

# Te Waipounamu Riders Against Domestic Abuse Trust Organisers of The South Island White Ribbon Ride 2024

## To Whom it May Concern

### A bit about White Ribbon

In 1991, a group of Canadian men formed the first White Ribbon campaign after 14 women were shot dead at the University of Montreal, by an “anti feminist”. Their call was for men everywhere to lay down their ‘arms’ against women and the White Ribbon became a symbol of that message. From there the movement has spread, with 59 countries now taking the message of respectful relationships and non-violence toward women, to their communities. Every year the message takes on a slightly different focus. In 2019 the message was about challenging the stereotypes that boys grow up with about not being ‘manly’ to cry or express feelings. Having to ‘toughen up’ and ‘Be the Man’ are messages about toxic masculinity that have had a negative effect on many boys and young men growing up. This year the messages are about changing the dialogues of toxic masculinity and encouraging respectful relationships as well as challenging and changing the notion of “Boys will be Boys”



### The White Ribbon Ride

This event is unique to New Zealand and is something that we are quite proud of. In November each year, a number of motorcycle riders take to the road to carry the Kaupapa of White Ribbon to schools, prisons and community groups. The riders are just ordinary people some of whom have been through violence, and have stories to tell, where appropriate and others are there because they simply believe in the importance of the messages. Most of them take the two weeks off work as well as pay their own way. They do not ask for donations, they simply want to share the message and try to make a change and stamp out violence towards Women.



*Speaking to students in Alexandra*

The riders cover around 1500kms in the 8 days that they are on the road and make many stops along the way, visiting both primary and secondary schools, marae and prisons, while also attending many community gatherings that are organised in various centres on route. The ride culminates in a community gathering on November 25<sup>th</sup>, White

Ribbon Day, where we ask not just men and young men, but everyone to take the pledge, to ‘Stand up, Speak out and Act to Prevent violence toward Women’.

The riders cover around



*Having tea with a Scout group. Oamaru*

## Where do the riders visit

The riders have visited many schools, prisons, community groups and marae over the years and are very skilled at getting messages across to all age groups. We have a great working relationship with the New Zealand police and they attend most of the visits the riders make. When 20 loud motorcycles arrive with leather clad



*Welcome at Netherby School. Ashburton*

riders, some of whom have personal stories to tell, people tend to listen to what they have to say. Hopefully the messages of respectful relationships get through and help even one person in the future.

## The messages

Today's boys and young men are still being taught unhelpful messages about what it is to be real men. They are told to 'toughen up, don't cry, chin up, sit down, socks up, man up.....'. "boys and young men are routinely expected to betray their better natures, to smother their consciences, to renounce the best of themselves and submit

to something low and mean. (Tim Winton).

Therefore our key message is about promoting healthy masculinity. Boys and men can still be 'brave', 'have muscles', be assertive and tough, love rugby, enjoy time with other men and boys. But boys and men should also be free to express sad and softer emotions, enjoy cooking, dancing, gardening and anything else that does not fit into gender stereotypes. Our messages are not just to the boys and men. We want our young Wahine to hear the message that they should



expect nothing less from the boys and young men around them. We want them to accept only respectful relationships and learn that it is important for them to walk away if things get toxic.

There have been a number of instances where people have approached the riders after listening to their messages, seeking help and the riders are armed with information and contacts for both men and women to get support.



*Trying the bikes for fit, St Keven's. Oamaru*

## The Ride.

This year the ride will commence with riders from all over the country gathering in Gore where we will be attending and speaking at community events and schools in the area. The ride then takes us to Invercargill where visits to businesses, community groups and school are being arranged. The ride then continues on to Balclutha and Milton where we will be visiting inmates at the South Otago Correctional facility. From there we head to Dunedin with a number of visits arranged. From Dunedin, we then ride to Oamaru to visit the schools there before heading to Timaru for more school visits, culminating in a big community event at Caroline Bay. We will be finishing the ride on White Ribbon Day, November 25th,





with a big event to be held at the Burnham Military Camp. All in all, the riders will visit around 11 schools and speak at roughly 8 public events.

The cost of the ride is budgeted at around \$20,000.00 which is the cost of accommodation and one meal a day for the 20 riders and support drivers and a small contribution to the riders fuel as well as the fuel for the support vehicle and resources. The support vehicle travels with the ride to carry excess luggage and to transport the

riders to evening meals if the weather is bad. It can be a travelling billboard with temporary signage for white ribbon and any sponsors and supporters. It normally parks in a prominent position when the riders stop and so can help both the ride and our sponsors. The riders stay mainly at Holiday parks and motorcamps, but we try to make them as comfortable as we can for a budget, as the days can be pretty stressful. The riders pay for the rest of their own meals as well as the majority of their own fuel.



*Public event in Nelson*

They do this, because they believe they can make a difference. They are passionate about the messages and live the kaupapa in their everyday lives. New Zealand has appalling statistics around Domestic violence by men and we need to change the way men think and act. Already this year (2022) 19 women have lost their lives at the hands of their partners or ex partners. Something has to change and we believe that the messages of White Ribbon can help men begin to make those changes. Further information regarding the White Ribbon campaigns can be found on the website, [whiteribbon.org.nz](http://whiteribbon.org.nz)

Kind regards

Te Waipounamu Riders Against Domestic Abuse Trust Board



*Speaking to a church group Amberly*



*Speaking to students. Waitaki Girls HS*