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Rates cap will mean deficits: Kirton

P2

Dumped chemicals injure workers

P3

Horse sculpture funds P5

e-bikes banned from iconic trail

P11

Tongariro fire contained, but wind change threatens

The Tongariro National Park fire is contained on the northern flank where it meets the area burnt in last month's fire, reported Fire and Emergency New Zealand (FENZ) on Tuesday morning.

"The wind is forecast to change direction (Tuesday morning), which will push it towards unburnt vegetation and may cause flare-ups in areas that were burnt yesterday," said FENZ.

Incident controller, Assistant Commander Renee Potae, said they have planned for that and are focusing on that flank of the fire.

The fire started as a result of a trailer tyre blowout, with sparks from the trailer wheel igniting scrub beside the road, between the site of the start of the November fire and the turn-off to Whakapapa Village.

Te Rūnanganui o Ngāti Hikairo ki Tongariro reported that a police officer arrived within minutes, ensuring the scene was immediately assessed and secured.

"There were several ignition points, all of which are now part of an ongoing investigation."

"South of the fire lies an area with denser fuel loads – manuka, kanuka and into mountain beech, which requires careful monitoring," reported Te Rūnanganui.

The *Bulletin* understands that the November fire also started from sparks from a passing vehicle.

Sadness

"Ngāti Hikairo ki Tongariro and the Department of Conservation share a deep sense of concern and sadness at seeing

Wild foals highlight of Kaimanawa tour

Pippa Hewson of Kapiti Coast was one of the many visitors to the Waiouru Army Training area to see the wild Kaimanawa horses on the weekend, including many foals. Photo: Cathy Strong.

By Cathy Strong

This year's annual public tour to the Kaimanawa wild horses was particularly exciting because of the huge number of foals in the herd viewed by the bus loads of supporters last weekend.

Pippa Hewson, 11, has been on the last three annual bus tours around the Waiouru Army land where the

Another devastating fire rips through the Tongariro National Park. Photo supplied.

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RUAPEHU BULLETIN 10 December 2025 • 1

Rates cap will ‘lock councils into long-term deficits’: Kirton

By Moana Ellis, Local Democracy Reporting
Ruapehu’s mayor Weston Kirton says a new cornerstone Government policy will strip communities of the ability to decide the level of services they want and risks pushing councils into a spiral of long-term underinvestment seen in Australia.

Kirton says the Government’s 2-4% rates cap – announced ahead of legislation expected next year to control council spending – will remove democratic choice, not just constrain councils.

He also questions whether the cap will deliver discipline or simply defer pain.

“When councils are forced to cut spending to meet a cap, it becomes impossible to lift rates later to catch up on deferred investment,” Kirton told Local Democracy Reporting.

“This leads to a cycle of underfunding and persistent deficits.”

Kirton said the district had already begun modelling ways to pull average rates increases back under 5% next year, in line with his election commitment.

Pay more to get more

The intention was to present ratepayers with “a menu of options” showing which services could be reduced or removed to achieve lower increases, and which could be retained or restored if the community agreed to pay more.

“The introduction of a hard rates cap removes that choice,” he said.

“Ratepayers will no longer be able to ‘pay more to get more’, even if they collectively want to retain a higher



level of service which they are happy to pay for.”

While reducing services did not automatically mean poorer-quality delivery, Kirton said the bigger danger lay in what has already played out across Australian councils: spending cuts that later become impossible to reverse.

He said a similar pattern had already emerged in New Zealand. Councils that held off investment in water infrastructure later faced large rate hikes when new Government standards required upgrades.

Although water has been excluded from the cap, Kirton warned that the same risks apply to other essential assets – roads, community facilities, parks, bridges and core infrastructure.

If investment was pushed too low, these assets would deteriorate and eventually require “much larger corrective increases in the future or force service cuts that no one wants”.

The mayor also raised concerns about “wider equity and affordability”.

“While the cap limits funding for “everything except water” to 2-4%, water users themselves will face significantly higher charges.”

Kirton said Department of Internal Affairs (DIA) modelling for the Ruapehu-Whanganui water plan shows Ruapehu water users face a 92% increase in water charges over the next 10 years – “with no affordability protections”.



Ageing bridges, shrinking co-funding and rising water charges leave region exposed under new rates cap Ruapehu mayor Weston Kirton questions whether the Government’s new rates cap will deliver discipline or simply defer pain. Photo: Tuakana Te Tana.

The DIA last week recognised Ruapehu water affordability issues when it accepted the joint water services plan, saying it expected the new entity to investigate price harmonisation and joining up with additional councils.

“Even though water will sit outside council under Local Water Done Well, we must still be mindful of the combined impact of general rates plus water charges on our ratepayers.

“Households experience these together as one cost-of-living pressure. The cap does not ease that burden.”

On the new requirement for councils to seek regulator approval to exceed the cap, Kirton said it was not yet clear how the approval system would operate.

While he supports efforts to limit rate rises, Kirton

said the Government has not addressed the core drivers of affordability and the fundamental flaws in council funding.

“As Ruapehu does not have any major revenue-producing assets or investments, we are significantly more reliant on rates, fees and charges, grants and subsidies, and debt to fund our services, projects, and other activities.”

New revenue mechanisms – such as tourism levies, infrastructure funding or tax-sharing – would be essential, he said.

“The issues with local government funding based around rates reliance will not be solved [by the] Government’s reform proposals.”

Government aware

Local Government Minister Simon Watts said the

rates target model was designed to balance councils’ ability to fund essential infrastructure and sustainable growth, while keeping rates affordable.

“The Government is aware of the risks of underinvestment in infrastructure and asset maintenance,” Watts told Local Democracy Reporting.

“As we regulate the cap, councils will be monitored to ensure they are not underinvesting in asset management and maintenance.

“This is also one of the reasons why we are setting a minimum to the band to clearly signal the need for ongoing and regular investment.”

On council funding, Watts said revenue was only one side of the equation.

“It is important that councils focus their spending and ensure it is on the basics.

“I expect councils to be using the full suite of funding and financing tools that they have available – ensuring fees and charges accurately recover the costs of providing private good services, using debt financing to spread the costs of infrastructure over time and maximising the new funding and financing tools under the Going for Housing Growth programmes, including Development Levies and the Infrastructure Funding and Financing Act.”

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

Ruapehu Events & What's On

DECEMBER 2025

Raetihi Christmas Carnival

13 December

Seddon St, Raetihi from 9am. Contact Kay on 027 924 7252 for stalls.

Christmas in the Park

23 December

Christie Park, Ohakune from 5pm.

JANUARY 2026

Mahi Aroha - DoC Summer Programme

1 - 30 January

For further information: www.tongariro.org.nz.

The Goat Adventure Run

17 January

Have you Goat what it take? www.thegoat.co.nz

FEBRUARY 2026

Waimarino A&P Show

21 February

For further information contact: info@waimarinoshow.com.

