



Police seek Mitchel Cole
P2



Prepare your pool for summer
P3



Community says farewell to Marama
P7



Christmas in the Park is back
P15

Flood damage could top \$14m, councillors advised

Storms over the last 12 months could add up to over \$14 million, Ruapehu District councillors were advised at their meeting on Friday at Waimano/National Park's emergency centre.

Ruapehu's mid-October storm has left a road repair bill of up to \$10 million.

It caused major damage on more than 30 roads and Ruapehu District Council says the repair programme is likely to take two to three years.

However, the council expects to pay only a fraction of the \$10m bill, with the rest covered by New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA)'s emergency works scheme, a report to Ruapehu District Council's December meeting says.

Among resolutions passed, councillors noted that the estimated local share for all weather events (including the provisional \$500,000 associated with the October 2025 event) can be met within existing and forecast emergency works budgets across FY25/26 and FY26/27.

Councillors were told that funding for emergency works had been approved including: August 2024 \$239,835; June 2025 \$2,258,060; and July 2025 \$1,944,775.

The application for funding for the October 2025 event, estimated at \$8-\$10 million is in progress

The region has been battered by three significant storms this year, with events also recorded in June and July. The council is expecting to fork out \$1.17m for its share of the repairs across all three.

The most serious effects after the 14-17 October storm included "significant slips and dropouts that isolated homes, farms, and schools," the council's land transport manager Jodeci Waru-Savage wrote in a report.

There were more than 30 roads with "substantial failures", which have had temporary repairs.

"Without further intervention these sites are at risk of additional deterioration, which could again restrict travel and disrupt daily life, essential services, and economic activity for affected communities,"

Five percent

The council has applied for emergency funding through the New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA). That would limit its contribution for the October storm to about \$500,000 — 5% of the estimated total, Waru-Savage writes. This claim is still in progress.

While the council has enough to cover its share in its budgets for emergency work, councillors would get a separate report "outlining the full financial implications".

The council had to get started on immediate repairs and has appointed three contractors, which it proposes to keep using: Inframax Construction, Jilesen Contracting, and Downer Group New Zealand.

"The scale and distribution of damage across the district requires multiple contractors working concurrently to ensure timely restoration of the network," Waru-

Turn to Page 2



It was a sunshiny day for the annual Raetihi Christmas Parade on Saturday — a long way off a snowy while Chistmas. TOP: the 'official' Santa waves to the crowd lining the street. LEFT: Angel Rapana, one of the key organisers, was very happy with the day. RIGHT: Leading the parade in style. As part of the day, the Garden Club held a competition with the people's choice 1st Rose — Brittany Griffin; 2nd Rose was Eileen Robb; 3rd Rose was Bernice Frost. Photos: Jude Chevin and Glyn Hubbard.

Meri Kirihimete

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Ruapehu Events & What's On

DECEMBER 2025

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](mailto:localwildfoodchallenge@gmail.com)

For all your ski board and bike rental needs

T C B

Ski, Board & Bike
Cnr Ayr St & Goldfinch St, Ohakune
06-385-8433 tcb.nz

FOR MORE DETAILS, GO TO OHAKUNE.INFO

IT'S FREE TO LIST SO PLEASE LET US KNOW IF YOU
HAVE AN EVENT COMING UP ...
ADS@RUAPEHUBULLETIN.CO.NZ
LINK YOUR EVENT TO EVENTFINDA FOR FREE

Community and Emergency Services

Alzheimers Whanganui Inc – Email admin@alzheimerswhanganui.org.nz or for support phone 06-345 8833

Budget Advice – Email waimarinobudgetservices@gmail.com or phone 027 259 5285.

CCS Disability Action (Whanganui) – Sheryl Brightwell 0800-789-654

Child, Adolescent and Sexual Health Nurse – 06-385-5019

Child Youth and Family Service – 0508-326 459

Churches

Anglican, 06-385-4957. **Baptist**, 027-206-1874. **Catholic**, 06-385-8858 or 027 606 5186. **Gospel Chapel**, 06-385-8453. **Presbyterian**, 06-388-0675 or 06-385-8708. **Waiouru** – **duty chaplain** 06-387-5599 ext 7031 or 021-493-692

Civil Defence – Simon Osborne, Emergency Management Officer (EMO), RDC – 07 895 8188, or 027 220 0569. Simon.Osborne@ruapehudc.govt.nz

CLAW community free legal advice – Whanganui 06-348-8288

Doctors: In an emergency call 111

Ruapehu Health Ltd 06-385-4211

Information Centres – Ohakune 06-385-8427, Raetihi 06-385-4805

Ngati Rangi Community Health Centre – 06-385-9580

Plunket Society – Plunket Nurse 06-385-5019

Police and Search & Rescue Emergency, call 111

Ohakune 06-385-0100, Raetihi 06-385-4002, Waiouru 06-387-6884, Military Police 0800-50-11-22

Red Cross – 0800 RED CROSS (0800 733 27677)

Rotary Club Raetihi - Ohakune – 027-344-5669

Ruapehu REAP – 0800 00 REAP (0800 007 327)

Ruapehu Maori Wardens – Email: ruapehumaoriwardens@gmail.com

St John – In an emergency call 111

Taumarunui Counselling Services

For confidential counselling in Waimarino phone 07-895-6393

Victim Support Contact Centre – 0800 842 846

Waimarino Cancer Society – Co-ordinator 06 348 7402

Waimarino Health Care Centre – Raetihi 06-385-5019

Waimarino Community Toy Library – waimarinotoylibrary@gmail.com

Women's Refuge – 0800-REFUGE 0800 73384

Ruapehu Mayor – Weston Kirton, enquiries to 06-385-8364 or 07-895-8188.

