



PRESS RELEASE

Karangahape Road Adopts 'Ikale Tahi Tonga Team for Rugby World Cup 2011

Karangahape Road affectionately known to Auckland, as K'Road has adopted Tonga's National 'Ikale Tahi Rugby Team for the duration of the Rugby World Cup (RWC) 2011. "Adopt a 2nd team" is an initiative from the Auckland Council to give the local communities an opportunity to support a team, buy tickets to watch their games or get family and friends together and try some new experiences like: Food, language, Music and Customs. When the opportunity for K.Road to adopt a team, President of the K.Road Business Association 'One Faleafa immediately put his hand up for Tonga and saw the potential opportunity for Tonga to align itself to the K'Road Business Association consisting of 1000 businesses.

K'Road historically since the early 1960s has always had strong links with the Pacific Islands migration to Auckland. Sakopo Lolohea CEO of Tourism Tonga, NZ Tonga Business Council Chairperson Rachel Taumoepeau and Frank Kolo'i from the Auckland Tonga Community RWC Committee met Precinct Manager Barbara Holloway of the K'Road Business Association to discuss how each organization will work together to ensure Tonga has a presence throughout K.Road during the duration of the RWC. Sakopo said "K'Road has the potential to develop into the home base for both the local Tongan community and visiting Tonga's fans during the RWC. Tourism and trade activity will be part of the plans further raising the profile of Tonga leading up to the opening game at Eden Park, Auckland between Tonga and New Zealand, Friday 9th September, 2011".

While in New Zealand Sakopo also met the RWC Pacific Advisory Board, with representatives from the Auckland Council, Tuia Internationals, Pacific Islands Trade & Invest, New Zealand Trade & Enterprise, RugbyNZ 2011, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, NZ Fiji Council, Samoa Consul and the New Zealand Tonga Business Council.

Tonga compared to other Pacific islands is leading the way in preparing for the RWC with the establishment and representation from the NZ Tonga Business Council and the Auckland Tonga Community RWC Committee in NZ.

The Rugby World Cup 2011 is an opportunity for Tonga to leverage of from a tourism and trade perspective taking advantage of the business opportunities created by the RWC 'From a tourism perspective, we are on a mission to lift the destination profile of Tonga during the RWC says Sakopo'. The initiative by K'Road Business Association and collaboration with the NZ Tonga Business Council is a unique opportunity and it will be a major part of our destination marketing approach to also include the games against Canada and Japan in Whangarei and the final game with France in Wellington.

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