



*Sir Peter Leitch's*  
**MAD BUTCHER CLUB**  
AT MT SMART STADIUM, HOME OF THE MIGHTY VODAFONE WARRIORS



# Newsletter

03 APRIL 2014  
#14

## Well done, Wellington! Well done, Warriors!



**SPECIAL WELLINGTON EDITION!!**  
CELEBRATING A GREAT GAME,  
A GREAT TOWN AND A GREAT TIME!

Shaun Johnson scores a try.  
Photo by Marty Melville / [www.photosport.co.nz](http://www.photosport.co.nz)

photosport

**W**hat a terrific time I had in Wellington, which is my home town and always a pleasure to return to.

It was an honour to be on hand to help the mighty **Vodafone Warriors** promote the game against the **Wests Tigers**, and it is not something I take for granted.

On the Friday night there was a do at **Vodafone's** Lambton Quay store and it was really good fun, absolutely fizzing. There was a great turnout and **Vodafone** had banners all over the city getting right behind the boys. They not only put up the sponsorship cash for the club, they get behind the team in so many other ways, so it was great to see that commitment being repaid with such a good turnout, not only at the store, but at the game itself. And a big thumbs up to **Wellington Stadium** too.

The representatives could not do enough for us, and were really positive and accommodating.

Saturday's experience was awesome. The atmosphere was great, the crowd more than 22,500-strong, the security guys were pleasant and sensible, and overall Wellington gets a huge tick - not least with a **42-18** win to celebrate too.

### **City goes off**

It was really cool after the game to take a walk around the city and see so many **Vodafone Warriors** fans in one place. That is something we miss a bit just because Auckland is so big, and the fans tend to scatter to all sorts of places after the game.

But in the capital everyone heads into town and it was really enjoyable seeing all those shirts, hats and scarves,

and especially the smiles on the faces.

It really helps make the game-day experience so much more enjoyable, *so I want to say a huge thank you to everyone who turned out to support our team.*

### **Lounge lizards**

I got to host a lounge at **Westpac Stadium** and I had a ball doing it. The fans loved it. I was blown away when eight members of the **Central Pulse** netball team turned up - and that is a good effort because I know they were getting picked up the next morning at 4.30 to start travelling to Sydney for their own game.

**Ben Sigmund** from The **Phoenix** was there too, and I see their faint hopes of play-off football were finally extinguished on Sunday when they lost to Adelaide 1-0. All sorts of league personalities were there, and my great



mate, **Monty Betham**, virtually ended up co-hosting the lounge with me.

### Game time

There’s no point me banging on about the game, because if you are getting this Newsletter, you are a fan and you already know how good it was.

But I will say this, *fan-bloody-tastic*.

The big talking points were that the game went for two hours because of all the decisions going to the video ref, the incredible result given a comeback from 12-0 down, and **Thomas Leuluai**.

I thought he was good, but I will leave it to him to sum up how the boys felt after the win was soured by **Jerome Ropati**’s broken jaw.

“It does take the shine off it,” he said. “I feel sorry for him.”

That’s back to back wins, with a visit to Cronulla next, before the **Bulldogs** come to Eden Park.

So it might be about how much confidence the side can take. It’s amazing how two wins turn around the negativity in the media, but we need to stay grounded.

All I ever ask is that players put in a good shift so fans don’t come away thinking players did not give their all. They could do worse than to look at someone like Jerome Ropati for inspiration.

## Jerome in the wars again



**Jerome Ropati is consoled by team mates after breaking his Jaw during the match. Photo: Grant Down / www.photosport.co.nz**

If there is a player in the **Vodafone Warriors** who deserves some good luck, it is **Jerome Ropati**.

But it looks like he is never going to get it. A mate of mine said bad luck is the only kind Jerome has, and that is hard to argue with after he broke his jaw in the win over the **Tigers**. Jerome is a good bloke and has been at the club for 11 seasons and played about 145 games, so fewer than half a season a year on average.

I do not know how long he is likely to be out, but my heart aches for a guy who is our second longest serving player.

