

# Should we pay all smokers to quit smoking?

A mixed methods survey exploring smokers' perceptions of financial incentives



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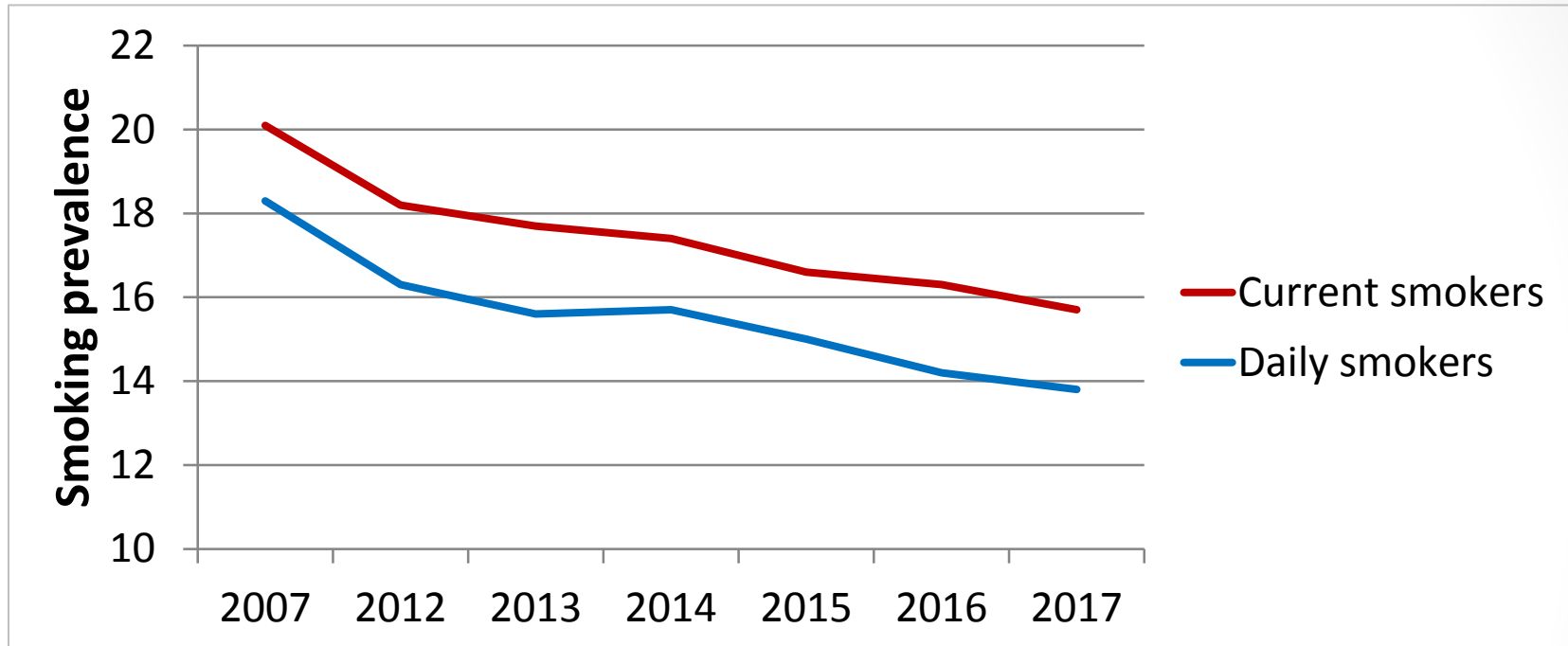
Cancer Society Social and Behavioural Research Unit | ASPIRE2025

# Background

- NZ has strong history in tobacco control:
  - 1990 - Tobacco sponsorship banned
  - 2004 - Smokefree bars & restaurants
  - 2010 - Ongoing annual 10% tax increases
  - 2012 - Point of sale display bans
  - 2018 - Standardised packaging
- Government's smokefree goal:
  - “...reducing smoking prevalence and tobacco availability to *minimal levels*... by 2025”



# Background



- 35.3% of NZ's indigenous Māori are current smokers, as are 24.5% of Pacific people
- **600,000 people** need support to quit if NZ is to achieve the 2025 smokefree goal

# Background

## Pregnant women given incentives to quit smoking

SARAH HARRIS  
Last updated 15:58, October 22 2015



SARAH HARRIS

Shantelle Patea and her 10-month-old baby Laiza Fonua are happy and smoke free.

