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Quake swarm 'not unusual'
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'Not just about cost': Why Ruapehu voted against bigger water model

By Moana Ellis, Local Democracy Reporting

Ruapehu councillors are standing by a decision to reject a multi-council water services body that officials say would save their community \$40 million.

Government water reforms are driving proposals for smaller councils to meet future costs by amalgamating water services.

The mayor Weston Kirton's bid to team up with Palmerston North, Horowhenua and Rangitikei councils was lost 6-4 on Wednesday.

Councillors opted instead for a two-council model with Whanganui District Council, which is to decide its approach on Tuesday.

"I have no qualms or ifs or buts," deputy mayor Viv Hoeta said.

"I heard exactly what my community wanted. It was not just about cost, it was also about local voice and relationships with a council we know and trust and share the same values with."

Hoeta said community feedback called for a standalone water entity – "and if we couldn't go it alone, they didn't want to go big."

The council's acting team leader of policy, strategy and sustainability told councillors larger groupings were the most affordable options because of additional scale.

Aggregated water services with up to



four neighbouring local authorities were projected to save users \$38.7m through cost efficiencies in the first seven years when compared with the two-council model, Todd Livingstone said.

Palatable

Councillor Lyn Neeson, who is standing against Kirton for the mayoralty in October, lives rurally. She is not connected to reticulated water and therefore does not pay council water charges.

"I've invested \$50,000 to get my water systems – rural people and small communities have to do that."

She did not believe cost savings would be as high as projected.

"I will be fighting really hard to ensure higher costs don't happen."

Neeson said savings expected from procurement bargaining could be achieved through collective council buying power regardless of whether Ruapehu was part of a larger Council-Controlled Organisation (CCO).

"A two-council CCO fully intends to make those procurement connections. It doesn't close down any of the opportunities for cost efficiencies."

Turn to Page 2

Heritage icon earning concrete praise



The Bridge to Nowhere, a remote icon in Whanganui National Park, has won an Enduring Concrete Award. At left, ranger Jim Campbell. Photo: DOC



At nearly 90 years old, the iconic Bridge to Nowhere in Whanganui National Park has cemented its reputation with a prestigious Enduring Concrete Award.

Embodying the lasting legacy of a now-abandoned post-World War 1 settlement in Mangapurua and Kaiwhakauaka valleys, today the bridge is a destination in itself.

The Bridge to Nowhere is a heritage icon cared for by the Department of Conservation.

DOC senior ranger heritage and visitors Jim Campbell has watched the bridge grow in popularity.

"When I first saw the Bridge to Nowhere in the 1970s there was grass growing in the middle of it. Now we have thousands of cyclists and trampers visiting every year, as well as side visitors from river trips."

"It's popular for its uniqueness, surrounded by bush in the middle of nowhere. It's unexpected, and it delights people."

The remote heritage structure has required careful upkeep over the years.

Turn to Page 2



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Youth MP calls for carbon farming controls

Local member of Parliament Suze Redmayne reports on the recent youth parliament in Wellington:

• It was a real pleasure to support my Youth MP, Patrick Coogan, at Youth Parliament in Wellington recently. Held every three years, Youth Parliament gives young New Zealanders a unique insight into how our democracy works.

Patrick represented Rangitikei with confidence and maturity, delivering a strong speech in the House on the impact of carbon farming on our primary industries and rural communities. In this guest column, he shares his reflections on the experience and the concerns for rural New Zealand he articulated so clearly in his speech.

By Patrick Coogan – 2025 Youth MP for Rangitikei

During the first week of July, I had the privilege of representing the mighty Rangitikei electorate at Youth Parliament 2025.

I really enjoyed meeting fellow-rural Youth MPs,



Chris Proctor (Youth MP for Tukituki), Catherine Wedd – MP for Tukituki, Suze Redmayne – MP for Rangitikei, Patrick Coogan (Youth MP for Rangitikei), Taiko Edward's Haruru (Youth MP for Whanganui).

particularly those from the Wairarapa and Hawke's Bay region, who shared similar concerns regarding

carbon credits.

Bringing a real issue from our region into the House was a major highlight for me. The rise of

carbon forestry on productive sheep and beef farms is something we're seeing across Rangitikei. It's an

Turn to Page 5

Ruapehu votes against bigger water model

From Page 1

She said being a 50% partner in a smaller CCO was more palatable for the community and she was proud of the debate and its outcome.

"This was democracy in action. It was a fundamental, directional shift from chasing potential savings to listening to our community, following the awa, following the community of interest, and following our relationships to Whanganui."

Fiona Kahukura Hadley-Chase, who is also running for mayor, said pricing alone was not reason enough to choose a bigger entity.

More important was a strong relationship with a council that was bound by obligations to Te Waiū-o-te-Ika and Te Awa Tupua (the catchments of the Whangaehu and Whanganui rivers) as well as agreements with each other.

Her vote against the proposed four-council grouping was based on "the weight of public opinion", including from iwi leaders.

"I would rather wager on creating and keeping good relationships with people who are interested in the Whanganui River and its tributaries and people."

Māori voice

Rabbit Nottage said two-thirds of the council voted against the four-council proposal, including the three Māori ward councillors.

"I was comforted by that. They are the voice of Māori and iwi."

Nottage said his decision took into account all submissions because there were concerns that consultation questions were skewed toward the four-council option.

"In my opinion we made the best decision for the Ruapehu community. If people think otherwise, the elections are coming up in a few months."

Councillors Korty Wilson and Channey Iwikau also voted against a four-council

entity.

In a report to the council, an analysis of submissions during consultation showed 36 supported a larger water entity if it helped reduce long-term costs, with 16 opposed and eight undecided.

'Pretty gutted'

Kirton said he was "pretty gutted" at losing the vote.

"I thought we'd be able to get a bigger entity over the line, based on evidence that the bigger the number of councils, the greater the efficiency gains and flow-on benefits for pricing."

"The rationale of elected members suggesting that relationships not pricing is more important is foolish if not irresponsible."

Kirton said the district's affiliation with the awa would not be compromised by a four- or five-council model. Te Awa Tupua legislation would remain a cornerstone for council values.

"The relationship would continue regardless and probably get stronger."

Kirton said price did matter, particularly for water users and ratepayers who were struggling, including pensioners and people on benefits.

In his report to the council, Livingstone said the difference between the two-council and four-council models in the first year was \$4m, with savings of \$14.5m across the first three years of a new entity, and \$38.7m across the first seven years through till the end of the Long-Term Plan (LTP).

A five-council model would see costs in 2027 of \$1488 per water connection.

"The four-council model is 8% more expensive (\$123 increase) in the first year, while the two-council model is 67% more expensive (\$996 increase), with standalone being nearly three times as expensive (\$2589 increase)," Livingstone said.

LDR is local body journalism co-funded by RNZ and NZ On Air



Ruapehu's mayor Weston Kirton says voting against joining a multi-council water entity that could save his community \$40 million was foolish if not irresponsible. Photo supplied.

Bridge to Nowhere earns concrete praise

From Page 1

"We conduct regular safety inspections and minor maintenance work," says Jim.

"Then, every seven years, specialist heritage concrete contractors complete larger maintenance in a way appropriate for a bridge of this age."

"Structures like this connect us to our past, we have a responsibility to protect this heritage for future generations."

Presented by Concrete NZ in partnership with New Zealand Independent Cement, the Enduring Concrete Award recognizes legacy concrete structures more than 40 years old and pays tribute to concrete's role in shaping New Zealand's built heritage.

The judging panel noted the bridge's historical and environmental significance, its enduring service, and the ingenuity of its original construction.

