



MEDIA RELEASE

24 September 2008

Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs launches *The Apprentice* campaign

The Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs hopes to revive interest in trades' careers for young people with its new initiative, 'The Apprentice' to be launched on Thursday 25 September 2008 at the Brierley Theatre, Wellington College from 6-9pm.

"This important national initiative aims to help break down barriers and overcome any difficulties faced by Pacific youth and their parents to accessing trade training," says Pacific Island Affairs Communications and Relationship Director Magila Annandale.

"With an increasingly youthful Pacific population expected to support New Zealand's aging population, the status of young Pacific students becomes increasingly relevant. In a future labour market they will be expected to provide specialist skills and capabilities.

"This is an employment-based education initiative for Pacific young people that combines the best of the apprenticeship tradition (job and workplace training) with mentoring and support arrangements," Magila Annandale says.

A key aspect of the launch is the profiling of Pacific trades people as role models who are either successful business owners or who have completed industry training and are now employed.

"This will empower our young people to gain greater access to industry training and thereby acquire valuable skills that will help transform New Zealand into a higher growth, higher skill economy.

The Modern Apprentice scheme was introduced by the Labour-led government in 2000 to improve the participation of young people in trades training.

Statistics show that towards the end of June 2007, there were close to 345 Pacific modern apprentices in training in key industries ranging from building, construction, and engineering, to road transport and mechanical engineering.

Pacific participation in modern apprenticeship accounts for just over 3.30% of the total participation rate. The modern apprenticeship awareness initiative is expected to raise the participation rate for Pacific people.

"We are continuing to push this campaign as a great opportunity for Pacific young people as just one contribution we can make to the economy, easing skill shortages and improving business productivity," says Magila Annandale.

The Ministry has worked collaboratively with some of the Industry Training Organisations that cover a broad range of industry trades to develop an apprentice resource. The resource kit will be launched on Thursday night and will be distributed to secondary schools, tertiary institutions, public libraries, churches and other organisations throughout New Zealand.

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