

Identities join campaign

By RACHEL THOMAS

District personalities are taking a stand against family violence.

Billboards beside State Highways 26 and 27 featuring local faces and a strong “family violence is not OK” message are on display in Morrinsville, Te Aroha and Matamata.

Former Morrinsville Sports, Waikato and Chiefs rugby player Alex Bradley has featured on the billboards since the end of 2012, but Roslyn Nancekivell from Morrinsville Community House said the new versions, set up just before Christmas, depict locals from several different sectors.

“Now we have a group of people from across the community fronting up and saying violence is not OK.”

The billboards were produced by the Matamata-Piako Family Safety Network, with support from the national It’s not OK campaign.

Joining Mr Bradley in the campaign are Matamata-Piako District Mayor Jan Barnes, Te Manawhenua Forum member Te Ao Marama Maaka and Ngati Haua representative Anaru Thompson.

Mrs Barnes said the cause is one close to her heart and urged workmates in particular to look out for fellow staff as people return to work.

“What presses my buttons is people and if people are hurting we need to be able to get alongside them.”



LOCAL CHAMPIONS: Lending their faces to help a campaign against family violence are, from left, Senior Constable Craig Gordon from Te Aroha Police, Jo McNaughton, manager of Starfish Social Services in Matamata, Te Ao Marama Maaka from the Te Manawhenua Forum, Matamata-Piako District Mayor Jan Barnes, Anaru Thompson from Ngati Haua, and former Morrinsville Sports, Waikato and Chiefs rugby player Alex Bradley.

Photo: BRIARLEY HICKS

She said it’s important to raise concerns if you suspect violence is happening to a friend, workmate

or relative. “Just be aware and take the time to lend a listening ear.

“If you suspect something you must speak up – it’s better to be wrong in the long run.”

The It’s Not OK information line is 0800 456 450. See areyouok.org.nz for more details.