Panel chair Ralf Kessel, Head of Architecture at Concrete NZ says despite its

remote location, the Bridge to Nowhere continues to captivate around 30,000 visitors each year.

"It offers a powerful reminder of the resilience and permanence of concrete – the Bridge to Nowhere is a remarkable example of enduring infrastructure"

Previous recipients of the Enduring Concrete Award include Wellington's Beehive, the Grafton Bridge in Auckland, and the Hawera Water Tower in Taranaki.

Jim says while the bridge is remote, it's surprisingly easy to access.

"Choose your method, cycling, a side trip from paddling on the river, tramping, or a cruise jet-boat tour," says Jim.

"Whanganui National Park is green, it's rugged, it gives you the sense of isolation that's hard to get these days. Visiting the Bridge to Nowhere connects people to nature and the unique history of the area."

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Ruapehu Events & What's On

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AUGUST 2025

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Go Pink for Breast Cancer 2 August
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Twilight Ski & Music 2 August
Details at www.whakapapa.com

Girls Who Shred 9 August
Visit www.pureturoa.nz or find us on Facebook or Instagram @turoa.nz for up to date information.

Elvis the King and Queens of Country 16 August
Royal Theatre Raetihi

Waimarino Cup - Junior Interfields 16 - 17 August
Registrations opening soon via Snowsports New Zealand. Snowsports New Zealand www.snowsports.co.nz

Tūroa Slopestyle Mini Shred (under 14) 16 August
Visit www.pureturoa.nz or find us on Facebook or Instagram @turoa.nz for up to date information.

North Island Champs - National Points 22 - 23 August
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Earthquake swarm near Ruapehu ‘not unusual’ – GNS

A swarm of small, relatively deep, earthquakes lasting two days occurred east of Ruapehu early last week, reports GNS. “However, there have been no significant changes to the volcano observed following the earthquakes,” says Geoff Kilgour, duty volcanologist.

He told media that such a swarm is not an unusual occurrence around the volcano. Te Wai ā-moe (Ruapehu Crater Lake) temperature remains stable at about 12°C.

“We continue to record emissions of volcanic gas indicating heat and gas flow from depth is occurring. The Volcanic Alert Level remains at 1 and the Aviation Colour Code at Green.”

A swarm of approximately 100, small, relatively deep earthquakes started on 8 July and lasted two days. They were mostly located about 10km east of Crater Lake.

The magnitude of the earthquakes was generally small (all less than M1.0) with

RDC accepts report on overspend – commits to enhanced controls

Ruapehu District Council’s Risk and Assurance Committee has accepted the recommendations of a comprehensive report into the \$700,000 overspend in the Community and Recreational Facilities activity area.

The report, prepared by executive manager finance and strategy Quentin Speers, examined all aspects of how the overspend occurred and outlined the corrective actions required to prevent a recurrence.

A five-member team undertook an in-depth review, looking into operational decision-making, supplier management, contract cost escalation, and compliance to procurement policy.

Speers said that in response to the overspend, Council has moved swiftly to enhance project and contract management processes.

“The proposed improvements underway include better budget oversight, tighter contract and conflict of interest management, stronger project governance, increased staff training, and the improved use of technology,” he said.

The investigation found that several weaknesses in project management and internal controls were further exacerbated by the limitations of Council’s existing financial system. This system is due to be replaced within the next 12 months.

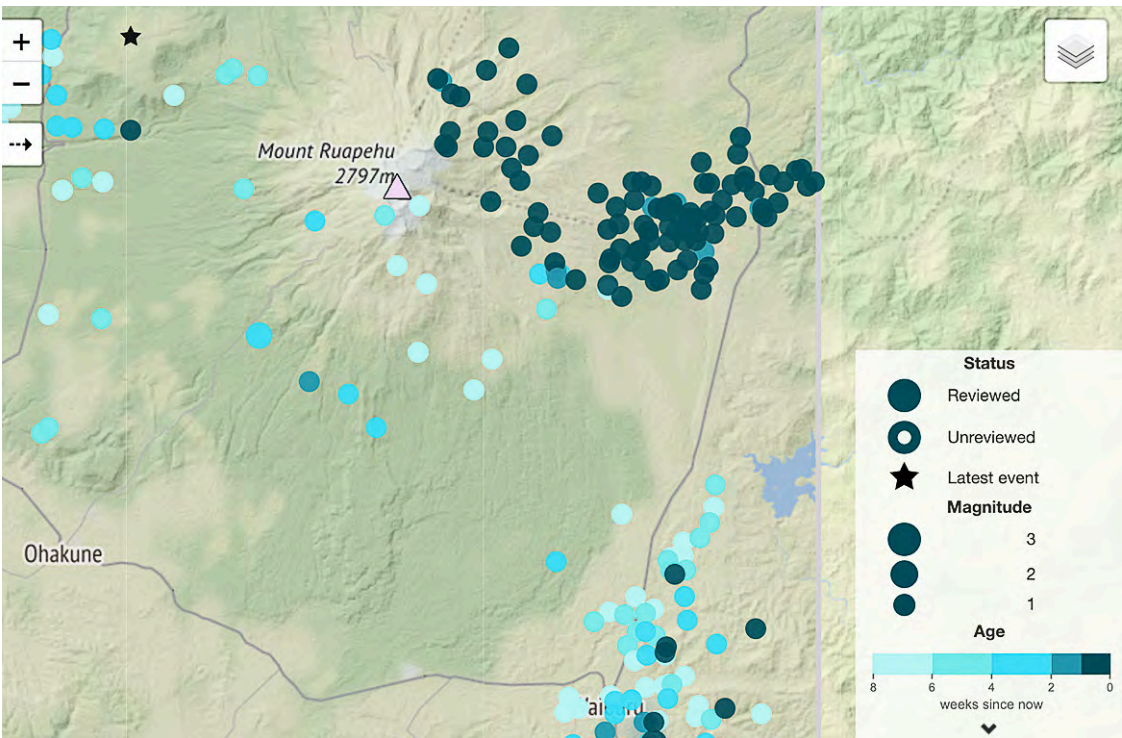
He says the new Datascape Financial System will “provide greater visibility and control by enabling Council to assign and monitor expenditure more accurately against specific projects within each activity area” – something not possible under the current system.

Chief executive Clive Manley acknowledged the review team for their efforts in untangling what he described as “a complex web of interrelated systems, decisions and events” to uncover the root causes of the overspend and develop a plan to move forward.

With the Risk and Assurance Committee accepting the report’s findings and recommendations, the next phase of the investigation will examine the role of staff and suppliers, the rationale behind key decisions and any further actions that may be necessary.

Manley said that, as key staff have been on extended leave, this aspect of the investigation has not been possible until now. To ensure transparency and community confidence, this phase will be overseen by an independent specialist, appointed in agreement with the mayor and the independent Chair of the Risk and Assurance Committee.

Manley noted that this next stage may



A swarm of earthquakes were recorded last week to the east of Mt Ruapehu, under the Rangipo Desert. The dark blue dots were recorded within the last week.

most at a depth of about 25 km.

“Initial assessment of the earthquakes indicates that they are caused by repeated movement on a fault. Volcanic tremor remains low, reflecting the low heat input and gas flux.”

Since their last update in May, the temperature of Te Wai ā-moe (Ruapehu Crater Lake) has declined from ~17°C to ~12°C. Observations from a visit on 8 June confirmed the presence of sulphur slicks on the lake surface, usually related to hot fluids entering the lake floor melting sulphur. The lake was also observed overflowing, indicating that there continues to be inflow of hydrothermal fluids into the lake. Heat flux modelling indicates there is a continuous heat input of between 0 and 100 MW.

