

ROTORUA WALKING FESTIVAL

1994 – 2013

The first 20 Years

The story so far



Event Background

Project of Rotary Club of Rotorua West

- **The Rotorua Walking Festival over the 20 years has been known as:**
 - **International Two Day Walk (1994 -1996)**
 - **NZ International Two Day Walk (1997 -2007)**
 - **Rotorua Walking Festival (2008 -)**
- **It started out as a two day leisure event with Saturday walks of various distances (eg, 5, 10, 15, 20,21, 25 and 30 kms) in the Whakarewarewa Forest and on the Sunday 30, 20 and 10 km distances around the parks, reserves, lakefront, CBD and stream areas of Rotorua.**
- **Held annually generally in the third weekend of March.**

Some of the Rotary 'Westy' Event People



The purpose of the event ?

- **The founder and driving force behind the event was the late Evan Jordan a past president of the Rotary Club of Rotorua West.**
- **The event was based on other successful events in Europe and Japan and was set up to:**
 - **Create an iconic event for Rotorua.**
 - **Be in the shoulder season so as to not impact on the peak tourism flows in Rotorua.**
 - **Benefit businesses in Rotorua, particularly those in the tourism industry.**
 - **Get Rotorua people out walking to maintain healthy lifestyles.**
 - **Involve the community (particularly with the walk activities over the weekend).**
 - **To make money for Rotary and those community organisations that assisted with the event.**

Event Background

- Established in 1994 by the Rotary Club of Rotorua West. In 2011 after 18 years the club resolved to discontinue its involvement with the event and a separate incorporated society – NZ Walking Association Inc. was set up to operate the event.
- The only IML Walking Association (IML) Walk in New Zealand (full membership in 1996)
- Over the same period there has been between 92 and 368 overseas walkers each year



Event Organisation

With 20 events there has been tens of thousands of hours of work by volunteers (largely from the Rotary Club of Rotorua West) with:

- Formulating the event programme (eg, between 2 and 8 days).**
- Marketing (eg, brochures, internet, Facebook).**
- Walk route design and marking.**
- Registrations – including responding to thousands of enquiries from walkers all over the world.**
- Meeting all safety and compliance requirements .**
- Coordinating all of the marshals and checkpoints.**
- Developing and maintaining relationships with key partners, stakeholders, sponsors and supporters.**
- Managing all administration to ensure that the event is well managed and financially sustainable.**



Some Facts and Figures

- **Over 20 years a total of more than 14,000 people have participated in the event.**
- **Over 2,200 international walkers have participated.**
- **Over the 20 years attendance has ranged between 178 (1994) to 1,404 (2004) with 7 international walkers in 1994 and a peak of 368 internationals in 2004.**
- **Overall average over the 20 years is more than 650 total walkers and more than 110 international walkers each year.**

Event Benefits

- **Donations to Walk charities including - Rotorua Youth Centre, Rescue Helicopter, SPCA and Hospice.**
- **Donations to Walk partners including ATC, schools (clean up and mail out), Girl Guides, St Chads, Rotorua music club (buskers), St Johns, various bands including school (eg WHHS) and local marching bands, various primary school kapa haka groups.**
- **Fundraising for many other groups such as Netherlands Society and Ngati Rangiwehiwehi.**
- **An economic direct impact of over \$3 million dollars to the Rotorua community and indirect impacts of more than \$4 million (note excludes all airfares of international visitors).**

An International Event



Key Challenges

- **Keeping Marketing of the event current and maintaining the profile of the event when we are in a challenging economic environment when there is a lot of choice in other events that people can do. Also increasing use of technology and increasing our online presence.**
- **Keeping the event fresh in walkers minds.**
- **Obtaining event volunteers both during the event and prior to the event with event organisation.**
- **Ensuring the ongoing financial viability of the event.**
- **Funding and sponsorship for the event.**



Key achievements

- **Membership of IML Walking Association (IMLWA) in 1996 and now part of an established network of IMLWA walks in more than 25 countries around the world.**
- **IMLWA AGM in Rotorua in 2004 – more than 50 international delegates and more than 368 international walkers.**
- **Being able to assist many local organisations to fundraise.**



Key achievements *(continued)*

- The walks being rated the best in the IMLWA, particularly with the combination of forest, stream and thermal and parks walks so close to town.
- Focussed on Rotorua as a destination for walking and forest recreation.
- Got Rotorua people enjoying their forest and parks and reserves of Rotorua.
- Raised funds for many good causes.
- Festivals have ranged from seven walking events over two and a bit days to 32 walking events over 8 days.



Key achievements *(continued)*

- Having dine and dance for over 300 walkers for more than 15 years
- Having walkers from more than 25 countries.
- The walks have included:
- dog (paws) walk, heritage walk, disability walk, Nordic walks, heart support walks, toddlers walks, guided walks around lakes Tarawera and Okataina, night walks, family walks, walks through the DoC estate in addition to our conventional marathon (42 km); half marathon (21 km) and 10 km Whakarewarewa Forest walks and our 10,20 and 30 km walks around Rotorua's



Partners, sponsors and Supporters for 2013

Agrodome

Cancer Society

Daily Post

Marketing/RDC -

Fifty/50 Traffic Management

Girl Guiding Rotorua

Kia ora magazine

Mayors Office /RDC

Media Works

PROevents

APR Consultants

CNI Iwi Holdings Ltd

Destination Rotorua

Events and Venues/RDC

Holiday Inn Rotorua

Lake City Athletic Club

MacDonald's Rotorua

Polynesian Spa

QE Health



Partners, sponsors and Supporters for 2013

Rotary Club of Rotorua West

Rotorua Energy Charitable Trust

Rotorua Netherlands Society

Skyline

Sport BOP

St Chads

Tasti

Te Puia

The Radio Network Rotorua

Timberlands

Walking Legends

Waiariki Institute of Technology



20 Year Acknowledgements

- **Key Event Partners**
 - **Rotary Club of Rotorua West**
 - **Rotorua District Council** *(note includes Events and Venues, Mayors Office, Destination Rotorua Marketing and Redwoods)*
 - **Rotorua Energy Charitable Trust**
 - **Rotorua Netherlands Society**
- **Key Individual Contributions**
 - **Henk Buissink**
 - **Neil Goodwin**
 - **Roger McElroy**
 - **Sue Marsh**
 - **The Jordan Family**



20 Year Acknowledgements

- **Key Sponsors**
 - Agrodome
 - APR Consultants
 - QE Health
 - Polynesian Spa
 - Skyline
 - Te Puia
- **Key Organisation Supporters**
 - St Chads Communication Centre Trust
 - Rotorua Girl Guides
 - Lake City Athletic Club
 - Sport Bay of Plenty
 - Waiariki Institute of Technology



Thank you for your support

- **Walkers**
- **Partners**
- **Key individuals**
- **Sponsors**
- **Supporters**

