

Mayor unable to get awards rule changed

WAITOMO mayor Brian Hanna has tried but failed to have North King Country's young sporting achievers recognised at "home".

Due to eligibility changes to the region's sports awards nomination process this year, several young people who call the North King Country home but move outside the Waitomo and Otorohanga districts for competitive opportunities or education, are no longer be eligible for recognition at the local annual Sport Waikato awards nights.

Instead, young sportspeople born and raised in the North King Country such as Josh Balme (shearing), Tallis Karaitiana (rugby) and Olivia Macdonald (volleyball) will have to represent the club or school they attend at their region's sports awards such as Taranaki or Waikato.

Mr Hanna, who approached Sport

Waikato chief executive officer Matthew Cooper to make an exception for the North King Country, says the decision is final.

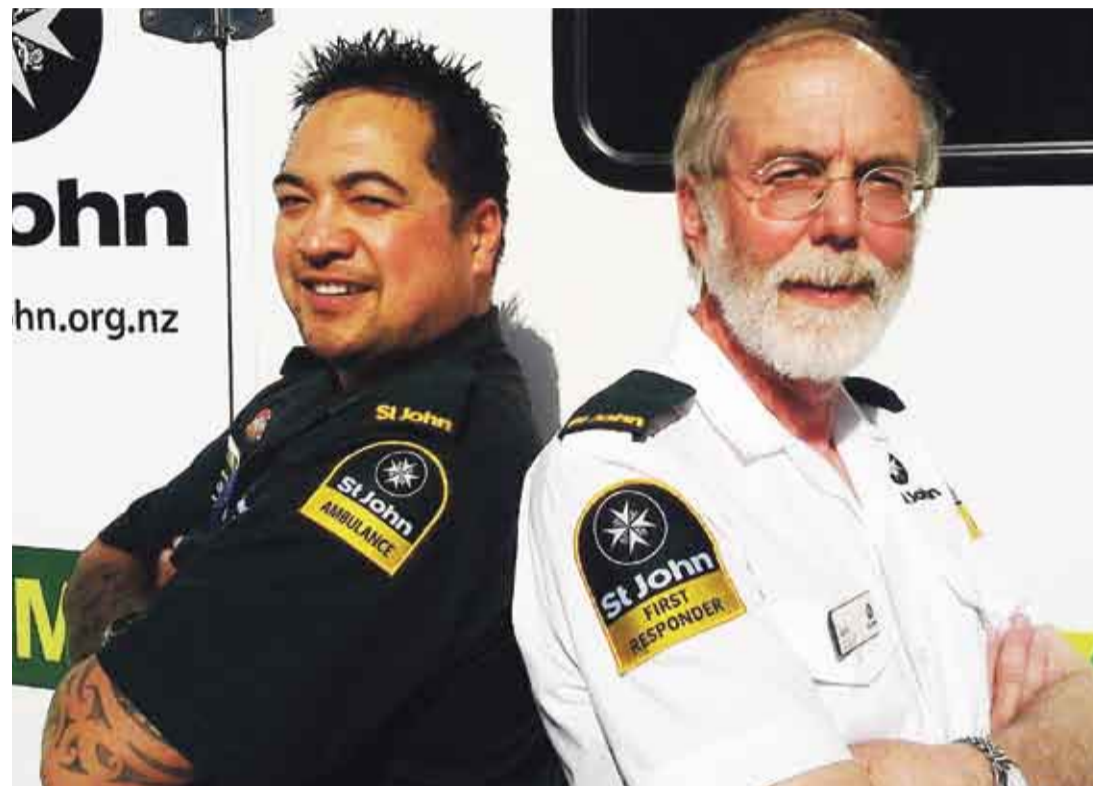
"Matthew could see our frustrations and totally understood our situation but they (Sport Waikato) had to bite the bullet this year and make one consistent ruling for all," says Mr Hanna.

"So we're looking at doing is introducing a new category (at our awards) called the Mayoral Achievement Awards to recognise young people from this district who have performed outstandingly in other regions.

"Although they won't be included in our annual Junior Sports person of the Year category, which is frustrating, we will still be able to celebrate their successes in the place they call home."

TO P7

Uniform look



ROAD TEST: Te Kuiti St John ambulance officer Winston Cotidis (left) is one of 16 nationwide staff trialling the emergency organisation's new uniform. The dark green shirt, white undershirt, green polar fleece and dark green cargo pants, designed for better wear and tear, may replace St John's well-known white shirt and black pants worn by crew members throughout the country for the past 10 years. "The material is far better wearing, the pockets are larger so it is more practical, and our badges are sewn on," says Mr Cotidis. "It gives us a fresher look." Volunteer ambulance officer Colin Scobie (right) in the current white and black uniform, says the new uniform is a welcome change. "Keeping white shirts . . . white . . . is very difficult. The green is a good look."

Inframax back in the black

WAITOMO District Council-owned roading contractor Inframax Construction Ltd has posted its first profit in years.

