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### **Smokefree dining a breath of fresh air for Te Taitokerau**

Following on from the success of the Fresh Air Project Whangārei, Healthy Families Far North is gearing up to join the movement and launch a call to action to support smokefree dining in the Far North.

The Fresh Air Project Whangārei was a three-month initiative which ended in May and is currently being evaluated by the Northland District Health Board and Cancer Society Northland. Based on a similar successful pilot run in Christchurch in 2017, the Whangārei initiative saw 10 cafes become smoke free, adding to the 14 that were already smokefree beforehand.

Northland District Health Board smokefree co-ordinator Bridget Rowse says the outdoor dining pilot was designed to allow the public to experience the benefits of smokefree outdoor dining, adding that 72% of customers during the period said they were more likely to visit a café again because of the smokefree outdoor dining appeal.

“The benefits of smokefree outdoor dining extend beyond the smoker to customers and staff. Second-hand smoke isn't just unpleasant; it poses a real health risk which customers and staff shouldn't have to be exposed to,” she says.

Although in the early thought stages, she says the appetite for bringing the movement further north to the Far North District is promising and Healthy Families Far North is engaged to support the building of capacity for outdoor smokefree dining with Far North eateries.

Healthy Families Far North kaiwhakahaere Shirleyanne Brown says the team has good working relationships with the Northland Chambers of Commerce and the Far North District Council at a high level, with key influencers sitting on the Healthy Families Far North Regional Leadership Forum.

“Healthy Families New Zealand operates under a set of guiding principles, including leadership and collaboration for collective impact. We support leadership at all levels of the prevention effort while navigating the complex systems and relationships at play



which have huge impact upon the health of the people of Te Taitokerau. Armed with the successful results of the Fresh Air Project Whangārei, we have a wonderful opportunity to collectively nurture the growth of smokefree environments in the Far North," she says.

She further adds that the last major change to public dining experiences was in 2004, when cafes and restaurants went smokefree indoors.

"Contrary to fears at the time, sales increased as more families were attracted to improved overall dining experiences. Now is the time for our Far North cafes and restaurants to make the next courageous step – to go totally smokefree, indoors and outdoors, for good," she says.

## **Ends**

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