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Media Release

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Waiora Maori Health Plan Launch – “Te Ara Tika”

FORMER Government Minister and Chief Executive of Te Whanau O Waipareira Trust, John Tamihere, today unveiled a plan to combat what he described as the appalling state of Maori health care in Waitakere.

Mr Tamihere said the Waitemata District Health Board (WDHB) had failed to deliver adequate services to West Auckland Maori.

He said West Auckland Maori were getting a raw deal from the WDHB and Waipareira had put them on notice.

“We can no longer sit by and let this continue,” Tamihere said. At Glen Eden’s Hoani Waititi Marae, Tamihere unveiled Te Ara Tika – Waiora Healthcare Trust’s blue print for the future.

Waipareira Trust and the Waitakere Union Health Centre established Waiora in 2003. It provides services for 45,000 people – including Maori, Polynesian and Europeans, living in Waitakere.

“We have caused some angst and difficulty but the truth hurts.”

Maori Party Co-Leader Hon. Tariana Turia attended the launch, along with new Labour Party President Andrew Little.

Hon. Turia, Associate Minister of Maori Affairs, Health and Social Services applauded Waiora for taking the initiative to tackle the health and welfare of West Auckland Maori.

“We (the government) are tired of the failures,” she said. “I’m really excited about Te Ara Tika. “This is a contract that has been designed by our own people for our people.”

Te Ara Tika is targeting Maori children aged 0-12 and Maori men aged 12-44 years in Waitakere.

West Auckland health statistics show these two groups are the most at risk and in desperate need of specialist healthcare programmes.

The five-year goals of Te Ara Tika are:

- to reduce child mortality
- reduce avoidable child hospital admissions
- reduce children's respiratory illnesses
- reduce the number of Maori men with diabetes and cardio vascular diseases
- reduce the number of Maori males with substance abuse problems
- get more Maori men to adopt healthier lifestyle choices

Waiora Healthcare will also work with Unitec, Auckland University and AUT University to increase the number of Maori workers in the health industry.

Tamihere said Waiora needs to become a health purchasing authority for Maori – not just health clinics picking up the pieces.

“We have people at the coal face who are in a far better position to know what Maori services are needed than some bureaucrat sitting in an office,” he said.
“I believe we can deliver on that.”

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