



LOWE CORPORATION  
**RESCUE  
HELICOPTER  
SERVICE**

# OFF THE LANDING PAD

SUMMER NEWSLETTER 2025

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## RESCUE HELICOPTER SURVIVOR BACK ON THE HORSE

Elsthorpe farmer Harvey Nelson is back in the saddle one year on from an horrific riding accident that thanks to the Hawke's Bay rescue helicopter, saved his life and limb.

It's been a long road to recovery for the hill country farmer following the fall that brutally snapped his femur and tibia but seven gruelling surgeries, a painstaking skin graft and months of rehabilitation have made him more determined than ever, to get back to doing what he loves.

"Mustering on horseback is what I know and love, I've got a way to go before I'll be doing that again but the accident that day was nothing the horse did wrong. It was just bad luck and I'm so grateful I'm here to tell the tale. I'm thrilled the rescue helicopter picked me up that day because I probably wouldn't be here otherwise."

Time and tenacity have helped Harvey through the aftermath of his accident and he now goes nowhere on the farm without his personal locator beacon – a purchase made thanks to his aunt and uncle Jill and Rod Dean.

"I didn't have a locator beacon or any cellphone coverage the day of the accident but have since got a PLB, it's a must. I would have only been lying there for a matter of minutes instead of five hours if I had one. I now carry it on my belt and urge anyone who lives and works in remote locations to get one, it could save your life.



*Harvey in his happy place.*

"We all think 'it won't happen to me – but it does and it did.' The Hawke's Bay rescue helicopter is a service we can't do without so we all need to get behind it whenever we can.

"There's no way six men could have pulled me out of where I was lying at the bottom of a gorge, my rescue would have been physically impossible without the chopper. The pilot that day was pretty gutsy, there was not much room for error and it's amazing he did what he did."

Overcoming adversity seems to be a hallmark trait of Harvey. He and wife Rachel and their young family suffered significant devastation following damage to their Waimarama farm in the floods of 2022, resulting in the loss of their home. A relocation to an Elsthorpe farm block earlier this year has offered a new start and a chance to set new goals.

**contined over page>>**





Harvey at the hangar

“When the accident happened I was really fit and healthy thanks to my training for Coast to Coast, my surgeon is convinced that’s what helped save my leg and aided my ability to heal,” says Harvey.

In search of a new challenge, Harvey’s confirmed he is eyeing up the ultimate comeback – another tilt at Coast to Coast. An approach over New Year by former winner of the race, George Christenson has Harvey on the brink of taking part in a tandem team with George (pending doctor’s advice).

“My physio has always said there’s no reason why I couldn’t one day have another crack at it. If I do have a go, it’ll be tackling the cycling leg.”

Being back on his bike and in the saddle for brief stints has Harvey reflecting on just how far he’s come.

“It’s been a tough haul for my family, they’ve been at my beck and call for a year, our youngest boys Sam and Joe

helped us shift house and run the farm, stepping up doing things kids their age shouldn’t have to, while Rach has been my rock. They’ve been outstanding.”

As for Harvey’s leg. “I’ve been told by my specialists that I may not need a bone graft after all. It’ll never be a skinny shank like the other leg, but that doesn’t worry me. I’m not about to hit the Catwalk anytime soon!”

Harvey laughs, “it’s halved in size and the specialists say it’s ‘a good flap!’. They’re keen to do a bit of liposuction on it but to be honest, they’ve probably got more needy patients than me. I’ve always had chicken legs so having one bulky one is fine by me.”



Harvey's leg before and after.

## CYCLONE GABRIELLE TWO YEARS ON

As Hawke’s Bay commemorates the second anniversary of Cyclone Gabrielle, Hawke’s Bay’s Rescue Helicopter Trust is bolstering its ability to respond, in preparedness for future natural disasters.

Gabrielle was incredibly challenging for the region’s emergency services, when flooding knocked out connectivity to much of the region, radio communications were severely impacted.

A recent call for donations to purchase a mini Starlink kit resulted in such an overwhelming response, the crew were able to purchase Starlink and a back-up generator.

Starlink will enhance our ability to respond when you need us most, making our service more resilient, should another catastrophe occur - deployed in a matter of minutes to support emergency responders in natural disaster scenarios.



