

RWC French Supporters Head North to Taipa

One year on from their international exchange in 2010, Taipa Area School returns a favour to host a touring group of 30 French Rugby World Cup supporters.

In September last year, 14 students and 6 adults representing Taipa Area School travelled to Europe to promote the traditional Maori game of ki-o-rahi, now a firm fixture in the school's cultural and sporting programme.

With extensive community support, the group travelled to Barcelona in Spain where students performed at the city's annual festival, La Merce. The group then travelled north to Paris, France where students were billeted with French families in the town of Gif Sur Yvette.

The French touring group led by Erick Acker, businessman and President of the French Touch Association, will spend one night in the Far North before heading to Auckland for their National teams big game against the All Blacks on Saturday.

The group tagged Taipa and Doubtless Bay as their first New Zealand excursion because they wanted to experience a different part of the country away from all hype. The keen supporters are also looking to explore local business opportunities with special interests in farming and viticulture.

Erick says, "the Rugby World Cup will change the way French think about business in New Zealand". "The Rugby World Cup provides a gateway to understanding each other and creating more opportunities between our countries"..

The visitors will be treated to a formal welcome by staff and students at Taipa Area School on Friday afternoon followed by a hangi and entertainment at Whangaroa Golf Club in the evening from 6pm.

Locals are most welcome to join the group at dinner with hangi tickets available at \$15 per person. Proceeds from hangi sales will go towards Taipa students participating in the prestigious Manu Korero Maori Speech Competitions held in Tauranga next week.