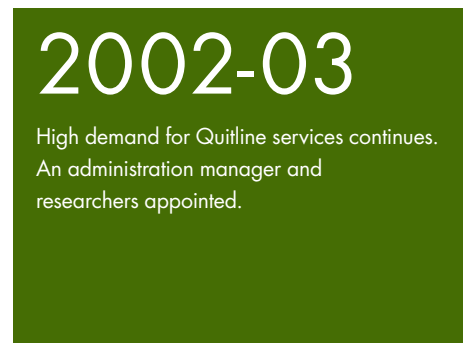
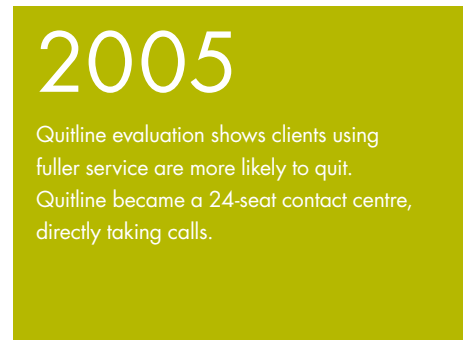
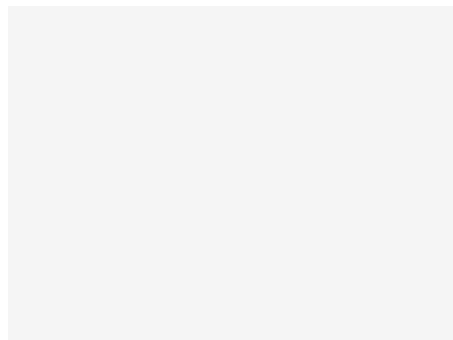
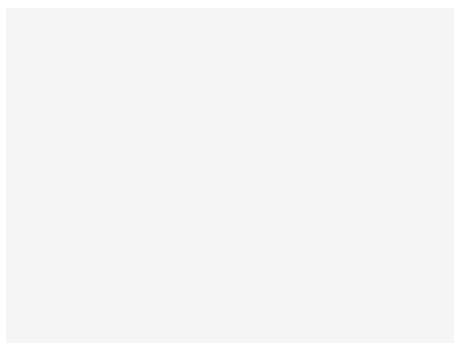
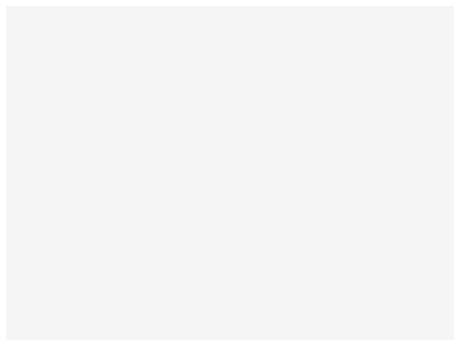


CONTRIBUTING TO A TOBACCO-FREE AOTEAROA



QUIT GROUP TIMELINE

Providing effective support nationally for more smokers to make more quit attempts – a brief history of The Quit Group.



1998

Health Sponsorship Council, Cancer Society and Te Hotu Manawa Māori form The Quit Group. Our goal, to put quitting on the agenda of people who smoke. Pilot campaign and Quitline launched in Waikato-Bay of Plenty.

1999

National Quitline launched. Contact centre answers calls and transfers those who want to talk to a Quitline Advisor. 'Every cigarette is doing you damage' campaign launched.

2000

The Quit Group becomes a Charitable Trust, with Annette Milligan first Chairperson and Helen Glasgow first Executive Director. Subsidised nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) results in 70,000 Quitline callers in November.

2001

Quitline swamped with over 100,000 callers in six months. Quit for our Kids and Quitcards launched. 'It's about whānau' campaign launched.

2002-03

High demand for Quitline services continues. An administration manager and researchers appointed.

2005

Quitline evaluation shows clients using fuller service are more likely to quit. Quitline became a 24-seat contact centre, directly taking calls.

Chairperson's report **2**
 Purpose and history of the The Quit Group **3**
 2010 brings a new season for The Quit Group **5**
 Smoking in New Zealand – how are we doing? **8**
 Quitline: 'Five times as successful as cold turkey' **9**
 Profile of more recent services **11**
 A quitter's perspective **13**
 Advertising campaigns **14**
 Kanohi ki te kanohi – out and about in the community **16**
 A look inside – working at The Quit Group **18**
 What our clients say **20**
 Contacts **22**

2008

Tobacco control sector sets vision for Tobacco-free Aotearoa/New Zealand 2020. Quitline capacity expanded to 45-seat contact centre.
 Web services grow and Txt2Quit services provided for young adult clients.

2009

53,000 smokers use Quit Group services for a quit attempt and one in five Quitline users are quit at six months.
 Staff level tops 100.

World Tobacco or Health Conference 1997 pledge:

"We need to persuade half of current adult smokers to quit by 2025 if we want to halve deaths from smoking from 2050."

2006

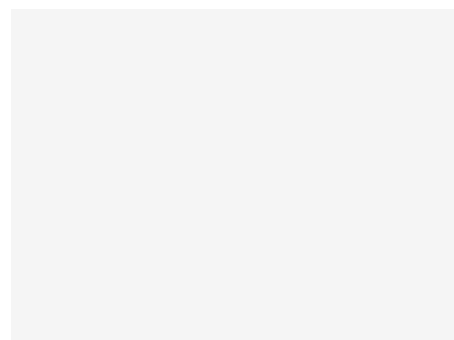
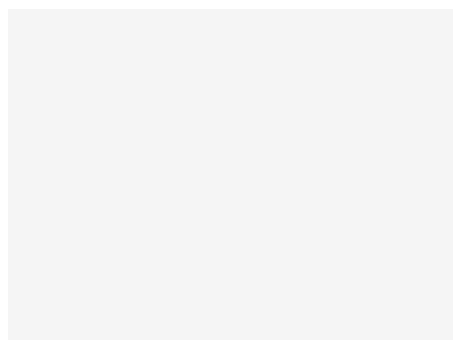
Quitline quality programme launched.
 'Video Diaries' television campaign launched.
 New Pacific 'Heart attack' TV campaign launched.

