

Safe Communities Foundation New Zealand

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Taupo District **International Safe Community** **Application for Designation** **& Site Visit Report**

May, 2010

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Overview - Application & Site Visit Report

Name of Community:	Taupo District, New Zealand
Date ISC Application Submitted:	March, 2010
Date of Site visit:	21 April, 2010
Certifying Centre:	Safe Communities Foundation New Zealand
Primary Contact:	Dr Carolyn Coggan, Director, Safe Communities Foundation New Zealand Certifying Centre for the World Health Organisation (WHO) Collaborating Centre on Community Safety Promotion

Objective:

Review of application, supporting documents and conduct of site visit for Taupo District based upon the criteria for designation as a member of the International Safe Community Network.

Application Review Process:

- Activity 1:** Appointment of New Zealand Peer Review and Site Visit team:
- Dr Carolyn Coggan, Director, SCFNZ, New Zealand.
 - Tania Peters, National Programme Manager, SCFNZ, New Zealand.
 - Julie Chambers, Senior Advisor, Safekids, New Zealand.
 - Cathy Bruce, Project Manager Local Government, Alcohol Advisory Council of New Zealand.
 - George Fairbairn, SCFNZ Trustee, New Zealand.
 - Tuini Hakaraia, Safe Waitakere, Puriri Injury Prevention, New Zealand.
- Activity 2:** Preliminary review of all materials submitted and confirmation that the community is ready for a site visit.
- Activity 3:** Review of internet application summary. Minor changes required. Final version formatted for inclusion on Karolinska website www.phs.ki.se/scp and SCFNZ website www.safecommunities.org.nz
- Activity 4:** Review of application and supporting documents.
Preparation of draft review report and finalisation of site visit activities.
- Activity 5:** Conduct of site visit and finalisation of review report.

Activity 6: Advise WHO Collaborating Centre on Community Safety Promotion on outcome of review.

Activity 7: Preparation for, and conduct of, designation ceremony.

Site Visit Agenda:

Session 1: Introductions, initial questions and response session between site visit review team and members from Taupo District Safe Communities, steering committee.

Session 2: Presentations and discussions related to:
⇒ Parent Pack
⇒ Grafitti programmes

Session 3: Visit/presentations and discussions related to:
⇒ AC baths 'Swim for Life' programme
⇒ Safekids Meetings
⇒ Road Safety Initiatives in Taupo Schools

Session 4: Visit/presentations and discussions related to:
⇒ Urban Design
⇒ Family Violence Unit
⇒ Off-Licence Accord
⇒ Segeway (Police) Display
⇒ CBD Cameras

Session 5: Visit/presentations and discussions related to:
⇒ Community Patrols
⇒ Health & Safety Seminars

Session 6: Feedback from Site Visit Review Team
General Discussion.

Background

A comprehensive well presented application was received from Taupo District in March, 2010. The four lead agencies for the Taupo District Safe Community initiative are: Taupo District Council, Lakes District Health Board (DHB), Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC) and the Police.

Taupo District has a population of approximately 32,500 people. In the application, the Taupo District is described as a vibrant, exciting and magical place to live, work, visit and play. Taupo District prides itself on being a world class tourist destination and event location. Geographically the district has Lake Taupo a centre point with mountains in the south and the townships of Mangakino to the north/west, Turangi to the South and Taupo on the northern bay of the lake. The Waikato River starts from Lake Taupo and winds its way north encompassing part of the Taupo District and Mangakino. The surrounding rural landscape is farming country and host to many walking and cycling tracks through native bush and pastoral land. Additionally, the lake, river and world renowned Huka Falls offer an abundance of sporting and recreational activities.

The purpose of applying for Safe Community Accreditation was to raise the profile of safety in Taupo District to address the injury and violence burden for residents and visitors.

The application for accreditation was extensively reviewed and it was determined that it adequately fulfilled the requirements for progressing to the next phase, a site visit. Taupo District must be congratulated as it has provided comprehensive safety, crime and injury prevention information, in an appropriate format that highlights the activities of a wide range of groups, collaborating effectively, to improve safety through the Taupo District. An electronic version of both the full application and a web-text summary can be accessed via the SCFNZ website (www.safecommunities.org.nz/sc/taupo).

