

# Spectacular event on water



Richard Moore

RECKON one of the great spectator sports is Inflatable Rescue Boat racing.

There are thrills, spills andounding sights galore as boat crews power through some very big waves trying to be the kings and queens of the water. They speed out from a beach, pick up "patients" in the water and then zoom back into shore where the "drivers" can sprint up the beach to the finish gate.

It is very exciting and the young crews train really hard to prove their skills and times.

The National IRB championships were held at Papamoa Surf Lifesaving Club over the weekend and the only downside was the weather gods were not in a good mood for much of the time.

The boat action was terrific, though.

On quite a few occasions the boats were left hanging — near critical — at the top of a breaker and a couple tipped over past the point of no return.

Watching them it made me wish I'd grown up in a place like Papamoa so I could have taken part in such a fun sport.

But, of course, there is a serious side behind the fun.

While the IRB events are hugely enjoyable to be in — just like any of the competitors — all the hard work goes to making the crews really professional when it comes to saving lives.

If an alert sounds out those IRB teams are in the waves almost instantly, powering out to save swimmers in all conditions.

Having been a regular visitor with my cameras to the Papamoa Surf Club over the past 15 years I can say there would be no place I'd rather get into the water than there.

They are a great group of people who volunteer their time keeping the beach safe.

And it is the same with all



**AIRBORNE:**  
Papamoa IRB driver Ross Cowdrey wonders what his brother Jake is doing during a race at the National IRB Championships held at Papamoa over the weekend.

PHOTO/RICHARD MOORE/MOORE MEDIA SERVICES

## WHAT DO YOU THINK?

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lifeguard clubs. They struggle along financially having to fundraise to buy new equipment — such as boats, motors, surf skis — or keep their clubhouses in a safe working condition.

The Papamoa Surf Lifesaving Club's clubhouse is well past its best-by date and the club is looking to replace it with a new purpose-built facility.

Their intention is to build an

environmentally and aesthetically pleasing rescue hub.

Having seen the artist's concept drawing of the proposed building, I can say it fits nicely into the environment with a smaller profile than the current base.

It will provide secure space for rescue equipment storage, education and training areas, improved communication systems and first-aid facilities.

It will also have areas for broader community use.

The club needs people to show their backing for the project by adding their names to a supporters' list.

The aim is to get more than 2000 supporters by the end of this month to show the Tauranga City Council and funding entities that the project is really important for the local community.

And, in fact, for anyone outside the area who uses the beautiful beach at Papamoa in safety.

So head along to [www.papamoabuild.org.nz](http://www.papamoabuild.org.nz) and show your support.

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*Richard Moore is an award-winning Western Bay journalist and photographer.*

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