2007

Quit Group values developed.
 Māori using Quitline make up 26% of callers and Pacific people make up 5% of callers.

2004

32,000 people register to quit smoking.
 'Second-hand smoke' campaign developed.



CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Next year we will be halfway to 2020 and our target of a Tobacco-free Aotearoa... we still have a lot of work to do.



Welcome to The Quit Group's Annual Review 2009. And as ever, it's been an exciting and challenging 12 months! This review offers you a glimpse of what has been happening – and what's coming up.

Next year we will be halfway to 2020 and our target of a Tobacco-free Aotearoa. While we've seen some outstanding progress over the last decade, when we project current smoking numbers into 2020 it's clear we still have a lot of work to do.

Smoking still claims the lives of around 5,000 New Zealanders every year and is directly responsible for a quarter of all cancer deaths. This is too high – a concern shared by the current government with their planned review of cessation services later this year.

As we look forward with this in mind, our focus is on delivering even greater results – encouraging more quit attempts and producing more smokefree New Zealanders.

Last year saw us strengthen our capability, so with a new structure and well-established leadership team in place, we are well positioned to take up the challenges ahead. But the landscape around us is changing rapidly, which requires us to keep adapting and continue refining both the type of services we offer as well as the way in which we offer them.

We must also ensure we provide the greatest possible return on the taxpayer's investment in the work we do. We need to work smartly, and efficiently, and we need to be able to respond to opportunities in real time, as they arise.

We play a crucial role within the tobacco control sector – one that is played alongside those whose task it is to shape and challenge public perception and continue to lobby for more effective legislative and regulatory measures. The increasing level of collaboration across agencies in the prevention and cessation areas represents a powerful force for change.

In the coming year, our emphasis will be on developing more innovative and effective ways of reaching New Zealand's smokers – especially among Māori and Pacific peoples where smokers continue to be over-represented.

As we look towards the challenges of the future, we do so confidently building on the successes of the past. On that note, and on behalf of the Board, I would like to extend our gratitude to all of the team at The Quit Group. Their dedication and commitment are the reason The Quit Group has become the success story that it is.

In particular, we would also like to express our sincerest gratitude to Helen Glasgow for her hard work and tireless commitment throughout this last decade. Helen's vision became a reality that has touched the lives of many. On behalf of the Board, and on behalf of those whose lives have been touched by your dedication Helen, we thank you.

As we look ahead, there are indeed significant challenges on the horizon – challenges I am confident The Quit Group is more than ready for.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Annette Milligan'.

Annette Milligan
Chairperson
The Quit Group

PURPOSE AND HISTORY OF THE QUIT GROUP

National Quitline reaches a decade!

This year it is a decade since the New Zealand Quitline was launched, so we decided to mark the anniversary with a glance backwards at our story – and a look forward at what’s to come.

Beginnings

While the National Quitline was launched in 1999, our story actually begins a year or so before. A small group of forward-thinking people realised that while money was being spent on trying to stop people from starting smoking, not a single government dollar was being invested in helping people quit.

Three organisations – the Health Sponsorship Council, the Cancer Society and Te Hotu Manawa Māori – joined forces to develop a Quit Campaign and Quitline as a pilot project in Waikato-Bay of Plenty. Their driving ambition: ‘To put quitting on the agenda of people who smoke.’

From these embers came a fire. In 1999 the National Quitline was launched, with a small team of Quitline Advisors taking calls transferred from a contact centre. Television advertising entitled *Every Cigarette is Doing You Damage*, based on a National Australian Tobacco campaign, shocked viewers with graphic images of the effects of smoking.

In 2000, The Quit Group became a Charitable Trust, with two of those behind the pilot taking senior roles – Annette Milligan becoming the first chairperson, and Helen Glasgow the first Executive Director.

NRT – the floodgates open

That same year the Ministry of Health offered smokers subsidised nicotine replacement therapy (NRT), via the Quitline. The phones went mad. 70,000 people called in November, with another 100,000 in the first six months of 2001.

The Quit Group began to grow, from one manager and 20 part-time Quitline Advisors in 2000, to five managers and nearly 50 staff by mid-2001, in expanded premises in Willbank House.

After the initial rush for NRT, the number of calls steadied out, but the work was just beginning. The Quitcard was launched, along with a hospital-based programme called *Quit for our Kids*, which delivered smoking cessation support and advice to parents and caregivers.

Another major advertising campaign, *It’s about Whānau*, was launched – aimed particularly at Māori smokers. *It’s about Whānau* used Māori role models to give positive messages about the benefits of quitting. A campaign focusing on second-hand smoke followed.

Meeting the challenge

An evaluation of the Quitline published in 2004 showed that 21% of those clients surveyed were still quit after six months – a much higher rate than for those quitting ‘cold-turkey’. Support from Quitline Advisors and correct use of NRT were shown to be significant factors in helping people quit. Recommendations from the evaluation led to the Quitline becoming a 24-seat contact centre in 2005. One in five clients identified as Māori.

Reflecting on the early years, Helen Glasgow says: “When we started we had no human resources advice, we had minimal training, no in-house finance capability, no research monitoring or capability and certainly no real ICT know-how. So one of the big challenges was to put in place the infrastructure to fulfil the contracts we were asked to deliver.

“We have gradually put in place all the disciplines of a contact centre, including a robust quality programme, so that our staff get feedback and coaching on the work they do.

