



Official Release

Wallace Foundation Rescue Helicopter Charity Auction a Sell-Out Success

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Hawke's Bay's critical air medical lifeline the Wallace Foundation Rescue Helicopter Service is celebrating the highly successful return of its Charity Auction - with a sell-out crowd and results exceeding expectation.

The inaugural 'Off the Record: Beyond the Black Jersey' event, held at the Napier Conference Centre on Saturday, marked the return of the Trust's much-loved Charity Auction following a seven year hiatus.

The event brought together 300 guests for an exclusive and candid Q&A-style panel featuring a line-up of All Black legends, who shared insights into leadership, high performance, pressure and life beyond the black jersey.

The evening then turned its attention to the Charity Auction, with guests bidding on an outstanding collection of experiences, memorabilia, artwork and exclusive opportunities.

In total, the event generated over \$130,000 in revenue via ticket sales and the exclusive collection of limited auction items. This significantly exceeded the Trust's expectations for Year One of its new concept 'Off the Record' and delivered a timely boost for the Wallace Foundation Rescue Helicopter Service.

Hawke's Bay Rescue Helicopter Trust Chief Executive Andy Quayle is elated with the result.

“To see 300 people fill the room for the return of our Charity Auction was an outstanding result, but what really surpassed our expectations was the generosity of those guests and the incredible support from our donors and sponsors,” Mr Quayle says.

“The energy in the room was palpable, and it was clear from the outset that people were there not only to enjoy a great night, but to make a genuine contribution to the future of the region’s rescue helicopter service.

“The fundraising result is a fantastic achievement and demonstrates just how strongly Hawke’s Bay gets behind its rescue helicopter. Every dollar raised helps support our ability to provide this essential service when people need it most.”

From the outset, the evening was designed to differentiate from traditional charity auctions. Combining an exclusive panel of high-profile speakers, with a very limited range of only 14 listed catalogue auction items, sought to create an evening of interest, insight and entertainment, balanced with the opportunity for attendees to contribute via the auction.

The auction itself featured an impressive collection of items and experiences donated by businesses and supporters from across the region and beyond.

The standout auction package was a House of Travel luxury seven-day stay for up to 12 people at The Reef House in Vanuatu, with return flights for two from Auckland with Solomon Airlines.

The Trust team were in awe of the generosity of supporters. “We know there’s a huge amount of goodwill towards the rescue helicopter, but the level of magnanimity from our auction donors was genuinely beyond anything we anticipated.

“From incredible All Blacks memorabilia and exclusive ASB Tennis Classic tickets through to local artwork, luxury travel and experiences money can’t ordinarily buy, the auction line-up was exceptional.

“Then to see people get behind our items so enthusiastically on the night - thanks in no small part to the wit and skill of auctioneer Neville Clark (‘Clarky’) was incredible. The result is a huge win for the rescue helicopter and for the Hawke’s Bay community.”

‘Off the Record: Beyond the Black Jersey’ was developed alongside Bayleys Hawke’s Bay to provide a new style of fundraising event supporting the Wallace Foundation Rescue Helicopter Service. Bayleys Hawke’s Bay Principal James Macpherson says the concept was always about creating something different, driven internally via agent Tony Rasmussen.

“The Black Jersey is a Kiwi institution, and the legends who have worn it continue to draw admiration well beyond the whistle. We knew we had a great panel and the crowd embraced it.

“We’re proud to have been involved in bringing ‘Off the Record: Beyond the Black Jersey’ to Hawke’s Bay in support of such an important regional service. We’re excited for where we go with it next.”

Host of the evening, renowned Master of Ceremonies David Todd ‘Toddy’ is well accustomed to interviewing some of New Zealand’s most respected figures but agrees this event had something special.

“Our panel spanned 60 years of All Blacks rugby from both a playing perspective through Ian Kirkpatrick, David Kirk and Taine Randell as players and Darren Shand’s experience over 20 years and 256 tests as All Blacks Manager. Given that, we heard insights from different eras that uncovered principles that have stood the test of time.

“The willingness of each of our panellists to speak so freely, given the event was “off the record” meant that those in attendance were treated to a great mix of wisdom and hilarity. There was a take home message for everyone in the room. I’ll have to admit; it was a real ‘fan boy’ moment to be on stage with such an illustrious panel.”

For the Trust, the success of ‘Beyond the Black Jersey’ provides a strong foundation for the future of the ‘Off the Record’ series and the return of its Charity Auction.

“This has been an outstanding night for the Trust,” Mr Quayle says.

“It comes at an important time for the Wallace Foundation Rescue Helicopter Service, with fundraising continuing to play a critical role in supporting the operation and ensuring our new H145 remains equipped to respond to emergencies across Hawke’s Bay and beyond.

“We are incredibly grateful to everyone who attended, donated, sponsored, bid and supported the event. The success of this evening directly contributes to our ability to continue providing a lifesaving service to the people of Hawke’s Bay.”

As the region's primary emergency air and search and rescue support, the Wallace Foundation 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.

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