

**14 June 2010**

## **Quitline's tobacco challenge: Banish the intruder from our house this Matariki**

Smokers are being challenged by staff at Quitline to banish tobacco from their lives this Matariki.

"As Matariki rises, a new cycle of life begins. All has its place and time – the kūmara will be planted, and we await the arrival of the koekoeā and the pīpīwhārauroa. But there is an intruder in the house, one which has made itself at home in front of the fire, one which slowly but surely, has robbed us of many of our tīpuna. And if we let it stay, it will, as surely as Matariki will rise again, rob us of our rangatahi and mokupuna. At Te Roopu Me Mutu, we are standing at the door and saying – No More."

Paula Snowden, Chief Executive of Te Roopu Me Mutu/Quitline, said: "Smoking has stolen much of our past, but we don't have to allow it to rule our future. It takes determination and the strength of our wairua to rid ourselves of the grip it has upon us, but it can be done.

"Some assume smoking is part of Maori culture, but tobacco has no place in our whakapapa, our identity. It's an imposter in our history that should have no part of our future.

"The three baskets of knowledge show us the way: the gift of the past is that we may learn from it to ensure a better present and a brighter future for ourselves, those we love, and those yet to come."

As Matariki rises, Te Roopu Me Mutu issues this challenge to smokers:

"Come to us, and let us fight alongside you to rid ourselves of this intruder. Come to us once, come twice, come five times – no matter how many times, each attempt increases your chance of victory, of quitting smoking for good. Take up the challenge with us and let this Matariki be the time when you leave smoking in the past."

Smokers quitting with Quitline are five times more likely to succeed than those quitting alone. Advisors support smokers to understand the three parts of the addiction – the nicotine, the habits and the emotions – which gives them the weapons to fight it successfully.

Quitline also offers subsidised nicotine patches, gum and lozenges at \$3 for two month's supply – so while it's getting more expensive to smoke, it's never been cheaper to quit.

**-ENDS-**

1. Contact Carl Billington (029 770 0317) for more information or requests for comment/interviews. Interviews are available in Te Reo on request.
2. The Quitline number is 0800 778 778. The Quit Group website is [www.quit.org.nz](http://www.quit.org.nz).