

Waitakere City Safe Community, Re-Designated # 46

In 1999, Waitakere City was the first designated Safe Community in New Zealand and there were many people at the redesignation ceremony, which was held on 6th December 2006, who had been part of the journey from the start. Bonnie Dowding, Injury Prevention Consultant with particular responsibility for Pacific peoples provided an informative historical perspective of this journey. Many in the audience recalled the challenges and successes they had experienced being part of Safe Waitakere.

As the Mayor for Waitakere City, Bob Harvey, commented: *“Today, we know a great deal more about what works and what doesn’t work and so progress is becoming surer and quicker as we increasingly build on success and progress. Our road safety is better than when we started. Perhaps our proudest achievement is the 40k speed limit around schools and the reduction of alcohol related injuries in young men. We also have the highest level of seatbelt wearing in the region – and seat belts save lives. As do child-seats and I think it is appropriate to acknowledge the key role ‘The Trusts’ have played in making child seats accessible, which in turn has seen Waitakere people leading the country in the very high level of use of child seat use by families.”* Mayor Harvey reminded all those present that *“of all the challenges that confront us now, five years on, the greatest of them all is family violence”*. He mentioned the need for more people to get involved in the White Ribbon campaign and challenged everyone present to ensure that reducing family violence becomes a high priority in Waitakere.

Waitakere, in the seven years since accreditation, has recognised that the key to success of Safe Communities has been community participation and ownership, working collaboratively with an integrated approach to all aspects of health, safety, road, injury, crime and violence prevention, to make improved safety a reality for all its residents and visitors. There are currently six portfolios that weave together to support Safe Waitakere:

- Safe Waitakere Injury Prevention;
- Community Action on Youth and Drugs;
- Crime Prevention;
- Safe Waitakere Alcohol Project;
- Family Violence Prevention; and
- Road Safety.



Councillor Penny Hulse, Chairperson Safe Community redesignation steering group detailed how Waitakere City has implemented safer design into many Safe Community initiatives. Two DVDs, the first on Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design, produced by the Ministry of Justice, highlighted what had been achieved in this field by Waitakere were then screened. The second DVD 'Snapshots of Safety' provided a pictorial overview of Waitakere community safety projects. This second DVD was accompanied by prominent musician Billy TK Junior, creator of the 'Driving Towards a Future' school road safety programme.



Cr Hulse also read out a letter of congratulations from the Hon Ruth Dyson, Minister for ACC which stated that "Waitakere City has gone on to demonstrate its commitment to injury prevention and has confirmed its status as a leader and champion in the sector". She also commented that *"It is encouraging to see the injury prevention sector growing through the World Health Organisation Safe Communities model and such a variety of sustainable injury prevention initiatives being delivered to communities throughout New Zealand"*.



In conclusion, Waitakere recognises that the International Safe Communities model developed by the WHO creates an infrastructure in local communities for addressing injury prevention initiatives by building partnerships between organisations as well as providing access to the experience of like communities throughout the world. It gives the city a benchmark to reflect on how it is delivering the safe community principles; signaling direction of developments and measuring progress.



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