

Interview with Ruby Higgins

Interview with Lewis Whaitiri

How would you define your smoking status?

I have smoked before, you know tried it of course but no, not regularly. I am a non smoker.

Do you think smoking in New Zealand is on the increase now or the decrease?

In New Zealand, now that there's no smoking in pubs or anything it's not so bad, it's kind of like all the losers go outside and have a smoke while we're all inside having fun so I think it's kind of frowned upon.

What do you think about young people who take up smoking?

When I see young people smoking I just think, 'What a waste of time'. There's no point and I think it's quite sad really because they obviously don't value themselves enough to look after their bodies or their insides.

Why do you think they still take up smoking?

I think smoking is a way to connect with people socially but it's just a stupid way to do it. That's not how I fit into the crowd, I just say no thanks.

So is it a big thing to say 'no'?

I don't find it hard to say 'no' when someone offers me a cigarette, it's just, 'No, I don't want to.' But I guess a lot of other people feel pressured as well which is why they would do it, pressure to fit in and be accepted because saying 'no' is quite hard for some people.

Why don't you feel that same peer pressure?

Because I don't care what anybody thinks. Like if they think you're uncool for not smoking, it's like you're uncool for smoking because you're killing yourself and I think I just know myself enough to stand up for what I want to do and I don't want to smoke so I'll just say no.

What do you think is the worst thing about smoking?

Are there any good things about smoking? I don't think there is just one bad thing but obviously you die.

Would you go out with a smoker?

I don't think so, I don't think I would. It's like a certain lifestyle that goes with smoking, like you wouldn't necessarily be very healthy and I just don't think I would be able to and the smell and the kissing thing, not very nice.

Do you have any advice for young people who are considering taking up smoking?

I don't know why anybody would consider making smoking a habit. I think it's something that you start off being a casual smoker and then suddenly you're addicted. So I think the only advice I could give and I don't even feel right giving advice because I'm so young would be, just don't do it. Think about what you want. Do you want that and do you want to be addicted to smoking? No, there is nothing good about it, there are no positives to smoking. Just think about what you want, do you really want to be a smoker?

What do you think of services like Quitline?

I think they are great, I notice that they advertise a lot and I think it's good for smokers to have that support.

What are the benefits of being smokefree?

Being smokefree means you are a lot healthier and you have better fitness and skin. You are way more able to have a longer life and it's just better, heaps better.

What is your view on having smokefree bars?

I think it's great. I think smokefree bars are great. It's way cleaner and it's just nicer. All the people that smoke have to go outside and be loners and we are all inside having a good time so yeah, it's definitely good to have the bars smokefree.

Is there anything you think we could do to be more of a smokefree country?

In LA, there was this one street, which was smokefree and it was just so nice. I think it was on the Promenade and it was just so nice, like no smoking in the street otherwise you get fined and I think it was only for a certain street but it was really noticeable. But yeah, I think we are pretty good.

Have you got any thoughts on the tobacco industry?

I mean obviously I don't think it's a good industry but I think they are just selling a product, it's a business and I think if people are stupid enough to buy into it then it is their fault.

Did you say before that you've got a friend who currently smokes?

Yeah. All my friends, we don't really do it, there's only my one friend who is the smoker and we're always really supportive of each other. We're from Steiner, so we're already like the Steiner crew and we all do things differently there so yeah, if somebody does start smoking we just shake our heads and are like, 'Oh no'.

Does she ever talk about trying to stop smoking?

No she doesn't. I don't even know why she started, it was real weird, she just randomly started smoking.

Do you ever comment on it?

Yeah, whenever she's like, 'Oh, I feel like shit', I'm like, 'Oh maybe you should stop smoking.' Just like everything that she says that's wrong I say, 'Oh, it's probably because you're smoking.' But she gets quite annoyed about that so I don't do it often or try not to.

Can you tell a smoker from a non-smoker?

You can definitely smell a smoker from a non-smoker. I saw this real gnarly lady the other day, she was a smoker. She was an old lady, well I'm not sure if she was an old lady but she looked old, she was fagging it up and you could definitely tell, like the wrinkly, rough, her skin was really damaged.