

# On Track News

Newsletter Kindly Sponsored by  
More Than Mowers, Ngongotaha Ph 357 4748

ISSUE 4

MARCH 2011

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## Kia Ora - Greetings from the Chair

Another financial year has passed at the Trust. Summer is showing signs of Autumn and the Christchurch earthquakes have consumed us all over these past weeks. Our battered isles seem to have had their fair share of drama over this last year.

In Rotorua the percentage of those 'not working for wages' is among the highest in the country. The District has always had trouble growing at the rate of other centres. How do you attract Industry, trade and commerce to a place where everything has to be shipped in and out by road. Surely Rail freight and passenger rail would help to make Rotorua a more attractive lifestyle plus proposition. Though none of us are under any false illusions that building and maintaining rail lines and Stations will in itself bring profit. The figures would have to be done and the numbers crunched and the amount of traffic measured and commercial users signed up to make sure that there would be sufficient operation to 'make a difference'. No more 'Pie in the Sky' Airport Extension stuff for this District – please.

Speaking of being-under employed begs the question. If people are not working for wages why aren't they volunteering. The rules of volunteering are exactly the same as the rules of the paid workplace.

- # Have respect for fellow workers;
- # Don't nick the boss's stock, money or equipment; and
- # Learn to have a laugh at yourself when the going gets tough.

Many of those who are not used to turning up and doing a hard days work would benefit immensely from the challenges of being a volunteer and you can choose to volunteer in areas that you are passionate about because you are not relying on that passion to provide a living. Some people would say that spansks of working for the dole and is unacceptable. Well the future is very likely going to produce less and less work with technology going the way it is, so the sooner we all get a handle on being useful in this world the better.

So who are our current volunteers. Of course they are the Pensioners – the ones with a Gold Card. They know about work ethic, and they volunteer to a whole bunch of organisations. Good on them.

We have valuable volunteer hours coming from the men and women at Te Whare Hauora, with thanks to Rob Becket. We have the heavy manual labour of the PDs under able direction of their Supervisors. We have the Community Service Workers who come to us with all sorts of skills and allow for a continuing amount of trade work to be achieved.

To Kevin Quick who is our skilled Paint Brush user and Chairs the Executive, Rod Morrell who has been voted the man most likely to achieve with 3'6" Steam Engines, Esther Turner for her cataloguing, office and website skills, thank you.

Top Volunteer of the year must go to Rod Sievers without whom the Rail Park would not function at all. For your skills and knowledge in driving all equipment, engineering, building and everything else, including night watchman, we all thank you very very much.

I need, again, to thank our General Manager, Sharon Fleet for another year of shoulder to the wheel. The Trust receives Grants money to make payments to Sharon for her business acumen, however it goes without saying that she spends hours volunteering and is committed to running Community Projects centered on the Rail Park. Sharon made my vision of 'Kiwi Culture Day' come true. It will be an iconic day on the Ngongotaha Calendar from now on. Thank you Sharon from the bottom of my heart.

Yes we still need more volunteers. Volunteers to take possession of projects in all areas of operation. Retail Sales, Miniature Trains, Building and Equipment maintenance, 3'6" restorations. Look at our good mate Bill Skelton. He has taken over lawnmower maintenance and mowing the lawns – hasn't that made a big difference to how the Park looks.

Yes we are working with Neil and Jane Oppatt at Railriders and agree nothing is ever fast about getting Railway up and running – just like Mainland Cheese, good things take time.

There is a light at the end of the train tunnel that will keep rail functioning in our region.

If you can spare us an hour a week... a month..... Yes you've heard it before, but it would be appreciated.

Raewyn Saville—Chairperson



## Rail Park

Open Every  
Weekend and  
Public Holidays  
10.00am to  
4.00pm  
School Holidays  
Group Bookings  
Welcome

Trading Hours  
9.00am to 4.30pm  
Monday to Sunday



Member



## “Trust Happenings” - Sharon

- It was great to have volunteers & families join us at the Trust Christmas function early December. The Hangi was fantastic thanks to the amazing help and knowledge of Rodney Sievers.



