Media release   
26 September 2017

**Iconic Flannagan Cup saved from sinking**

**When one of the country’s oldest swimming events was threatened with cancellation, the Taranaki community sprang into action to ensure the survival of the Flannagan Cup.**

The water was a chilly temperature on New Year’s Day in 1916, when three courageous swimmers attempted to swim from Moturoa to the East End. Cramp stymied the attempts of two of them before the halfway mark and after nearly three gruelling hours in the water, the final 18 year old participant, W Davies, exited the water to a cheering crowd. It’s worth mentioning that this young man had just come from working all night at the telephone exchange and hadn’t eaten for 12 hours.

This event came to be known as the Flannagan Cup, after the trophy’s donor, keen swimmer and local philanthropist, Patrick Flannagan.

Local businessman, Neale Parkinson says, “This iconic event celebrated its magnificent centenary in 2016, yet instead of fuelling interest and support for another 100 years, the event found itself in real doubt for 2018, due to a lack of an organizing committee. The Flannagan Cup is a firm fixture on the list of swimmers and multisport participants throughout the Taranaki region and we couldn’t disappoint our many entrants.”

So in conjunction with Swimming Taranaki, a core group of like-minded people responded to the news that the future of Flannagan Cup was looking decidedly shaky.

“Thanks to the generous sponsorship of local businesses and superb commitment from new members of the organising committee, we are delighted to confirm that the cup will be back on Waitangi Day in 2018. We are also focusing on putting processes in place so that the Flannagan Cup will not be under threat of disappearing from the Taranaki sporting calendar in the foreseeable future,” says Neale.

With its new support team, comes a new name, and the revitalised event will now be known as the Govett Quilliam & Bayleys Flannagan Cup, thanks to the naming rights sponsors.

Other generous local sponsorship comes from: Port Taranaki, Z Energy, Tag Oil, The Accounting Room, Egmont Seafoods, The Devon Hotel and Chris Bell Construction.

**About the Govett Quilliam & Bayleys Flannagan Cup**Held every Waitangi Day, at Port Taranaki the Flannagan Cup is named after the man who donated the trophy, Patrick Joseph Flannagan. Before his death aged 61 in 1933, he was a swimming aficionado, patron of the East End Surf Life Saving Club, life member of the New Plymouth Old Boys Surf Life Saving Club and helped set up the Royal Life Saving Society in Taranaki. Spanning a 3.6 kilometre swim, the first event was held in 1916 and it now features separate 1.2 kilometre events for master and junior swimmers, plus shorter relay events for younger children.