

How do people who smoke perceive a tobacco retail outlet reduction policy in Aotearoa New Zealand? A qualitative analysis

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Disclosures

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- Neither author receives tobacco industry funding;
- Both authors are members of the ASPIRE Research Centre.



Overview

- Commercial tobacco endgames aim to rapidly reduce widespread tobacco availability;
- Internationally, policy makers have taken different approaches to reducing retailer density;
- Modelling studies in USA and Scotland highlight pro-equity measures;
- NZ-specific modelling found pro-equity benefits from large reduction in retail outlets.



Overview

- Aotearoa NZ plans to reduce tobacco retail outlets from ~6000 to 600;
- Explored participants' views on this policy change and their anticipated responses;
- Examined wider societal implications and unintended impacts.



Research Question

- **Aim**
To inform policy implementation by exploring how people who smoke perceive the policy change;
- **We examined**
 - Current purchasing practices;
 - Expected impact of the retail reduction policy;
 - Responses and implications.



Methods

Sample

- Eligibility- aged 18+, smoked at least 5 cigarettes per day;
- Recruitment- social media, referrals;
- Most participants from Dunedin (Otepoti) and Hamilton (Kirikiriroa).

Interviews

- Semi-structured guide;
- 24 interviews in total;
- Mainly conducted online (Zoom) lasting 37 - 119 minutes;
- Audio-recorded with permission;
- Transcribed using Otter.ai software.



Methods

Mapping

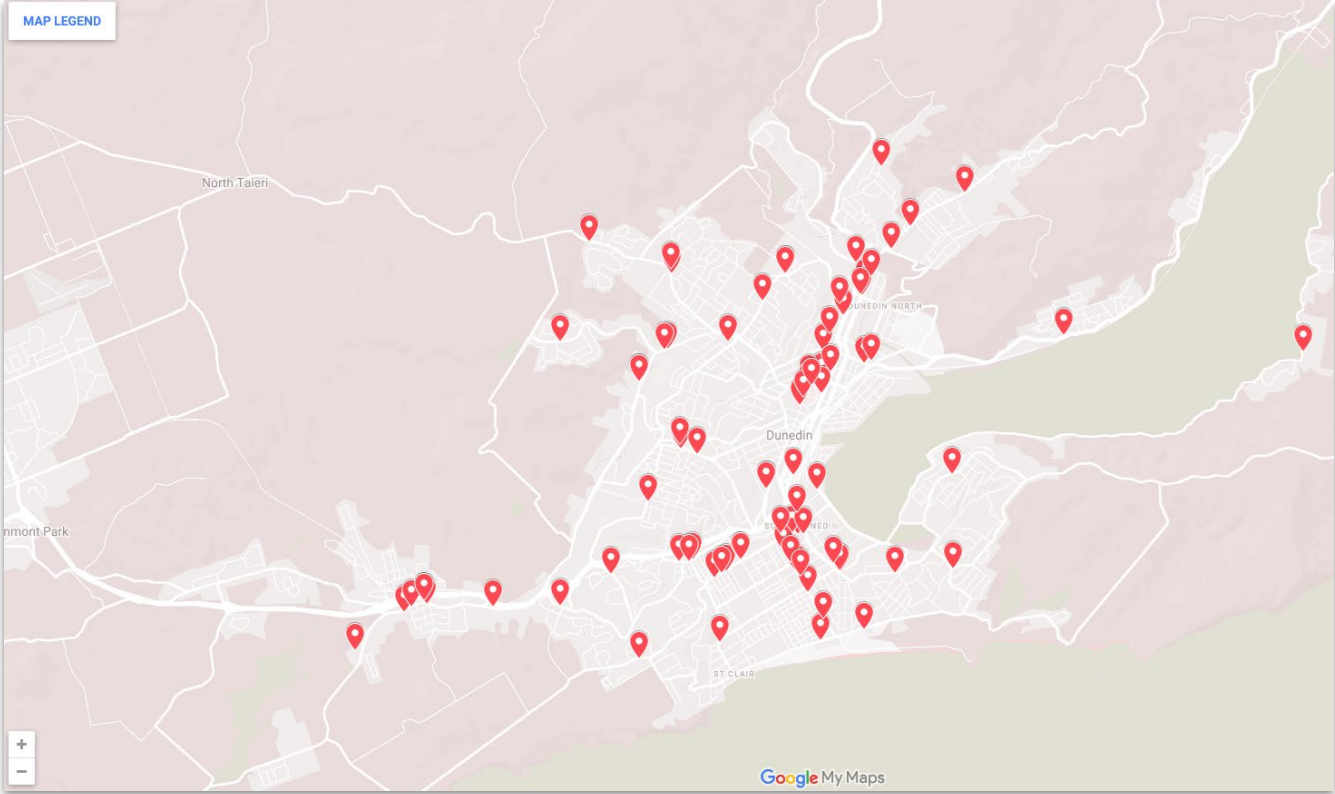
- Google My Maps to depict current scenario vs policy change;
- Visually appealing format;
- Personalized and interactive.