“Over the past few years our advisors have grown in skill and confidence because of all the training, coaching and feedback they get. I’m very proud of all of them and the work they do.”

The Quit Group last year helped 53,000 new people, around 20,000 more than five years ago. This includes around 11,000 Māori and 3,000 Pacific people.

Also in 2006, new *Every Cigarette is Doing you Damage* adverts were aired, plus the first *Video Diaries* advertising campaigns were developed, using a documentary style presentation to follow actual smokers as they went through their quit attempt. Over the next couple of years, Stu, Tash & Joe, Karen & Sean and Roseanne & Jeremia all shared their journeys with huge TV audiences. Their stories really hit home, with research showing that the impact of the ads was just as good as for the *Every Cigarette* campaign. By this point, Māori made up 26% of callers to the Quitline and Pacific people 5%.

Within the last two years, The Quit Group has continued to expand, both in terms of capacity, reach and reputation. While the Quitline became a 45-seat contact centre in 2008, from November 2007 the Quit website allowed people to register for nicotine replacement therapies online, attracting increasing numbers to that service.

The last 12 months

The last year has seen more changes, with new services added to The Quit Group's armoury, and changes at the top to ensure the organisation is firing on all cylinders.

Txt2Quit, an innovative service allowing predominantly younger smokers to get support via text messages, was launched in June 2008 as a three year pilot programme. This service produced great results including among Māori – a target population because of the high representation of smokers.

NRT lozenges were added to patches and gum to help people quit in September 2008, meanwhile Quit@work, aimed at helping workplaces support their staff to give up, found demand increasing dramatically. In August 2009, Quit@work won the Ministry of Health's tender to deliver a national workplace-based cessation programme.

And over Christmas and New Year 2008/09, a new style of advertisements was used, with real-life Quitline Advisors featured. A similar advert was used to inform pregnant women smokers that help was available if required, and a special ad was filmed to celebrate Matariki. This personal touch has drawn positive responses from callers.

The Quit research team continued to produce important work to inform both our own staff, and international audiences. A second Quitline Evaluation published this year showed that the quit rate had remained constant at 21%, showing a great consistency of service.

The Quit Group last year helped 53,000 new people, around 20,000 more than five years ago. This includes around 11,000 Māori and 3,000 Pacific people.

The Ministry of Health's *Health Warnings* advertising campaign continued, following the success of adverts featuring oral cancer victim Adrian Pilkington. Emphysema sufferer Keith Tanirau was featured, with adverts showing his struggle to live a normal life. The adverts continued to attract new callers to the Quitline. Following Adrian's death in August 2009, his adverts were shown again as a tribute to his courage in allowing his story to be told.

Finally, the Ministry of Health's ABC Approach to Smoking Cessation got under way. Guidelines for medical practitioners outline how they should **A**sk all patients if they smoke, issue **B**rief advice if they do, and offer **C**essation treatment. As the leading 0800 line cessation provider in New Zealand, the Quitline will be dealing with the majority of calls emanating from this approach, and will be working closely with other organisations to ensure patients receive the most appropriate and effective treatment to help them quit.

2010 BRINGS A NEW SEASON FOR THE QUIT GROUP



Farewell and thank you

During 2009, The Quit Group prepared for the departure of long-time Executive Director Helen Glasgow. A new structure was put into place, with three director positions created. Jack Schierhout filled the position of Director of Corporate Services, bringing a vast amount of finance and IT experience, while new Director of Communications and Services Lynne Heasman brought experience as a senior executive across communications, research, media and services.

Paying tribute to Helen's impact on tobacco control in New Zealand, Health Sponsorship Council Chief Executive Iain Potter said:

"An important point to remember about Helen's involvement in the beginning of The Quit Group is that the number one objective was to put cessation on the government and policy agenda.

"Back then, cessation was not always flavour of the month – in 1998 not \$1 of government money was spent on cessation. It was thought that smokers could get themselves out of the fix they had gotten themselves into.

"Helen, with others, thought that a Quitline pilot project might help convince government that cessation should be funded as part of a comprehensive tobacco control programme – so the Quitline, Aukati Kai Paipa, NRT, the ABC strategy, hospital cessation services, etc all owe their existence in some way to the 'cunning plan' Helen instigated.

"Similarly the Smokefree Environments Act improvements, second-hand smoke, anti-smoking campaigns and so on often have Helen's 'fingerprints' on them – her ability to see that a cunning plan needs to consist of more than just the obvious has been a big part of her contribution to public health."

Quit Group Chair Annette Milligan also paid tribute: "Helen has had a tremendous impact on the health and well-being of all New Zealanders. Throughout her life, she has a very long history of having been a leader in preventing illness and promoting health, especially in the area of cancer prevention.

"Helen was a part of the concept of Quit, right from the beginning, before the Quitline was even established. A small group of people had a dream of what could be if only people could be helped to quit smoking. She knew that the answers weren't simple but the vision was: a smokefree New Zealand. To achieve that, there simply had to be more help for people addicted to nicotine.

"Helen leaves a legacy of which she can be very proud – the creation of a strong organisation which is a leader in the field of smoking cessation. There are very few who will ever have the impact on people's health that Helen has achieved."



A new beginning

New Chief Executive of The Quit Group, Paula Snowden, says she's ready to take up the fight against nicotine addiction in New Zealand after taking over from Helen Glasgow in August 2009.

"Often when you join an organisation it is at a time of change and the first few months are spent organising and planning for that – getting the house in order so to speak. Not this time," said Paula.

"I've come to The Quit Group at a time when the organisation is clearly working brilliantly, helping huge amounts of people and with a very impressive quit rate. The staff are very skilled in their areas and their passion for the task is really wonderful to see. But none of us are under any illusions – the job ahead of us, of pushing on towards a Tobacco-free Aotearoa 2020, is still a big ask."

