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Summer 2025-2026

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Cash for cycleways:

Mtns to Sea to be extended

Two new sections of the 320km Mountains to Sea cycle trail – Phase Two of Te Ara Mangawhero from Tūroa and a new section of Te Hangaruru to the Last Spike – are to receive \$10.8 million in funding. And work is due to start any day.

Tourism and Hospitality Minister Louise Upston and Conservation Minister Tama Potaka announced \$10.8 million funding.

The two routes are among the final links needed to finish the Ngā Ara Tūhono Mountains to Sea Great Ride, a 320km journey from the mountains of Ruapehu to the Tasman Sea.

Te Ara Mangawhero – Phase II includes 13km of new trail, including boardwalks and 11 bridges through Tongariro National Park, up to Massey Flat off the Ohakune Mountain Road. The target for opening is Autumn 2027.

Te Hangaruru – Pōkākā Road to the Last Spike – includes construction of the 99m Manganui o te Ao suspension bridge and 1.1 km of trail. The target for opening is Autumn 2026.

The final section – Last Spike to Waimarino (National Park Village) – is being planned with partners – including iwi, community, and stakeholders – to fully complete the full 320 km Great Ride.

“We’ll need everyone’s support to help deliver this last connection – there’s only about a 10 km gap as the kererū flies!” says trail champion Lynley Twyman.

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Another massive swingbridge will be part of the extension to Te Hangaruru.

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Mtns to Sea to be extended

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The project is a partnership between the Department of Conservation (DOC), Tourism and the Ngā Ara Tūhono Charitable Trust, which includes iwi agencies Ngā Waihua o Paerangi Trust and Te Korowai o Wainuiārua.

Upston said the investment would be drawn from the International Visitor Levy (\$7.7m) and the \$70 million Major Events and Tourism (MET) package (\$3.1m) as part of a regional resilience strategy.

Ngā Waihua o Paerangi (Ngāti Rangi) and Te Korowai o Wainuiārua (representing the iwi Uenuku, Tamakana and Tamahaki) will lead the new works alongside DOC and the Trust.

Bringing people back

Ngāti Rangi chair Tomairangi Mareikura said iwi were ecstatic to lead the projects, which represented a significant milestone in reconnecting people to ancestral lands.

“This trail has provided us an opportunity to bring our people back to put their hands and feet on whenua that we have otherwise not had access to or been alienated from for generations,” Mareikura said.

“While it might seem like a small thing – building a trail to bring other people to our rohe – it’s been massive in terms of getting our own people home and connected to place.”

The final section of Te Ara Mangawhero will mark the starting point of Ngā Ara Tūhono Mountains to Sea from just below Tūroa ski area on Mt Ruapehu.

Support growth

Te Korowai o Wainuiārua chair Aiden Gilbert said he hoped there was a Government plan for ongoing support to uplift the region after a number of difficult years.

“We support the growth here,” Gilbert said.

Te Hangāruru connects with the Ohakune Old Coach Road in the south and will extend north to the Last Spike, winding through native forest, wetlands, and over boardwalks and suspension bridges.

Trail champion Lynley Twyman said the aim was for Ngā Ara Tūhono Mountains to Sea to be

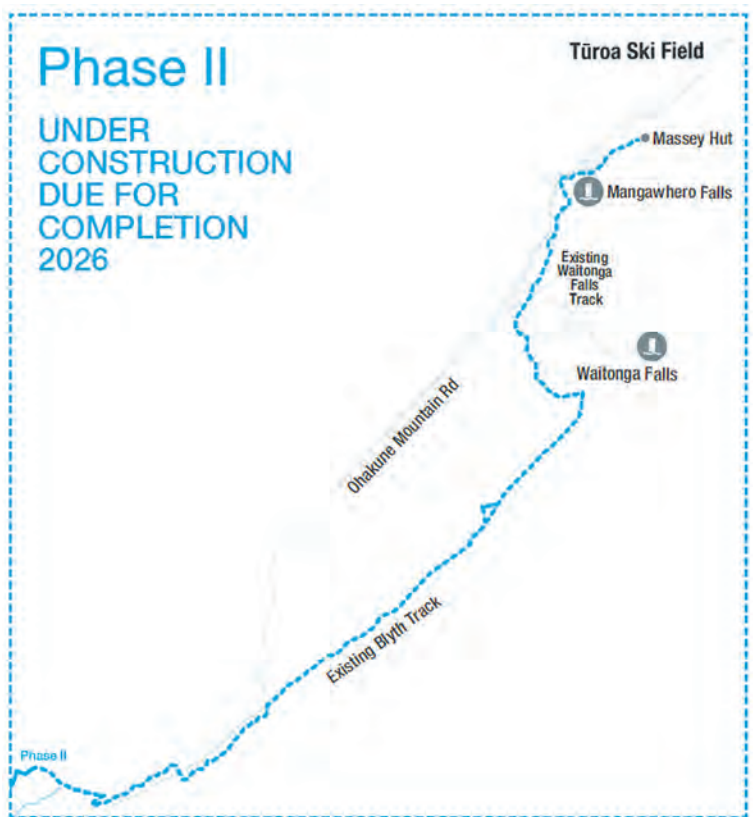
the “number one Great Ride” in the southern hemisphere.