Owhango-National Park Community Board:

Peter Zimmer - Chairperson 027 479 1926; Gail Gray - Deputy Chair 027 434 6599;

Anthony Gurr 021 487 742; Eddie Marsters 021 108 0279; Murray Wilson 027 542

9079; Luke Pepper - (RDC Rep) 027 329 2849

Taumarunui/Ohura Ward Community Board:

Molly Jeffries - Chairperson 021 431 833; Sophie Stockbridge - Deputy

Chairperson 020 401 11190; Johnny Dryden 027 573 4726; Brian Portland 027 558

5585; Oriwia Wanakore 020 498 4088; Robyn Gram (RDC Rep) 027 389 1912

Waimarino-Waiouru Community Board:

John (Luigi) Hotter - Chairperson 027 274 2616; Stu Robinson - Deputy Chairperson

021 024 07657; Kay Henare 027 924 7252; Colin Pakai 021 091 67315; Emma Young

027 347 1457; David (Rabbit) Nottage - (RDC Rep) 021 111 6514

Guidelines is published free of charge. Please help us to keep it up to date – call us if your details change, or if you see something that needs changing: 06-385-8532

Police seek son of Ruatiti homicide victims

Police investigating a double homicide in Ruatiti are seeking assistance from the public to locate a person of interest.

Two people were located deceased at a Murumuru Road property by officers on Saturday afternoon.

A scene examination is still underway at the large, remote property, including the use of the Police Eagle helicopter to assist staff on the ground.

As part of our ongoing inquiries, Police wish to speak with Mitchell Cole, pictured.

“It is believed that the 29-year-old is in the Ruatiti area. He should not be approached, but if you see him please call 111 immediately,” said Central District Commander Superintendent Dion Bennett.

“I know this event will be concerning for many in our community. Police will be carrying out reassurance patrols as we work as quickly as possible to locate those involved.”

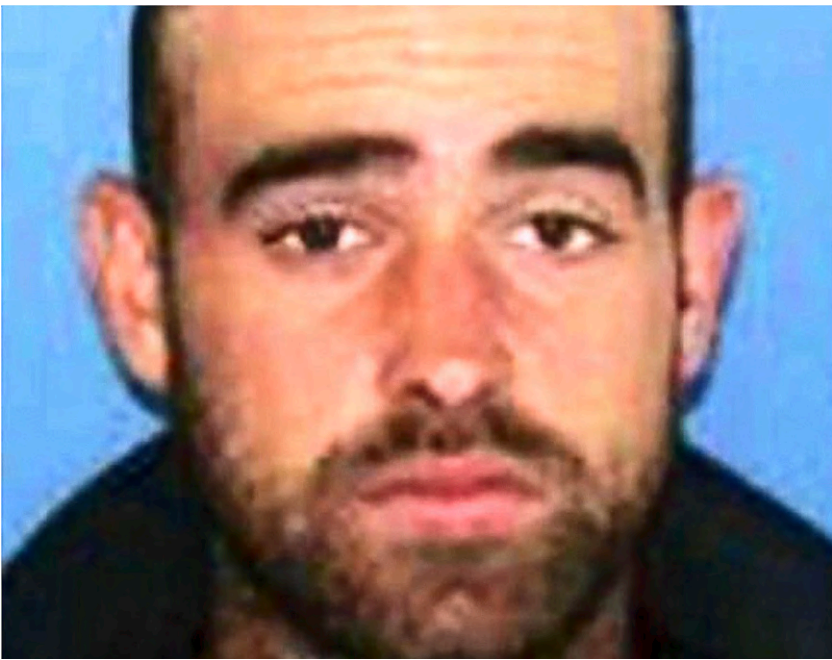
Additional Police are in the Ruatiti area to assist the investigation as they pursue every lead available to Police.

“I urge anyone who has information that may help us to contact Police as soon as possible.

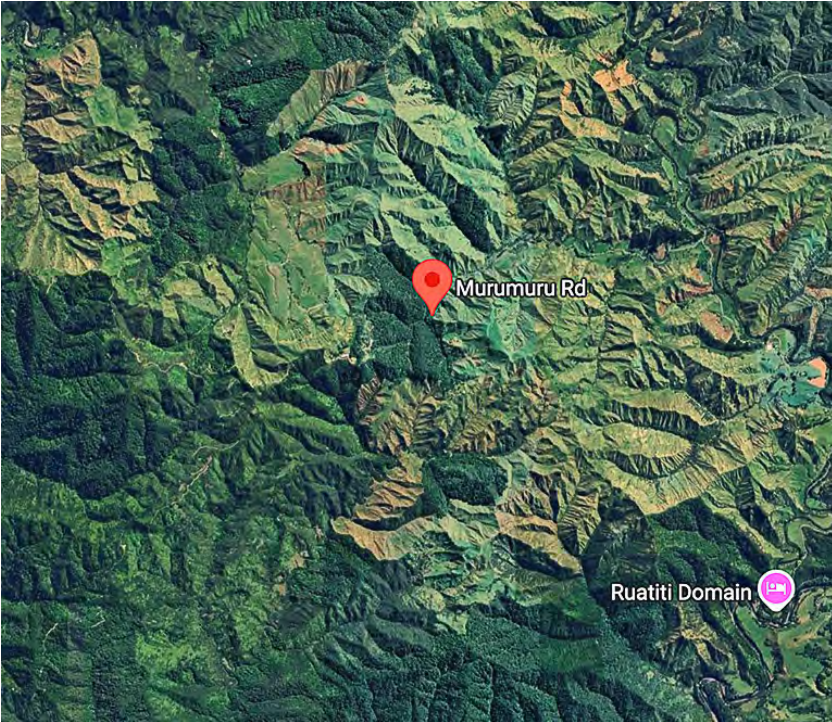
“If you see Mitchell Cole, call 111 straight away.

