

Media statement- for immediate release  
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## **Council of Medical Colleges Calls On Government To Stop The Rollbacks On Smoking Prevention**

The National-led Government needs to urgently rule out any further rollbacks on smoking prevention with the news today that the Associate Health Minister is open to options on freezing the tobacco excise tax, says the Council of Medical Colleges in New Zealand (CMC).

“The evidence is overwhelming clear that the tobacco excise tax is one of the most effective deterrents to New Zealanders smoking. The advice is the same from health practitioners to Treasury. Smoking kills and the excise tax helps prevent smoking” says Dr Samantha Murton, CMC Chair.

Freezing the tobacco excise tax comes on top of an already announced set of rollbacks on tobacco prevention with the plan to repeal the amendments to the Smokefree Environments and Regulated Products Act 1990 and regulations. These measures were intended to decrease the number of retail outlets who could sell tobacco, denicotisation requirements, and introduce smokefree generations.

“These actions show the abandonment of the goal of smokefree generations by the Coalition Government. 5000 people die each year in New Zealand because of smoking or second-hand smoke exposure. We ask for leadership in stopping these preventable deaths”, said Dr Murton.

“The Government must rule out the consideration of freezing the tobacco excise tax immediately and not hide behind budget sensitivity. They need to demonstrate that they are led by the evidence on what works and not under the pressure of outside business interests.”

**ENDS**

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*About the Council of Medical Colleges in New Zealand:*

CMC represents seventeen medical colleges who provide support to over 9000 medical practitioners working in a range of 34 specialties in the Aotearoa New

Zealand health system. Medical colleges are educational bodies responsible for the training, examination and recertification of medical practitioners in specific medical disciplines. This statement reflects the majority view of the colleges.