A Far North programme is offering pregnant women financial rewards to quit smoking.

Te Whare Oranga Ō Kaipōke has had 14 women through their programme in the last year. Out of those 10 managed to quit after one month and five of those were smoke free after baby was born.

### Incentives to smokefree pregnancies

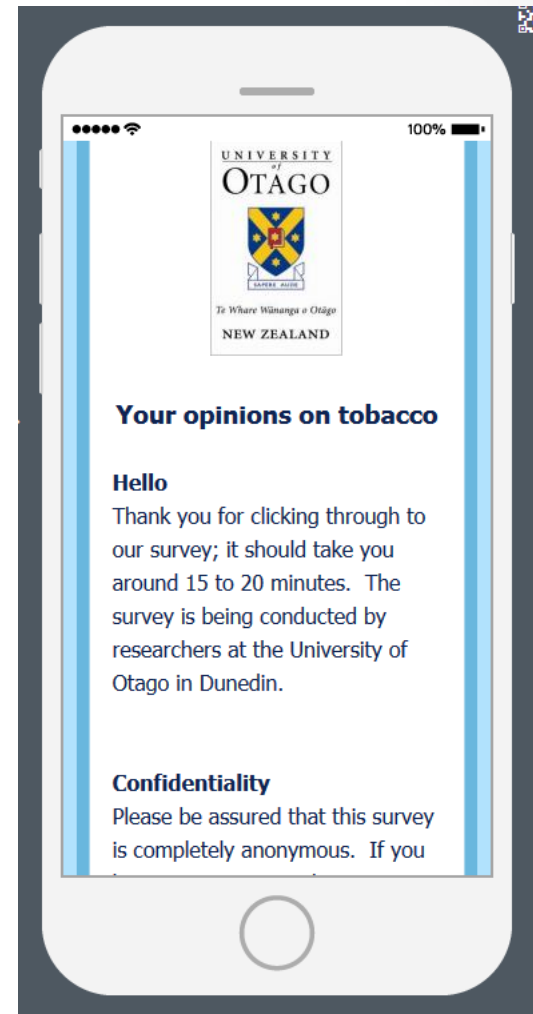
Incentive programmes have recently been launched to encourage pregnant women to quit smoking in some North Island areas, including Waikato, Counties Manukau and Northland DHBs. As part of the Waikato programme, vouchers to a total value of \$250 are given to Māori or Pacific women who are up to 28 weeks pregnant, at one, four, eight and 12 weeks after they have quit smoking.<sup>19</sup> Vouchers are intended to be spent on items such as groceries or petrol; they cannot be exchanged for cash or spent on cigarettes or alcohol.<sup>19</sup> The smokefree status of the women participating is measured by testing exhaled carbon monoxide levels. It was reported that this was a positive influence on quit attempts as it provided accountability.<sup>20</sup> The Counties Manukau programme resulted in a 65% quit rate at four weeks and a 60% rate at 12 weeks.<sup>20</sup>



