

## Media Statement

15 March 2022

### **Northland Rescue Helicopters thank community**

The Northland community has again come up trumps by donating over \$360,000 to the Northland Rescue Helicopter 2021 annual fundraising appeal.

The total is up from \$334k in 2020 and \$246k in 2019.

Northland Emergency Services Trust Chair Paul Ahlers says he is immensely grateful for the ongoing generosity of Northlanders and visitors to the region over the summer break.

“We are always taken aback by the passion people have for the service and that shows in the fact they donate substantial amounts year after year,” says Mr Ahlers.

“We simply could not do what we do without this community support and the backing of our principal sponsors of 34 years – Top Energy and Northpower, Northland Regional Council and all of our other loyal sponsors.

“Then there are all those individuals and community groups and organisations and clubs who fundraise on our behalf. It all adds up and that is vital for a charity like ours.”

Northland Rescue Helicopter CEO Craig Gibbons says he is also thankful for the loyal support from the Northland community.

“The support we receive from the community and sponsors seems to get stronger every year and it is critical to have that backing because the demand for our rescue helicopters continues to increase as the Northland population grows,” says Mr Gibbons.

In recent weeks two significant donations were made to the service. The first from ‘All in, All Out Trail Riders’ who donated \$5,150 after a trail ride fundraiser.

The group has regularly fundraised after one member, Hemi Murray, survived a horrific head on crash into a pine tree in July 2020. He was not expected to survive and has since recovered remarkably well and become an avid supporter of the service.

The other donation came from Whangarei man Phil Schultz who organised a classic car convoy around Northland. The efforts of Schultzie and his mates raised \$4,418k, adding to the thousands of dollars he has personally raised in recent years.

Top Energy and Northpower Chief Executives Russell Shaw and Andrew McLeod have also acknowledged the community support.

“We love the way the community comes together every year to support the annual fundraising appeal in so many ways – with donations and in-kind activity.

“We are all part of the community and every donation goes towards helping someone in their time of need, so it really is a case pf paying it forward and caring for others,” say the pair.

2021 was the busiest year on record for Northland’s Rescue Helicopters with 1289 mission call-outs in the calendar year to midnight December 31. That was up from 1115 missions in 2020 and 951 missions in 2019. Since 1988, the service has completed well over 23,000 missions.

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