## // MEET THE CREW - JACK FAXON JR.

Hawke's Bay Rescue Helicopter's emergency response team is highly skilled, dedicated, and adaptable, with each member bringing a strong sense of commitment to their role. In this edition, we'd like to introduce our newest recruit, Critical Care Flight Paramedic, Jack Faxon Jr.

### // Where have you come from (personally and professionally) before this role?

I began my emergency services career in high school as a volunteer with the local fire brigade. While I found this work both enjoyable and rewarding, I wanted to do more and to be challenged more so I turned to prehospital medicine. This led me to train as an Emergency Medical Technician in the United States while also working as a wildland firefighter.

In 2003, I moved to New Zealand, where I worked in various industries before joining Hato Hone St John in 2008 in Auckland. After completing their internal training programme, I began practicing at paramedic level. Shortly after, I relocated to Hawke's Bay to take up a single-crewed role.

### // What made you want to become an air-based medic – why does that appeal to you, and why do you enjoy the challenge?

My first experience in a helicopter was in 2001 aboard a Bell UH-1 Iroquois. At first, I wasn't keen—between the noise, the machine shaking, and the overall look of the thing, it didn't seem that safe. But once we were in the air, I thought, 'this is such a cool job—maybe I'll pursue this someday.'



Jack Faxon Jr.

The air industry appeals to me because it's another unique mode of transportation with its own set of challenges. Being an isolated practitioner requires reliance on your team, and the camaraderie in air-based teams is unparalleled. Honestly, that camaraderie is one of the biggest draws for me.

### // Tell us about your home life and what you like to get up to in Hawke's Bay in your spare time.

I'm incredibly fortunate to have a wonderful wife who means the world to me, and we have four clever, beautiful children who keep us on our toes. In our spare time, we enjoy spending time as a family, and hiking. The kids are involved in multiple sports, which keeps us busy, but it's a joy to see them active and engaged.

Please join us in welcoming Jack to the team! //

## THANK YOU TO THE FOLLOWING GROUPS WHO HAVE DONATED TO THE TRUST RECENTLY



- Cape Trail Run
- Twist MX Argyll \$2,000
- Pak 'n' Save Hastings \$1,000 voucher towards HBRHT 32nd birthday celebrations
- Hereworth School Hamilton Logan Givealittle Page and Tribute Walk \$2,447
- St Andrew's Church \$1,300
- Tasman Smith Charitable Trust \$5,000
- 2024 Trucking for HB Child Cancer 'Ride in a Truck' Day \$5,000
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- Wairoa Veterinary Club Inc \$5,000
- Te Whanua Aroha \$1,000
- Hastings Orphans Club Inc \$2,000
- Taradale & Districts RSA \$1,250



## COMMUNITY CHEER

We are so grateful to the Hawke's Bay Community for supporting our service so we can be available 24/7 for our region. Below are a few special people who have been raising valuable funds for us recently.

### DO YOU HAVE AN IDEA FOR A FUNDRAISER?

Please contact Beth – email [beth@hbhrt.org.nz](mailto:beth@hbhrt.org.nz) or call (06) 878 1630 to discuss how we can help you, help us!



### Charity Auction Delivers Vital Funding

Property Brokers Hawke's Bay's annual Charity Auction last October raised over \$90,000 to support local charities, with funds benefiting The Cancer Society of New Zealand, The Hawke's Bay Rescue Helicopter Trust, and The Property Brokers Make a Difference Fund.

Money raised on the night goes a long way to keep our lifesaving service operational 24/7, 365 days of the year so we can be there when you need us most.

Thank you to the team at Property Brokers Hawke's Bay for supporting your local community!



### In for the Long Haul - 'Ride in a Truck Day'

Trucking for Hawke's Bay Childcare, 'Ride in a Truck Day' gives children an opportunity to take a ride in a big rig, with funds raised supporting: St Johns, Hato Hone Ambulance, The Hawke's Bay Rescue Helicopter Trust, Little Elms Charitable Trust and families requiring short term accommodation whilst they have a child in hospital.

The kids loved living out their dreams of riding in a big rig to the A&P Showgrounds – a huge thank you must go to the incredible volunteers at Rapid Relief Team NZ in Hawke's Bay who kept the large crowds well fed and watered!



### Hereworth Honours 'Hamilton's Hundy'

In November, Hereworth School students joined members of the Logan Family to finish what the late Hamilton Logan started – to hit his target of 100km, on what would have been his 100th birthday.

