

29 JUNE 2011

POLICE COMMISSIONER LAUNCHES NEW FIREARMS SAFETY PROGRAMME

Police Commissioner, Peter Marshall and the Mountain Safety Council's Chief Executive Officer, Darryl Carpenter, launched a new firearms safety programme, called "Whakatūpatō" yesterday in Rotorua.

Kaumatua from Te Arawa hosted the launch at the Tamatekapua Marae, Ohinemutu. The new programme was launched in conjunction with the Commissioner's first powhiri onto a marae in New Zealand.

"The programme is a very practical initiative and I'm delighted that Police, the Mountain Safety Council and local Iwi will be working closely together to ensure its success," said Mr Marshall.

Whakatūpatō, meaning 'take care' is a joint venture between the New Zealand Mountain Safety Council (MSC), New Zealand Police and Iwi to provide comprehensive firearms safety training for Māori and other rural persons.

The programme gives rural communities the opportunity to have firearms safety training delivered in their own community, typically held at appropriate venues such as marae or community halls, and provides a pathway for interested persons to obtain their firearms licence.

Whakatūpatō adopts MSC's model of using local qualified volunteer instructors to deliver firearms safety to their own community. MSC is one of New Zealand's leading authorities on outdoor safety and has been delivering firearms safety training and testing to new firearms licence applicants throughout New Zealand since 1974.

Mountain Safety Council CEO, Darryl Carpenter said: "Whakatūpatō is fantastic example of a safety programme designed and delivered by the community, for the community. Our research showed that whilst many rural Maori have access to and actively use firearms, they didn't necessarily have access to essential safety training and education.

Whakatūpatō fills this gap and promotes safe firearms usage as well as the opportunity to gain their firearms licence in an appropriate setting".

The Whakatūpatō programme has been delivered in Te Urewera, parts of the North Island's East Cape and in Northland at Mangamuka.

The official launch celebrated the successes to date and marked the beginning of taking the programme nationwide. Rural communities interested in hosting a Whakatūpatō Programme in their area should go to www.mountainsafety.org.nz

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For further information regarding this press release or to arrange an interview please contact:

Tracy Wakeford

Training Co-ordinator – Firearms
New Zealand Mountain Safety Council

Cell: 021 510 907

Email: tracy.wakeford@mountainsafety.org.nz

For general information regarding Mountain Safety Council and images please contact:

Andrea Hubbard

Marketing & Communications Manager
New Zealand Mountain Safety Council

DDI: 04 915 9286

Email: andrea.hubbard@mountainsafety.org.nz

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