

**New Zealand Māori
Wardens Association**

Communications Strategy

July 2004

1 Background

In late 2003 the National Executive Council recognised the need to make organisational changes and, after a series of discussions with Te Puni Kōkiri, collectively agreed to undertake a project that would strengthen the capacity of the Association. It was later accepted that the project needed to improve the Associations position as a national Māori body.

To this end, a project plan (Strengthening the Position of the Association) was developed and focussed on an assessment of the current position of the organisation, the identification of critical areas for improvement and the development of tasks for implementation.

As part of that project discussions have taken place resulting in agreement to develop a Communications Strategy.

2 Overarching Goals and Objectives

2.1 Internal Communications

Internal communication is one of the critical areas for improvement identified as part of the Strengthening the Position of the Association project. It was noted in the project plan that there has been virtually no contact between the Executive Council and its membership. Although, it was further noted, that those Districts and Sub Branches who have members on the Executive Council are well informed of Association activities.

As it is impractical to visit every District and Sub Branch on a regular basis alternative means of communication are necessary, and therefore an internal communication strategy needs to be adopted.

2.1.1 Internal Communications Goal

That the Association maintain regular contact with District Associations, Sub Branches and the membership.

Objectives:

- To establish and maintain regular contact with Māori wardens
- To ensure effective dissemination of information
- To provide opportunity for feedback on needs and aspirations of membership

2.2 Public Relations

During development of this strategy the need to promote the Association externally was identified. A higher profile improves public awareness and knowledge about the Association and encourages new members to join.

This is seen as a move towards autonomy for the Association by raising awareness of the Association and its kaupapa. This will also assist with strengthening the position of the Association by contributing to a stronger identity for the Association both internally and externally.

2.2.1 Public Relations Goal

That the Association actively promote the Wardens kaupapa nationally and locally.

Objectives:

- To promote the Association and raise awareness about its kaupapa
- To recruit new and non-financial members

3 Implementation Plan

3.1 Internal Communications

3.1.1 Establish an Association website with links to District websites

The establishment of a website will promote the Association both internally and externally. This will also provide a point of reference for general information regarding Māori warden activities at all levels and an opportunity to publicise and celebrate achievements.

Two issues that were identified during the development of this strategy was the lack of information and knowledge (within the Association) on warrants/badges and Youth at Risk funding. The website will provide the vehicle to ensure this type of information is accessible to all parties (both current and future Māori wardens).

3.1.2 Establish and maintain a contacts database

An up to date contacts database is essential to any communications strategy to ensure all Māori wardens can be kept informed. It is important that once this database is compiled measures are put in place to ensure it is kept up to date.

3.1.3 Establish email networks as a means of two-way communication

As part of establishing a contacts database email contact details should also be included. There may be Māori wardens who do not currently have an email address and this may be addressed as part of the Training Strategy for Māori wardens.

Email is a cost effective and convenient method of two-way communication and suits the organisational structure for NZMWA due to the geographical spread of wardens. The use of email provides an opportunity for regular contact amongst wardens regardless of their geographical location.

Email is an effective vehicle for direct and instant information dissemination and also provides the opportunity for feedback on needs and aspirations of membership.

3.1.4 Publish a structured and informative newsletter and distribute to the membership

A regular newsletter distributed to the membership will also help to keep members informed of the Associations activities and any upcoming events. It is also a good vehicle for celebrating and publicising the achievements of various wardens.

3.1.5 Kanohi ki te kanohi

Regular hui should be held to provide the opportunity to disseminate information and seek feedback from Māori wardens. The importance of meeting kanohi ki te kanohi should not be overshadowed by the use of technology and newsletters as alternative vehicles for communication. A good balance of various mediums will ensure all wardens' communication needs are met.

Regional hui are currently being held around the country and should become a regular event as they provide opportunity to interact with Districts, Sub Associations and individual wardens.

3.1.6 Enable Executive Councillors to report back to Regions and seek feedback from Districts and Sub Branches by setting up communication protocols

Standard communication protocols should be developed to ensure two-way communication between the National Executive and Regions. There should be procedures in place to ensure Councillors report back to Regions and seek feedback from Districts and Sub Branches. This will help to ensure the Association is working towards the same goals and aspirations at all levels. It should also help address any issues raised by Māori wardens by providing the opportunity for them to be discussed at the National Executive level.

3.2 Public Relations

3.2.1 To utilise the website as an information delivery tool

As mentioned under paragraph 3.1.1 the establishment of a website will promote the Association both internally and externally. To enhance the profile of Māori wardens the website should be used to deliver information of interest to external parties, for example, the kaupapa of Māori wardens and the services they can deliver to Māori people and their communities.

3.2.2 To provide generic information pamphlets and posters

The availability of general information will contribute to raising the profile of Māori wardens. These pamphlets and posters should be distributed as widely and strategically as possible. Strategic distribution involves identifying the best location for this type of information, for example, places where Māori youth gather to encourage new membership.

The pamphlets and posters should also provide contact details for those seeking further information, for example, the Associations website address.

3.2.3 To utilise media coverage at national and regional levels including newspapers, television and radio

Opportunities should be sought to gain exposure for Māori wardens through the media. This would include preparing press releases prior to major events and actively contacting newspapers, television and radio to promote events and achievements.

3.2.4 To standardise uniforms through a dress code

A dress code will help to provide a visual reference for Māori wardens and enable them to be easily recognised contributing to their profile in the community.