“You can also share non-urgent information about what happened with us online at 105.police.govt.nz, clicking ‘Update Report’, or by calling 105. Use reference number P064773873.

“You can also make a report anonymously through Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.”



Mitchel Cole, son of homicide victims Brendon, 56, and Trina Cole, Mitchel's stepmother.



Murumuru Road, an isolated area of Ruatiti, west of the Waimarino Plains.

The Royal Theatre, Raetihi Community Entertainment Season's Greetings

Watch out for great shows and movies in 2026!



**Councillor Rabbit - your RDC
Councillor - wishing you a safe
and prosperous 2026!
Always keen for a chat -
anything - anytime! 021 111 6514**

Flood costs

From Page 1

Savage wrote.

The contractors would be assigned packages of work based on location and their specialist skills.

While no specific roads are named in the report, the damage is described as extensive and complex, with multiple sites needing geotechnical or resilience-focused solutions. Repair options for certain sites may carry higher upfront costs, but are expected to pay off in the long term by preventing repeated failures in future storms and improving the roads.

As for the recovery after the previous storms, about 75% of the repairs from the June and July 2025 events are expected to be finished within the current financial year, the report says.

RDC had still been working to clear up after an August 2024 event - something it expects to have done this financial year.

Pool and spa owners urged to check safety barriers: RDC

With the start of summer and days getting hotter the local council is calling on people with pools and spa pools to remember to keep water safety top of mind.

New Zealand has laws regarding swimming pools with most needing to be completely fenced to limit access to anyone who shouldn't be alone around water.

Ruapehu District Council building control manager Darryn Cosford says swimming pools can be a lot of fun, but they can also be a source of potential harm if not properly fenced.

"Residential pools including inground, spa, or hot tubs must all comply with the safety requirements of the NZ Building Act 2004," he said.

"All swimming pools that can be filled with over 40cm of water are required by law to be properly fenced with physical barriers that restrict the access of unsupervised children and keep them safe."

This requirement applies to all pools no matter what the size, including temporary and inflatable swimming pools.

He said there are several specific require-

ments for swimming pool fences, but they generally must be at least 1.2m high with a self-closing gate that has a child-proof or lockable latch installed at least 1.5m high; there should also not be anything within 1.2 meters of the fence that is climbable in any way from outside the pool area, which includes trees, garden furniture or barbeques.

Hot tubs and spas that aren't fenced require compliant child-resistant and lockable safety covers.

This sort of barrier is applicable when every wall of the pool is not less than 760mm above the floor or ground that is adjacent, and when those pool walls do not allow for climbing.

"These safety covers must restrict access when closed, withstand a decent load without breaking, be easily closed, and have signage indicating how the child safety features work," said Cosford.

For further information on swimming pool fencing requirements visit Council's website at www.ruapehudc.govt.nz or email us at info@ruapehudc.govt.nz



All swimming pools that can be filled with over 40cm of water are required by law to be properly fenced with physical barriers that restrict the access of unsupervised children and keep them safe. Photo supplied.

XPRESS AUTOMOTIVE

Christmas Light Competition

Entrants

Ohakune	Raetihi
8 Moore Street	2 Ballance Street
21 Arawa Street	8 Plunket Street
23 Tawhero Street	18 Railway Road
75 Goldfinch Street	18 Ranfurly Terrace
Ohakune Fire Brigade	27 Queen Street

Winners announced- 21st of December on our Facebook page - Xpress Automotive

Prize

1st Prize - \$500
2nd Prize - \$250
3rd Prize - \$150

OHAKUNE

CHRISTMAS

IN THE PARK

2025

Tuesday 23rd, December

5pm @ Christie Park

SCAN for LYRICS!

Need advice on the area, activities or even the weather, call or stop in and see the team for firsthand knowledge.

Free phone: 0800 647 483.

Email: isites@visitrुapehu.com

Ohakune: 9am-4pm

24 & 31 December: 9am - 3pm

54 Clyde Street.

OHK: 06 3858427

Taumarunui: 9am- 4pm

24 & 31 December: 9am - 3pm

Railway Station, 116 Hakiaha Street.

TAU: 07 895 7494

Letters

Empty icon

• I'm told it is impossible to change or influence the Iwi's decisions on Tūroa's future development (or diminishment). The other Magic Mountains of the world welcome thousands to their slopes.

We wish to repel them from Ruapehu? Few of the Māori I've spoken with have stood on Ruapehu and I ask what benefit comes from an empty icon?

What holy place benefits from fewer people?

This region needs visitors. It needs a lot more investment foresight too.

And a future with more buses, fewer big SUVs. My great grandchildren will kick my memorial over otherwise; yours too. It's not 1825 anymore.

