



KIA ORA - WELCOME TO TRACKS TRUST'S RITE OF PASSAGE PROGRAMME FOR BOYS.

This information pack is to explain what a Tracks Rite of Passage is, where Tracks Trust came from and what can be done before and after the event to add to the experience.

Tracks became a Charitable Trust in early 2002 when a group of men; Youth workers, leaders of men's groups, counsellors, teachers, friends and fathers from all over the country, gathered together for a weekend to create a program that recognises the transition boys make as they pass through adolescence. The life experiences of these men revealed that this time of adolescence has fundamental effects on the individual's life and that there can be a lot of confusion around the transition to becoming an adult man.

Many societies around the world, both ancient and modern, recognise the transition to becoming an adult and hold a ceremony and celebration - an Initiation or 'Rite of Passage'. Research shows that when communities creates a conscious 'Rite of Passage', adolescents realise more clearly how their strengths and attributes can contribute to the well being of their community as well as to their own future. This not only helps them to be happy, stable and more able to lead positive fulfilling lives but the potential for social improvement is enormous.

Tracks Trust has been improving its Rites of Passage wilderness events for over five years and we are proud of the quality of the program. Our Directors are international leaders in the field and have implemented training programs for men and Tracks facilitators. We now have participants coming from all over the country to our purpose built outdoor events site in Golden Bay adjacent to the Abel Tasman National Park and have plans for regional development around the country over the next few years. We have a passionate and professional staff some of whom are national authorities on youth issues and Rites of Passage. Together our vision is:

*'Strong, healthy men and families through community led rites of passage for boys'*

The events are primarily about boys becoming young men, however everybody around the boy is affected, directly or indirectly, so it is important that the boy's family and community recognise, understand and are a part of what is happening. A Tracks Rite of Passage is more powerful if his father or another significant male adult can accompany the boy. Another supportive way is for many family members to attend the beginning and ending ceremonies. We expect that this will be one of the defining moments in the boy's life and we hope that the lives of everyone around the young man will be significantly enhanced.

Tracks events can have two parts, two possible levels of learning for young men. When a boy first comes to a Tracks Rite of Passage he arrives as a new boy and leaves as a new young man this is his Rite of Passage. He then may be invited to return as a peer leader, a Tracker. We encourage you to think of the process as not just being the one Rite of Passage, but to include a follow up event as a Tracker, to learn about qualities of leadership and service. The reinforcing of the Rite of Passage process the second time through as a peer leader adds significantly to the experience.

*'HOW CAN A CAMP OF JUST FIVE DAYS CHANGE ANYTHING?'*

It's not so much the length of time, but the fact that during that time the focus is completely on the process of becoming a man. This doesn't all happen over the five days, but marking the change symbolically has a significant effect. It can only take a few hours to be born, you only walk for the first time once, getting married only takes a few minutes, buying your first house and getting your drivers license can take a very short time but no one ever forgets these times. These important times are the markers that tell us, and those around us, where we are on the path of our life.

*'WHO WILL BE THERE?'*

There will be a team of men who have been carefully gathered to lead the boys through their Rite of Passage. On this team there will be several Elders (Senior Facilitators in their 50's and 60's who have shown they have the wisdom and knowledge to overview and guide these events) two Event Directors, several men in their 20's to 40's who have been trained as Facilitators, several Facilitator trainees and a group of young men in their teens called Trackers who have been through their Tracks Rites of Passage and are returning as peer leaders. Each Tracker is matched up with a new boy and is assigned the role of helping that boy personally throughout the whole event. A lot of important new friendships are founded on these events. All told we will be a team of 25 to 30 men who will be welcoming in a group of 8 -10 new boys.

*'WHAT HAPPENS BEFORE THE CAMP?'*

We suggest that before the event there is an opportunity to celebrate the childhood of the boy. This could be something like having a special meal with other family members like grandparents, looking through old photos, telling stories, and making reference to the coming Rite of Passage and its new beginning. We encourage the boy's parents to make some time before the event to talk about what the Tracks Rite of Passage means for them. This can prepare the boy for leaving his childhood to become a young man, in a new relationship with his mother and the feminine and a new relationship with his father and other men.

