

## AROUND THE WORLD

# SAVING LIVES

### Carlton Irving

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WHAKATŌHEA

I'm an Intensive Care Paramedic (ICP) we're the advance team that provide medical assessment and treatment for those with significant illness or injury. I currently work in the air on the rescue helicopters. I'm originally from Opotiki; Whakatōhea, Ngāti Ira, I'm a descendant of Mokomoko. Growing up my whanau moved around a lot and by the time I was 14 we'd moved four times. We didn't have much and there were stresses that taught me that struggle can build character.



Carlton

#### Life's lessons

I think I mucked around a bit in the last few years of school. I scraped through in PE, Māori and Art so I had no idea what I wanted to be when I left school. I tried martial arts, music and the military as career options and while they all taught me something they didn't appeal to me as long-term occupations. I found I was okay at learning new skills and the army and martial arts taught me to stay focused and gave me the discipline to get things done.

#### Finding my vocation

I think a lot of things showed me my path. My favourite teacher collapsed in front of me at high school and I couldn't help. He died shortly after, I lost my favourite aunt when she went tramping and disappeared. Then one of my closest friends broke his leg. By this stage I'd finished school and when we had to call an ambulance for my mate it kind of hit me. I should do this, I can help people. Two of my aunts and a cousin are nurses so working in health was always there.

#### Kia Ora Hauora

One of the things that Kia Ora Hauora does is talk to rangatahi about career options in health. Paramedicine is a career that I'd encourage young people to seriously consider. KOH asked me to speak to rangatahi and explain what it is I do. I love that part of my job and I couldn't be happier to help.

#### Job pathway

I initially trained on the job with St John's but to advance further I needed to complete higher qualifications. So, I enrolled at AUT which has a great Māori network. I found the study fascinating and fun and my lecturers were great. But my main support network was my whānau, they're the ones who kept me going.

#### What is the best part of being a Paramedic

On the one hand it's amazing. I get to travel in ambulances, helicopters, planes and boats. I've literally been around the world saving lives in all kind of places; It's exhilarating. However, we do what we do because we're dealing with life and death situations.

The worst of the worst. It's not for everyone, when you save a life it's amazing. But you can't always be the hero. You've got to be willing to risk failing to try and get good outcomes. So, you need good whānau and friend support to keep yourself healthy.

I love the outdoors so my de-stressor involves surfing, hiking, biking, rock climbing, that kind of thing. It's a release from the pressures of the job.

#### Are you doing any more study?

I'm finishing my Masters and eventually I plan to go to Med School and study to be a GP. But for the moment I'll keep serving my community as a Paramedic. I believe we could do with more Māori Paramedics.