

Rec'd 27/7/15

(20150215)



13 July 2015

Mr Chai Chuah  
Director General  
Ministry of Health  
PO Box 5013  
WELLINGTON 6145

Dear Chai

Tēnā koe

#### **SHORE/WHARIKI REVIEW OF TOBACCO CONTROL SERVICES**

I'm writing to you to ask for your support in requesting corrections of fact in the Shore Whariki *Review of Tobacco Control Services* which was commissioned by the Ministry of Health.

The Quit Group first contacted the Ministry of Health to highlight the errors in the report in March of this year. The Ministry responded to our concerns by saying that Massey University has decided not to amend the final report because they believed that the 'intended purpose' of the review would not be substantially impacted by the errors. The Ministry concluded that the review was intended as an 'internal planning exercise' and that the final report was published to ensure transparency and as a courtesy to the smoking cessation sector.

Despite the Ministry's assurance that the review was only ever intended as an internal planning exercise, it has been cited on a number of occasions as a reliable source of information regarding tobacco control services in New Zealand.

It is also of concern because these reports find their way into the global summaries of Quitlines under the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control monitoring. It behoves New Zealand to ensure that New Zealand's Ministry of Health funded Quitline is correctly represented.

There are two significant areas that Quit Group Trust would like corrected.

#### **Data accuracy**

The review incorrectly assigns Quitline's six month quit rate result of 24.2% (obtained from Quitline's *Quit Service Evaluation*) as Quitline's four week result. This percentage is then incorrectly used to calculate an inflated cost per successful quitter at \$741.

Quitline's four week quit rate, which is a key part of the Ministry's *Tier 1 Service Specification*, is 32% which results in a cost per successful quitter of \$560 at four weeks.

This is a simple but significant error in the report which we request is corrected.

### **Quitline's Electronic Services**

The review misrepresents the extent to which Quitline at the time of the review was a multi-channel service. It refers to Quitline as a 'telephone service' and recommends that Quitline incorporate 'newer technologies' into its suite of services.

Quitline has been aggressive in the development of its multi-channel capability. This is evidenced by the fact that more than half of Quitline's clients register for the service through our website. More than two-thirds of Quitline clients use multiple channels of phone, text, email and/or online as part of their quit programmes. This service use is reported monthly, quarterly and annually, to the Ministry of Health as part of the contract and was available to SHORE from either Quitline or the team that commissioned the review.

Finally, given that all publicly funded cessation services are now configured to meet the requirements of the Tier 1 Smoking Cessation Service Specification, and that it remains the standard that all cessation service providers need to meet, the Trust is surprised that it is not meaningfully covered in the review (it is mentioned in passing just once on page 186). For Quitline, the Tier 1 Smoking Cessation Service Specification establishes the quality framework of the service which is why the role of the specification needs to be appropriately included in the review.

As New Zealand's most used quit smoking service, the Trust would like Quitline to be fairly represented in the Ministry's Review of Tobacco Control Services. We request that you require the current inaccurate Review to be taken off the Ministry of Health web-site and that a corrected document be completed and re-published.

Nga mihi



**Professor Chris Cunningham**  
Chair, Board of Trustees  
The Quit Group Trust