Dear Sir

World No-Tobacco Day is the 31st of May every year. This year's anniversary has a sense of urgency about it because instead of declining, it appears that smoking is increasing, especially amongst children.

In Indonesia, a two year old boy throws temper tantrums and smokes up to 40 cigarettes a day. His parents view the habit as a amusing when it is actually deadly. My own two year old isn't allowed anywhere near smokers and second-hand smoke, let alone have access to cigarettes. Aren't these parents afraid that he'll burn the house down?

South Africa has some of the strictest anti-smoking laws in the world. I've heard plenty of people complaining about the nanny state and how it infringes on their rights, but the truth is that non-smokers are also paying for smoking related illnesses even if they don't want to. And then there is the aspect of enforcement. Though they are not supposed to, I have seen cafés and even local grocers selling cigarettes to minors. When I point out that this is illegal, those vendors look at me as if I have committed a sin of epic proportions. Why is this when the law is on my side?

I would urge all smoking parents out there to stop smoking on this day. Don't glamourise the habit and don't make your children accessories by asking them to buy your cigarettes because you have other errands. Kids are exposed to enough without adding addictive behaviour to the mix.

Yours sincerely,
Cllr Dot Corrigan
DA Joburg