



## Media release

23 March 2013

# 2013 Waka Ama Championships the biggest yet

A record 2000 spectators lined the banks of Rotorua's Blue Lake on Friday to watch their schools compete on the final day of the ActivePost National Secondary Schools Waka Ama Championships. More than 1,500 students from 90 schools competed for national honours in various boat classes over distances of 250 and 500 metres.

Overall line honours went to Huntly College and Nga Taiatea Wharekura who both successfully defended their respective U19 500m Boys and U19 500m Girls Championships titles.

The U19 Boys race was a thriller, with Huntly College just managing to hold out Kerikeri High School by 0.2 of a second. At the medal ceremony all teams present launched into simultaneous hakas to honour Huntly College.

Schools competed for national honours in one, six or twelve paddler teams. The winning crews for the 2013 ActivePost National Secondary Schools Waka Ama Championships were:

- U19 250m Boys Championship: Huntly College
- U19 250m Girls Championship: Nga Taiatea Wharekura
- U19 500m Boys Championship: Huntly College
- U19 500m Girls Championship: Nga Taiatea Wharekura
- U16 250m Boys Championship: Kaipara College
- U16 250m Girls Championship: Auckland Girls Grammar School
- U16 500m Boys Championship: Tawa College
- U16 500m Girls Championship: Gisborne Girls' High School

Lara Collins, Chief Executive of Waka Ama New Zealand, said that this year's Championships were the best yet.

"We're absolutely thrilled with the turnout. This year we had more crews, more paddlers and more people turning up to cheer on their schools.

"The large crowd of supporters wildly cheered on their teams from the lake shore. The lively atmosphere was a good reward for the hundreds of volunteers in schools and in the Waka Ama community who give up their time to make this a truly special event," she said.

In just twenty five years Waka Ama racing has grown in popularity to become the fastest growing sport in New Zealand. Each year, more than 8,000 paddlers from 85 Clubs turn out to race Waka Ama in a show of brute strength, endurance, and team work. Many thousands more attend to watch the racing as spectators.

Nicola Airey, NZ Post Group Sponsorship Manager, said they were thrilled to support a sport that keeps growing in popularity.

“In just twelve years we have seen the sport of Waka Ama racing take New Zealand by storm. Kiwi kids can’t get enough of it and that is why ActivePost is delighted to partner with Waka Ama NZ to grow these Secondary School’s Championships into the biggest sports event on the school calendar,” she said.

This year’s full list of results can be found here: <http://www.wakaama.co.nz/stories/read/1003242> and photography of every crew competing can be found here: [https://www.facebook.com/wakaama/photos\\_stream](https://www.facebook.com/wakaama/photos_stream)

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#### **Editor’s notes**

##### About Waka Ama NZ

Established in 1987, Nga Kaihoe O Aotearoa (Waka Ama New Zealand) is the national governing body for Waka Ama in New Zealand. Waka Ama’s vision is to lead the development, practice and promotion of the sport and culture of Waka Ama so that by 2035, future generations will have a sport where: *“Waka Ama is a heavyweight in the Aotearoa/New Zealand sporting psyche and is recognised as a global leader and significant influencer in the sport, nationally and internationally.”*

For further information about Waka Ama NZ visit [www.wakaama.co.nz](http://www.wakaama.co.nz)

##### About ActivePost

Launched in mid-2011, ActivePost is a NZ Post initiative to support grassroots participation in sports and recreation and give all Kiwis the opportunity to do some active. Under the ActivePost umbrella, NZ Post works closely with Sport New Zealand and provides resources, funding and logistical support to help other organisations deliver activities that are engaging, fun and involve the community through families, businesses, schools and Clubs.

More than 1,000 ActivePost events are held around the country every year. Initiatives that ActivePost provides support to include:

- Kia Maanu, Kia Ora (Watersafety NZ)
- Get Set Go (Athletics NZ)
- Small Sticks (Hockey NZ)
- Waka Ama racing (Waka Ama NZ)
- The NZ Heart Foundation
- The AUT Millennium Institute

For further information about ActivePost and its activities visit [www.activepost.co.nz](http://www.activepost.co.nz)

