

## Media Release

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### Tall ship voyage to challenge Northland students

Electricity generation and local lines company, Top Energy along with neighbouring lines company, Northpower have confirmed their joint sponsorship of the inaugural, Te Tai Tokerau Tall Ship Challenge.

The Challenge, open to 5 schools each season, takes place aboard the Northland-based sail training vessel, R Tucker Thompson. Top Energy is sponsoring students from Opononi Area School and Whangaroa College, while Northpower is sponsoring Whangarei Girls High, Bream Bay College and Dargaville High students.

To be held each Autumn, The Te Tai Tokerau Tall Ship Challenge is a competition between participating schools to find out which team can demonstrate they have what it takes in terms of leadership, initiative and of course, teamwork. The 7-day event will take place this year on 13 – 19 May, on the waters off Northland's East Coast.

Teamwork will be an important part of selection for the winning students - who will not only have to demonstrate they can work with their own school mates, but also with crew members from competing schools as well. Their days on board will include hard physical work, some mental challenges, as well as a lot of fun on and off the ship.

Top Energy's support for the Challenge is courtesy of its Community Development Trust which also supports other educational programmes for Far North students, including the WaterSafe Programme and the Far North Science & Technology Fair. Top Energy also sponsors the Northland-wide Young Enterprise Scheme (YES Northland) in partnership with The Lion Foundation.

Said Top Energy CEO, Russell Shaw, "Much of our sponsorship funding supports educational programmes which provide hands-on learning opportunities for our young people. The Te Tai Tokerau Challenge offers an opportunity for students to be part of a unique sea voyage which encourages them to gain confidence, develop communication and leadership skills and to build self-esteem. We believe the Challenge fits well with other academic and life skill educational programmes Top Energy supports".

The voyage departs from Marsden Cove on Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> May and returns to Opuia on Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> May. END.

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Pic: Young people returning from a voyage aboard, R Tucker Thompson.

