

ONBOARD

NEWSLETTER OF THE TARANAKI
COMMUNITY RESCUE HELICOPTER

JUNE 2018

TARANAKI COMMUNITY
RESCUE
HELICOPTER



A RURAL LIFELINE FOR YOUNG FAMILY

ISOLATED IN RURAL TARANAKI, JANELLE AND LANCE DOWNS NEEDED THE HELP OF THE TARANAKI RESCUE HELICOPTER, NOT ONCE BUT TWICE. **YOUR SUPPORT** GOT US THERE IN THEIR TIME OF NEED.

The Rescue Helicopter is a recognisable icon in the skies around Taranaki, but one couple know the helicopter service better than others.

Last year, in the space of two months, the Taranaki Rescue Helicopter came to the aid of Janelle and Lance Downs, sheep and beef farmers on a 2,000-acre farm in rural East Taranaki. "The first time was for me," says Janelle. "The second time was for Lance."

It was calving season for Janelle and Lance, when one of their quieter cows got into difficulty. "Lance took her through into the woolshed yard but as I went to latch the gate she turned around and jumped it. The gate came back and hit me just above the eye, throwing me back 4.5m. I was knocked unconscious for about 10 minutes and came to, covered in mud."

Out of cell phone reception and with his wife out cold with a severe head injury, Lance raced back to the house to call 111, and the ambulance and the Rescue Helicopter were deployed. "I was taken to Taranaki Base Hospital with a major gash above my eye that required both internal and external stitches," says Janelle. "I was just

thankful I didn't have our children with me or the outcome could have been a very different story."

A second mission

Back home on the farm, life continued for Janelle and Lance during one of the busiest times of year, until the afternoon of Sunday 12 November.

"It was the last cow to calve and Lance was assisting her. As he went to anchor the rope, the cow pulled forward catching the rope around his thumb and amputating it, all in one brief motion," recalls Janelle. Leaving their two young children – Ellie 2.5 years and Tim 6 months - in the care of Lance's slightly panicked father, Kevin, Janelle drove Lance the one-hour drive to New Plymouth Base hospital's A&E.

"When we got to A&E, the severity of Lance's injuries required specialist care. Next thing we knew, St John paramedic, Roger Blume was picking us up in his car to take us to the hangar and 45 minutes later we were at Waikato Hospital."

Dressed in nothing but her mud-splattered farm clothes, Janelle wasn't prepared for the eight nights Lance ended up spending in Waikato Hospital. "He was in surgery for six-to-seven hours, but they couldn't save his thumb. Instead,

they had to attach his thumb to his stomach and a graft of skin from his stomach over his thumb. He stayed with his thumb sewn to his stomach for three weeks before it was later removed and the graft was secured over the end of his thumb."

A worthwhile service

Six months on, Janelle still suffers from symptoms associated with her concussion, including susceptibility to light, poor memory and motion sickness. Lance's 'stumpy thumb' doesn't appreciate the frosty mornings but her and Lance can now chuckle at the irony of not only needing the Taranaki Rescue Helicopter twice in two months, but being in the care of exactly the same crew each time.

"When Roger came into A&E to take us to Waikato Hospital, he did a double take," says Janelle.

"But we are incredibly grateful for the care of the crew and, in particular, the importance that Roger placed on Lance's situation.

"Roger dropped everything, including his grocery shopping. When he came to our aid he could see time was of the essence so he got us in the air straight away. Both Roger and Sarah [fellow crewman] were fantastic. The service they offer is worth its weight in gold."



CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Rescue Helicopters have been in the news a lot lately, including our very own, so I wanted to take this opportunity to explain why. At present, the Taranaki Rescue Helicopter Trust operates with the help of financial generosity from the regional community. We also receive financial support through contracts with the National Ambulance Sector Office (NASO), a unit within the Ministry of Health, for every mission we undertake.

After a significant review of the rescue helicopter service offered by ourselves and the other 15 rescue helicopters throughout New Zealand, NASO has decided to streamline all operations. This involves reducing the number of rescue helicopters. It has been recommended to continue with a New Plymouth based service.

As part of the proposed changes to New Zealand's rescue helicopter service, all bases will be required to meet strict regulations regarding the type of helicopters we fly, the equipment we carry, the crew we have on board – moving forward, we will be required to have a dedicated paramedic – and our processes and operations, staff training standardised across the nation. This means we can call on others within the service to help us out in Taranaki, should the need arise.

Understandably, the reduction in the number of rescue helicopter bases has been viewed by many communities as life-threatening, but I strongly believe this is not the case. NASO's changes will help reduce inefficiencies and enable all bases, including our own, to provide a better level of service and most importantly an improved patient outcome.

At the end of the day, our responsibility is to provide the best emergency rescue service to each of our communities who support us. I believe NASO's changes will enable us to achieve and deliver this. These changes are expected to come into effect on 1 November, 2018.

We thank you for your continued support of the Taranaki Rescue Helicopter and look forward to delivering an even better rescue service to you.