John Riding

Ruapehu water

• On 17 May 2018, Ruapehu District Council moved our waters from being targeted funded, to district-wide funded supporting districtwide upgrades. This was at great expense to Ohakune who took a big rate rise.

On 8 July 2020, the Government announced a funding package of \$761M to provide post-COVID-19 stimulus to local authorities to support water services delivery arrangements, operations of Taumata Arowai and better off funding.

Our Council agreed to be government-funded in part at least. However, concerns about asset ownership, local voice and large entities remained. We then joined LWDW (Local Waters Done well) along with other councils.

"Three Waters" was replaced with the new "LWDW". Three Waters was rejected due to concerns about local democracy, de facto privatisation and co-governance with Māori. "LWDW" does not provide direct funding - No government funding packages, no better off funding or regional entities.

Under the new LWDW, Councils could decide the most appropriate model for owning, managing and delivering water services, such as forming regional partnerships or using council-controlled organisations. All options on the table were not to harmonise (shared cost). We consulted with our communities and voted on this decision twice - choosing to join with Whanganui District Council.

On 24 Nov 2025 our joint service delivery plan to DIA was approved. On 25 November 2025 government then announced a local government reform - whereby they are getting rid of regional councils and have a forum of mayors who will run everything. And lastly, on 2 December 2025 the government announced a rates cap of 4% to take effect on 1 January 2027. All of this after our regional and local elections and we were given a pay rise.

We are at the stage now where the RDC and WDC will meet to reaffirm our relationship and discuss next steps.

Cr Viv Hoeta

Rates cap not the answer

• Ruapehu doesn't spend on rainbow crossings or vanity projects. Yet our rates are high. Why? Because rates are council's only substantial income. Unlike most OECD countries, local government in New Zealand receives almost no financial support from central government. Successive governments have instead encouraged councils to borrow for infrastructure, meaning rates must cover both services and debt. That model is unsustainable.

Rather than increasing funding, central government has chosen to impose rate caps - limiting annual rises to 2-4%. Without alternative revenue, this would force councils to cut services.

Rate capping without new funding is punitive and populist. Rural councils do not spend recklessly; if they did, they would quickly end up in administration. This is political theatre from a government under economic pressure in the run-up to the 2026 election: "Don't look at our shortcomings - look at theirs."

Across the OECD, central governments co-finance local infrastructure. NZ is unusual in relying so heavily on property rates. International best practice includes: shared funding models: National governments in Germany, France, and Canada co-finance transport, water and housing projects.

Specific-purpose transfers, such as climate adaptation funds, ensure local projects are properly resourced.

Councils abroad often receive a portion of national taxes. Sharing GST from tourism would help offset the costs of serving over a million visitors a year.

Countries like Sweden and Finland back municipal funding agencies, lowering borrowing costs for councils.

Here, councils derive 50-60% of revenue from property rates, with only limited central transfers. Rate capping without alternative funding would severely restrict local capacity. Affordability must be balanced by central government support.

If Wellington insists on rate caps, it must also provide sustained infrastructure investment. Otherwise, communities may face smaller bills today but far bigger problems tomorrow.

And for rural councils, the stakes are even higher. Small ratebases must stretch to cover vast areas, extensive road networks, water systems and emergency services for populations a fraction of those in the cities. Without central government investment, rural communities are left paying more for less. Rate capping may sound like relief, but for rural councils it risks hollowing out the very services that keep communities resilient, safe, and viable.

John Chapman

More Letters Page 6.

Te One greets horse tours



Welcoming the 400 people to the recent annual tour to visit the Kaimanawa wild horses was Ngāti Rangī's Tommy Waara on his now-tamed Kaimanawa horse. Tommy and his horse Te One Tapu Waara have been greeting the annual bus tours every year since 2014, when the fundraising tours first started. Tommy says his gelding has changed colours over the years to a much-lighter coat but still shows how gentle the wild horses can become. Tommy and his horse are pictured with some of the many tour participants who take the opportunity to get up close to a Kaimanawa horse. Photo: Cathy Strong.

THE WEEKLY WORKOUT

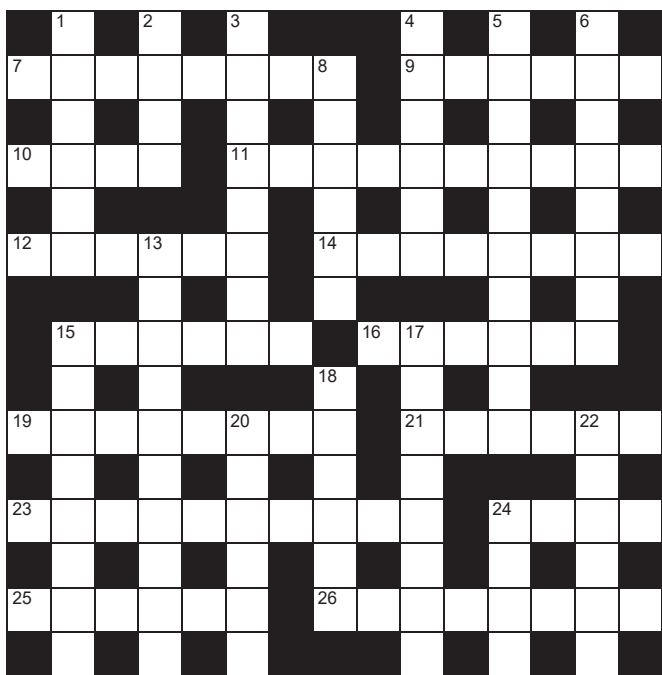
answers for each puzzle are included on this page

