

QUEENSTOWN LAKES DISTRICT COUNCIL**WANAKA COMMUNITY BOARD****FOR MEETING 2 NOVEMBER 2006****REPORT FOR AGENDA ITEM: 7****SUBMITTED BY: Phillipa Tsukigawa, Parks Assistant****REPORT DATED: 19 October 2006****SMOKE-FREE POLICY IN PLAYGROUNDS, SPORTSFIELDS & SWIMMING POOLS****PURPOSE**

To consider the option of a smoke-free policy for Queenstown Lakes District Council's swimming pools, sports grounds and playgrounds.

BACKGROUND

At the Community Services Committee on 6 September 2006, Hannah Smeaton, on behalf of the Wakatipu Youth Council, presented a submission in Public Forum asking Council to consider implementing a policy to introduce smoke-free parks, reserves and playgrounds.

This report considers the impact of adopting a smoke free policy that would ban or limit smoking in Council swimming pools, sports grounds and playgrounds. This ban or limit in smoking would follow on from the amendment to the Smoke-Free Environments Act 1990 on 3 December 2003 requiring among other things:

- Buildings and grounds of schools and early childhood centres to be smoke free by 1 January 2004;
- Licensed premises to be smoke-free indoors from 10 December 2004;
- Other workplaces to become smoke-free indoors from 10 December 2004;
- Other workplaces to become smoke-free indoors; - including offices, factories, warehouses, work canteens and smoko rooms from 10 December 2004;
- The display of tobacco products in retail outlets restricted and a "smoking kills" sign erected near the display from 10 December 2004; and
- Access of smoking products to those under 18 years further restricted.

A recent Cancer Society survey found that two thirds of all New Zealanders support the expansion of smoke-free areas to outdoor areas children use.

The South Taranaki and Upper Hutt Councils have already adopted a similar initiative and South Wairapa has made their playgrounds smoke-free, and Surrey Park playground at Invercargill is now smoke-free.

Several councils in New South Wales, Australia, are passing regulations to ban smoking in parks, playgrounds, beaches, at entrances to buildings, sporting fields and venues and al fresco dining areas, to promote healthy communities. In an effort to reduce communities' exposure to environmental tobacco smoke and to make venues more family-friendly, major sporting venues around Australia including Stadium Australia, Telstra Dome, the MCG, the WACA and ANZ Stadium have become smoke-free.

If Council were to adopt this policy, it would further reinforce Council's Smoke Free Policy, which is designed to protect non-smokers from any detrimental effect on their health caused through exposure to tobacco smoke. Smoking is therefore not permitted in Council buildings including all offices, foyers, reception areas, toilets, lifts and tearooms; Council vehicles; Council libraries and halls.

SIGNIFICANCE OF DECISION

Not significant under Council's policy on Significance.

CONSULTATION - INTERESTED OR AFFECTED PERSONS

Kai Tahu ki Otago Ltd, Te Huatanga O Wakatipu Whanau, Wanaka Whanau Group and Te Ao Marama Incorporated have been written to for their views on this proposed policy.

Public Health South is very supportive of any council policy that encourages smoke-free areas where children gather, to help denormalise smoking.

The Cancer Society is very encouraged that the Wakatipu Youth Council initiated this request to Council and is very keen to see Council adopt smoke-free areas at its playgrounds, sports fields and swimming pools.

Upper Hutt City Council and South Taranaki District Council have stated that there has been no negative feedback from the introduction of their smoke-free policy, and they have noticed that there has been public pressure at winter sports grounds for people not to smoke.

DISCUSSION

In considering this policy, Council needs to look at:

- a. How much influence such a policy would have on encouraging our youth to see that smoking is not normative behaviour and the long term positive effects this could have.
- b. Whether or not it sees this as an appropriate action for Council.

