

The Quit Group

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Media release

Reality TV Health Campaign

Hon Damien O'Connor launches Video Diaries

Reality TV meets health head on with the launch of a new advertising campaign using real smokers trying to quit smoking.

The Quit Group's *Video Diaries* documentary style campaign follows three smokers as they face the reality of overcoming addiction to nicotine.

Executive Director Helen Glasgow says the unscripted campaign is a realistic portrayal of quitting and how hard this is for some smokers.

"Not all our television quitters are successful. In making this campaign we wanted to clearly show that it takes most smokers three or four attempts before they successfully quit."

The first series of ads will follow Natasha (Tash) Tawhara, a 30-year-old Māori woman who smoked up to 15 cigarettes a day.

"I decided to quit to live a healthier lifestyle, get fit for my sport, be a role model for my children and most of all to save for a house."

Tash's story will be followed by Stuart Sutherland who has smoked for 25 years and smoked up to 45 cigarettes a day. Stuart decided to quit because his father died at 52.

"I don't want to die young and I know that if I stop smoking my chances of living longer will be much better."

The Quit Group's Executive Director Helen Glasgow says the new campaign is aimed at the whole population but it has a particular focus on Māori. Ms Glasgow says Māori make up about 20 percent of callers to the Quitline and the organisation's goal is to contribute to the work of reducing the number of Māori who smoke.

"There is evidence showing mass media campaigns are one of the most effective ways of getting people who smoke to quit."

Associate Health Minister Hon Damien O'Connor is launching the new campaign at Parliament on 3 July 2006. The quitters will be attending that launch. *Video Diaries* will launch on television on 10 July 2006.

For more information or to speak to Tash or Stuart: (Photos of Tash and Stu are available).

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