Waimarino Sheepdog Trials

27-28 February

Contact Secretary – Roger Suckling 027 897 1610.

MARCH 2026

Blazing Hills Trail Run/Walk

14 March

Contact www.blazinghills.nz.

Waimarino 103rd Rodeo

21-22 March

Secretary: Cathy MacLean 06 385 4636 or 027 240 1090. Email: c_d_maclean@xtra.co.nz. Raetihi Rodeo Grounds, Parapara Highway

Ring of Fire

27-28 March

See www.rof.co.nz for more information

Tussock Traverse

28 March

See www.tussocktraverse.co.nz for more information

Raetihi Wild Food Challenge

28 March

For more information email: localwildfoodchallenge@gmail.com

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ADS@RUAPEHUBULLETIN.CO.NZ

LINK YOUR EVENT TO EVENTFINDA FOR FREE

Eating out in the Ruapehu District

Call 06 385 8532 to list your business here

KINGS BAR & RESTAURANT

3 Rimu St Ohakune Junction

Ph: 06 385 8648

Est in 1913, historic Kings offers an inviting menu by international chefs, a great selection of boutique wines and craft breweries including award winning Ruapehu Brewing Co beers in the fridge and on tap. See our Facebook page for what's on. Please check our open times as these will vary.

LA PIZZERIA

6 Thames St, Ohakune Junction

Ph: 06 385 8558

Ohakune's most famous pizza restaurant, for over 37 years we have been serving Ohakune's best pizza. Come up and see us in the "Junction" at the end of the Old Coach Road and try one of our hot, tasty, handmade pizzas. Same great menu available for takeaway. Open Thursday to Monday, 4 – late. Check us out online at: www.lapizzeria.co.nz

LKNZ LODGE & CAFE

1 Rata St, Ohakune

Ph: 027 257 LKNZ (5569)

Open every day. Menu includes our delicious big breakfast, creamy mushrooms, homemade soups, wedges, nachos, toasties, waffles and more ... Volcanic coffee, muffins & scones, real fruit smoothies and thick shakes. Dine in or takeaway. Onsite parking. www.lknz.co.nz

POWDERKEG

Bottom of the mountain road

Ph: 06 385 8888

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THE CYPRUS TREE

79 Clyde St, Ohakune

Ph: 06 385 8857

Check out our new menu. Kiwi craft beers, boutique wines and cocktails to quench that thirst. Playroom for the kids, foosball, air hockey and spaces to keep the kids entertained. Spectacular mountain views. A great place for casual get togethers or special occasions. Open every day.

UTOPIA CAFE

47 Clyde St, Ohakune

Ph: 06 385 9120

Open 7 days from 8am – 3pm for all day breakfast and lunch. Serving Havana Coffee. A cosy memorable atmosphere with a great range of cabinet food and beverages, Frappé and smoothies. Vegan/Gluten-free options for both savoury and sweet are available. Speedy free Wi-Fi! A perfect place for everybody!

Ngā mihi o te Kirihimete me te Tau Hou

Season's greetings for Christmas and the New Year from the Trustees and Staff.

Hinengakau Maatua Whangai Office will be closed from

TUESDAY, 23 DECEMBER 2025 AT 4:30PM and will re-open

MONDAY, 12 JANUARY 2026 AT 8:30AM

2 • RUAPEHU BULLETIN 10 December 2025

Dumped chemicals injure transfer station workers

Ruapehu residents need to take extreme care when disposing of unwanted chemicals, the local council says, after a serious health and safety incident forced the closure of the Taumarunui Transfer Station on Tuesday 25 November.

The incident occurred when unlabelled plastic containers holding a liquid chemical was left in the plastics recycling.

The containers ruptured while staff were bulking up plastics for off-site shipment, causing the liquid to splash onto one worker's arm resulting in a burning sensation, and exposing another staff member to fumes that irritated their eyes and throat.

The Fire Brigade's Hazardous Materials unit attended the scene and safely collected and contained the substance in a sealed container.

The chemical was believed to have been an acid, but without any labelling its exact nature remains unknown.

Council manager solid waste, Anne Marie Westcott, said the incident highlights the very real risk to staff and the environment when chemicals are not disposed of properly.

"This was a major health and safety incident that could have been completely avoided," said Ms Westcott.

"Unlabelled or partially full chemical containers pose a serious threat not only to our staff but also to the environment if they make their way into waterways. We need the community's support to keep everyone safe."

Correct disposal

Residents are reminded that unwanted chemicals including agricultural, household, garden, automotive, or otherwise can

be safely disposed of at either the Taumarunui or Ohakune Transfer Stations. There is a small charge to cover the cost of disposing of the material.

Council is asking everyone to:

- Ensure all containers are empty before disposing of them in recycling or rubbish bins.
- Never place containers with unknown liquids into recycling bays or general waste.
- Treat any container with unidentified liquids with extreme caution.
- Take any chemical or unknown substance to the Taumarunui or Ohakune Transfer Stations, where trained staff have the proper processes to manage hazardous materials safely.

- Keep original labels on containers whenever possible, so staff can identify the contents.

Protecting people and the environment

Ms Westcott said the risk extends well beyond individual staff members.

"Incorrectly disposed chemicals can harm people, damage infrastructure, and contaminate waterways," she said.

"We're asking the community to help us prevent incidents like this and ensure our transfer stations remain safe places for both workers and the public."

Residents with concerns or queries about chemical disposal can contact Council or speak with staff at their local transfer station.



The Fire Brigade's Hazardous Materials unit was called to the Taumarunui Transfer Station to safely contain a chemical spill that affected two workers and forced the closure of the site.

Tongariro fire contained

From Page 1

another fire flare up within Tongariro National Park," reported DOC on Monday.

"For mana whenua and all those who care for this whenua, the return of fire to such a culturally and environmentally significant landscape — so soon after the previous blaze — is a heavy and confronting reality."

Fire services were alerted to the fire around 1.10pm on Monday and Fire and Emergency New Zealand continue to lead the response.

DOC Operations Manager Libby O'Brien says DOC's priority is people's safety.

"Our team have been walking the tracks checking for any visitors who may not be aware of the fire. Fortunately, no one has been injured, and our staff are all accounted for."

"As a precaution, we've cancelled bookings for Mangatepopo Hut and the Tongariro Alpine Crossing until the morning of 10 December. We've also suggested visitors may wish to leave the Whakapapa Village area for their safety."

The Tongariro Alpine Crossing is closed as is the Tongariro Northern Circuit.

"We are working hard to ensure anyone who is currently in Tongariro National Park is aware of the fire and is able to return home safely."

"Residents of Whakapapa Village are also on standby for evacuation, and any call to evacuate will be made by Fire and Emergency and supported by DOC."

