

Scarflies great for the game...

by Daniel McCabe

There is a place for scarfie culture at live sports events, but Auckland is missing out. And the local rugby union is shouldering the blame.

Ticketing services manager for the Auckland Rugby Union Justin Pule says the union would like to get more students along to Auckland games.

"It's something we really want to improve, and to be honest, it's probably the union's fault. We haven't focused on the students as much as we should have.

"We've focused more on fans from the visiting unions but we are really going to try to get more students in."

Despite the dreadful student attendance at Auckland games, Auckland Rugby Union communications manager Bevan Sanson says there are no special deals available for students.

"There's no direct promotion for getting students along, it's just a matter of themeing each game individually," he says.

There has been a heritage theme whereby former players, coaches and referees were offered discounted rates and for the upcoming game against Bay of Plenty secondary students can sit in the terraces for \$2.

"The promotion that we've got going that will be more in line with students is for the North Harbour 'battle of the bridge' match on Friday 1 September. We're themeing that as 'the boys' night out'. So for \$25 you get a covered seat in the ASB stand and a beer and a hotdog."

Sanson says in the future the union may look at liaising with AUT University and Auckland University to try and get more students to games.

"Encouraging students to come along is something we

would definitely look at in the future.

"We're different to the scarfie culture of Otago rugby. But of course students are an integral part of a crowd atmosphere, as are all sections of the community."

Otago and All Black lock forward James Ryan has the pleasure of playing his home games in front of a parochial crowd brimming with students.

And Otago players know that when they make the trip to Auckland, the crowd atmosphere at Eden Park isn't intimidating.

"They don't seem to be that passionate about supporting up there in Auckland. The atmosphere isn't anything to be feared like it is in Canterbury – but I don't think that's anything to do

with the students. They're just a more passionate, vocal crowd," he says

With Eden Park's reputation as a tame venue, Ryan believes much can be gained from attracting the student crowd, who are more valuable than just colourful banners and plentiful liquor sales.

Ryan says the dominant student crowds of yesteryear at Carisbrook had a great impact on player performance.

"I think the students here tend to get behind rugby more than students in other places," he says.

The driving force behind Dunedin's scarfie culture has been a deal between the Otago Rugby Union and the Otago University Students Association.

They came up with a system whereby students pay \$12 for entry to the terraces, a bus ride to and from the game and a beer afterwards at one of four participating pubs.

While student numbers at Carisbrook have dropped in recent weeks, the assistant social activities manager for Otago University Students Association, Vanessa Reddy, says they still get around 800 students at every game.

"It was an initiative that came about between the Otago Rugby Union and the student association. Carisbrook is quite far away from the student accommodation so we organise buses to get them to the games."

The president of AUT University's student association,

Paul Stewart, believes that Auckland Rugby would need to come up with a cheap package that is attractive to students if they wanted to tap into that resource.

"It's a case of Auckland Rugby putting a deal to us," he says.

"Because at the end of the day, more students going to games benefits them more than it benefits our members."

Stewart says the student population base in Auckland is ample for a feverish scarfie crowd, and there would certainly be enough interest from university students.

"There are a lot of students new to Auckland, staying in student accommodation who would like to attach themselves to a local team."

...so where are ours?



PHOTO: MATT EVANS

EMPTY: Eden Park's often empty stands could be filled by a drive to attract tertiary students

Abstinence: are you doing it?



PHOTO: MARC CHECKLEY

by Rebecca Gardiner

A recent *Te Waha Nui* survey of 100 people around the AUT University campus found 21 per cent had made a conscious decision to abstain from sex until marriage.

Most cited cultural and religious reasons for their abstinence but also said their decision stemmed from a personal choice.

One 18-year-old student said she abstained from sex because "God knows best and I really like the idea of waiting for another person".

Despite the survey, Family Planning executive director Dr Gill Greer believes abstinence is unpopular among most young people.

She says the mainstream media promotes sex and promiscuity and shows that abstinence is not cool.

"Magazines like *Cosmopolitan* can be bought by 12-year-old girls and TV suggests that if they're not having sex 24 hours a day there must be something wrong with them."

While other countries have

specific abstinence programmes, such as the American True Love Waits course, Destiny Church's Absolute Abstinence course is the only programme of its type in New Zealand.

Since the course was set up in 2004, 515 people aged 12 to 25 have taken part in the church's seven-week programme.

Destiny Church youth pastor Caine Warren says the benefits speak for themselves when it comes to abstaining from pre-marital sex.

"You don't carry too much baggage," he says.

"Common sense says you're going to have a far better life."

Warren says abstinence reduces "issues and emotional hang-ups" in relationships and promotes happy marriages.

He believes schools should adopt an "ABC approach" to sexual education that includes abstinence "as an option and as a choice".

"It should be Abstinence Before Condoms," he says.

"Condoms have their place. If you're a young person and you're going to have unprotected sex outside marriage, you'd best be

wearing a condom."

He says abstinence has a stigma attached to it and believes sexual health organisations, churches and the government need to work together to reduce teenage pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases.

"The public need to know about choices. We're all on the same team," he says.

"We're trying to lower the same STD rates and teenage pregnancies. We're not opposing them, but [abstinence] has got to be promoted."

Dr Greer says Family Planning supports "comprehensive sexual education" that informs young people of all their sexual health options.

"We teach abstinence and delay, but not abstinence only."

She says despite substantial funding the Bush administration has given to abstinence programmes in the US, the country's teen pregnancy and STD rate has remained constant.

"The US has not achieved its goal. There is no simple solution to unplanned pregnancy. No one thing will achieve what we want to achieve."