“Sulphur dioxide emissions measured by our continuous

gas emission detectors continue to show low-level, but continuous, gas emissions ranging from ~0 to 150 tonnes per day,” reports Kilgour.

“The new multigas sensor system at the lake outlet has been recording continued gas fluxes of carbon dioxide (CO₂), and sulphur dioxide (SO₂).

“Despite the swarm of nearby earthquakes, a lack of other observable changes at Ruapehu indicates that the volcano continues to exhibit typical background activity. When weather permits, we will be conducting further gas flights and sampling Crater Lake fluids to monitor any changes closely.

“In summary, our recent observations are consistent with minor volcanic unrest, therefore, the Volcanic Alert Level remains at 1 and the Aviation Colour Code remains Green.”

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Letters

Water arguments 'not clear'

• It wasn't clear from the arguments made by those supporting the option to go with Whanganui why, other than an emotional attachment to local control, they voted for the option. The evidence-based arguments put forward by Council officer Todd Livingstone at last Wednesday's meeting made it clear that the option would place a significant burden on ratepayers and an even greater burden on those who could least afford the increase.

Given that this is the case it is difficult to understand why members who so enthusiastically embraced the much larger regional entities that were to be Three Waters should now find themselves making gestures to localism that will create genuine hardship.

Those members who listened to the reasoned, evidence-based arguments put by Todd Livingstone should be commended for doing their jobs as council members, listening with an open mind to the evidence being presented to them and voting accordingly. When it comes to voting this October, Councillors Gramm, Hinch and Ralph will be high on my list. We need members who will ensure council decisions are both evidence-based and affordable.

John Chapman

Democracy in action on water

• For those watching from the outside, I can understand if the recent media reporting of Ruapehu's Wednesday meeting to decide on our Local Water Done Well partner looked like a fair interpretation of proceedings.

This was certainly not the way I saw it. We had a 4-hour intensive debate, quizzing our staff member who created the report and considered all the options and alternatives. I thought it was a brilliant example of democracy in action and a council giving clear governance to our chief executive, after listening carefully to our community.

The initial recommendation to partner with three other councils lost 6-4. When we voted then to opt for a smaller partnership with Whanganui, it was unanimous. Now we must put all our prejudice aside and look forward positively to creating a long-term partnership for the improvement of our water services for both Ruapehu and Whanganui.

From my perspective it was the logical choice. Having a 50% partnership in an entity that makes decisions for our small, isolated communities seems much more optimistic than having only a 20-25% stake where we would be seriously out-gunned. We already have existing partnership arrangements with Whanganui, in everything from Economic Development to WRET. The Whanganui River catchment IS our district. We absolutely listened

with great care to the staff advice around potential cost savings with the bigger entity, even though the actual figures became more confusing as the meeting progressed. And of course we would not want to add extra costs to any rate payers' bill. At the end of the day our decision was that any potential cost savings were not exclusive to a larger entity. Partnering with Whanganui also brings cost savings, along with many other benefits. This partnership will be a much better fit with our community.

Going forward I'm excited about the opportunities this partnership will bring to both our districts. With a strong focus on our river and an ambition to be small, tight and financially prudent I am positive that this decision represents a continuation of two neighbours that will prosper together.

Lyn Neeson, councillor, Ruapehu District

Bigger water a 'huge advantage'

• Ruapehu urban ratepayers responded clearly during the water reform submission process carried out over recent months that any change must be affordable.

Many in the District are dealing with the high cost of living, with families, business owners, retirees and beneficiaries struggling to pay for the basics.

The message from urban ratepayers was clear: keep the increase in water rates as low as possible while maintaining quality.

Six elected Councillors chose to vote against the official advice to join with four other Councils in favour of a two-way arrangement with Wanganui City. In doing so, they have added another \$1000 per year to the water rates coming our way soon.

Voting to increase rates by another \$1000 against the official advice was their democratic right. They are entitled to vote how they wish, however they are also obliged to explain their decision to the community – especially those who have been campaigning for greater financial accountability from Council.

The evidence was clear from experts, government officials, the local government funding agencies and our own policy teams: going bigger has huge advantages.

Ruapehu District urban ratepayers were set to save up to \$40 million over the first seven years alone.

I voted to save our urban ratepayers \$1000 per year and I want to thank the other Councillors who did so.

The Council must now make the most of a bad situation.

While I am saddened by this decision, this is a democracy and the Council has voted.

My job now as Mayor is to make sure the new arrangement is as good as it can be in the circumstances.

I take my job seriously and will give that 100% every day.

Weston Kirton, mayor, Ruapehu District

Winter break for the 42 Traverse

As winter sets in, the 42 Traverse remains off-limits to four-wheel drives to protect track condition and maintain access for conservation work, advises Department of Conservation team lead Michael Christie.

The 42 Traverse, or T42, is a popular multi-use track and off-roading destination in the Tongariro Forest Conservation Area in the Central North Island. The area provides habitat for iconic species including kiwi and whio.

Christie says the winter closure to four-wheel drives protects the track and provides safe access for critical conservation work – including protecting threatened species.

"Winter off-roading causes heavy track damage, affecting our work and impacting the track experience for other users.

"It's also a safety issue - large vehicles can increase the risk of slips from sodden

soils."

To protect the 42 Traverse, four-wheel drive vehicles are not permitted on the track between 1 May and 30 November. These restrictions are outlined in the Tongariro/Taupō Conservation Management Strategy (CMS).

"To be clear, we have to focus our efforts and funding where it matters most, and we cannot afford to continue fixing a road purely so a few can tear it up again," says Christie.

"If you wreck it, it will likely become inaccessible to everyone."

The 42 Traverse extends through native forest, offers superb views back to Tongariro National Park, and is enjoyed by people doing a range of other activities including tramping, hunting, and mountain biking.

The 42 Traverse will reopen to four-wheel drive vehicles from 1 December.



Four-wheel drive vehicles cause damage to the T42 in winter conditions. Photo: DOC.

THE WEEKLY WORKOUT

answers for each puzzle are included on this page

810

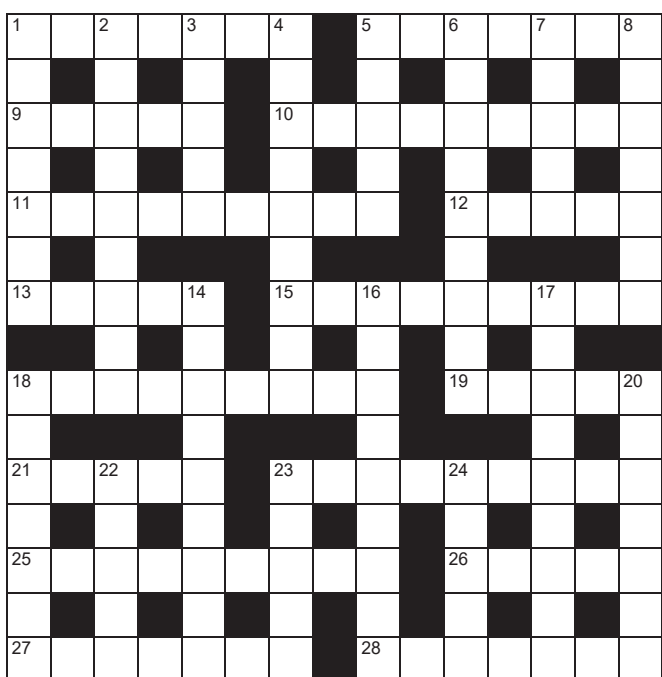
QUICK CROSSWORD

Across

- Subjugate (7)
- A car's frame (7)
- Head adornment (5)
- Alliance (9)
- Beyond value (9)
- Leg joint (5)
- Crouch (5)
- Embroid (9)
- Head of state (9)
- Tumbler (5)
- Surprised: taken (5)
- Lawyer (9)
- Custom (9)
- Annoyance (5)
- Go back on a deal (7)
- Precisely (7)

