



Ngāti Kahungunu Iwi
INCORPORATED

MEDIA RELEASE - 21 June 2010

Matariki Lights Up Hastings Skies

Matariki Celebrations – Flaxmere, Friday June 24

KEY POINTS

- Seven hot-air balloons, representing the seven stars of the Matariki constellation, will play a key part in Matariki celebrations around Flaxmere on June 25 and June 26.
- The balloons will feature at a public concert in Flaxmere Park on the evening of June 25, where they will perform a night glow.
- The balloons will also be taking off from a Matariki breakfast being held at Te Aranga Marae on the morning of June 26.
- The balloons will also appear alongside the Hawke's Bay Opera House in Hastings on the evening on June 26, to perform a light flicker, to welcome guests to the Family Works Fashion Show, which will be held inside The Assembly, at the Opera House.

‘Matariki Lights Up Hastings Skies’

Flaxmere and Hastings will shine for Matariki when a group of hot-air balloons fire up and light up the towns to help people celebrate the end of the harvest and the beginning of a new season.

Seven balloons, representing the seven stars of the Matariki constellation, will play a key role in three events on June 25 and June 26.

They will perform a “night glow” for the public on Friday, June 25, at Flaxmere Park and will be involved in a symbolic Matariki breakfast, marking the connection between paptuanuku (mother earth) and ranginui (sky father), on the morning of Saturday, June 26.

And finally the seven balloons will perform a light flicker over the Hawke's Bay Opera House on the evening of June 26.

There are balloons coming from Wairarapa and Wellington to be part of the Matariki celebrations and they will be led by Andrew Livingston from Hawke's Bay Early Morning Balloons.

Mr Livingston is co-ordinating the balloons' Matariki appearances with Ngati Kahunguu Iwi, as part of the iwi-supported free Matariki events from Wairoa to Wairarapa, through to July 2.

The balloons will be a feature at Flaxmere Park where a concert is planned for Matariki starting at 5.30pm, Friday, June 25.

"We'll start our show at about 7pm, we'll have the balloons on the ground at the park and they'll light up like light bubs ... it's just a good way for people to see the balloons and for us to meet people," Mr Livingston said

"We've been involved in big Matariki events like this one before but it's just a really good way to meet people. Five or six years ago no one knew what Matariki was about and there's a lot more awareness of it now, that it is based around the Maori New Year and a change in the calendar when the stars appear," he said.

There will also be entertainment in the park, an outdoor screen, food and craft fair and the evening will finish with a fireworks display.

The seven air balloons will also appear at a Matariki breakfast event planned for Te Aranga Marae in Flaxmere on Saturday, June 26.

Te Aranga marae chairperson Des Ratima said a ceremonial hangi would be made to recognise the end of harvest and the beginning of a new food-growing season.

The hangi would contain traditional Maori food, such as kumara, and would be made in recognition of the connection between papatuanuku (mother earth) and ranginui (sky father).

"When we take the hangi out of the earth, we are opening papatuanuku to her husband ranginui ... in that symbolic way we are joined together around the food," Mr Ratima said.

"We are going to give parcels of the food to the seven balloons and they will launch on land next to the marae, they will take the food from the earth up to the sky, to ranginui.

“This is quite a unique approach and I don’t think anyone else is making the same connection between Matariki and food ... it’s something we want to stand out as a major point that identifies this particular Matariki,” he said.

Mr Ratima said the marae will also hold a breakfast for the community and talk to the public about his community garden project. The ceremonies and free breakfast will run 6am to 8am followed by the marae’s AGM at 8.30am. Everyone is welcome to attend.

On Saturday evening (June 26) the seven air-balloons will also make a guest appearance over the Hawke’s Bay Opera House in Hastings.

They will perform a light flicker to welcome guests attending the Family Works Fashion Show, which is being run by Presbyterian Support East Coast as an independent Matariki event.

For more information on other Matariki events around Kahungunu, contact Te Rangi Huata on (06) 8762718 or 027 5118 052.