

Hon Tariana Turia honoured for contribution to Māori public health

Public Health Association media release

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Associate Minister of Health Hon Tariana Turia has become the first recipient of a new tohu (award) that will be given each year to a key figure in Māori public health by the Public Health Association (PHA).

The tohu was developed to acknowledge success and achievement in Māori public health and has this year been named Tū Rangatira mo te Ora¹ to recognise people who have shown leadership in Hauora development.

Ms Turia received the tohu today at the PHA conference which is being held at Turangawaewae Marae. PHA President Richard Egan said Ms Turia received it for her courage and successes in Māori public health.

“Recently Ms Turia has had a high profile as a Māori health champion, especially for her roles in tobacco control and as the Minister for Whānau Ora. But we are also acknowledging her long history in Māori public health advocacy and development.

“Over many years she has given faith, hope and encouragement to countless individuals and small health provider organisations, so her contribution has been far-reaching and wide.”

PHA Māori Caucus member Peter Thomas, who works for Hapai Te Hauora Tapui-Māori Public Health, said there has been considerable development in Māori public health over the last 20 years and that the tohu is a celebration of the whānau and leaders who have been at the forefront of that kaupapa.

“Many Māori leaders in health do not necessarily have health backgrounds, but they have either championed or supported Maori health initiatives. While it is natural for Māori to initiate change, or develop new ways to meet community needs, not everyone gets to hear about them or the successes they achieve. This tohu is also for them.

“We are extremely happy to be making the first presentation at Turangawaewae Marae to pay tribute to the many people from Tainui, such as Te Puea and Te Arikinui Te Atarangi Kahu, who have been at the forefront of Māori health development over the years. We also acknowledge that this award will in future highlight other Māori leaders and other iwi that have been crucial to Māori health development.

“Turangawaewae is a place of national significance to Māori all over the country and a fitting place for us to honour those who have worked hard for the betterment of the health of all Māori.”

The PHA has given out an annual Public Health Champion Award to a leading figure in New Zealand Public Health since 1999. This year it was given jointly to husband and wife team Professors Robert Beaglehole and Ruth Bonita. Māori who have received this award in the past include Dr Paratene Ngata, Professor Sir Mason Durie, Dr Papaarangi Reid and Marty Rogers. The new Tū Rangatira mo te Ora tohu has the same status as the Public Health Champion Award but will be reserved specifically for Māori.

Mr Egan says the tohu is also a demonstration of the PHA’s commitment to Māori and Māori health development.

For more information contact

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¹ To recognise Leadership in Hauora development