Following review of the application, a site visit was organised. Six International Safe Community (ISC) trained reviewers attended the one-day site visit on Tuesday 21st April, 2010. Additionally, observers from Hutt City Council, Upper Hutt City Council, Napier City Council, Rotorua City Council, and Ministry of Justice also actively participated in the day. Another expected observer from the Nelson/Tasman region representing the Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC) was unable to attend due to the Taupo airport being closed during the morning. SCFNZ wishes to congratulate Taupo District for hosting such a large group of reviewers and observers.

The Taupo site visit was well-organised and demonstrated community involvement of a range of key organisations and individuals. The presentations and field trips all provided meaningful insights into how Taupo District had effectively adopted the WHO Safe Community model to improve community safety at a local level. Additionally, the hosting of the site visit by the Taupo District Council was appropriate, as the council has a statutory obligation under the Local Government Act 2002 to work together with other government agencies to improve community well-being. Under its Long-Term

Community Council Plans it also has a requirement to work with the non-government and community sectors to further improve community safety for its residents.

The ISC application and supporting documents for the Taupo District, was extremely comprehensive (151 pages in total) and contained five letters of support. These letters of support were extremely positive and bode well for the future of the Taupo District Safe Community. As Dr Cathy Cooney, Chief Executive, Lakes District Health Board stated in her letter of support: *“Ensuring a safe environment cannot be fulfilled by one agency alone. While Lakes DHB provide the health care which people require after an injury we are well aware that in order to ensure people remain injury free and healthy we must also make changes to our environment including having a focus on injury prevention and health promotion”.*

Both in the application and during the site visit, the time and effort that had gone into the Taupo District Safe Community initiative was evident. Taupo has certainly set a new bench-mark for future ISC applications and site visits. The remainder of this report provides details, related to both the application and site visit, on how the Taupo District met each of the six criteria for designation as an International Safe Community.

Criteria 1: An infrastructure based on partnership and collaborations, governed by a cross-sectorial group that is responsible for safety promotion in the region.

Pages 15 to 28 of the application succinctly depict the partnerships and collaborations which exist in the Taupo District to promote community safety. This was further displayed through observing the relationships between the various coalition steering committee members and working groups operating to improve safety for Taupo residents. The Taupo District Safe Community steering committee is to be congratulated as it is based on effective intersectoral collaboration with each organisation contributing their expertise and resources to improve community safety throughout Taupo District. Additionally, as evidenced during the site visit, the interaction between volunteer organisations, government and non-government groups is a real strength of this community, and augers well for future safety initiatives.

Evidence of involvement from the Taupo District Council was ably demonstrated, both in the application and during the site visit. For example, the Mayor and Deputy CEO, as well as several Council Staff, fully participated in the site visit. Both ACC and Lakes DHB are also both actively involved in injury prevention and have had a long-term involvement in the Taupo District Safe Community initiative. The leadership and collaborative style of working of the Police demonstrated in the application and during the site visit is to be commended. This point is ably demonstrated in the following statement by Senior Sergeant, Anthony Jeurissen, Officer in Charge, Taupo Police: *“Our officers are committed to working together with the wide range of community organisations, both large and small in our district, to ensure our community is safe, secure and protected”.*

Many collaborative working groups have also been established to work with the Taupo District Coalition Steering Group and include, but are not limited to, the following: Fire Service, SafeKids, Water Safety New Zealand, Road Safety Committee, Age Concern, Violence Intervention Network, Alcohol Accord, Neighbourhood Support, Turangi/Tongariro Safe Community Council, Mangakino Safer Community Group, Taupo Safer Community Trust, and the Taupo Council of Social Services. As was evident from both the application and site visit, the working groups draw together a range of organisations and individuals with an interest in safety enhancement in a collaborative approach.

It is also pleasing to note the way that the Taupo District Safe Community initiative has also sought to build on key national organisational strategies and programmes. This is an important aspect of the ISC model.

However, for ISC to be sustainable, funding is also important. Site visit representatives discussed the need for ongoing support and funding for the Taupo District Safe Community Programme Manager. While it was acknowledged that this position did not necessarily need to be a full-time position, all present agreed that, without a dedicated coordinator, existing collaborative community safety efforts could be threatened. The importance of a dedicated safe community coordinator is very important if Taupo is to achieve its goal of being “the safest events capital in New Zealand”.

The review team considered that this criteria had been met. In the application and at the site visits, a wide range of examples were provided which demonstrated how groups were working collaboratively to promote safety and to reduce the injury and crime burden for residents and visitors to the Taupo District.

