

# FORD RANGER NEW ZEALAND RURAL GAMES

24 January 2022

## Rural Games Weekend will be back for 2023

The Ford Ranger New Zealand Rural Games scheduled to be held in The Square, Palmerston North in March is the latest national event to fall victim to the predicted spread of the coronavirus.

New Zealand's largest rural sporting event was on track to draw crowds of over 50,000 to the free to the public three-day event. In addition, the Norwood NZ Rural Sports Awards dinner, a seasoned favourite set for the Friday evening, had been well sold out to over 400 guests for six months.

The New Zealand Rural Games Trust runs and operates the Ford Ranger New Zealand Rural Games, the Norwood New Zealand Rural Sports Awards, the Allflex Clash of the Colleges and the Westpac Agri Futures careers day.

New Zealand Rural Games Founder Steve Hollander said although he and his team were gutted, the decision was a no brainer.

"With the whole country moving to the red traffic light, it was clear that we could not proceed. The Agri Futures and Clash of the Colleges were going to be a huge drawcard to hundreds of secondary school students. The risk to vulnerable people was just way too great for the popular 'have a go' events for children and parents, plus the opportunity for so many elderly people to be able to sit and watch."

Steve Hollander said that while the preparation for the Games was nearly completed and his team had been full throttle for the last six months, he wanted to publicly thank our many loyal sponsors, sports associations, athletes, local government, community trusts and partners for their unwavering commitment and generous support.

"I also want to acknowledge our board and the executive team who have been planning to bring new activations to our events and introduce manned entry and exit gates to the games to manage Covid."

Steve Hollander said, "Knocked down but never knocked out - once the cancellation process is completed, the team will take a break and come back together mid-year to start planning for 2023. Only 400 days to go!".

## For more information:

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