I visited him in hospital on Sunday and by the time you read this, he will have had his operation. It was great to see the club doctor and other officials staying on to support him too, and arranging to get his wife down to the capital.

Jerome, who has played 10 **Kiwis** tests too, made his debut for the **Warriors** in 2003. He has played at fullback, wing, centre and stand-off, and I have never known him give anything other than his best.

Think back to what I was saying about how cruelly his career has been hit by injury and then consider that he played in every game in 2007, and you begin to understand how much footy he has missed.

His 2011 season was ruined by injury when he tore his ACL, and he had to watch his teammates go all the way to the final. Yet I have never heard him bemoan his luck. He is one of the most outwardly positive people I know, and that is amazing when you consider how he must have been feeling inside.

Everyone thinks he must be part of the famous Ropati league-playing dynasty, but he isn’t related.

Of Samoan descent, he was educated at St Paul’s, the famous league school, and played his early footy with the **Marist Saints** and later **Marist Richmond Brothers**. The 2003 Bartercard Cup season shot him to prominence, as he led the club to a final he didn’t play in because he was making his **Warriors** debut.

### Special plug for Captain Mannering

How good was it to see **Simon Mannering** become the most capped **Vodafone Warriors** skipper.

I rate the bloke. He is one of our best week after week and a quiet achiever. He was also pretty bloody crook during the week, so just making it out on to the field was an achievement. To play as well as he did, was something else again.

There were others in the camp who were also feeling less than perfect, so the value of the medical staff was pretty evident.

And speaking of crook, my right hand man **Dexter Trail** was in town for the game with me and had to shoot through at half-time because he fell victim to the bug that has been going around. Harden up Dex. To be fair on the poor fella, he was so crook that he had



to abandon a visit to family who live up the line, and stay on in Wellington for an extra day.

### Another big week ahead

This week I am very much looking forward to taking a little time out and visiting Waiheke Island. My guests are going to be Sam Tomkins and his mum, so I will have to be on my very best tourist-guide behaviour. Then at the weekend I am off to the Coromandel – a lovely part of our world – for a wedding in Whitianga.

### Bring on the Sharks

Last week we won in Townsville for the first time in 12 years. Saturday was our first win in Wellington, so all that remains is to get that Eden Park monkey off our backs.

This weekend though, it is the **Sharks** over the ditch, so dig in and enjoy the ride. I know I will, and **go the Mighty Vodafone Warriors**.

**Warriors captain, Simon Mannering, runs the ball. Photo: Marty Melville / www.photosport.co.nz**

The awesome photos on this page are courtesy of **photosport**  
Check out more on: [www.photosport.co.nz](http://www.photosport.co.nz)



**Jayson Bukuya touches down. Photo: Grant Down / www.photosport.co.nz**



**Manu Vatuvei dives in to score. Photo: Grant Down / www.photosport.co.nz**



**Dane Nielsen drives for a loose ball. Marty Melville / www.photosport.co.nz**



# IT WAS A GRAND OLD TIME IN THE WELLINGTON LOUNGE!



Ben Sigmund from the Phoenix had a blast in our lounge.



Jay Reeves from ZM Radio, popped into the lounge.



The Mount Smart Joker called into the lounge. The fans love him, as the Butcher does.



We even had some of the Plus players in the lounge and Phoenixia players joined us.



Stacey Jones, the coach of the Holden Cup team, was all smiles getting back to back wins, but could not stay as his team had to leave at half time of the main game to head to the airport. Even the NRL side caught a AirNZ flight after the game.



The boys from Fat Freddy's Drop show off their gear.



The Vodafone Warriors loved having Fat Freddy's Drop come by to have tea with them on Friday night (note two of the boys in their Fat Freddy's tee shirts!)





Wayne Scurrah entertains the crowd with his humour in the lounge. Very funny man!



Don Mann, GM of the Vodafone Warriors, entertained the crowd in the lounge. Don's father and brother played for the Kiwis and his Duane played for the DB Warriors and now works for the club.



