



Draft Budget Policy Statement 2016

Submission to the Finance and Expenditure Select Committee

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Contact

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About the New Zealand Nurses Organisation

NZNO is the leading professional nursing association and union for nurses in Aotearoa New Zealand. NZNO represents over 47,000 nurses, midwives, students, kaimahi hauora and health workers on professional and employment related matters. NZNO is affiliated to the International Council of Nurses and the New Zealand Council of Trade Unions.

NZNO promotes and advocates for professional excellence in nursing by providing leadership, research and education to inspire and progress the profession of nursing. NZNO represents members on employment and industrial matters and negotiates collective employment agreements.

NZNO embraces te Tiriti o Waitangi and contributes to the improvement of the health status and outcomes of all peoples of Aotearoa New Zealand through influencing health, employment and social policy development enabling quality nursing care provision. NZNO's vision is *Freed to care, Proud to nurse*.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The New Zealand Nurses Organisation (NZNO) welcomes the opportunity to comment briefly to the Finance and Expenditure Select Committee on the Draft Budget Policy Statement 2016.
2. NZNO has consulted its members and staff in the preparation of this submission, in particular members of Te Rūnanga o Aotearoa and policy and research advisers.
3. As a proud member of the Smokefree Coalition, NZNO supports the Smokefree Aotearoa 2025 vision and advocate for strong tobacco control measures especially through legislation and regulation (including enforcement), taxation, health promotion and smoking cessation services. The vision of a country whose tamariki will be free from exposure to tobacco and will enjoy Smokefree lives is something we are eager to support.
4. NZNO supports any actions that will reduce smoking prevalence and tobacco availability in Aotearoa New Zealand and strengthen commitment to the World Health Organisation Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. We agree that the government should:

- maintain a focus on effective public health policies to reduce smoking prevalence through reducing the affordability of tobacco products; and
 - continue to increase the amount of tax on all tobacco related products.
5. As health professionals, we have concerns that tobacco products may adversely impact government's public health objectives. We urge the government to ensure that access to smoking cessation services are available and have additional support to ensure those who attempt to quit are successful.
 6. Note, we support the Smokefree Coalition and Hāpai Te Hauora Māori Public Health submission.

DISCUSSION

Support for Smokefree 2025 vision

7. NZNO has consistently supported the Governments strong leadership and commitment to Smokefree 2025 vision through which Aotearoa New Zealand stands to end unnecessary deaths and poor health outcomes related to tobacco use.
8. See our previous tobacco related submissions.
9. Recent research indicates that the current status quo of 10% increases annually will not be sufficient to reach our goal of Smokefree 2025 with modelling predicting smoking reducing to about 9% in 2025 and to 9.4% for Māori.
10. To achieve maximum benefit, the evidence supports increasing tax to 20% per year for a period of at least four years. With higher taxes the tobacco tax revenue will keep rising for some yearsⁱ, which will provide extra funding to support stop smoking services and health services in general.

Improving Māori health and reduces health inequalities

11. The Government has shown leadership and an ability and willingness to implement a range of tobacco interventions to reach the overarching goal of a better health status for Māori and all New Zealanders.
12. Continued increases to tobacco taxation will reduce health inequalities. Expected health gains from higher tobacco taxes are estimated to be 3.7 times greater for Māori compared to non-Māoriⁱⁱ. The benefits from a comprehensive approach with increased taxation and additional health promotion and targeted stop smoking services, will achieve the Government's Smokefree 2025 goal for Māori and Pacific people.
13. An additional strategy would be to address the issue of product change, as research shows that the act of swapping to a cheaper brand during tobacco taxes increases is more likely to occur with Māori and other disadvantaged peopleⁱⁱⁱ.
14. In conclusion, NZNO recommends that you note:
 - NZNO continues to advocate for an increase to taxation on tobacco products;
 - that tobacco products adversely affects the government's public health objectives; and
 - that access to smoking cessation services must be available with additional support to ensure those who attempt to quit are successful.

Nāku noa, nā



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REFERENCES

ⁱ Cobiac LJ, Ikeda T, *et al.* Modelling the implications of regular increases in tobacco taxation [...]. *Tob Control* 2015; 24:e154-60.

ⁱⁱ Blakely T, Cobiac LJ, Cleghorn CL, *et al.* Health, health inequality, and the cost impacts of annual increase in tobacco tax: Multistate lifetable modelling in New Zealand. *PLoS Med* 2015;12:e1001856.

ⁱⁱⁱ Walton, D, Li J, Newcombe R, Tu D, Berentson-Shaw J. Smokers' behavioural responses before and after the 2012 tobacco excise increase - *Kōtuitui: New Zealand Journal of Social Sciences Online* - Volume 8, Issue 1-2¹.