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### **Expert reports increase in Māori life expectancy**

The average Māori life expectancy has increased dramatically since World War II, with a significant increase over the last ten years.

“Māori have always experienced poorer health than other New Zealanders and significantly lower life expectancy,” Otago University epidemiologist Professor Tony Blakely told the Public Health Association’s annual conference at Waitangi today.

“When we look back over the last few decades, however, we see Māori are now living at least fifteen years longer than they were immediately after World War II.

“More importantly the gap between Māori and other groups appears to be closing. So, we can look forward to a day when Māori can expect to have the same health status and life expectancy as other New Zealanders.”

The trending upwards been steady from World War II to the 1980s, and then showed little if any improvement during the 1980s and 1990s. Since then the upwards trending has continued.

Dr Blakely said that there are a host of factors that have contributed to this improvement.

“Things like improved socio-economic status, and increasing government investment in prevention have all helped.

“I believe the work of Māori health providers is significant. We must continue to support the development of by Māori for Māori approaches – and the ongoing re-orientation of mainstream services so they better meet the needs of Māori.”

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