

# Indigenous Māori perspectives of smokefree parks

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Tobacco was not a traditional pre-European product in Aotearoa (New Zealand), but was introduced during European settlement<sup>1</sup> and became a commodity and currency used to influence and regulate Māori, particularly in the colonisation process of the nineteenth century.<sup>2,3</sup> Now, in Aotearoa, smoking tobacco causes significant harm and is the leading risk factor for preventable death,<sup>4</sup> with Māori experiencing greater incidence and impact.<sup>5</sup> Daily smoking prevalence is nearly three times higher for Māori than non-Māori;<sup>6</sup> closing this gap remains a significant challenge for reducing health inequities.

It has been suggested that the separation of Māori tikanga (protocol, customs, culture) from smoking will support a future for Māori that can be smokefree.<sup>7</sup> While there is a smokefree goal to reduce smoking prevalence to less than 5% by 2025,<sup>8</sup> it appears unlikely that this goal will be reached by this time,<sup>9</sup> particularly for some population groups, including Māori.<sup>10</sup> Smokefree environments have been a key platform contributing to this goal.<sup>10,11</sup>

Smokefree environments have the potential to help alter perceptions about smoking normality in a community. Smokefree environments help to reduce smoking uptake among children and young people and increase quit attempts and quitting at a population level.<sup>12</sup> Wider health effects include protection from second-hand smoke exposure as well as the environmental effects of tobacco-related litter.<sup>13</sup> The legislative mandate provided by the *Smoke-Free Environments Act (SFEA) 1990* and its amendment in 2003 provides for smokefree indoor workplaces, schools, early childhood centres and prisons. However, few

## Abstract

**Objective:** This study aims to understand the context of place associated with smoking in urban Hamilton parks from a Te Ao Māori perspective (the worldview of Māori, the Indigenous people of Aotearoa New Zealand).

**Methods:** Our study approached smokefree environments in Hamilton through a Māori lens, undertaking interviews with family groups and people from organisations involved in the local Smokefree environments policy.

**Results:** The majority of the 26 adult participants identified as Māori, with 30% being current smokers. Parks had a place in the sporting memories of participants. Smoking was merged with these memories. Important features of places that influenced smoking behaviours were raised, with signage a key talking point.

**Conclusions:** The colonial construct of parks do not make visible Māori values and historical associations with the land, nor do they set a framework that would promote Māori ways of being and doing, including enacting smokefree spaces and places.

**Implications for public health:** This study provides the incentive to address change in parks and reserve management that would support Māori aspirations for their health and wellbeing associated with ancestral land, and give meaning to smokefree environments.

**Key words:** Indigenous people, Māori, parks, smokefree environments

outdoor areas are covered by this legislation. Subsequently, many local authorities have also implemented smokefree policies that pertain to places in their district, for example, playgrounds, sports grounds and council-run events.<sup>14</sup>

## Parks and reserves as smokefree environments

Our study looked more closely into parks and reserves as smokefree places for Māori. Previous research into smokefree environments was more focused on stakeholder or organisational responses.<sup>11,15</sup> One study in Aotearoa that evaluated smokefree policies found that they were implemented by 70% of local authorities, but compliance was voluntary, with no active enforcement.<sup>16</sup> The 2017 Achieving Smokefree Aotearoa by 2025 plan (ASAP)

recommended incremental increases in smokefree place policies which supports parks and reserves being included in policy coverage.<sup>17</sup>

Exploring parks and reserves that are smokefree from a Māori worldview is relevant for the argument made by Barnett et al.<sup>18</sup> that the “practice of smoking is embedded within everyday rhythms of life, and ... discrete cultures materialise in particular places that govern people’s smoking behaviour and the meanings drawn from that experience”. Parks and reserves are a largely westernised concept, reflecting the industrial revolution distinction between work and leisure, with parks the result of colonisation, as space *appropriated from indigenous cultures*.<sup>19</sup> Parks are not innocuous features of the landscape, especially in cities,<sup>20</sup> but result from colonialist intervention<sup>21</sup> and have culturally specific

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dimensions.<sup>22</sup> We aimed to better understand the intersections between Māori worldviews and the impact of colonisation, urban parks, tobacco use and smokefree outdoor area policies.

Anderson et al.<sup>23</sup> proposed that their case study approach to Indigenous health across the Pacific enabled them to present the social and historical context that underpins understanding contemporary issues. Similarly, our case study approach builds on the knowledge and relationships that the researchers had with particular communities and activities. Within the research team, two of the three researchers are Māori, and collectively they had experience with parks and recreation organisations and management and smokefree environments policy research expertise.

