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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **ITM Cup the new prize of national provincial rugby 2010 ITM Cup draw released**

New Zealand-owned building suppliers' co-operative ITM will sponsor the premier national provincial competition this year through to 2012, the New Zealand Rugby Union (NZRU) has announced today.

ITM will be the new title sponsor for the national domestic competition taking over the sponsorship from Air New Zealand which has decided to focus its energy on supporting the All Blacks.

NZRU Chief Executive Steve Tew welcomed ITM as a perfect fit with New Zealand's provincial rugby competition.

"ITM is a very parochial Kiwi-owned co-operative and they are very proud of their provincial reach across the country. Given the pride and support many communities have for their provincial teams, ITM is well placed to be at the centre of this competition.

"It's an exciting time for ITM to come on board. We saw a great surge in support for the domestic competition last year, and the challenge this year will be to build on that and we are really forward to working with ITM to achieve just that," Mr Tew said.

ITM Chief Executive Gordon Buswell said the co-operative membership was delighted with their new involvement in the competition. The ITM Cup was the perfect extension of their existing relationship with provincial rugby through their sponsorship of SKY TV's coverage of the competition over the last three years.



“Putting our name behind this great tradition of provincial rugby reflects strongly where our heart and minds are which is right in the heart of our regions,” Mr Buswell said.

“The provincial pride of the ITM Cup also reflects the pride of our stores, customers and suppliers across the regions. We are all hugely excited about the competition this year.

“We and our members are thrilled about our association with the ITM Cup this year. Inter-provincial rivalry will take on a whole new meaning for our 90 stores across the country, as we not only anticipate a great competition but also celebrate the best of our provincial talent,” Mr Buswell said.

The NZRU today also released the competition draw for the 2010 ITM Cup, which gets under way with Taranaki v Northland at Yarrow Stadium, New Plymouth on Thursday 29 July.

This year is also North Harbour’s 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary, and the union kicks off their 2010 season by hosting the traditional battle of the bridge match against neighbours, Auckland on Sunday 1 August.

Otago will get the first opportunity to play Southland for the Ranfurly Shield in Week 2 of the ITM Cup. The ITM Cup Final will be played on Friday, 5 November.

Steve Tew said: “We are looking forward to another great season of provincial rugby and providing communities all over New Zealand an opportunity to show their support for their teams.”

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**Please note: The 2010 ITM Cup Draw is attached**

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