Chairman,
Taranaki Rescue Helicopter Trust

JACOB'S FLIGHT TO SAFETY

WHEN SEVEN-YEAR-OLD JACOB COPE FELL DOWN THE SIDE OF A BUSH TRACK, YOUR SUPPORT ENSURED THE RESCUE HELICOPTER WAS ABLE TO WINCH HIM TO SAFETY.

It was meant to be an uneventful Sunday afternoon in February. Seven-year-old Jacob Cope had laced up his walking shoes and was enjoying an easy walk on the York Road Track in Egmont National Park with his best mate and their family. But the river they were walking near was too inviting for the seven-year-old adventurers to resist and they ducked under a barrier to get closer to the water.

As the adults in the walking party called the boys back onto the track, Jacob lost his footing and slid five metres down the bank to the river bed below.

Back home in Hawera, Jacob's parents, Adam and Marissa Cope were spending their Sunday in the garden. "It certainly wasn't the phone call we wanted to get," says Marissa. "To hear your son has fallen down the bank, gashed his head open and the Rescue Helicopter is on its way."

While Adam and Marissa drove the one hour to Taranaki Base Hospital, Jacob was stable and in good hands. "His best mate's mother had a full first aid kit with her so had stemmed the bleeding and a DOC worker was also on the scene," says Marissa.

However, there was nowhere for the Rescue Helicopter to land, so Jacob was winched up into the aircraft. Upon arrival at Base Hospital,



Jacob was kept in for observation and received five staples in the back of his head. "It was just fortunate he slipped rather than tumbled down the bank otherwise his injuries could have been a lot worse," says Marissa.

Living in Taranaki, Jacob knew of the Rescue Helicopter, but the Cope family never expected they'd need it. "Jacob was just out for an easy walk so the last thing we expected was that he'd be rescued," Marissa says. "It just goes to show you never know when you might need the service. It's a fantastic resource for our region to have."

BULL FOR FUNDS

Janelle and Lance Downs (Tawanui Herefords) breed quality, registered and commercial Hereford cattle for the beef and dairy industry. To thank the Taranaki Rescue Helicopter for the care and service the Trust provides, Janelle and Lance will be auctioning a Hereford Bull at their annual Tawanui Herefords bull sale in September.

"Every year we have a big sale in September comprising of around 90 two-year-old Hereford Bulls and 40 two-year-old Angus Bulls. They are all pure bred bulls and we have farmers from around the mountain attending.

"To show appreciation and thanks for the outstanding service from the Rescue Helicopter, we are going to auction off the

first bull at this sale and donate all proceeds to this local life-saving asset."

When: Monday 3 September, 2018

Time: 12.00pm

Where: 923 Wingrove Road, Stratford

All proceeds of Lot 1 will go to the Taranaki Rescue Helicopter Trust.

CELEBRATING WITH FRIENDS

MIA YOUNG'S FIRST BIRTHDAY WAS A CAUSE FOR CELEBRATION. IT IS THANKS TO YOUR SUPPORT OF THE RESCUE HELICOPTER THAT BABY MIA WAS ALIVE TO ENJOY TURNING ONE.



On 16th April 2018, Mia Young turned one. This vivacious, independent little girl celebrated in style with a spring in her step. But Mia may not have reached her milestone first birthday had it not been for the lifesaving help of the Taranaki Rescue Helicopter.

In September last year, at just four-months-old, Mia stopped breathing and began turning blue in her mother's arms. Frightened and fearful for her daughter's life, Inglewood woman, Dineka Young phoned 111. Shortly afterwards, the

Taranaki Rescue Helicopter and crew landed on the family's front lawn and breathed life back in to baby Mia.

Mia is the face of the 2018 Taranaki Rescue Helicopter's FRIENDS appeal. Her rescue was made possible because of the generous donations provided to the Trust by the Taranaki community. Our FRIENDS are at the heart of the Trust. They have pledged \$50 to become a FRIEND of the Trust – and you can too.

Mia's family had never donated to the Rescue Helicopter before, but Dineka says they do now. "We're proud to be a FRIEND of the Trust. I found myself in an extremely stressful situation and was freaking out as I held Mia's lifeless body in my arms. The Rescue Helicopter crew came in and took over. They were the voice of calm in a distressing situation. You don't ever think you will need the Rescue Helicopter, and then you do."

EXTRAORDINARY EFFORT EARNS SAR AWARD

Saving lives is part and parcel of Steve Orr's job. As a St John Intensive Care Paramedic (ICP), Orr regularly provides support to the Taranaki Rescue Helicopter crew. But on one particular night, Orr's persistent effort in the face of many a challenge resulted in the experienced paramedic being awarded a prestigious New Zealand Search and Rescue Council (SAR) Gold Award, the highest award possible.



Rescue helicopter crewman and Trust General Manager Andy Cronin, nominated Orr after a particularly complex mission in May 2017. Tasked with rescuing an adult male patient with life-threatening vital signs at the Tieke Kianga campsite in Whanganui National Park one

evening, a change in weather conditions meant the helicopter was grounded.

Orr had limited oxygen and medical supplies to hand and the patient's condition was deteriorating. It was vital the patient reach hospital as quickly as possible. With the poor weather conditions preventing the rescue helicopter from flying, Orr transported the patient down the river in a jet boat with the support of Joe and Mandy Adam, proprietors of Bridge to Nowhere Lodge, to a waiting ambulance.

