

# Teen street walkers threatened by proposed bylaw

by Amanda Cameron

Many at-risk teenagers, most of them Maori, could face criminal charges if a bylaw outlawing street walkers is passed in Manukau.

Manukau City Council has drafted a bylaw that prohibits prostitution in public places and makes no distinction between adult and youth offenders.

If the council passes the bylaw, it will become the first local authority to outlaw street walkers since prostitution was decriminalised last year, and it will place many at-risk youth outside the protection of the law, says Catherine Healy, national co-ordinator of the New Zealand Prostitutes Collective.

"Coming within the law provides a blanket of support," she says.

"The bylaw will just make the lives of these vulnerable young people worse.

"They'll be less likely to put their hands up and ask for help and, if convicted, they'll have to face the stigma and discrimination that comes with a criminal record."

Most underage prostitutes in Manukau are Maori, says Mama Tere, who runs Te Aronga Hou Inaiane, a support service for gay and transgender prostitutes in Papatoetoe that operates in association with the Mangere East Family Service Centre.

"But it's not about race," she says. "It's about poverty."

Mama Tere, who is of Nga Puhui, Tainui and Cook Island descent, says she sees between 30 and 40 underage prostitutes a month across Manukau, some of them as young as 12.

Most are there because their support networks have broken down and they do not have enough money, says Mama Tere, who has 30 years experience with the sex industry.

NZPC regional co-ordinator Kate Dickie agrees that underage prostitution is largely about survival.

"Many of these kids are just hanging on the street," she says. "They're not really sex workers. They're often

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just responding to an adult's offer of a meal or a place to stay for the night."

The bylaw will not prevent exploitation of these vulnerable young people, says Ms Dickie.

"Youth in Counties Manukau need cash and a place to crash," she says.

Mavis Roberts, chairperson of the Makaurau Marae committee in Ihumatao, Mangere, agrees.

"Our mokopuna need to be looked after and nurtured in a safe place," says Mrs Roberts, from iwi Waikato.

End Child Prostitution Pornography and Trafficking (ECPAT) believes that underage prostitutes should be seen as victims not offenders.

"Protection services are needed rather than criminal procedures for these young people," says ECPAT NZ.

Human Rights Commission educator Marama Davidson agrees, and points out that children have the right to government protection from sexual exploitation under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which New Zealand adopted in 1993.

However, council clean environment manager Mohammed Hassan

says dealing with underage prostitution is outside the remit of the council.

The bylaw, which was drafted with help from Counties Manukau Police, is a response to public complaints about noise, fighting, needles and condoms in areas frequented by street walkers, he says.

But advisor to the council, Maurice Wilson, believes something needs to be done.

"Maori didn't have prostitution before Pakeha arrived," says Mr Wilson, who is of Te Waio Hua and Tainui descent.

"This country has the problem, not Maori," he says.

The council voted on May 27 to delay public consultation while the bylaw is redrafted, following legal advice that it may be unenforceable and unreasonable because prostitution is now legal.

# Tuhoe activist leaves George FM for his iwi

by Peter White

Tame Iti has left Auckland and returned to his Tuhoe iwi in Ruatoki, to help create a better environment for his people.

He is focusing on traditional marae-based values and operating alcohol and drug programmes.

The well known radio announcer, political activist and artist, is following in the footsteps of generations of Maori leaders before him.

He will work directly for his iwi from within the community – rather than trying to help from outside at national level.

For the past six years in Auckland, his early-morning programme on George FM has been a mix of te reo Maori and English, and kept his listeners informed about Maori issues.

Mr Iti's involvement with making the Maori voice heard goes back to the 1970s, when his work with Nga Tama Toa helped to reo Maori become an official language of New Zealand.

He now uses art as a means to communicate with his clients and to share his vision of Tuhoe history.

"I was working as a family and drug and alcohol therapist, working with men and violence. Art was another method of approaching, talking and

dealing with those who needed our service," says Mr Iti. "I was the one at the front-line, and I use art to help get through to them."

In Ruatoki he is setting up new drug and alcohol programmes and says he has a responsibility to his Tuhoe people.

"I am more of a tribal person than a national figure, even though I have a national profile, I want to focus on my whanau and hapu. That's really the centre of our world," he says.

"It was long before I was born. I come from people who are always participating, who get things happening

politically and culturally. That's what makes a community and that is where my heart is."

Professor Margaret Mutu, head of the Department of

Maori Studies at the University of Auckland, sees Mr Iti as one of Maoridom's many fearless advocates who actively upheld the rights of their people, in the face of virulent assaults on their mana and integrity.

"He has not been afraid to stand and fight in the front line if necessary, but like any true Maori leader, takes his direction from his own whanau, hapu and iwi," she says.

