“The impacts of tobacco consumption place thousands of New Zealanders at significant risk, every day. Around 5000 people die each year because of smoking or second hand smoke exposure; that’s about 13 people a day.

Into this environment then, the place of advocates and champions to help all New Zealanders live smokefree lives is fundamental. Quitline started as a volunteer phone helpline in 1999 and has grown, exponentially, to a multi-channel operation that now provides support to ten percent of the New Zealand smoking population each year.

One of my proudest achievements is to know that in the period between 2006 and 2013, smoking prevalence in New Zealand fell from 20.1% to 15.1%, or in real numbers, 134,601 fewer smokers. I have always believed that the most effective way to reduce smoking is to address many strands of influence at the same time including price, policy and social pressures. I know that Quitline has made an important contribution to reducing smoking rates in New Zealand and I want to congratulate them for their leadership in making the difference.”

Hon Dame Tariana Turia

QUITLINE: SUPPORTING NEW ZEALANDERS TO STOP SMOKING

32,555 Quitline Quit Attempts, at 5.4% of the total adult smoker population of 597,000 smokers (Census 2006)

Graphic warnings on cigarette packs with Quitline phone number

Substantial increase of Quitline funding results in a ‘step change’ in demand

Quitline online access for NRT

Quitline Annual Expenditure (Nominal dollars, $millions, financial year July to June):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>02/03</th>
<th>03/04</th>
<th>04/05</th>
<th>05/06</th>
<th>06/07</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Quitline</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertising</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>1.2</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
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2 A history of Quitline 1999–2015
6 Edith Rerekura’s 15 years at Quitline
7 A team effort: Quitline’s staff and trustees, past and present
8 Looking to the future: Smokefree Aotearoa 2025
A BRIEF HISTORY OF QUITLINE
1999–2015

1999
The national Quitline is launched. The year before three organisations – the Health Sponsorship Council, the Cancer Society and Te Hotu Manawa Māori – had joined forces to develop a pilot Quitline in Waikato/Bay of Plenty. Their ambition was, ‘to put quitting on the agenda of people who smoke’. Up until now, no public funding had been invested in helping people to quit.

The national Quitline began with a small team of Quitline Advisors who took calls transferred from a contact centre. The advertising campaign Every Cigarette is Doing you Damage aired. Based on an Australian campaign, it shocked viewers with graphic images showing the effects of smoking.

2000
The Quit Group becomes a charitable trust. Annette Milligan is the first Chairperson and Helen Glasgow is the first Executive Director. In November the Government announces funding for subsidised nicotine patches, gum and lozenges through Quitline and other providers. Smokers around the country immediately respond creating unprecedented demand for Quitline’s services, with 70,000 calls fielded in one month alone.

2001
100,000 calls are received in the first six months of the year. Staff levels increase from one manager and 20 part-time Quitline Advisors to five managers and nearly 50 staff in expanded premises. A new advertising campaign, It’s about Whānau, is launched. It uses role models from all walks of life to give positive messages about quitting. Quitline delivers a hospital-based programme called Quit for our kids providing smoking cessation support and advice to patients and their caregivers.

2002
The campaign Every Cigarette is Doing you Damage is relaunched with two new advertisements including one aimed at Māori. A radio campaign to inform people about the Quitline service is launched alongside this campaign.

2003
The campaign Take the smoke outside airs, highlighting the risks of second hand smoke.

Every Day One More Non-smoker is Extinguished
In May, Quitline opens its own contact centre, requiring the organisation to develop technology, workforce skills and quality management systems. Advisors now answer calls directly, instead of another contact centre transferring them. There is capacity for Advisors to spend more time with each client, and each client has an average of three contacts with an advisor.

2004
32,000 people register to quit smoking. An evaluation of Quitline shows that 21% of clients are still quit after six months – a much higher rate than for people who quit alone. Speaking to an Advisor several times, using nicotine replacement therapies and reading printed resources sent in the Quit Pack are shown to further increase a person’s chances of successfully quitting.

2005
Tobacco control sector sets vision for a Smokefree Aotearoa/New Zealand by 2020. Txt2Quit is launched, providing motivational text support. Quitline expands from a 30 to 45 seat contact centre. Nearly 44,000 people register to make a quit attempt. Graphic health warnings are introduced on tobacco packaging and the number of clients who obtain Quitline’s number this way increases dramatically.