### Research approach

Qualitative research methods were used within this Kaupapa Māori study. Kaupapa Māori research frames the study within a historical, cultural, social and political context, mindful of – and critical about – how Māori are represented in the research.<sup>24</sup> A key aspect of this approach was changing the focus of the study. Instead of a focus on smoking and the stigma and power imbalance of the smokefree ‘rules’, we were interested in the narratives and stories about the land that was now known as parks and reserves, prior to smoking discussion. This approach implements the early stages of the behavioural change framework presented by Michie et al.,<sup>25</sup> with an exploration of the issue and context, and allows for the Meihana Model to guide analysis. While the Meihana Model was first proposed as a guide for clinical practice,<sup>26</sup> it has subsequently supported a wider range of health research.<sup>27–30</sup> Framing the research within the Meihana Model enabled explicit consideration of the model’s component parts – Whakapapa (ancestral links), Hinengaro (mental health), Tinana (physical health), Iwi-Katoa (society-organisations), Taiao (environment), and Whānau (family). Central to this approach was the composition of the research team. Two work within the health research academic environment (RQ and LM) and two of the team identify as Māori (RQ and BCH).

The collection of narratives within the ‘by Māori, for Māori’ Kaupapa Māori framework facilitated pūrākau as the data collection

method. Pūrākau enable an appropriate, culturally grounded approach, and provided the opportunity for consideration of individual needs within a wider context.<sup>31</sup> Intergenerational knowledge and Māori views of the world are encapsulated in pūrākau,<sup>32</sup> enabling a focus of our research on the meanings and associations of the parks and reserves with smoking and discussion on experiences of smokefree environments policy.

### The case study context

Hamilton is Aotearoa’s largest inland city, in the Waikato region. The Waikato is also the longest river in Aotearoa, flowing through the city for 16km.<sup>33</sup> Compared with Aotearoa overall, the Waikato region has more people who identify as Māori (24% vs. 17%), and more people who smoke regularly (14.9% vs. 13.2%). More specifically, for those who identify as Māori in the Waikato region, nearly 30% smoke regularly.<sup>34</sup> The local authority, Hamilton City Council (HCC), adopted a smokefree environments policy in 2012.<sup>35</sup> Parks and sports fields are specified to be smokefree, although compliance in parks is thought to be low. In 2019, the Council adopted a Smokefree Plan, the purpose of which was to support and implement the smokefree environments policy, and the Smokefree 2025 vision for Aotearoa. The Plan provided for leadership and collaboration across the multiple agencies involved in smokefree advocacy, and involves eight listed projects. However, none of these projects specifically target improving compliance within existing rules, such as with parks and sports fields, nor are the projects relevant for Māori.<sup>35</sup>

Two parks (Swarbrick and Steele) are hubs for the sport of Touch Rugby (Touch), which is played for enjoyment, fitness, health and social reasons.<sup>36</sup> It is played by large proportions of Māori and young adults aged 16 to 24 years.<sup>37</sup> Touch is one of the most popular sports in Aotearoa, particularly for men, and is most commonly played at an outdoor sports park.<sup>37</sup> Steele Park is one of the city’s oldest parks and was named after Lieutenant Steele who arrived in the Waikato in 1864.<sup>38</sup> Steele was one of Hamilton’s earliest European settlers.<sup>39</sup> Swarbrick Park was named after Arthur Swarbrick, a European known for championing the development of reserve land around Hamilton.<sup>40</sup>

### Aims and objectives

The study aims were to understand the place-based context of smoking in urban Hamilton parks from a Te Ao Māori perspective. Its objectives were to:

- Understand the relationship of smoking with the location of Swarbrick and Steele Parks and the activity of Touch for Māori.
- Gain knowledge about the narratives, cultural dimensions and meanings for Māori that are associated with Swarbrick or Steele Parks.
- Explore the perspectives of staff associated with urban parks and sport in organisations and agencies associated with the implementation of smokefree environment policies, particularly with regard to compliance, enforcement and cultural context.

### Methods

A qualitative, Kaupapa Māori, case study of two Hamilton parks covered by the local authority smokefree environment policy and used for the sport of Touch was undertaken.

### Sample and recruitment

The data collection was conducted in two interconnected phases. The first focussed on the experiences and knowledge of Māori who have an association with smoking, Touch and Swarbrick or Steele Parks. The second part was associated with people in the organisations that are associated with smoking, Touch and parks in the study area.

