



# Smokefree

# TIMES

Action on Smoking and Health

Special Edition

ASH NZ Oceania Conference Edition. September 2007

## Turning vision into reality

Kia ora! Hello! Kia oranga! Talofa! Malo e lelei! Talofa! Aloha! Bula! Fakaalofa ahi atu! Alii! Gaoi! Mauri! Yokwe! Nga'aiho! G'day!

The Oceania tobacco control conference saw guests representing over 30 countries gather in Auckland's Aotea Centre to discuss, debate and decide on our future directions for Tobacco Control.

After a traditional Maori powhiri from Ngati Whatua there were gateway meetings focusing on indigenous peoples and the science behind addiction.

These themes continued throughout the conference with a strong sense of combining cutting edge research and science with tradition and culture to truly benefit those communities who are suffering the most.

Visiting speakers stimulated debate about pushing forward the policy agenda. Radical proposals from Canada's Rob Cunningham included having smokers self-purchase a licence to buy tobacco. He presented exciting new ideas for discussion as well as well-established campaigns like banning retail displays and increasing pack warnings.

Quantity not quality was the theme of cessation expert Shu-Hong Zhu's plenary session. He argued elegantly and eloquently that to truly increase the numbers who quit,



we need to increase the numbers who try. The priority should be to increase quit attempts not just to promote cessation support. In turn we should be seeing far greater investment into ongoing and effective use of traditional media and new technology to communicate with smokers.

The conference theme was "from vision to reality" and this captured media attention on Thursday with a major editorial in the New Zealand Herald calling for the Government to get serious about raising tobacco tax as a fundamental public health priority.

The whole event had a real sense of action starting with

the resolution of first inhabitants to the inaugural tobacco control conference: Smokefree Oceania 2007; bringing together diverse cultures with a common goal to end the death caused by tobacco. We all look forward to turning the vision of a Smokefree Oceania into reality.

-Ben Youdan, ASH Director

ASH NZ Oceania Conference Special

Issue 90

Special Edition

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### OCEANIA PARALLEL SESSIONS

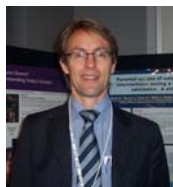


# In their own words



The conference has been excellent, and the organizers are to be congratulated. One can sense the strength of the region's tobacco control community, and the potential for important gains.

- Rob Cunningham, Senior Policy Analyst, Canadian Cancer Society



My impressions are of high quality presentations that have generated discussion, engagement and renewed energy and commitment. The direction of our cessation work has been strongly affirmed – more smokers need to make more quit attempts.

- Ashley Bloomfield, Ministry of Health, New Zealand



I'd like to take this opportunity to share my acknowledgement to the organizers for their excellent job.

It is an eye opener for many participants from the Pacific Islands. We find it an opportunity to share knowledge and vision and also to discover new contacts and networks. The conference was well timed for some of us from Pacific Islands who are still looking forward to passing a tobacco Bill in our country.

On behalf of the Solomon island participants and Pacific friends, I'd like to thank the Government of New Zealand through the Ministry of Health and the supporters of the conference. Without this generous support this conference would not happen.

Thank you and togi tumos

- Watson Gascoine Bana, National Smokefree Coordinator, Solomon Islands

The Oceania Smokefree conference is a wonderful opportunity to work together on controlling the biggest killer of Pacific Peoples in NZ and the Pacific. The Smokefree Oceania brand is inspirational and will help rally all peoples in Oceania.

- Colin Tukuitonga, Chief Executive, Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs, New Zealand



Pacific communities are at varying stages of tobacco prevention and control, however forums like this conference allow us to share lessons learned and tools for success. Our cultural seminars bridge the Ocean, our cultural differences strengthen those bridges.

- LorrieAnn Santos, Pap Ola Lokahi, Hawaii



This has been a very friendly and welcoming conference, packed with many high quality presentations and lessons for the future. There's been a good mix

of research and practice, and some thought-provoking sessions on new policy options. I've come away with some new ideas for further research and a renewed sense of admiration for the work going on in our part of the world. Thanks to the organisers and participants for making it such a great meeting.

-Melanie Wakefield, Director, CBRC, Cancer Council Victoria, Australia



Congratulations and thank you to New Zealand and the Smokefree Oceania Tobacco Control Conference organizers.

The conference was dynamic, encouraging, refreshing and relevant to the common goals of the participants – to address tobacco use, one of the most important health issues, and to oppose the tyranny of the tobacco industry which is targeting and trapping the peoples in Oceania and the Pacific and inflicting health and economic damage on their lives – all for greed and profit-making.

The conference was appropriately held in New Zealand, one of the strongest nations challenging the tobacco industry within its borders and externally. The many interesting, informative and relevant sessions were conducted by experts from the field, policy makers and researchers.

It was a privilege to participate. Thank you.

-Senator Caleb Otto, Republic of Palau

The conference has provided a forum with a strong Pacific and Indigenous focus. For the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), seeing the delegates fully support the concept of a Pacific tobacco control network is a really significant step forward. The proposal of funding for the network is to be submitted to the Bloomberg tobacco control initiative will enable; increased media advocacy, knowledge exchange, sharing of pacific resources, a regional meeting and a grant mechanism to assist countries with implementing the FCTC.