- Kiwi Culture Day held at the Park on Waitangi Day was a huge success for both the Community and the Trust. We estimated about 2500 to 3000 people attended, Ronald McDonald was certainly a big hit many thanks to Linley Parry of McDonalds Rotorua for her awesome sponsorship. This is to become an annual community event. Many thanks to John Charteris, Porter Hire for the loan of the Truck.
- We have retired the old forklift last month and have purchased another bigger model, We didn't see Rod S for a few days only heard him on this new toy!!! You don't realise how much one was used until you don't have one.
- Firewood sales are starting to pick up, we have some super dry pine in at the moment if you are thinking about ordering some now is the time to do it.

- Painting of the Park buildings to match NZR Heritage colours has begun thanks to the help of a painter who has come to us through our Agency placements. Greg you are doing a fantastic job. Thanks also to Adlam Painters who have supplied the paint at cost price.
- A lot of work went into the running the Activity Days held on the 9<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> February. We really needed a few more volunteers to help. The Kohanga Reos / Kindergartens / Day Cares that attended had a fantastic time and really appreciated what we did. The 150 American and Canadian students from Australearn in Auckland once again were really blown away with what we did and are keen to bring another group back in July. We were able to achieve a number of tasks set for the days including the re-organising of the train equipment in the containers, shelving etc.
- The Park is looking great we have had so many positive comments, thanks to Bill we are now hopefully on top of the ride on operating issues (cross our fingers).



- Tickets for the \$100 Trust Power Voucher raffle are still available at only \$2 each. We have also been given 2 tickets to the Cats Musical which will also be raffled off at \$2 per ticket or 3 for \$5 Raewyn has these.
- We contacted the Rotorua Model Engineering Society to open the communications line in view of their dispute between Te Amorangi and themselves. Since then it appears that they will be shifting to Cambridge unfortunately, however we have been given their pedestrian over bridge which we picked up last week and are currently talking to them about relocating their station buildings to our Park.
- Thanks to Andy's Hire we have been the recipients of 3 pallets of treated plywood. This plywood has been and will be utilised for all sorts of applications from the Dog Jigger deck, doors for the train tunnel, container shelving as well as trailer decking and up stairs in the bunk room.
- The 2011 FRONZ Conference is to be held in Greymouth this year on 3rd to 6th June, Sharon Fleet and Alan Estcourt are to attend to represent the Trust.
- It was great to have Peter McCallum, FRONZ Executive and Engineering Manager for Taieri Gorge Railway visit us and we look forward to being able to work closer with the operations in Taieri Gorge.
- It is good to see volunteers wearing their name badges while they are on site. It helps visitors to clearly see who they are.
- Finally plans are a foot to bring our Q wagon home from Bush Tramway, apparently it should be able to fit onto our old Bedford.
- Sharon and the 2 Rodneys are also to arrange a visit to the Hamilton Rail Engineers to have a look at their 16" diesel build by Ikon Engineering.



Rotorua Ngongotaha Rail Trust  
**Invites you to attend our Annual  
 Public Meeting**

7.00pm, Thursday 19th May 2011  
 Ngongotaha Hall

Come along and hear what is  
 happening listen to our Guest Speakers  
 and join us for Supper afterwards

## **Railway Sleepers**

**Now available  
 Good Quality**

**\$45 each**

A few 2nds are available





## Token railway Signaling

The operation of a bidirectional single track line has obvious problems, the most serious of which is the possibility of two trains traversing the line travelling towards each other, both drivers unaware that the other is using the line.

Electric Train Tablet system is a form of railway signalling for single line railways used in several countries; it was first devised in Great Britain by engineer Edward Tyer after the Thorpe rail accident of 1874, which left 21 people dead. It was used in New Zealand for close to 100 years until June 1994. The system used a hard disk called a tablet, a form of token.

The purpose of the system was to use the tablet as a physical guarantee to the train crew that their train had exclusive right of way on the single line section. Without this they could not proceed beyond the section signal which protected entry to the single line.

With advances in electrical locking of the lever frame within the signal box, the tablet instrument also electrically locked the section signal lever. This was marked with a white stripe on the red background.



Main view of No. 6 instrument showing the restoring lever and the tablet tray in the "out" position



Tablets are in the form of a disc made of metal or fibre (with a gunmetal weight at the top of the magazine) about 4.5 inches (110 mm) in diameter, engraved with the names of the stations between which it is valid, and also provided with notches (also called configurations) or other indentations to ensure that it would fit only one pair of instruments. They were often painted in distinctive colours as an additional visual identification in areas where consecutive sections could each be controlled using the same type of instrument.