2006
Video Diaries advertising campaign is launched using an unscripted, documentary style format to follow actual smokers as they quit smoking. Research shows that threat appeal commercials are the most successful for generating quit attempts, but these campaigns are even more successful when run in conjunction with supportive campaigns offering smokers solutions and strategies.

2007
1000 people join Quitline’s newly launched online community which offers a peer-support blog, calculators and the ability to order NRT online.

2008
Irene May-Thomas

32,000 people register to quit smoking. An evaluation of Quitline shows that 21% of clients are still quit after six months – a much higher rate than for people who quit alone. Speaking to an Advisor several times, using nicotine replacement therapies and reading printed resources sent in the Quit Pack are shown to further increase a person’s chances of successfully quitting.
A BRIEF HISTORY OF QUITLINE
1999–2015

2009:
53,000 people register to make a quit attempt. Long-time Executive Director Helen Glasgow retires and Paula Snowden becomes Chief Executive. Quitline wins a tender to deliver a national workplace based cessation programme, Quit@work. Nearly half of all Quitline clients now register online.

2010
An independent report shows Quitline offers a return on investment of $1:$31.50. The first of a series of tax increases on tobacco creates a big spike in demand, with Quitline receiving a record number of 850 calls the day this comes into effect. In the following month call volumes are 50% higher than average.

2011
The Government announces its commitment to making New Zealand a smokefree nation by 2025. Quitline works with the Department of Corrections on training and developing resources for smokefree prisons. Quitline launches a newly designed website which includes a range of new support tools, including personal pages for registered clients where they can create their own quit plans and monitor their quit stats. Quitline launches a new campaign Don’t give up, Quit which features former smokers sharing the moment they became smokefree and another promoting the use of nicotine patches – shown to double a person’s chances of successfully quitting.

2012
Following tobacco tax increases in 2010, 2011 and 2012, the Government announces there will be further 10% increases in 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2016. An independent evaluation shows that almost 25% of Quitline clients are smokefree after six months and that the more services a client uses, the higher their rate of success. An automated referral system is put in place so that medical practices using Medtech can directly refer patients to Quitline. An advertising campaign The New You is launched which features clients who have successfully quit with the help of Quitline’s services and promotes the message that people are five times more likely to quit with Quitline’s support. Quitline runs a second campaign on Māori Television, tracking the quitting journey of singer and musician Chad Chambers, which prompts great feedback from Māori.
The Crayons campaign launches, focusing on what people in high deprivation communities said was their most powerful motivator to quit – their children. The campaign creates an instant 30.7% increase in Quit Programme registrations and a 35% increase for Māori clients. In the annual client satisfaction survey, 95.6% of clients said they were satisfied with the service they had received, 97.1% of Māori clients were satisfied and 95.8% of Pacific clients were satisfied. 87.5% of clients used two or more services – from the choice of phone, web, blog, email and text and almost 50% used three or more services. Research shows that the more services a person uses, the greater their chance of successfully quitting. Clients’ four-week quit success rate was 32.6% (up from 30.7% in 2013–2014).

As of 1 November 2015, the Quitline service will no longer be delivered by The Quit Group trust. Homecare Medical Limited has won the contract to deliver the Ministry of Health’s new National Telehealth Service, which includes Quitline.
When subsidised nicotine replacement therapies (NRT) were first introduced in 2000, the response from Kiwis wanting to quit smoking was unprecedented. “In those days thousands of faxes used to come spilling out of the machine. I firmly believe the Government didn’t know there was going to be such huge demand,” says Edith Rerekura who became a Quitline Advisor in 2000. The faxes contained the details of people who had requested NRT. Quitline did not have its own contact centre and calls were answered by another contact centre, then called back by an Advisor. Edie says she loved talking to people on the phone. Like many Quitline staff, she had once been a smoker herself. A moving presentation by Aukati Kaipaipa had prompted her to quit. “I never touched another cigarette. When I saw the advert for a job at Quitline it was something I really wanted to do, it became a passion for me. I wanted to help my people to give up, because it has killed our people.” Edie knows from first-hand experience the devastating affect smoking can have on families. The eldest of seven siblings, “I am the only one left and five of them died of smoking related diseases”.