Formerly at ACC, Paula's role was to improve access to the scheme for Māori, Pacific, Asian and older people, along with people with disabilities. Paula, whose tribal affiliation is Ngāpuhi, has also served with the Alcohol Advisory Council as Deputy Chief Executive and Housing New Zealand, where as General Manager Housing Innovation she was in charge of a number of social housing programmes. This included rural sub-standard housing, social services housing development and assistance and home ownership for modest income families.

"When you're working in any social services area you're always trying to improve things for individuals, family and communities. Some of the things you're working on will be structural, effective programmes delivered effectively. Sometimes it's about influencing people's attitudes and beliefs. More often it is a combination of both that is needed to get the results we are all looking for.

"What is exciting, and challenging, is getting that balance right. You have to mix the rules and regulations with the incentives and benefits, support non-smoking and deliver interventions that support quitting. Smokefree environments, change messaging and cessation services – they are all needed.

The Quit Group will know it is succeeding when we see Māori and Pacific quit rates that are equal to the whole population. Tobacco-free 2020 for all is the goal.

"I'm not going to try and re-invent the wheel, I'm here to take the fight forward – to keep New Zealand engaged with the need to invest in bringing down our rates of smoking, to reduce the numbers who start and to bring down the smoking rates in populations where it is more prevalent – among Māori and Pacific peoples. The Quit Group will know it is succeeding when we see Māori and Pacific quit rates that are equal to the whole population. Tobacco-free 2020 for all is the goal."

We have done exceptionally well at targeting and supporting the individual smoker who wants to quit. We now need to design support approaches with wider environmental factors and barriers in mind.

Ensuring a return on investment

One of the other things Paula is passionate about is ensuring a return on New Zealand's investment in smoking cessation.

"We've had a decade now to refine our approach and fine tune our understanding of the right channels and tools to support people quitting.

"This was no small achievement starting from scratch in New Zealand and we have an excellent sense of this now – which is demonstrated in the results for Quitline, Txt2Quit, Quit@work and the growth in our online registrations.

"However, we are now in an environment where the health dollar is under enormous pressure. We need to ensure we're working as efficiently as possible in order to demonstrate for New Zealanders that the investment in cessation is worth it.

"In real terms, this means knowing exactly what it costs to support a person to quit and what the savings are down the line – for their health, their workplace, and their family environment," Paula explains.

"Addiction to nicotine is a personal thing – the support needs to be customised and targeted in the right way. For example, services such as Txt2Quit really strike a chord with young urban people, but we know they're not effective for rural populations where there's poorer network coverage.

"We need to be more creative and tailored in areas like this.

"We need to remember that quitting is not a one time event; it's a journey, and different incentives and support will be needed at different times.

"Some people need a personal touch, so we may need to look at making advisors more accessible. Others will be better supported to quit with the help of local services they trust and we need to connect with those services in the interest of our clients.

Paula adds, "We have done exceptionally well at targeting and supporting the individual smoker who wants to quit. We now need to design support approaches with wider environmental factors and barriers in mind.

"We need to look at quit support that focuses on a household, not just the individual in the household. We need to consider ways to adapt our services with factors like these in mind to produce more lasting results and more lasting returns on New Zealand's investment towards a smokefree future."

Paula is only too aware that achieving a Tobacco-free Aotearoa by 2020 depends heavily on the collaboration of the entire tobacco control sector across New Zealand.

"As we focus on helping more people to quit, those who advocate for smoke-free environments through policy and stronger regulation play an equally vital role. All these things support a person's desire to quit and their ability to stay quit.

"As we turn our attention towards working more efficiently, providing more flexible, customised services and working in a co-ordinated way across the sector, we will ensure New Zealanders receive increased value for money."

SMOKING IN NEW ZEALAND – HOW ARE WE DOING?



Photo courtesy of Fairfax Media/Sunday Star Times

Overall smoking rates

Approximately 18% of New Zealanders smoke. When you turn that into numbers it's approximately 700,000 smokers out of a population of just over four million. It's still the leading cause of avoidable death in New Zealand.

We now take smokefree dining and workplaces, entertainment, and public transport for granted, but it wasn't always the case.

The percentage of smokers in New Zealand has steadily decreased over the last decade – a period that has been especially significant for reducing the effects of smoking and its damage to the lives of New Zealanders.

However the rates of decline have evened out and the levels have remained fairly steady since 2006. We've still got a lot of work to do.

We know that most smokers begin smoking in their teens – the average age is between 14 and 15. We also know that smoking rates are unequally high among Māori and Pacific peoples – for 2008, smoking rates were highest among Māori (45%), followed by Pacific (31%), European (21%) and Asian (12%) people.

Looking at our country's children, 7% of year 10 and 12 students (9-13 year olds) smoked daily in 2008.

Within this group 22% of Māori girls and 12% of Māori boys smoked, compared to 10% of girls and 8% of boys for other ethnicities.

While smoking is an individual addiction, it's influenced heavily by the surrounding social environment. Students at low-decile schools have been shown to be three-to-four times more likely to be regular smokers than their high-decile counterparts. Significantly, over half of those children who are daily smokers want to quit.

So, again, while some good progress has been made, we've still got a lot of work to do.

Managing smoking is a mix of influencing policy and legislation to decrease the number of those who take up the habit (prevention), encouraging existing smokers to give up (promotion), and providing support to those who want to quit (cessation).

In New Zealand over the last five years, approximately 65% of smokers have made a quit attempt. Rather than simply going 'cold turkey,' increasing numbers are doing it through the Quitline and our other support services.

The remainder of this section takes a closer look at how we're actually doing – whether our services actually are helping more smokers quit and stay quit throughout New Zealand.