Down

- Sea creature, wheke in Māori (7)
- Insincere remark (9)
- Dodge (5)
- Reticent (9)
- Extreme disorder (5)
- Causing trouble (9)
- Scornful smile (5)
- Open and honest (7)



- Glistening (9)
- Irritability (9)
- Home unit (9)
- Adhesive dressing (7)
- Witchcraft (7)
- Once more (5)
- Shirk (5)
- Hot tea drink (inf) (5)

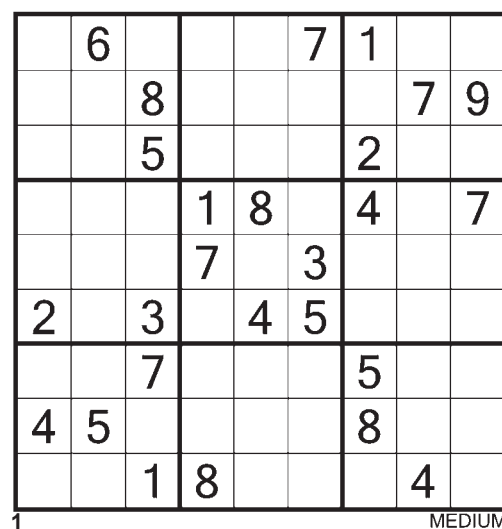


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SUDOKU

Fill the grid so every row, column and every 3x3 box contains 1-9



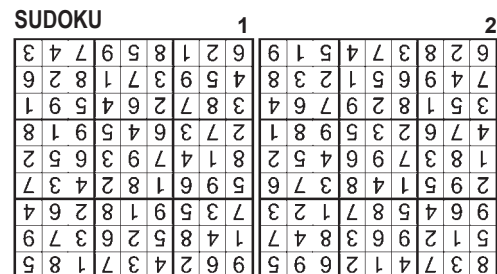
The Top 10

- Who is forever trying to catch 'a wascally wabbit'?
- What colour is something if it is described as auric?
- How many edges does a triangular pyramid have?
- Is the time difference between Auckland and New York usually 14, 15 or 16 hours?
- What type of foodstuff is a Po' Boy?
- In a 1982 song, what type of people go 'around the outside'?
- What is measured in joules in the International System of Units?
- Which creature is St Patrick said to have banished from Ireland?
- The system of using flags to send messages is called . . . ?
- What's the capital of Indonesia?

CROSSWORD

23. Skive, 24. Cuppa.
Apartment, 18. Plaster, 20. Sorcery, 22. Again,
8. Sincere, 14. Twinkling, 16. Petulance, 17.
Secretive, 5. Chaos, 6. Agitating, 7. Smirk,
Down: 1. Octopus, 2. Platitude, 3. Evade, 4.
27. Renegade, 28. Exactly,
Aback, 23. Solicitor, 25. Tradition, 26. Peeve,
15. Implicate, 18. President, 19. Glass, 21.
Coalition, 11. Priceless, 12. Ankle, 13. Squat,
Across: 1. Oppress, 5. Chassis, 9. Tiarra, 10.

SUDOKU



Kiwi food story puts Ruapehu on the map

Ruapehu's unique food journey will be on screen this Saturday when the TV series *A New Zealand Food Story* with Ben Bayly meets some of Ruapehu's passionate growers, producers and restaurateurs.

"Food experiences are a big part of what attracts visitors to destinations and showcasing Ruapehu's offering through the TV series is a fantastic way to share stories of our people and place," says Jo Kennedy, general manager of Visit Ruapehu.

The Ruapehu region has a rich grower's history, market gardening, fertile volcanic soil and is home to the carrot capital of NZ – Ohakune.

"Working with Ben and his incredible team has been a boost for our communities and a unique opportunity to invite viewers to come and explore Ruapehu's emerging food story," adds Kennedy.

The chef and TV presenter says he loved his time in the region when filming earlier in the year.

"The vast and majestic Ruapehu region, there is no place in New Zealand that compares to its beauty. I fell in love with it as a kid as Whakapapa is my home ski field," says Bayly.

"It was amazing to head back to film *A New Zealand Food Story* and see that Ruapehu has so much more to offer, especially when it comes to food."

"From growing New Zealand's best carrots in rich volcanic soils, to the legendary Johnny Nations eclairs in Ohakune and onto its very own truly world-class restaurant – The Chef's Table at Blue Duck Station. I am over the moon that the Ruapehu district is serving up a superb regional food story," concludes Bayly.

"Emotions are evoked, memories created and a sense of place achieved."

The episode airs on Saturday 19 July at 7.30pm on TVNZ 1 or on TVNZ+.



Ben Bayly meets Dan Steele from Blue Duck Station – "where rugged land meets fine dining". Photo: Visit Ruapehu.

Youth MP calls for carbon farming controls

From Page 2

issue I care deeply about, as it affects families, jobs, entire communities, and the future of rural New Zealand.

Since 2017, more than 300,000 hectares of sheep and beef farmland has been converted to permanent exotic forestry. These trees will never be harvested; they're left unmanaged and forgotten.

This isn't just about land use, it's also about our rural communities and way of life. Every farm planted in pines is a family gone. A rural school closed. A rugby team folded.

This isn't climate action but is a short-sighted cash grab that my generation will pay for. New Zealand farmers are the most efficient and sustainable in the world. Yet we continue to shrink our own productive capacity and shift our production to other

countries with higher emissions and lower standards. It might look good on paper, but globally, it makes things worse.

Rural New Zealand isn't a problem to fix, it's an asset to protect. That was true when my family started farming in Mataroa five generations ago, and it's still true today.

Our farmers are the backbone of this country and they deserve policies that think beyond politics. We need to back our nation's farmers, not carbon speculators.

We need policies directed by people who live and work on the land. Bottom up and build, not top down and applied. We need to back farmers to do what they do best.

I'd like to finish by thanking Suze Redmayne, MP for Rangitikei, for selecting me and supporting my involvement – it was an experience I'll never forget.

RDC accepts report on overspend, enhanced controls

From Page 3

take some time, and he will not be making further comment until the process is complete.

"It's important that the investigation is allowed to follow due process, and I urge people not to jump to conclusions. This needs to be a fair and impartial process for everyone involved," he said.

"This has been a very challenging time for Council, both for elected members and

staff. I would like to thank them for their professionalism throughout.

"While this overspend occurred in one activity area, the learnings will be applied across all of Council's operations.

"The community should have confidence that the strengthened controls and reporting mechanisms will provide the necessary disciplines to significantly reduce the risk of any future unauthorised overspend occurring."

Vintage viaduct train trip

Vintage rail organisation Glenbrook Vintage Railway (GVR) has another rail excursion planned for later this month taking in the historic Main Trunk Rail Ruapehu viaducts.

The Ruapehu Viaduct Explorer will run from Waimarino-National Park to Ohakune and return on 26 July, with tickets available for \$35.

"Hopping aboard our train at National Park Station and relaxing into your seats, the journey will see us cross the

mighty Makatote Viaduct then pass the site of the Last Spike, the location where both rail heads met in 1908, then up to the highest point on New Zealand's rail network," states GVR.

"We then descend towards Ohakune, crossing the curved Hapuawhenua Viaduct before arriving at Ohakune."

The train will leave Waimarino at 12:40pm and arrive at 1:15pm. It then leaves Ohakune at 3:10pm, back at Waimarino at 3:50pm.

