



**Media statement: Monday, 16 March 2020**

**Concern around Coronavirus leads to cancellation of popular Iron Maori Taupo event.**

Iron Maori today announced the cancellation of this weekend's 2020 Iron Maori Taupo event in light of the potential risk to participants of Coronavirus (COVID-19).

More than 550 people were registered to take part in the popular event which was scheduled to take place in Taupo this weekend, Saturday, 21 March.

Heather Skipworth, founder of Iron Maori, said "It is really unfortunate that we've had to cancel Iron Maori Taupo this year.

However, at the end of the day, ensuring that whanau are in a safe environment while taking part in a healthy, active event, is paramount. That's what Iron Maori is all about."

"We looked closely at whether we could reschedule the event. However, in light of all of the uncertainty around Coronavirus, this just isn't feasible at this time.

Registered participants for Iron Maori Taupo 2020 should refer to our website ([www.ironmaori.com](http://www.ironmaori.com)) for full information about the event's cancellation. We will also be contacting all registrants directly.

Heather adds, "We will still be providing everyone's race packs as we already have these on hand. The pack includes the event t-shirt and medal. We will post these to registered participants within the next fortnight.

We are also offering all current registrants a 20% discount off the entry fee for our Iron Maori quarter event later this year. This is scheduled to take place in Ahuriri, Napier in November.

The Tuwharetoa Maori Trust Board has backed Iron Māori on Lake Taupo since 2017.

Trust Board CEO, Shane Heremaia, said the cancellation was an unfortunate, but necessary, decision to make.

"We have seen the Taupo event grow exponentially to become one of Iron Maori's most popular regional events with hundreds taking part in the swim, run and cycle course.

These are unprecedented times we are in as a global pandemic around Coronavirus unfolds.

As kaitiaki, Ngāti Tūwharetoa has a responsibility to ensure that all users of the lake are kept safe and not unnecessarily exposed to the risk of large gatherings for the good of our community and New Zealand as a whole.

With regret, we support Iron Māori's decision to cancel this year's event".

**Ends.**

**Media enquiries:**

Heather Skipworth, Founder, Iron Maori  
Mobile: 027 320 5427 or heather\_ironmaori@hotmail.com