

Ambush marketing kicks-off in New Zealand

13/10/2011 by [Penny Catley](#), and [Kate Giddens](#)

Those of you who are familiar with the game of rugby will be aware that New Zealand is currently hosting the Rugby World Cup 2011 (RWC). Travellers from around the world have been treated to a spectacle of sporting endeavour held in magical surroundings.

In recent years, intense interest has surrounded the outrageous activities of so-called ambush marketers at various worldwide tournaments, with the RWC in New Zealand being no exception. Instances of alleged ambush marketing have been reported even before the finals kick-off.

The Mermaid Bar, an adult entertainment venue in central Wellington, was warned it could face a \$15,000 fine for instructing its staff to hand out flyers on the concourses of the Wellington Regional Stadium, within the tournament's "clean zone" while wearing a miniature version of the ALL BLACK uniform. As an aside, Wellington Regional Stadium is usually called Westpac Stadium, but naming rights and signage have been removed during the tournament's "clean period".

UK company OPRO faced an allegation of ambush marketing after Samoan player Alesana Tuilagi, was fined \$10,000 for wearing an

OPRO branded mouthguard. Days later Alesana's brother Manu, who plays for England, received the same fine for the same offence. OPRO Chief Executive Dr Anthony Lovat categorically denied an ambush marketing attempt, stating the brothers' use was coincidental.

New Zealand helicopter company Helipro was warned after one of its helicopters, and associated HELIPRO branding, was sighted above the Wellington Regional Stadium allegedly holding passengers taking photographs during one of the pool matches.

Also in the spotlight has been use, or rather misuse, of the registered trade mark ALL BLACKS and the lengths the New Zealand Rugby Union (NZRU) will go to protect its brand. The NZRU has taken exception to:

- use of the catch cry "Go the All Blacks" on a luxury car dealership's street frontage that just happened to be on one of the main access points to Eden Park,
- use of the phrase "ALL BLACK RACK" and accompanying NZRU registered fern devices by well-known New Zealand fashion designer Trelise Cooper in her Wellington store, and
- a sale for "All Black Lingerie" on IM Lingerie's store front. .

As the atmosphere reaches fever pitch and the world's focus intensifies, brand owners should remain vigilant. Perhaps a surprise attack is just around the corner.