Criteria 2: Long-term sustainable programmes covering both genders and all ages, environments and situations.

The application comprehensively demonstrates the wide range of injury prevention and community safety initiatives underway in the Taupo District with: 42 initiatives being listed for Transport Safety; 35 for Home and Leisure Safety; 42 for Child Safety; 31 for Older Person's Safety; and 11 in the Occupational Safety area. This equates to a total of 161 safety initiatives. While this number may seem large it is also important to recognise that some of these initiatives relate to one-off events, others are short-term, with many having been operating for a long period of time.

Following the list of safety initiatives, on pages 38 through to 88 of the application, a selection of programmes is then provided in tabular and case study format. In this section information is provided on programmes related to: Child Safety (n=7); Youth Activities (n=4); Road Safety (n=4); Elderly, Community Leisure and Sport (n=4); Crime Prevention, Alcohol and Violence (n=7); Safer Communities (n=5); Self Harm and Occupational Safety (n=2); and Fire Safety (n=4). The tables clearly outline the project title; key organisation involved; what the programme addresses; target population, duration; reach of the programme; results achieved; and partners involved. The 33 case studies provide further details on the initiatives. This section is a strength of the overall Taupo District application and the Safe Community Programme Manager, in conjunction with the Taupo District Safe Community Steering Group and Working Groups, are to be commended for their comprehensive efforts. This information is produced very clearly and demonstrates how Taupo District is providing sustainable programmes covering both genders and all ages, environments and situations.

The review team considered that, in Taupo, the focus was predominantly operational. All agreed that the particular strengths were the level of commitment to improve safety for children and young people together with the effective partnerships established between the Police, the Council, the Violence Intervention Network and the newly established Taupo Safer Community Trust to address Crime Prevention. However, members of the review team did consider that strengthening efforts to address alcohol-related harm would be important. Additionally, while review members rated the Parent Pack very highly, a minor point noted was that, the graffiti section could have been more closely aligned with the graffiti brochure and include a statement that graffiti vandalism was illegal. The inclusion of a contact number for reporting graffiti may also have been helpful.

Other members of the review team noted that, given that Taupo was aiming to be "the safest events capital of New Zealand" and that "tourism was a major industry in Taupo", it was somewhat surprising that the application did not particularly emphasise visitor safety. However, following discussions and presentations by representatives from a range of government and non-government agencies during the site visit, it became increasingly evident that visitor safety was indeed a priority within the Taupo District. The site visit at Taupo District not only offered further insights into the range of safety initiatives operating but also highlighted the effective collaboration between the non-government sector of Taupo District, the Council and the Police. Projects covered included:

- The demonstration of the Swim for Life programme at the AC baths. It was clearly evident to ISC reviewers why the AC Baths Aquatic Team won the inaugural New Zealand Water Safety Awareness Award for its Swim for Life and Lake Taupo Water Safety programmes at the national awards presented in November 2009.
- The demonstration by the Taupo Safekids Coalition and Murray Bishop (Road Safety Contractor to the Taupo District Council) covering a range of initiatives to address Child Safety and Road Safety was of an extremely high standard. The support by the Council for efforts to make Taupo District roads safer, especially in and around schools, was ably demonstrated during the site visit. Additionally, the enthusiasm of the Taupo Safekids Coalition members involved was refreshing. Their in-depth understanding of child safety and injury prevention as applied to school safety, motor vehicle child passenger safety, burns prevention, water safety, safety in the home for young children, the 5 Mountains cycle skills challenge, walk to school and travel plans, the school bus initiative for drivers and many, other injury and road safety issues, was inspiring. This is a good demonstration of how at the delivery level the best available evidence is aligned with a novel and engaging approach to ensure effective practice.
- The adoption by the Council to environmental safety as evidenced by the demonstration at Tauhara Ridge of the proposed master-planned community was inspirational and a somewhat new approach, in New Zealand, to urban design.
- The approach adopted by Taupo District Police to prevent crime and violence was informative. The collaboration leadership model adopted by the Family Violence Unit and the Violence Intervention Network was clearly demonstrated. The involvement of a range of volunteers who are actively supporting initiatives such as the CBD Cameras and the Taupo Community Ambassadors is to be commended.
- All presentations and supporting materials were professional, informative and demonstrated the scope of safety activities and the collaboration occurring.

