



Ninety-six percent of New Zealand smokers support smokefree cars containing preschool children

New Zealand and international research shows that smoking in cars, even with the windows down, produces dangerous levels of pollutants.^{1,2} These levels are far higher than World Health Organization air quality guidelines for particulates in ambient air.³

While at least 10 Australian and North American jurisdictions (including California) have banned smoking in cars carrying children,⁴⁻¹³ New Zealand officials have been reported as hesitant about considering such a move.¹⁴ Perceived questions about public support appear to have contributed to lack of progress on this issue in New Zealand.¹⁴

In a number of areas of Australia and North America, support from smokers (85% or over) and non-smokers (90% or over) has been reported for banning smoking in cars with children inside.¹⁵⁻¹⁸ In a 1997 Wellington area survey, 94% agreed that cars with children in them should be smokefree (86% of smokers).¹⁵ In a 2004 New Zealand wide survey, 76% disagreed that it is “okay” to smoke around non-smokers inside cars even when there are windows down.¹⁶

New NZ data on smokers’ attitudes—Between March 2007 and February 2008 we surveyed a national sample of 1376 New Zealand adult (18+ years) smokers. A specific question included: ‘Do you think smoking should be allowed in cars with pre-school children in them?’ Further detail on the survey methods is available elsewhere.¹⁷

Results weighted to reflect the national population of smokers showed that 95.9% disagreed (95%CI: 4.7%–97.1%) and only 3.0% agreed with this question. That is, there appears to be almost universal support for not allowing smoking in cars carrying children, from smokers themselves.

New Zealand advocates and policymakers now have evidence of strong support by smokers for pursuing the safety of children from tobacco smoke pollution in cars.

A smokefree car law should be a priority for the new government.

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