



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



# Newsletter

19 Dec 2014  
 #54



**20 YEARS**  
 VODAFONE



**Having fun at the  
 Vodafone Warriors  
 #MembersBBQ**



As the year draws to a close the Vodafone Warriors are getting ready to hang up their Christmas stockings, knocking off on December 20. But they will be back into it on January 5, when the players who were part of the Kiwis Four Nations triumph also return.

Our new signings, Bodene Thompson from the Tigers, the Storm's Ryan Hoffman, Jonathan Wright from the Sharks, and Eel Api Pewhairangi are settling in and I cannot wait for the season to roll around.

We do not get a home game until round 3 on Saturday March 21, when the Eels will be in town. By then we will have started our season on Saturday March 7 at the Newcastle Knights, and followed it up with a clash against the Raiders on Sunday the 15th.

Sunday March 29 will see the Brisbane Broncos at home at Mt Smart, and that will be something special because we will be celebrating 20 years of playing them. And they were our first team we played in the Aussie competition.



## Nines Edging Closer

But before a ball is even kicked, the NRL Season Launch will take place in Auckland, a first for New Zealand, on January 29. Just two days later I will be at Mt Eden to see the **Dick Smith NRL Nines**, which are January 31-February 1 next year. **It's going to be bigger and better next year.** And I tell you what, players who weren't that keen on the Nines this year are busting to be part of the set-up this time round. I will again have a lounge, and if you are looking for the perfect gift for the league fan in your life, hop on to [ticketek.co.nz](http://ticketek.co.nz). There are two-day passes from as little as \$99.

The **Nines** is some tournament. The organisers are expecting 90,000 people over the two-days to see 31 men's games and three women's clashes. That's about 280 players and they tell me they will get through 220 balls, more than 544 hands will provide massages and they will even use about 8000 bags of ice just for player recovery sessions, never mind what goes in your water! And speaking of water, next year more than 40,000 empty bottles will be handed out so that fans can use the free water stations around the ground, which I think is a great idea.

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## Jerseys Go On Show

The 16 NRL clubs have launched their jerseys for the 2015 Dick Smith NRL Auckland Nines. For the first time, clubs will wear everything from basketball cut jerseys through to Aussie Rules-style tops.

The \$2.4 million **Dick Smith NRL Auckland Nines** will feature many

of the top stars and also include a nine-a-side match-up between the current women's World Champions the Jillaroos against New Zealand's Kiwi Ferns.

Josh Dugan said he was excited to again be a part of the **Nines** concept, which involves a two-day, **nine-a-side tournament** and was last year won by the North Queensland Cowboys. "I loved the experience in last year's **Nines** and I'm looking forward to being a part of the shorter format again," he said. "Everyone who was involved enjoyed being a part of the concept."

Since the NRL, in partnership with Duco Events and Auckland Tourism Events and Economic Development announced that the **Nines** would be held at **Eden Park**, tickets for the 2015 tournament have been selling fast.

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## Auckland Nines Pool Draw

Rangitoto Pool: Eels, Sea Eagles, Knights, Dragons  
Waiheke Pool: Storm, Cowboys, Panthers, Rabbitohs  
Piha Pool: Roosters, Broncos, Bulldogs, Sharks  
Hunua Ranges Pool: Tigers, Warriors, Raiders, Titans

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## Mt Albert Go BIG!

You can go along and watch the **NRL Nines** at **Mt Albert Rugby League Club**. If you have tickets to the games, the club will be open before and after each day, with two free mini vans operating. On Friday and Saturday January 30-31 there will be a Tertiary Nines tournament at Fowlds Park.

It is going to be an awesome weekend, so go and be a part of it!

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## Bring on the Sevens too

Of course the following weekend, February 6-7, I will do it all again, this time for rugby's shortened version of the game, at the Wellington Sevens.

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**For more information and to purchase tickets, visit:**  
[www.ticketek.co.nz/nrlakl9s](http://www.ticketek.co.nz/nrlakl9s)

**The jerseys can be purchased online at:**  
[www.nrlshop.com/teams/nrl-auckland-nines](http://www.nrlshop.com/teams/nrl-auckland-nines)



On Wednesday I took a few of my mates to Ellerslie for a get together. A big thanks to the team at Ellerslie, especially Craig Fenwick. The food was so good that most went up for seconds. Here are a few photos.



Rod Slater was rapped to win the Lion Red chilly bag. He reckons he will fill with all the fish he catches.



