

# Smoker support for key measures to achieve a smokefree goal: Findings from the ITC New Zealand Survey

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## Background:

- New Zealand (NZ) has a goal of being smokefree with virtually zero smoking prevalence in all peoples by 2025.
- Current prevalence trends and modelling studies suggest the goal will not be achieved, particularly among Māori (the indigenous people of NZ) who have a much higher smoking prevalence.
- The 'Achieving a Smokefree Aotearoa Action Plan' (ASAP) proposes a comprehensive set of interventions to reduce the affordability, availability and appeal of tobacco products as well as intensifying current measures.

## Objective:

To assess support for key measures included in the Achieving Smokefree Aotearoa 2025 Action Plan among NZ smokers and recent quitters.

## Key ASAP measures:



### Making tobacco products less affordable

- Raise tobacco excise tax (e.g. by 20% per year)
- Establish minimum retail price for tobacco products
- Use additional tobacco tax revenue to support increased cessation support and smokefree marketing (targeted for Māori, Pacific and low income smokers).



### Make tobacco products less available

- Greatly reduce number of tobacco retailers by 95%
- Ban sale of tobacco products in alcohol-on-license premises
- Introduce 'tobacco free generation' policy with annual 1 year increase in minimum purchase age for tobacco products



### Make tobacco products less appealing and addictive

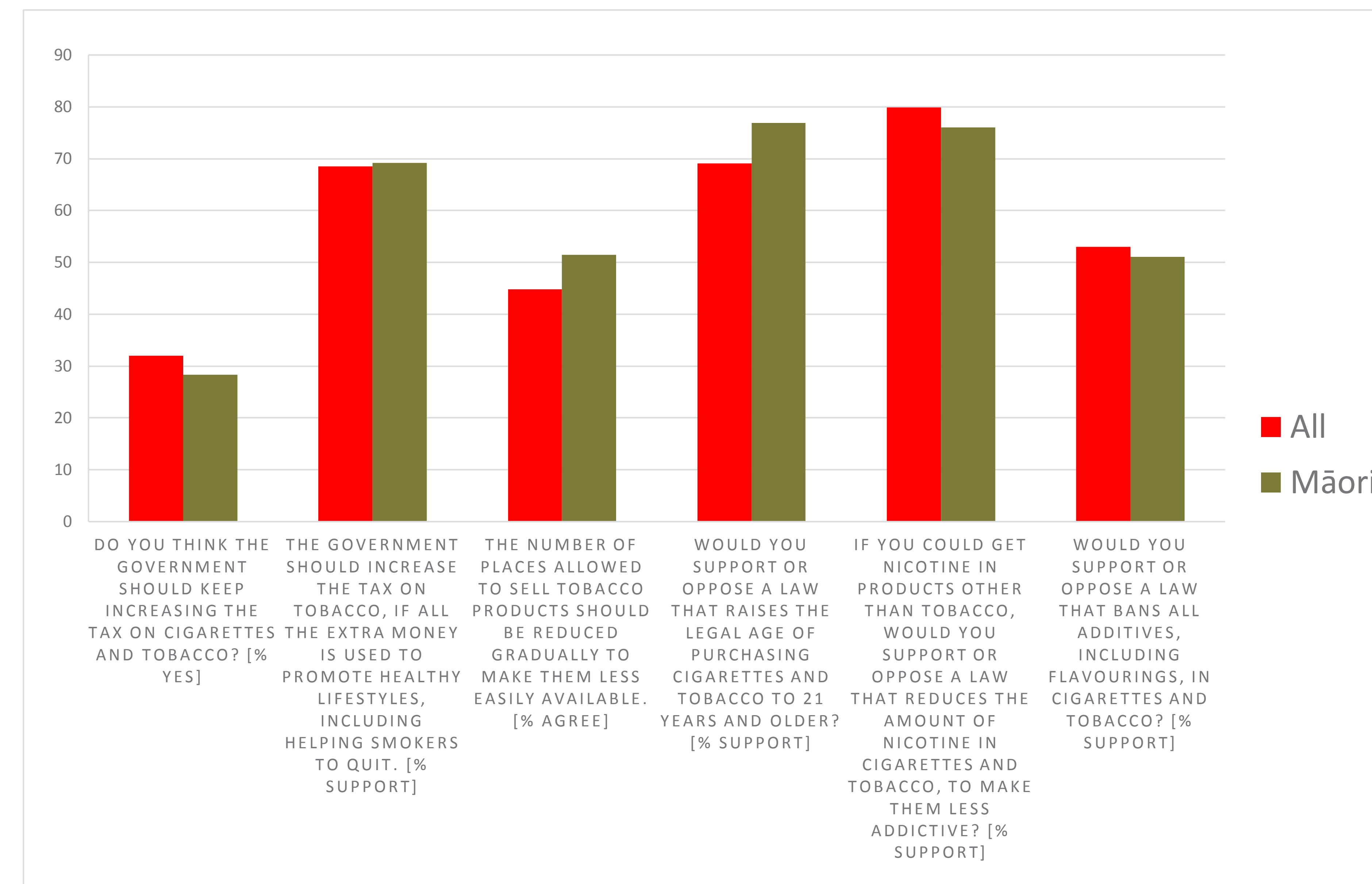
- Ban all additives and product innovations that may enhance appeal, palatability or addictiveness of tobacco products
- Introduce mandated very-low nicotine cigarettes and other smoked tobacco products

## Methods:

- Data from the first wave (Aug 2016-April 2017) of the NZ International Tobacco Control (NZ ITC) Survey.
- Participants recruited from respondents in the nationwide NZ Health Survey (NZHS).
- Sample comprised 1082 smokers and recent quitters, including 361 who identified as Māori.
- Data collected through CATI interviews and included questions assessing support for the main (or similar) recommended measures in the ASAP plan.
- Response – 41.5% of all contacted eligible subjects, 27.6% among all eligible subjects.
- Analysis accounts for over-sampling of some participant groups in the NZHS/ITC sampling stages.

## Results:

- There was strong (80%) support for removing the nicotine from smoked tobacco products if alternative products to deliver nicotine were available
- Majority support (69%) for raising legal of purchase of tobacco products to 21
- Around half participants supported reducing the number of places selling tobacco products, and removing all additives from cigarettes.
- Only 32% supported ongoing tax increases, but 69% supported tax increases if revenue was dedicated to help smokers quit.
- Support was mostly stronger among recent quitters and among smokers planning to quit, and was did not differ greatly by age, ethnicity and socio-economic status.



## Conclusions:

- There was substantial support among smokers and recent quitters for most of the measures proposed in the ASAP report, with particularly strong support for reducing nicotine in cigarettes and raising the age of legal purchase.
- Tax increases are much more likely to be supported if revenue is used to support smokers.
- Support was similar among Māori and among different demographic groups.
- Support among the overall population is likely to be much higher.
- The findings suggest that introducing a comprehensive range of measures to achieve the Smokefree 2025 goal is feasible from the perspective of public acceptability.

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## Conflict of interest statement:

There are no conflicts of interest to report.



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