832

QUICK CROSSWORD

Across

7. Starving (8)
9. Slanted writing (6)
10. Plunge (4)
11. Raptor (4,2,4)
12. Tax (6)
14. Exhibit (8)
15. Done with confidence (6)
16. Prompt (6)
19. Hourglass (3,5)
21. Sufficient (6)
23. Sports competition (10)
24. Old (4)
25. Sculpture (6)
26. Parody (8)



Down

1. Spittle (6)
2. Yield (4)
3. Unlikely (8)
4. Japanese robe (6)
5. Type of coffee (10)
6. Contaminated (8)
8. Pressure (6)
13. Unable to read or write (10)
15. Braggart (8)
17. Ultimate (8)
18. Apprehend (6)
20. Whiner (6)
22. Slum (6)

24. Know-all, smart (4)

THE TOP 10

1 Trombone, 2 Cyprian, 3 Oscar Wilde, 4 Tequila, 5 Show Boat, 6 Kate Sheppard, 7 Colorado River, 8 Silver Fern, 9 Foil, épée, sabre, 10 His right.



Enjoy WordFit puzzles? Magazines available from www.thepuzzlecompany.co.nz

Puzzles © The Puzzle Company

SUDOKU

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

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

1 EASY 2

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

MEDIUM

The Top 10

1. 1940s band leader Glenn Miller played which instrument?
2. Which Mediterranean island has been divided since a 1974 invasion?
3. Who wrote *The Importance of Being Earnest*?
4. What type of alcohol is made from the fermented juices of the agave plant?
5. From which musical is the song *Oi! Man River*?
6. Whose efforts and petitions led to the vote for New Zealand women in 1893?
7. Which river flows through the Grand Canyon?
8. What plant is depicted on New Zealand's one-dollar coin?
9. What are the three types of sword used in fencing?
10. Which arm did Nelson lose at the Battle of Santa Cruz?

CROSSWORD

22. Ghetto, 24. Alec.
17. Eventual, 18. Arrest, 20. Moaner,
8. Stress, 13. Illiterate, 15. Bigmouth,
4. Kimono, 5. Cappuccino, 6. Diseased,
Down: 1. Saliva, 2. Cede, 3. Doubtful,
25. Statue, 26. Travesty,
21. Enough, 23. Tournament, 24. Aged,
15. Boldly, 16. Remind, 19. Egg timer,
11. Bird of prey, 12. Tariff, 14. Showcase,
Across: 7. Ravenous, 9. Italic, 10. Dive,

SUDOKU

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

Rāhui extension over new fire-affected area

Ngāti Hikairo ki Tongariro acknowledged the significant impact of another fire within Tongariro National Park last week and the “continued strain this places on our whenua, our taiao, and our people”.

“As mana whenua and kaitiaki of Tongariro, it is our responsibility to respond in a way that upholds the mauri of the land and ensures its healing for generations to come,” stated the iwi in a press release.

“We confirm that a new rāhui will be placed over the latest burn area, effective immediately. This new rāhui will be formally incorporated into the existing Rāhui Whakaora, which was established following last month’s fire. By linking the two areas, the entire landscape affected by both events will now sit within a unified 10-year rāhui, protecting the whenua while natural regeneration begins and long-term

Tongariro tracks reopen after fire

Visitors were allowed to safely return to tracks and huts in Tongariro National Park on Wednesday 10 December, but caution is advised around traffic-controlled areas of State Highway 47.

The fire last Monday and Tuesday affected around 300 hectares of Tongariro National Park, in an area near the previous, devastating, November fire.

Fire and Emergency New Zealand declared on Wednesday that the fire completely contained and the Park’s tracks and huts were safe from the impacts of fire.

State Highway 47 also reopened on Wednesday with a section restricted to single lane traffic under speed restrictions. Access to State Highway 48 and Whakapapa Village will be restored.

The Tongariro Alpine Crossing, the Tongariro Northern Circuit, and all walks in and around Whakapapa Village opened from Wednesday.

Department of Conservation Tongariro operations manager Libby O’Brien said the news is a relief for the community.

“Our community have been feeling it, both the loss of these beautiful parts of the park and also the loss of tourism so many rely on.

“By opening up our tracks and huts we are saying, ‘yes it’s safe, yes you can visit, nau mai haere mai ki Tongariro National Park’.”

While the highway restrictions were in place, DOC requested that hikers continue to

restoration planning continues.

“This decision has been made in close discussion with our kaumātua, Te Hau Matao, and with the support of our hapū. It reflects both our deep cultural obligations and the clear environmental need to restrict access, limit disturbance, and allow the maunga and its ecosystems the time they require to recover.

“We continue to work alongside Fire and Emergency, DOC, Police, and other agencies who are responding tirelessly to this fire. We acknowledge their efforts and the care they have shown for our whenua and waahi tapu.

“We ask the public, visitors, and all those who love Tongariro to uphold and respect this rāhui. It is a protective measure – not just for the land, but for the wellbeing of our community and for the safety of those responding on the ground and in the air.”