During her 15 years at Quitline, after beginning as a Quitline Advisor, Edie was promoted to Team Leader and then became an Events Specialist. She has witnessed big changes to the Quitline service, from the opening of the contact centre, to the launch of online and text services. “There’s choices now and some people like their privacy, they don’t want to talk to an Advisor, so they can go online and order NRT and do everything themselves.”

Representing Quitline at community events, Edie has also noticed a change. “When we first went we saw all these smokers, it was just smoking everywhere. In those days there were no smokefree places. It was a great success, we were inundated with people who wanted to quit smoking.” Nowadays at events, “you walk around the grounds and there’s no-one smoking”. One of the highlights of her career at Quitline was organising a Hauora marquee at the Rātana Pā celebrations in 2015, which brought more than ten healthcare providers together to address a range of health issues. Reflecting on her time at Quitline, Edie says she will miss the whanau atmosphere. “I’ve definitely enjoyed all the years that I’ve had at Quitline, I’d never swap them for anything, it’s such a pleasure to be working knowing we’re doing good for our people, because smoking is an evil and I know it’s an evil. It wiped out all my siblings and it’s probably done that to a lot of other families too.”

“Things have changed drastically from 15 years ago when I began and they’ve definitely changed for the better. People know what smoking does to you. The Government is right there with the Smoke-free Aotearoa 2025 goal – but there’s still a lot to be done to reach that target.”
More than 350 people have worked for Quitline as permanent staff or contractors. Fifteen people have served on Quitline’s board. Each and every one of these individuals has made an important contribution to the goal of a smokefree Aotearoa, New Zealand.

A TEAM EFFORT
Quitline Staff Past and Present

We have made every effort to include all staff employed by Quitline although records do not exist for the first two years of Quitline’s operations. If your name is not on this list, rest assured we appreciate your work.
**LOOKING TO THE FUTURE**

**SMOKEFREE AOTEAROA BY 2025**

Apirational goal established in 2011 that Aotearoa New Zealand is to be a smokefree nation by 2025 (interpreted as less than 5% smoking prevalence). Includes setting a proportionate challenge for improvement across all demographics to seriously address the higher smoking rates amongst Māori and Pacific communities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GOVERNMENT GOAL</th>
<th>OBJECTIVES</th>
<th>ACTIONS</th>
<th>HOW WE MAKE IT WORK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LOOKING TO THE FUTURE</td>
<td>SUCCESSFUL QUITTING</td>
<td>Increasing successful cessation by all New Zealanders, and especially by those who are most disadvantaged and face the biggest barriers to quitting.</td>
<td>Deliver comprehensive cessation services tailored to community needs, Increase tobacco control mass media, Utilise best cessation technologies, Develop a policy response to electronic nicotine delivery system (ENDS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EFFECTIVE POLICY</td>
<td>Advancement of tobacco control policies to limit the harm caused by tobacco products.</td>
<td>Implement standardised tobacco packaging, Increase price of tobacco products, Restrict tobacco supply, Control tobacco product content, Ensure full FCTC implementation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>REDUCED INITIATION</td>
<td>Increasing public support of tobacco control policies that increasingly eliminate smoking as a normal activity in New Zealand society.</td>
<td>Expansion of smokefree environments, including smokefree cars, New Zealanders know about and support the Smokefree 2025 goal, New Zealanders completely mistrust the tobacco industry, Raise awareness of tobacco addiction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>INCREASING CESSATION</td>
<td>Deliver comprehensive cessation services tailored to community needs, Increase tobacco control mass media, Utilise best cessation technologies, Develop a policy response to electronic nicotine delivery system (ENDS)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EFFECTIVE LEGISLATION &amp; REGULATION</td>
<td>Implement standardised tobacco packaging, Increase price of tobacco products, Restrict tobacco supply, Control tobacco product content, Ensure full FCTC implementation</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>INCREASING PUBLIC SUPPORT</td>
<td>Expansion of smokefree environments, including smokefree cars, New Zealanders know about and support the Smokefree 2025 goal, New Zealanders completely mistrust the tobacco industry, Raise awareness of tobacco addiction</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>WORKING TOGETHER</td>
<td>Engage national decision makers, Engage national influencers, Review relevant existing and overseas laws, Advise and inform policy processes</td>
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<td></td>
<td>COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT</td>
<td>Local activities to make communities smokefree and protect children from exposure to tobacco, Engagement with decision makers and media, Raise local awareness of Smokefree 2025 goal</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>RESEARCH AND EVALUATION</td>
<td>Monitoring of tobacco use, Monitoring of quitting behaviours and attitudes, Evaluation of interventions, Monitoring of industry, Academic research</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>POLICY</td>
<td>Monitoring of retail outlets, Enforcement of smokefree laws and regulations, Monitoring of tobacco industry practices, incl. marketing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT</td>
<td>Unpaid Media/PR, Paid Media, Communications, Signage, Branding, Events</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>RESEARCH AND EVIDENCE</td>
<td>Comprehensive research and evaluation to underpin policy, advocacy and programme development.</td>
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</table>
The National Smokefree Working Group (NSWG) was established to give national leadership on tobacco control initiatives toward the goal of Smokefree Aotearoa 2025. Quitline is represented on the NSWG alongside Cancer Society of New Zealand, ASH New Zealand, Quitline, Tala Pasifika, Heart Foundation, ASPIRE 2025, Smokefree Coalition, Mental Health Foundation, T&T Consulting, Asthma Foundation, Stroke Foundation, Inspiring Limited and Te Ara Hā Ora.

