journal on vaping regulation. Chris Bullen (HCA tobacco co-chair) is an author. The comment notes: "Importantly, the relative harms of different nicotine products should not just be reflected in regulation but clearly communicated to enable people to make informed decisions". It's a well balanced take.

We are finalising the analysis and release of our smoker survey, and I'll share as soon as we are ready to release. Hopefully very soon.

Thanks

Ben

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Re: The Herald article

From Ben Youdan s 9(2)(a)
Sent Thu, 11 Jun 2026 22:49:35 +0000
To Richard Ninness <Richard.Ninness@parliament.govt.nz>
Subject Re: The Herald article

Hi Richard,

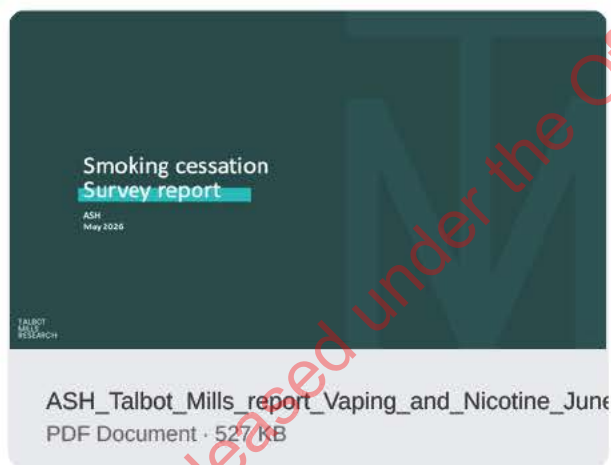
The summary data is linked below.

We're doing some secondary analysis at the moment to break it down a bit further and will share with you ASAP.

One question we also asked, but is not in this summary was where people get their info from. Health professionals topped the list.

Let me know if you have any questions - an also happy to walk you through some of the broader results if of use.

Ben



On 12 Jun 2026, at 10:15AM, Richard Ninness <Richard.Ninness@parliament.govt.nz> wrote:

Hi Ben,

Are you able to share the survey you spoke to? Good that you have data to highlight the issue but we really need to do something about this.

Cheers,
Richard

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Beyond a smoke-free generation: ending smoking within a generation - Lancet Comment

From Robert Beaglehole <r.beaglehole@auckland.ac.nz>
Sent Sun, 14 Jun 2026 07:25:53 +0000
To "Casey Costello (MIN)" <C.Costello@ministers.govt.nz>
Cc Ruth Bonita Beaglehole <r.bonita@auckland.ac.nz>, Brian Watson <Brian.Watson@parliament.govt.nz>, Richard Ninness <Richard.Ninness@parliament.govt.nz>
Subject Beyond a smoke-free generation: ending smoking within a generation - Lancet Comment

Dear Hon Minister,

Please find attached this Comment in which we argue that a smoke-free world within a generation is achievable, but only if global tobacco control shifts its focus from preventing youth uptake to rapidly reducing smoking among the 1.3 billion current smokers. We call on WHO to fully embrace all three pillars of the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control—demand, supply, and harm reduction—highlighting the underuse of safer nicotine alternatives. Citing New Zealand's rapid progress, we emphasise that scaling up harm reduction, particularly for high-risk populations, is essential to accelerate declines in smoking and avert millions of deaths.

Here is the link: [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(26\)01129-3/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(26)01129-3/fulltext) - paper is free with registration!

We look forward to your response.

Ngā mihi

Ruth Bonita and Robert Beaglehole
Emeritus Professors,
University of Auckland

s 9(2)(a)

New Lancet Regional Public Health Paper

From Ben Youdas s 9(2)(a)
Sent Wed, 24 Jun 2026 21:03:10 +0000
To Richard Ninness <Richard.Ninness@parliament.govt.nz>
Subject New Lancet Regional Public Health Paper

Hi Richard,

We have just had the attached paper published yesterday. I hope it is of interest. We look at the relationship between vaping, the accepted drop in smoking in New Zealand and how harm reduction has complimented historical tobacco policy.

Thanks

Ben

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