

**Media Release**

Kaikohe, Friday 16 November 2007



## **Olympians to nurture budding yachties**

Sailing Week is again to be held on Kerikeri's, Lake Manuwai.

Sponsored by local lines company, Top Energy in association with Team Inspiration (NZ Women's Olympic keelboat sailors, Sharon Ferris [Skipper] with crew, Reynor Smeal and Shandy Buckley) the annual recreational/educational event is scheduled for Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> and Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2007.

First held in 2005, up to 120 children have attended a weekend's FREE sailing tuition and fun racing, making it possibly the single biggest training event for young people ever held in the Far North.

Far North school children aged 8 – 16 are invited to register for either or both days. Training yachts and safety equipment, including floatation vests, will be available for those who have no sailing experience, while those who already sail are encouraged to bring along their own boats - as more advanced tuition and racing will be organised for them. Adult supervision will be provided, however parents who'd like to lend a hand organising would-be sailors and rigging yachts are most welcome to come along and help out.

According to Roger de Bray, Top Energy Chief Executive, Sailing Week came about as a natural progression to his company's sponsorship of Team Inspiration's build-up to next year's Olympics in Beijing. "We saw it as an opportunity to put world-class sailors like Sharon and her crew in front of our children - to introduce them to sailing and just as importantly, to act as the positive role models they are. Also Sailing Week gives these world-class sailors the opportunity to put something back into yachting in the Far North", de Bray said.

de Bray believes his company's sponsorship of Team Inspiration and Sailing Week is a good fit with other community educational/training initiatives his company is proud to sponsor, such as:

**WaterSafe** - which teaches the region's primary school children to swim and be safe around water;

**Far North Science & Technology Fair** – a hands-on way to promote science and technology to secondary school students, while at the same time helping them develop investigative and problem solving life-skills;

**Education 4 Enterprise** – designed to seed an enterprise culture into the region’s secondary schools, with the aim of helping students and school leavers use entrepreneurial skills to create a future for themselves and to help create job opportunities for others;

**School-to-work Programme** – which provides scholarships for senior students wanting to get paid part-time work experience while still at school.

“Much of our corporate sponsorship focus is on fostering the pursuit of excellence - on nurturing our Tall Poppies if you like. This starts with WaterSafe and teaching them how to survive. It then focuses on developing specific life-skills; whether it be learning to sail, developing skills which prospective employers are willing to pay for, encouraging young people to become entrepreneurs or, right at the other end of the scale, helping our business people strive for business practice excellence, through the Tall Poppy Business Awards”, de Bray said.

To register for Top Energy Sailing Week, please call Sharon Ferris, Team Inspiration on 027 431 8159, or Belinda Peddie, Top Energy on (09) 401 5603. Registrations close Friday 30 November at 5:00 pm, although late entries may be possible at the venue on the Saturday and Sunday mornings, before 9:00 a.m. END.

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