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Media Release

For immediate release



‘Akona te Kauhoe’ – Swim For Life

Water Safety New Zealand (WSNZ) is supporting Maori Language Week through its Maori Water Safety campaign by endorsing a Maori language version of ‘Swim For Life’.

‘Akona te Kauhoe’ (Swim For Life) is a marketing initiative aimed at increasing both the awareness of and opportunities to develop the core-life skill of being able to swim and survive, something a large proportion of today’s Maori population are not able to do.

For the past three years the ‘Swim For Life’ message has been promoted through swim schools and community pools along with a marketing campaign delivered via TV, radio, cinema and in print.

‘Akona te Kauhoe’ will be a major element in the WSNZ Maori Water Safety strategy to help reduce Maori drowning in New Zealand. Drowning data indicates that on average 21% of total drowning deaths in New Zealand each year are Maori. The most high risk Maori groups are tamariki and males. Statistics show that 46% of all Maori children aged 5-14 years who drown do so whilst swimming.

Mark Haimona, Maori Water Safety Project Manager, explains “the ability to swim competently plays a significant role in reducing the likelihood of drowning, whilst also increasing self esteem and confidence. Being able to swim also allows Maori to participate in a range of aquatic activities such as swimming, waka ama, diving for kaimoana, surfing and fishing. These are all common activities that Maori and whanau enjoy doing. Akona te kauhoe hei oranga moou”

Haimona continues, “Akona te Kauhoe will allow for enhanced effectiveness in promoting learn to swim through Maori schools, community and iwi groups that support the use of Maori language as a primary medium of communication”.

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For more information or interview contact:

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