Hanmer Springs, an alpine tourist centre in the South Island, recently trialed a voluntary smokefree and vapefree zone across designated retail/business streets and adjacent public spaces (over a six-month period). The smokefree and vapefree zone was the result of a collaborative partnership with the Cancer Society, the Canterbury DHB, local council, businesses, and the community.

The evaluation\(^a\) of the Hanmer Springs smokefree and vapefree zone was undertaken following a request from the Cancer Society. The evaluation used a mixed-methods design which involved the collection and analysis of information from nearly 1,000 respondents. The overall aim of the evaluation was to assess and report on the general levels of awareness of the zone, the attitudes of stakeholders, the overall level of support for the continuation of the zone, smoking/vaping prevalence, and any unintended consequences of the zone.

\(^a\) The evaluation was conducted by the Information Team from Community and Public Health (a division of the Canterbury District Health Board). The evaluators had no role in the development of the smokefree and vapefree zone programme plan or implementation.
Field observations were conducted over five weekend days (in two periods) and all coincided with school holidays. A total of 7,034 adults were counted. During the first observation period (prior to the trial), 2% of adults were observed smoking and vaping in the zone and, for the second period (during the trial), this proportion was approximately 0.5%**. Walking loops were also conducted in the zone, and clusters of smoking behaviours were observed in green spaces within the village, including playgrounds. Substantial cigarette litter was visible outside the cafés and bars along Jack’s Pass Road and Conical Hill Road.

*Observed outdoors, in specified public spaces (not necessarily a measure of the proportion of people who smoke and/or vape in Hanmer Springs on any given day).
**Overall, 110 smokers/vapers were observed ‘in-zone’ during the field observation scans and walking loops.

Would visitors* be more or less likely to visit other places in NZ that have smokefree and vapefree zones?

- More likely to visit: 54%
- No difference: 40%
- Less likely: 5%

*Only includes visitors who responded via feedback cards (total respondents = 547).

Example comments

"I think it's fantastic. We should be able to enjoy our outdoor spaces with fresh air" (Business owner)

"Someone (some town) has got to lead the way for other towns/cities to follow. It's a good fit for the community too - one that promotes an active lifestyle" (Resident)

"If it's not illegal it shouldn't be banned. Freedom of choice" (Resident)

"Good concept. Need to be realistic about timeframes to become 'normal'. Stick with it! Long term" (Business owner)

One policy [smokefree and vapefree] is a good one..." (Visitor)

"It is what is best for the community not the smokers" (Resident)

"I think both habits are intrusive to others..." (Visitor)

“We are a tourist town, and need as many people as possible to visit our beautiful area. We now have serious competition from other areas in the South Island, and cannot afford to be picky on who comes here" (Business owner)