

MEDIA RELEASE (Captions at end of story, further photos available)
From Doug Laing, media officer, Shearing Sports New Zealand
October 13, 2017

A shear party underway in Waimate

The 50th Waimate Shears, incorporating the New Zealand Spring Championships, have been launched in a new million-dollar stadium – a community of less than 4000 people raising the money and building the facility in less than two years.

The project was spearheaded by the championships committee, its 27 members steered by local shearing contractor Warren White joining forces with the Southern Canterbury A and P Association which owns the land at its showgrounds on the outskirts of the town south of Timaru.

Mr White has been Shears chairman for 11 years of the near half-century since the committee was formed in 1968 to run the first championships later that year in the South Canterbury town's old Olympia Hall.

More than 200 people were present last night when founding chairman Alan Kelly told how the commitment evident in the latest project had been there from the start, with a committee formed in 1968 and the first championships just a few months later in a hall transformed into a woolshed each year for a competition which has become one of the most important in New Zealand.

It incorporated Open, Senior and Intermediate machine shearing and Open blade shearing, with woolhandling competition introduced in 1979.

Of the 61 competitions under the umbrella of Shearing Sports New Zealand this season, it is one of just eight held over more than one day.

It's Open shearing championship is the long strongwool round of the five-round PGG Wrightson Wool National Shearing Circuit, and on Saturday it will stage a bladeshearing test match between New Zealand and Australia, part of a home-and-away trans-tasman series in which teams will meet at Bendigo, Vic, in two weeks' time.

Highlighting the standard of competition, the first four Open shearing finals at Waimate were won by legendary multiple-Golden Shears and 1980 World champion Brian "Snow" Quinn, who was among at least eight first-year finalists at last night's anniversary function, where a guest speaker was Shearing Sports New Zealand chairman and multiple World and Golden Shears champion Sir David Fagan, who won the Waimate title 10 times from 1992 to 2011.

When Manawatu shearer Murray Henderson won the Open machine shearing final last year it was only the second time in 25 years the big title had been won by someone has not been a World champion.

Woolhandling competition was first held at the Waimate Shears in 1979, and defending

Open woolhandling champion Joel Henare in February claimed his second World individual and teams champion double, while late multiple World and Golden Shears champion Joanne Kumeroa won seven times spanning 21 championships from 1991 to 2011.

The need for a new facility arose through the rebuilding of longtime venue the Waimate Sports Stadium, with a new facility which became unsuitable for the shearing competition.

Mr White, who started his association with the Shears volunteer crutching sheep for the competition, said the committee initially hoped to help redevelop the showgrounds' Dempsey Pavilion, but the "final straw" was the likely \$25,000 cost of "moving a power pole."

Work on the 900sqm facility started in November last year, thousands of dollars of community labour supplementing such finance \$50,000 grants from the Waimate District Council and the Lotteries Commission, and \$100,000 from the Lion Foundation, among supporters which contributed at least \$5000 each. A sponsors board lists almost 60 others that contributed at least \$500 each, and there was vast input of donated or "at cost" materials.

Fundraising events included shearing days in which locals effectively sacrificed wages for the good of the cause, and a "battery drive" in which over \$12,000 was raised gathering old batteries for export to recyclers.

The honour of shearing the first sheep at the first Waimate Shears in the new events centre, which is overlooked by the Hunter Hills and went to Mr White, who on Thursday night was made a life-member.

Woolhandling heats and semi-finals in three grades were being held today, along with heats in the shearing and woolhandling teams event, and Open and Senior speedshears, a junior/intermediate clean shear, and a woolhandlers fleece throw are to be held tonight.

All other events are held tomorrow, including all finals on a day of competition starting at 7am and expected to end about 9pm.

Today, Mr White was back into the more mundane chores of minute-by-minute running of the championships, pictured at the bar and canteen.

Also pictured are eight first-rear-finalists, from left Colin Gibson, John McCone, Barry Black, Brian Green, Brian Quinn, Lester Rowland, Richie Gould and Mike Boyd.

Also pictured is Alan Kelly, speaking at the 50th anniversary function.

ENDS

For further info:

Doug Laing

Media Officer

Shearing Sports New Zealand

Ph 0274-690644

media@shearingsports.co.nz

Website: www.shearingsports.co.nz





PAVILION SPONSORS



DONATIONS \$5000+

The Lion Foundation

NZ Lotteries

Waimate Shearing

Dave & Karen Ellis

Strathburn Farms

Waimate District Council

Ravensdown

BNZ

Jim Armstrong

Mid & South Canterbury

Community Trust

DONATIONS \$500+

Peter Hamilton
Digger & Lyn McCulloch
Peter & John Hughes
Waimate Rugby Club
Warren & Sandy White
Paul & Lyn O'Connor
Elgin View Farming
A R Chapman
Leathwick Family
R T E & A M Hamilton
Glenavy Young Farmers
Dawn Ratana
M A & D E Chamberlain
Tangney Tree Topping
John & Jen Tangney
Reuben Allan
D & H Le Fleming
A & W Van Leeuwen

Kinsman Contracting
Charmaine Proudman
Booth Shearing
P L & L J Brown
I L Mehrrens & Sons
Russell Hart
Gus & Steph Simmons
Alistair & Francis Young
Waihao Forks Hotel
Mick Hamilton
James Gibson
Kerry Downs
Allan J Kelly
Mitchell Bragg
Ali Bell
Waimate Rodeo Club
TB & MJ Bailey
Bill Johnson

EA & PH Fletcher
R P Ponsonby
Brian Ponsonby
Crossroads Motels
A J Clayton
Kingswood Motels
Glenmac Farm Ltd
Ross Brown Contracting Ltd
Alcombe Farm Ltd
McKeown Group
Trust Aoraki
Hurst Partnership
Alistair & Ruth Mackenzie
Springfield Farm
RSM Law
Greeson Dorman & Co.
Ben & Kim Hart

TIME & PRODUCT

Jeromy Rogers Building
Jamie Wratt Fencing
Headford Propagators
Makikihi Fries
Barry & Heather Henshaw
Caithness Farms
Alistair Gray
Trevor & June Bailey
James Davis Contracting
Ian Leathwick Contracting
Cosgroves
Canterbury Long Run Roofing
Oamaru Pre-Cut
Interpaint
Colin Butler
Kingsbury Plumbing
Waimate Shearing
Interfreight