

# **Nelson City Council Upper Trafalgar Street Temporary Closure**

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## Submitter details

1. Nelson Marlborough Health (Nelson Marlborough District Health Board) (NMH) is a key organisation involved in the health and wellbeing of the people within Te Tau Ihu o Te Waka a Maui. NMH appreciates the opportunity to comment from a public health perspective on the Nelson City Council's Upper Trafalgar Street Temporary Closure.
2. NMH makes this submission in recognition of its responsibilities to improve, promote and protect the health of people and communities under the New Zealand Public Health and Disability Act 2000 and the Health Act 1956.
3. This submission sets out particular matters of interest and concern to NMH, particularly in relation to alcohol harm and smokefree environments.

## General Comments

4. NCC has stated that the purpose of this closure is to create an inviting pedestrian-friendly space. Research has shown that characteristics of a great public space are, amongst others, that the space
  - a. is safe, welcoming, and accommodating for all users
  - b. promotes human contact and social activities
  - c. promotes community involvement
  - d. reflects the local culture or history
  - e. is well maintained.<sup>1</sup>
5. It is important that this public space is welcoming to people of all ages and NMH is supportive for this. The availability of public space provides the opportunity for people to gather and socialise which has many health and wellbeing benefits.<sup>2</sup>
6. The installation of additional street furniture and designated performance space would create flexible space where people could linger and watch events. Given that Nelson has an ageing population, additional street furniture would give older people a place of respite.
7. Consideration needs to be given to the location of street furniture, planter boxes and signage so people can navigate easily in particular people with limited mobility or prams.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.planning.org/greatplaces/spaces/characteristics.htm> Retrieved 22 August 2017

<sup>2</sup> Regional Public Health (2010) *Healthy Open Spaces: A summary of the impact of open spaces on health and wellbeing*. Regional Public Health, Wellington. Retrieved from <http://www.rph.org.nz/content/d893f45e-9d35-4906-bde7-c4912036c97e.cmr> 27 July 2017



8. Given that this trial will occur in the summer months, many people may chose to cycle to this area. Therefore there should be an adequate number of cycle parks in the area.

*Recommendation:* that appropriately placed street furniture, designated performance space and cycle parks are added to Upper Trafalgar Street.

## **Alcohol Harm Reduction**

9. NMH is supportive of the creation of public space in the heart of Nelson but has reservations about the proposed liquor licence extensions. There is a growing recognition of alcohol-related harm and subsequent costs to individuals, communities and the health system. According to regional results from the 2011-2014 New Zealand Health Survey, 11% of Nelson Marlborough residents are hazardous drinkers.
10. NCC does not have a Local Alcohol Policy, therefore there are no restrictions on the hours that a premise can be licensed, or the density and location of licensed premises permitted in any area. Currently, in Upper Trafalgar Street, there are approximately twelve businesses of which seven are on licenses and one an off licence. The six on licenses currently have outdoor licensed areas. If these premises were all to be encouraged to extend their outdoor licensed area, the dominant purpose for the public space would be licensed premises. As mentioned above, some of the characteristics of a great public space are that the space is safe, welcoming, and accommodating for *all* users, promotes contact and social activities, and promotes community involvement.<sup>3</sup> The dominance of one activity, such as licensed premises, over any other activity would place restrictions on the range of people who would benefit from this area.
11. The expansion of licensed premises and the subsequent increase in availability of alcohol could well result in an increase in alcohol related harm.
12. If the temporary closure results in expanded licensed areas, any variation to licences needs to be considered under the Sale and Supply of Alcohol Act (2012) and a report will be provided by the Medical Officer of Health. Consideration would include such matters as the purpose of the extension, the activities to be undertaken in the area, the controls over sale and supply of alcohol, the hours to be licensed, the designation of the area and the effects on amenity and good order of the locality.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.planning.org/greatplaces/spaces/characteristics.htm> Retrieved 22 August 2017

*Recommendation:* the true intent, benefits and associated costs of this temporary closure be identified so that rate payer contributions are spent on features that are of appeal to the majority of the community. Overall consideration should be given to the creation of an area that has the characteristics as listed above of a “great public space”.

### **Smokefree environments**

13. NMH has consistently expressed its desire for NCC to make the streets and public spaces of Nelson CBD smokefree environments.
14. NMH is pleased to see that NCC recently extended its smokefree policy to include events run by council and also endorsed the Cancer Society’s smokefree outdoor dining trial that is scheduled to commence in the region in October. While these are great steps towards NCC’s goal of creating a smokefree city, NMH considers that the Upper Trafalgar Street Temporary Closure is another fantastic opportunity to encourage restaurants and cafes within this zone to make their outdoor dining areas smokefree, at least for the duration of the closure period.
15. Making Upper Trafalgar Street outdoor dining areas smokefree would also support the Government’s goal of becoming a smokefree nation by 2025 and align with the following NCC community outcomes:

*“We nurture our young people so Nelson is a safe and healthy place for everyone to grow up and live”*

16. This outcome and the provision of a healthy environment is particularly important given that the closure will encourage families, young people and children to gather and socialise in the area.
17. National and international evidence shows the importance of smokefree outdoor areas in de-normalising smoking as a socially acceptable activity, therefore decreasing the incidence of smoking especially amongst young people.<sup>4</sup>
18. To reiterate evidence from that submission, extending smokefree areas:
  - a. is generally supported by the public<sup>5</sup>
  - b. does not harm business<sup>6,7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Auckland Council. 2016. *Review of Auckland Council’s Smokefree Policy 2013*. Findings Report. Auckland: Auckland Council

<sup>5</sup> Health Promotion Agency. 2013. *Acceptability of extended smokefree areas and smokefree cars*. Wellington: Health Promotion Agency

- c. can reduce the impact of cigarette-related litter in outdoor areas, resulting in reduced cleaning costs, fire risk and environmental impacts<sup>8</sup>
- d. reduces the risk of adverse health effects from second-hand smoke exposure, de-normalises smoking especially around children, and encourages smokers to quit.

*Recommendation:* that NCC encourages the restaurants and cafes situated within Upper Trafalgar St to make their outdoor dining areas smokefree, at least for the duration of the closure period.

## **Accessibility**

19. NMH notes that the road closure will result in the removal of parking spaces including mobility parks. It is important that people with limited mobility are able to have access to this area therefore alternative mobility parks should be sited nearby.

*Recommendation:* that mobility parking spaces are designated on Hardy Street or Selwyn Place.

## **Conclusion**

20. NMH thanks the Nelson City Council for the opportunity to comment on the Upper Trafalgar Street Temporary Closure.

21. NMH believes that the recommendations contained in this submission will go towards promoting this area as a safe and inviting public space where the possible harms of tobacco and alcohol are reduced.

Yours sincerely



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<sup>6</sup> Loomis BR, Shafer PR, van Hasselt M. 2013. *The economic impact of smoke-free laws on restaurants and bars in 9 states*. Preventing Chronic Disease 10:120327

<sup>7</sup> World Health Organization. 2015. *Tobacco*. Fact sheet No 339. Copenhagen: WHO Regional Office for Europe

<sup>8</sup> Cancer Society of New Zealand and Health Sponsorship Council. 2008. *Smokefree councils implementation kit: A guide for local health promoters*. Wellington: Cancer Society of New Zealand and Health Sponsorship Council