



Media Release
For Immediate Release

VODAFONE WARRIORS TO BE SMOKEFREE ROLE MODELS AT MT SMART STADIUM

Auckland, New Zealand, March 14, 2007 – The Vodafone Warriors rugby league franchise will be introducing smokefree outdoor seating areas to Mt Smart Stadium from the start of this season.

The initiative will kick off this week with the club's first game of the 2007 NRL season against the Eels. Patrons will be asked not to smoke in any seated area, including grandstands and corporate boxes.

Under the Smoke-free Environments Amendment Act 2003, smoking is already banned in all indoor areas.

This initiative is partly in response to complaints from supporters who would rather people did not light up near them. But Vodafone Warriors chief executive, Wayne Scurrah, says it's also an opportunity for the club to promote a healthy message to its fans.

"We want our young fans to know that smoking isn't normal or cool, and that it certainly doesn't help anyone play good sport. It's about setting a good example, and supporting a smokefree future generation," he said.

Signs will be put up around the stadium indicating the areas that are smokefree. Patrons who wish to smoke will be encouraged to refrain from doing so in these areas and pointed to the designated smoking areas.

"This initiative is not about telling smokers not to smoke, but about encouraging them not to smoke around others, especially children", said Scurrah.

Partly or completely smokefree areas have also been introduced in other stadiums around New Zealand such as the Westpac Stadium in Wellington and Jade Stadium in Christchurch. Several NRL grounds in Australia are also smokefree.

The Auckland Regional Council (ARC), which has responsibility for Mt Smart Stadium, is right behind the smokefree drive. Cr Sandra Coney, Chair of the ARC's Parks and Heritage Committee, says smokers in New Zealand are increasingly becoming accustomed to smokefree areas.

"Most really do want to be considerate, so we're not expecting any problems with compliance."

Prime Minister Helen Clark has also congratulated the Vodafone Warriors for introducing the smokefree seating areas.

"I see it as a clear demonstration the Warriors are committed to being smokefree role models to their young fans," she said.

"I would like to encourage other rugby league clubs, and all our sporting groups, to make their grounds smokefree in the interests of a healthy next generation. "Well done to the Warriors, and I wish you every success for the 2007 season."

For further information:

Richard Becht
Media Manager
Vodafone Warriors
Tel: + 64 9 526 8820, Mob: + 64 21 814 537
Email: richard@warriors.co.nz

Jo Davidson
ARC Communications
Tel: + 64 9 366 2000 x8071. Mob: + 64 21 331 634
Jo.Davidson@arc.govt.nz