



Ministry of Health admits failure of tobacco tax hikes

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The Ministry of Health's annual Health and Independence Report confirms the scandalous failure of regressive tobacco taxes, says the New Zealand Taxpayers' Union.

Taxpayers' Union Executive Director Jordan Williams says, "This report demonstrates that tobacco taxes have been ineffective in cutting smoking rates, and especially so for Maori and Pacific smokers."

"Counter-intuitively, it is New Zealand's poorest communities that have been least responsive to the tax hikes."

"Hiking tobacco tax causes tremendous financial harm to smokers and their families. Driving up the cost of an addictive substance in practice means less food on the table."

"And that's not to mention the wave of tobacco-focused burglaries terrorising shop owners."

"Even the small reductions in smoking rates will only partially be a result of tax hikes – many people will have switched due to education campaigns, or by switching to less harmful alternatives like vaping."

"This report essentially vindicates the findings of our own report, Up in Smoke: The social costs of tobacco excise. Our report concluded that the only feasible and moral way to reduce smoking rates further is by removing regulatory barriers to people taking up alternatives like vaping, snus, and heated tobacco."

Source: <http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/PO1807/S00223/ministry-of-health-admits-failure-of-tobacco-tax-hikes.htm>