"Tongariro National Park is incredibly special to so many people, and to be facing this again so soon is gutting."

It's been less than a month since a nearly 3000-hectare fire ripped through parts of the park, prompting outpourings of support

from around the world.

A spokesperson for Te Rūnanganui o Ngāti Hikairo ki Tongariro says the fire has been deeply felt across the hapū.

"Tongariro is our living ancestor — the foundation of our whakapapa, and the spiritual and cultural heart of Ngāti Hikairo. To see fire return to this area so soon after the last major event is emotionally heavy for our people."

"Our rāhui remains in place across the affected landscape, and today's events reinforce why that protective measure is necessary as the environment heals."

Libby says there's no information on damage yet.

"We aren't aware of any structural damage, though we anticipate significant impacts on biodiversity in the affected area. These are things we'll work through once the fire is controlled."

Scientists who were in the area to carry out studies on the previous fire ground said that the November fire was the first major fire since the 1940s.

FENZ reported on Monday night that there was an aggressive air attack and ground operations that continued until dusk.

The fire is estimated to have burnt 322 hectares.

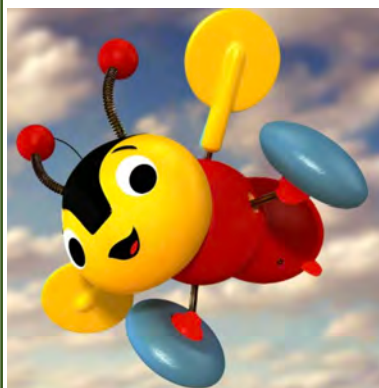
About 60 firefighters with 16 fire trucks supported by helicopters worked into the evening on Monday night, with additional helicopters on the way.

SH47 from Waimarino to Tongariro is closed between the intersections of SH46 and SH48.

Crews from National Park, Ōwhango, Whakapapa, Ruapehu Rural, Waimarino Rural, Turangi, Southern Lake Taupo Rural and Whanganui were in attendance on Monday.



Raetihi 2025 Christmas Carnival



Saturday Dec 13 9 am
Christmas Parade 1 pm

Floats, competitions, the fabulously decorated Christmas wreath and tree, food and market stalls, live music, kids games and prizes with the amazing Spinning Genie.

The theme this year is **Kiwiana Christmas**.

raetihichristmasparade@gmail.com



Meri Kirihimete
me ngā mihi o te tau hou

The Ngāti Rangi offices will be closed from
19 December 2025 until 5 January 2026

Have a safe and happy holiday

After hours mental health assessment and treatment team 0800 653 358
For emergencies call 111 • Plunket Line 0800 933 922 • Health Line 0800 611 116
Ruapehu Health Ltd during operating hours 06 385 4211

Letters

Consent costs

• As expected, the newly elected chair of Horizons has expressed opposition to any proposal to curtail the gravity train of regional governance, which has seen massive rate increases for both urban and rural ratepayers with no discernible benefit other than the provision of high paying jobs for those employed by regional councils or on their board of directors.

As well as the direct cost of rates, there are additional charges to consent holders and these costs have escalated to the point where holding water consents to irrigate crops in the Horizons region is not a viable option.

Likewise, consent renewals have seen a host of costly new conditions imposed often without reasonable cause or benefit. One Ohakune grower had to spend \$600,000 to get a consent to discharge vegetable wash water to land – ultimately these charges to consent holder raise the cost of producing food and this flows through to the consumers at the supermarket checkout.

Under the cover of the emotional umbrella of environmentalism, regional councils in general and Horizons in particular have expanded their bureaucracy taking an ever-increasing amount of money out of the community and into their pay packets and board remuneration.

So, my advice to the new chair and elected board members is to work with government to produce better management of environmental matters at less cost.

Ron Frew

Nikki Riley, Horizons chair, replies:

• I fully recognise the frustrations this reader has about costs. Rates have risen at a pace which is unsustainable, and compliance costs are high.

Since our election in October, Horizons councillors have been working hard to reduce proposed rates increases. I expect we will have news to share by the end of the year, which will show we are taking strong action to bring rates inflation down. This work started well before central government made its rates capping proposal.

Central government must be given credit for their work on resource management reform. Both sides of the political divide, as well as myself and other councillors, agree that the current system is not working. It costs too much, constrains growth, and often does not result in true environmental improvements. While we're yet to see the draft legislation, reforming the resource management system will bring down compliance costs. I want to see legislation that enables our communities to achieve good results for the environment and the economy.

Horizons supports reforming local government and wants to work with all parties, including central government, to make sure the reform delivers tangible benefits to people in our region. The proposed local government changes recognise the benefits of services delivered at a regional scale, including lower costs. However, we need to make sure that any change preserves local voices. As Ruapehu's representative on the regional council, I will work to make sure our district's voice is not lost in discussions around local government reform.

The writer is welcome to call me to discuss the new Resource Management Act.

False gods

• Alas, it would seem that Ben Mitchell has not read Luke 10:27 or Matthew 22:37. These remind us to use all our mind in moral matters. All of it. So in addition to the individual conscious part of our mind that Mr Mitchell failed to use all of when suggesting his novel cause of the big fire, we also use our collective unconscious mind that associates emotive symbolic figures like Mother, Hero and Creator with abstract values like unstinting practical care, courage in adversity, and creating a good society.

Thus "Yahweh the Creator" was the language style that nomadic Hebrew leaders used to add emotive force to the abstract values summarised by their ten commandments, which do indeed create a heavenly social world when everyone keeps them.

The 1940s and 50s Mangamahu of my childhood was just such a world. My renowned grandma was the archetype Mother, and our valley's young farmworkers, who had so many of their black singlets thrown into cleansing fires after yet another solo body-recovery job during those surreal weeks of Tangiwai, were true Hero archetypes. (tinyurl.com/hero53)

The statue of Te Ririō, a Hero ancestor of the local iwi, is at Mangatepopo to remind hikers to honour the ancestors of local landowners by imitating their care of the park's natural treasures and by not carelessly killing themselves, values not unlike those of the Hebrew's Yahweh.

As for the worshippers of false gods that Mr Mitchell referred to, these symbolise community members wedded to habitual selfish actions that grievously harm many generations of their children. Our society's worst false god is destructive luxury. This is worshipped with endless black housing and roadways, big fossil fuel vehicles, overseas flights, excessive cattle product – all contributing to the global overheating that made the fire in our park so big.

Let us hope that none of our good fundamentalist friends have been worshipping this false god.

John Archer

Lightning strikes Raetihi Water Treatment Plant



The Raetihi Water Treatment Plant and storage tank facility, which is situated on a hill overlooking the Raetihi township, took a direct lightning strike last week. The plant remained fully operational, sustaining only minor damage to some instrumentation with water supply to the community not affected at any stage. File photo.