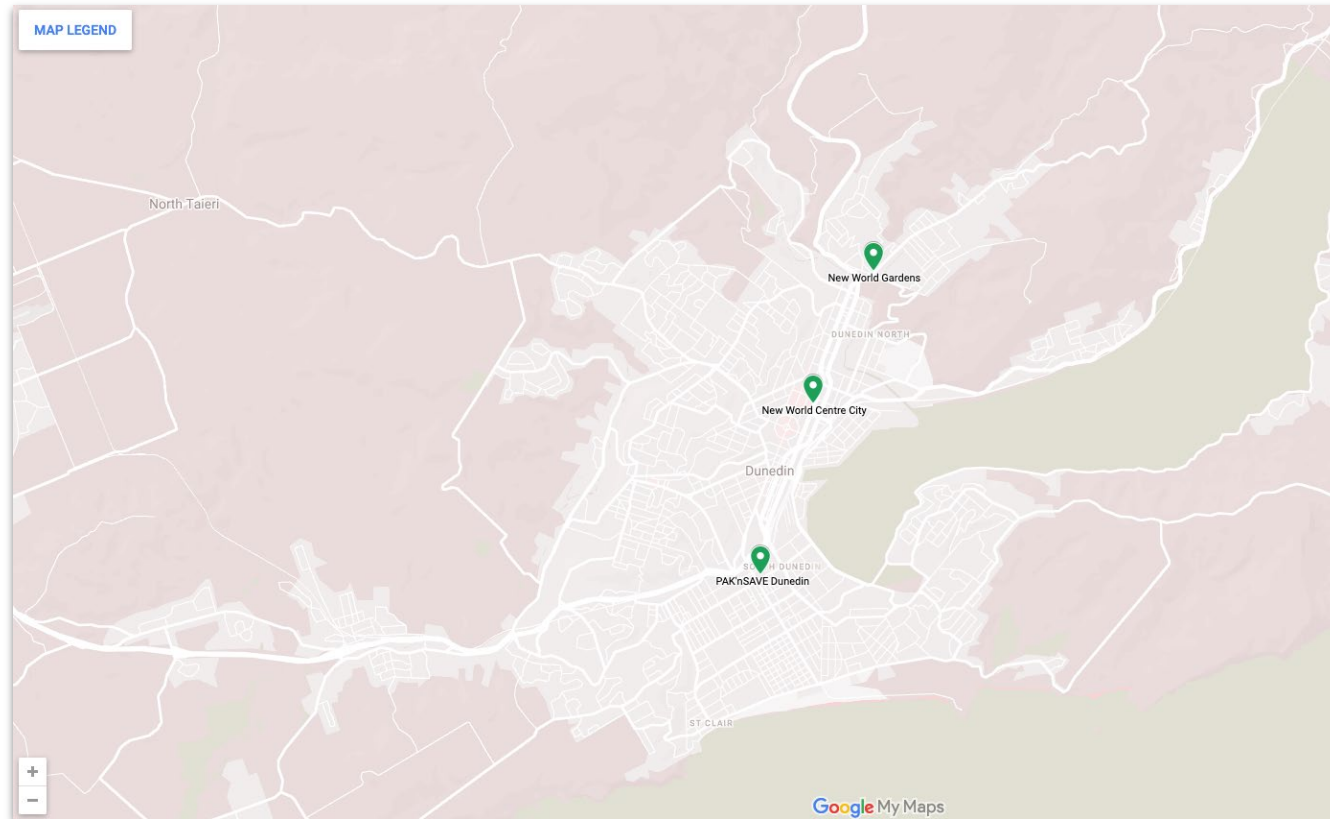
Dunedin sample map: participants' preferred retailers



