



Official Release

Rescue Helicopter's Iconic Principal Sponsor Hands Over Baton After Record Tenure

For immediate release: Monday 13th July 2026

Hawke's Bay Rescue Helicopter Trust's long standing Principal Sponsor is handing over the baton after more than three decades of dedicated emergency air support for the region.

It marks the end of an era of unwavering sponsorship from the Lowe Corporation, whose outstanding contribution helped establish the Hawke's Bay Rescue Helicopter Trust's inception as a dedicated rescue operation back in 1992.

Lowe Corporation Managing Director Andy Lowe says continuing to facilitate hundreds of lifesaving missions each year has been incredibly important in honouring his father Graeme Lowe's legacy.

"Continuing my father's mission to provide air medical lifesaving support for the community over 34 years has been an immense honour and a privilege not lost on my family.

"We have been proud to have been aligned with such a critical community cause and step aside with a deep sense of gratitude and positivity for the service's future."

The focus going forward for Andy Lowe will hinge around supporting local environmental and educational trusts; notably his conservation brainchild - Cape Sanctuary, alongside his other community interests including youth at risk.

The Cape Sanctuary conservation project has been running since 2006; tackling habitat restoration, pest control and the translocation of many endangered species including around 1500 kiwi to the Cape Peninsula and Ocean Beach. Cape Sanctuary is a model

showing that sustainable conservation is about enabling endangered species to coexist with human habitation, food production and recreation.

Hawke's Bay Rescue Helicopter Trust Chair Blair O'Keeffe reflects on the history and significance of Graeme and Andy Lowe's long-standing association.

"We are incredibly grateful for Lowe Corporation's ongoing support of our air rescue service and would like to recognise how integral its contributions have been in delivering countless vital lifesaving missions across Hawke's Bay and beyond."

Originally established primarily to respond to water rescues, Hawke's Bay's Rescue Helicopter Service expanded in 1989 to include patient transfers, police searches, accident recovery and marine emergencies.

By the early 1990's, the service secured sponsorship support from then Lowe Walker NZ Ltd before a name change move to become Lowe Corporation in 1997.

Blair O'Keeffe says the rest is history.

"The sheer duration of consistent significant sponsorship from Lowe Corporation is remarkable and a reflection of the commitment and unassuming humility of a respected Hawke's Bay family. There's no doubt the Lowes have left a lasting legacy.

"As we look to the future and imminent arrival of the region's new helicopter, our mission remains the same – to continue to provide a dedicated rescue helicopter service to those who require urgent medical, or search and rescue support in the Hawke's Bay Region, and most importantly, to keep our services free and available 24/7 to everyone in our community. We warmly welcome our new Principal Sponsor in support of this."

It's just been announced that the rescue helicopter's new Principal Sponsor will be the Wallace Foundation, led by its founder Havelock North based Commercial Property Developing trailblazer, Jonathan Wallace alongside his wife Maree.

Hawke's Bay Rescue Helicopter Trust Chief Executive Andy Quayle says the Trust and operational crew are highly optimistic about the new partnership.

"From one philanthropic Hawke's Bay family to another, the baton has been passed to help steward our lifesaving service into its next chapter.

We are delighted to welcome the Wallace Foundation on board and look forward to growing our relationship at what is an exciting time for our rescue services."

The timing aligns perfectly with the imminent arrival of the region's new Airbus H145 – set to significantly enhance patient care and boost reliability in remote or challenging conditions.

Jonathan Wallace says supporting the service at a pivotal time in its history was a deeply personal decision.

“Hawke’s Bay is where we call home and the region has been incredibly good to us. As a family we support many community initiatives but feel passionately about supporting the lifesaving work of the region’s rescue helicopter in a larger, more enduring way.

“The critical role the rescue helicopter plays in helping anyone, anywhere, at any time at no cost to the patient makes the Hawke’s Bay Rescue Helicopter Service pretty unique, and that’s what’s driven us to get behind it. We’re very motivated to partner with such a vital essential service providing an anchor of support, alongside other community sponsors.”

We are proud to announce the service is now officially named the **Wallace Foundation Rescue Helicopter**.

As the region's primary emergency air support, Hawke's Bay's Rescue Helicopter averages around 400 callouts per year and relies heavily on corporate partnership and community donations to perform each and every lifesaving mission.

ENDS.

For media enquiries or to request an interview please contact:

Alisha Neilson

Marketing and Communications Specialist

Hawke’s Bay Rescue Helicopter Trust

021 672 718

alisha@hbhrt.org.nz