It was a wonderful occasion, as students from all year groups walked all morning to get near the goal before all 310 boys and girls, special guests and the Logans themselves walked the final kilometre together. It was a fitting tribute to Hamilton, bringing together so many of the things he cared for – the school, the community and family.

In the process, students raised \$7,000 to donate to the three charities he was passionate about – Hawke's Bay Rescue Helicopter Trust being one of them.



### Tahaenui Christmas Fete

Thank you to the Tahaenui Christmas Fete who donated \$6,300 from their 2024 Christmas event. Despite inclement weather on the day, hundreds of locals turned out to support the popular market, with all proceeds supporting the rescue helicopter.



## // RECENT MISSIONS

The Lowe Corporation Rescue Helicopter team has continued to demonstrate remarkable effectiveness in helicopter rescue operations, saving numerous lives in often remote locations. Our dedicated crew performed **379** lifesaving missions in 2024, assisting a total of **317** patients. As 2025 kicks off, their skill and specialist clinical expertise will continue to be called on.



**9/12/24**

### Stingray Attack

A 'freak' stingray attack on a keen local fisherman at a southern Hawke's Bay beach has left the man hailing the lifesaving efforts of Hawke's Bay's Rescue Helicopter crew.

Eli Carroll was wading out to sea to drop some crayfish pots with a friend at Owahanga, 40 minutes south of Pongaroa, a few weeks ago when he unwittingly stood on a stingray in knee-deep water provoking a violent attack.

"I knew straight away I'd stood on something as I felt the vibration under my feet. Next thing I knew, this huge tail came whipping out of the water, hitting me hard in my thighs. I knew at that point that I was in big trouble."

The first stroke of the ray's serrated tail pierced a laceration 10 centimetres long in Eli's right upper thigh, before seconds later striking his left leg snapping its barb off and leaving it embedded.

"The first thing I thought was 'I need to get to shore and call the helicopter, fast!' Where we were was quite remote and I felt myself fading, knowing I wasn't going to be awake long enough to speak to the paramedic.

Critical Care Flight Paramedic Heath Gillot treated Eli at the scene.

"When we arrived Eli was alert but in immense pain and bleeding from both legs. He had a large gash to the right inner thigh near the groin and the barb from the stingray was protruding from the inner left side of his leg. Both injuries to the legs appeared to have narrowly missed Eli's femoral artery and we were unable to determine the depth of the barb that was lodged in his left leg."

Eli was airlifted to the nearest facility at Palmerston North Hospital where he underwent emergency surgery to remove the barb.

"Had the delay been more significant I believe that Eli might not have had such a favourable outcome," says Heath. "In addition, the location of his injuries were mere millimeters from major vessels and organs that could have significantly impacted his survival."



**30/8/24**

### Alpine Hunter Rescue

Hamish (Rambo) Ramsay is one of our most experienced pilots having flown nearly 10,000 hours over his career so far. A few months ago, he completed one of his most complex rescue missions, saving two young male hunters off a cliff face in high winds.

Despite the challenges, the crew coordinated with ground teams and used advanced navigation technology to pinpoint the exact location and recover the pair via a winch to the aircraft. The medical team on board provided lifesaving care en route, ensuring the hunter's condition stabilised during the flight. The team's swift response, expert handling of the complex terrain, and ability to remain calm under pressure were pivotal in saving the hunter's lives.



**22/11/24**

### Cruise Ship Emergency Winch

When a serious medical event happens on a cruise ship, a passenger's only lifeline is the rescue helicopter. Luckily Hawke's Bay's Rescue Helicopter crew: Pilot, Bill Hartree, Critical Care Flight Paramedic, Cornelius Venter and Air Crew Officer, Dave Bayfield were on hand ready to answer the call. The team were tasked to winch a male patient off the rooftop of a cruise liner near East Cape. The patient was flown straight to Waikato Hospital for urgent further treatment.



Each and every mission is memorable for its own unique set of challenges, but in all cases, the team's training, expertise, and unyielding dedication to the job ensures the best possible outcomes for the patient. As always, it's a privilege to be in a position to assist those in need, and while such operations can be challenging, the satisfaction of making a lifesaving difference is unparalleled.



*Lowe Corporation Rescue Helicopter Service Chief Pilot Charlie Beetham*

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This list was prepared on the 16<sup>th</sup> of January 2025.

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