QUITLINE: 'FIVE TIMES AS SUCCESSFUL AS COLD TURKEY'

The Quit Group now supports more clients who want to quit with numbers increasing from 34,000 in 2004 to over 50,000 in 2008.

A full evaluation of the Quitline was undertaken during 2007/08, with almost 4,000 users of the service being interviewed three weeks after their registration. Of those, 2,700 were re-interviewed at six months. The results of the evaluation were released this year, and showed the following:

Using a conservative measurement, at least one in five people (21%) who call the Quitline has given up smoking after six months. Overseas evidence suggests that the rate for those quitting without help is just one in 25 (4%), making the Quitline five times more successful.

The evaluation also found that more than eight out of ten had made at least one quit attempt within six months of calling the Quitline. Of those that hadn't quit, more than seven out of ten had reduced their tobacco consumption, and eight out of ten of all respondents do not allow smoking in their homes, all of which are significant factors in the continuing fight against their dependence on tobacco.

The use of nicotine patches, lozenges or gum is shown to greatly improve the likelihood of being quit after six months. Chances are increased when eight or more weeks of nicotine products are used through the redemption of Quitcards. Using nicotine products for the recommended length of time, and using them to replace smoking completely rather than assist with cutting back are also important, proven factors.

Māori and Pacific smokers

While the quit rate for Māori through the Quitline was 18%, compared to an average of 21%, this is still nearly five times as successful as for those going cold turkey. The Pacific quit rate also compared favourably with the average.

Māori respondents were significantly more likely than others to have a partner who smoked (40% compared to 32%); and both Māori and Pacific smokers were much more likely to live in households with other smokers.

Pacific (48%) and Māori (46%) smokers were also significantly more likely to say that health warning labels on cigarette packets made them think a lot about the health risks of smoking than others (37%); and Pacific (63%) and Māori (54%) were more likely to agree that cigarette displays in shops made it harder to quit (compared to an average of 50%).

Talking about these figures Denise Messiter, The Quit Group's Manager Māori and Pacific Strategy, said:

"Essentially, smoking is a key contributor to Māori health disparities. On the upside we know that supporting our people to quit smoking and stay tobacco free and connected to their communities makes a significant contribution to supporting whānau ora – that is enabling whānau to take control of their lives free from the shackles of nicotine addiction."

These results clearly show what our clients think. Quitline Advisors receive feedback every day from the clients they work with and this reinforces those comments – that the Quitline is a fantastic service that we should all be really proud of.

Measuring customer service

The latest annual Quitline Client Satisfaction Survey (2009) has been completed, with results showing that in pretty much every way, the Quitline is getting better and better.

Here are a few of the results:

Quitline Advisors

Ratings for Quitline Advisors are the most positive they've been since 2002. In terms of friendliness, understanding, support and availability, ratings are all in the very high 90s, and all improved on previous years. The availability rating has risen dramatically from 65% in 2002 to 97% this year.

Almost all respondents (93%) recalled that the Quit Advisor had asked if they would like to receive follow-up calls. In response, more than four in five (83%) chose to receive these calls.

The Quitline

The Quitline service itself also rates consistently high, showing that clients overwhelmingly see it as convenient, would recommend it to other people, feel the information they receive is relevant, and feel well-informed about NRT. This latter has seen the most dramatic improvement, from around 85% in 2002 to 98% this year.

Most (94%) relapsed smokers and those who hadn't attempted to quit at the time of the survey indicated that they would consider using the Quitline phone service again in the future.

Reflecting the high level of satisfaction with the current service, seven in ten respondents (71%) stated that no improvements to the Quitline service were needed. Six per cent of respondents suggested that Quit Advisors could ring back more frequently.

Ringling the Quitline

The majority of respondents (92%) only had to ring once to get through to a Quitline Advisor on their most recent call to the Quitline.

Use of other Quit services

9% of respondents also reported joining the Quit online community, 8% had used Txt2Quit, 2% had ordered a Quit Pack online and 1% had ordered nicotine patches, gum or lozenges online. However, 83% of respondents had not used any other Quit Group services in addition to the Quitline phone service.

Registrations continue to increase

Our latest 12-month report, published in July, shows that we're registering the highest number of clients since 2001/02, when NRT was first introduced.

Between July 2008 and June 2009, The Quit Group registered 53,167 people. Of those, 27,995 called the Quitline, 21,229 registered online and 3,946 via Txt2Quit. It's these latter two figures that are really bolstering the numbers, with online registrations particularly going through the roof over the last couple of years.

Other points of interest:

- 53% of new registrations were female, 46.2% male
- Quitline Advisors made 105,527 outgoing calls
- The Quitline received 77,395 incoming calls
- 70% of new registrations identified as European, 21% as Māori, 5% as Pacific, 3% as Asian, 12% as other
- The services attracted different age groups: the highest proportion of new registrations is 20-24 year olds, while the majority of Txt2Quit users are 15-24. Half of web users are 25-44
- Equal numbers of new callers got the number from TV advertising and tobacco packaging (25% each). Next highest is friends and family (13%)

PROFILE OF MORE RECENT SERVICES

Staying in touch – online, on a mobile, and on the job!

While the Quitline has proven an effective and efficient service over the last 10 years, offering support and subsidised nicotine replacement therapy, we are aware that things don't always stay the same.

The use of the internet has grown enormously over the last few years, so we have had to ensure that our own website is meeting the needs of our clients, both current and new.

More recently, but just as dramatically, mobile phones have become more than just a weighty lump of plastic with a short battery life – they are now an essential part of modern life, and thus a way for our clients to contact us.

On these pages we profile the new ways in which people wishing to quit can reach us – and the ways in which we can reach them.

Txt2Quit

Targetted particularly at 16-24 year olds, the innovative Txt2Quit service (launched in June 2008) has also proven very popular with Māori and Pacific smokers.

