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Media release – for immediate release

TracPlus follows trans-Tasman paddlers home

As trans-Tasman kayakers James Castrission and Justin Jones near the end of their epic journey, their effort has been applauded by Daestra New Zealand whose TracPlus global tracking service has followed them every splash of the way.

The Dunedin-based company's CEO Chris Hinch says the Australian pair's epic journey is an incredible feat of human endurance and he and his staff are proud to have been able to take a leading role in keeping them safe.

"Our primary concern has been to increase the safety margins for James and Justin by using the TracPlus satellite tracking terminal fitted to their kayak to pin-point where they are," he says.

The terminal automatically reported the position of the kayak every ten minutes and that data was delivered in real time to maritime and aviation rescue authorities on both sides of the Tasman, as well as to the expedition website, where their progress was tracked.

"Systems like this are now small enough to fit on a kayak so there is an utterly compelling case for the widespread use of this essential safety equipment by both commercial and recreational maritime users."

Patrick Brothers, the managing director of Race Recon which has been providing decision-making and technological support for the expedition says Daestra has been fundamental to the overall success of the venture, from both the safety and media aspects.

"Knowing very accurately where they were, how fast they were moving and in what direction they were going meant we were able to overlay that information with oceanographic and meteorological data to see what the conditions were doing to them," he says.

"And because rescue co-ordination centres in Australia and New Zealand are using TracPlus it would have expedited any rescue effort."

Brothers says Race Recon's focus is on using new technology and media in extreme expeditions and action sport, so they have taken TracPlus and embedded it and other web technology in the expedition website to create an interactive platform.

"More and more people are saying they would rather watch this than some reality TV show," says Brothers.

One of the spin-offs of the TracPlus system has been the peace of mind it has provided family, friends and supporters of the pair.

"We have families who would have fallen to pieces had they not been able to see where James and Justin are and how they are getting on."

The robustness and reliability of the tracking unit and supporting software has also impressed Brothers.

“The unit was mounted in the front of the kayak, so it was submerged numerous times and pounded by 10 metre waves, but it still tracked them 3,000km without even a glitch.”

Race Recon is now in the throes of planning other events where they will use TracPlus.

“It is going to add a whole new dimension to expeditions and action sports.”

About Daestra New Zealand and TracPlus

Daestra New Zealand’s key focus is the delivery of real time global tracking, sensor monitoring and analysis services to business and government organisations worldwide.

The company’s innovative TracPlus global tracking solution provides seamless, real time tracking of assets in all transport environments, be it aviation, maritime or land – all within a single system. It enhances safety and gives operators and rescue authorities alike a clear view of the ‘big picture’.

TracPlus is used in ten countries as well as Antarctica, and is used by St John Ambulance Emergency Coordination Centres (ECC), Rescue Coordination Centre of New Zealand (RCCNZ), New York Air National Guard and the US State Department.

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Photograph attachment:

Kayakers James Castrission and Justin Jones near the end of their journey – photo credit Mark Dwyer, Taranaki Daily News.