From left: Logan, Gus, Leisha and Iain; all from Porirua.



My good mate, Graham Wright from Vodafone came to entertain 300 people in the lounge before the mighty Vodafone Warriors take on the Tigers.



Great to see Ben Matulino's sisters, Mel and Trudy, nieces and nephews, and baby daughter Kyla!



Isireli and Rebecca from Lower Hutt big fans.

**League? We're lovin' it!!**





Angela and Jen Vinsen from Wellington, enjoying a conversation with Mateo. The girls never miss a game in the capital.



Nice to catch up with Ben Matulino's lovely partner, Courtenay, and 16 month old daughter, Kyla.



Fabien Kiri left, and Losi Filipo right, who are in Warriors development.



Shaun Graham, from Otaki, had a son playing for the Tigers in the under 20 Tigers team. And Andre, also from Otaki, cheering for the wrong team.



Marlene Love, Harvey, and Diane from Waikiki and Mangere Bridge, who drove down – took nine and a half hours! Big fans.



Three guys up from Christchurch to see the mighty Warriors play the Tigers at the Cake Tin! From Left: Lucky, Steve and James - all massive warriors fans.



Tess, who loves rugby league and even won a prize in the lounge, with Monty.



Two great league boys: Star Olsen from the Te Aroha Eels and Wi Kapua of the Randwick Kingfishers of Lower Hutt.



Steve from Christchurch, George Williamson from Kapiti Coast, Bruce Pert from Auckland and Richmond Rovers RLC, enjoying the lounge.





From Left to right:  
Gary, Butch, Steve,  
Paul, Toddy, Blanchy  
and Hank.



Jim and Rose, who flew down from Whangarei.



Dave, owner of Mad Butcher Porirua (on the left), and Leon, owner of Mad Butcher Lower Hutt, enjoying the big Vodafone Warriors win in Wellington.



Our TAB man gave us a tickets for Simon Mannering to score a try, but had no luck. But a very kind offer, TAB.

My granddaughter and her mates had a blast - even when I gave her mate a hard time for wearing a Tigers jersey in the lounge!





# SOME HAPPY WINNERS

## IN THE LOUNGE IN WELLINGTON!



Gary won a Lion Red pack.



This bloke won an official team photo.



Grant won a lion red sports bag.



Yes, she won the big prize – a 2014 signed jersey!



This lady was overcome at winning the mad-tastic plates.



Jeanette won a Panasonic player.



Gary thought he had won Dexter's daughter, but I put him straight very quickly! In fact she had come over from England to the game. Gary got a Lion Red pack.



Am I happy? I just won myself a new phone! Plus, I won another prize as well!



Stu won a signed ball but was stoked to have his photo taken with some of the Haier Pulse ladies!



This lucky punter won a signed members tee-shirt. Very happy she was!



There were many more winners but they were too shy to have their photos taken!



# A Winning Team!



**From the left:**  
**Dan Nielsen,**  
**Chad Townsend,**  
**Shaun Johnson,**  
**me, Sam Rapira,**  
**Nathan Friend.**  
**Front row:**  
**Manu Vatuvei,**  
**Suaia Matagi –**  
**Winners are grinners!**

**Below:**  
**Charlie Gubb, Thomas**  
**Leuluai and a very**  
**happy Konrad Hurrell.**



**Look at me, I scored**  
**4 tries! Glen Fisiiahi**  
**chilling out in the ice**  
**bath.**



**Shaun caught up with his brother on**  
**Saturday morning.**



**I caught up with Sam in the changing room**  
**happy to score a try.**



**Jacob Lillyman and Sione Lousi.**



# Victoria Hunters Rugby League Club

The Victoria University Rugby League Club is the youngest club in Wellington; it took us 13 seasons to taste victory in the 2013 Wellington Premier Competition. It was certainly a much-desired “first” for our young club and one that has set in place a number of other “firsts” too.

