

# Chopper visits schoolchildren

THE excitement of students in three North King Country primary schools was "sky high" when special guests flew in for a surprise visit last week.

In aid of the Westpac Chopper

Appeal month, schools throughout the region hosted a Wacky Hair Day – raising money for the Westpac Rescue Helicopter.

With their hair coloured and styled in crazy ways students

from Maihihi, Ngutunui and Pukenui schools were among the lucky few to be thanked by the rescue helicopter crew when they landed on May 30.

## SPECIAL GUESTS

To end the appeal month, the helicopter also carried special guests – brother and sister sporting stars Joe Webber (former New Zealand sevens player) and Jordan Webber (current New Zealand sevens representative).

Pukenui School staff member Carol Malcomson says keeping the visit a secret from students until the helicopter landed wasn't easy.

"We lined them up on the tennis court to watch for 'something' to appear on the field," she says.

"Of course, we all heard the helicopter first then saw it from afar as it came in low and passed over the school then turned and came in to land. There were some very big eyes and wide smiles."

Students were shown the inside of the helicopter and heard from crew members about their experiences rescuing people in remote areas throughout the Waikato.

The Webbers signed autographs and played rugby with students.

Ngutunui School principal Phillippa Bourke says

rural communities appreciate and value the rescue helicopter and are more than happy to help raise money to support it.

"Everyone had lots of fun and now have great memories of this day," she says.

When the helicopter arrived at Maihihi, students handed their gold coins to the pilot which office administrator Sally Jennings says was "a great thrill".

"We were all hoping they weren't going to get a callout – it was such a great experience."



**FLYING COLOURS:** Sporting stars Jordan (back left) and her brother Joe Webber flew into Ngutunui School on the Westpac Rescue Helicopter last month surprising Jack Egan (front left), Lucas Dowdy and Jacob Garland. Meanwhile Quishay Keefe-Stewart (bottom left), Talia Davis, Taylah Hamilton and Erica Martin got into the spirit of Wacky Hair Day raising money for the chopper. PHOTOS SUPPLIED



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## WDC gives grants to three groups

WAITOMO District Council granted \$16,000 in funds to three groups last month with the goal of 'helping the community help itself'.

During the second and final round of the council's 2013/2014 Community Partnership Fund (CPF), the newly formed Piopio Community Sports Inc received \$5000, Piopio Memorial Hall Committee \$7000 and Friends of Hillview \$4000.

The sports group applied for funding for repairs and maintenance to the Piopio Rugby Clubrooms, the hall committee will put their grant towards upgrading the Piopio Memorial Hall's toilets while Friends of Hillview plan to invest in a new transport van.

The CPF is part of WDC's broader Community Development Fund – a contestable fund focused on projects and programmes that contribute to the community's wellbeing.

With a total of \$25,000 to allocate in 2013/2014, the first round of funding closed in November with three applicants receiving \$8900.

The three groups were Aria Toy Library that received \$1700 towards exterior wall paint; Te Kuiti SPCA which was granted \$4200 towards the replacement of its animal ambulance and Piopio Playcentre received \$3000 for a shade sail.

Waitomo mayor Brian Hanna says the council is proud to support all the applicants who received funding in the 2013/2014 round of CPF allocations.

"In my opinion they are all worthy causes. It is an initiative that this council gives great thought to ensure we are doing all we can to assist community groups achieve their goals. And going by the latest round of funding, the support is going to a wide variety of groups and organisations that are doing great things in our community."

## IN BRIEF

### FF CEO chosen

FEDERATED Farmers, has named Graham Smith as its chief executive officer designate to succeed Conor English. Mr Smith has been chief executive of Soda Inc – an organisation facilitating new technologies, including agri-tech and company start-ups. Prior to this, he was chief executive of the Crown Research Institute ESR (Institute of Environmental Science & Research) for almost three years. He is a former general manager at AgResearch and holds an MBA from the University of South Australia and a Bachelor of Economics from the University of Adelaide. He takes over the role in July.