The Raetihi Water Treatment Plant and storage tank facility took a direct lightning strike on Wednesday last week during the widespread thunderstorms affecting much of the North Island.

The plant, which is situated on a hill overlooking the Raetihi township, remained fully operational, sustaining only minor damage to some instrumentation.

With 24 hours of on-site storage capacity, water supply to the community was not affected at any stage.

Council's water services contractor Veolia responded immediately, restoring

key functions within about an hour by replacing blown fuses.

Reservoir level instrumentation and remote monitoring remain affected; however, Veolia has confirmed this will not impact ongoing plant operations.

Veolia advises that alternative systems are in place, including the ability to monitor reservoir levels manually, ensuring the continued safe and reliable supply of drinking water to Raetihi.

Veolia is continuing work to fully restore all systems and will provide updates via Council if required.

THE WEEKLY WORKOUT

answers for each puzzle are included on this page

831

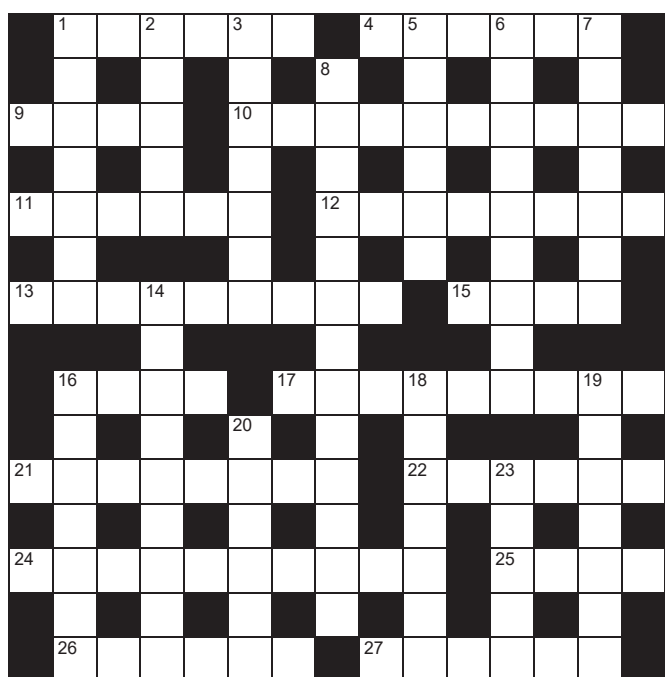
QUICK CROSSWORD

Across

1. Medieval clown (6)
4. Trinket (6)
9. Stun (4)
10. Sentimental film or book (10)
11. Killjoy (colloq) (6)
12. Australian state (8)
13. Attacker (9)
15. Medal (colloq) (4)
16. Highlander (4)
17. Persecuted (9)
21. Avoid (8)
22. Sunglasses (colloq) (6)
24. Hindrance (10)
25. Genuine (4)
26. Chop (6)
27. Sleazy (6)

Down

1. Filled with envy (7)
2. Oozes (5)
3. Spellbind (7)
5. Alter (6)
6. Savage (9)
7. Close of day (7)
8. Seasoning (4,3,6)
14. Amends (9)
16. Of, or produced, by an earthquake (7)
18. Italian rice dish (7)



19. Precious stone (7)
20. Garb (6)
23. Pungent (5)



Puzzles © The Puzzle Company

SUDOKU

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

			6	7		1		
		3	5					9
	1					7		4
		4	7					1
2								8
6				3	5			
9		8					3	
4				2	9			
		5		6	9			

1

MEDIUM 2

	8		7		2			5
	7	2			4	1		
		3		8				
		6		7				1
	4	1				7	3	
	3			1		8		
				9		4		
		8	3			2	9	
2			8		7		5	

HARD

The Top 10

1. What is harvested at Lake Grassmere in Marlborough?
2. What is the term for a painting done on a freshly plastered wall?
3. Which islands off South America did Darwin visit to get evidence in support of his theories of natural selection?
4. In which year did John Key resign as PM, New Zealand won four Olympic golds, and Ray Columbus died?
5. What is tattooed on Popeye's arm?
6. Which American virologist developed the first successful polio vaccine?
7. Where was the Titanic launched?
8. Which member of Abba was not born in Sweden?
9. What is a patu pounamu?
10. Who is the neurotic heroine of Henrik Ibsen's play of the same name?

CROSSWORD

Across: 1. Jester, 4. Bauble, 9. Daze, 10. Tearjerker, 11. Wower, 12. Tasmania, 13. Assailant, 15. Gong, 16. Scott, 17. Oppressed, 21. Sidestep, 22. Shades, 24. Impediment, 25. Real, 26. Cutlet, 27. Sordid.
Down: 1. Jealous, 2. Seeps, 3. Entral, 5. Adjust, 6. Barbarous, 7. Evening, 8. Salt and pepper, 14. Atone, 16. Seismic, 18. Risotto, 19. Emerald, 20. Attire, 23. Acrid.

SUDOKU

1	2
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 1	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 1
3 4 5 6 7 8 9 1 2	3 4 5 6 7 8 9 1 2
4 5 6 7 8 9 1 2 3	4 5 6 7 8 9 1 2 3
5 6 7 8 9 1 2 3 4	5 6 7 8 9 1 2 3 4
6 7 8 9 1 2 3 4 5	6 7 8 9 1 2 3 4 5
7 8 9 1 2 3 4 5 6	7 8 9 1 2 3 4 5 6
8 9 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	8 9 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
9 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	9 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

THE TOP 10

- 1 Salt, 2 Fresco, 3 Galapagos Islands, 4 2016, 5 An anchor, 6 (Jonas Edward) Salt, 7 Belfast, 8 Anni-Frid (Norway), 9 A greenstone club, 10 Hedda Gabler.



Kaimanawa Statue supporters Elder Jenks and Alan Buscke erecting an information poster next to the Z petrol station in Waiouru (photo: Rabbit Nottage).

Wild foals highlight of Kaimanawa tour

From Page 1

unique wild horses roam and says the plethora of newborns was a special bonus.

"I spotted 31 foals up close, and many only a few days old," she said.

"They were so wonderful to be around."

The organisers confirmed there are many more foals on the Army's 63,000 hectares of land than previously.

Patron of the Kaimarama Heritage Horses group, Elder Jenks, explained this is because there are so many more horses in the area, estimated to be more than 500.

There are more mares giving birth and at a younger age, says Jenks, who has been involved with the Kaimanawa horses since 1998.

He says it used to be foals were born within an 8-10 week period, but now they are born in a 4-5 month period.

"Some were born in the snow and survived," says Jenks.

The burgeoning number of wild horses is a problem because Department of Conservation wants only 300 wild horses on this high country desert land. The annual muster of horses allows an accurate count, veterinary care, and the opportunity to take some away to approved homes.

In the past 12 years the group has rehomed more than 1230 horses.