FIREFIGHTERS RESPOND: A helicopter responds to the large fire at Tongariro National Park last week. Fire and Emergency New Zealand says that, as this was the second devastating fire in the area in a matter of weeks, it shows how easily fires can start and spread in hot, dry, and windy conditions. “As many parts of the country are dry and experiencing heightened fire danger, we urge caution and encourage you to seriously consider the fire risk before lighting any fires or undertaking activities that could generate heat or sparks and potentially cause a wildfire. If you are planning any outdoor fires or using any heat or spark generating tools, go to checkitsalright.nz to check if it’s safe to do so.” Photo: Mike Scott/NZ Herald.

Meri Kirihimete
from your friendly
TLC team

Our offices are closed from noon on Wednesday 24 December to Monday 5 January 2026.

But don't worry, our team is still on hand to keep your lights twinkling.

Got a fault? Power out?
Call 0800 367 328



thelines company

keeping you connected



Suze Redmayne

MP for Rangitīkei

Season's Greetings to you and my best wishes for a happy, healthy and prosperous 2026.

My electorate office in Taumarunui will be closed for annual holidays on Friday 19 December and will reopen Monday 12 January 2026.

For urgent enquiries please ring 07 896 8008 and leave a message.

Suze.RedmayneMP@parliament.govt.nz
07 896 8008



Authorised by Suze Redmayne, Parliament Buildings, Wellington.

Ohakune Primary School

wishes you all a safe and happy holiday season

School starts back on Monday 2 February

Powhiri 9.30am

We welcome our school community, new students and whānau to join us.

26 – 30 January – office is open 8am – 3pm for new enrolments and uniforms
(limited uniform stock available on site. Orders can be purchased from The Warehouse in Whanganui).

The Principal, Lisa Clark, can also be contacted for new enrolments and visits on
principal@ohakune.school.nz 06-385-8384 or 027 388 7581



Letters

MOTangiwai signs

• I would like to thank the local Lions Club members who installed the excellent memorial column and explanatory signs at Tangiwai for removing that large pyramid soliciting money for the sign's upkeep. It is good to see them sacrificing their own time and money instead.

When the Police and Army failed to send men and equipment to recover bodies from the difficult middle reaches of the Whangaehu river, local Mangamahu families made much greater sacrifices of their time, money and emotional resources.

They had to resort to firemen's lifts to carry bodies from deep, near-inaccessible gorges up to the roadside where the bodies lay unprotected until my father, the local carrier, took them to his lorry-shed, right beside our house, for my mother and other young local women to make them "decent" before another volunteer carrier took them 50km to the Whanganui Police, who took all the credit for their recovery. Dad and mum tended 40 bodies like that.

Mangamahu people spent four weeks recovering increasingly decayed bodies as they gradually swelled and rose to the surface. Yet their heroism has been mentioned neither by ceremony, in written history, nor on the local club's explanatory signs.

However, in front of the sombre 2m x 0.5m Tangiwai memorial are two much bigger and brighter erections, each 5m x 4m, advertising the club's 50th anniversary by mentioning its name some 30 times and also advertising commercial firms and that no-show Army.

Those advertisements have now been there for 10 years in the middle of a burial-ground, not only of some dozen Tangiwai victims buried by silt, but also of Ngāti Rangi warriors who died repelling Waikato invaders there. Many people have told me they would like to see those adverts go. A forest of totara, maire and oaks for the dead warriors, crew and passengers would be a more dignified replacement.

John Archer

Moral code

• Thank you John for pointing out the moral code (see Letters, 10 December, John Archer).

Yes, the moral code was given to Moses on the mount 4000 years ago; there were 10 of them, written in stone. We remember most of them and they form most of the western civilisation government regulations.

Some of them are: thou shalt not steel, thou shalt not lie, thou shalt not commit adultery. The first one and most important is thou shalt have no other gods before me: check them out Deutonomy 5 and Exodus 20.

You mentioned Matthew 22:37 and Luke 10:27: that was 2000 years ago when the Pharisees heard that Jesus had put the Sadducees to silence. They sent a lawyer to Jesus saying what shall I do to inherit eternal life? That is not a moral code but a question about eternal life. Jesus asked the lawyer what is written in the law :26 Luke 10. The lawyer replied, thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy strength, with all thy mind and thy neighbour as thyself. Jesus answered and said thou hast answered right, do this and live.

Okay, so a moral code has the bases in the 10 commandments.

Getting back to the fires, so if we read Psalm 1:1-3 it says, blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners etc. his delight is in the law of the Lord, he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.

Okay, so there you have it.

Ben Mitchell

Clarification

Last week's article on the proposed Kaimanawa Horse statue in Waiouru stated that the council had pledged \$30,000 towards the project. Cr Rabbit Nottage has asked that it be clarified that this money would come from the Government's Empowering Communities, Enhancing Lives Fund and not from local rates. The amount allocated to the statue project was \$28,669.

Trust election names deadline today

Nominations close for King Country Trust's election of trustees today, Wednesday 17 December.

As of Friday 12 December 2025, two nominations had been received for the two vacancies.

Candidates have until 4pm today, Wednesday 17 December 2025 to get their nominations in.

To be eligible for nomination, a candidate must be aged over 18 years and be recorded on the Electoral Roll within the King Country Trust district. Each candidate must have one person support their nomi-

nation, who is a consumer of electricity within the King Country Trust district.

Nomination papers are available by accessing www.kepowertrust.co.nz where one can be downloaded, or by contacting the Returning Office at info@electionservices.co.nz or 0800 922 822 to have one posted or emailed out.

