

MEDIA RELEASE

2 February 2010

PACIFIC COMMUNITY CAUTIONED ABOUT IMMIGRATION SCAMS

Immigration New Zealand and the Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs are extremely concerned about the alleged scam targeting Pacific people reported on One News tonight.

“We advise anyone who thinks they may be a victim of this or any other scam to contact the New Zealand Police immediately,” says the acting head of Immigration New Zealand, Lesley Haines.

“We urge all Pacific communities to be very cautious of misinformation concerning the granting of residence and citizenship.

Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs chief executive Dr Colin Tukuitonga said Pacific people being offered deals on their immigration status should remember one simple rule:

“If it sounds too good to be true it probably is. Only Immigration New Zealand or people licensed by them are able to issue permits. Don’t give your money to a fraudster.”

“And don’t go to Waitangi this weekend thinking you are going to get residence or citizenship there. You won’t.”

“Immigration New Zealand is the only authority able to issue immigration permits to remain in New Zealand,” says Ms Haines. “To give advice on immigration matters in New Zealand, a person must hold a licence or be exempt under the Immigration Advisers Licensing Act from the requirement to hold a licence.

"I can't emphasise strongly enough that Pacific people should immediately report to the Police anyone who is involved with these types of scams. They are illegal.

If people are concerned about their immigration status they should contact any of our immigration branches to discuss their own circumstances and determine what the best option is for them".

If in doubt, contact any Immigration New Zealand branch or the Immigration Call Centre 0508 55 88 55.

ENDS.

For further information contact the DoL media line on 0274 422 141 or e-mail media@dol.govt.nz or Frances Ross, Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs on 027 672 3501 or e-mail frances.ross@mpia.govt.nz