-Jeanie McKenzie – Secretariat of the Pacific Community

If you are a nurse, and wish to join the **Nurses for a Smokefree Aotearoa/ New Zealand** advocacy group, email Grace at [nurses@ash.org.nz](mailto:nurses@ash.org.nz)

# If not us, then who?: if not now, then when?

After four years of working at ASH NZ, I am moving on. I never saw a dull moment at ASH and tobacco control, and this conference highlighted the passions (both on and off the dance floor!) of those that work in the field.

A key learning I took from Oceania was summarised by LorriAnn Santos from Hawaii, USA: "If not us, then who; if not now, then when."

This is a powerful message. Tobacco control has come a long way in the last 25 years due to tireless efforts of many



Sneha Paul and Jeanine Tamati Eliffe

tobacco control stars. In the hustle and bustle of things we forget that each of us makes a significant difference in Oceania and beyond.

In his plenary session on cessation, Dr Shu-Hong Zhu said, "If we don't try, our success rate is zero percent; if we keep trying, we increase our chance of succeeding." So just do it!

I am re-energised and buzzing with ideas on the future of tobacco control (what a silly time for me to leave!). I believe that the time is now to turn our vision into reality.

*-Sneha Paul,  
ASH Communications Manager*

## Head or Tails?



Diversity and averages were the predominant themes at the conference.

There was greater diversity than any previous tobacco control conference in our region. Maori, Pacific Island peoples of NZ and their home islands, Aboriginal people and Native Hawaiians were all there.

There were repeated calls for greater recognition of difference - for example, by ethnicity, nation, gender, age, SES, addiction level.....On one side of the

coin there was a strong call to tailor and target effective and culturally appropriate interventions to the sub-groups; preferably at the local level, building community capacity.



On the other side, there was a focus on population level strategies such as tobacco tax increases, more mass media, extended smokefree environments and stronger legislation that will impact en

masse. Which will win?

Or can we restructure our tobacco control programmes so that we reach as many people as possible with the blunter tools aimed at your average Joe, whilst still supporting the different communities to develop and deliver right into the family home?

Can we make these often philosophically opposed strategies two sides of the same coin?

Arei te wero!

(This is the challenge!)

*-Dr Marewa Glover, Director, Auckland  
Tobacco Control Conference.*

## The end game

We need to make sure we're all on the same song sheet when it comes to tobacco control campaigns.

What do we mean by smokefree? Is it banning smoking? Getting rid of cigarettes? Putting tobacco completely out of sight? Or is it just indoor areas? The importance of a shared understanding was made abundantly clear in a lunch seminar by the Smokefree Coalition, ASH NZ and Te Reo Marama when a vision for smokefree New Zealand held

different meanings for us all. The language and understanding of tobacco control is vital to setting clear goals and objectives and we must get this right.

The important message is that we are united in challenging New Zealand to declare an end game for tobacco and start mapping out the steps we need to get there.

*-Ben Youdan, ASH Director*

A big thank you to the organizers of the inaugural Oceania Tobacco Control Conference.

ASH was delighted to see people from all over the Pacific region bring their passion and ideas to New Zealand.

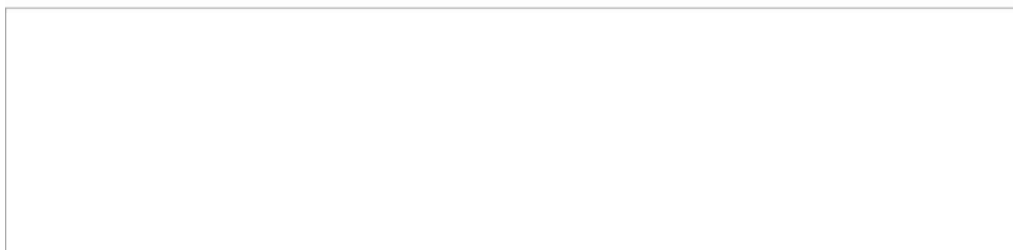
For more information, go to [www.smokefreeoceania.org.nz](http://www.smokefreeoceania.org.nz)



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## THE LAST WORD...



It was eighteen months ago that the steering group and executive committee held a tele-conference to identify the overall theme for this conference along with how we might best structure it.

Reaching agreement was amazingly straightforward. This spirit of cooperation and mutual respect has continued throughout the planning and development process.

Back then we imagined a conference not focused on what *had* happened but what *could* – and how we might achieve it. Subsequently we came up with the theme - *From Vision to Reality*.

We also wanted this conference to have a unique flavour – to truly reflect the Oceania region in which it was being held.

I believe that those who had that vision 18 months ago should be

well-pleased with the result. We have been blessed with excellent presenters – plenary, workshop and parallel, a tireless administration team and amazing energy and enthusiasm from you, the delegates.

Perhaps most rewarding of all has been

to see the wonderful mix of Oceania peoples learning from and enjoying one another.

I believe that the Oceania concept has been a success. It has enabled good tobacco control evidence and thinking to be widely disseminated. It has fostered regional relationships that will benefit developing and developed nations. It will be a challenge to take the concept forward but it is a worthwhile challenge that we happily pass on to our successors.

*Highlights* - too many to choose from

*Regrets* - none

*Take home message* – a Smokefree Oceania will happen.

-Iain Potter, Chair, Executive Committee,  
Oceania Tobacco Control Conference,  
Auckland, NZ.