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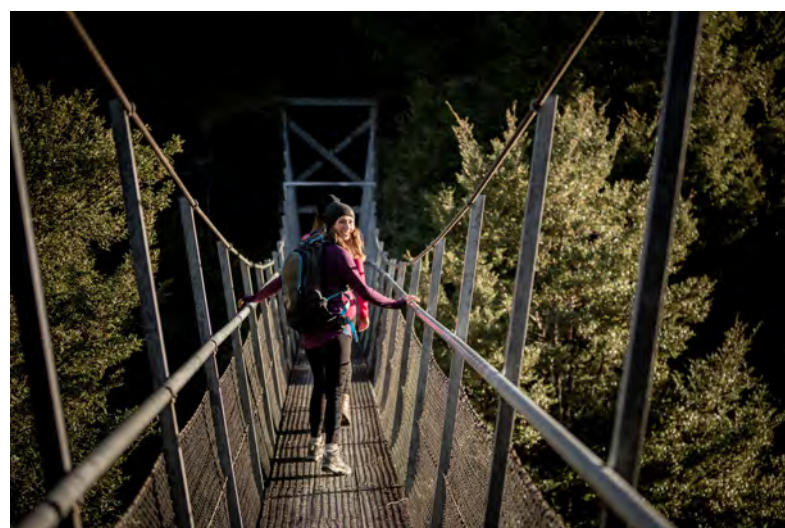
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Diego Chapman Mora enjoys his first ski for 2025, on the first weekend of the Whakapapa season, and the first weekend of skiing for the new owners of the field, Whakapapa Holdings Limited. The Company gave away free ski passes for Happy Valley on their opening days.

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HMW releases new report on state of the region's environment

Horizons Regional Council has released ‘Te Oranga o te Taiao State of the Environment: Horizons Region 2025’, a comprehensive environmental data synthesis report that outlines the current state and trends of the region’s air, land, and water.

The report also identifies the key influences shaping environmental outcomes in our region and highlights the challenges and opportunities associated with ensuring the health and wellbeing of the environment.

“One of our core functions as a regional council is to provide a comprehensive and reliable evidence base to guide decision-making and policy development that leads to effective environmental stewardship,” says lead author and Horizons science communicator Rhianne Tod.

“This report aims to facilitate informed conversations, from governance to grassroots, about the key issues at play in the region and actions moving forward. In this respect, the data and insights presented are both markers of where we are and where we’ve come from, as well as signposts guiding us toward where we need to go,” says Tod.

She says nature’s contributions to people, also referred to as ‘ecosystem services’, are woven through the report, reflecting a shift to a more holistic way of presenting Horizons’ environmental reporting.

“This shift aligns with the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment’s 2019 comments about improving environmental reporting, which emphasised that we gather information about the natural environment for the same reason we track the economy, education, or public health – because these things are essential to our wellbeing.

“The links between nature and people’s wellbeing represent a crucial data and knowledge gap in environmental monitoring, and researchers and policy-makers across the country are investigating how to effectively track them to support decision-making and stewardship of the environment,” says Tod.

Creatives

One of the ways the report considers this is by featuring the winning and highly commended entries from Horizons’ 2024 Creative Arts Competition, which invited submissions highlighting how the region’s environment contributes to the wellbeing of our people.

“The creative works included in the report showcase the deep personal and cultural connections our communities have with nature and serve as a powerful reminder of the impact of the environment on our wellbeing. These examples of nature’s contributions to people emphasise why everyone across the region is a stakeholder in the environment’s health.

“The report reaffirms the complexity of the region’s environment and the pressures it faces – it’s not just a backdrop to human activity, but an interconnected system that supports and shapes almost every aspect of our lives.”

A digital copy of the full report is now available on the Horizons website. Hard copies will soon be available to view at Horizons service centres.

Key highlights:

Air Quality: The region generally enjoys good air quality, enabled by prevailing winds, low population, and a small number of industrial emissions. However, winter-time emissions from woodburners remains an area of concern.



The state of the environment in the Manawātū-Whanganui Region is the subject of a recent report from the regional council.

Land Health: The report underscores the importance of soil health, erosion control, and biodiversity protection. Programmes, like the Sustainable Land Use Initiative (SLUI) which has led to the planting of 30 million trees and the completion of 65,000 hectares of erosion control works, are estimated to reduce the amount of sediment entering waterways by 48% by the end of the century.

Water Quality: While improvements in ammoniacal nitrogen levels are evident, challenges persist with nutrient concentrations and sediment loads in the region’s waterways. The report highlights collaborative efforts to improve water quality, such as riparian planting and fencing.

Freshwater Habitats: The report documents the state of rivers and streams as habitat, and the state of fish populations. The report also covers work by Horizons and communities to remediate over 100 fish passage barriers and reopen nearly 300km of habitat to native fish.

Cyclone Gabrielle Case Study: The report examines the widespread impacts of Cyclone Gabrielle, emphasising the need for resilience-building and collaborative recovery efforts.

View the full report online: <https://www.horizons.govt.nz/HRC/media/Media/State-of-the-Environment-Horizons-Region-2025.pdf>

Chaos as councillors reject officials advice on water

By Moana Ellis, Local Democracy Reporting
Ruapehu councillors have voted down a recommendation to join a multi-council water body that officials estimate would save their community \$40 million dollars (see separate story).

Instead, they are opting to partner with one neighbour only, Whanganui District Council – which was yet to decide on its approach to future water services at the time the Bulletin went to print.

The decision comes despite staff advice that amalgamating water services with Palmerston North, Horowhenua and Rangitikei councils could deliver a projected \$38.7 million savings for Ruapehu in the first seven years.

Ruapehu District council chief executive Clive Manley warned councillors they were risking “losing all options” and needed a backup plan.

Kirton said he was “disheartened” by the 6-4 decision against his motion for the four-council option.

“We had an opportunity to be brave. That efficiency from day one is immediately lost.”

In major water sector reforms, councils around the country have until September to decide on future water services delivery plans, with many eyeing aggregated models.

Sniping and criticism

Ruapehu’s vote came at the end of a fractious

four-hour meeting in Taumarunui on Wednesday.

In favour of the four-council model were: Kirton, Robyn Gram, Brenda Ralph and Janelle Hinch. Against were: Viv Hoeta, Lyn Neeson, Fiona Kahukura Hadley-Chase, Korti Wilson, Channey Iwikau and Rabbit Nottage.

The meeting was marked by interjections, sniping at the mayor and chief executive and criticism of a council officer for offering his opinion in response to councillors’ questions.

It ended in chaos when councillors realised they had no alternative plan if Whanganui rejected the two-council partnership.

A rash of new motions followed, with some councillors continuing to oppose a backup option to join Palmerston North, Horowhenua and Rangitikei.

The council had already decided against a stand-alone entity because it would be unaffordable.

‘Total stalemate’

The chief executive cautioned councillors that if Whanganui rejected the two-council model and councillors continued to oppose a larger multi-council grouping as a backup, “we will have lost all options”.

“If this [motion] is lost ... you will be putting yourselves in a total stalemate. If we can’t stand alone, can’t join Whanganui, and can’t join the

bigger option we are out of options,” Manley said.

“This is embarrassing,” Hinch said.

A motion cobbled together to follow Whanganui if it decided to join the larger grouping (forming a five-council model) was eventually left on the table rather than being put to the vote.

Deputy mayor Hoeta said she was certain Whanganui would agree to partner with Ruapehu. She was against the four-council solution because of her connection to Te Awa Tupua (the Whanganui River catchment).

Two other councillors abstained from voting on new motions, saying they wanted to wait to see what Whanganui would do.

Neeson said she preferred the two-council option because of strong relationships already forged with Whanganui.

Hadley-Chase said she was against profit over people. “Bigger is only better for profits and corporations.”