At this time Orr's oxygen supplies ran out so for the more than two hours it took the ambulance to drive the windy, mostly metal roads to Whanganui Hospital, Orr used a hand operated bag valve mask which he squeezed every six seconds to keep the patient breathing.

Cronin says without Orr's medical knowledge and intervention, it was unlikely the patient would have survived the night. "Steve's extraordinary effort, with the help of Joe Adam and Mandy Jackson, who also received the NZ SAR Gold Award, is a reflection of the dedicated personnel we are so fortunate to have contribute to the Rescue Helicopter service."

Driving in style

We are extremely fortunate to have the long-standing support of Energy Motors Isuzu and extend our heartfelt thanks to the team for the loan of a 2018 Isuzu D-max LS Auto 4x4 Double Cab ute.

This is the fourth vehicle Energy Motors Isuzu has provided to the Trust. "The rescue helicopter is a vital necessity for our community and we all know, or have met someone, that without the rescue helicopter and the work the Trust does would not be here today. It's our way of supporting a community that supports us," says Shaun Biesiek, Dealer Principal of Energy Motors Isuzu.



Round of golf for the Rescue Helicopter

A big thank you to New Zealand Certified Builders – Taranaki who ran a charity golf tournament and raised \$4,000 for the Taranaki Rescue Helicopter. In February, 21 teams of builders and businesses associated with the industry donated tools for the day to play in the NZCB's annual charity golf competition at the Stratford Golf Club. The Taranaki Rescue Helicopter Trust was nominated for the essential role we play in the community and the value the NZCB place on our service to the area.

A literary contribution

A sincere thank you to Linda Meehan of Stratford for her generous donation of \$1,000 to the Taranaki Rescue Helicopter. Linda's donation comes from proceeds from her book *Need to Know*, the story she wrote after her son BJ passed away just before his 28th birthday after a battle with the disease Adrenoleukodystrophy. Thank you Linda. Your support will help our Rescue Helicopter continue to save lives.

THANK YOU

The Taranaki Rescue Helicopter Trust relies on the generous financial support of businesses and individuals throughout the Taranaki region. Every donation made to the Trust goes towards ensuring we can continue to provide this vital life-saving rescue service to our community. Thank you to our recent supporters: Oilfield & Engineering Services (1996) Ltd, Shell Todd Oil Services Ltd, Beca Ltd, Hawkins Watt Ltd, Aviagen Limited, Dads & Lads Gentlemens Barbers, Alistair Dore and Family, Cut

a Trail Events Ltd, Central Taranaki Ramblers Social Motorcycle Club, New Plymouth Girls' High School, Hawera High School, Linda Meehan, Omahanui Health Care, Eleanor Hodson, Tainui Whitebaiters Association, Triumph Riders Taranaki, Pennington Orthopaedic Services Ltd, Brown & Hayman Fisheries Ltd, Podjursky Motors. Special thanks to the Taranaki Community Health Trust for the \$10,000 donation given in March.



65 MISSIONS

1 JAN- 31 MAY

-  **37** EMERGENCY ACCIDENT AND MEDICAL
-  **11** SEARCH & RESCUE
-  **17** HOSPITAL TRANSFERS

WINCH APPEAL

Every rescue the Taranaki Rescue Helicopter undertakes has its challenges – and some more than others. Here in the Taranaki region with beautiful Mount Taranaki and our wild west coast, many of our rescues are in difficult terrain and we can't always land the helicopter. This is when we use the rescue winch.

Our rescue winch enables our crew to be winched down into hard to reach terrain, and in 2017 the winch was used in 12 per cent of all missions. These included rescuing injured climbers and trampers, responding to Personal Locator Beacon activations, a mountain bike

accident, and assisting Police with body recovery in inaccessible locations.

Like all our equipment, the winch requires scheduled maintenance. To ensure we can continue to save lives in our region's most treacherous areas, we are asking for your help. We need \$75,000 to pay for the rescue winch overhaul.

By filling in the form below, you are providing us with the financial support we need to keep our equipment operational. Thank you for your support.

I'D LIKE TO MAKE A DONATION TOWARDS THE WINCH OVERHAUL

I'd like to donate: \$ _____ **DONOR ID:** _____

Mr Mrs Ms Miss Other Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Postcode: _____

I'd like to receive my receipt by email Email: _____

Credit Card Number: Expiry:

Name on Card: _____ Signature: _____

Cheque Online: taranakirescue.org.nz Internet Banking: TSB 15 3956 0586572 00



If you would like to make a donation, please return this slip and your donation to:

TARANAKI RESCUE HELICOPTER TRUST
 DX PO BOX NP 90081,
 New Plymouth 4343
 P 0508 473 7283
 E: info@taranakirescue.org.nz
www.taranakirescue.org.nz

Individuals and companies may be able to claim a tax credit for donations; please contact IRD or your accountant for further information.

We respect your privacy, your details will not be shared.

Thank you so much!

Reference: Donor ID and surname

