

24 March 2006

Mayor Adrienne Staples
South Wairarapa District Council
19 Kitchener St
Martinborough

Dear Adrienne,

I am writing on behalf of the Wairarapa Cancer Society to ask if the South Wairarapa District Council would consider altering their by-laws to ban smoking at sporting fields and playgrounds.

A few local Councils in both New Zealand and Australia are leading the way in banning smoking in these areas. South Taranaki Council has recently adopted a Smoke-Free Environmental Policy. (attached brochure).

Smoking is the greatest single preventable cause of death in NZ, causing a quarter of all cancer deaths. Local Councils are in a unique position given their ability to communicate directly with communities and play a vital role in de-normalising smoking and providing supportive environments for people to quit.

Local Councils have statutory powers under a number of acts that relate to public health. The Health Act 1956 states that it is the duty of every territorial authority *'to improve, promote and protect public health within its district'*. One of the key purposes of Local Council is to *"promote the social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of communities"* Policies designed to expand smoke-free areas are an example of a practical way that councils can contribute to this. The Local Government Act 2002 specifically states that councils can make by-laws for the purpose of *'protecting, promoting and maintaining public health and safety'*. In addition, Part 1: Section 20 of the Smoke-free Environments Act 1990 specifies that local authorities can make bylaws to provide *'greater protection from tobacco smoke than is provided'*.

This sends a strong message to the residents in the community 'Smoking and sport don't mix'. By introducing smoke free sporting fields and playgrounds Councils are:

- Reducing exposure of young people to the use of tobacco, especially in recreation and sport areas
- Minimise the many known health and environmental risks associated with smoking
- Reducing smoking amongst users of parks and sporting fields
- Providing another reason for smokers to consider 'kicking the habit'.

Where policies have been implemented internationally there has been no need for enforcement *per se*. The focus has been on public education especially through appropriate signage.

The Wairarapa Cancer Society is asking for the South Wairarapa District Council to consider changing the bylaws.

Yours sincerely

Gaye Rowberry
Wairarapa Coordinator
Cancer Society