‘Small is beautiful’

Nottage said he saw no advantage in anything bigger than a two-council model.

“Bigger might be better but small is beautiful. It’s going to be tough but Whanganui’s going to be good for us. We already have a lot of connections there.”

Backing the four-council model, Ralph said

relationships with councils in the larger grouping could be developed, and four or five councils working together would spread the costs for water customers.

“It is tough out there. I don’t want to see a huge amount of [costs] imposed on our users.”

Hinch said all advice and recommendations had been that Ruapehu water users would fare better in a larger entity.

“If you don’t want to be paying hundreds, then thousands, of dollars more per year for your water, we have to go with the bigger model.

“This amount of money is make or break for many people in this community and we have a moral obligation to put that at the top of our list.”

In March and April, Ruapehu consulted on developing a three-council model with Rangitikei and Whanganui District Councils.

That option came off the table when Rangitikei District Council decided at the eleventh hour to join Horowhenua District and Palmerston North City councils.

The three councils left the door open for Ruapehu and Whanganui to join them.

Whanganui was expected to make its decision on Tuesday on one of three options: a CCO with Ruapehu, a standalone model and the four-council

Turn to Page 8

Burn good wood for cleaner air

As the chilly mid-winter weather sets in and fireplaces light up and crackle across the region, Horizons Regional Council is reminding communities to burn good wood.

Horizons environmental scientist Harold Barnett says burning green or wet wood, using an unswept chimney, or operating your woodburner incorrectly can emit gases and smoke that carry small particles into the air.

“These gases and minuscule particles can affect our health, causing irritation, worsening allergies and asthma, and even contribute to serious health conditions like heart disease”, he says.

The good news is that recent trend analysis of Horizons’ monitoring data suggests air quality in the region’s airsheds is improving, says Mr Barnett.

“These results might suggest homeowners in these areas have been gradually upgrading their heating appliances or improving their burning practices over the years. These trends are encouraging to see and this winter we want to see our communities capitalise on their great work.”

While many locals are already familiar with lighting fires for home heating, Mr Barnett says it’s worth revisiting Horizons’ tips for warmer, brighter, and cleaner fires this season.

“Having your chimney swept will help to keep your fire burning safely and efficiently during winter. Use plenty of dry kindling to get things started and keep the air control open for at least 30 minutes when adding fresh logs.

“Stack split, dry wood loosely in the firebox to allow air circulation and don’t overload logs

before the fire gets going. And remember - never burn rubbish or treated wood, as these can release harmful toxins.

“By practising these tips, you’ll enjoy the bright, swirling flames and red glowing embers of a good fire, while keeping smoke, and thus your impact on air quality, to a minimum.”

People with concerns about smoky chimneys in their neighbourhood can reach out to their local city or district council for assistance.

Communities can check out air quality monitoring data for Horizons’ two airsheds, Taumarunui and Taihape, at lawa.org.nz. People can also learn more about air quality in the Horizons Region at horizons.govt.nz/managing-natural-resources/air.



Good, dry firewood not only provides more heat, it’s also good for air quality.

Ohakune Squash

Last week's Ruapehu Zone interclub saw league leaders Ruapehu College beaten by Turangi in a close encounter with two matches each and split by one game on a games countback. In the other match Taumarunui beat Ohakune 3/1. This Wednesday Turangi travel to Taumarunui whilst local teams Ohakune and Ruapehu College play each other with a 5:30 start. Visitors welcome.

Week four of Ohakune Squash Club interhouse on Thursday produced close results. Salming narrowly beat Dunlop 73/71, Tecnifibre narrowly beat Prince 83/80 and Unsquashable beat Head 84/73. Karakal got 80 for the bye. Points to date are Tecnifibre 346, Unsquashable 336, Dunlop 313, Head 309, Prince 302, Salming 295, and Karakal 288. The draw for this Thursday is 5:00pm Prince vs Karakal, 6:30pm Tecnifibre vs Dunlop 8:00pm Salming vs Head and Unsquashable has the bye.

This week teams will travel to district graded teams superchamps competitions. Ohakune has seven teams competing this year. The B grade men's team travels to Hunterville. The C grade women's team travels to Waitara. The D grade men's team travels to Hawera. Both men's and women's E grade teams travel to New Plymouth and both men's and women's F grade teams travel to Turangi. All teams are competing to try and qualify as the Central team to compete in the national graded champs later in the year.

Several entries have been received for the Catalyst Performance Agronomy B grade tournament to be hosted the following weekend.

Play focusses on days of school

The much-anticipated upcoming production at Ruapehu College is set to go to stage next week. *School Daze* follows students and teachers through a typical day at the fictional W.E College whilst giving insight to a range of shared experiences which promise to be relatable, humorous and entertaining.

Opening on Wednesday 23 July, teacher in charge of Performing Arts, David Sims notes change in artistic direction for this year. The production focuses on the craft of acting and the requirements for quality story-telling.

“The audience will need to be focused and listening in order to enjoy what the scripts have to offer. The actors must demand and command their attention in order to gain and sustain the focus. It’s very challenging stuff from a broader performance perspective,” said Sims.

With a simplified stage, props and costumes, the actors navigate how attention to detail can create

an immersive experience whereby the audience can become a part of each scene.

Audiences can expect an intimate theatre setting, with limited seating to “feel up close and personal”.

The actors will break the “fourth wall” regularly, bringing the audience into the performance using them as both reference and participants. The action occurs both in and out of the classroom setting, pointing a lens at our own recollections of secondary school, via a series of vignettes that have been carefully stitched together.

Originally penned as NCEA drama exercises by playwire Lindsey Brown, Sims has embellished the scripts to create characters and storylines in order to enable a more cohesive structure.

“It’s a very no-frills approach to theatre, but I really wanted to put the students under the microscope as actors. It will be intimidating to work so closely to and with an audience, but I think they will do a wonderful job.”

Year 12 student Hannah Swift is performing this year and production has always been one of her favourite parts of school. She believes that getting to explore and experience the world of acting, but also creating a show is a valuable experience.

“The process of crafting the actual show, then watching people learn their parts and bring the characters to life is something that is inspiring. Production takes many hours, but on opening night, watching it all come together and be enjoyed by other people is something that makes me so proud of myself and my castmates. It makes everything we work towards worth it.”

Held at the Ruapehu College auditorium, tickets are strictly limited and on-sale now. They can be purchased directly online for 7pm performances from 23-26 July. A supper is provided for koha during the intermission. For further details or queries, contact: dsims@ruapehu.school.nz.

Chaos in Ruapehu water discussion

From Page 7

option rejected by Ruapehu.

Additional scale

Ruapehu council’s acting team leader of policy, strategy & sustainability, Todd Livingstone, told councillors the most affordable options were the larger groupings because of additional scale.

This was backed up by modelling by Whanganui District Council and also Morrison Low (commis-

sioned by Palmerston North and Horowhenua).

In the first year, the difference between the two-council and four-council models was \$4m, with savings of \$14.5m across the first three years of a new entity, and \$38.7m across the first seven years through till the end of the Long-Term Plan (LTP), Livingstone said.

“The five-council model ... would see costs in 2027 of \$1488 per water connection,” Livingstone

said.

“The four-council model is 8% more expensive (\$123 increase) in the first year, while the two-council model is 67% more expensive (\$996 increase), with standalone being nearly three times as expensive (\$2,589 increase). For context, the LTP projected costs in year 4 of \$2290 per connection.”

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New booking system for Ruapehu isites

Ruapehu's isites in Taumarunui, Ohakune, and the Waimarino-based mobile isite have entered a new era under Visit Ruapehu's management from 1 July, kicking things off with a new booking and retail system.