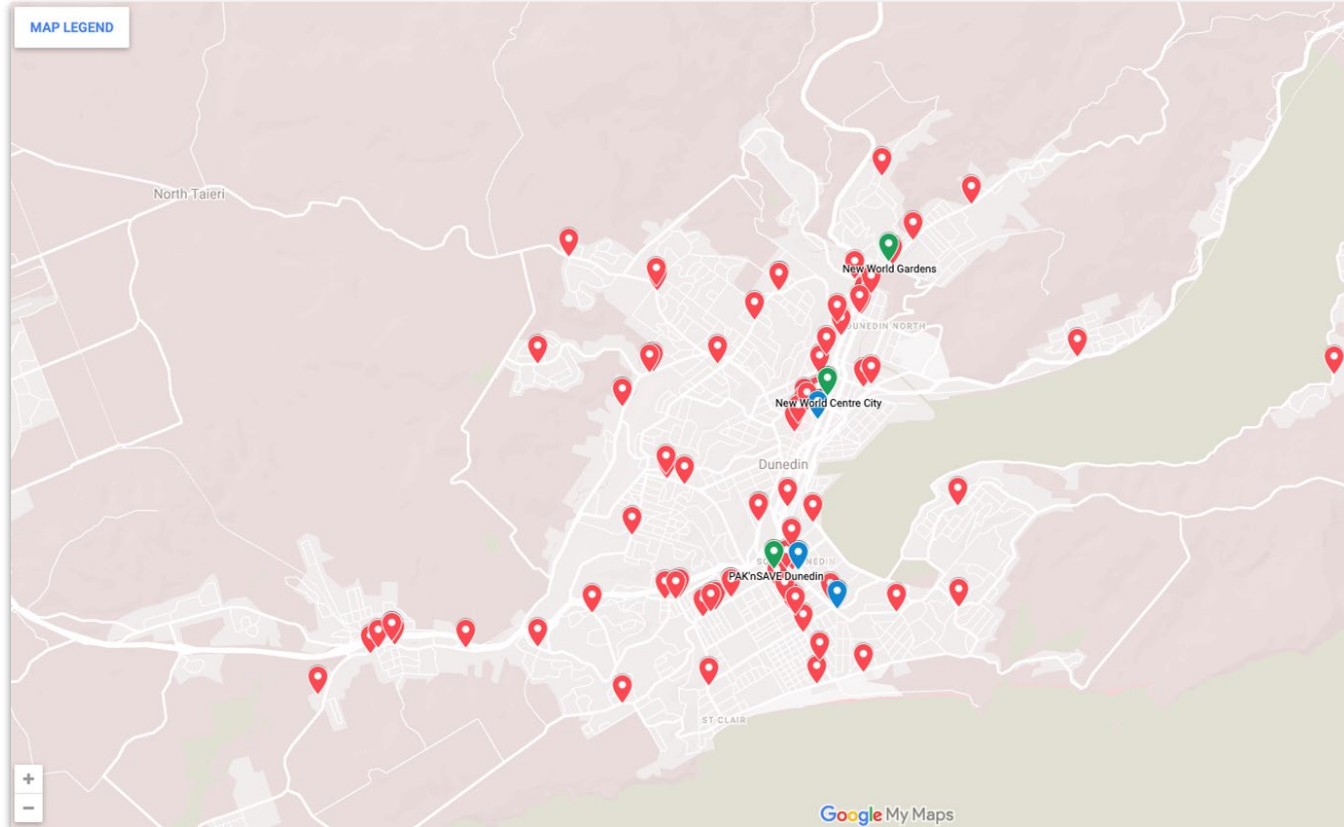
Dunedin sample map: all current retail outlets