Last Thursday (March 27) the club was invited to a parliamentary reception by our Club Patron and the current MP for the Te Tai Tonga Electorate, Rino Tirikatene. Rino felt that, after such a great year in 2013, it was important to start the 2014 season off on a high note, hence the get-together. It is fair to say a parliamentary reception is a “first” and definitely a highlight for our club, however, the gathering was enriched by, what I term, a quality human being.

With just over 24 hours’ notice, Sir Peter Leitch (aka the Mad Butcher) made his way up to parliament to be part of our club’s celebrations. We’ve all heard about this guy’s kindness and generosity, but I think it is his accessibility, and obvious passion for Rugby League, but, more importantly, a passion for people that sets him apart from most. Sir Peter enriched our evening by offering anecdotes, yarns and jokes from his wealth of experience with people. Looking at our players’ faces when they arrived to see Rugby League Royalty was priceless. Many thanks to you Sir Peter, you certainly made our evening a “first” to remember and, on behalf of the **Victoria University Hunters Rugby League Club**, I would like to thank you for being part of our club on March 27.

**P.S.** If any of you out there are from Wellington and would like to play Rugby League or you have an interest in what’s happening in Wellington Rugby League circles, contact us at the following.

**[www.huntersrl.co.nz](http://www.huntersrl.co.nz)**

**Many thanks,  
VUW Hunters RLC.**



**What a party! All three NZRL, WRL and VUHRL Patrons with Sponsors and Players – a great night had by all.**



**Sir Peter showing Hunters/Wellington Captain Mickey O'Brien a bit of knuckle.**



**Sir Peter and Crooked Cider owner Nigel, discussing the perfect meat/cider combinations.**



**Some of the Team Victoria Hunters Rugby League Club.**



**Hunters at the Ready!**



**A rose between two thorns perhaps?**



**Sir Peter sharing a yarn about Sweet Georgia Owner, Charlie Gubb's father and Club Stalwart, Paul Gubb.**



# A Cruise On the Harbour

## Off to sea

On Sunday I had the great pleasure of gathering all my nephews and a few other guests up for a three-hour trip out on Wellington harbour. If there is a more beautiful harbour on a nice day, I haven't come across it.

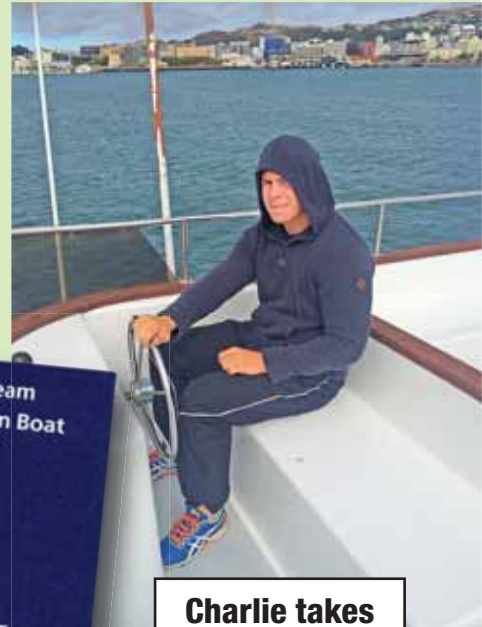
And the really special part is that the wonderful boat, the **Sweet Georgia**, was skippered by none other than **Charlie Gubb's** dad, **Paul** – and what a good sort he is.

**Sam Tomkin's** mum and her partner came along, and were great company, so I can totally recommend getting in touch with Paul if you are ever in Wellington and fancy a spot of rest and recreation on the water.