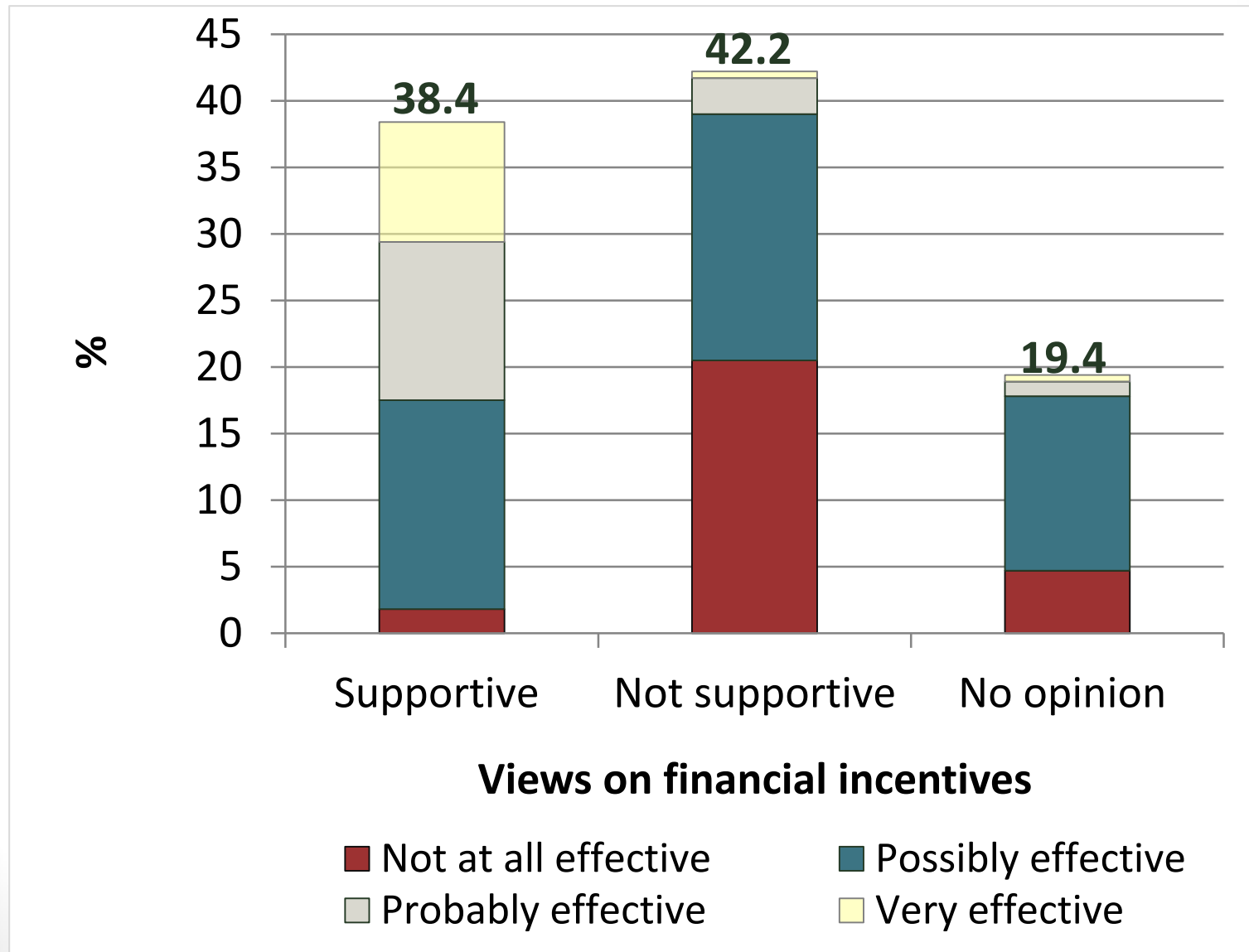
- Endgames require innovative interventions for cessation
- Financial incentives effective among pregnant smokers and in workplaces
- Could financial incentive schemes be rolled out to general population of smokers?
- The acceptability among smokers would influence adoption

# Methods

- Online survey of 623 current smokers
- Convenience sample (internet panel)
- Assessed support for and perceived effectiveness of:
  - Financial incentive schemes generally
  - Government vs employer funded schemes
  - Deposit-based vs reward-only schemes
- Descriptive statistics; logistic regression
- Open-ended question; qualitative content analysis