The study sample for phase one were whānau groups, defined as extended family, family group or a group of people connected through a mutual purpose. Participants were recruited using whanaungatanga, being existing relationships or kinship networks, and by word-of-mouth. For phase two, they were representatives of organisations with an interest in the Hamilton City Smoke-Free Environment Policy, utilising targeted recruitment within relevant organisations.

For each of the six phase-one whānau interviews, one adult aged 18 years or older was the primary participant for that whānau. Inclusion criteria required the participant to have whakapapa Māori (Māori genealogy), socialised or played Touch regularly at either Swarbrick or Steele Parks, and had stories to share about smoking. The other whānau participants were at the discretion of the

primary participant and included other adults, children and young people under 16 years. Allowing children and young people to participate, with their whānau guidance and consent, reflected Kaupapa Māori research methods<sup>41</sup> and allowed their stories to be heard.<sup>31</sup>

Inclusion criteria for participants in the organisational interviews were adults, aged 18 years or older, professional or voluntary staff, associated with either the organisation of Touch in Waikato, management or maintenance of HCC parks, or working in or associated with the Hamilton City Smoke-Free Environment Policy or one of its partnering agencies or organisations. Purposeful sampling was used to maximise the opportunity for pūrākau from Māori participants in phase one and for the diversity of organisational views for participants in phase two.<sup>42</sup> The number of participants and interview groups was guided by the practical limitations of the funding and time available.<sup>43</sup>

### Procedure

Interviews followed the pūrākau method, which facilitates the opportunity to consider the impact of colonisation on the meanings and association of urban parks, and to consider the role of smoking and where it occurs.<sup>31</sup> The pūrākau method allowed for the interviewer to ask semi-structured, but deliberately open questions, allowing for exploration of narratives, cultural meanings and identified attachments to the places and activities, such as sport, smoking or socialising. The participant information sheet included a brief concept of the study and was explicit about the pūrākau data collection method. Table 1 includes more detail about the indicative interview questions.

All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed. The written transcript was returned to the participants, giving them the opportunity to respond if any of the recorded information and knowledge was not appropriate to be shared.

For whānau interviews, each participating adult aged 18 years or older received a \$40 retail voucher in recognition of their time contribution, and any costs incurred in travelling to and from the interview. In addition, each whānau received a koha in the form of a gift basket, acknowledging the contribution of the whānau as a collective unit. For organisational interviews,

**Table 1: Interview indicative topics.**

#### Whānau and Organisational Interview Questions

|   |
|---|
| Do you know any pūrākau and history of the Waikato area?  |
| What is your whānau association with the places now known as Frankton and Hamilton East?  |
| What do you know about the history of Swarbrick and/or Steele Parks?  |
| What is your whānau history with these parks?   |
| Do you have any stories/can you share any pūrākau about these parks?  |
| What is your whānau association with the sport of Touch Rugby?  |
| What is your whānau history with smoking?   |
| Do members of your whānau smoke?  |
| For how long has smoking been a practice of your whānau?  |
| Has smoking in your whānau changed over time?   |
| Are smokefree practices part of your 'way of living'?   |
| Is there anything in your whānau environment that is associated with smoking/becoming smokefree?  |
| Do you have/can you share any stories about smoking?  |
| How does smoking fit with Swarbrick and/or Steele Parks?  |
| Hamilton City Council has a policy that means parks and sports fields are smokefree. Can you talk about what this policy means for you? |

#### Additional Questions for Organisational Interviews

|  |
|--|
| Our participants have talked significantly about signage to advise that places are smokefree areas, what are your stories about signage? |
| In your line of work can you share any examples of how smoking has impacted whānau or communities?                                       |

participants were offered a koha in the form of a \$40 retail voucher. Where possible, kai (food) was provided as a sign of manaakitanga (showing respect, generosity and care for others) to reciprocate the hospitality and contribution of whānau.

All participants received an information sheet and provided written consent. Ethical approval was obtained from the University of Otago Human Ethics Committee (20/095), and the Ngāi Tahu Research Consultation Committee (5767\_22021).

### Analysis

The pūrākau method provided for narratives to be collected, analysed and then shared in ways that contribute to the transformation of the existing paradigms around the place associations with urban parks, being Māori and smoking.<sup>44</sup> With this framework, qualitative thematic analysis was applied to all interview transcripts. NVivo 12<sup>45</sup> was used to code the transcripts according to general patterns, commonalities and differences, generating themes. All transcripts were coded by two authors. Codes were compared and discussed amongst the research team to agree on commonality. As Kaupapa Māori research, tikanga, described by Jones et al.,<sup>46</sup> safeguarded and guided analysis and interpretation of findings.

