

Serenity eases stress of difficult time

Hastings Leader 11 Jul 2018 BY BRENDA VOWDEN brenda.vowden@hbto-day.co.nz

A passion for helping support people during a difficult time has led Awa Roiri into the funeral business — and his family has followed. Having managed Melrose Funeral Home in Tauranga and after a spell at Simplicity Funerals in Hamilton, it was time to branch out.

Awa is joined by father Whitu, mother Jayne and funeral director Jimmie MacKay to make up the team at Serenity Funerals, delivering a top notch professional service for those grieving or wanting to pay their respects.

Serenity Funerals has taken over the reins from Hawke's Bay Funeral Services, and Whitu says although they have a strong connection to traditional tikanga, they are here for everyone — every culture, race and denomination.

Putting clients at ease is second nature to Whitu — that's what he does.

"You need to be at ease with people — you have to be able to communicate and have genuine empathy."

A "comfy, welcoming and appealing" front of house has been developed to help people

relax.

"It's like a family lounge — that's how we want it to be — it helps relieve some of the stress for loved ones."

Some of their money worries have also been removed, with a uniquely tailored financial package available.

"This helps ease some of the burden for families during a trying time."

Born and raised in Hawke's Bay, the move for 28-year-old former menswear designer Jimmie into the funeral industry may be seen as an unusual one, but with a back-



L-R Serenity Funeral directors Jimmie MacKay, Whitu Roiri, and Awa Roiri.

ground in catering for funerals, the transition was smooth.

"You have to be clear minded — do it all for them when they're emotional. They look to you for strength."

A purpose-built chapel on site and the roomy lounge area can cater for large numbers and provide after funeral receptions. The team has so far received "great reviews and feedback, telling us we went above and beyond — we went the extra mile".

Whitu says they provide for slide shows and audio.

"It's personalised. We believe strongly in our core values of professionalism and integrity. You've got to help people and support them when they're grieving — you've got to know how to do it," Whitu says.

■ Serenity Funerals, 204 St Aubyn St West, phone, (06) 870 3068 anytime 24 hours day or night.