## On Loan to the Trust

Last week the Trust was approached by Mike and Heather Johnson, Ngongotaha, to offer us the opportunity to display two fully functioning Tyer Tablet Machines one from Waipukurau and the other from Hikurangi. The machines form part of the J A T Terry vast Collection of Railway memorabilia. We look forward to learning more of the history of these machines and having them fully functional.



### MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

#### REMINDER

*2011 Friends of the Trust  
Is Due 1st April 2011*

- \$10 per member
- \$20 per Family
- \$30 per Corporate

*Please find enclosed form to  
be completed and returned*

## Model Railway

It is good to see that donations made to the Model Room are being spent on improvements to the Model Room, last month we purchased 2 Transformers and Control Units for the lay outs. We are also looking at revamping the lighting in the room and also under the veranda outside.

Unfortunately we discovered that our Thomas layout suffered a significant lose last month with 8 pieces of rolling stock going missing, this is devastating and really shakes our trust in allowing free access. Thanks to Progress Ngongotaha Kokiri Ngongotaha who have contributed \$337 towards helping us replace the missing stock and the Trust have topped it up to \$400.

We are currently toying with the idea of hosting a model railway expo and it is only at the early planning stage for this, if you are interested in helping please contact Rodney Sievers or Sharon Fleet.



**Rotorua Rail  
Model Railway Group**

**Meet every  
Thursday Evening  
6.30pm to 8.30pm**

**Entry is by  
Gold Coin Donation**

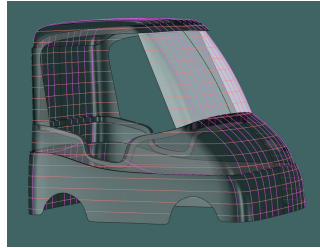




## Rail Riders Tourism Operation Progress By Neil Oppatt

The production of the first seven V3000 hybrid RailCruisers is fully underway.

The V3000 hybrid RailCruiser body design is now longer to provide more leg room front and back and it has single point entry on each side for both the front and rear seats. The wind-screen is now sloped back and curved to deflect driving rain with the window moved further away from the faces of the front seated passengers to provide a more comfortable experience.



Final V3000 hybrid RailCruiser body design

Visually the biggest difference in the new design is the addition of the front bonnet, providing more leg room.

The V3000 hybrid RailCruiser now comes with onboard forced air heating for those cold winter Mamaku days and has a 16hp petrol engine and generator to assist the batteries on the steep climb to Mamaku. The generator also extends the operating range of the RailCruiser to allow for long range cruising.

This photo is of progress with the construction of RC2 and RC3 at Ikon Engineering. Ikon has almost completed installation of all sub assemblies, components and powertrain to the chassis.



RC2 and RC3 at Ikon Engineering nearly completed and waiting for body

The two chassis, as at 11<sup>th</sup> February, are at the stage of requiring the body to complete the construction of the RailCruisers.

### RailBikes

RailBiking has always been an important part of our Business Plan to obtain another diversified income stream. The lower capital and operating costs of the RailBike provides the opportunity for a rail based product at the lower priced end of available tourist activities.

The downside is that unlike RailCruisers it does require physical effort by the customer which limits the potential market and is weather dependent which will very much limit it to a restricted number of operational days.

We are planning two RailBiking excursions, Rotorua to Ngongotaha and Mamaku to Bart's Crossing Ngatira.

Last week we confirmed with Ikon Engineering the basic design for the first proto-type RailRiders RailBike. It will be a four seater, with two rear recumbent pedaling positions and two front passenger seats.

Ikon Engineering is in the process of building this RailBike with our intention to undertake testing and type approval between now and the start of summer when we intend to offer RailBiking.

### Track Clearing – Tarukenga to Rotorua

We have finally cleared the track from Tarukenga to Rotorua of a number of years of rampant growth. One section comprised gorse growing from the sides and centre of the

track above head height for over a 1km in length.

Bryan Z dealt to it with our rotary slasher on the back of the Rail Trust tractor and then Bryan, my two sons and I went at the gorse missed by the tractor with handheld loppers.

The section from Tarukenga to Ngongotaha has now been opened up. It is now more open than it has been for a number of years and ready for RailCruising.

