

Community News

# International Restorative Justice Week - what is happening in Whanganui?

Restorative Justice has been operating in Whanganui since 1999, developed initially by the local community and inspired by then local Judge, Andrew Becroft, now Children's Commissioner. It is now business as usual in our District Court, as a process to allow victims of crime and perpetrators to meet. Legislation now requires restorative justice to be considered

in most cases where a person pleads guilty to a crime. It allows those that have been harmed the opportunity to talk about the effect this harm has had on them, have it acknowledged by the perpetrator and together work towards repairing the harm. It can be a very powerful and empowering process.

Over the years the definition of "restorative justice" has given way to "restorative process-

es" and then "restorative practice" when used in the wider community. Restorative practice can be used anywhere to prevent conflict, build relationships and repair harm by enabling people to communicate respectfully and effectively.

Here in Whanganui we are working towards a Restorative City. The District Council has committed to this approach and many organisations, Govern-

ment departments, workplaces and schools throughout the city have adopted the Restorative approach. Restorative practice is a philosophy in action. It is organic, in that it develops as people practice the approach and see that it is successful. In Whanganui we are hoping and it is our goal that people will eventually say when talking about this approach "this is the way we do things here".



Members of the Whanganui Restorative Practices Trust: David Alexander, Karen Edlin, Jenny Saywood, Gail Cato and Marg Robinson.  
Absent: Bob Evans