

Repaired cutter outward bound again

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Special day: Outward Bound chief executive Trevor Taylor speaks to guests at the launch of the repaired Matahorua cutter about what it meant to many people and how pleased they would be to see the cutter back on the water.

Five months ago Outward Bound was not only reeling from the news that eight of its students had been injured when their cutter and a dolphin watch boat collided in Queen Charlotte Sound, but also from the belief that their much-treasured cutter Matahorua was damaged beyond repair. However the cutter has been repaired and Express reporter Cherie Howie was there for the official launch at Carey's Boatyard, in Picton, on Saturday.

An Outward Bound cutter thought written off when it was involved in a collision with a Dolphin Watch Ecotours boat in Queen Charlotte Sound in February is back on the water.

Eight aboard were injured and the nine-metre cutter, Matahorua, was left with large gashes in the bow and on the port side and lying semi-submerged after the collision.

Outward Bound chief executive Trevor Taylor initially thought the 35-year-old kauri cutter could not be saved, but was pleased to be proved wrong when the repaired cutter was launched in Picton on Saturday.

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Seven hundred hours of work by Carey's Boatyard boatbuilders had put the \$180,000 cutter back on the water, Mr Taylor said.



The \$75,000 repair bill is covered by insurance.

Many people would be happy with its return to sea, he said.

"When it [the collision] happened I couldn't believe how many emails I got. It drove it home to me the special nature of these boats to the 57,000 New Zealanders who have been through Outward Bound over the years."

Outward Bound school director Rob MacLean said all four of the organisation's cutters were special, but the Matahorua was particularly so.

"It is the pride of our fleet and we're very lucky to have it back. Our other boats are clinkers and don't perform very well."

Hearing students had been injured and a cutter damaged was like one of the worst nightmares a chief executive could have, Mr Taylor said.

He thanked everyone who helped the 11 students on board the cutter when the collision occurred, as well as the students themselves.

"They did what they had been trained to do in an emergency superbly."



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Two students were flown by rescue helicopter to Wellington Hospital after the collision, but their injuries were later found not to be serious, while six others were treated at Wairau Hospital, in Blenheim.

Some students were still receiving treatment for their injuries, but were well on the way to recovery, Mr Taylor said.

Maritime New Zealand is still investigating the incident.

Carey's Boatyard owner Jim Carey said the repair had been an "interesting challenge" because the cutter had been handcrafted.

"There was nothing manufactured. Every plank had to be separately fitted and it's [made up of] three layers of planks."

Boatbuilders Keith Henson and Trevor Cozens did much of the work. Mr Henson described it as a challenging pleasure. "When you see how badly damaged it was ... it's come up nice."

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