The Covid years limited the annual round-up, and construction problems with a new mustering yard at one end of the ranges meant the horses in that area didn't get attended to, and the herds increased more rapidly.

The mustering event, funded by DOC, also is the opportunity to treat mares with the new contraception injection. Jenks estimates only 57 mares have been received it so far, although it takes several years and two injections to be significantly effective.

Wild horse statue for Waiouru getting closer

Waiouru may soon get a giant statue of a wild Kaimanawa horse to rival the carrot at Ohakune, gumboot at Taihape, huntaway dog at Hunterville and bull at Bulls.

Next year marks 150 years since the unique wild horses were first spotted and identified.

Kaimanawa Heritage Horses group says a life-size statue will create recognition for the horses and for the 63,000 hectare Army land the horses call home.

Organiser Elder Jenks says they need \$50,000 more donations to reach their goal of \$200,000 to complete the project.

A design by artist Matt Gaudie is used

on posters and fund raising has begun. The structure will be 2.3 meters high and is planned to be placed next to the Army Museum.

Ruaapehu District councillor Rabbit Nottage says council has already pledged \$30,000.

"It would be good for Waiouru," he says.

The project is supported by Mana Whenua Ngāti Rangī, the Army Museum and the Z service station.

Donations can be made at the Waiouru Z service station, or email the organiser for bank details marilynandelder@gmail.com

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Summer theme for Christmas appeal

The Waimarino Christmas Appeal may have a new name and summer theme but it's still the same volunteers leading the festive mahi.

Emma Young, the Ohakune Events Charitable Trust (OECT) chairperson, said nothing's changed through the organisation's involvement.

"It's still being led by amazing volunteers like Leah Stuckey, Sonya Jensen, Jayde Lowe and Rachael Gilbert along with their incredible Christmas elves supporting them from behind the scenes.

"The project shifted last year to sit under the OECT but this change was mostly technical, creating a banner for the community fundraiser to sit under."

Being registered as a charitable organisation helps the appeal to continue to be sustainable.

"Unlike previous years, this year we have taken on a summer-fun theme with a focus on getting tamariki outside, being active and spending time with friends and whānau", said Ms Lowe.

"We are hoping to be able to give families season

pool passes to either the Raetihi or Ohakune pools along with water-based accessories like towels, goggles, floaties or flutter boards.

"It is a bit more expensive than what we've done in the past but the whole point is getting our kids outdoors while easing the cost for families who would normally want to go anyway."

Along with receiving gift donations from the community and through the Ohakune Volunteer Fire Brigade 'Toot for Tucker!' drive on 14 December, the appeal organisers have launched a Givealittle campaign and three raffles.

"With a combined value of \$2550 our Lux, Ultimate Project and Adventure raffles have something for everyone and they are just \$5 per ticket", Ms Lowe said.

"We wouldn't have been able to bring together these three amazing prize packs without the ongoing generous support of Jones Brothers, Kune Bike & Shuttles, La Pizzeria, Mountain Kebabs, No8 Restaurant & Bar, Ohakune Engineering, Ohakune Healthcare Depot, Ohakune Hire, Opus fresh, Osteria, PGG Wrightson, Placemakers, Powderhorn Chateau, Ruapehu Brewing Co, Service Foods, TCB, Te Whetu Partnership, The Cyprus Tree The Hungry Rush, Tweeddale Contracting, Utopia Café, Vertigo Climbing Ohakune and Xpress Automotive."

A new partnership with Sustaina Grow has added an additional opportunity for fundraising with grow packs including a wool pot, soil pellet and sunflower or poppy seeds available for purchase.

"These awesome packs are zero-waste stocking stuffers and a fun summer project for tamariki.

"Every year it continues to amaze us how generous our communities are in supporting both gifts and kai for families around our towns.

"All that's changed is there is a growing number of ways whānau can continue to support the 2025 appeal with all our updates, raffles and Givealittle links being posted to our new Waimarino Christmas Facebook page.

"If you are not on social media we can be emailed at hello@oect.co.nz or you can pop in and see Leah at The Cyprus Tree."

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Ruapehu roots theme of new novel

The Ruapehu region has been a source of inspiration for many authors, captivating their imagination and influencing their work. From classic novels to contemporary poetry, this iconic New Zealand landscape has left an indelible mark on literature.

Some notable authors who have lived in or drawn inspiration from the Ruapehu region include: John Mulgan, Fred Cody, Jenny Patrick, William Taylor, Martin Edmond, as well as Lila Pakinga, George Potaka, Che Wilson, Tim Donoghue. This list is nowhere near the numbers it could have.

The Ruapehu region's unique blend of natural beauty, cultural significance, and dramatic landscapes continues to inspire authors, composers and artists alike, making it a fascinating topic to explore.

Now shifting focus to yet another novel being launched locally this Saturday is Michael Sommerville's debut novel, *The Catharsis*, a story that goes back to his roots in this district.

Those roots, his Pemberton and Sommerville families came early in European settlement and took out leases on Atihau land on the Parapara and the Oruakukuru and farmed. On another side his Moule family came to Erua and Horopito, while the Moore family left Hokitika for Makaranui and eventually Ohakune.

Michael's story follows the journey of Josh Savill, a world traveller who returns to his hometown of Ohakune burdened by unresolved

grief over his sister's untimely death and a strained relationship with his parents. As he reconnects with old friends and seeks a sense of belonging, Josh uncovers a hidden truth about his sister that challenges his perceptions and forces him to confront his past.

The narrative unfolds through a fragmented structure that mirrors Josh's memory, grief and actions — inviting readers to piece together his story in the same way he must piece together his own healing.

The Book Launch will be held at the Gallery 58A Miro Street, Ohakune 6:30pm Saturday 13 December.



Michael Sommerville – writes about Ruapehu.

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Rates cap will hit tourism: Kirton

By Moana Ellis, Local Democracy Reporting
The Government's new rates cap will hit the most vulnerable, infrastructure-stressed councils hardest, a rural mayor says.

Ruapehu's mayor Weston Kirton says the cap lands hardest on districts like his that have ageing bridges, heavy tourism loads and major capital needs, but no alternative funding tools.

He warns the district faces a widening funding gulf for essential upgrades just as several longtime sources of Government support disappear.

"For Ruapehu, the main infrastructure pressure outside of water is land transport – particularly the replacement of ageing bridges – and maintaining the infrastructure needed to support high visitor numbers.

"Council would like to accelerate its bridge renewal programme, but we cannot do this without strong co-investment from NZTA Waka Kotahi.

"A strict 2-4% rates cap makes this more difficult, as it limits our ability to fund our local share or major capital upgrades on our own."

Tourism infrastructure presented a similar challenge. Ruapehu's small population but heavy



visitor load required investment well beyond what local ratepayers alone could sustain, he said.

