

Porirua City New Zealand International Safe Communities Designation



On 1st September 2008 Porirua City became the 8th community in New Zealand to achieve designation under the WHO Safe Community framework, the 143rd International Safe Community. Porirua is a medium-sized city with a population of 50,600 situated in the lower part of the North Island of New Zealand, very close to Wellington the capital city. It has a relatively young population with significantly larger proportions of Maori (20.9) and Pacific peoples (26.6%) than the Wellington region overall.

The Safer Porirua Strategic Group has a robust coalition of key government and community stakeholders working across a wide range of sectors and a Memorandum of Understanding between Porirua City Council, New Zealand Police, Porirua Safer City Trust, Porirua Community Guardians, Accident Compensation Corporation and Regional Public Health which details the commitments made by these organisations. The Safer Porirua Strategic Group has adopted the slogan “Porirua Safe As! and, as can be seen in the photos, the wearing of iconic lime green safety vests, uniforms and t-shirts (even for participants in the walking school bus) to demonstrate the emphasis put on safety in Porirua.

The site visit ably demonstrated this emphasis on community safety and injury prevention occurring and how those involved were “*people with a passion who not only had in-depth knowledge of their community but more importantly how to engage with people in a meaningful and relevant way to improve the lives of residents that often went well beyond mere safety outcomes*”. In addition it was clear at the site visit that “*Safer Porirua conduct audits, gather data and research and basically ensure that they get their facts right about the determinants of safety and how to engage residents from a strengths-based approach before taking action*”.

The Porirua Community Guardians play a significant role in community safety in Porirua. They are a group of volunteers from all walks of life that was formed on the basis that community safety is the responsibility of all members of society and that local people can make places safer by their presence. Around 50 volunteers who reflect the ethnic diversity of Porirua and range in age from late teens to late seventies deliver this community safety programme, providing “*a friendly yet obvious presence that makes people feel safe*”.

Further information can be found by visiting the Safe Communities Foundation NZ web site <http://www.safecommunities.org.nz/sc/po>



Site Visit Team



Porirua Community Guardians



Young resident