



## NZ's Original Mtn Bike Race Secures International Cycling Sponsor

The Southern Hemisphere's longest running mountain bike race - Upper Hutt's Karapoti Classic - has secured one of the cycling world's biggest supporters in vehicle brand, ŠKODA.

Established in 1986, the newly branded "Gazley ŠKODA Karapoti Classic" is renowned as New Zealand's "must-do" mountain bike event. But organisers say the support of such a cycle-friendly international sponsor could make it bigger than ever.

"This is a big deal for Karapoti," says Event Manager Michael Jacques. "A brand like ŠKODA gives the event added security and the potential for vastly increased exposure."

"It's a great fit too. The Karapoti Classic helped establish much of the culture that surrounds mountain biking in New Zealand and ŠKODA's own history and commitment to bike sports is exceptional."

ŠKODA's own history hails back to the 1890s in Bohemia when its founders set up a bicycle maintenance and building business that morphed into mo-ped cycles and eventually motor vehicles. Today it is an international motor brand that honours its link to bicycle sports by supporting ground-breaking events such as the Tour de France right down to grass roots participation and now NZ's longest running mountain bike race.

The ŠKODA partnership will be delivered by Wellington's biggest motor company, Gazley Motor Group, who are the Wellington and Hutt Valley agents for ŠKODA.

"The culture and history behind the Karapoti Classic is a great fit with a brand like ŠKODA," agrees Gazley dealer principal, Myles Gazley. "But actually, we were just as attracted to Karapoti because it has remained a true grass-roots event where weekend warriors and kids can line up beside world champions. That's an increasingly rare thing in modern sport."

Indeed, while the Karapoti Classic was founded on a gruelling 50k traverse of Upper Hutt's scenic but savage Akatarawa Ranges, today the event also includes options for relative rookies and kids with the "20k Challenge" and "Kids 5k Klassic".

"Karapoti's 50k is the classic that every mountain biker aspires to," says Jacques. "It's the sport's only link to where it all began. But nobody just rocks up and conquers a challenge like that as their first mountain bike ride! So the 20k and the Kids 5k is a great way to introduce people not just to Karapoti, but to mountain biking in general."

The 2020 Gazley ŠKODA Karapoti Classic is scheduled for Saturday 29th February and will celebrate the 35th anniversary of what is the Southern Hemisphere's longest running mountain bike event. Entries are now open at [www.karapoti.kiwi](http://www.karapoti.kiwi).