"We've had to invest in facilities that serve far more people than our resident population – water treatment upgrades, the Park and Ride. These projects have only been possible because Government has previously co-funded them," he told Local Democracy Reporting.

"With many of those funding streams now switched off, council will not be able to take on new large capital works without renewed Government partnership."

Debt management under a capped model would add another layer of strain, he said.

Ruapehu's current Long-Term Plan includes an average rates increase of 9% over the first three years (2024-2027), followed by around 5% annu-



Storm and weather-related repairs are expected to qualify as rate cap exemptions under the Government's "extreme circumstances" provision. Photo: Supplied

ally for the remaining seven years.
The council had raised its self-imposed increase limit from the Local Government Cost Index (LGCI) +2% to LGCI +3% to begin gradually reducing debt.

"How this will now look with rates capping and water debt transferring to the new entity is still to be determined," Kirton said.

"Although water debt will not be on council's book, it will be ring-fenced to Ruapehu water users who are facing significant affordability issues."

Although storm and weather-related repairs are expected to qualify as exemptions under the Government's "extreme circumstances" clause, Kirton said councils need the same type of support for other damaged assets as is available under NZTA Waka Kotahi's emergency funding rules.

Under normal funding arrangements, Ruapehu

has a Funding Assistance Rate (FAR) of 75%, meaning the local share of any road works is 25%.

In an emergency event, once spending reaches a specified limit, the FAR increases to 95%, meaning local share is only 5%.

"Unless Government supports councils with a similar arrangement for non-roading infrastructure, the affordability issues will severely limit any recovery."

Kirton said Ruapehu has already begun modelling scenarios for the 2026-27 transition to the rates cap regime, but without service cuts, staff reductions, deferred projects or under-depreciation, achieving the rates cap target was "not possible".

The council is now weighing which trade-offs ratepayers face.

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



Ruapehu's small population but heavy visitor load required investment beyond what local ratepayers could afford, the mayor warned. Credit: RNZ.



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St Joseph's sets sale for prirate ship



Children from St Joseph's School, Taihape, stormed the rails of the new Pirate Ship at the Ohakune Carrotland Park recently. The school's day out included a visit to Vertigo indoor climbing gym, a walk along the Jubilee Park track and time at the park.

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“We’re also part of a wider team, with our sister store Taumarunui Honda & Stihl Shop providing the same trusted service across the King Country.

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TAIHAPE



Builders of the 3rd swingbridge are running firewood raffles to help fund the sign-off. See the Alternative Taihape Community Board Facebook page for details on tickets.

Hautapu River parks walk bike run

With the third swingbridge across the Hautapu River almost complete, organisers are looking forward to running their trail event, at 10am on Saturday 24 January, where participants are invited to walk, bike or run the Hautapu River Park tracks. Details are on the event Facebook page, ‘Hautapu River Parks, walk, bike, run’.

EVENTS

DECEMBER 2025

Taihape Christmas Parade	13 December
Taihape Community Christmas Lunch	Christmas Day 25 December

JANUARY 2026

Marton Country Music Festival (ticketed)	16 – 18 January
Kiwiburn Hunterville (ticketed)	21 – 26 January
Turakina Highland Games	24 January
The Taihape Shears	24 January

The event will be held in Taihape and is a key part of the selection process for the New Zealand team for the 2026 Golden Shears World Championships in Masterton

FEBRUARY

Rangitikei Shearing Sports	early February
Fest-a-Bull - Bulls	28 February

MARCH

CampFest Bulls	6 - 8 March
Rangitikei Adventure Race Nth Island Secondary Schools Champs (ticketed)	21 March

APRIL

Marton Harvest Festival & Pedal 4 Pleasure	12 April
Suzuki Extreme 4x4 Challenge	late April

ADVERTORIAL

From posts and poles to all things rural

Hautapu Rural Supplies, which opened in 2009, has its origins in Hautapu Pine, the post and pole mill on the northern entrance to Taihape, when they wanted to move their retail sales to another site.

Since then, Hautapu Rural Supplies has expanded its stock far beyond posts and rough sawn timber. The store now stocks everything you need for farm fencing and building projects. It stocks paint, plumbing supplies, basic electrical supplies, building hardware and a range of tools.

Over the years the store has developed its product range in response to customer requests, so it stocks all sorts of things like castor wheels, curtain rails, sediment filters and sink plugs – if they don’t have what you want, the staff can order it in for you.

In 2019 the staff carpark was transformed into a garden centre, which has proven to be very popular and is a great

asset to the local community. It stocks a wide range of seedlings and plants, plus an extensive array of garden care products.

Hautapu Rural Supplies also builds sheds and farm buildings, including woolsheds. Since opening, the store has built over 100 sheds including 10 woolsheds. Hautapu Rural partners has very experienced builders who are passionate about farm buildings.

The store is a member of the Buildlink group, a national cooperative of independent building supplies merchants. Being a member of BuildLink gives Hautapu Rural Supplies ‘buying power’ to purchase products at lower prices, which enables it to compete with the big city stores.

Hautapu Rural Supplies is very ably managed by Neil Merwood, who has over 20 years of experience in the industry. He is assisted by a friendly team of six staff who are ready to help you find the products that you need.



The team at Hautapu Rural Supplies. Inset: part of the car park was turned into a successful garden centre in 2019.

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Electric bikes on Timber Trail ‘technically illegal’

By Phil Pennington, RNZ

Thousands of electric bike riders are taking to a central North Island great ride trail - even though e-bikes are illegal on it.

Bike trail builders and operators on the Timber Trail say it is a classic example of the tangled rules and hurdles that faces an industry worth more than \$1.3 billion a year.

Rider numbers on the 85km Timber Trail topped 20,000 two years ago and are still rising.

Paul Goulding has run Epic Cycle Adventures, which offers glamping, shuttle and ebike hire, for 12 years.

“Two years ago was the first time, the first year, that we ... hired out more e-bikes than normal bikes. And since then it’s just that percentage is increasing every year,” he told RNZ last month.

“Just as an example, two weeks ago, we sleep 36 people at our Camp Epic and 32 people were on e-bikes.”

But while most trails nation-wide allow e-bikes – which are meant to be under 300 watts power, although many bikes now exceed this – the Department of Conservation’s (DOC) rules are tougher in Pureora.

“It’s a ‘don’t ask, don’t tell’, but that does make some things a little bit difficult,” said Lynley Twyman, who helps promote the trail as part of the Central North Island Great Rides.

Challenging

DOC acknowledged e-bikes were not allowed under the Waikato Conservation Management Strategy, but said this was “very challenging” to monitor and enforce.

A law change next year may fix this, it said.

Goulding said the occasional person rang to ask about the ban, but “I just tell them, you know, that’s not a problem”.

“Even though it’s illegal, DOC aren’t sort of policing it or anything.”