## Results

### Participant characteristics

For phase one, six whānau interviews were conducted, involving 32 participants (16 adults, five young people and 11 children). For phase two organisational interviews, six interviews were conducted with eight adult participants. Table 2 presents the characteristics of participants. All interviews were conducted by one of the authors between November 2020 and January 2021 at a time and location appropriate for the participants, usually at their home or workplace. One organisational interview was conducted by phone.

### Themes

Results for all interviews are presented together as analysis showed that the same themes emerge from both phases. This added a richer context, blending both player experience of the parks, sport and smoking, with those associated with management and policy. Quotes from participants are used to illustrate themes, with [WI] used to denote whānau interview participants and [OI] used to denote organisational interview participants. The number in the interview code indicates the group and individuals within the group are defined further by a letter. Participants' narratives were grouped in two themes and associated sub-themes – Parks, Sport and Smoking (sub-themes

were histories, colonial associations, journey into smoking, sport narratives with smoking, role of alcohol, and family connections and context with smoking), and the Place Context of Smoking (sub-themes were modifying smoking behaviour associated with parks and people, smoking, Māori values and land, features of parks with smoking, children as smoking modifiers, smokefree policy knowledge, and smokefree signage at parks). Figure 1 shows an illustrative framework of these themes and sub-themes, based on the Meihana Model.<sup>26</sup>

*Parks, Sport and Smoking*

Whānau participants were regular visitors to Swarbrick and Steele Parks, but most did not know stories about the Māori history of the land or area. The narrative of this participant illustrates that any known and whānau history associated with the area may not be passed down through the generations:

*She did talk of stories about Granddad ... he came here not speaking a word of English and he enrolled in ... school here and used to get beaten 'cause he couldn't speak English. So that kind of changed our whole upbringing, because of his upbringing he didn't want his kids to have to go through that 'cause that was the whole colonisation times. [W15a]*

Any known history was associated more with the parks' colonial associations. One whānau member discussed the hurt and trauma associated with the land that was Steele Park and Swarbrick Park, and the land confiscation that followed the Raupatu (Land Wars) in Waikato:

*... it was one of the first settlements ... That's where the battleships all kind of decided to dock and do what they did, and in the gardens. The gardens were along this space.*

*This was a space, the soil along here was perfect for growing and so the Pākehā came in and took that purposefully. [W12a]*

For another participant, their involvement in a park in another town meant they heard more about the issues of conflict associated with that land: "So with them being involved, they took us right back in history to where the rarururu [dispute/conflict] was. It was more so to sit in that, to wānanga [meet and discuss] that with them" [O16a]. Another participant was unaware of any non-European history of the parks, but saw its amenity value: "Steele Park so it's our oldest park... It's got beautiful, protected trees all the way around it" [O15a]. This participant also saw that use and requirements were changing however, acknowledging contemporary issues such as gender identity: "Making sure that they are appropriate for people... for example for people that don't identify with a gender" [O15a]. Overall, most of our participants did not know much about the parks or the surrounding area prior to European settlement and their relationship with the land was through sport: "What I know about is just Touch, to be honest ... I think I started playing at seven, at Swarbrick ... which is 20 years... And that's all I know about Hamilton East, Swarbrick, is just playing the sports. But none of the history or anything" [W16a].

Participants had wide-ranging discussions about the context of smoking, how people started young, and the relationship of sport with smoking: "We've been smoking since we were 13 eh so we'll have a cigarette before the game, before we get in the car to the sport, before the game starts and as soon as it finishes ..." [W11b]. Further illustration of the integration role of smoking with sport from

their childhood was also shared: "I remember playing rugby as a kid and they'd sit on the sideline smoking" [W13a]. Some sports were thought to facilitate smoking more easily by players. This participant had specific experience with softball: "I know at softball you have people having a smoke in between innings ... whereas at Touch, it's kind of before and after the game" [W15a]. Most participants played sport at club and regional level, but one participant spoke about playing Touch at a high representative level and smoking in the past: "I was the only one that smoked. But, in saying that, I had to train twice as hard to stay up with them" [W14a]. Vaping was raised by another participant as an alternative to smoking at sport: "More, like, sporting friends or friends that are in, like, sports groups and stuff that I'm with, I'd, like, vape around them" [W16b]. The narratives around the benefits of smoking while playing sport were enlightening, with this participant saying: "You know you get your feelings or emotions at a high or get butterflies or stuff like that and you just have a smoke just to calm it down and yeah, out on the field it's business time" [W11c].