### Mamaku to Tarukenga Track Maintenance

The weather over the past few months has made for ideal pest weed growth and our once perfectly cleared first operation section of the track, Mamaku to Tarukenga Station has seen rampant weed growth. Bryan Z has been active spraying this section to keep the weeds off the ballast.

The stormy weather of the past couple of weeks has resulted in the odd tree falling across the track; we have taken the opportunity to take out a number of other suspect trees to reduce future risk of trees falling on the track.

### Mamaku Station Development

Mamaku Station is now taking shape with the Railway Station all but complete. We are presently undertaking landscaping, laying lawns and completing construction of the carpark.

The immediate area on the opposite side of the rail in front of the Station is being leveled and grassed to provide a picnic area and most importantly an area where we can accommodate up to a 12m x 30m marquee for special events such as conference, company incentive groups, weddings and other special events. The Station can accommodate up to 100 people for sit down dinner by utilising both the interior and the covered deck.

Conference delegates can be transported by RailCruisers from Rotorua, Ngongotaha or Tarukenga Stations to Mamaku for lunch or dinner.

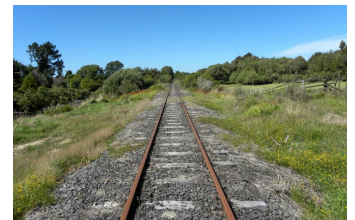
We have run secondary lines off a turntable on the main line



Kathy & party trying to undertake a track inspection back in Aug10 between the new Tarukenga Station & Ngongotaha which has now been cleared



Bryan Mowing the section of the track between Ngongotaha and Rotorua



A relatively clean track looking from Mamaku Station towards Ngongotaha



Completed Mamaku Station with secondary track waiting to be ballasted



to the RailCruiser storage provided by shipping containers and for off main line rail vehicle parking.

We have completed the installation of two 40 foot containers positioned back to back with the ends cut out to provide secure storage for the first eight RailCruisers. At one end we can back up and load RailCruisers directly onto our road trailer and the other end is linked to the main line through a turntable.



RailCruiser Storage at Mamaku Station and earthworks being undertaken in the background for the carpark

Shipping containers are acting as an efficient secure method for storing RailCruisers with a track laid through the middle.

### Rotorua Railway Station

We are presently in the design stage for a high profile Rotorua Railway Station with an information and booking office on Lake Road at the site of the last Rotorua Railway Station.



Old Rotorua Railway Station site at Lake Road with the overbridge to be removed in the background

Lake Road is the main tourist route into Rotorua off Fairy Springs Road from Auckland.

Tenders are about to be advertised for the major road works which includes removal of the road overbridge, stopping of the railway line on the northern side of Lake Road, the building of foundations for a parallel run around line and installation of a large round-about at the junction of Lake Road, Railway Road and Biak Streets. Our new Railway Station will have a high profile location at this round-about on the corner of Lake Road and Railway Road.

At this stage it is not known if the successful contractor will remove the overbridge and build the round-about before or after the Rugby World Cup. If the work is started before then it has to be completed before the World Cup, a tight timeframe.

We of course would like it started before to have it in place for the World Cup and the next summer tourist season.

Our concern is that the hidden nature of the previous Railway Station with the overbridge in place made it open to vandalism and is difficult to see from Lake Road to provide the high profile we are after.

The road will also be closed to all road traffic for a month whilst the overbridge is removed and we do not want to be based in the middle of a road works site for many months.

However the marketing opportunities of being based in the city rather than at Mamaku are very compelling. From Rotorua we will operate a half day excursion to Mamaku initially and when the 1,300 sleepers just west of Mamaku have been replaced we will also offer a full day excursion to Bart's Crossing Ngatira.

This will then complete a range of RailCruising and RailBiking products on the line from 1 hour & half day RailBiking excursions to 2 hour, half & full day RailCruising excursions.

**Rail Licence** Obtaining a Rail Licence for the operation has been one of our biggest tasks to complete before we can start commercial operations. This is all brand new for both us and NZTA.

Never before have customers been able to hire their own rail vehicle to undertake a self-drive rail excursion. Whilst we call it self-drive, in practice a combination of onboard computers, anti-collision systems and in-track magnets detected by an onboard magnetic sensor tightly control the journey of each RailCruiser.