Bob Lovett from Remuera Fisheries is a big Vodafone Warriors fan. He was stoked to win a signed ball.



Gordon Gibbons was pleased to win the bonus prize, a fabulous Mad Butcher cooked on the bone ham.



Fishing guru Geoff Thomas was very pleased to win Panasonic headphones.



Glenn Moore was stoked to get the Selly's BBQ Care kit from my mate Dexter.



Tony Herewini didn't look too happy winning a Warriors hat.



Former Kiwi's coach Brian was stoked to win a Lion Red t-shirt.



Sam Tonkins won a Lion Red shirt and reckons he'll wear it at Xmas.



Thomas presents Stacy with a Lion Red pack and Vodafone Warriors cap.



Great to catch up with my mate Dallas Gurney from The Radio Network.



I really enjoyed catching up with all my league mates.



Welsh comedian Phill Kingsly Jones kept the guys entertained with his jokes.

# 20 Years of Vodafone Warriors DVD Box Set

To celebrate our 20th Anniversary we have created this special edition 20 Years Vodafone Warriors DVD Box Set. Featuring a specially selected game from each of the 20 years PLUS a bonus 10 games from our finals series - that's 30 full length games in one set.

Each set comes in a slip case featuring the 20 Year logo and includes a booklet with a description of each game. Total of 15 x discs in 4 cases.

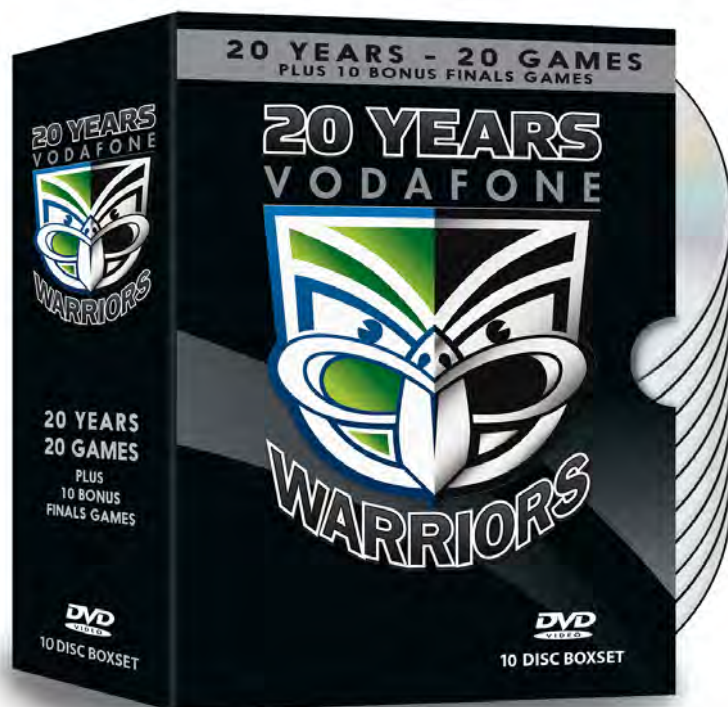
## 20 Years - 20 Games

1995 March 10 | Brisbane, Ericsson Stadium  
1996 April 28 | Illawarra, Wollongong Showground  
1997 April 7 | Canberra, Bruce Stadium  
1998 June 27 | Melbourne, Olympic Park  
1999 August 21 | Newcastle, Ericsson Stadium  
2000 May 20 | Bulldogs, Ericsson Stadium  
2001 August 5 | Penrith, Panthers Stadium  
2002 April 14 | Northern Eagles, Ericsson Stadium  
2003 April 13 | Brisbane, ANZ Stadium  
2004 June 6 | Canberra, Ericsson Stadium  
2005 June 26 | Brisbane, Mount Smart Stadium  
2006 August 19 | Melbourne, Olympic Park  
2007 August 5 | Sydney Roosters, Sydney Football Std.  
2008 June 29 | Wests Tigers, Leichhardt Oval  
2009 March 22 | Manly, Brookvale Oval  
2010 June 27 | Sydney Roosters, AMI Stadium  
2011 September 3 | North Queensland, Mount Smart  
2012 April 15 | South Sydney, Mount Smart Stadium  
2013 June 16 | Sydney Roosters, Allianz Stadium  
2014 April 25 | Melbourne, AAMI Park

