

## MEDIA RELEASE

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### Join the trend – quit smoking for World Smokefree Day

With fewer New Zealanders smoking, Nelson Marlborough Health smokefree co-ordinator Karen Vis is challenging anyone who's thinking about quitting smoking to join the trend.

“World Smokefree Day on May 31 is the perfect time to choose the smokefree lifestyle. We know it's not easy to stop smoking, but with the right support it can be done.”

Increasing numbers of New Zealanders are living smokefree, with the most recent tobacco-use figures show 84%<sup>1</sup> of New Zealanders do not smoke. “That's 4% more than in 2008, so we are moving towards the Government's goal of a smokefree Aotearoa in 2025,” Karen says.

Karen says the launch of the new Pepi First and Stop Smoking services in the Nelson Marlborough region one year ago on World Smokefree Day has helped more people to quit.

Between April 2017 and March 2018, 464 people have enrolled in the Stop Smoking or Pepi First programme and 57% of people have successfully quit smoking in that time.

Pepi First, an incentivised quit programme for pregnant women, has been especially successful with the rates of women who smoke (recorded by lead maternity carers) dropping to a record low of 7.7% in the first quarter of 2018 – compared to 14.9% at the same time last year.

“Pepi First is providing significant and lasting benefits for mothers and babies, and often the whole whanau,” Karen says.

“We know that mothers want the best start for their babies and that pregnancy is a big incentive to quit smoking and make a positive change. The health system also wins – the health risks to a mother who smokes, and to her child, are serious and can be lifelong.”

Karen says that more local businesses are also going smokefree. Indoor work areas have been smokefree since 1990, but many businesses are now going over and above what the law requires and declaring a completely smokefree workplace, including work vehicles.

“More and more businesses are approaching us for help to support their employees to become smokefree. They're offering free nicotine replacement therapy and stop smoking support during work time with the aim of creating a smokefree workforce.”

Karen says the Stop Smoking and Pepi First services have highly trained practitioners who use a trialled and tested stop smoking methodology. “Those who join our programmes have the benefit of on-going, face-to-face, intensive

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<sup>1</sup> Health Promotion Agency 2017. NZ Health and Lifestyle Survey 2016.

support and supervision. We can create a plan to manage cravings, and strategies to deal with situations where they might usually smoke. We know what works long-term.

“Being smokefree is normal in New Zealand, so I’m encouraging anyone who wants to give up smoking to take up the challenge this World Smokefree Day. Our job is to make it as easy as possible to stop smoking, and we are more than ready to help people choose to live smokefree.”

### **More about the Stop Smoking and Pepi First services**

A partnership between Nelson Marlborough Health, Marlborough Primary Health, Nelson Bays Primary Health and Te Piki Oranga, the Stop Smoking and Pepi First services are designed to give smokers the best chance of quitting and staying smoke-free.

They build on the current range of smoking cessation support currently offered in the region, and compliment the Quitline service that offers 24/7 support. People can refer themselves using a free phone line, or referrals can be made by GPs, midwives and other health practitioners.

### **How to contact the service**

Smokers can refer themselves to the services, or ask their GP, midwife or other health practitioner to look into it for them.

The contact details are:

[smokefree@nmdhb.govt.nz](mailto:smokefree@nmdhb.govt.nz)

0800 NO SMOKE (0800 667 665)

[www.nmdhb.govt.nz/stop-smoking-services](http://www.nmdhb.govt.nz/stop-smoking-services)

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### **Notes to reporter:**

- For more information on World Smokefree Day, go to: [www.worldsmokefreeday.org.nz](http://www.worldsmokefreeday.org.nz)
- World Smokefree Day was created by the World Health Organization in 1987. In other countries it is known as World No Tobacco Day.

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