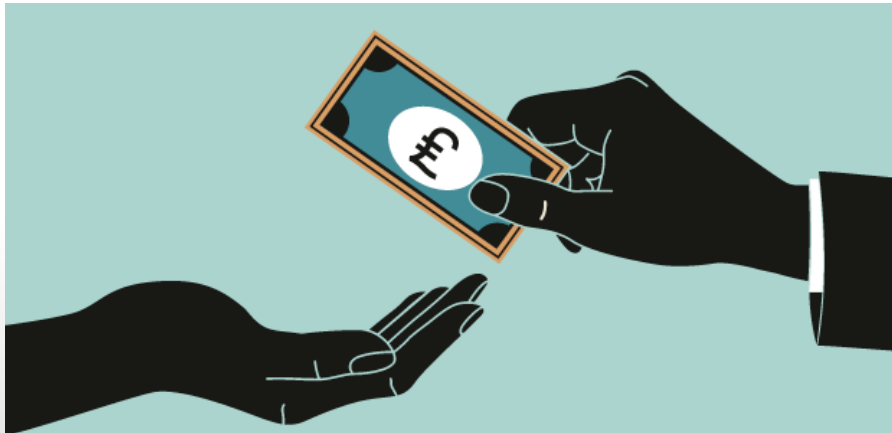


# Key Results



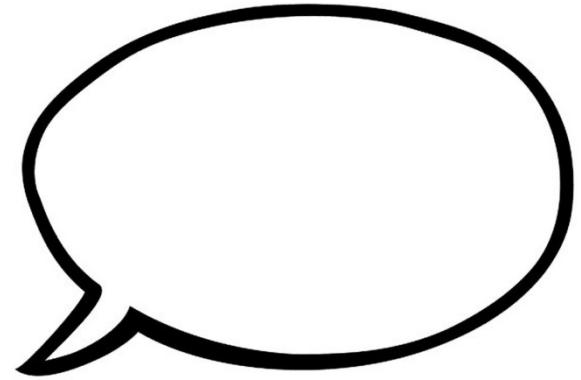
# Support - by type of scheme

<b>Most acceptable scheme</b>	<b>%</b>
Government-funded, reward-only	26.6
Government-funded, deposit-based	20.6
Workplace-funded, reward-only	6.7
Workplace-funded, deposit-based	5.0
None of these schemes (i.e. no support)	41.1



# Results: Qualitative

- 301 responses; supportive (n=47), neutral (n=44) or oppositional (n=210)



## Supportive responses

- Possibility incentives could prove effective:  
*“It’s worth a try and might make a difference”*

## Neutral responses

- Conditional endorsement:  
*“..the incentive should be non-cash-based. Offer things that have a cash value but can’t be redeemed for cash”*



# Results: Oppositional responses

- Individual responsibility:

*“I don't think it's taxpayers' or employees' responsibility to pay for smokers to quit...”*

- Distrust:

*“Some people would just hide the fact they were smoking and say they weren't, to get the money (which would most likely be spent on more smokes)”*

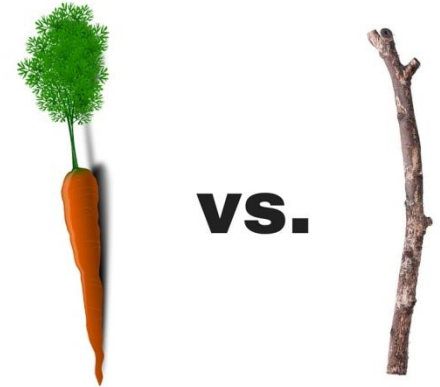
*“A lot of people would claim they smoked just to get on the programme to ‘quit’ and be paid”*



# Results: Oppositional responses

- Coercion:

*“People shouldn't be forced or coerced into giving up smoking. You can only do it when you're ready.”*



- Inequity:

*“..it is unfair on non-smokers. Would they be paid for not smoking?”*



*“This is unfair on others who are fighting other addictions or losing weight”*

# Should we pay all smokers to quit?

- Even amongst those who would benefit, support for FIs is modest
- **Very** low support for employer-funded schemes
- More support needed for wider implementation
- Media advocacy and health education could increase understanding of, and support for FIs



Image source: Te Ara Ha Ora

# Acknowledgements

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