Smoking prevalence has reduced sharply in New Zealand within a generation – from 33% in 1983 to 15.1% in 2013. This has been achieved by sustained efforts to change public attitudes, inspire and support people to quit smoking and to implement innovative policies such as smokefree environments, advertising bans, point of sales restrictions and increasing tobacco prices. However, based on current projections, much more effort is needed to achieve the Government’s aspirational goal of Smokefree Aotearoa 2025 of less than 5% smoking prevalence.

This road map sets out the key strategic work the National Smokefree Working Group (NSFWG) has identified to be undertaken to place New Zealand on track to achieve Smokefree 2025."

Dr Jan Pearson, Chair, National Smokefree Working Group

In June 2015 Homecare Medical – a leading New Zealand tele-triage organisation - was announced as the Ministry of Health’s partner to develop and deliver a new, enhanced, integrated, national telehealth service for New Zealand. Included in the new service is Quitline, which Homecare Medical will run from 1 November 2015.

The new national telehealth service will provide access to joined up health and wellness support. Homecare Medical CEO Andrew Slater says “We are working to deliver a service that can be accessed through multiple channels 24/7 – phone, websites, email, text message, chat, and in the future, video calling and mobile applications. This will be a service where every door is the right door – where users’ needs are met directly, or by linking them to the appropriate service.”

“We are committed to supporting quality smoking cessation programmes. We are privileged to have built a constructive relationship with the Quit Group Trust who have helped us develop our plan for the best ‘design’ for a national telehealth service and who are supporting us during the transition period to 1 November. We recognise and will build on the work that the dedicated Quitline teams and management have championed and we’re looking forward to great people joining the national telehealth team.”

“The national telehealth service will be integrated with local and regional services and users will get a consistent service no matter where or how they make contact, and each caller should only have to tell their story once. Our commitment has always been to innovate, create and deliver services that are focussed on giving all New Zealanders the best possible chance to live well.”

The following services will make up the 24 x 7, free national telehealth service:

» Healthline
» Poisonline
» Immunisation advice for the public
» Gambling Helpline
» Alcohol and Drug Helpline
» Depression Helpline (depression.org.nz and the Lowdown)
» Quitline

No phone numbers or contact details that users access will change at this stage.

Homecare Medical is a partnership between Pegasus Health and ProCare, two of New Zealand’s largest primary health networks. Homecare Medical is a New Zealand organisation providing tele-triage services to around 600 practices throughout New Zealand, covering about 2.2 million people. They have a large nursing workforce, with some non-clinical call takers as well – all committed to delivering quality care and important information to those who call. They are Auckland-based, but national in reach.