

# Incoming New Zealand govt to abandon anti-smoking laws

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New Zealand's incoming conservative government will jettison world-leading measures to stub out smoking, new Prime Minister Christopher Luxon confirmed Monday, in a move described by health campaigners as a "huge win for the tobacco industry".

Unveiled under former prime minister Jacinda Ardern, the so-called "generational [smoking](#) ban" aimed to prohibit the sale of cigarettes to anyone born after 2008.

Praised by public health experts and anti-smoking advocates, a suite of near-identical measures were recently announced in the United Kingdom.

But after being sworn in on Monday, Luxon confirmed New Zealand would scrap the laws before they came into effect, citing fears of a flourishing black market.

Luxon conceded the tax revenue from ongoing cigarette sales would also generate welcome revenue for the government, but stressed it was "not the motivation for doing it."

Anti-smoking group Health Coalition Aotearoa—the Maori name for New Zealand—said the policy backdown was an insult to the country.

"This is a major loss for public health, and a huge win for the [tobacco industry](#), whose profits will be boosted at the expense of Kiwi lives," the group has said in a statement.

Luxon said the cigarette ban would create "an opportunity for a black market to emerge, which would be largely untaxed."

The legislation, scheduled to start later this year, was designed to almost immediately reduce the number of people using tobacco products.

While the number of adults smoking in New Zealand is already relatively low at just eight percent, the previous government had envisioned a future where the country was completely smoke-free.

As well as the steadily increasing age limit, the new law would have slashed the number of retailers able to sell [tobacco](#) products to a maximum of just 600 nationwide, a massive drop from the current figure of 6,000.

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