

Appeal for kidney funds

North Shore Times pg 14 - Friday March 13 2009

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Former Auckland Blues and All Blacks wing Joeli Vidiri knows all about kidney disease.

It ended his rugby career prematurely and now he needs to use a dialysis machine at Manukau SuperClinic five hours a day, three times a week to cleanse his blood.

But he still coaches the Counties-Manukau rugby sevens team and leads a full and active life.

Vidiri's lent his weight to the Kidney Society Auckland's annual appeal this week.

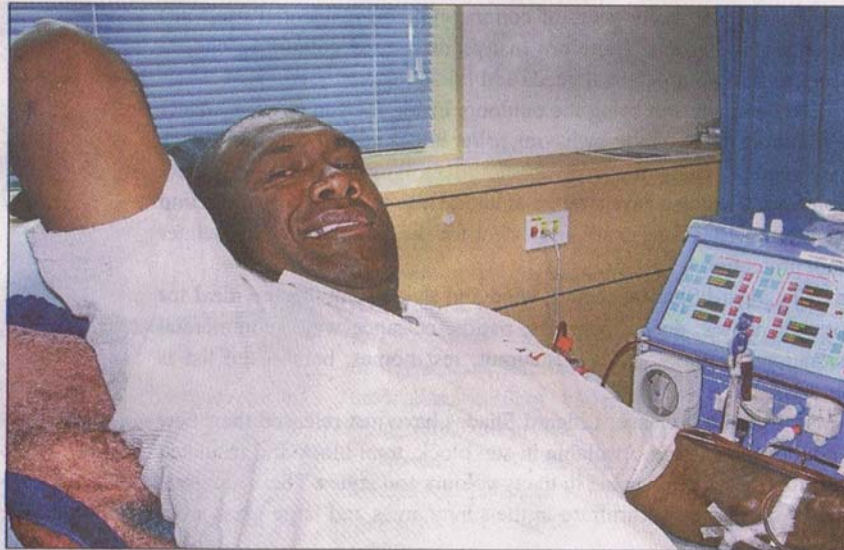
"The Kidney Society helps people like me and my fellow patients. If we have problems or need someone to talk to, we call them.

"They help us do ordinary things like everyone else even though we need dialysis," he says.

People who have kidney failure must have treatment to live.

Treatment is dialysis several times a day or week or a kidney transplant. All have a significant impact on the individual and their families.

Kidney Society Auckland executive director Nora Van der Schrieck says for patients treatment means losing some of their independence and it can disrupt fam-



Worthy cause: Joeli Vidiri is backing the Kidney Society Auckland annual appeal. The former All Black needs dialysis at Manukau SuperClinic three times a week.

ily life in many ways.

"Maintaining a sense of wellness and self-worth can be very challenging but it is possible for people with kidney failure to feel good and enjoy life with a little help."

She says unlike Vidiri, some people find it very difficult to adjust to a different level of fitness and to develop a new sense of "feeling well" that enables them to get on with life.

"Going to the gym when you don't have the looks and the energy to keep up with others can

be very daunting."

The society's Wellness Programme, the first of its kind in Australasia, focuses on encouraging and helping people with kidney failure to maximise their fitness level.

Kidney Society Auckland supports 1300 clients in Auckland and Northland to "get on with life" by offering services such as the Wellness Programme, home visits and phone support, information and educational events and a community dialysis house for people to be treated independently

away from a hospital environment.

It's the only organisation of its kind delivering free professional support services to kidney patients and their families outside of the health service and relies on the generosity of trusts and foundations, businesses and individuals to fund its work.

To donate to the appeal see www.kidneysociety.co.nz or contact the society on 278-1321.

To make an automatic \$20 donation call 0900-KIDNEY (0900-543-639).