

Whangarei District Officially Declared a WHO Safe Community

30/03/06

Whangarei District has been declared a 'Safe Community' by the Safe Communities Foundation New Zealand (SCFNZ) on behalf of the World Health Organisation (WHO), Collaborating Centre on Community Safety Promotion, becoming just the 98th place in the world to gain such recognition.



The accreditation as a Safe Community is the result of years of effort by staff from the District Health Board, the Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC), Fire Service, local iwi and many different organisations in the district that have developed injury prevention programmes to address their regional injury burden and to improve community safety.



The accreditation promotes Whangarei District into an international group of Safe Communities of the WHO Safe Communities Network that includes communities from Sweden, Australia, Europe, United States, South Africa and Asia.

Whangarei District has worked in many areas of injury prevention. In the area of road safety, the 'Shattered Dreams' video and presentation into schools, enhances the impact of over-representation of young people in motor vehicle traffic crashes. Additionally, the Te Kotahitanga initiative, implemented by the Fire Service for the Northern Region, is an impressive initiative that has seen significant reductions in injury deaths due to fires.



Spokesperson for Northland Community Injury Prevention Programme (CIPP), Marion Weaver, says that "Whangarei District being awarded accreditation has been made possible through the collaboration of people working together in partnership to try to reduce the number of injuries".



The Northland Community Injury Prevention Programme (CIPP) comprises representatives from Northland District Health Board, Whangarei District Council, Accident Compensation Corporation, Plunket, the Police, Roadsafte Northland, and the Fire Service. Many more stakeholder groups are also involved in promoting injury prevention activities in Whangarei District.

In 2001, with a goal to working collaboratively to reduce the number of injuries in the Whangarei District, the Northland CIPP decided to use the WHO Safe Communities Model. Their research and consultation work identified the types of injuries, the population groups and the locations that needed to be given priority in an injury prevention programme. Some existing work was extended and new programmes developed as a result of this assessment.



Plunket Well Child programme which covers falls prevention, water safety, fire safety and safety in the car; the Fatal Vision Programme targeting drink driving crashes and the effects of alcohol on judgment and agility; Safe with Age which addresses the issues facing mature drivers as they age; and Alcohol Accord – ‘think before you supply under 18’s drink’ are examples of some of the programmes and campaigns that have helped build the safe community culture in the Whangarei District.

Whangarei District is the fourth district in New Zealand to gain accreditation as a Safe Community of the WHO Safe Communities Network. A designation ceremony was held on Thursday 30 March, commencing with a Powhiri at Forum North. During the ceremony, a kauri tree was gifted by the Kaumatua to Whangarei District Council to symbolise this prestigious occasion.

The Mayor of Whangarei District Pamela Peters commented “Safe communities are happy and productive communities, but to achieve them requires the collective efforts and commitment of us all. The Whangarei District Council supports the WHO Safe Community model, which unites both service facilities and ‘at risk’ groups in this common focus.”



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Certifying Centre of the WHO Safe Community Network;

Affiliate Safe Community Support Centre of the WHO Collaborating Centre on Community Safety Promotion; &

Affiliate Centre with Certifying Authority of the International Safe Schools Movement.