Where RailCruisers travel across roads the complete road crossing operation of each RailCruiser will be tightly regulated and managed by a Rail Guide. A Rail Guide being a new qualified railway position requiring strict training. All RailCruiser movements are controlled from a centralised train control centre.

The last of the paperwork for our first excursion to be established between Mamaku & Tarukenga was submitted by us to NZTA just after New Year. We are hoping that by March 2011 we will have approval to start commercial operations.

Then there will be more work to achieve approval to operate both RailCruising and RailBiking on the Tarukenga to Rotorua section of the track, which includes getting signoff for our road crossing procedures.



One of three bridges on the Family RailBiking section of the line between Rotorua and Ngongotaha

**Stolen Sleepers** Finally on not such a positive note we had thought that we had secured the far reaches of the line (Putaruru end) from thieves with all forestry road gates with access to the track locked to non-forestry vehicles. It will be some time before we will be able to link up all the stolen sections of the line and in the meantime we are trying to protect those sections left from theft.

As a result of a tip-off from a member of the Rail Trust who had been walking on the track about 2.5km from Putaruru, Bryan and my two sons went to pick up the lifted hardware and sleepers to find the two thieves stacking sleepers and hardware at a road access.

Unfortunately they were unable to get a good look at the two who immediately took off into the bush. A quick phone call to Putaruru police who we have been working with had three police cars blocking exits within 10 minutes. Unfortunately they and a Rotorua police dog called in lost track of the two thieves.

We have now added a number of satellite (where there is no cellular coverage) and cellular linked tamper alarms to the far reaches of the track which are designed to trigger our paging system if anyone tries to remove rails from sleepers.

The paged message tells us where and what has been disturbed, the system also tells us when the battery voltage is getting low. This is a relatively cheap system to protect isolated rail infrastructure. The equipment is very small and easily hidden. Battery life is about 3 months.

We are happy to sell our system to any rail organisation who wishes to also protect rail assets in isolated areas, such as buildings, track and monitor gate openings.



## Park Community Partnership Page

Each newsletter we want to tell readers about one of the other groups that use our land at Ngongotaha for their Club. This issue features :

### Dog Sports Rotorua Inc

Dog Sports Rotorua will be 5 years old on the 31<sup>st</sup> March this year.

The success of the Club is largely down to the Rail Trust giving the Group a home. We are one of the very few non Kennel Club Dog Sporting Groups in the country.

The group was initially formed to give keen dog trainers a training ground, as to be successful in dog training one needs to train more than once a week. A lot of us didn't have a big enough property to put a few hurdles on to train agility so we needed an accessible space to do our training. The other need was for a ground to compete at Flygility – the sport where the dog runs 30mtrs to a box with a tennis ball in it, triggers the box, grabs the ball and comes back through the obstacles to the handler.

This sport is also not affiliated to the Kennel Club and was not being run in Rotorua at the time our Group was formed.

Since then the group has grown to encompass Obedience Classes – both the sport, and good behaviour, run by Sylvia Bow and Lois Galliers, Agility overseen by Judy Casey and trained by Raewyn Saville, both Flyball and Flygility trained by Raewyn, Eukanuba Puppy School run by Amanda Druery and classes aimed at dogs who are not coping with fear or other animals or people, or who are likely to chase cycles, sheep etc. We call it aversion training and it is often done at the dog's home.

We run competitions such as Flygility National Sports Days where people come from all over the North Island to compete

but which is also open at its lower levels to anyone who walks in to the grounds with their dog. We have games days such as our Doggylympics which are annual, Racegame which is on through the year and other inventions such as snakes and ladders with dogs as the counters. All competition days and games days are open to allcomers. Entry fees are very low at \$2 per game so that it is affordable fun and achievable Dog sport for everyone.

For those who wish to go further and have the time and patience we will help you with that as well.

Dog Sports Club Captain is Rosslyn Prichard Ph. 3486620, Vice Captain is Fran Knapman, Secretary Sharon Mear, Publicity and fundraising Emily McGowan, and Treasurer Karen Prichard.

