

## STATEMENT – PPDVP SUPPORT TO SAMOA

The Pacific Prevention of Domestic Violence Programme (PPDVP) is a NZ Police overseas assistance programme funded by the NZ Government, to increase the capacity and capability of the Pacific police and their partner agencies to effectively address domestic violence, and therefore to reduce the incidence and harm caused in these cases.

PPDVP Programme Manager Cam Ronald has been made aware of the current case of a Samoan woman allegedly seriously assaulted by her estranged husband, and some observations made around that case in the Samoa Observer newspaper.

Mr. Ronald wishes to make it clear that domestic violence is never OK, and that violence cannot be condoned or justified in any situation.

The PPDVP has worked with the Samoa Police since 2006 to assist them to develop their knowledge, practices and procedures to address reported instances of domestic violence. The Samoa Police have a robust process in place with dedicated and trained staff available 24 hours a day to attend to cases and to support victims, and where an offence has been committed, to arrest offenders and to commence prosecutions. Mr Ronald said that PPDVP provides training, advice and support to the Samoa Police and considers that this is the appropriate way to respond.

A key component of the work in Samoa, and in all Pacific countries, is for the police to work with local NGOs and agencies. In Samoa the primary agency is the Samoa Victims Support Group (SVSG). PPDVP has worked directly with them over the last 7 years and has provided funds and support for workshops, training and equipping of field staff to work with victims, and to assist the overall work of the SVSG. The PPDVP does not provide specific funds to pay the costs of Court orders, as this is a cost that must be met in the country itself.

The PPDVP New Zealand Police in country mentor to Samoa is currently working with the SVSG, the head of the Domestic Violence Unit and the Police Assistant Commissioner overseeing this work to continue to enhance the relationship between the Samoa Police and the SVSG.

Mr. Ronald noted that the Police, the SVSG, the community, and the Government all have a role to play in addressing domestic violence. The Samoan Government has recently enacted the Family Protection Act which simplifies processes to protect victims, and allows the Court to more effectively deal with cases which come before it. The Police role is clearly to investigate cases and to present them to the Court, and to support the victim in this process. This is best achieved in a cooperation with groups such as the Samoa Victim Support organisation

The PPDVP, with support from the NZ Rugby Union and teams in New Zealand has worked with the Samoa Police and Samoa Rugby in recent years to raise awareness in Samoa on domestic violence. A key component of that work is to promote a message that violence is never appropriate, and to encourage people to speak out and act to stop violence. The Samoa Rugby organisation has been an active supporter of this work. A key audience for this message is young men as they begin to form their own relationships and families.

PPDVP will continue to work with the Samoa Police, the community and organisations to prevent domestic violence.