

MT SMART SMOKEFREE SEATING AREAS
Questions and Answers
March 2007

Why are smokefree seating areas being introduced to Mt Smart?

The reasons are two-fold: to keep our children and young people smokefree, and to respond to a growing number of complaints from patrons who do not want to be exposed to other people's smoke.

We know from research that increased smokefree environments will contribute towards fewer young people beginning to smoke – the less they see smoking, the less 'normal' it will seem. Few parents, smoking or non-smoking, want their children to become smokers.

By moving away from the smokefree areas to smoke, adults at Mt Smart Stadium will be smokefree role models for children and young people; rather than giving the message that smoking is just another part of life by smoking in front of them.

In addition, the Warriors and Auckland Regional Council have received a number of complaints over the past few seasons from people annoyed at being smoking on and around. With so many venues smokefree these days (bars, restaurants, other stadia), many people expect smokefree environments as a matter of course.

How will it work?

All seating areas at Mt Smart Stadium will become smokefree from 17 March 2007, which is the Warriors' first NRL game. Signage will indicate smokefree areas, and areas in which people can smoke will also be defined. Patrons will be asked to respect the smokefree areas.

Who is behind this initiative?

The smokefree seating initiative is being driven by the Warriors, with support from the Auckland Regional Council, the Counties-Manukau RFU and a number of health groups.

How will smokefree seating areas make smoking seem less 'normal'?

Young people tend to believe more people smoke than is actually the case. For example, a 2004 New Zealand study found that over 50 percent of girls and 40 percent of boys thought that half or three-quarters of their peers smoked. In fact, only 11 percent of their peers were smokers.

Research indicates that seeing people around them smoke contributes to young people's tendency to overestimate the number of smokers. This over-estimation makes it more likely that young people will take up smoking, as they mistakenly believe smoking is a common activity and 'everybody does it'.

Having smokefree seating areas will reduce children and young people's exposure to smoking, better reflecting actual smoking rates.

What is the benefit to the Warriors of smokefree seating areas at Mt Smart?

The smokefree seating areas initiative gives the Warriors an opportunity to promote a healthier community and show that smoking and sport do not mix. It shows the Warriors are prepared to take positive action to help reduce the chances that their young fans will become smokers. The smokefree initiative shows the franchise supports a smokefree future generation.

Do other stadia have smokefree seating areas?

Many other stadia in New Zealand and Australia have smokefree seating areas. Under the Smoke-free Environments Amendment Act 2003, indoor areas at stadia are required to be smokefree. However, many venues have gone beyond these legal requirements and have also introduced smokefree areas outside.

For example, the Westpac Stadium in Wellington is smokefree – smokers have to smoke on the concourse outside the stadium building.

A number of NRL grounds in Australia are smokefree.

What happens if someone smokes in a seating area?

Experience with smokefree outdoor spaces has shown that smokers are generally very considerate, and will smoke outside smokefree areas. If someone does light up in a smokefree area, other users of that space will often ask them to step outside the smokefree area to smoke.

What is second-hand smoke?

This initiative is primarily about positive smokefree role-modelling for children and young people. However, if you are standing next to someone who is smoking, you may well be forced to inhale their second-hand smoke.

Second-hand smoke is a mixture of smoke breathed out by the smoker (mainstream smoke) and smoke released from the lit cigarette (sidestream smoke). It contains cancer causing and other toxic substances such as acetone (paint stripper), ammonia (toilet cleaner), hydrogen cyanide (rat killer), DDT (insecticide) and carbon monoxide (car exhaust fumes).

Second-hand smoke is linked to coronary heart disease, lung cancer, acute stroke, eye and nasal irritation, and nasal sinus cancer. Children are especially vulnerable to second-hand smoke as their vital organs are smaller and more delicate and, therefore, can be seriously affected by tobacco smoke and the chemicals it contains.

What other environments are smokefree?

In New Zealand, and internationally, smokefree indoor and outdoor areas are increasingly becoming the norm. In 2004, New Zealand introduced a ban on smoking in all indoor workplaces, including bars, restaurants and clubs. Over 90 percent of the public support workers' rights to work in an environment free from second-hand smoke. In addition, all schools and early childhood centres are smokefree, 24 hours/7 days.

Several local bodies have introduced smokefree outdoor areas, including parks and sports grounds. For example, the Upper Hutt City Council introduced smokefree parks

in 2006, following the lead of the South Taranaki District Council. Other councils are following suit. Overseas, some jurisdictions are introducing smokefree beaches and other outdoor public areas.

Globally, countries such as Ireland, Norway, Scotland, Malta, Sweden and Italy, as well as a number of states in the United States of America, have implemented strong smoking bans in public places.

What are the health effects of smoking?

Tobacco use is the leading cause of preventable death in New Zealand, accounting for around 4300 to 4600 deaths per year. Smoking increases the risk of developing diseases of the respiratory and circulatory systems. These include cancers of the lung, oral cavity, pharynx, larynx, oesophagus and pancreas. Smoking also increases the risk of developing diseases of the urinary tract, pelvis, bladder and digestive tract.

Half of the people who smoke today and continue smoking will eventually be killed by tobacco. Half of them will die in middle age.

Tobacco is the only consumer product that kills half its users when used as the manufacturer intends.