At the company's annual general meeting last week, it was reported Inframax had recorded a post-tax \$266,600 profit for the 2012-13 year, against a forecasted \$1.1 million loss in the recovery plan agreed by the council just two years ago.

Through "hard work" and "a shift in focus", the company achieved an operating surplus of \$402,000 in the past financial year, compared to the \$1.37 million operating loss reported the previous year.

"After financing cost and asset revalua-

tions, a post-tax comprehensive income of \$267,000 is reported, which overall represents a tremendous effort by chief executive Chris Heywood and the staff of Inframax," says company chairman Eric Tait.

"We now have a company re-established on a sound financial footing, but there is still considerable work to be done to demonstrate Inframax Construction Ltd is a strong business."

OUTSTANDING RESULT

Waitomo mayor Brian Hanna says this is the first profit declared for six years and in the context of the current tough trading

environment, the result is "outstanding".

"I congratulate the board, management and staff at all levels in the company on the respective roles they have played in this turn around in the company's performance.

"The board has worked extremely hard and spent many long hours well above all expectations to work at delivering what is best for the company."

Mr Hanna paid special tribute to the company's directors Mr Tait, Craig Rowlandson and Earl Rattray and also Mr Hayward for the turnaround in profit.

"Chris has worked tirelessly over the past year to refocus the company to deliver profit,

reduce overheads and place the company on a more sustainable pathway going forward," says Mr Hanna.

"The company has secured good future contracts and is very focussed on achieving good trading margins and delivering good customer service.

"I believe Inframax has turned the corner, and is definitely heading in the right direction."

Inframax employs more than 150 staff, and was formed in 1999, after a merger between Te Kuiti-based Waitomo Civil Construction and New Plymouth's Northgate Construction.

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New group provides support for epileptics

A NEW epilepsy support group set up to help Waikato sufferers is hoping to extend its services to people in the North King Country.

Kihikihi epilepsy sufferer Margaret Nicholls started the group in July.

"We meet informally once a month to offer support and share information with anyone living with seizures," says Mrs Nicholls.

"When you are newly diagnosed, you can feel isolated so it's important to stay in touch with others who know what you're dealing with.

"It usually comes as a shock to find out you can't drive, your memory plays up and you can no longer do some things on your own until your medication is sorted out and your seizures are under control."

TOO SHY

Mrs Nicholls says people are sometimes shy about reaching out for help and group members are able to put sufferers in touch with field officers and support systems.

She says there are many types of epilepsy and people are affected in different ways. Her seizures were triggered by a bad car accident five years ago

and are now totally under control.

Petit mal seizures caused her to blank out for a matter of seconds.

She had no warning before an episode, or memory of what had happened afterwards.

"Group members appreciate being able to talk to others who understand what they're going through.

"I could really have done with this support at the time I became ill, but there was nothing. It can be very frustrating if you can't get

help. I feel sad there are people slipping through the cracks."

MEETINGS

Mrs Nicholls says if just one person is helped by the group, that's enough to make it worthwhile.

Anyone in the North King Country with epilepsy is welcome to phone her on 07 871 3399 or Epilepsy Waikato field officer Annette Stott on 0800 202 122.

The group meets informally for a coffee and a chat at the Dawn to Dusk café opposite The Warehouse in Te Awamutu at 2pm on the third Tuesday of the month. The next meeting is on October 15.

"When you are newly diagnosed, you can feel isolated so it's important to stay in touch with others who know what you're dealing with."

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FROM P1

The decision to adjust the rules was made after many young people were being nominated for two or more different district sports awards evenings.

This led to Sport Waikato having to draw the line with where the athletes compete.

Also in some cases, the local winner, then included in the Waikato District Sports Awards, would be eligible for a Waikato award without actually competing or living in the region.

The wording on nomination forms now states:

Nominees will not have represented provinces, schools or clubs outside the greater Waikato region during the judging period (November 1, 2012-October

31, 2013), where they have had opportunity to represent provinces, schools or clubs at the same level within the greater Waikato

Nominees will be judged in the district the club/school is based in during the judging period, or when Waikato region wide, nationally or internationally, they will be judged in the district they live in. (Exemptions may be sought if the sport is not offered in the district)

A nominee may not be nominated for an award in more than one district And the nominee must have clearly demonstrated loyalty to the Waikato region.

Nominations for Waitomo and Otorohanga district sports awards close tomorrow.

IN BRIEF

Boundary re-draw begins

THE Representation Commission will soon begin to redraw the electorate boundaries for use in the 2014 and 2017 general elections.

Under the Electoral Act, the boundaries of the General and Maori electorates must be reviewed after each population census

and Maori Electoral Option to ensure electorates have similar population numbers. The number of General and Maori electorates and the electoral populations will be announced on Monday.

The commission expects to release proposed electorate boundaries for public comment on November 21.

Jim Wright NISSAN

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