

Police deny 'too nice' claims

Karla Akuhata

Staff reporter

WHILE police are adamant a Whakatane woman would not have been denied a place as a recruit because she was "too nice, knows too many people and is from Tuhoe", the country's top Maori officer wants her case reviewed.

Last year Helen Tulloch completed the police preparation course through Te Wananga o Aotearoa and before she applied for a place at the Police College in Wellington, she undertook work experience involving four shifts at the Whakatane police station.

Ms Tulloch said the officer who wrote a report on her performance told her it wouldn't be a good one but wouldn't say why, or give her a copy of what he'd

written.

And when Ms Tulloch approached the college, she said a recruitment officer told her one of the reasons she failed to gain a place in this year's intake was because she was Tuhoe.

This week, police deputy chief executive Maori, Superintendent Wallace Haumaha, confirmed he had called for a review of Ms Tulloch's case after she raised concerns about the recruitment process.

But organisational employee development director at police, Josh Tabor, said Ms Tulloch was not denied a place at the Police College because of her tribal affiliations.

"It is important that police select the right individuals to become police officers and we have rigorous selection procedures to ensure this happens.

"Each year we receive around 4000

applications to our recruitment process, of which 11 percent are successful.

"While we are limited in what we can say about individuals, it is entirely incorrect that this application was not progressed for the reasons stated ... specifically 'she is too nice, knows too many people and is from Tuhoe'."

Mr Tabor said police were satisfied Ms Tulloch's application was processed in an appropriate way and the decision not to award her a place at the police college had been peer reviewed.

"Police are committed to ensuring we reflect the communities we serve and this is demonstrated in our recruitment of Maori.

"In the last 12 months we received 607 applications from those identifying as Maori, 60 of these applications, a rate of 15 percent, were successful,

which is a higher than the overall success rate of 11 percent.

He said there are 67 constables based at Whakatane, with 12 percent identifying as Maori.

"Police are keen to recruit a broad base of young New Zealanders, in particular women, Maori, Pasifika, Indian, African and Asian.

"This includes young leaders with mana, communication skill, empathy and an understanding of te reo and tikanga.

"These skills are crucial to prevent crime, crashes and victimisation in our communities.

"The current recruitment campaign specifically aims to reach these populations so we better represent the diverse communities we serve. We also want to encourage more women to consider a career with police."