

**29 November 2011**

## **FIREARMS SAFETY MESSAGE SPREADING AROUND RURAL NORTHLAND**

The recently launched firearms safety programme called Whakatūpato has been operating in Mangamuka since May this year, and further to its success, the Mountain Safety Council are pleased to announce that the first programme has now taken place at Parapara Marae (Ngati Kahu).

Whakatūpato 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 and can lead onto them obtaining a firearms licence. Typically these programmes are held in rural communities at appropriate venues such as marae, schools and community halls.

“It is fantastic to see this programme spreading in our rural areas,” said Whakatūpato co-ordinator, Tracy Wakeford.

“The programme is a lot of fun and it is very rewarding to be a part of delivering firearms safety messages through our communities,” she said.

Parapara Marae (Ngati Kahu), located in Kaitaia, hosted this new programme attended by 23 local people, including men, women and even a few children. It consisted of a short presentation, viewing a firearms safety DVD and discussing personal experiences through stories.

Participants also have the opportunity to sit the firearms safety test and be supported with completing their firearms licence applications if they wish. All participants receive a resource pack and a certificate of attendance.

John Bassett of Parapara Marae said: “It is exciting to have this opportunity to up-skill as a group, especially in such an important topic that will keep everyone in the community safe, including our tamariki (children).

“This is a real positive thing for our people” he said. “It is hoped that another Whakatūpato programme will be held at Parapara early next year for anyone that could not attend this one,” added Mr Bassett.

The Mountain Safety Council would like to see the Whakatūpato Programme achieve coverage throughout rural NZ within the next five years. If you are interested in setting up a Whakatūpato Programme in your area, please contact the New Zealand Mountain Safety Council in the first instance. Visit the website [www.mountainsafety.org.nz](http://www.mountainsafety.org.nz) or telephone 04 385 7162.

**Ends 363 words**

## NOTES TO EDITOR:

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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](http://www.mountainsafety.org.nz)**