

Aide-Mémoire

Meeting with Action for Smokefree 2025 (ASH) on 7 August 2024

Date due to MO: 1 August 2024 **Action required by:** N/A

Security level: IN CONFIDENCE **Health Report number:** H2024045720

To: Hon Casey Costello, Associate Minister of Health

Consulted: Health New Zealand:

Contact for telephone discussion

Name	Position	Telephone
Jane Chambers	Group Manager, Public Health Policy and Regulation, Public Health Agency Te Pou Hauora Tūmatanui	s 9(2)(a)
Emma Hindson	Manager, Ope Ōpiki, Public Health Policy and Regulation, Public Health Agency Te Pou Hauora Tūmatanui	s 9(2)(a)

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Details of meeting: 3.15pm - 3.45 pm, Wednesday 7 August 2024
Minister Costello's office 2.54PH

Purpose of Meeting: On 25 June 2024, Ben Youdan, Director Action for Smokefree 2025 (ASH) wrote to you to:

- support the view that oral nicotine products have a role in helping people switch from smoking
- offer to discuss evidence-based, proportionate actions to reduce youth access to nicotine products while supporting access for adults who smoke
- note the opportunity to support older adults who smoke through public health campaigns and the health and social care system
- request to meet with you.

Attendees: Emeritus Professor Robert Beaglehole, ASH Chair
Ben Youdan, Director of ASH

Background: You previously met with ASH representatives Robert Beaglehole and Ben Youdan on 21 February 2024.

ASH has received recent media coverage about their connections with the vaping industry (for more detail see: [Concerns raised after anti smoking group met with vaping lobbyist | Stuff](#))

Comment:

- Cabinet (CAB-24-MIN-0084 refers) has agreed in principle to allow the sale of reduced harm smokeless tobacco and oral nicotine products, subject to products meeting safety requirements and regulatory controls to prevent youth access.
- Reforming the regulation of oral nicotine products falls under tranche two of your plan to address youth vaping.
- You will receive further advice and options to reform the regulation of oral nicotine products from the Ministry of Health later this year.

- By age group, the highest rates of daily smoking are among those aged 45-54 (8.5%) and 55-64 (9.7%). These age groups have shown the least progress in smoking reduction over the past 10 years.
- Jane Chambers, Group Manager, Public Health Policy and Regulation is available to attend this meeting.
- This aide memoire discloses all relevant information.



Jane Chambers
Group Manager, Public Health Policy and Regulation
Public Health Agency | Te Pou Hauora Tūmatanui

PROACTIVELY RELEASED

Talking points

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PROACTIVELY RELEASED

Appendix 1: Profile of attendees



Emeritus Professor Robert Beaglehole, Chair

- Independent global public health practitioner, Robert Beaglehole trained in medicine, epidemiology and public health in New Zealand, England and the USA before becoming a public health physician.
- He was Professor of Community Health at the University of Auckland, New Zealand (1988-1999).
- He joined the staff of the World Health Organization (WHO) in 2000 and between 2004 and 2007 directed the Department of Chronic Disease and Health Promotion.
- He left WHO in February 2007 having reached the UN retirement age and returned to New Zealand.
- He is now an independent global public health practitioner with a focus on the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases.



Ben Youdan, Director

- Ben Youdan has worked in tobacco control and campaigning for nearly 20 years in the UK and New Zealand.
- He was the Director of the UK's No Smoking Day campaign that supported over 1 million annual quit attempts and worked with the UK defence force on setting up dedicated smoking cessation services for the UK Army and Navy.
- He has worked for ASH UK, and on the European Commission youth smoking prevention initiative.
- Ben moved to New Zealand in 2007 when he was appointed Director of ASH (NZ). Since then, he has also worked as the National Campaign Director for the Green Party of Aotearoa, a campaigns and policy consultant, and is currently the Strategic Policy Lead for the New Zealand Heart Foundation.

Appendix 2: Letter requesting meeting

Tena koe

On behalf of Action for Smokefree 2025 (ASH) we would like to request a further meeting with Minister Costello to discuss next steps for Smokefree Aotearoa.

We note the recent budget statement reiterated the Government's view that tobacco harm reduction and much less harmful oral nicotine products have a role in helping people switch from smoking. A view we share and is backed by evidence.

ASH is also conscious that New Zealand's regulated model for reduced harm nicotine continues to create tensions around youth vaping prevention and fears young people will use oral nicotine products.

We would like to discuss evidence-based and proportionate actions to reduce youth access, whilst ensuring adults who smoke have access to reliable advice and products that can help them stop smoking for good.

New Zealand has been extremely successful reducing youth and young adult smoking. However, smoking rates have remained relatively stable in older adults.

It is likely that the rate at which smoking is declining will slow as much of the recent progress has been in younger populations. Around 80% of the reduction in smoking prevalence in the last decade is accounted for by people aged between 18 and 45 years old.

Older adults who smoke are being left behind, yet are the cardiovascular, lung cancer and respiratory disease victims of the next 5-15 years. Currently this population is overlooked in smokefree strategies, however there is significant opportunity to better support them through public health campaigns, and the health and social care system.

Not only will achieving Smoking prevalence of under 5% by 2025 be highly dependent on success with this older population, but the short to medium term benefit to the health system will also be greatest. The high profile debate around young people vaping, and the smokefree generation is often at the expense of the still smoking population.

We have appreciated the previous meetings with the Minister and hope we can continue the conversation about next steps including how ASH can assist with evidence-based advice and support to reduce smoking, and to keep the focus on the overwhelming harms of smoked tobacco use.

Robert Beaglehole is currently overseas until the end of July, and I hope we might be able to find a time in Ministers diary in August.

Many thanks

Ngā mihi

Ben Youdan

Director

ASH