If more than two nominations are received, an election will be held by postal and electronic voting, with voting packs issued to electricity consumers in the King Country Trust district from Friday 30 January 2026, with voting to close at 12 noon on Thursday 26 February 2026.

For more information, please contact the Returning Office, King Country Trust, telephone 0800 922 822.

Letters rules

The *Ruapehu Bulletin* welcomes letters to the editor and points out that letters published do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the *Bulletin* or staff. All letters must carry a name, address and telephone number for verification. The Editor reserves the right to edit and abridge letters.

Our policy is to give those named in letters a right of reply in the same issue, when possible. Letters will be published as space allows and not necessarily in the week that they are submitted.

Letters must be no more than 300 words unless a prior arrangement has been made. Letters are published with the writer's name. We generally don't accept nom de plumes unless a valid reason for needing to do so is supplied.

The editor reserves the right to reject any letter.



Wishing everyone a safe and happy holiday!

from the Placemakers crew



Open 24 December – 7.30am - 1pm
Closed 25 – 26 December
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Transfer Stations, Reuse Shops & Kerbside Collection



Transfer Stations and Reuse Shops

All Transfer Stations and Reuse Shops are closed Christmas Day (Thurs 25 Dec), Boxing Day (Fri 26 Dec), New Years Day (Thurs 1 Jan), and the day after New Years Day (Fri 2 Jan).

More info inc. normal operating hours see: ruapehudc.govt.nz

Kerbside Collection

Will be having Christmas Day and New Years Day off only. Normal collection days will move back one day to allow for these holidays.

- Thurs 25 Dec kerbside will be done the next day - Fri 26 Dec.
- Thurs 1 Jan 2026 kerbside will be done the next day - Fri 2 Jan 2026.

Waiouru Community please refer to the website of environz for wheelie bins and recycling. Foodwaste collection remains Friday.

Ruapehu's 'amazing people' farewell Marama

By Kate Hartmann

As Marama Allen's ten-year tenure at Ruapehu College concluded this week, I met with her amidst a multitude of packing boxes and a strangely empty office.

Welcomed with a wide smile and a warm generosity, which I have since learnt from others is characteristic of her leadership style – inclusive, respectful and kind – I asked where it all began. She remarked that “teaching wasn’t my first career, working for the Ministry of Social Development was!”

As a young girl, attending Sacred Heart College in Whanganui, Marama knew she wanted to become a teacher, just like the teachers who inspired her at school.

Applying for entry to teachers’ college at 16, Marama, who was brought up by her grandparents for whom English was a second language, was questioned on her English and asked to read aloud by the selection panel. When she had finished, they said thank you but you’re not successful and encouraged her to go away and read more books.

Which was ironic as growing up she loved to read; there wasn’t much else to do for entertainment back then and she would often escape into the novels of Enid Blyton. However, reading for oneself and reading for an audience are two different things and being a shy, less than confident 16-year-old did not help. Marama was discouraged and thought that door was closed for her and so pursued a career with the Ministry of Social Development instead.

It was not until her second child started school and Marama started working as a teacher’s aide at his kura that she thought “maybe I can do this”. Encouraged by her husband KJ, a teacher and her mother-in-law, also a teacher and the encouragement of the Kura she was working at, Marama was accepted into Massey University in 2002.

The vocation she wanted

By 2004 Marama was finally pursuing the vocation she had always wanted and was teaching at Whanganui High School. There followed placements at Whanganui City College and Whanganui Girls College. Ten years later, in 2015 Marama accepted a position at Ruapehu College as deputy principal and she “fell in love with the place immediately”.

She became acting principal 2019 and principal in 2020.

I asked Marama if she could relay to me a funny story – did anything stand out. She said that when she and her son,

Te Matau O Te Rangi who was starting year 11 at the time, initially moved up here into staff housing, her husband KJ had stayed behind in Whanganui for work. It was cold and they had no experience with wood burners being “city folk”.

Te Matau O Te Rangi decided to empty the coals and ashes of the fire into a corner of the garden full of dry old waste; he thought it the perfect place for this rubbish. They were inside eating dinner when a knock on the door revealed the fire brigade informing them that their tree was on fire in the yard – a “warm welcome to the community!”

It was even more embarrassing for Marama as a teacher and two students were volunteering on duty that night.

Loyal to peers

I remarked that must have been very difficult for her son as he was starting anew at the College and what a first impression! She said, “that it wasn’t a problem, it’s just different in rural schools, the students are very loyal to their peers. They embraced him, took him out hunting and cliff diving in Ruatiti, they were very welcoming”.

Marama continued “what I love about this place is the people, the students, the amazing, dedicated staff, parents and Iwi all connected into the school. There is a strong sense of service in this community. A number of people volunteer their time and resources over and again. I feel very humbled and honoured to have worked at Ruapehu College. We wouldn’t have been able to achieve what we have without that wider community support”.

I asked Marama what she personally was most proud of and in her characteristically humble way she deferred to the wider team and so I asked her deputy, Michael Darmody, who had many examples of Marama’s exceptional leadership but perhaps what stood out for him was her leadership over the Covid years. He said Marama guided the school through these times with compassion and kindness, ensuring the staff and students felt really supported. He described her management style as being the “perfect balance of bureaucratic and collegial”, “no ego and the confidence in herself to allow us to lead and do our jobs”.

