



# MEDIA RELEASE

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## **New research shows surge in outdoor smokefree action around NZ**

Local outdoor smokefree action is rapidly growing around New Zealand, according to new research from the University of Otago, Wellington.

In a study published today in the *NZ Medical Journal*, the researchers identified local smokefree progress around the country in outdoor smokefree dining, large outdoor work sites and ski-fields, and parts of downtown areas such as squares and streets.

Lead author Associate Professor George Thomson from the University's Department of Public Health, says councils, including Palmerston North, Napier and Hastings have used pavement-lease policies and bylaws to start smokefree outdoor dining.

“Significant moves towards smokefree outdoor dining have also been made elsewhere, including in Rotorua, Ashburton, Westland and Christchurch. Tobacco-free retailing also continues to expand, particularly in Northland.”

“Moves towards smokefree outdoor hospitality areas are particularly important, as it is very easy for people, who are trying to quit smoking, to relapse to smoking again when they visit these areas.

“The New Zealand Government, despite having a Smokefree 2025 goal, has not introduced any new smokefree areas regulation since 2004. We need to change the culture of a ‘drink and a smoke’ much more quickly,” he says.

The study authors note this trend towards outdoor smokefree areas is consistent with other developed countries, particularly Australia, Canada and the United States, but the difference is that in most of these places the power of the law is used to protect people in outdoor hospitality settings.

“New Zealand is behind these countries and could make better use of national laws to ensure regions have smokefree areas across the board. Successful previous New Zealand laws have created smokefree pubs, restaurants and school grounds,” Associate Professor Thomson says.

### **For further information or a copy of the full paper, please contact:**

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