

# MARLBOROUGH MIDWEEK

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## Precision pilot

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# Pilots' fun day out still fixed on safety

By SVEN HERSELMAN

Daring pilots from around New Zealand will descend on Marlborough on Saturday for the second annual Healthy Bastards Bush Pilot Championships.

The Marlborough Aero Club will again play host to the event it put together last year to highlight its bush pilot training course. That contest turned out to be far bigger than expected with 56 pilots taking part, half of whom were from outside Marlborough.

Aero club president Craig Anderson says they hope to have at least the same number of entries, but it could well be even bigger this year.

"The idea is to encourage the guys to get out and have some fun. In aviation everything is so regulated things can get a bit boring, so this is a great way to do something different," he says.

Despite the more relaxed and fun attitude, safety still remains the top priority.

Members of the public are encouraged to watch the pilots show off their skills in two categories; short take off and landing [Stol] and precision landing.

Pilot Nick Milne says the Stol



**Getting close:** Ivor Yockney lands his plane as close to the line as possible in the precision landing contest at last year's Healthy Bastards Bush Pilot Championships at Omaka.

Photo: FILE

event requires pilots to take off in the shortest possible distance and then land in the shortest distance.

"Last year the winner did it in 40 metres, which is incredible," Nick says.

Precision landing sees pilots trying to touch down as close to line on the ground as possible,

## COVER PHOTO:

**Kitted out:** Marlborough Aero Club president Craig Anderson checks his plane, specially fitted with large soft tyres, ready for the Healthy Bastards Bush Pilot Championships being held at Omaka on Saturday.

Photo: EMMA ALLEN

with last year's winner coming within just two metres.

The contest is a good reflection of the skills bush pilots need, as they will often need to land and take off in small areas and on unconventional runways like river beds.

The day will also feature live music and food and drink on sale, with a gold coin donation as the entry fee.

The contest will begin at 10.30am and run until around mid-afternoon. If the weather is bad the event will be postponed until Sunday.

## New cancer event to raise profile

By SVEN HERSELMAN

The Marlborough Cancer Society have a new event on the cards, with their first ever 10km sponsored run/walk coming up.

Society fundraiser Zoe Gray says that the idea behind the fun run is for them to have an event that runs on the alternate years to the Relay for Life.

"The Relay for Life is every second year so the 10km run/walk will be every second year too, so we have something on each year," she says.

They hope that it will also be a good catalyst for people looking to take part in the relay.

The 10km will be held on March 2 and start at Wither Hills winery outside Blenheim at 9am. The route will take the runners and walkers through the vineyard and onto the Taylor River Res-

erve, and then down the river to the Cancer Society Marlborough memorial garden near the Beaver Rd bridge.

"The route keeps right off the roads and will be very scenic - it's a great route to walk or run," says Zoe, who will be walking the route with her mum Rachel Burden. At the finish a brief memorial service will be held, similar to the one held at the Relay for Life.

Entry will be \$5, but contestants are encouraged to use it as a fundraiser for the society. Finishers will get spoilt at the finish with a energy bar style cake made specially for the event by Boo-tea.

"We are still working out what other things we will have happening at the finish, but it is still early days. We are keen to get the word out now so that people can start preparing," Zoe says.



**Active pair:** Cancer Society Marlborough fundraiser Zoe Gray, left, with her mum Rachel Burden at the Cancer Society memorial garden on the Taylor River Reserve. It will be the finish point of the new Cancer Society Marlborough 10km sponsored run/walk.

Photo: SVEN HERSELMAN



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