Participants' stories strongly linked smoking and sport. Narratives about where alcohol fitted with smoking were also shared, with this participant talking about their experience of starting smoking and alcohol: "It started with friends and then it became every time I drank" [W15a]. Alcohol was implicated in the stories of many participants; this participant remembered how normalised both drinking and smoking were within the context of their sports through sponsorship: "Yeah I remember a lot of smoking at softball, a lot of smoking at Touch and I think because of that, they were sponsored by alcohol and tobacco, doesn't help, it's in your face" [W12a]. The historical association of tobacco companies and sport sponsorship was easily remembered by another participant: "Rothman's Championship. They were actually sponsored; our major tournaments were sponsored by cigarette companies ... So, yeah there was a huge smoking culture around and there still is around softball ..." [W12b]. Another participant was unsure about the involvement of tobacco companies in vaping: "When you see British American Tobacco investing in things like that, you've gotta start asking yourself okay, what are these fellas up to 'cause it's about to be socially and immorally wrong to smoke so they're looking for another way to hook people into a product" [W12b].

**Table 2: Participant characteristics grouped by interview type.**

| Participant characteristics      | Whānau Interviews<br>32 participants   | Organisational Interviews<br>8 Participants  |
|----------------------------------|--|--|
| Number of interview groups       | 6  | 6  |
| Participants per interview       | Ranged from 1 participant to 6   | Ranged from 1 to 2   |
| Age                              | Adults = 16<br>Young people aged 12-17 years = 5<br>Children aged under 12 years = 11  | Adults = 8   |
| Sex of adult participants        | Female = 10<br>Male = 6  | Female = 5<br>Male = 3   |
| Identification as Māori (adults) | Māori (15)<br>Non-Māori (1)  | Māori (3)<br>Non-Māori (5)   |
| Smoking status (adults)          | Regular smokers = 12<br>Former smokers = 2<br>Never smokers = 2  | Regular smokers = 0<br>Former smokers = 3<br>Never smokers = 5   |
| Education level (adults)         | No formal qualification = 6<br>School level qualification = 7<br>Diploma or similar qualification = 2<br>Bachelor's degree or higher = 1 | No formal qualification = 0<br>School level qualification = 2<br>Diploma or similar qualification = 1<br>Bachelor's degree or higher = 4 |

The focus of the interviews was on sport, smoking and parks, but there was also significant and relevant discussion about the broader context and knowledge sharing that occurred around smoking generally. This participant illustrated how smoking facilitated connections to their past and their families:

*But even talking about the Marae [ancestral base], you know, you're in the kitchen, you're doing mahi [work] and then you'll go outside and the kaumātua [knowledgeable elders] are all sitting there having a smoke. So you all sit down and you go, "oh hey, Uncle" and that's when the conversation gets going and you just sit there, have a smoke with them ... because they've got all these stories to tell... it's an opportunity to go and listen to them and have a smoke with them and feel probably more connected to them. [W12b]*

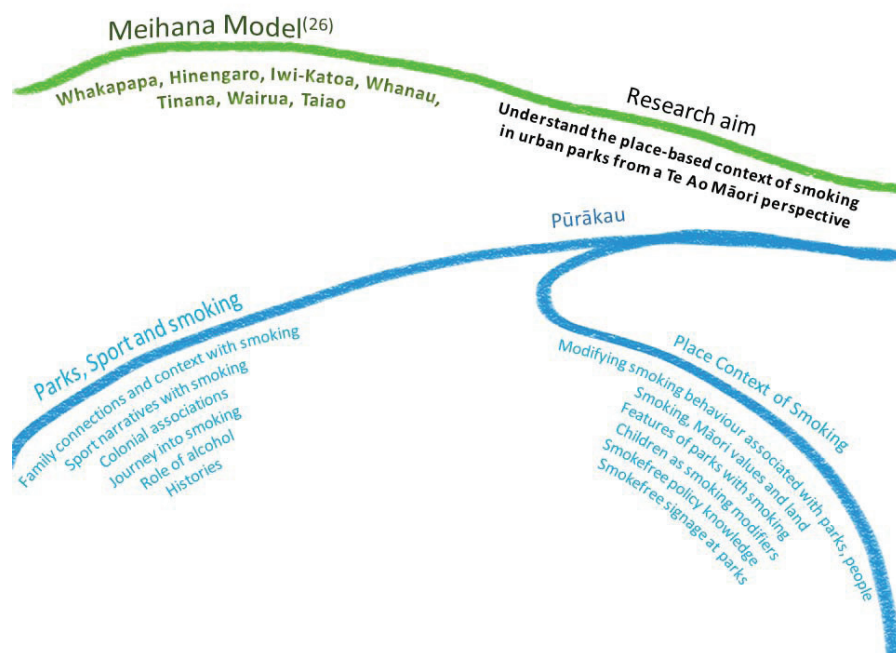
Connections with family were also suggested as opportunities for quitting together:

"Cause, if, like, that one person in that whānau gives up, then, maybe, they could share it with others in their whānau. And that could be the cycle that we need, instead of just going in this three-way circle" [W16a]. Quitting stories from participants had shared how iterative the quit cycle was, but this participant explained how the broader family context was important and would support long-term cessation.

### The Place Context of Smoking

This theme gathered together participant stories about the context of place. Discussion by participants about the location of smoking illustrated how features of parks moderated smoking behaviours, its visibility and the smokefree policies. One of the organisational participants articulated the connection between quitting and smokefree environments, saying that: "helping people on their journey as well is part of that is them recognising places or things where they're most likely to smoke and really preparing to make change" [O14b]. Another organisational participant saw parks as key components of the smokefree environment: "You also need to bring in much, much stronger, the whole smokefree environment, and the role that plays in supporting the quit attempts" [O11b]. For non-organisational participants, there was mixed awareness that parks were smokefree. Regardless of this lack of knowledge, several participants in one whānau observed behaviour changing anyway: "I think even at Touch, aye, you don't see people around the

Figure 1: Thematic illustration – He awa tātou (the river is us) with reference to the Meihana Model<sup>26</sup> and He awa whiria.<sup>47</sup> The illustration is based on an old photograph of Rainbow Falls on the Waikato River.<sup>74</sup>



fields. People kind of move out ... So there has been a change. And around by the trees" [W12a]. Another participant in the same interview stated: "People are a little bit more oh, want to move away with their cigarette aye, they're not just kind of lighting up wherever they feel like it" [W12b]. A number of participants also moderated their own smoking actions at parks. One participant said it like this: "I won't smoke at a park. If we go, even at Swarbrick, I don't like smoking on the footpath next to the main road" [W12b]. Another participant would not be seen smoking: "Well personally, I would go and stand by my car and have a smoke and not stand near the fields" [W14a].

All participants acknowledged that protecting children from smoking was essential even if they were not aware of its formalisation in the smokefree environment policy that included parks and playgrounds. One participant said: "It just makes sense not to smoke around parks and stuff, especially ... where kids are" [W14a]. With many of the whānau interviews identifying that the presence of children in many locations was important in smoking behaviours, an organisational participant shared a story about how this extends in the whānau context to support smoking cessation:

*I had a hapū mama come, she came to us wanting to quit smoking 'cause she was pregnant and she brought in both her parents and her partner and ... two or three siblings*

*..., they all came on the programme together and quit together because they knew that this baby was on the way. [O14a]*

Places in parks that clearly prioritise children were important for many participants. The playground space supported one of the participants to ask others not to smoke: "Hey, can't smoke in here, you're in a playground" [W11b]. The comment of this participant suggests that they felt supported to regulate the smoking behaviour of others because the presence of children was an obvious reason that smoking was not permitted.

Many whānau interviews included discussions about policy enforcement. This participant was aware that enforcement was likely to be difficult:

*I don't think you're s'pose to smoke in parks, but I think everyone does anyway. Yeah, I'm pretty certain that most parks are smokefree but they can't actually police it because it's an outside area, so it's like how are you gonna do that? Get the smoke Police out somewhere? I know that when I'm in a park, I will definitely kind of look around for signs and think ... if the signs are there, then I will go out on the street but if there's no signs, it's like oh well. [W12b]*

Signage was a common feature of smokefree parks in all interviews with an extensive discussion about the size, wording and location of signs. This participant was just looking for signs of any sort: "Is it advertised? Like signage, no smoking, say at parks? I don't

think I've seen a no smoking sign" [W13a]. One of the organisational participants thought that signage supported peer-policing:

*I think what the smokefree policies, what it does is that ... or even the signage... what it allows to do is that if there is a non-smoker there, they can just ask the person that is smoking, "Hey, look, did you know that it was a non-smoking area?" So, yeah, that's the idea around it. [O11a]*

Signs also needed to be relevant for current definitions of smoking and show understanding of smokefree policies from a Māori perspective. One of the organisational participants articulated it this way: "It's kind of basically just doing that, because, probably, they perceive it as a Pākehā law" [O11a]. There was also wider discussion about communication of the smokefree environments policy generally, with most relying on signage, although one participant recalled an announcement at a sports tournament: "It might've just been the one announcement in the morning ... they would just say it was a smokefree environment and then they'd give areas to smoke if you were a smoker" [W15a].

