



The Thoracic Society
of Australia & New Zealand
LEADERS IN LUNG HEALTH



**Asthma +
Respiratory**
FOUNDATION NZ

Health professionals condemn changes to smoking and vaping laws

A group of clinical leaders is urging the Government to seriously re-consider changes to smoking and vaping legislation after hearing of its plans to axe laws put in place to protect the health of New Zealanders.

Respiratory and cardiology clinicians from the Asthma and Respiratory Foundation NZ, Thoracic Society of Australia and New Zealand (TSANZ) and the Cardiac Society of Australia and NZ (CSANZ) are deeply concerned about the coalition's intentions to revoke legislation banning the sale of cigarettes to future generations, reducing nicotine levels and limiting the number of tobacco retailers.

Foundation Medical Director Dr James Fingleton says he is extremely worried about the direction the new coalition is taking when it comes to lung health.

"If they were to proceed with the repeals, it would be a massive step back in respiratory health for Aotearoa.

"This move not only undermines the progress we, as a country, were making in safeguarding the respiratory health of our New Zealanders, but also places a heavier burden on our healthcare system."

Foundation Chief Executive Ms Letitia Harding says: "Not only do the proposed changes jeopardise the well-being of countless New Zealanders, it also places our communities at an increased risk of debilitating lung and heart conditions."

"I was hoping that this government might be different and actually listen to specialists in this field rather than big tobacco and the vape industry."

Respiratory Physician and TSANZ New Zealand Branch President Dr Paul Dawkins says the Government cannot afford to compromise the health of New Zealanders for short-term gains.

"It is their duty to prioritise the wellness of New Zealanders, and healthy lungs are at the forefront of a healthy active life.

"I ask our new leaders to re-think their agreement - now - before it's too late," Dr Dawkins says.

"New Zealand is currently one of the world leaders in tobacco and smoking control, so it is unfathomable that a new Government would abandon this to allow big tobacco and the vaping industry to make profits at the expense of the health and lives of New Zealanders".

Dr Selwyn Wong, Chair of the NZ Branch of the Cardiac Society of Australia and New Zealand echoes the concerns of his respiratory colleagues.

"Cardiovascular disease remains the country's greatest killer and smoking is a major contributor, so smoking cessation is essential for anyone with established disease.

"The delay of a smokefree society will have significant cardiovascular consequences - including more premature heart attacks, strokes and deaths."

ENDS