While acknowledging the challenges of preventing alcohol-related harm, the site visit team considered that, given the high incident of anti-social behaviour and injuries associated with alcohol misuse, in the future more attention will be needed to focus on this area.

Criteria 3: Programmes that target high-risk groups and environments.

The review team was impressed with this section of the application. The introduction succinctly gave an indication of the way the high-risk populations and environments were identified. In Taupo, the priority areas were:

- Injury Prevention
 - Falls in older people
 - Safety of children
- Road Safety
 - Driving crashes SH1
 - Drink-driving
- Crime/Violence Prevention
 - Violence, alcohol related harm and anti-social behaviours
 - Home, work and sporting environments

This criteria is well addressed in the application and is covered on pages 90 through to 102. Extensive projects are listed for several high risk and vulnerable groups: driving programmes; child safety; road safety especially, drink driving, and crashes along SH1; and alcohol related family violence and crime prevention. Additionally, case studies related to driving programmes, family start, liquor bans, boat harbour, lake and river safety, and workplace safety seminars are showcased.

While addressing areas of injury concern, some of the programmes also impacted positively on other areas, such as, social connectedness and belonging to a community. This was evidenced in the comments from the volunteers and their awareness of the need to make the environment safer for residents and visitors.

Members of the site visit assessment team were impressed with the discussion by the Police and the Family Violence Unit that clearly demonstrated the collaborative efforts of these organisations related to addressing family violence. However, it is interesting to note that despite injury rates being higher for Maori than other ethnic groups, Maori are not specifically highlighted in criteria 3 in the application. Members of the site visit assessment team raised a concern that the Taupo District steering group did not include representation from iwi and suggested that Maori representation would further strengthen the appropriate targeting of measures to improve safety for high risk and vulnerable groups.

Criteria 4: Documentation of the frequency and causes of injuries

Criteria four is an important focus for the scientific approach of injury, violence prevention and community safety. It is also essential for sustainable development. The Taupo District coalition steering group has successfully documented the frequency and causes of injuries both unintentional and intentional in a meaningful and accessible format.

The site visit review team were very impressed that such extensive data was included covering NZHIS data; ACC claims and costs; road statistics; Police crime statistics; suicide statistics; and water safety statistics. Identifying measures for suicide, overall community safety, offences resolution rate, lakes navigation safety, and motor vehicle crashes and outlining why these particular measures were important was a useful addition. This section of the application provides a good model for other smaller communities to follow.

Overall, the review team were impressed that, in this application, data informed the establishment of priorities and also allowed agencies to be responsive to new and emerging situations. This is very commendable.

Criteria 5: Evaluation measures to assess the programmes, processes and the effects of change.

The application described several types of evaluation used for Taupo District community safety initiatives. Evaluation is a key component in the implementation and sustainability of projects in Taupo and members of the Taupo District Safe Community Coalition steering group recognises its importance. Selected evaluation findings summarised in the application included:

- Downward trend in the number of fatal motor vehicle crashes on SH1 in the Taupo District as a result of the keep life, intersection, speed and fatigue campaigns.
- Reductions in adult hospital admissions as a result of the Tai Chi classes for balance and strength.
- Increase in awareness of rural safety by children and young people as a result of the Down the Back paddock initiative.
- Increase in children's ability to swim as a result of the AC Baths' Swim for Life programme which, over the past five years, has resulted in more than 40,000 student attendances.
- Increase in parents knowledge of how to improve safety for adolescents as a result of the Parent Pack.

The inclusion of a project plan covering the purpose, governance structure, strategic alignment, goals/objectives and activities for the Taupo District Safe Community programme was identified by the review team as a further strength of the Taupo District ISC application.

Additionally, during the site visit, comment was made that there had been significant reductions, by the Taupo District Council in the number of ACC injury claims. Documentation of the evidence and the programmes implemented to support such reductions is important. It is anticipated that this information will be incorporated into subsequent annual reports related to ISC designation.

The review team would have liked to see further evidence as to how appropriate evaluation techniques will be used in the future to demonstrate how the Taupo District Safe Community programme is adopting a continuous improvement approach to the many programmes operating throughout the district. Discussions during the site visit did highlight the overall lack of support from government agencies to provide sufficient resources and meaningful timely data to support effective outcome evaluations.

Criteria 6: Ongoing participation in national and international Safe Community networks.