## 10 Bonus Finals Games

2002 September 15 | Canberra, Ericsson Stadiums  
September 29 | Cronulla, Stadium Australia  
October 6 | Sydney Roosters, Stadium Australia (Grand Final)  
2003 September 13 | Bulldogs, Olympic Showground  
September 20 | Canberra, Sydney Football Stadium  
2008 September 14 | Melbourne, Olympic Park  
September 19 | Sydney Roosters, Mount Smart Stadium  
2011 September 16 | Wests Tigers, Sydney Football Stadium  
September 24 | Melbourne, AAMI Park  
October 2 | Manly, ANZ Stadium (Grand Final)

**On Sale Now!**



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

# NRL Draw Out

The 2015 NRL Telstra Premiership will open with a series of blockbuster matches. And Anzac Day will be one of the biggest in the code's history, with five games being played in Auckland, Newcastle, Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane. NRL Head of Commercial Paul Kind said the Premiership would open at Suncorp with the Broncos taking on Souths. The traditional Rabbitohs v Roosters clash will be staged on Sunday in Round 2 at ANZ Stadium. The return clash will be at Allianz in Round 26. There will be a series of big games in the first four rounds – including Manly v Bulldogs, Broncos v Cowboys, Eels v Rabbitohs and Cowboys v Storm. A highlight of the season will be a special commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the Anzac landings at Gallipoli. The Warriors v Broncos game in Round 4 will be televised live on Channel Nine in Aussie at noon immediately before the World Cup Cricket final.

Fans can sign up to become a member on

[www.nrl.com/membership](http://www.nrl.com/membership)

The full schedule can be found on [www.nrl.com](http://www.nrl.com)

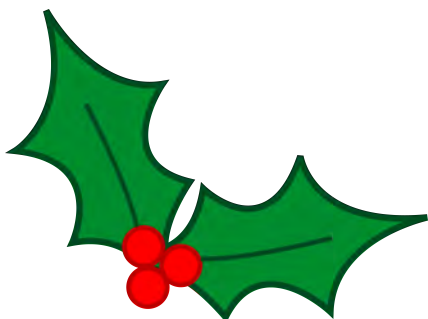
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## Vodafone Warriors Draw

A rematch against original opponents the Brisbane Broncos, a first-ever Anzac Day clash at home and visits by heavyweights Melbourne, Manly, the Sydney Roosters and North Queensland are the standout features of the Vodafone Warriors' NRL draw.

"We're thrilled about the chance of being able to mark our 20th anniversary against our very first opponents so early in the season. It's going to be one of the real high points of a massive year for the club," said Vodafone Warriors managing director Jim Doyle. "It's also a huge moment for us having an Anzac Day game here for the first time on what will be such an important day, with both countries marking the 100th anniversary of Gallipoli.

"The fact we have so many of the big-name clubs coming to Mt Smart is going to ensure 2015 will be a season to remember for all our members and fans."



## Vodafone Warriors - 2015 NRL Draw

(NB: Local kick-off times listed)

- 1 Sat March 7th 4.30pm Knights
- 2 Sun March 15th 6.30pm Raiders
- 3 Sat March 21st 5.00pm Eels **Mt Smart**
- 4 Sun March 29th 2.00pm Broncos **Mt Smart**
- 5 Mon April 6th 5.00pm Storm
- 6 Sat April 11th 7.30pm Wests Tigers **Mt Smart**
- 7 Sat April 18th 5.30pm Cowboys
- 8 Sat April 25th 2.00pm Titans **Mt Smart**

May 1-3 - Anzac Test

- 9 Sat May 9th 5.30pm Sharks
- 10 Sat May 16th 3.00pm Eels

11 May 22-25 - Bye

- 12 Sun May 31st 4.00pm Knights **Mt Smart**
- 13 Sat June 6th 3.30pm Rabbitohs
- 14 Sat June 13th 8.00pm Roosters **Mt Smart**
- 15 Sat June 20th 5.30pm Titans

16 Sat June 27th 5.00pm Raiders **Mt Smart**

17 July 3-6 - Bye

- 18 Sun July 12th 4.00pm Storm **Mt Smart**
- 19 Sun July 19th 2.00pm Roosters
- 20 Sat July 25th 5.00pm Sea Eagles **Mt Smart**
- 21 Sat August 1st Sharks **Mt Smart**
- 22 Sat August 8th Dragon Wespact Stadium Wellington**

- 23 Sat August 15th Panthers
- 24 Sat August 22nd Cowboys **Mt Smart**
- 25 Sun August 30th Wests Tigers
- 26 Sun September 6th Bulldogs

## FINALS

- 1 September 11-13th - Qualifying Semi Finals
- 2 September 18-19th - Semi Finals
- 3 September 25-26th - Preliminary Finals
- 4 October 4th - Grand Final

# Big Wigs Sign Up

I'm actually feeling pretty proud of myself at the moment, having signed up two high-profile business leaders to be Warriors Proud members.

