

Media Release

Wednesday 10 February 2010

New Pacific Unit launched at Problem Gambling Foundation

Mapu Maia, the new Pacific Unit at the Problem Gambling Foundation was officially launched at a special event held yesterday in Auckland.

Over 50 people attended the celebration including representatives from Pasifika community groups, Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs, Child Youth and Family, Kaumatua, NZ Police, churches and other service providers and the Matua Council of the Waitemata District Health Board, who came to show their support for the new service.

Special guest speaker at the event was Cr Alfred Filipaina, Pacific Liaison for NZ Police.

Graeme Ramsey, CEO of the Problem Gambling Foundation says this is a 'by Pasifika, for Pasifika service'.

"The service is within a mainstream service provider, which builds on the experience of our highly successful Asian team," he says.

Pesio Ah-Honi Siitia, Mapu Maia's Manager, says it is wonderful to be supported by the community and to be able to provide a dedicated, culturally appropriate service for Pasifika.

"Mapu Maia will work with Pacific communities to educate and raise awareness of the harm caused by gambling and will also provide counselling and support for Pacific families in Auckland that need help with problem gambling," she says.

"The Samoan phrase, 'Mapu Maia' means a place to come in and rest or shelter – a place for hope – and that is exactly what we want our service to provide for Pacific families in Auckland," Pesio says.

Pasifika communities are at high risk of problem gambling and Pasifika and Maori women are particularly at risk from non-casino pokie machines and more likely to suffer gambling-related harm.

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