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**Cultural app to raise awareness among staff and community**

Pronunciation of te reo Māori, cultural protocol and waiata are the main focus of a new mobile app, *Āke Āke*, launched this week by Waitematā and Auckland District Health Boards.

*Āke Āke*, available now on iOS and Android, took a year to develop and includes an interactive user-friendly guide to Māori customs and traditions.

*Āke Āke* enables users to understand the pōwhiri process, get to know the layout of a marae and learn the meaning behind well-known waiata.

The app also includes an easy-to-use audio feature to help people with their pronunciation.

*Āke Āke* gives users the ability to write their own mihi, a formal introduction in te reo Māori, by entering their details.

Chief Advisor of Tikanga at Waitematā and Auckland DHBs, Dame Rangimarie Naida Glavish, says *Āke Āke* was born out of a desire to raise cultural awareness among healthcare staff.

“Throughout the app, you will notice a theme highlighting an inherent sense of manaakitanga (caring) within te Ao Māori (the Māori world) that intertwines nicely with the culture of healthcare,” Dame Rangimarie says.

“This app helps us support staff by enhancing that desire to manaaki (care for) and work effectively with all people, including Māori.

“*Āke Āke* will help us become better-connected with Māori and work to improve health outcomes for this community,” Dame Rangimarie says.

The app is one of multiple initiatives implemented by Waitematā and Auckland DHBs to reduce inequities in the health system.

Others include the expansion of the AAA (Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm) screening programme for all Māori living in both DHB catchments and the establishment of Effective Stop Smoking Conversations with Pregnant Women Online Programme – an initiative for all health professionals who work with women in communities where smoking rates are disproportionately higher than the rest of the population.

**ENDS**

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