Air NZ CEO Christopher Luxton and iconic businessman Sir Ralph Norris have paid their \$59 - just as I have - to become Warrior Proud members. Now that's top-level support.

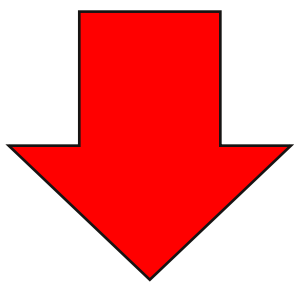
You can sign up too or it would make a great gift. There's the added bonus of a chance to win VIP tickets to the Nines, and a signed 2015 Vodafone Warriors jersey too. Details are on [www.sirpeterleitch.co.nz](http://www.sirpeterleitch.co.nz) or see below.



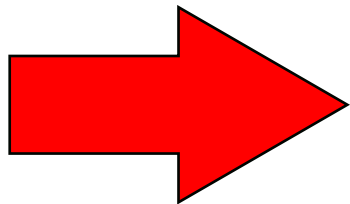
Christopher Luxton, Your Old Mate The Mad Butcher and Sir Ralph Norris.

Join us for  
only \$59!  
plus bank charge

Details here:



Details here:



Giddy your old mate **the Mad Butcher** join me and become a Warrior proud member for only... **\$59\***

\*credit card fees will be additional

**WARRIOR PROUD MEMBERSHIP INCLUDES:**

- ✓ A Free general Admission ticket to a regular season Vodafone Warriors home game of your choice
- ✓ Exclusive 20th anniversary membership cap only available to members
- ✓ Exclusive 20th anniversary membership case, pin, bumper sticker and lanyard
- ✓ 10% discount on CCC Vodafone Warriors merchandise
- ✓ \$150 members price for Jerseys (RRP \$185)
- ✓ Invites to exclusive meet the team events
- ✓ Members first & Exclusive communication from the club

**20 YEARS VODAFONE WARRIORS**

Become a member before Friday 23rd January - simply comment 'Mad Butcher' in the seating and preference box to go into the draw to win 1 of 5 VIP side-line seats to the Dick Smith NRL Auckland Nines plus a signed 2015 Vodafone jersey

[www.warriorsforever.co.nz](http://www.warriorsforever.co.nz) | Membership line: 0800 839 839

# Warriors Christmas Party



20 YEARS  
 Having fun at the Vodafone Warriors #MembersBBQ



20 YEARS  
 Having fun at the Vodafone Warriors #MembersBBQ



Even I had to sit on Santa's lap.



20 YEARS  
 Having fun at the Vodafone Warriors #MembersBBQ



Great to catch up with Manu Vatuvei's Dad.



This little guy caught my heart and his favourite player is Konileti Hurrell.



These girls were all waiting for Shuan Johnson.



I caught up with the Mt Smart Rocker.



Left: The three musketeers on the BBQ. (From Left) Former Warrior Duanne Mann, Head Chef Me, First ever Warriors Captian Dean Bell.





## Here is a little insight into what the players are up to over Christmas



### **Sam Tomkins**

December 25 is going to be a first for our fabulous fullback. Sam has never experienced a Kiwi Christmas before, in fact he has never experienced Christmas outside his home town of Wigan in England before. Fortunately Sam is real good mates with Thomas Leuluai, so has a trip to Queenstown with his teammate lined up.

"I'm looking forward to Queenstown with Thomas, but I am hoping the weather sorts itself out because I will be back in Auckland, and if the sun shines I'm off to the beach. They tell me that's what a lot of Kiwis do, so I thought I'd give it a crack. But I'll be watching I eat because I am busting to play in the Nines again."

### **Simon Mannering** - The Vodafone Warriors and Victorius Kiwi Captian

Our skipper, and the captain of the Four Nations Kiwis side, will be hosting family at his palce in Mangere Bridge, and although his little one is now 15-months, so has a Christmas under the belt, Simon is looking forward to it. "Having a baby changes your life that is for sure, and my brother is coming up, and my partner's family will be there too. So it's all gifts, good food and great company."