The change is aimed to make it easier for visitors to plan their Ruapehu adventure and for locals to book trips and activities across the country.

Alongside gifts and souvenirs, the isites continue to sell shuttles, accommodation, local experiences, InterCity bus tickets, locator beacons, Sky Waka gondola tickets, ferry bookings and more — making “a true one-stop shop for travel advice and bookings”, says Visit Ruapehu.

Bookit Training and Development manager Chris Telenta travelled from Australia this week to deliver in-person training, working alongside the local teams to ensure a smooth rollout. The new system covers real-time bookings for accommodation and tours, as well as retail, giving staff the tools they need to expand services and better support the community.

Amy Coburn Levae, isite Team Leader North, says the system is

already proving its worth.

“It's great — really easy to use and we're looking forward to making bookings and growing what the Ruapehu isites can offer,” says Amy.

“Having Chris here in person was fantastic — his humour and passion really made the training enjoyable and helped our team get comfortable with the new system quickly.”

Isite team leader south, Janeen Bishop, adds:

“Running Bookit for our retail transactions as well means we can grow our range of products for locals and visitors alike.”

Visit Ruapehu has worked closely with the Rotorua isite and is proud to be the second isite in New Zealand to move to Bookit for all transactions — a step approved by the Visitor Information Network just nine days ago.

The investment reflects Visit Ruapehu's commitment to supporting local operators, connecting people with the best experiences on offer, and ensuring the region's isites remain a trusted place to book, shop, and get great local advice,” says Visit Ruapehu chief executive Jo Kennedy.



Zita Van Over-meeren, Chris Telenta, Sandra Mochan at the Ohakune isite. Photo: Visit Ruapehu.



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Ruapehu Mayor Weston Kirton

To arrange a meeting or call back, please phone Council on 06 385 8364 or email: kay.kidd@ruapehudc.govt.nz



This Saturday 19 July
at The Centre, Seddon St until 1pm

For stall info phone Angel 0274 316 327
Only \$10 per stall – third Saturday of each month

PUBLIC NOTICES



Ruapehu College School Board Elections Parent Election Notice

Nominations are open for the election of 5 parent representatives to the school board.

All eligible voters will receive a nomination form. Use this form to nominate yourself or someone in your community. You will also receive a nomination cover letter calling for nominations. Information on who is not eligible to be a board member is provided with this notice, and the nomination form.

If you need more nomination forms, contact the school office.

Nominations close at noon on Wednesday 6th August 2025. You may provide a signed candidate statement and photograph with your nomination.

The electoral roll is held at the school and can be viewed during normal school hours.

As nominations are received, there will be a list of candidates' names kept at the school up until election day, which you can view.

Voting closes at 4pm on Wednesday 10th September 2025.

Signed Kay Sutton
Returning Officer

IN MEMORIAM

DEADMAN, Mathew Craig (Podge):
24.12.81 - 17.07.05

Twenty years have passed, though to us it only seems like yesterday. So dearly missed. Mat, we remember you often:

- when we have family gatherings
- when we hear your V8 roar
- when it's duck shooting season
- when we're repairing or modifying machinery
- when we're in our tractors working the paddocks
- when your friends remind us of the antics you shared with them
- when we hear "The Gambler" song played.

We cherish the memories of the times we spent together and the photos we have to remind us.

"Gone but never forgotten"

Love and bigs hugs, mum, dad, Carl, Mel, Ricky, Holly and families.

PUBLIC NOTICES



Nga Morehu o Uenuku Te Kohanga Reo NOTICE OF AGM

Wednesday 23 July 2025, 4:30
2 Hukaroa Rd, Raetihi

- Election of officers
- Chairman
 - Secretary
 - Treasurer

Nau mai haere mai



OHAKUNE EVENTS CHARITABLE TRUST

Community Meeting - Mardi Gras

Join the Ohakune Events Charitable Trust and Audiology for a post-event catch up about Mardi Gras 2025

Thursday 17th July, 7pm
Ohakune Council Chambers

Open invite to all who would like to attend

For everything Ohakune, go to www.ohakune.info

PUBLIC NOTICES

PUBLIC NOTICES

Section 101, Sale and Supply of Alcohol Act 2012
Ohakune Food Barn Limited has made an application to the District Licensing Committee at Ruapehu District Council for a **New Off Licence** in respect of the premises situated at **12-14 Goldfinch Street, Ohakune** known as **New World Ohakune**. The general nature of the business to be conducted under the licence is that of a **Supermarket**. The days on which and the hours during which alcohol is intended to be sold under the licence are: **Monday – Sunday: 7.00am – 9.00pm.**

The application may be inspected during ordinary office hours at the office of the Ruapehu District Licensing Committee at Ruapehu District Council, 59-63 Huia Street, Taumarunui.

Any person who is entitled to object and who wishes to object to the issue of the licence may, not later than 25 working days after the date of the publication of this notice, file a notice in writing of the objection with the Secretary of the District Licensing Committee at Ruapehu District Council, Private Bag 1001, Taumarunui 3946.

No objections to the issue of a licence may be made in relation to a matter other than a matter specified in section 105(1) of the Sale and Supply of Alcohol Act 2012. This is the first publication of this notice.



Te Kura Kaupapa Māori o Ngāti Rangi School Board Elections Parent Election Notice

Nominations are open for the election of 3 parent representatives to the school board.

All eligible voters will receive a nomination form. Use this form to nominate yourself or someone in your community. You will also receive a nomination cover letter calling for nominations. Information on who is not eligible to be a board member is provided with this notice, and the nomination form.

If you need more nomination forms, contact the school office.

Nominations close at noon on Wednesday 6th August 2025. You may provide a signed candidate statement and photograph with your nomination.

The electoral roll is held at the school and can be viewed during normal school hours.

As nominations are received, there will be a list of candidates' names kept at the school up until election day, which you can view.

Voting closes at 4pm on Wednesday 10th September 2025.

Signed Kay Sutton
Returning Officer



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WAIMARINO BULLETIN

VOICE OF THE RUAPEHU REGION
Tuesday 16 July, 1985. Volume 3 No. 8

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Ohakune falls into line on amalgamation issue

Ohakune Borough Council has now fallen into line with its two near neighbours in agreeing that amalgamation is where the future lies for the region's local authorities.

At their monthly public meeting last month, a majority of Ohakune councillors spoke in favour of Ohakune retaining its own identity, claiming that amalgamation with Raetihi Borough and Waimarino County would not be in the best interest of the town.

However, when councillors met with Mr Brian Elwood, chairman of the Local Government Commission last week, they had reversed their stance.

The Commission is reviewing the efficiency of New Zealand's 1,000 plus local bodies.

The official policy of Ohakune Borough Council — like Raetihi Borough and Waimarino County — is now to push for an amalgamation of the three bodies into a district council.

Ohakune Mayor, Bill Taylor, said after the meeting that his council had decided that fighting a long battle in a bid to retain the status quo would be "singularly pointless."

It would be more productive for the council to throw its energies into planning the formation of a district council, he said.

Mr Elwood told councillors from all three local authorities that he was prepared to listen to any ideas they came up with, but he made it plain that they must

accept that change was inevitable.

Mr Elwood left the three councils in no doubt that small local authorities would not be able to survive the tough times which lie ahead.

Administration costs were spiralling and the administrative skills required to run local government were becoming increasingly sophisticated and specialised, he said.

Even though all three local authorities are now in favour of amalgamation in principle, there are still many problems to be ironed out.

Ohakune's Mayor, Bill Taylor, expressed the view that a quick transition to a full union would be the best solution, to avoid dragging the matter out.

However, Garrick Workman, Raetihi's Mayor,

favours a ward system where the three authorities would have their rate funds kept in separate accounts, with a full amalgamation possibly taking place after a number of years.

