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**Media release**

[DATE]

**Paddlers descend on [WHERE] to do battle on Waka Ama**

[WHERE] will this weekend transform into a sea of colour as Clubs paddle for glory on their Waka Ama, or outrigger canoes, at the [NAME OF RACE MEET]. More than [XX] crews from [XX] Clubs throughout [REGION] are expected to line up at the starting line.

[NAME], [POSITION], said that the level of interest in the [WHAT] event was unprecedented.

“The interest from Clubs this year has been unprecedented. We’ve got [XX] crews competing and we’re expecting more than [XX] spectators to turn up and cheer their team on.

“These races are a true test of grit, strength and endurance and the paddlers have been training for months for these races. It’ll be a great couple of days racing and I’m looking forward to hearing the buzz of the crowd as the Waka near the finish line.”

Waka Ama sees six paddlers working together as a team over varied distances from 500m, 1500m to Marathon races of 30 –75 km. The ama or outrigger on the left-hand side balances the Waka or Canoe, helping it to speed through the water with each stroke of the paddlers.

For this weekend’s race meeting, Clubs will compete for honours in [XX], [XX] or [XX] paddler teams over distances of [WHAT]. More than [XX] paddlers from Waka Ama Clubs in [REGION] will compete in various age classes on a course that promises to challenge the most seasoned paddler.

In just twenty five years Waka Ama racing has grown in popularity to become the fastest growing sport in New Zealand. Each year, more than 8,000 paddlers from 85 Clubs turn out to race Waka Ama in a show of brute strength, endurance, and team work. Many thousands more attend to watch the racing as spectators.

The first race begins at [TIME, DATE]

For full details about the event, including crews and course information visit [Website]

Ends

**Contact**

[NAME][PHONE][EMAIL]

**Editor’s notes**

About Waka Ama NZ

Established in 1987, Nga Kaihoe O Aotearoa (Waka Ama New Zealand) is the national governing body for Waka Ama in New Zealand. Waka Ama’s vision is to lead the development, practice and promotion of the sport and culture of Waka Ama so that by 2035, future generations will have a sport where: *“Waka Ama is a heavyweight in the Aotearoa/New Zealand sporting psyche and is recognised as a global leader and significant influencer in the sport, nationally and internationally.”*

For further information about Waka Ama NZ visit [www.wakaama.co.nz](http://www.wakaama.co.nz)

About ActivePost

Launched in mid-2011, ActivePost is a NZ Post initiative to support grassroots participation in sports and recreation and is the sole sponsor of Waka Ama New Zealand. Under the ActivePost umbrella, NZ Post works closely with Sport New Zealand and provides resources, funding and logistical support to help other organisations deliver activities that are engaging, fun and involve the community through families, businesses, schools and Clubs.

For further information about ActivePost and its activities visit [www.activepost.co.nz](http://www.activepost.co.nz)