The service provides support to smokers wishing to quit through text messages, ranging from pre-quit preparation through to the Quit Day itself, then a period of intensive help and a maintenance stage.

Messages range from general support and encouragement to responding to particular requests – often when a client is having a 'craving.'

The service was developed from a programme called STOMP (Stop Smoking by Mobile Phone) and is being trialed as a three year pilot. In the first 12 months, around 4,000 people signed-up with the programme, with 66% of those between 16 and 24 years old.

Quit@work

In August 2009 The Quit Group's workplace programme, Quit@work, was awarded the Ministry of Health's Request for Tender to deliver a national workplace based smoking cessation programme.

Quit@work has come a long way from its humble beginnings in January 2008. Originally, if workplaces contacted us the response was limited to sending out whatever available pamphlets or posters were on hand.

Demand from workplaces seemed to increase after the introduction of the Smokefree Environments Amendment Act in 2004 which, alongside bars and restaurants, banned smoking inside workplaces.

Around this time Health and Wellness programmes began to grow in popularity as well.



It feels so good to have a real mandate and dedicated budget to take this programme to workplaces across the country.

The result was an increase in employers looking for ways to try and help staff to quit smoking.

So Josh Galuszka, appointed Quit@work advisor in January 2008, set to work. This included designing resources such as a 'workplace plan' and a 'workplace policy template' to serve as best practice guidelines, offering workplaces ideas about what they could do to help staff to quit smoking and how to refer them to The Quit Group's services.

As client numbers increased we saw the development of a database and a web page, and the Research Team produced a Literature Review and evaluation plan to monitor the programme's outputs. This was all-important for continuing The Quit Group's evidence-based approach to cessation, for which we have become world famous.

"After 18 months of hard slog on a shoestring budget it feels so good to have a real mandate and dedicated budget to take this programme to workplaces across the country," said Josh.

So far, Quit@work has worked with more than 180 workplaces. The future of the programme includes developing workplace-specific resources and delivering free training to selected workplaces based on their size and high risk smoking staff levels.

Online

Our website is proving increasingly popular with smokers wishing to quit online, with more than 20,000 signing up in the last year.

Since NRT Online began in October 2007, it has grown exponentially. Website registrations now make up 40% of our annual total, and seem to be gaining fast on the number of people using the Quitline. We'll be watching this development carefully to ensure the services we are providing are meeting the needs of the people wishing to access them.

In addition to ordering NRT online, website users can access other services such as quitting tips, factsheets and the popular blogging community. Since its creation in July 2006, there have been over 10,000 postings and just over 1800 individual bloggers!

Initially the community was created as a vehicle for quitters to post online quit diary entries and Quitline Advisors would respond and offer tips, advice and support.

While this certainly still takes place the blog has rapidly evolved into its own community where quitters interact directly with each other, offering support and advice from their own experiences. We regularly see people who have successfully quit themselves frequently return to the blog to encourage those currently working through the journey towards 'smokefreedom'.

As blogger *Mittens* so accurately said in a recent post: "Smoking is not a choice, smoking robs us of choice... and I choose freedom".

Other bloggers have kept count of both the days and dollars since their quit date. One of our most frequent bloggers, *Katmell*, recently posted her stats: "Day 87, 2175 cigs not smoked, \$1,113.60 not wasted...WOWeeeeee!!!"

The service continues to evolve, but it is clear that for a growing number of smokers the blog community plays a vital role in the success of their quit attempts. New developments in social networking offer us further opportunities to both offer support, and provide a supportive community for people quitting. So watch this (web) space!

A QUITTER'S PERSPECTIVE

Katmell – a blogger's journey

Katmell has been part of The Quit Group's blog community since 8 June 2009. After smoking for just over 40 years, *Katmell* is now smoke-free and offering regular support and encouragement to others in their quit journeys.

Katmell directly attributes her own successful quitting to the support of the blogging community: "I've found the community tremendous. I truly don't think I would have got this far without it."

"For the first five days after my quit date, every time I felt like caving in I would jump online and let people know how things were going.

The support was amazing – and after reading the responses and encouragement, and hearing other people's stories, I couldn't care less about a cigarette anymore!

"It was so helpful. I don't know if everyone looks around the site a lot, but there's a lot of inspiration there – right back to some of the earliest postings from 2007 from people that were struggling then and are now smokefree!"

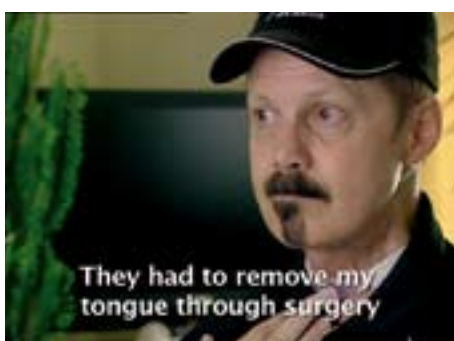
"It's fantastic getting the encouragement and support from other members. Some have told me my encouragement has brought tears to their eyes – happy tears, which is lovely. So many others have done the same for me."

As *Katmell* said in a recent post: "We are all recovering smokeaholics and all have stress in our lives. We just need to learn how to deal with it [and] a problem shared is a problem halved."

You can join the online community at www.quit.org.nz

Some have told me my encouragement has brought tears to their eyes – happy tears, which is lovely.

ADVERTISING CAMPAIGNS



Television advertising can have an instant impact, triggering the moment when a smoker decides that their time to quit is now. We know this for certain – as soon as our advertisements appear on screen, the phones in the Quitline start ringing.

Different styles of adverts work for different people however – for some, the shock of seeing an ex-smoker gasping for breath will be the catalyst to quit. For others, the more empathetic approach of a Quitline Advisor offering support will be the way forward. Here are some of the adverts that we broadcast this past year.

