Safe Communities Overview
Model and Safe Communities Foundation New Zealand

What is a Safe Community?

New Zealand has a well-established local, regional and national Safe Community network that supports wellbeing, placemaking, resilience and injury/violence prevention initiatives. Safe Communities is not another project or a programme, it is an integrated way of doing business. The model is recognised by the World Health Organization (WHO) and worldwide as an effective and acceptable intervention that improves community wellbeing and reduces the burden of injury experienced by individuals, families, whānau and communities. Safe Communities concepts embodies the values and philosophies of whanaungatanga (relationships) manaakitanga (respect, care and support) and tino rangatiratanga (self-determination and autonomy). The Manifesto for Safe Communities states that "All human beings have an equal right to health and safety".

Pan Pacific accreditation as a Safe Community formalises community's commitment to continue to work in a collaborative and systemic way. Pan Pacific Accredited Safe Communities provide the ideal platform and channels for central and local government to improve the wellbeing of New Zealanders and their families through supporting healthier, safer and more connected communities.

How many Safe Communities do we have in NZ?

Since inception there has been exponential growth of Safe Communities within NZ, with 2 out of every 3 New Zealanders living in an accredited Safe Community. There is no 'one size fits all' formula for Safe Communities. Each area creates its own structures, priorities and activities that are appropriate and responsive to local needs and conditions. Local authorities are usually engaged, along with key stakeholders including Police, ACC, Fire & Emergency NZ, District Health Boards, local Iwi, and other community agencies. For a full list of accredited Safe Communities, and their priorities, initiatives and outcomes visit: *http://www.safecommunities.org.nz/safe-community-networks/safe-community-networks*.

What is SCFNZ's role in this process?

SCFNZ is a non-government organisation with charitable trust status, and is a Safe Community Support and Accrediting Centre of the Pan Pacific Safe Community Network (PPSCN). SCFNZ adopts both public health and community development principles in its approach to build social capital and increasing wellbeing through community safety promotion actively supporting the Government wellbeing agenda, alongside the Sustainable Development Goals. SCFNZ also aligns to the theory of Injury Prevention as Social Change (McClure RJ, et al. Inj Prev June 2016 Vol 22 No 3. webinar) reframing injury prevention at the population level through a systemic approach.

Why an integrated approach to supporting Safe Communities?

Intentional and unintentional injury is the leading cause of death for people between the ages of 1 to 34 years in NZ and has an estimated social and economic costs of approximately $60 billion per annum. SCFNZ vision (*Communities in New Zealand are safe, vibrant, resilient and connected, He haumaru, hihiri, manahau me hono hapori i roto i Aotearoa)* provides a platform for the achievement of New Zealand government wellbeing agenda. The Safe Community movement is committed to working together to collectively strengthening Safe Community cultural capability, diversity and inclusion. It recognises and

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is committed to working with tangata whenua we contribute to a safer environment not only for Māori but for all New Zealand communities.

Safe Communities is aligned to central government objectives including: Department Internals Affairs Purpose: ACC Strategic intent; Ministry of Health: Health Promotion Agency focus on reducing drug and alcohol-related harm; Ministry of Social Development outcomes; NZ Police Prevention First Strategy; NZTA 'Safer Journeys 2020'.

The Local Government Act 2002 recognises that Territorial Authorities have an important role to play as they are the most effective deliverers of local services. The Local Government Amendment Act 2018 includes "promote the social, economic, environmental, and cultural wellbeing of communities in the present and for the future". The Safe Communities model is well placed to address the needs of local government to address the four wellbeings – in particular the social and cultural aspects.

Furthermore, the New Zealand Safe Community Network actively supports the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, addressing those directly related to injury and violence prevention and those that address the risk factors of injury. The WHO Regional action plan for violence and injury prevention in the Western Pacific : 2016-2020, recommends Safe Communities as a strategy for achieving a reduction in injuries.

Some benefits and challenges
There are many advantages and benefits from being an accredited Safe Community. They include:
- ❖ Increased synergy - developing collaborative relationships, building critical mass and credibility. Increased community social capital and the mobilising of action. Having a mechanism for joint interagency work on a wide range of wellbeing, resilience and safety issues determined by the community
- ❖ Mapping and linking current initiatives, creating a clearer and more comprehensive picture of local risks.
- ❖ Sharing best practice and developing an integrated problem-solving approach to planning.
- ❖ Increasing impact and reach - one message many voices, resulting in a continuity of messages and interventions.
- ❖ combining of creativity, perspectives, skills and resources to run and fund projects
- ❖ a coordinator dedicated to help make things happen and ensure continuity and sustainability
- ❖ participating in regional and national networks and training opportunities
- ❖ providing a means of meaningful community participation, consultation and determination of community needs.

There are also challenges that often need a special focus. Some challenges of collaboration include:
- ❖ ensuring that the right people are in the governance group who have sufficient authority to make decisions on behalf of their agencies
- ❖ keeping people engaged and interested in the process and projects
- ❖ dealing effectively with conflict within the group, such as differing views and interest
- ❖ ensuring that everyone understands the purpose and outcomes of what is being achieved
- ❖ maintaining effective coordination and communication

The overall benefit of working towards helping to create a liveable community where people their daily activities in an environment without fear or risk of harm or injury outweighs the challenges every time.

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