

Case study: Wairoa

1.1 Background

Wairoa Council's smokefree parks policy was officially launched on World Smokefree Day (31 May) 2008.

The Hawke's Bay and Chatham Island Smokefree Coalition (the Coalition) worked collaboratively with the Council to initiate and implement smokefree parks in Wairoa.



1.2 Implementation

Prior to a formally approaching the Council, the Cancer Society Hawke's Bay Centre sent a regular newsletter to Council members and to MPs informing them about a range of smokefree issues and raising awareness of the benefits of smokefree environments. The newsletter contained updates on smokefree initiatives implemented by other councils around New Zealand.

1.2.1 Approach to council

In June 2007 Wairoa District Council received a written submission to their annual planning process from the Coalition requesting that outdoor spaces in the district be made smokefree. In addition, the Coalition attended a Council hearing and made an oral submission. Local representatives from the Wairoa PHO and Sport Hawke's Bay provided oral support in favour of the smokefree proposal.

1.2.2 Initial responses

A generally positive consensus from Council was received following the submission and agreement was forthcoming to develop a policy around smokefree outdoor areas.

1.2.3 Policy development

The Coalition had first approached the Council without a formal project plan in place. Once the submission had been approved, they drew together a plan around development of the policy.

A Policy Analyst within the council was identified as a 'Council champion' and someone who could help the process along. The policy was developed by the Policy Analyst, although a substantial amount of background research and resources were provided by the Coalition.

1.2.4 Budget

The budget for the Wairoa smokefree signage was approximately \$4000. This was funded collaboratively by the Cancer Society New Zealand, Hawkes Bay PHO, Hawke's Bay DHB, The National Heart Foundation and the HSC.

Wairoa Council contributed installation costs, erected suitable structures to hold the signs and agreed to cover the costs of ongoing signage maintenance.

1.2.5 Promotion

To promote the Smokefree Parks Policy, Wairoa Council put up posters which were supplied free of charge by the Hawkes Bay PHO. They were displayed on public notice boards and organisations' staffrooms around the district. The policy was also promoted internally through Council newsletters.

The official launch of Wairoa's smokefree parks policy took place in a local park on World Smokefree Day 2008. Local MPs, Council Staff, Wairoa PHO staff and members of the public were in attendance. The Mayor spoke publicly about how supportive local government was of the project.

Media were contacted through a news release and were invited to the launch. The event received coverage in the local press and on Maori TV.

1.3 Evaluation

No formal evaluation of the policy has taken place in Wairoa. However, there is a positive indication that the public is embracing the policy. Whereas normally council signage is prone to graffiti, the prominent smokefree signs have not been damaged.

1.3.1 What worked well

Excellent collaboration between the Coalition and other key stakeholders was crucial to the advocacy, development, and funding of the policy. The collaborative approach meant a wide cross-section of the community was represented, making smokefree parks into a community issue rather than solely a health one. Having people within the community speak in favour of the policy at the submission was important to Council's decision to approve smokefree parks.

As the Coalition funded and provided the signage, there was little cost involved for Council which made implementing smokefree parks a more appealing prospect for them.

1.3.2 What didn't work so well

During the original submission stage, the Coalition did not link the Council's long term community outcomes into the proposal, which may have been a more persuasive approach.

1.4 Suggestions

The following suggestions come from key members of the Hawke's Bay and Chatham Island Smokefree Coalition:

- A collaborative approach yields good results – get a lot of team members behind you and work together to make things happen.
- Make sure those approached within the council are the appropriate people to deal with. Councils have different layers in terms of staffing and you need to work with people at the right level. Identify a council champion who will help move the process along quickly.
- It's important to line up someone who could speak knowledgably and clearly around the issue at an oral submission, as well as local representatives – particularly people who are known in the area. This can be very persuasive and lead to positive feedback.