Approximately 25% of New Zealanders smoke, and the health risks of second hand smoke and emulation of behaviour from children and young adults are proving to be a significant factor in influencing young people to take up smoking. It has been proven that smoking has broad ranging impacts on the wellbeing of communities – health inequalities, drain on economy, premature death, and environmentally through litter and fire.

A combined approach over the last 30 years has been successful in reducing smoking prevalence, improving health outcomes, enhancing people's wellbeing, addressing health inequalities and reducing the financial burden of tobacco. Unfortunately this has recently slowed, and in the mid to late 1990s there was a rise in the prevalence of young people smoking. There is visual evidence of this in our local communities.

Normative values play an important role in youth smoking and it is concerning that young people perceive that many more people smoke than actually do – thereby enforcing smoking as a normative behaviour. Statistics show that young people think that 50 – 70% of their peers smoke when in fact only 11% do.

The Cancer Society is encouraging local councils to consider discouraging smoking in areas under their control which young people frequent, such as pools, sports grounds and playgrounds. Smoke-free parks and playgrounds would reduce children and young people's exposure to smoking and therefore their perception of normative values.

One of the key purposes of local councils is to promote the social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of its communities and this initiative would be seen as further supporting this.

Smoke-free environments can help by:

- Reducing the visibility of smoking which contributes to smoking initiation
- De-normalising smoking and especially smoking around children
- Supporting former smokers to remain smoke-free around children
- Supporting former smokers to remain smoke-free
- Encouraging people to quit smoking

Celebrating 'clean fresh air' fits in with New Zealand's clean green image and would also reinforce New Zealand's 100% Pure campaign.

If the policy were adopted, signage would be erected to encourage people not to smoke around children's playground areas, sports grounds and swimming pools. It is not proposed to actively enforce this; rather the signage would suggest in a positive manner that people refrain from smoking in our playgrounds, sports grounds and swimming pools and in so doing encourage good role modeling.

This initiative has originated from the Wakatipu Youth Council as a concern they have for children and youth of our area. The fact that they have raised this as a concern that affects their peers and young children is commendable.

It is proposed that as signs are upgraded, no smoking symbols could be included on our smaller signs, with more graphics similar to the example on the next page placed on the larger signs.

Permission to use the "smoke-free" logo and the Cancer Society logo has been granted providing the set out guidelines are followed.

Signage has been used by both Upper Hutt City Council and South Taranaki District Council and has proven to be successful without looking too official. Both councils are very pleased with their initiative to adopt a smoke-free policy in their playgrounds and parks and to be seen as going beyond the minimum requirements of the Act.

If adopted the emphasis would be on:

- De-normalising smoking behaviour
- Encouraging positive role modeling in the community
- Reducing smoking therefore reducing health inequalities
- Reinforcing a smoke-free world as a normal world.

An example of a sign that could be used if this policy were to be adopted is on the next page.

This playground contains fresh Lakes District air

Please do not smoke in
our playground



OPTIONS

- A. Maintain the status quo.
- B. Adopt an educational policy requesting through signage and publicity that the public refrain from smoking in Council owned playgrounds, sports fields and swimming pools.

The policy could also cover activities or events run or supported by council on council property, and this could easily be incorporated into the 'Guide to Managing Events in the Queenstown Lakes District'.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The financial impact on implementing this policy would be minimal if the signage was incorporated with new signage. If individual signs were commissioned the cost could be absorbed in our existing signage budget over the next two years. In smaller playgrounds it may be more cost effective to include no smoking symbols in the playground signage.

REGISTER REFERENCE

The Wanaka Community Board's jurisdiction covers maintenance and enhancement of land, facilities and services essential to the development of strong communities in the district including reserves, pools, recreation, leisure activities, public health and safety.

RECOMMENDATION

1. *That the Board receives the report.*
2. *That the Board recommends to Council that:*
 - a. *Council owned playgrounds, sports fields and swimming pools be declared smoke-free.*
 - b. *That the policy be educational as opposed to penal in seeking compliance.*