

Sir John Kirwan welcomed as NZCCP patron

Sir John Kirwan was welcomed as the first patron of the NZ College of Clinical Psychologists (NZCCP) at an afternoon tea held in his honour on Tuesday 7 October.



Sir John (right) is presented with a gift by College President, Deb Moore, and Vice President, Elliot Bell.

Sir John is a former All Black and professional rugby coach in New Zealand. He has spoken openly about his experience of and recovery from depression, particularly in the context of the Ministry of Health's National Depression Initiative. His advocacy work in mental health has focused on destigmatisation and encouraging help seeking. With regard to the latter he is a strong advocate of using psychological therapies and strategies in treatment and relapse prevention. He has written extensively about this in his autobiography "All Blacks don't cry" and the newly released "Stand by me", a book co-written with College members Elliot Bell and Kirsty Loudon-Bell to help parents of teens going through tough times. His services to mental health were honoured firstly in 2007, when he was made an Officer of the New Zealand Order of Merit, and in 2012 when he was appointed a Knight Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit.

The NZCCP is a professional association of clinical psychologists, with a membership of nearly 900, and Sir John with his extensive advocacy work raising the awareness of and de-stigmatising mental health issues, and in particular depression, is a great fit.

The event, held at the NZCCP office in Wellington was attended by the current President and Vice President, Deb Moore and Elliot Bell, two past Presidents, John Bushnell and Nigel Fairley, the College Kaumatua, Kuni Shepherd, and the newly elected Māngai Māori, Luke Rowe. Also there to welcome Sir John were several members of the Wellington Branch Committee, representatives from Auckland and Christchurch, and the NZCCP Executive Director, Caroline Greig.

Sir John was presented with a copy of the NZCCP history book, *Te Awa: The first 21 years of the New Zealand College of Clinical Psychologists*, and an

artwork purchased from Roar, the art gallery displaying and selling works created by a group of Wellington-based mental health service users.

We look forward to a long and mutually beneficial relationship with Sir John.

#####ends#####

Thank you
Caroline

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