71ft Luxury Charter Launch; 21ft Beam  
Surveyed for 100 persons; Top Function Boat  
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Email: gubb@xtra.co.nz

**Sweet Georgia**  
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Paul Gubb 0274 452 641



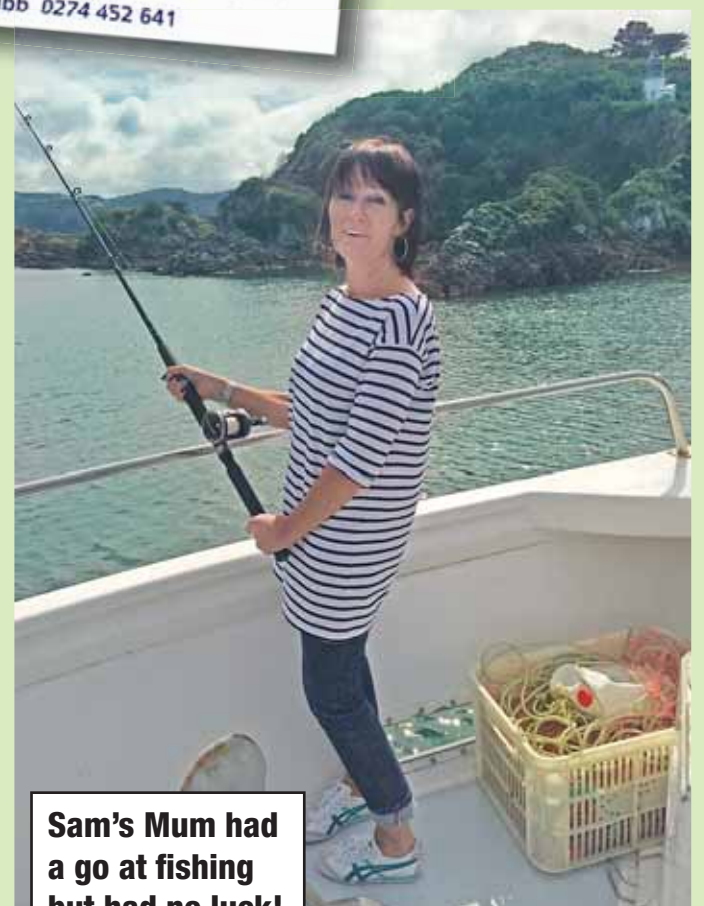
Charlie takes control of the vessel.



Our captain loved his Lion Red gear, but he my have to lose a bit of weight to fit it!



Sam's mum loves her Vodafone Warriors scarf and Lion Red hat - even wore them on the boat!



Sam's Mum had a go at fishing but had no luck!



I'm happy! I'm going fishing!



Your never too young to skipper a boat !



Charlie Gubb gives a fishing lesson (note the size of the fish).



# At the Vodafone Shop



Some of the Warriors staff and a member from the South Island at the Vodafone shop.



Pete and Rosa from Timaru were at the Vodafone shop.

These signs were all  
over Wellington.  
Thanks Vodafone.



## Heating Marlborough's Story:

It was our privilege to win a prize through Vodafone for 10 people to go to the Warriors game with a corporate meal included. Wow what a prize to win! We only have a small staff here so were able to take partners as well, our build up to the event was exciting as Hannah at Vodafone organised first the Jerseys to wet our appetite (the team was so excited) and then the tickets combined with the corporate lanyards (something we have never experienced before). This made it very exciting in the build up to the game. We were welcomed upon arrival and looked after throughout the whole evening.

It was great to win the prize but to have been treated to a fantastic evening was one of the best we will all remember. It couldn't have been scripted better with the Warriors having a great win, we are now "Die Hard Warriors Supporters for Life"

We can't say enough about Hannah and the team at Vodafone. Thank you so much.

**Kind Regards**

**Peter Cairns**

**Heating Marlborough** 55 Grove Road Blenheim  
027 279 7556



# GET YOUR BIG LEAGUE!

The New Zealand marketplace is important to the Big League community unfortunately due to increasing production and logistic costs it is no longer maintainable for us to continue supplying the NZ market on a weekly basis.

New Zealand customers can still access Big League magazine though.

■ Copies will be available for sale at the grounds for Warriors home matches throughout the 2014 season.

■ Print subscriptions can be arranged – please contact NewsLifeMedia subscriptions on +61 2 9282 8023 – however, print subscriptions can take up to 1-2 weeks to arrive in New Zealand as it is despatched through regular mail channels.