While it has not had an impact on Epic’s business, Goulding thought it might help if the trail could be promoted for e-bikes.

But Twyman is not allowed to do that, or to put out safety messages that were specific to the heavier bikes.

“We are just silent on it, which is not really where we want to be,” she said.

“We can’t officially promote e-bikes. However, all of our commercial partners, you know, rent e-bikes. And probably 60, 70 percent of our customers are using them



Biking the Timber Trail in the Ruapehu District is technically off-limits to e-bikes, despite their soaring popularity.

because they’re a great way to travel on the Timber Trail. They work perfectly.”

The ban originated when the area’s unique Conservation Management Strategy (CMS) was drawn up. The CMS remained relevant even though it recently expired, Twyman said.

“I know that the team in the Waikato are grappling with that.”

New Zealand Cycle Trails acting chair Pete Masters said DOC could not possibly police e-bikes.

Passing fads

He said DOC had been behind the times when

it opposed the first mountain bike trails on conservation land in a project Masters was involved with years ago, and was again behind the times on e-bikes, thinking that both were passing fads.

“The Timber Trail’s the classic, in that e-bikes are illegal on the Timber Trail, according to their CMS, which is a prescriptive CMS, but 90 percent of the users of that trail are e-bikers,” he said.

The accommodation providers had battery chargers, and all the concessionaires hired out e-bikes.

“And it’s all good. It’s fantastic,” said Mas-

ters. “We’ve got people out riding them. It’s not a problem, but technically ... technically, they’re all illegal.”

He is hoping for a common sense approach in an overhaul of the Conservation Act, which the government has promised for next year.

“The train’s left the station on e-bikes and the department is 10 years behind where e-bikes are. So that should be addressed by the Conservation Act review.”

The Timber Trail lodge - which offers beds and e-bike charges at the halfway point - had not

Turn to Page 14

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You can say a big 'thank you' to your local customers and at the same time to tell them your opening times over the holiday period or anything special you might be running during this time.

The last issue for 2025 is 17 December.
First issue for 2026 is 21 January.

Call Jude now to book your space 0274 993697

Ruapehu Bulletin

Latest Tongariro fire covers 300Ha



An aerial view of the Tongariro fire that started on Monday afternoon. See Page 1 for details. Photo: FENZ.



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Timber Trail e-bikes ban

From Page 11

been impacted, said Guy Whitaker, who helped set it up. "But it's certainly not ideal. It's just crazy that they can't sort it out because they have known about it for years."

"DOC know what's going on so surely... they are guilty themselves," Whitaker said.

E-bikes can make a difference to how trails are designed. They can be made a bit steeper than for regular bikes and sometimes might need more camber on the downhill corners as e-bikes are heavier.

DOC said the trail was meant for walkers and regular mountain bikes, and the more powerful e-bikes could do more damage and compromise the trail for other users.

Riders should stick to the rules, but: "The isolated nature of the Pureora Timber Trail, and its length, make it very challenging for DOC to carry out compliance and monitoring activities in response to trail damage with the small number of suitably trained and available staff to do this work", it said.

Different rules

"Every area is different," said Twyman. The Timber Trail comes under one set of rules, while trails she promotes around Tongariro under others.

"Whether we're working on conservation land... Ki-wirail land... LINZ land or private land or road reserve, there's a basket of rules and regulations," she said.

"It's just really hard to know where to go. It can be very complex and expensive to navigate your way through that."

DOC said the proposed conservation law reforms should streamline things and get rid of outdated restrictions, and give it greater flexibility to update guidance and respond to changes in biking.

"We acknowledge e-bike technology has evolved significantly since the guidelines were drafted," said DOC director of heritage and visitors Cat Wilson.

The CMS rules in various regions mostly predate the upsurge in e-bike use globally since about 2020; e-mountain bikes are an even more recent phenomenon.

Another old rule that is also being flouted on trails and on the road is NZTA's limit on e-bike power, set at a maximum 300 watts. Many e-bikes now exceed this, which officially classifies them as motor vehicles (on conservation land, the law considers all e-bikes as motor vehicles).

"No final decisions have been made yet, but this is an area we expect to be able to modernise in future," said Wilson.

Catching up cannot come soon enough, said Masters. "E-bikes have saved in some ways cycle trails because we've got a whole new demographic of people riding," he said.

"You know, 70, 80 year olds out riding every day, it's just fantastic. You know, the health benefits alone must be worth a fortune."

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PUBLIC NOTICES



Ruapehu Mayor Weston Kidd

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PUBLIC NOTICES



Christmas Services

Christmas Day 10am
28 December - no service

St Mary's Church, 130 Seddon St, Raetihi

Contact: Kathryn 0274 212 254

PUBLIC NOTICES

Section 101, Sale and Supply of Alcohol Act 2012
Tithom Hotels Limited have made an application to the District Licensing Committee at Ruapehu District Council for the **Renewal of an On Licence** in respect of the premises situated at **68 Clyde Street, Ohakune**, known as **Rice Bar & Food**. The general nature of the business to be conducted under the licence is that of a **Hotel**. The days on which and the hours during which alcohol is intended to be sold under the licence are: **Monday – Sunday: 11.00am – 11.00pm**.

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 renewal of a licence may be made in relation to a matter other than a matter specified in section 131 of the Sale and Supply of Alcohol Act 2012. This is the first publication of this notice.

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We are seeking a confident, creative educator to join our team in the Year 7–8 Technology programme at our school, with a focus on sewing and food technology. The role also covers three other schools from the local area. This role will also include two days of release cover each week for our school. The position for technology will be 4 days a week.

We would expect that the successful candidate would also participate in ongoing PLD in Structure Maths and Literacy as they would also be supporting the wider school for CRT and demonstrate an understanding of learners with diverse needs.

We're looking for someone who:

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If you're passionate about helping learners develop real-world skills and confidence, we'd love to hear from you. Please send applications to: principal@ohakune.school.nz with CV and covering letter

Applications close Wednesday 17 December.

WAIMARINO HEALTH CENTRE

22 Seddon St Raetihi

CHRISTMAS/NEW YEAR HOURS

The Waimarino Health Centre will close on the 19th December 2025 at 4.30pm and reopen on 5th January 2026 at 8.30am

Hours for the following services through this period are as follows:

Midwifery Staff	available throughout the closure Phone: 0274 848827
Rural Nurses	available throughout the closure Phone: 0274 848826
Community Mental Health Nurse:	Closed statutory days During closure phone 0800 653 358 (WDHB Mental Health Assessment Team)
Social Worker	reopen Tuesday 6th January 2026
Radiology Dept	reopen Tuesday 6th January 2026
Public Health	reopen Monday 5th January 2026

All other Services will be closed throughout this period.
If an emergency please dial 111.