Waimarino County has not yet formulated an official policy on whether a ward system or a full amalgamation is the most desirable option.

Even if an amalgamation of Raetihi, Ohakune and Waimarino does come about it may not be the end of the matter, as the question of the region's relationship with Rangitikei County and Wanganui to the south and with Taumarunui and Taupo to the north will remain to be answered.

Mr Elwood hinted that a further amalgamation could be forced on a newly formed

Continued on page 2

Waiouru doctor appointed

The wife of Ohakune solicitor, Mr Duncan Harvey, Dr. Lynne Harvey, has been appointed to the position of Waiouru civilian general practitioner.

Dr. Harvey will take up the position in mid January next year.

The Harveys were married in Wellington last

Easter, but Dr. Harvey is currently living in Auckland taking an obstetrics course. This involves six months work at the St. Helen's Hospital and the National Women's Hospital.

Mr Harvey, of the firm of Harris, Tansey and Harvey, has remained in Ohakune.

When Dr. Harvey takes up her new post the couple intend moving to Waiouru to live.

In addition to commuting to his office in Ohakune each day, Mr Harvey plans to see clients in Waiouru two nights per week.

"So as well as gaining a doctor, Waiouru will also gain a part-time lawyer," he says.

Dr. Harvey qualified as a doctor two years ago and has spent the last two years "in just about every hospital in Auckland," her husband says.

She has experience in obstetrics and paediatrics which will be a big asset to the people of Waiouru when she takes up her post.

Waiouru has been without a civilian doctor since April when Dr. Tim O'Donovan left the position.

Since then routine obstetric work and emergency medical treatment for residents of Waiouru and the surrounding area have been carried out by army medical officers.

This will continue until Dr. Harvey takes up her appointment in January.



It was the first time on skis for Shelley McLean (left) and David Wong when they visited Turoa this week.

Shelley and David were among nineteen intellectually handicapped Wellington youngsters who spent a five day skiing holiday in Ohakune, staying at the TASC ski lodge.

Only one of the youngsters — who were all aged between 13 and 18 — had skied before and three-quarters of them had never previously been in snow.

But despite this, senior teacher in charge of the youngsters, Lexia Bridger, said they had all picked up the sport very quickly and had coped as well as most other first time skiers.

Ratepayers meet council

A deputation of disgruntled ratepayers will meet with members of Ohakune Borough Council on Thursday to discuss their recent rate rise.

A petition asking the council to withdraw the 85/86 rate demands "as they are totally unacceptable" is now circulating in the town. The aim of the Ohakune Concerned Ratepayers' Group, which is behind the petition, is to gather the signatures of a majority of the town's ratepayers.

The group's spokesman, Mr Bruce Wilde, said there was no legal way the council could be forced to review the rate as a result of a petition being raised, but if a petition was signed by a majority of ratepayers "it would be an arrogant council which ignored it."

The group is also advising Ohakune residents not to pay their rates bills at this stage.

County rate up 12.33%

Waimarino County residents will have their rates increased by 12.33 percent.

The increase was agreed upon by councillors at a special estimates meeting on Wednesday evening.

The new rate will not be confirmed until the council meets for its regular monthly public meeting later this month.

Much of the additional revenue will be spent on maintenance and a roads resealing programme throughout the county.

Council clerk, Mrs Hope Vaughan, said the relatively modest increase had been made possible because the council had insisted on keeping rates at a "realistic" level in 1983 despite demands for lower rates from the National administration.

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Under 21 woodchopping on show in Ruapehu



Morgan Bolstad in woodchopping action. He will be competing at a fundraising event on Saturday 26 July.

A fundraising event for the New Zealand Under 21 Woodchopping Team, which includes local Morgan Bolstad, will be held in the Athletic Hall in Taumarunui on Saturday 26 July.

The NZ Under 21 team consists of eight young men, who have been selected to represent New Zealand to travel to Australia to compete in a three-test series against the Australian Under 21 Team at the Royal Adelaide Show in late August/early September.

NZ U21 secretary/treasurer Michele Bolstad said that she is “really excited to be able to bring a Woodchopping event back to our town”.

“People and businesses in town have also welcomed the return of a woodchopping event and have shown their support. Personally, it will be a very proud occasion for me to watch Morgan compete in front of our own community”.

She said they are also excited to have local world champion Jack Jordan attempting a NZ Record on the night.

There are two titles up for grabs – an U21 Colts Elimination Handicap Title where two competitors will race against each other in an underhand chop with the

winner moving onto the next round. The second Title is an U21 Colts Championship Overall Title. The winner of this title will be determined by overall points from four Championship events. These events are underhand, standing, single saw and a combination championship (where competitors cut an underhand followed immediately by a standing block).

Twenty-year-old Morgan Bolstad is the defending overall champion, having won this championship for the last three years (Invercargill 2024, Hokitika 2023, Tokoroa 2022), so will be determined to defend his title.

“The evening will be an action-packed night of entertainment with non-stop chopping action,” says Michele Bolstad.

There will be spot prizes and an auction of some great products, which have been donated by local businesses.

Tickets (\$20) can be purchased at Mitre 10 Taumarunui and include a light meal and snacks, which have been sponsored by Mitre 10 Taumarunui.

“Come along and support this great young talent as they raise funds for the NZ U21 Colts Team travelling to Adelaide to represent New Zealand.”

Ruapehu seniors unbeaten run ends at the final

Marist Knights win senior title with 40-17 victory over Ruapehu

By Jared Smith, Whanganui Rugby
For the second year in a row, the Tasman Tanning Senior champion is the previous season’s runner-up and they likewise beat an undefeated team to do it as Forest 360 Marist Knights grabbed the silverware on Saturday.

The Knights avenged their May loss to McCarthy’s Transport Ruapehu and showed they had learned from 2024’s narrow grand final defeat to Utiku Old Boys by staying linked and focused, pulling away for a 40-17 triumph at Cooks Gardens.

After scoring first through man-of-the-match prop Temesi Vurakania, Knights went behind 10-7 at the end of the second quarter through a good try by Ruapehu winger Tahatika Te Riaki, converted by fullback Chrissy Winter to go with his penalty.

Knights responded with consecutive tries – Vurakania reaching out for his double, then second-five Xavier Halpin running in off a line break and offload by centre Epeli Delasau.

What proved the two decisive moments of the game occurred in the last two minutes of the first half.

Trailing 19-10, Ruapehu attacked down the short side and flanker Taipari Wirepa was just held up over the tryline.

From the goal-line dropout, Knights

regained possession at a ruck and attacked down both sides of the ground for winger Kuliasi Ligaitamana to power over near the sticks for a crucial 26-10 halftime lead after fullback Joey Devine landed his third conversion.

The Knights didn’t let up after the resumption as Ligaitamana produced a beautiful in-and-away serve to dive across untouched in the 46th minute.

Ruapehu’s chances took a further blow when second-five and skipper Kahl Elers-Green received a late tackle yellow card.

Devine then powered through two tacklers and ran under the posts for a 15-point personal haul by the 65th minute.

The game gone at 40-10, Ruapehu earned some consolation when reserve Jaydis Hammond ran off a short ball from lock Ben Waiwai to dive under the posts and, while Knights lost reserve Ben Dowman to an infringement yellow card, they defended their line and cleared Ruapehu back in their half by fulltime.

Although finishing one game shy of a perfect season, Ruapehu coach Chris Winter was proud of his team’s development in the past two years.

“Everyone’s homegrown, we’re all family, no real outsiders.

“It was a big effort from the boys and it came down to little moments.

“They played with a bit of spirit and didn’t give up, which is awesome.”

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