Marama’s next role is a position with Tawhero Primary School as acting principal but firstly she was taking a ten-week sabbatical. During that time, she would be researching Kura Kaupapa for ultimately moving into a RTLB role



Marama Allen speaks at her own farewell at the Number 8 restaurant in Ohakune. Photo: Ngāti Rangi.

Turn to Page 9

BAYLEYS

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**The staff at Ohakune Engineering thank you for your
support during 2025 and wish you and your families
a safe and enjoyable Christmas break.**

The workshop and retail shop will be closed from 4pm on Friday 19 December and will
reopen at 7.30am on Wednesday 7 January 2026.

29 Burns St, Ohakune. Email: bruce@ohakune-eng.co.nz
Urgent inquiries: Bruce 027 444 2058 or Alan 021 038 9288



Ohakune Healthcare Depot

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all ...
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Loving the Christmas look

By Suze Redmayne, local MP

• The Christmas season is well and truly upon us and I love seeing our towns and rural communities come alive with festive spirit.

Christmas parades and celebrations have already brought festive cheer to Waiouru, Taumarunui and Raetihi, with Ohakune's Christmas in the Park still to come on Tuesday 23 December at 5pm in Christie Park. I always enjoy the creativity on display – from the colourful floats and costumes to smiling performers, as well as the strong sense of community pride that make these events truly special.

It's hard to believe another year has flown by. I'm grateful for the privilege of representing the mighty Rangitikei electorate and for the opportunity to champion our rural and provincial communities. Supporting our farmers and growers, who are the backbone of our economy, remains at the heart of why I got into politics.

There was big news for farmers and growers last week with the announcement of a new planning system to replace the outdated RMA. Two new bills will provide a fairer, more practical framework that respects property rights, reduces unnecessary consents and supports common-sense environmental management. I'm delighted our hardworking farmers and growers will soon see a real difference, with less time tied up in red tape and more time focused on what they do best – producing world-class food and fibre.

I've continued to enjoy my work on the Primary Production Select Committee this year, particularly as we partnered with the Finance and Expenditure Committee on the inquiry into banking competition. The final report placed strong focus on rural issues, recommending practical steps to strengthen competition and better support our rural communities.

Here in Rangitikei, it's been another busy and rewarding year. I've welcomed 13 of my Minister and MP colleagues to the electorate, along with the Prime Minister in July. I've attended 182 events, worked through 96 sitting days in Parliament and met with hundreds of constituents.

A major development in 2025 was the boundary changes that will give the Rangitikei electorate a new shape at the 2026 General Election. I'm gutted to be losing the Ruapehu District, but on the upside I look forward to welcoming Horowhenua into the electorate.

As we head into Christmas and the summer break, I hope you have the chance to relax, recharge, and enjoy time with family and friends. Please take care on the roads and in the water and a special thank you to those who will be working through the holidays – our amazing emergency services, first responders, defence personnel, and those keeping essential services running. Thank you for your incredible dedication and hard work.

Wishing you a joyful Christmas and a happy, healthy and prosperous New Year.

Authorised by Suze Redmayne Parliament Buildings, Wellington



Local MP Suze Redmayne on the steps of Parliament.

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Inspiring young adventurers on the Tongariro trails



The Kid kids kick off on their run round the Mangawhero Forest Loop in the event in January this year.

Marama farewell

From Page 7

(resource teachers learning and behaviour), working alongside schools and Kura to provide learning support where needed. She hoped to be doing this throughout the Whanganui region and so we may see Marama back up this way.

Kris Vine from Shirley Boys High in Christchurch has been appointed to take Marama's place, with his wife and young child. A former student of Ruapehu College, Vine has strong links with the region. He has a strong sporting background and is a maths teacher which Marama said is a "distinct bonus" as they can be hard to find and with the Ministry of Education's focus on numeracy, that will come in handy.

Marama will be back at the start of 2026 to welcome Vine with a powhiri and formal handover.

As I was leaving, I thanked Marama for her time, wished her well and said, "change is good" to which the ladies behind her replied sadly "no it's not!". Clearly Marama will be dearly missed by the whole school community.

There is something special about watching tamariki discover the outdoors. Their curiosity, their courage and the way they light up when they realise what they can do remind us why getting kids into nature matters.

"The Kid Tongariro was created for that very reason, to spark adventure, confidence and connection to our whenua," says Emma Young, chair of Ohakune Events Charitable Trust, who are running The Kid.

The 2026 event returns for its fourth time on 17 January, held in Ohakune at the foot of Mt Ruapehu. The course follows the Mangawhero Forest Loop Track on the edge of the township within Tongariro National Park.

"It winds beneath towering native trees, through pockets of sunlight and birdsong and along a trail that feels like a real adventure just for young explorers," says Emma.

"Some tamariki take off in a burst of excitement. Some jog along with friends. Some walk proudly with whānau at their side.

"No matter how they travel, the moment they reach the finish line is pure magic. The cheers are loud, the pride is huge and the medals shine almost as brightly as their smiles.

"Every child leaves knowing they did something brave and fun on the whenua we all cherish."

Emma says it is more than a race.

"The Kid Tongariro is an experience that helps young people discover the joy of nature. It is about fresh air, laughter, muddy shoes and stories that get told again and again. It is about building confidence, encouraging curiosity and helping tamariki feel at home in the outdoors."

"Adventure starts young. In Ohakune, surrounded by forest and community and the presence of the maunga, it is the perfect place to begin".

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Meri Kirihimete! Wishing you all a safe and happy holiday from the team at Ohakune New World!