While this criteria was adequately addressed in the application, it is recognised that due to the over-all lack of resources available to Taupo District for community safety, Taupo District has a low international profile. Taupo District also does not have any major Government Agencies based in Taupo. This creates significant challenges, as individual representatives need to travel considerable distances to provide active support for many of the community safety initiatives or to attend essential strategic meetings. It was however, strongly demonstrated during the site visit and throughout the application, that Taupo District participates effectively in local, regional and national networks.

The breadth of activity and groups involved in supporting community safety is a credit to Taupo District, especially the long-term involvement of Police, SafeKids Coalition, Age Concern, ACC, Fire Service, Road Safety Committee, Violence Intervention Network, Alcohol Accord and Neighbourhood Support. The close involvement of the Taupo Safer Community Trust further enhances networking within the Taupo District Safe Community programme. Additionally, the conduct of health and safety forums has further enhanced effective networks to address safety throughout the Taupo District.

Taupo District also has a large volunteer base that provided much of the essential networking at the grass root level. The high skill base and expertise of the voluntary sector is to be commended.

Members of the site visit assessment team considered that Taupo District and its coalition partners need to raise the international profile of Taupo District as an Internationally Accredited Safe Community, as it has many innovative and evidence-based initiatives currently operating. One way to do this would be to submit new items to the International Safe Communities Monthly Newsletter. This could be in the form of brief reports on initiatives and activities or could highlight when important reports are completed. Another important means of raising the profile of Taupo, would be to ensure that when national and international events are being planned and held in Taupo, that your status as an Internationally Accredited Safe Community is always stated and emphasised.

Future Directions/Recommendations

Taupo District is to be commended on their efforts to improve community safety. Taupo District is an innovative community encompassing an environment that is attractive to the pursuit of a wide range of recreational and outdoor activities. As the Taupo Mayor Rick Cooper stated *“Taupo is the events centre of New Zealand”*. Again in the words of the Taupo Mayor the *“Taupo District Safe Community efforts are focused on ensuring that Taupo is the safest events capital of New Zealand”*. Throughout the site visit the level of commitment and passion shown by key stakeholders, government and non-government sectors, was particularly impressive.

It is also important to recognize good leadership. Taupo District has been fortunate to have a Programme Manager, Doug Scott, who has been with them from the beginning. His abilities to: support the activities of a wide range of groups and agencies; keep them focused on their unique contribution to the Taupo District Safe Community programme; provide good fiscal planning; and maintain an excellent working relationship with all their unique community partners must be noted. As previously stated, the importance of a dedicated safe community coordinator will be important if Taupo is to achieve its goal of being ‘the safest events capital in New Zealand’. The site visit team was concerned that funding may not be available to ensure this important role continues.

It is also acknowledged that for an individual to be effective they require good management and strategic support. This was ably provided by the Community Manager and Community Development Manager at the Taupo District Council.

Some areas for future development could include the further engagement of representatives from Mangakino, Turangi, Tongariro and iwi representatives on the Taupo Safe District Coalition Steering Group. These areas are important given the reported higher injury rates among Maori and people living in Mangakino, Turangi and Tongariro.

Recommendations for future directions include:

- Ensuring the ongoing support from TDC, ACC, Police and Lakes DHB for the employment of a Taupo District Safe Community Programme Manager.
- Strengthening of programmes with a focus on visitor safety.
- Strengthening of programmes with a focus on alcohol related harm.
- Ensuring that representatives from Mangakino, Turangi and Tongariro are invited to join the steering group.
- Ensuring that representatives from iwi are invited to join the steering group.
- Ongoing attention to the matching of data to project development and implementation.

- The ongoing conduct of health and safety forums to ensure the further building of effective networks.
- Raising the profile of innovative and unique community safety projects operating throughout Taupo.
- Nationally, and internationally, raising the profile of Taupo District as an effective International Safe Community.

Following the review of the Taupo District Safe Community application and the results of the site visit, the Safe Communities Foundation New Zealand, in its capacity as a Certifying Centre of the WHO Collaborating Centre on Community Safety Promotion, found that the Taupo had achieved the criteria to be designated as an International Safe Community by the WHO Collaborating Centre in Karolinska Institute, Stockholm, Sweden. The designation ceremony will take place on 28th May in Taupo and will be officiated by Dr Carolyn Coggan, Director Safe Communities Foundation New Zealand. On this day Taupo District will become the 186th community globally to receive this award and the 13th in New Zealand.