"That has enabled him to work very effectively in both the Maori world and

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PHOTO: PETER WHITE

Tame Iti – Tuhoe ambassador has left George FM

the parts of the Pakeha world that are comfortable with Maori, those who identify with their own culture with great pride, confidence and strength of purpose."

Mr Iti's decision to return home to Tuhoe is driven by a common pull that many Maori face as they get older, says Dr Pare Keiha, head of the Maori

faculty Te Ara Poutama, at the Auckland University of Technology.

"Manaaki ki te tangata is a compelling force that is difficult to resist. Call it duty or responsibility, but the service of one's whanau and community is the highest achievement in life that one can aspire to. Kia kaha e Tame."

# Submission goes to UN over foreshore and seabed

by Edward Gay

Ngai Tahu's move to take the Government's proposed foreshore and seabed legislation to the United Nations will keep the issue publicly visible, says a Ngai Tahu historian.

"It's about keeping the pressure on the Government," says historian Jim Williams.

Ngai Tahu and the Treaty Tribes Coalition are challenging the Government's proposed foreshore and seabed legislation by making a submission to the UN's permanent forum on indigenous issues in New York.

"Now that the Hikoi has reached its conclusion, we hope that the UN finding will ensure it remains in the public consciousness, says Mr Williams, a University of Otago lecturer.

The Ngai Tahu submission says the proposed legislation is evidence of the Government's "flagrant disregard" for equality and "contempt" for human rights.

"The rule of law is a human right and this has been compromised with the introduction of this legislation," says Mr Williams.

"[Prime Minister] Helen Clark has waded in after claiming that the Maori Land Court was not able to rule on the foreshore and now she's passing retrospective legislation," says Mr Williams.

Mr Williams says the legislation stipulates that ethnic groups must prove "ancestral connection" dating back to 1840, and this dilutes the status of tangata whenua.

"The legislation does not recognise customary rights because this was not our custom. Hapu and whanau would move from one area of the foreshore to another," says Mr Williams.

Ngai Tahu's submission says forcing Maori to prove ancestral connection to an area of seabed and foreshore contradicts article two of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and tino rangatiratanga.

The Government did not meet with Maori after changes were made to the proposed foreshore and seabed legislation following a damning report by the Waitangi Tribunal in April this year.

Mr Williams says: "The Government has been totally ignorant and won't listen to anybody. There's been a huge backlash of public opinion and Helen [Clark] still thinks Helen knows best."

# Gambling: 'Hidden disease' for Maori

by Kim Reed

A surge in the growth of non-casino pokie machines throughout Auckland has impacted on Maori, according to a new study.

The Gambling Impact Assessment study was carried out by the University of Auckland's Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences on behalf of all councils in the Auckland region. It was used by individual councils to draft gaming venue policies as required by the Gambling Act 2003.

Under the Act, all councils must specify where pokie machine venues may be located and can refuse to allow new gaming venues or machines to be established.

Maori are one of the few indigenous people with no history of gambling, drinking or smoking, yet many are

now dependent on gambling, according to the Maori Reference Group on Gambling and Problem Gambling.

Kataraina Tuhaka, health promotion advisor for the Problem Gambling Foundation of New Zealand, works with community groups in South Auckland to raise the awareness of problem gambling among Maori.

"It's a hidden disease," says Mrs Tuhaka, who would like to see pokie machines completely banned.

"Most whanau don't know how to deal with it or don't want to know.

"The only way we can raise awareness about problem gambling is to have more Maori working to help Maori."

There are 5,139 non-casino gaming machines in the Auckland region. The highest concentration is in the Papakura and Rodney districts, with

one machine per 178 people, according to the study.

Over \$940 million was lost on non-casino pokie machines throughout New Zealand in 2003, a marked increase of over 700% in 13 years, according to statistics by the Department of Internal Affairs.

In 2003, National Gambling Machine Trusts distributed \$28.5 million back into the Auckland community, with only 1% going to marae and Maori organisations, according to the study.

"How can communities work to reduce the number of machines in their area when no funding has been provided by the Government for 'David' to take on 'Goliath' or for the 'tuna to take on the taniwha', says Dr Lorna Dyall, senior lecturer in the Faculty of Medical and Health

Sciences at the University of Auckland.

"Some people say it's Maori's fault. But when you're already at the bottom and there are no resources and no participation in the process, then it's a total exploitation by the government," says Dr Dyall.

Auckland City voted on the gambling venue policy in April and will not grant consent for any new non-casino gaming machines venues in the city.

Dave McPherson, coordinator for The New Zealand Coalition for Gambling Reform Inc. (known as Gambling Watch), feels the policy is too late.

"The damage has already been done and we have yet to see the fallout. It hasn't affected the lion's share of the country that already have gaming machines in place," he says.