**PLUS**, Digital Copies can be purchased. Big League is offering a special price of \$NZ39.99 (saving 74%) on digital subscriptions through Zinio. This works out at \$NZ1.29 per issue. Every issue of Big League magazine will also be available through: Apple (iPad only); Zinio (multiple platforms including iPads; Android Tablets and PCs) and Google Play Newsstands. **Available every Thursday.**

## Home games:

Round	Date	Opposition	Venue
Round 06	Sunday, 13 April	Bulldogs	Eden Park
Round 09	Saturday, 10 May	Raiders	Eden Park
Round 12	Sunday, 1 June	Knights	Mt Smart Stadium
Round 15	Saturday, 21 June	Broncos	Mt Smart Stadium
Round 16	Sunday, 29 June	Panthers	Mt Smart Stadium
Round 18	Saturday, 12 July	Eels	Mt Smart Stadium
Round 20	Sunday, 27 July	Sea Eagles	Mt Smart Stadium
Round 22	Sunday, 10 August	Sharks	Mt Smart Stadium
Round 24	Saturday, 23 August	Roosters	Mt Smart Stadium
Round 25	Saturday, 30 August	Titans	Mt Smart Stadium



This is what you miss if you don't buy the Big League Magazine... Even with a bit of nostalgia! Do you remember this?

# TOO GOOD TO PASS UP!



This is an example on what you miss when you don't get Big League Magazine each week!





Eleanor Cater with Sir Peter.

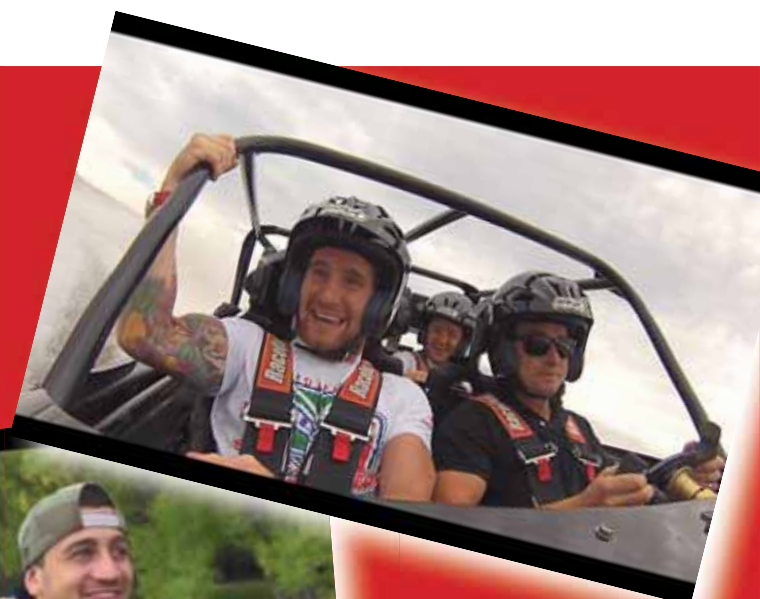


Dave, Glenda, Robbie, Rosa, Peter and Lorraine celebrating the win at Trax bar post game..



Dan O'Hagen, Kenny O'Brien - Wellington Orcas coach, Jason Hemson - GM Wellington RL, Lorraine McKee and Eleanor Cater, enjoying Wellington RL Hospitality at the Corporate Club Lounge.

**Check out the day Red Bull hosted the Vodafone Warriors click on the link <http://www.sirpeterleitch.co.nz/tv-appearances/>**





# HOT TEES!



The **Warriors Forever Tee** is the latest HOT item! Only available through **Playbill Merchandising** at the **Warriors Shop – Mt Smart Stadium** and online

[www.warriorsstore.co.nz](http://www.warriorsstore.co.nz)

Priced at a reasonable \$45 (Members \$40.50) and modelled by the wonderful **Playbill** staff at **Eden Park!**

To stay up to date with all that is happening with the **Vodafone Warriors**, and to see a gallery of the day's best photos - check out [www.facebook.com/vodafonewarriors](http://www.facebook.com/vodafonewarriors)

Cheers, The team at the **Vodafone Warriors**



<http://www.playbill.com.au/>



## Nelson and Tauranga teams take out National School Volleyball Titles



Waimea College Gold and Tauranga Boys' College A are the 2014 champions of the New Zealand Secondary Schools' Volleyball Nationals, both fighting out Otumoetai College for the titles.

