

MEDIA RELEASE

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SUPPORT AVAILABLE FOR PACIFIC PEOPLE WHO LOSE JOBS

Pacific people losing their jobs due to the recession need to know there is support and assistance available from the government says Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs chief executive Dr Colin Tukuitonga.

“The latest unemployment figures show that 12.8 per cent of Pacific peoples were without a job in June 2009 and that is double the jobless figures at the same time in June 2008,” Dr Tukuitonga says.

“Pacific communities need to know they can access support like Working for Families and ReStart from government agencies.”

“Redundancy is not something many of our Pacific people have experienced before, so they don’t know what government assistance they are entitled to in these times of hardship.

Patricia Reade, Work and Income Deputy Chief Executive, says those people who have lost their jobs should contact Work and Income to find out what support is available.

Working for Families can help take the pressure off raising children, help with housing costs and assist with after school care and childcare for many families earning less than \$70,000. This assistance is delivered by Work and Income and Inland Revenue.

“Pacific people who are made redundant, had a child recently or suddenly had their income reduced may qualify for a range of assistance” says Ms Reade.

“The ReStart package could also offer some relief for Pacific people who have lost their jobs. ReStart is there to help you financially if you have children or if you have high housing costs while you are looking for work.”

“ReStart will be paid out for a maximum of 16 weeks (four months) or until someone finds a job in that period. Pacific people who think they may qualify for this package should call 0800 559 000 for more information.”

Dr Tukuitonga says Pacific communities are among the hardest hit in any recession.

“We want them to know that they are entitled to support and it is important for them to know where they can get help,” he says.

People can call Work and Income on 0800 559 009. Work and Income also operates two multilingual contact lines:

For Tongan phone 0800 669 009

For Samoan phone 0800 663 003

You can also visit www.workandincome.govt.nz.

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