*The Staff at the Waimarino Health Centre would like to wish you good health and safe travelling over the Christmas/New Year period.
Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.*

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Te Whatu Ora



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WAIMARINO BULLETIN

VOICE OF THE RUAPEHU REGION
Tuesday 10 December, 1985. Volume 3 No. 29

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Red Cross backs up search



Hungry searchers are served their meals by local Red Cross workers from left: Sue Kumeroa (in background), Lyn Fetzner, Nigel Buck, president of the Waimarino Red Cross, and Sheila Buck.

The Waimarino Red Cross worked very hard last week during the Mt Ruapehu search for John Brough, feeding and accommodating search and rescue teams day and night.

Clyde Lodge, the AHI Turoa Skifields Ltd hostel, was used to provide round-the-clock meals — breakfast from 4am, lunch for those off the mountain and dinner and supper until after 10pm.

Bread for breakfast was delivered at 4am by local people while others baked scones and donated money, said the Red Cross emergency welfare officer, Sue Kumeroa.

The big three-course meals every night were

much appreciated by hungry searchers.

Last week's search was probably the biggest event the Waimarino Red Cross has ever had.

During the search, the committee of six and other volunteers worked in shifts at Clyde Lodge.

Ian Thurston, advisor for the search from Taihape, was most grateful to the Red Cross.

"For me in headquarters it has been marvellous — all I've had to do is get the searchers out of the field and then Nigel Buck and his crew sheltered and fed them," he said.

The Red Cross would like people to know that they are available in a crisis and can provide support.

Outside referee for councils' finance wrangle

On Friday night, in their second amalgamation meeting of the week, Waimarino councillors decided to ask the government Audit Office to prepare an analysis of the administrative costs of each authority so that they could be objectively compared.

The meeting was chaired by Waimarino County Council chairman Bruce Berry who said the meeting was called to discuss broad

aspects of amalgamation and to attempt to break the stalemate which emerged over the recent weeks.

"I wish to emphasise the county considers that no authority should be penalised financially and no authority should have to pay more than they pay now when they go into amalgamation," he said.

The meeting followed another on Monday 2 December when the Ohakune Borough Council resolved unilaterally to send its ideas and proposals on amalgamation to the Local Government Commission.

Ohakune Mayor Bill Taylor said that night that it was imperative that Ohakune send its ideas to the commission even though the other partners in the proposed Waimarino district council might not agree, and that he did not favour discussing financial details until after amalgamation was achieved.

"We are wasting the commission's and our time if we go back to step one, or if we look at the nuts and bolts

• Continued page 3.

Christmas gift guide

Can't think what to buy for Christmas presents? Turn to page 13 for your giant Christmas gift guide life-out.

Ohakune-based search team?

The search for the Rautahi boy, John Brough, lost on Mt Ruapehu last week brought an overwhelming number of offers of help from local people, said Lisle Irwin, senior national park ranger at Ohakune, and field service controller and search advisor.

Mr Irwin said that some people who knew the search area well were upset that they had not been asked to take part.

"All we can say to those people is that we're sorry that they were not asked in, but if they all went racing off into the hills, even experienced people could have difficulties.

"By keeping it organised it was more efficient and we knew exactly which areas had been searched," he said.

Ian Thurston, search advisor from Taihape, said that it was possible that in future a local search and rescue team may be trained for this area.

"We have names and phone numbers of many of those who offered help, and some of those who did help, and we may contact them at

a later stage to train for search and rescue," he said.

Both ranger Lisle Irwin and Ohakune Police Sergeant Neil Coker believe a local search and rescue team would be a good idea.

Search and rescue groups, trained in first aid, radio communication and search and rescue techniques, are available on a callup list and Mr Irwin said when he realised help was needed on Sunday 1 December he alerted them immediately.

"All it took was a radio call to Taihape, Taumarunui and Wanganui and straight away the system is in operation, the guys are immediately ready," he said.

The first search team included local people, followed by the Taihape team, who arrived just before dark and searched until about 11pm in atrocious weather conditions.

"By Monday morning, the system had drawn people from all over the place and everyone was ready to go," said Mr Irwin.

By Wednesday much of the bush had been covered three times and searchers had covered the main area,

• Continued page 2.

Ruapehu prizegiving



Maxine George and Principal Michael Warbrick hongi after he had presented her with the Principal's award for all-round excellence.

Ruapehu College's junior prizegiving on Friday was the last Michael Warbrick will attend as principal of the school.

Mr Warbrick has been appointed Principal of Edgumbe College and will be taking up his position next year.

The prizegiving was highlighted by items from the school's brass band, the Maori cultural group, Raylene Sue, Janine and Suzanne McIlroy, Helen and Carys Hubbard, who

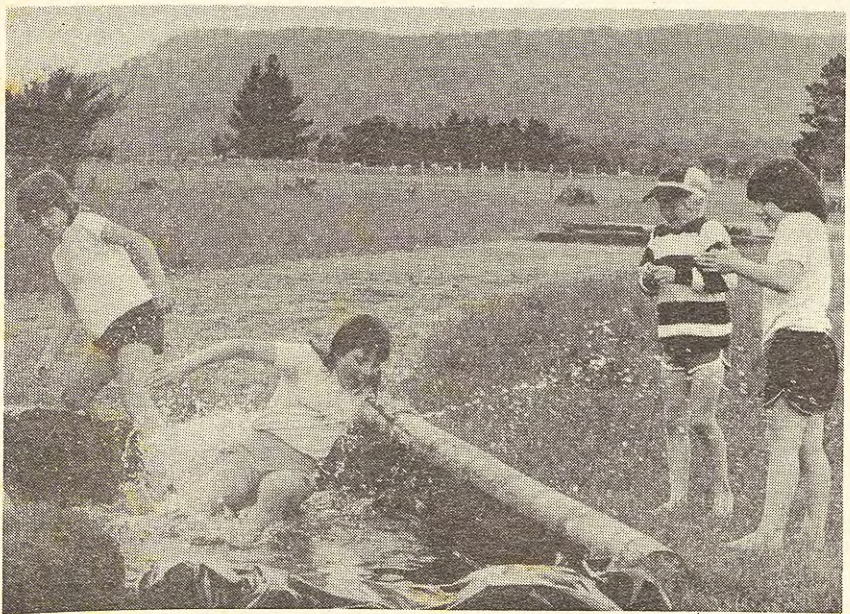
performed modern dance items, and Cherie Young, who danced a ballet.

Mr Warbrick was presented with a school jersey and bath towels by head boy, Craig Eades, on behalf of the pupils of the school.

Bonnie Sue, representing the school PTA, presented Mr Warbrick with a voucher for an autographed copy of teacher Merrilyn George's book, about the history of the Waimarino, which will be published in about a year's time.

• Prize list page 6.

Big splash at rural sports



Not the swimming sports but competitors enjoying the obstacle course water jump at the rural schools' sports day last week.

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