

Press Release
(For immediate release)
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Springston Trophy returns to Southland

One of the largest equestrian events in the Southern Hemisphere, the Springston Trophy will return to Southland later this year.

The South Island pony club fixture, which was last held in the province 10 years ago, is expected to attract over 200 riders and hundreds of support crew, resulting in a considerable economic injection during the three days of competition.

Southland Pony Club stalwart Noel Griffin said the Springston Trophy was now in its 39th year and remained an aspiration for young riders. "It's one of the premier pony club events and it's something the average rider can achieve," he said. "There's great team spirit involved and it's excellent experience travelling with their horses. Like many things, the pony club movement has reduced in size over the years but most branches still aim to get a team to Springston."

The ILT Foundation has granted \$10,000 towards staging the event in Southland, while the ILT have contributed a further \$2000. An additional \$9000 in funding has been used to upgrade the course at the Griffin Equestrian Centre venue, near Oreti Beach.

Staged from October 1-3, the Springston Trophy will feature three disciplines – dressage, cross-country and show jumping.

"As a venue, it's probably quite different to a lot of the others given that it's in the sand hills – it does add some new challenges for the riders," Griffin said.

The make-up of each team comprises two riders aged under 13, two under 16 and two under 21.

"The degree of difficulty of the tests they face is aimed at the level of rider they should be."

The 2010 Springston Trophy will be the 27th Griffin and his wife Eleri, both life members of the Southland Pony Club, have attended. The couple shared the role of secretary for the previous four Southland events, including the first one hosted by the province in 1985.

"We enjoy it ... it's great to see our local riders coming through," he said.

A combined Southland and Otago area team placed fourth at the New Zealand Pony Club Championships recently, while the Wakatipu team will defend the Springston Trophy it won in Canterbury last year.

ILT Foundation and Invercargill Licensing Trust chairman Alan Dennis said he was thrilled the Springston Trophy was returning.

"It is yet another event that will attract hundreds of visitors to our city and enable us to showcase all the wonderful attributes we have here," he said.

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