Sad farewell to courageous Adrian

Early in 2008, the Ministry of Health advised that they were keen to support a campaign using a cancer patient to help introduce graphic health warnings on cigarette packets.

Oral cancer patient Adrian Pilkington was filmed and his documentary-style adverts, with the end line “It’s not worth it, eh?” were shown over the last 12 months.

In August 2009, Adrian passed away. Formerly a mechanical engineer and martial arts black belt, Adrian first noticed a small ulcer in his mouth in late 2006. The ulcer quickly grew and his tongue became very swollen and painful. After visiting his GP, he was referred to a specialist where he was diagnosed with mouth cancer.

On 5 March 2007, he went into Auckland City Hospital for an operation to remove his entire tongue which was then replaced with a flap of skin and muscle from his stomach. Adrian then underwent intensive radiotherapy nearly every day for seven weeks. He was fitted with a permanent tracheotomy to help him breathe, and could no longer eat or drink normally, being fed through a tube.

In one of the adverts, Adrian said: “My life is full of regret. I should have lived for another 25 or 30 years. It’s not a happy thought; being given a death sentence... The sad thing is that it was so avoidable.”

Fighting for every breath – Keith Tanirau

Graphic adverts which showed ex-smoker Keith Tanirau fighting for every breath due to emphysema proved very effective in bringing new callers to the Quitline.

For some, the adverts, which showed Keith struggling to manage even day-to-day activities such as walking or loading a supermarket trolley, were too disturbing. Some called The Quit Group to complain about using an ‘actor’ in this way. Others felt that the ads, part of the Ministry of Health’s *Health Warnings* campaign, were in bad taste as they showed Keith at work as a prison officer.

But Keith is very real, and still works at his job in video surveillance.

“I started smoking at a young age and never thought about any smoking-related illnesses whatsoever,” said Keith, who spends part of each day hooked up to an oxygen canister. “Slowly it got the better of me and eventually I’ll die because of it.

“Smoking sucked the life out of me,” he adds. “Don’t start smoking. Just don’t. Because eventually you’ll end up like me,” he adds.

Smoking sucked the life out of me...
...Don't start smoking. Just don't. Because eventually you'll end up like me.



Quit Group 'stars' shine at Christmas

Those of us at The Quit Group already knew that our Quitline Advisors were stars, but the general public had the chance to see this for themselves when a new advertising campaign aired over Christmas and New Year 2008/09.

Based on the reality that one of the biggest selling points of the Quitline was the Quitline Advisors themselves, we filmed adverts showing them talking on the phones and addressing the camera directly.

For the advisors themselves, it was an unusual but exciting experience. Lynn Szpetnar said: "I enjoyed being in the adverts. It was a new adventure for me and I am always keen to try new things. I was also happy to 'make it real' for our quitters.

"So many of my friends have seen me – people I haven't seen for years have been back in touch because they saw me on TV. My voice has been recognised when I answered the Quitline phone with one person saying I was the reason she had the courage to call!"

Brad Kirk said: "It's strange seeing and hearing yourself on primetime television. I did tend to get texts and phone calls from friends while my ad was showing and I had fun with this for a while, pretending not to know anything about it!



I'm helping people change their lives for the better and I'm getting paid for it – priceless!

"I would like to think the ads did make a difference. I am always proud to tell people that real advisors were used in the making of the commercials and people are always surprised.

"Being a Quitline Advisor is something quite special. People know smoking is bad for them, so as an advisor that places you in a unique position where you need to present facts and quitting techniques in an unbiased manner while building rapport in a short space of time. It is both fulfilling and challenging every day.

"I feel very privileged to be in a role where I can support and encourage people to give up. Like any job there are a mix of good and bad days, but it only takes one person to say 'Thank you' or 'You have added years to my life' to help remind you why we do what we do."

Dan Umaga, who also featured in adverts targeting pregnant smokers during the winter, said he found the experience nerve-wracking but well worthwhile.

"I thought it was a good concept to use real advisors, as this would have made the ads more sincere. Working on the Quitline is the most rewarding job I've ever had. I'm helping people change their lives for the better and I'm getting paid for it – priceless!"

KANOHI KI TE KANOHI – OUT AND ABOUT IN THE COMMUNITY



Te Matatini, the national Kapa Haka festival in Auckland, was another chance to work with fellow organisations, and let people try the new NRT lozenge, with the slogan 'Try this free sucker!'



Creekefest in Porirua promotes healthy living among Māori and Pacific people, so of course we had a team there!



We had a Big Day Out alongside the Health Sponsorship Council in January – a chance to promote Txt2Quit and the new NRT lozenge.

While in most cases smokers come to us, this year we've also taken opportunities to go to them!

Quit Group staff have attended a range of events across the country, making themselves available to speak to smokers about our services, and working with partner organisations in the smokefree sector. Here's a pictorial guide to the year that was...

And it wasn't just us going out – trainees from Aukati Kai Paipa visited us in March to meet Māori Quitline advisors and listen to calls. Here Denise Messiter and AKP's Taniwha Williams realise they come from the same Marae!



Heart disease in Māori men was the focus of Te Ra O Te Raukura in Lower Hutt, where our team offered advice on the links between heart disease and smoking.



For the last three years, ASB Polyfest has been smokefree, so it was a great place for us to meet people. Some people were surprised to meet real Quitline Advisors, and were keen to find out about NRT.

A LOOK INSIDE... WORKING AT THE QUIT GROUP

Denise Messiter: Manager – Māori and Pacific Strategy

Rather than following a traditional career path, I've always sought to go where I can make a real contribution, to develop and implement solutions that ultimately support whānau ora. What is so rewarding about working here are the opportunities we have to support Māori and Pacific smokers to make life-saving choices for themselves – to quit.

