

Enterprise Wananga set the goals

na Margie Comrie

Maurice and Anna Henry are a couple who are thinking big business — not for themselves but to help young people. Their aim is to set up a work trust or co-operative, so they went along to an Enterprise Development Wananga to find out how to go about it.

The 14 wananga held all round the country finishing September are the brainchild of Dr Ngatata Love, Professor of Management and Development at Massey University. He hopes that workshops will launch a whole fleet of Maori businesses on their way.

Professor Love also sees the workshops as a way of ensuring the best use is made of the 12.5 million dollars available through the Maori Enterprise Development Scheme.

The Henrys were among 45 people in the light, sunny room at the Palmerston North Tu Tangata Community Centre taking the first steps towards planning a successful business.

Like many of the others, they are hoping for enterprise development money. Maurice has been self-employed for 15 years. Bridge building, housepainting, welding, panelbeating, clearing sections, drainlaying, fencing and laying concrete are among the skills he can teach.

Active members of the Highbury Whanau Support Group, the Henrys employ three other people even so, they've more work than they can handle. "We want to keep the business intact for the family, but help out our young people," says Maurice.

They're aiming especially at school drop-outs and hope to start off with half a dozen. As well as his own skills, Maurice says he has contacts in plumbing, housebuilding, and so on who'd be willing to take on young recruits for six months or so. He's hoping the workshop will give the ideas and support needed to set up a work trust.

Some at the workshop already run businesses; most are just venturing out. Professor Love grabbed their attention when he spoke about the importance of self-confidence. "One of the biggest fears our people have is when they go to see the bank manager, the lawyer or the accountant. How do you feel when you go to see the bank manager? Nervous? I do! But these people are in a service industry. You are Number One. Often in dealing with institutions we're put off. We don't get the service we should. We must ask for it, and, if we don't get it, we should go further up."

Sally Spiers, secretary of Foxton's kokiri management committee, took that advice to heart. "I have a pakeha husband in a building business and we'd like maybe to extend it to help our unemployed people. Today has taught me not be a whakamaa. I'm going to show my bank manager that I'm a potential customer."

Alan Harnett, a Pakeha greenstone carver, also knows he needs confidence. He's got the skills, he says, but doesn't know how to find the market. "Today's been really good. We've got the message now — but we need lots more workshops like this for everyone."

Ella and Tai Davis, too, found the day gave them a boost. They're from Levin and want to set up a business recoring and repairing radiators. Again, they're qualified to deal with radiators but have never run a business before. The workshop gave them plenty to chew on, especially Professor Love's advice on planning.

Dr Love sees planning as a vital safeguard against failure. All too often, it's missed out. "People have their plan in their heads and do most of their thinking at night, because they're too busy in the day doing things they think are important." But before you even start, he says, a lot of questions need answering: Can your business really make money? Do you have a market? Are you in the right place? What happens if you get sick or there's downturn in the economy? This sort of planning is too important to be done off the cuff, Professor Love says.

Before the participants know it, he has them unravelling the mysteries of business plan flow charts. Six top local businessmen are on hand to help them devise their own.

This sort of advice was what the Wilsons especially appreciated. They helped set up the Te Awahou Kokiri in Foxton and have been with it nearly three years — Wayne as senior supervisor and Margaret as clerk. Now they're ready to develop their own business, running a pub in Taranaki.

Wayne, who's had seven years in hotel work, says the pub they have in mind is not in full use. "There are

rooms with great potential, we could expand it and have four or five workers. We've checked out unemployment in the area and it's very high. I've got the confidence to give it a go, and I'm very determined."

Sadie Rukuwai is another one with plenty of get up and go. She's been managing a clothes shop in Pahiatua; now, she wants to set up on her own.

"What decided me on coming along here was seeing that fashion parade on 'Koha'. I thought, why can't I sell products like that? I go up to Auckland twice a year to see the parades, and I'm very interested in fashion, but I've never seen anything offering like that. I'd like to sell them — I'd need to set up in Palmerston North, though, I don't think Pahiatua would be a big enough market for those clothes."

As well as helping Sadie and other would-be entrepreneurs with their business plans at the wananga, local advisors will keep in touch with them over the next few months in the early stages of their ventures. Professor Love sees setting up these links between experienced business people and the Maori community as one of the main aims of the workshops.

However, not everyone at the wananga fancies themselves as enués in a speech given some time ago by the former Governor-General, Sir Arthur Porritt who commented that (7):

"The prime values in Maori life are people and land — for the Pakeha they are money and position."

2. The Treaty of Waitangi guaranteed the Maori the preservation of and the right to his land, forests and fisheries. These rights need to be restored immediately to the Maori if the conservation of these natural resources is to be achieved.

The Maori has long demonstrated simple but effective conservation practices. For example, if bark is stripped from a tree care is taken to ensure that the bark is taken from that side of the tree facing the sun. This enables the bark to regenerate more quickly. If a food source (eg fish, berries etc) is running low then a rahui (ban) is imposed by the local Maori tribe to give nature time to replenish that source.

3. Food, particularly seafood has an important cultural value to the Maori because:

(a) its abundance and quality is a source of pride, mana and prestige to the tribe and references to this are often made in tribal legends and songs;