The locational aspect of smoking and parks was relevant for participants and supported as places that normalised environments where smoking was discouraged. Extending the concept of the park as a smokefree place to a place that had more meaning and greater value than its European history was appealing to some participants. One participant appreciated that it could be linked to Māori values in a way that could support smokefree:

*I liked when I read your brief around the linking of the history to the whenua [land], like this generation that's coming through, I think those are things that can be really used. That it's, you know it's not part of our whakapapa [ancestral story], smoking and actually, looking at the history of certain areas and linking those in with those measures, I think those could be quite powerful. You know, it'd be really cool to see some stuff like that happening for some of our kids. [W12a]*

Another could relate the project to the essence of what it is to be Māori:

*I think again being Māori and going back to Iwi and having that respect factor again. You know you can't smoke there you gotta smoke out there so, yeah obviously being on your marae just having that respect, not smoking in, you know, not smoking in those sacred areas. [O12a]*

Māori values support extending knowledge that underlies smokefree environments.

## Discussion

The two themes that emerged from the analysis of participant responses inspired summation of the results as a river, with its tributaries merging in a deep flowing body of water. This conceptualisation of the narratives as a river draws from He awa whiria, the Braided Rivers Approach of Macfarlane et al.,<sup>47</sup> and further demonstrated by Gillon and Macfarlane.<sup>48</sup> The Braided Rivers Approach portrays a blend of Indigenous and western knowledge that was also evident from the discussion of our participants, but our inspiration was the Waikato River. While braided rivers spread out over alluvial fans, have numerous streams and channels, and are mostly seen in Te Waipounamu (the South Island), the Waikato is deep and long and has many bends and tributaries. Our analysis drew on the depth of discussion from participants, conversations moved swiftly, bouncing from one concept to the next, interspersed with information illustrating how narratives were impacted by Māori beliefs and non-Māori structures and values.

The way this research investigated parks and sport as a context for smoking supported the whakawhanaungatanga (relationship-building) approach presented by Espiner<sup>49</sup> and similar to yarning by Indigenous Aboriginal people, described by Osmond and Phillips.<sup>50</sup> Participants were encouraged to establish connections during the interview process, before discussing the knowledge and history of the parks and before talking about smoking. Even though the interviews did raise smoking, the framing around understanding the connection to the whenua was considered positive, and an opportunity for smokefree environments to be enhanced.

The history and stories of Swarbrick and Steele Parks known by participants were grounded in non-Māori histories and values, echoing a recent Sport New Zealand (NZ) report about play opportunities for, by and with Māori. The report quoted one of their participants who recognised that parks with playgrounds were part of the "proliferation on non-Māori places".<sup>51</sup> Moewaka Barnes and McCreanor<sup>52</sup> championed "reconceptualising relationships with whenua as an underpinning determinant of health". This is similar to Lines et al.<sup>53</sup> with their study confirming the essential relationship between land and health for Indigenous young people in the Canadian Northwest Territories. Our participants articulated

knowing that they were still experiencing the impacts of colonisation and its associated land alienation. The broad area of the Waikato region and the city of Hamilton where the parks are located are part of large swathes of land dispossessed systematically and deliberately from Waikato-Tainui Iwi by the Aotearoa government by 1865. For the Iwi, their claim to the Waitangi Tribunal was redressed in 1995, and with redress was apologies for many wrongdoings, including for the devastation of property and social life, and for the confiscation of land.<sup>54</sup> Twenty-five years on from these apologies, there appears to be little change in the management of the two parks that were the focus of this study. There are many statutory requirements for central and local governments, including the HCC, to give effect to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi (ToW).<sup>55</sup> Under the ToW, HCC must actively protect Māori interests, including protection of tino rangatiratanga [sovereignty].<sup>56</sup> This study provides the incentive to address change in parks and reserve management in NZ, including the HCC, which would support Māori aspirations for their health and wellbeing associated with ancestral land and give meaning to smokefree environments.