This is an organisation where I see people genuinely working with a real commitment to live up to The Quit Group's values. We're not perfect and there's still a lot of work to do, but it's an environment where people can see themselves in it, which helps to create a sense of belonging and ownership.

My role is specifically focused on identifying strategies that support Māori and Pacific peoples to quit smoking - it's both developing the thinking and the 'how-to.'

Some of the highlights for me have been nurturing our relationships with other organisations – particularly Māori and others working in their communities. Seeing these grow into strong partnerships that are focused on supporting Māori and Pacific quitters' journeys to be more successful than going it alone is very fulfilling.

Another highlight was initiating and co-hosting the Māori Tobacco Control Summit. A particular highlight there was having some of the Māori Quitline Advisors participating in the conference. While we were focusing on strategic issues and challenges, having those who work at the coal-face so to speak ensured conference deliberations were informed by those dealing with the realities on the ground.

None of us can afford to stand apart, we can't do it on our own. Equally, we should never underestimate or take for granted the influence we have on people's lives. We, and in particular the Quitline Advisors, are change agents in the lives of whānau that we may never see or get to meet, and that is a significant influence in and of itself.

John Gao – ICT Project Leader

The last 12 months have been interesting because the ICT environment The Quit Group has been using up to now was designed for a much smaller organisation. We didn't have the infra-structure or the policy, but as we've 'grown up' we've effectively needed a different ICT lifestyle.

It's been challenging and exciting, and certainly not boring! We have had to re-build servers and eradicate a lot of viruses. ICT affects not only computers but many of the technical areas of the organisation such as the call centre, so if we don't get it right, the phones don't work.

For me, working at The Quit Group is not about smoking because I never smoked. I was self-employed with my own company so I wanted to work at a strong organisation where I could learn.

A couple of smokers I know don't want to quit... it's a lifestyle for them. But I also know a chef who when I first came here was smoking two packs a day and said he'd never quit. But after a couple of months he called me and said he was thinking of quitting but was worried as his speaking-English isn't so good, so I told him he could register online to get NRT – another benefit of IT!



**Mele Sanerivi –
Quitline Team Leader**

What I most enjoy about my job is supporting the Quitline Advisors, having a good relationship with them and having some influence about how they can better do their job. They go out there and motivate the clients but sometimes they need someone to motivate them, so that's my job.



I was an advisor myself and was actually one of the first team leaders, but now there are six of us and they are amazing people. We use each other's strengths and help each other with weaknesses, we know how to support each other and how to be blunt when needed! But we know we're all working together towards the same goal.



I always wake up every morning feeling grateful for the fact that I do something useful. We're impacting on people's health for the better – occasionally I pinch myself because I'm getting paid to do something I want to do!

This job has also impacted on my relatives and my family. My partner stopped smoking because of me and I'm working on my son! I suppose being in this job means you are constantly thinking about being healthy.

It's a good place to work as the people are very warm. We're passionate about what we do and we're all here for the right reasons.



**Pauline Walker –
Senior Quitline Advisor**

It's nice to make a positive connection with people. It's positive in that you're actually helping them make changes in their life which will be beneficial. You talk to some really interesting people from every different walk of life, which you probably wouldn't get the chance to do on a day-to-day basis.

I think to be helpful as a Quitline Advisor you need to be patient and interested. Part of the job is being inquisitive, because you're trying to find the client's own story. And that in itself can keep things interesting, because although we might say the same things several times a day, it's probably the first time that particular person has heard it.

I have smoked and although you don't need to have smoked to be a Quitline Advisor, it does help you understand what people are going through. I understand how hard it is, and how you feel when you need a cigarette, and would cheerfully choke somebody to get one! I think most people don't realise quite how addictive nicotine really is.

When I first started here I never thought about the job actually being good for me, but it's been a two-way thing. Some of the things people tell you about what they've been through, and the odds they've overcome, are really inspiring.

WHAT OUR CLIENTS SAY

I've been smokefree for 12 weeks. I relapsed a couple of times when I was on the programme, but I kept trying and feel like those times set me up for when I was really ready.

I'm now smokefree for almost eight years and couldn't have done it without the help and support from the Quitline. I feel a sense of appreciation when I see your ads on television and felt compelled to phone in today to express my thanks to all the advisors for their hard work in helping people to quit smoking.

I discovered I had lesions on my lungs, and emphysema, and the specialist told me that if I didn't stop smoking I would die. I called the Quitline back then in 2003, and have had love, care and support from you since then. With the money I've saved I've bought three colour TVs, two video recorders and lots of DVDs, and I'm about to go on holiday on a plane – without my oxygen bottle in tow! I spread the word of the Quitline every day and can smell a smoker 15 feet away. Without Quitline, I'd be dead.

Smokefree since 31 January, and have now stopped using the patches. I couldn't have done it without Quitline!

I was very impressed with the service you provided today. Quitline is an excellent, friendly and professional service – thanks for making this a wow experience for me!

I lost my grandfather
to lung cancer when I was six,
and was deeply moved
by the Adrian advertisements.
Thank you.

On 29 January it will be
one year since I've had
a cigarette – thanks to you.
At 67, looking forward
to another 67 years
without a smoke!

After 46 years of smoking,
I am now seven weeks smokefree.
I phoned The Quit Group and
what a fantastic help they were.
So for all you smokers who are
ready to quit, please trust me:
this is well worth the journey.

The Quitline changed my life.
I've been smokefree for nine months,
my blood pressure is now normal and my
'hacking cough' disappeared after three weeks.
I feel sooooo good now that I can
even hang around my smoking friends
and not want one at all.
I smoked for 57 years and could not have
done it without the Quitline.

I'm so glad you sent me
the cards to quit smoking
so quickly, I may have changed
my mind otherwise.
It'll be great to be able to taste,
smell and especially breathe
more easily, even at 75
blinking years.

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