



23 JUNE 2011

NEW FIREARMS SAFETY PROGRAMME PROVING TO BE A SUCCESS FOR EAST COASTERS

“East Coasters now have better access to firearms safety training and it is great to see more communities participating and benefiting from our programme,” says Tracy Wakeford, the Whakatūpato Programme co-ordinator.

Whakatūpato (meaning ‘take care’) is a new firearms safety training programme for rural communities. It is a joint venture between the New Zealand Mountain Safety Council (MSC), New Zealand Police and Iwi and gives opportunity for rural communities to have firearms safety training delivered in their own communities as well as providing a pathway for interested people to obtain a firearms licence.

Programmes have been running around Te Urewera, the East Coast (including Ruatoria, Tolaga Bay and Tokomaru Bay) and Northland. In March this year, instructors from Gisborne travelled to Te Araroa and delivered two programmes there; one at the school for senior students and one for the community. 40 people attended the evening lecture and to date already 25 of these have applied for a firearms licence.

Richard Katipa, Chairman of the East Cape Hunting Fishing & Tourism Club Inc. has been recruited by MSC as a Firearms Instructor, so now the community of Te Araroa has its very own instructor and resource person.

“I’m impressed that MSC have come out into the rural areas like the East Coast where we have a lot of outdoor activities and hunting and firearms are a part of that scene,” said Mr Katipa.

“Anything that provides opportunity for our community members to keep safe has got to be good. This is just a start of an ongoing relationship and the response has been fantastic so far,” he added.

The success of these programmes largely depends on community support. “Thanks go to Te Waha O Rerekohu Area School, Radio Ngati Porou, and the East Cape Hunting and Fishing Club, for assisting with the set up of the Te Araroa programme,” said Mrs Wakeford.

If your community would like to host a Whakatūpato programme in your area or if you would like to find out about other NZ Mountain Safety Courses available, please contact the Gisborne Branch of MSC on 06 868 5233 or visit www.mountainsafety.org.nz

Ends: 356 words

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ABOUT THE NEW ZEALAND MOUNTAIN SAFETY COUNCIL

The New Zealand Mountain Safety Council was formed in 1965 in response to the increasing number of mountain, bush and firearms fatalities. Today, NZMSC is a national organisation responsible for safety in land based outdoor activities. We facilitate the setting of standards, offer training, distribute resources, lead public awareness campaigns and foster positive support in the community so that more people can discover and enjoy New Zealand's outdoors safely.

MSC's volunteer firearms instructors are approved by NZ Police to deliver firearm safety training and administer the Firearm Safety Test to new firearms licence applicants. MSC is also proactive in delivering key firearms safety messaging campaigns throughout New Zealand and produces publications including the 'Going Hunting' pamphlet.

www.mountainsafety.org.nz