

Good sports backing youth pride project

Manukau mayor Len Brown has put his weight behind the fight to help at-risk youngsters reach their full potential.

He joined boxing and sporting legends David Tua, Shane Cameron, Monty Betham, Tawera Nikau, Stacey Jones, Inga Tuigamala and Tea Ropati last week when they launched Regency Youth Pride.

The community-based, out-of-school initiative aims to support, motivate, inform and guide young people with workshops and mentoring.

"The Regency Youth Pride initiative deserves widespread community support and I'm calling on local businesses to get behind the programme through sponsorship," Mr Brown says.

"Manukau City Council was proud to provide a platform for Tea Ropati and his team at the launch."

The Manukau pilot is the first stage of a nationwide rollout of the programme which is sponsored by Regency Duty Free.

Thirty local participants are about to complete their first workshop and mentoring sessions and the response so far has been a big thumbs-up.

The programme is designed to complement other development support the youngsters might be receiving, including school.

It targets youth aged 12 to 17 with a focus on Maori and Pacific young people and aims to see the youngsters produce and implement life plans.

Mr Ropati says the programme promotes positive role models for Maori and Pacific youth.

It aims to involve 500 young people over three years.

Regency New Zealand managing director Kelvin Ricketts is hoping other local businesses, community groups and individuals get behind the project.

"I also hope Regency's involvement and the energy we bring will allow the programme to spread nationwide. My mission is to encourage community service clubs to add their support."

As a Rotarian Mr Ricketts says there's an opportunity for Rotary to use the youngsters who complete the course as candidates for the organisation's own programmes.



Added punch: Manukau mayor Len Brown, centre, offers his support to Tawera Nikau, left, and Tea Ropati at the launch of their Youth Pride initiative.

Photo: BEN CAMPBELL