Feel free to use the fully fenced oval space in the middle of the miniature train tracks, as an exercise area for your dog. Please pick up all doggy do and put it in the container provided. Phone Raewyn on 3322171 or Sylvia on 3456658 for more information on Training. Phone Rosslyn for information about Club events and other activities. We are keen to expand to a 'walking your dog' group in the near future. Anyone who wants to be involved is very welcome. We make a mean morning tea on Saturday morning as well. Our sincere thanks to the Rail Trust for accommodating our group. Specially as the Rotorua District Council declined our application for public land to run our Club on.

We pay a monthly koha and pay our own power bill. Our lawns are mown and we have access to running water and toilets. What more could a small Club ask for..... woof.



### CATS

Musical Showing  
18th March to 2nd April  
At the Civic Theatre

We have been given 2 tickets  
Valued at \$90  
RAFFLE TICKETS Only  
\$2.00ea or 3 for \$5.00  
See Raewyn Saville

The Trust wish to acknowledge & Thank the following:





## Project Updates

1. **Hudswell Clark** (Rodney Morrell) This is a huge project & at a recent Executive meeting it was agreed to put this project on hold in favour of restoring the Barclay 1130.
2. **Buick Jigger** (Rodney Sievers) Still having problems sourcing a 1932 blue flame carburettor would appreciate some help here if you know of anyone that could have one or may have parts for one. The petrol tank has been repaired and the deck almost finished thanks to the plywood donated by Andys Hire.
3. **Clubrooms Interior Refurbishment** (Raewyn Saville) Steady progress is being made with the up stairs bunk room. The electrician has been in to wire it up and the walls and ceiling are almost completely lined. Just need to trim the window and wall plaster then paint. Once completed then new carpet is to go down.
4. **Flat Bed Wagons Restoration / Preservation** (Kevin Quick) This project is now completed and has been signed off.
5. **Safety Case** (Sharon Fleet & Raewyn Saville) The Asset Register is now completed and work is slowly continuing.
6. **16" Track Extension** (Rodney Sievers & Sharon Fleet) Work has restarted on the 16" track extension again, the track is about to be surveyed & pegged so the new group of Trade Education trainees can continue the earth works and lay the prebuilt track. We still require a good amount of ballast and large pipes to take the line on and off the island.
7. **(NEW) Sir Roy Restoration** (Jim Ross) Sir Roy is due to have his boiler and braking system over hauled. A funding application will have to be completed to achieve this.
8. **(NEW) Barclay 1130 Restoration** (Rodney Morrell) Following identification of components for the Barclay it appears that there is little wear and tear, cylinders in perfect condition only problem is the frame, quotes are currently being sort for fabrication of the frame plates to get this project started.

## Please Help to Restore Me!



### Editors Note.

If you have a group which needs a meeting place or a place to run an event or as a start finish for a road race or school fundraiser, please call Sharon on Ph 357 5484.

As a Charitable Trust our Job in the Community is to assist the Community to Succeed.

## Rotorua Society of Model Engineers Inc

It is with sadness that we heard at the beginning of this year that the Rotorua Society of Model Engineers were unable to renegotiate a lease with the Te Amorangi Museum and have commenced removal of their well established network of tracks for temporary storage. The Society have been based out at the Holdens Bay site since 1975 which is evident in the beautiful landscaping of their tracks, tunnels and bridges

A little bird told us that they may be re-establishing themselves over at Cambridge even though the Trust made several attempts to establish communication with them to look at re-establishing themselves out at our Park.

I am thrilled to let you know that we have been contacted and offered their wonderful buildings for our Park, we have already dismantled and brought home the pedestrian over bridge and over the next couple of weeks removing the main station building and storage garage below. The erection of the buildings will form a special project in itself as we will need to draw up a site plan and acquire the appropriate building permits etc.

On behalf of the Trust we wish to thank the Rotorua Society of Model Engineers and wish them well with the future plans and we would love to host them out at our Park once a 7 1/4" unloading ramp is constructed. Although our new forklift may well be able to be used as an interim.





**Rotorua Ngongotaha  
Rail Trust**

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**SHOP OPEN**

Every Weekend and Public Holiday  
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- Domestic mowers
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- Chainsaws
- Weedeaters



**Ph 357 4748**

10 Hall Rd, Ngongotaha

**We Service What We Sell!**

**Sponsors Thank You**

It gives me pleasure to recognise and thank our contributing sponsors of the Trust. With their financial and in kind contributions we continue to bring benefits back to you and our community. We encourage you to support them as they support us.



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