Each game was intense and close as predicted, with the rivalry and competition of college sport proving passionate.

In the boys' final, defending champions Tauranga raced away in the beginning. Otumoetai quickly reacted and evened the score before slipping back again.

Tauranga's Burton McAdam and MVP Caleb Aperahama were immensely impressive on both defence and attack, making some key plays to assist their team in a 25-18 set victory.

The second set followed in the same fashion as Tauranga overpowered their arch-rivals, thriving from their own passion and momentum to take the

set 25-17.

Tauranga's superiority was confirmed in the final set, as they upped the ante in the final points to defeat their opponents 25-20 and win the championship two years' running.

The girls' final was a much closer encounter. Waimea took off with an early lead, rattling the defending champions who began to look unsteady. Otumoetai crept back eventually, however, and with some impressive teamwork were able to pull ahead to snatch the first set 25-21.

Waimea proved resilient in the second, but it was still point for point and spike for spike at the crucial stage of the set. The pressure was manifested in miscommunication on Waimea's part, and once again Otumoetai managed to hang on to take the set 28-26.

Fuelled by determination, Waimea were never

going to let the game go easily and led the third set throughout. Although Otumoetai came within two points, the Nelson squad came out on top, winning the set 25-23.

The fourth set was another intense battle, and Waimea were once again triumphant to force Otumoetai to another set. The underdogs proved their worth in taking out the last set 15-12, and the game 3-2.

Tauranga Boys' Caleb Aperahama and Waimea College's Brittani Harrington were named Most Valuable Players for the respective boys' and girls' sections.

For more information, please visit:

<http://www.volleyballnz.org.nz/NZSSNationals-main>

### Hi Sir Peter

Thanks very much for your help in driving our attendance for Wellington – outstanding as always as our ambassador and 19th Vodafone Warrior. Crowds are a tough ask at the moment but with your help we may have secured the highest attendance across the NRL for this weekend.

### For the Bulldogs game we have a special offer:

- The Ultimate Fan Pass
- 5 tickets for \$50
- East Stand Only
- Booking fees apply

Sky City is also putting up a trip to Hawaii through an Aloha theme which Holly will provide details for.

We will also have a 24hrs 50% discount special match ticket offer just for members which Holly will forward through when that is ready.

Looking forward to winning at Eden Park.

**DON MANN**

General Manager - Commercial Vodafone Warriors





# Just Two More



Some of my family who came to the game in Wellington as my guests. It was fantastic to catch up with them.



Cop the crowd on Friday night waiting to meet the boys!



## BULLDOGS ARE HEADING TO NZ



ROUND 10 | SUNDAY 18 MAY | WAIKATO STADIUM | KICK-OFF 4:00PM

[WWW.BULLDOGS.COM.AU/TICKETS](http://WWW.BULLDOGS.COM.AU/TICKETS)

Secure your tickets to the Round 10 NRL Telstra Premiership match between the Canterbury-Bankstown Bulldogs and the Vodafone Warriors.

CORPORATE OPTIONS ALSO AVAILABLE: [corporate@bulldogs.com.au](mailto:corporate@bulldogs.com.au)



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\$25 ADULT

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## A VERY BIG THANK YOU TO ALL OUR SPONSORSHIP PARTNERS!

Without our sponsors' fantastic support the Mad Butcher Club wouldn't be as great as it is. If you get the opportunity to support them please do whenever you can!

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### The Newsletter Team

Here are the team that help me make the newsletter each week. Between us we make the newsletter happen - and like everything it is a team effort.



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