Dunedin sample map: potential designated retailers following policy implementation (supermarkets)



Dunedin sample map: toggling layers



Results

Convenience and Cost as Twin Imperatives

- *“Either I'll have to walk further, or start using a bus, or stuff like that... Like, to me, it's just a nuisance, because I don't have a car or any mode of transportation.”*
- *“Well, it'll be the whole... distance of travel. And the price of gas these days has been so hectic. Who wants to be constantly travelling, just to buy a packet?”*

Results

Responding to Retail Disruptions (Bulk Buying)

- *“You know, a lot of the time I look inside my pouch of tobacco and go, ‘Oh... I need to make it last several more days because I don't want to spend the money just yet’. But if it's right there, I'm not even gonna notice. I'm gonna... smoke two weeks' worth in a week and a half.”*
- *“I do have a restraint on me as far as that goes. Like, if I run out of cigarettes in a week, well, that's it. You know... I never ever feel good about having to buy a second pack of cigarettes and usually I don't have that money there anyway.”*

Results

Responding to Retail Disruptions (Reducing Use vs No Anticipated Change)

- “You know, because the convenience of it is disappearing, I could make myself think that it's *just too much effort and slowly cut down because of that..*”
- “It would be a really good way for me to cut down... I'm over it. I've been doing it for long enough now. *Why do I put something into my body that is harming me? Self-harm, isn't it?*”
- “You're dealing with an addict.. We need to be realizing that *this is not choice. This is addiction.*”

Results

Responding to Retail Disruptions (Supporting cessation)

- *“I think if someone was serious about [quitting]... they can't just nip to the dairy to grab a packet, and they'll contemplate more: ‘Is it worth going all the way down there?’ Rather than just that quick, split decision to go get a packet and fall back into that trap.”*
- *“I know people [who] have smoked fifty years, and they absolutely cannot give it up. They sacrifice things... food, power, gas, to get their tobacco. The younger generation- target them, that's great, but people who have been smoking their entire lives... I think it's extremely unfair for them.”*

Results

Responding to Retail Disruptions (Disproportionate Burden)

- *“I think it will have a big impact on the lower socio economic group... because they're not going to have the same ability to... drive, or whatever, to get to a supermarket to buy their cigarettes.”*
- *“It's just going to impact their mental health and cost them more than it originally would because they paid for a taxi or a bus fare, or [they went] somewhere else to get it.”*

Results

Social Gains and Losses (Positive Impacts for Future Generations)

- *“It's all about the next generation and breaking the cycle, breaking those chains of unhealthiness, you know...it didn't happen during our time, but let's make it better for them.”*

Social Gains and Losses (Revenue Loss)

- *“If I went into a dairy to buy tobacco, I'd look around for a drink, chocolate bar, a lighter, hot food. Yeah, [it would have] a huge impact on dairy owners.”*

Social Gains and Losses (Distrust of Govt. vs Support for Action)

- *“The government should mind their business... not get too carried away...”*
- *“[It's] going to be good... you know, creating a healthier, better world.”*

Discussion

- Measures elicited complex responses;
- Findings highlight importance of
 - Community mobilisation;
 - Cessation support;
 - Māori leadership
- Approaches must be holistic and culturally meaningful
- Clearly communicated



Ngā mihi maioha

Thank you

Graham-DeMello A, Hoek J. How do people who smoke perceive a tobacco retail outlet reduction policy in Aotearoa New Zealand? A qualitative analysis. *Tob Control*. 2023 Jan 31;tc-2022-057834. doi: 10.1136/tc-2022-057834