This also means working towards a new contract or set of agreements that will take effect after the camp. This will assist with understanding the new level of responsibilities and freedoms of being a young man.

WE ASK THE BOY to bring an item or photo to represent his childhood along to the camp, a symbol of the childhood he is leaving behind.

WE ASK MOTHERS to find a symbolic gift to mark this time for her son, which will be presented at the beginning ceremony.

WE ASK THE FATHERS OR ANOTHER SIGNIFICANT MAN to find a symbolic gift to give to the boy during the event. If they cannot be present at the event we ask that they also write a short letter of recognition to the boy, to be presented on the day of his transition at the same time as the gift.

*'WHAT HAPPENS ON A CAMP?'*

One way to answer this question is to explain the separate days of the camp.

#### DAY 0 – 'TRAINING DAY'

The day before any new boys arrive is a time for the team of facilitators, trainees and trackers to get ready. We discuss how we are going to meet, greet and get to know the new boys and how we can support them to have the best time they can.

#### DAY 1 - 'SEPERATION'

This day is about symbolically and physically separating the boys from the outside world; their childhood, family members, communities, friends, and other influences like TV, playstations, and school. On this day we all get together and share a lunch before the boys are taken away by the men of the Tracks community to start their 'Rite of Passage'.

#### DAY 2 - 'BUILDING COMMUNITY'

Tracks Rites of Passage are designed to create a feeling of unity and connection so this day is about getting to know and trust each other. Within the whole larger group we spend time in and sleep in smaller teams called 'home groups' each in their own Tipi. We play full-on games, tell stories and eat good food together.

#### DAY 3 - 'TRANSITION'

This is the big day; we recognise the change from boy to man and set the task for the major challenge.

#### DAY 4 – 'ASSIMILATION'

There are no boys on the event now; we are all men and young men. Tracks Rites of Passage are about seeing and acknowledging the gifts and strengths of the younger men. We take time to reflect upon the achievements of the previous day and talk about how things may change when the new young men go home and return to their lives. This day is about Acknowledgment and Celebration.

#### DAY 5 – 'RETURN'

Today the new young men return to their family and community. This is formalised with a 'threshold', a line between the outside community waiting to pick up their new young men and the group that has been on the event. Each young man takes his turn to step over the line and be received by his family. This is an opportunity for people from both sides to speak to each other. Following this will be a lunch feast and then it's time for everyone to say their goodbyes and go home.

Take your time to reconnect as a family once the young man has returned from a Tracks event. We have talked to him about new responsibilities and freedoms and you all may wish to discuss how things may be different from now on.

*'WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE EVENT?'*

We suggest that after the event the family makes a special occasion to celebrate the new young man having completed his Tracks Rite of Passage. This could be a special meal with family and friends with an opportunity for the young man to tell his story of the event and the honouring and acknowledgements he received. This is all a part of building his confidence and a foundation for himself as a young man. After the event is the ideal time to begin exploring and re-negotiating a new phase of your relationship. We encourage you to take your time with this process. Please get in touch if you'd like some ideas on how to do this.

We mail out a package a few weeks after the event that includes; a collage of photos, a contact sheet, a follow up letter, info about upcoming Tracks events, the writing or drawing the person from the event did on the visioning morning and a certificate for the Trackers to recognise their service & leadership.

Everyone on the event agrees to keep some things confidential. This enables people to talk about their lives without fear of disclosure. It also helps to maintain an 'air of mystery' for the next new boys and keep secret some of the surprises that are in the programme.

We hope this information has answered some of your questions. Tracks Trust Rites of Passage events are powerful, exciting and enjoyable and help to build solid beginnings for young men on their way to manhood.

Please contact us if you have any questions,

Ka kite ano,

TRACKS

rites of passage event registration

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Check us out on the web,  
there are heaps of photos on the gallery page

[www.tracks.net.nz](http://www.tracks.net.nz)