### **Thomas Leuluai**

It's one end of the country to the other for Thomas. After his South Island trip with Sam, he's off to Ahipara in Northland to be with family, and catch up with his former Kiwi Dad James. "To be honest, I don't do much when I go up there. I'm not into fishing, so it's a lot of relaxing and chilling with the family."

### **Stacey Jones** - Ex Vodafone Warrior, Now coahcing the New South Wales cup team.

Stacey is another one who is heading up north, but he's headed to Awanui. "It's just a little place a bit north of Kaitaia, and we all love going up to see Mum and Dad. But I haven't done the Christmas shopping yet, so I better get into that. I can't leave everything to the missus and Santa Claus." Despite his lack of shopping prowess, he might be out of the woods. By the end of the lunch he'd won one of the lucky prize draws, and left with a few goodies.



### **Logan Swann** - Ex Vodafone Warrior

Logan and his lovely wife Jennifer got the perfect present earlier this year, a bouncing little boy they have named Cole, a brother for Lucas, so they don' need anything more for Christmas. Even so, the family has a nice road trip planned. "We are off to the bay of Islands. We don't even know where for sure yet, but then it is back to Auckland and we might head out to Waiheke for a bit. Christmas is brilliant so we are really looking forward to having our first with our new baby."



### **Jo Vagana** - Ex Vodafone Warrior

Now no disrespect, but Jo is no tiddler. In fact it is fair to say he is a big bloke who looks like he knows his way around a knife and fork pretty well. And is probably the most honest of our celebrities too, because this is what he said when he was asked about what he was up to for Christmas. "I might do a bit of eating!" I can tell you I wouldn't want to be doing the washing up if Jo had a big feed in mind. Seriously though, he's another just looking forward to kicking back and having time with the family. Good on you Jo.

### **Monty Betham** - Ex Vodafone Warrior

While his former teammates are heading north, Monty Betham, all round good guy, Steps for Life champion, conqueror of Carlos Spencer and Warriors legend, is going in the opposite direction. He's off to Wanaka. "We're off straight after Christmas to meet family and we have family coming in all the way from the United States. They haven't been home for 20 years, so that is going to be awesome. I love it down there, winter or summer it is a fabulous place."







**Boxing Day – Friday 26th December, Sunday 28th December,  
New Year's Day, Thursday 1st January  
Ellerslie Racecourse**



Running for over 150 years, Ellerslie's Boxing Day Races are an institution on Auckland's social calendar.

This event is the beginning of The New Zealand Herald Christmas Carnival and is always a magnificent day of high fashion, entertainment, socialising and premier thoroughbred racing. Breathe in the excitement of the track as horses thunder past you, dress up and enter Nicolas Feuillatte Fashions in the Field, or do it your way and soak up the on course action from a spot on one of the public lawns or at the Ellerslie Infield.

With plenty of free children's entertainment and free general admission for the under 15s, The New Zealand Herald Boxing Day Races also offer a fantastic, affordable day out for the family. Can't make it on Boxing Day? The action continues on Saturday 28th January and, for the one of the best day's racing in the country, be at Ellerslie on New Year's Day.

**For tickets and more information visit [ellerslie.co.nz](http://ellerslie.co.nz)**

## Rookies Get New Deals

Two of our most promising players have had their contracts extended by two years.

Rookie NRL winger David Fusitu'a, off contract next year, has been signed until the end of the 2017 while 2014 NYC debutant Ata Hingano has been secured until the end of 2016.

Fusitu'a, 20, had the distinction of playing for each of the Vodafone Warriors' three teams in 2014 - the NRL, NSW Cup and the NYC.

Hingano became one of the NYC's youngest debutants when he was handed his first appearance soon after his 17th birthday.

The halfback-standoff had a key hand in the Vodafone Junior Warriors' progress to their grand final success, culminating in him being named the 2014 Counties Manukau Young Sportsman of the Year.

The Vodafone Warriors beat off interest from rival clubs to retain the pair.

"David and Ata are highly regarded by our coaching staff and are certainly two players we see having a big future with the club," general manager football Dean Bell said.

"They're local products who have come through our system, both of them making significant progress this year."

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## Major League Baseball on his way

Milwaukee Brewers star Ron Ronickee is visiting New Zealand next year to visit schools and regions.

In past years Baseball New Zealand has had visits from New York Yankees (now Mets) centre fielder Curtis Granderson, former

San Diego Padres catcher Nick Hundley, current Seattle Mariners and NZ 21U coach Chris Woodward, and Pittsburgh Pirates reliever Mark Melancon.

