

Congratulations, Upper Hutt!

Your parks, reserves and playgrounds are now smokefree!

World Smokefree Day - 31 May 2006 - www.worldsmokefreeday.org.nz

The Upper Hutt City Council, with the support of Regional Public Health (Hutt Valley District Health Board), has approved a policy that will make all parks, playgrounds and sports fields in Upper Hutt smokefree.

The introduction of smokefree parks in Upper Hutt is a progressive step forward, and one that focuses on protecting our young people. The policy comes into effect on 31 May 2006, which is also World Smokefree Day.

We know from research that the less children and young people see smoking, the less likely they are to become smokers themselves.

The smokefree parks policy is about doing all we can to help our young people stay smokefree. Our parks and reserves are where our children play, socialise and compete, and where they learn the value of health and fitness. By agreeing not to smoke around Upper Hutt's chil-

dren, adults serve as positive smokefree role models.

We encourage everyone in our city to support the smokefree parks policy. Let's make Upper Hutt an even better place to live in by discouraging unhealthy behaviour in areas set aside for recreation.

From 31 May, please choose to make a positive difference for our city by not lighting up in public parks and reserves.



Mayor Wayne Guppy enjoys some soccer and some fresh, smokefree Upper Hutt air with Raymond Zorn, 16, and Abi Zorn, 14, at Trentham Memorial Park.

What do they reckon?



"One of the ways in which adults can touch the future and make it a positive place, is to be the best role models that we can be. By having smokefree parks, we're taking positive action so that our children are encouraged to make healthy choices. We're giving them the message that smoking isn't healthy and that it definitely affects their performance on the sports field."

- Virginia Francis, Principal Plateau School



"We've had a smokefree policy on our rugby fields for about a year, and there's been absolutely no problem with this at all. Once parents and spectators see it's not about punishing smokers, but about doing something positive for the kids, they become really supportive."

- Ben Kingi, President Rimutaka Rugby Club



"As an ex-smoker, and a great sports enthusiast, I am right behind our parks becoming smokefree. Adults can send a really positive signal to kids by choosing not to smoke around them while they are playing sport."

- Councillor Peter McCardle



"South Taranaki has had smokefree parks for a year now, and it's something that has worked really well for us. Good on you Upper Hutt! I congratulate your council on this healthy move. Other councils are bound to follow."

- Jan Martin, Group Manager of Community Services and Development, South Taranaki District Council

"Smokefree parks are all about protecting our tamariki. We don't smoke in front of them at school, so why smoke around them in playgrounds and parks? Being outside is all about running and playing and being healthy. Smoking has nothing to do with that."

- Linda Pahi, Treasurer/Coordinator, Orongomai Marae

The Mayor's Challenge

"I'd like to lay down the gauntlet and challenge other councils around the country to follow Upper Hutt's lead. Adopting policies that ensure good role-modelling to kids is one of the best things councils can do in the interests of the next generation." - Mayor Wayne Guppy

Mayor Wayne Guppy answers your questions about smokefree Upper Hutt parks

So, why has the Council decided to make Upper Hutt parks smokefree?

Well, first and foremost it's about the kids. Whether you're a smoker or not, you know that smoking isn't good for you, and I'm sure even smokers will agree that they don't really want their kids to start.

Kids tend to do what they see adults doing, and the more they see people smoking, the more normal they think it is, and the more likely they will be to do it because it's just the done thing.

But doesn't the council have more important things to worry about than whether people smoke in the park?

Our council believes that making our city safe and healthy is like putting together a jigsaw puzzle. If you want to get the job done properly, you have to get all the pieces in place. Smokefree parks are just another piece of the puzzle. Having a city full of healthy kids and families is as important as having streets that are safe to walk down.

Won't some adults just smoke around their kids at home anyway?

Maybe they will. But smokefree parks are a great step towards making smoking less normal. Teachers don't smoke around kids, you can't smoke in indoor public places, and we're saying that we'd

prefer you not to smoke around kids while they're playing and competing in sports. We're sending a positive message to parents that they can make a difference to their kids' futures by not smoking around them.

How is the smokefree policy going to be policed?

We're taking an educative approach with this. It's not about punishing smokers. It's about protecting kids. We want people to look at it as something positive they can do, rather than something they can't do.

That doesn't mean people can choose to ignore the policy. If someone smokes in a public park, people are quite within their rights to ask them to stop.

Can you see this having other positive benefits for the city?

Absolutely. There are a lot of local people on hospital waiting lists, and many of them have illnesses caused by smoking. If we can get that number down in the future; if we can help just a few kids avoid becoming smokers, then we'll have been very successful.

We're going to be the healthiest city in the country. I'm proud that our council has shown leadership in this area. It will do a lot for our reputation as a great, healthy, clean, green city.