Muriwai<sup>7</sup> suggested that smoking as a stress reliever was ingrained in Aotearoa by the 1950s. It was still used in this way by our participants, including in sporting environments. UK research by Hilland et al.<sup>57</sup> proposed coaches promote smoking prevention and other health promotion messages. Implementing this more formally through Aotearoa government agencies such as Sport NZ and non-government agencies such as Touch NZ may be an opportunity for change. Making sure the smokefree messages are appropriate for Māori would extend the work of Hodge et al.<sup>58</sup> aiming for sport organisations to work in a way that reflects Te Ao o Ngā Tāngata Whenua (Indigenous worldview) and implements tikanga o Ngā Tāngata Whenua (Indigenous practices).

The Smoke-free Environment Policy adopted by the HCC in 2012 prohibits smoking in all parks and sports fields, and within 10 metres of all playgrounds. Signage is required wherever practicable, to "communicate smokefree zones".<sup>59</sup> There was a lack of awareness that parks were smokefree by our study participants, although they would promote playgrounds as smokefree when they were with children. Participants were vocal about the need for signage

and for improvements in signage at parks. They reported that they seldom saw signs communicating smokefree areas. Poor signage at playgrounds has been suggested as “a rather neglected component of New Zealand’s moves towards the Smokefree 2025 goal”<sup>60</sup> but worthy of improvement in density, quality, utility and size of signs.<sup>14</sup> Signage and messaging that is positive and motivational, has been suggested to be effective in increasing physical activity<sup>61–63</sup> and reducing smoking.<sup>64,65</sup> This is worth exploring further, particularly as it fits within the Smokefree Aotearoa 2025 Action Plan focus area five, as enhancement of the existing smokefree environments initiatives.<sup>66</sup> As far as the authors are aware, no research has been published about the reach of this signage for Indigenous populations. Further development of this concept, particularly if this work is led by Māori, enacts Guiding Principle 2(c) of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control for participation of Indigenous peoples in programs that are socially and culturally appropriate.<sup>67</sup>

Our participants were asked about their views of smoking, parks and what history they knew, but did raise mātauranga Māori (knowledge and ways) as an opportunity to strengthen and extend places that were smokefree. Mark and Lyons<sup>68</sup> stated that biomedical conceptions of health and illness are inadequate for Māori and other Indigenous peoples, which suggests that only viewing smoking and smokefree areas as biomedical matters is ineffective. Similarly, just as Māori specific cessation initiatives secure higher quitting rates than nonspecific interventions,<sup>69</sup> combining mātauranga Māori with and within innovative signage may be an opportunity to bring about a major change in smoking norms among Māori. Signage that acknowledges the history and potential intergenerational trauma associated with parks, within a smokefree framework, could implement de-normalised smoking environments.<sup>70</sup>

### Strengths and limitations

This study was a focused investigation into the sports field history of two specific parks, smoking behaviours associated with the sport of Touch and Māori perspectives undertaken in a provincial city. As such, its results may not be generalisable for other parts of Aotearoa nor for other sports. However, the

experiences of participants provide insight into gaps in the historical knowledge that are likely to be common throughout Aotearoa, and similar for many colonised Indigenous peoples. There was strength in the pūrākau approach with its similarities with other Indigenous methodologies,<sup>71,72</sup> seeking narratives from whānau groups, and starting with a discussion about less-stigmatised topics, such as parks and sports, before focusing on smoking behaviours.<sup>50</sup> Inclusion of participants representing organisations involved in the smokefree environment policy was also a strength, enabling the organisational perspectives to be integrated with whānau participants, enriching understanding about smoking experiences and their place context with history, sports and parks.

### Conclusion

Understanding smokefree environments for Māori was the broad framework for this research, with the interpretation of environments being places, as a setting, rather than the event that occurs at that place.<sup>73</sup> While smokefree outdoor area policies de-normalise smoking,<sup>18</sup> the views of Māori about smoking in many outdoor areas, such as urban parks are not well known.

Our study approached smokefree environments research through a Māori lens, eliciting interesting and grounded views on settings and our participants’ relationships with place and history. It adds understanding about smokefree environment policy interventions, providing valuable insight into the normative change that is occurring in smoking behaviours. However, the colonial construct of these two parks do not make visible Māori values and historical associations with the land, nor set a framework that would promote Māori ways of being and doing, including enacting smokefree spaces and places. Future work could explore Indigenous narratives and stories associated with parks and reserves, drawing on traditional relationships. Developing activities and structures that honour those relationships, demonstrating meaning and values for Indigenous people could contribute to environments that promote wellbeing, as a strength-based approach, rather than adverse messaging.

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