Roenicke has managed the Milwaukee Brewers since 2010, leading the Brewers to the 2011 National League (NL) Central title in his first year.

Playing a mix of outfield and first base, Roenicke had an eight year playing career with six different teams.

"I can't wait to get to New Zealand as my wife Karen and I have wanted to come here for a long time," said Roenicke.

Whilst the main purpose for his visit is to visit schools and regions around the country, Roenicke is hoping to see some competitive games to see if there is anyone who may have the right skills to succeed in America.

The Brewers boss will spend eight days coaching in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch, the dates at the end of January through the beginning of February still to be confirmed.



## Women Get Their Big Chance

Five newcomers have a chance to make NZ Kiwi Ferns debuts, after their inclusion in the national women's squad to prepare for next month's Dick Smith NRL Auckland Nines.

About 50 players trialled, but coach Rusty Matua has reached beyond that roster for the Eden Park tournament.

Since this will be the first time New Zealand has fielded a national nines team, all the players eventually chosen will technically be debutants.

For Aleasha Brider (Mid Central), Luisa Gago (Counties Manukau), Amber Kani (Counties Manukau), Krystal Rota (Counties Manukau) and Janna Vaughan (Mid Central), though, this could be their first opportunity to wear a Kiwi Ferns jersey.

Vaughan, who is also a national kickboxing champion, Kani and Rota have been close before, narrowly missing selection in the past. Brider is a former NZ Maoris and Queensland representative, while Gago was 2014 Forward of the Year for the Manurewa Marlins. But Matua wasn't able to include several players pursuing their Olympic dream at the national rugby union sevens tournament, scheduled for the same weekend as the Kiwi Ferns' final selection camp on January 16-18. "It's a harsh reality, but we had to give them an ultimatum," he says. "We had to draw a line in the sand and we've now gone with girls who are 100 percent committed to the nines programme."



The squad is: Aleasha Brider (Mid Central), Maitua Feterika (Counties Manukau), Sarina Fiso (Counties Manukau), Teuila Fotu-Moala (Counties Manukau), Luisa Gago (Counties Manukau), Georgia Hale (Akarana), Honey Hireme (Counties Manukau), Chanel Huddleston (Mid Central), Amber Kani (Counties Manukau), Nora Maaka (Counties Manukau), Kelly Maipi (Counties Manukau), Laura Mariu (Counties Manukau), Krystal Murray (Mdi Central), Hilda Peters (Counties Manukau), Kahurangi Peters (Counties Manukau), Rona Peters (Counties Manukau), Krystal Rota (Counties Manukau), Atawhai Tupaea (Counties Manukau), Janna Vaughan (Mid Central), Sharnita Woodman (Counties Manukau), Shontelle Woodman (Counties Manukau)

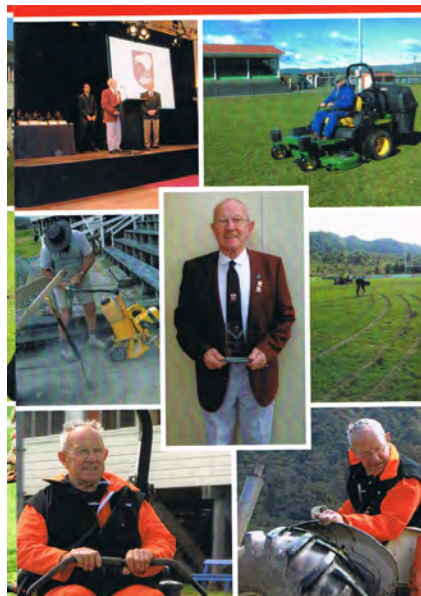
## Celebrating Frank Gibson's 90th

Frank Gibson, the long serving, legendary groundsman of Wingham Park, HQ of the West Coast Rugby League was 90 yesterday. To tell you what kind of guy he is, he was even out at the park this a couple of mornings ago helping a bloke paint a fence.

Frank was the NZRL volunteer of the year in 2010.

Frank is a top bloke and I wish him a very Happy Birthday for yesterday. Without volunteers like Frank, sport in New Zealand wouldnt be possible.

This photo, on the right, from 2010 shows Frank, centre with his award, and top left at the Awards function in Wellington, the rest were taken at Wingham Park.



## Congrats to Auckland Football Club

Well done guys you put in a fantastic effort. You've done us Kiwis proud.



## 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!



### 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.



David Kemeys  
Editor at Large



Peter Leitch  
Editor

