

# Butting out:

## A qualitative analysis of the responses to tobacco product waste

\* Janet Hoek PhD<sup>1,2</sup>, Kerri Haggart PhD<sup>2</sup>, Mei-Ling Blank MPH<sup>1,2</sup>, Louise Marsh PhD<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Department of Public Health, University of Otago, Wellington, New Zealand <sup>2</sup> Department of Marketing, University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand <sup>3</sup> Department of Preventive and Social Medicine, University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand

### Background

Littering of nearly five trillion cigarette butts each year despoils public settings and presents a major environmental threat. Understanding how smokers and non-smokers perceive strategies for dealing with tobacco product waste (TPW) would provide important guidance to policy makers.

### Methods:

We conducted in-depth interviews with diverse participants recruited using social media platforms and community advertising, and probed how smokers (n=16) and non- or former smokers (n=18) evaluated ten measures that could address TPW.

### Results:



### Conclusions

Tobacco companies know filters are not bio-degradable, yet have framed smokers as responsible for TPW; this approach has influenced public perceptions. Raising awareness of the harms filters cause and the costs of managing TPW could foster public support for producer responsibility policies, and support the eventual introduction of those policies.

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### Contacts

Janet Hoek janet.hoek@otago.ac.nz

### Conflict of interest statement

There are no conflicts of interest to report.

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