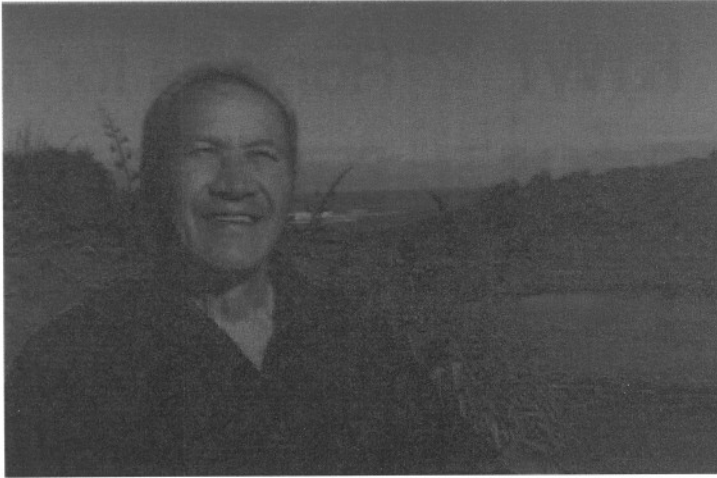


# South Taranaki Leads The Way



**Kaupokonui Beach Motor Camp manager Paddy Robinson enjoying some fresh, smokefree South Taranaki air.**

The Council is thrilled other territorial authorities are butting in to its butt-out policy.

The policy, launched last August, actively discourages smoking in all Council parks, playgrounds, reserves and swimming pool surrounds.

Following South Taranaki's bold move, Gisborne District Council has passed a resolution that all its parks, reserves and playgrounds and GDC-supported events be smokefree.

Upper Hutt City Council's smokefree parks policy took effect on World Smokefree Day last Wednesday and Timaru District Council had a playground smokefree for the day.

An informal survey of 12 users of Hawera's King Edward Park over two days at different times found nearly universal support for the policy, among both smokers and non smokers. Just one park user approached, a smoker, thought the policy was a "bit silly". The mum felt people who bring their children to the park should be able to sit down and have a smoke and relax for 10 minutes.

A teenager smoker thought the policy was good. "I smoke, but I just don't smoke around kids." The policy was a fabulous idea, his father, a non smoker, thought.

A smoker and mum thought it was a good policy "because not everyone's considerate of other people's children". She would normally smoke in the park, but not around children.

A mother of two and a teacher wasn't aware of the policy, but was all for it. The smoker for 20-plus years had just finished a cigarette when approached, the butt of which she flushed down the toilet. "I think it's a great idea to have no smoking in parks, especially where

there are children. Children need to be encouraged not to smoke cigarettes."

Other comments from teenagers, parents and grandparents in support of the policy included not wanting to smoke around children and the untidiness and potential danger of butts lying around where children play.

Kaupokonui Beach Motor Camp manager Paddy Robinson is an avid fan of the smokefree parks policy. He gave up smoking 19 years ago and says the policy is "one of the best ideas the Council has ever had". "The most important thing to any human being is their health, not money," he says hitting his chest. "Rich people stay in cemeteries too."

The Taranaki Cancer Society's Christine Brouwers says it is with such a sense of pride she speaks to groups and colleagues highlighting the huge step the Council took when it adopted the smokefree policy in May 2005. "This is a Council that had the courage to make a move to reinforce the message that smoking and second-hand smoke kills," the health promotion and education adviser says.

Council community services and development group manager Jan Martin, who developed the policy, says it has been positively embraced. "The policy is all about demonstrating leadership and positive role modeling, that a smokefree lifestyle is both desirable and the norm in South Taranaki," Jan says.

The informal survey results point to an acceptance of not smoking around other people in public places, especially children. "Local Government should be seen as leading by example in its community and it's fantastic to see other Councils following our lead," Jan says.