

## Media release

### **MARTY ROGERS IS PUBLIC HEALTH CHAMPION 2008** **Embargoed to 10pm Thursday 3 July**

Long-time public health manager and advocate Marty Rogers has been named the public health champion of 2008. The award recognises individuals who have made an outstanding contribution to public health. It was conferred by the Public Health Association of New Zealand (PHA) at its annual conference, being held this week at Waitangi.

PHA Director Dr Gay Keating says that Marty is the latest in the line of Public Health Champions who have made an outstanding difference to public health in New Zealand.

"Marty is one of the new wave of leaders in Maori public health. She was appointed to senior roles when Maori participation in public health was rare.

"Apart from her formal roles, Marty has been involved on a voluntary basis with organisations that have promoted excellence and development within Maori public health. Her contribution to workforce development cannot be under-estimated.

"Marty's commitment to community development defines her work style. She engages communities in the development and planning of public health."

Marty is currently director of her own consultancy ROK Solutions. She has been CEO of Auckland-based Maori regional public health provider, Hapai Te Hauora Tapu. Hapai started with Marty; she brought together the three major Maori organisations in Auckland to work as one to promote good health in a Maori way

Marty has worked with numerous health organisations, whatever the issue – from tobacco control to injury prevention. Her message was that Maori health improvement must be on the agenda and that to be effective organisations need to have Maori staff working with Maori communities.

She carried this with her in her position as General Manager, Maori Health, Waikato District Health Board.

--

**Marty Rogers**  
**Te Rarawa/Ngati Kahu**

This year's public health champion Marty Rogers is one of a small group of dedicated Maori who have pioneered the development of Maori in public health.

"It runs in the blood," Marty says. "My mother has always been involved in community work and Maori health issues, and my sister Lisa also works in public health. Growing up in a town like Kaitaia you are always acutely aware of the plight of our people, and the need to invest in community development."

Marty's journey into public health began in 1986, with her involvement in the Auckland branch of the Maori Women's Welfare League.

"I'd been involved in some community development work prior and my work with the League convinced me that community development provided a model for Maori public health. So it's about communities identifying what they need rather than being told what to do by government and non-government agencies.

"The public health practitioner's role is to support the community's agenda and facilitate the community's access to expertise and resources."

Hapai Te Hauora Tapui in Auckland was the country's first regional Maori public health provider, and the organisation gave birth to the concept of Maori public health as an independent discipline. In 1996 Marty was appointed Hapai's first CEO, and this was her first formal public health role.

"The establishment of Hapai was tremendously important. At a personal level I learned about leadership and how to establish and maintain an organisational infrastructure.

"As an organisation we were able to provide a Maori public health perspective that was independent of government, and advocate for structural change that would benefit Maori public health. We also focused on co-ordinating Maori services across Auckland – which is a city that generates a host of unique challenges."

Marty's next role as General Manager Maori Health for the Waikato District Health Board moved her more directly into the public service, and meant she had to balance her passion for community development with the responsibilities of administering public funds.

Some of the achievements Marty nominates during this period include:

- development of a strategic plan for Maori health
- management of iwi relationships on behalf of the District Health Board
- development of the Maori Health Unit, increasing staff numbers and Maori potential
- development of the Reducing Inequalities Strategy.

"At the end of the day government realises that it must take account of community views as it plans and develops services. So I believe that I was able to stay true to my values and fulfil my obligations as a senior public servant."

Outside these roles Marty has contributed to the growth of Maori public health in a host of ways. She has been Chair of the Public Health Association, and Te Tumu Whakaraae (National District Health Board Maori Managers Forum). She is also an integral part of Nga Ngaru Hauora o Aotearoa, an independent forum that advocates on behalf of Maori health providers. She has worked with numerous community groups and iwi organisations.

“The sector is so complex that we must always be looking at ways of networking and linking, so that the work we all do in pockets is holistic, and based on tikanga Maori.”

**For further information: Anton Blank, PHA Communications, 021 406 031**