



FESTIVAL OF THE ELEMENTS

WAITANGI DAY

6 February 2007
Te Rauparaha Park

MEDIA RELEASE

EWE TO YOU

Competitors will do battle with knitting needles and crochet hooks at this years' Festival of the Elements in Porirua on February 6.

The massive free day-long Waitangi Day festival will include a “Ewe to You” competition, in which four teams of crafts people will transform a sheep's' fleece into a wearable garment in just five hours.

Organiser Kathy McLauchlan says that means each team must take the 550g of dyed fleece, flick card it to loosen the fibres, spin it into usable thread and then transform it into some sort of garment.

It will all be done before the public as the four teams compete in a tent at the heart of the festival on Te Rauparaha Park, in central Porirua.

The Festival of the Elements is now in its 15th year and has become one of New Zealand's biggest Waitangi Day celebrations; attracting 30,000 people last year.

It is an extravaganza of art, music and entertainment involving more than 1000 performers and aims to provide a positive celebration for Waitangi Day and New Zealand's cultural diversity.

At Te Rauparaha Park there will be non-stop entertainment on a main stage, plus the ever-popular sculpture from trash competition, alongside a wide range of stalls and roving entertainers.

Next door at Pataka Museum and Gallery musicians, poets and artists will display their talents and at the Porirua Recreation Centre there is the Kapi Mana News Art Action!, a children's festival of workshops and entertainment. Across the road at Elsdon Park there will be a display of huge kites designed and made by the New Zealand Kite Flyers Association.

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In the Ewe to You competition on Te Rauparaha Park, the four teams doing battle will come from the Wairarapa, Hutt, Kapiti and Porirua/Tawa. Kathy is chairperson of the Gear Woolshed Fibre Craft Group from Porirua.

She explains Ewe to You events are held nationally and internationally and often involve shearing the sheep on site before competition starts.

That won't happen at the festival because Kathy is keen to give the competitors more time to work at a relaxed pace, so they can interact with the crowd and have a little fun.

“We're working it like the All Blacks and having subs off the bench. Each team will have up to eight members, with four working on the garment at any one time.”

It might be fun, but Kathy says it won't be easy.

“It is tricky. They have to work out what they're doing. There are quite a lot of colours in it (the fleece). There's quite a high skill level involved.”

The competition kicks off in the morning and the final garments will be on display later in the afternoon. Alongside the competition will be felting, weaving, spinning and knitting demonstrations.

The Festival of the Elements continues on into the night with a top-class line-up of entertainers performing until 9.30pm when the festival will close with a spectacular fireworks display.

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