“We now have the opportunity to build all the way through to the Last Spike including the bridge over the Manganui o te Ao. That’s a huge achievement,” she said.

“I’m looking forward to seeing our tamariki and mokopuna really excited that they can make a future here, and right now they can enjoy the trail as well.”

Sections of the track will open progressively, with completion expected in early 2027. When finished, only the final short link between the Last Spike and Waimarino will remain.

That section is expected to include one of the longest suspension bridges in Aotearoa, stretching 200 metres across the Makatote River near the Makatote rail viaduct.



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After the fire: how hikers can help

Hikers heading up to walk the Tongariro Alpine Crossing will find the scene quite confronting – the sight of 3000 hectares of burnt vegetation that is left behind after the November fire.

The bulk of the Crossing track is free from damage after the access road and the first few kilometres and is still worthy of the title of one of the best one day walks in the world.

“We’re so happy to be able to welcome people back to the Tongariro Alpine Crossing,” says Libby O’Brien, DOC Tongariro operations manager.

“It’s such a unique experience and I think the fire has made us recognise its specialness even more. It might be quite confronting for visitors to the Tongariro Alpine Crossing. Shuttles take them along the road showing kilometres of blackened earth and shrubs and by the time they get to the start of the crossing they already have some idea of the scale of the devastation.

“But they’re also seeing signs of recovery and hope. Standing beside the fireground we can hear birds, and we can see native plants shooting new green growth.”

She said the Department of Conservation receiving enquiries as to how visitors can help.

“We are working with Ngāti Hikairo ki Tongariro to develop the hapu-led Maunga Ora restoration plan that will outline what recovery looks like in the coming months and years for the area of the park affected by the fire,”

“We’re also working with partner agencies across the region to feed into regional recovery plans, but our priority at this stage is to support Ngāti Hikairo in developing Maunga Ora.”

She said the full plan is still being developed but that they know the key to recovery is weed control and this is also a big aspiration for Ngāti Hikairo ki Tognariro.



The pou at the start of the Tongariro Alpine Crossing. Photo: Mike Scott.

“While our native plants in this area are resilient, the disturbed ground is the perfect seeding ground for invasive plants. We’ll

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After the fire

From Page 5

be working hard to keep these at bay so the natural ecosystems can recover in their own time.

“We have already started some weed control to try and get on top of broom, gorse and heather as quickly as possible. We’ll also be putting efforts into protecting these regenerating plants from grazers like rabbits, but it’s not likely any replanting in Tongariro National Park will take place.”

DOC are being asked how people can help.

“You can help by respecting the restorative rāhui on the fire ground – this means sticking to the tracks, not littering and using the provided toilets. We also ask visitors to ensure their shoes, clothes and gear are clean before using the tracks to minimise the introduction of weeds to the area.”

For those wanting to contribute from afar – the New Zealand Nature Fund is accepting donations on behalf of DOC and Ngāti Hikairo ki Tongariro. All funds raised will drive post-fire restoration and conservation efforts in Tongariro National Park.

Bubs Smith, representing Ngā Whenua Rahui, says he believes there will “definitely be opportunities for visitors to help put their shoulders to the task in regards to the recovery.”

He said it was early days of planning, currently prioritising some of the research that is time sensitive and needing to be actioned this side of Christmas and that any support opportunity would probably involve weed control.

Positive signs

He said one of the strongest and most heartening signs has been the genuine willingness of agencies — particularly FENZ — to work alongside mana whenua from the very beginning.



The road up to the start of the Tongariro Alpine Crossing is a confronting image for hikers. Photo: John Funnell.

“This hasn’t just been about operational logistics; it has been about recognising the value of local knowledge, especially from whānau who live in these remote rural areas and understand the unique mountainous winds and weather patterns that directly influenced the behaviour of the fire.”

He said areas where natural recovery won’t be enough include

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Photo by Glyn Hubbard



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Playground pirate ship sets sail, arrrrr!

A “motley crew” of local volunteers witnessed the latest attraction at the Ohakune Carrotland Park – a pirate ship.

Builder Wayne Gunnell created the pirate ship from an old lifeboat donated by Ohakune locals, with support from a huge range of donors and volunteers.

The ship has dozens of features designed to entertain the children that have been storming the vessel since it was “launched” onto the high seas of Carrotland.

The old lifeboat is from the Russian cruise liner Mikhail Lermontov that sank in the Marlborough Sounds in 1986.

Today, the ship rests 30 metres below the surface and remains a popular dive destination.

The Ohakune pirate ship lifeboat was towed across Cook Strait by Paul Scarf and Peter Moroney and later transported to Ohakune by shareholder Peter Hammond, who hauled it behind his carrot truck.

Designed to carry up to 100 people, the lifeboat is impressively large.

After resting in Ohakune for decades, the Scarf and Powderkeg

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Ohakune's latest Carrotland addition, a pirate ship, complete with a plank to walk off.



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After the fire

From Page 6

at higher altitude zones, around 1500m on Pukekaikioire.

“These areas sit in a harsh alpine environment where soils are thin, nutrient-poor and exposed to extreme winter temperatures. Natural regeneration will occur, but it will likely be slow and patchy and the effects of stress may be visible for several years.

“Although alpine species are inherently hardy — adapted to volcanic disturbance, fire, ashfall and tough climates — the recent burn has pushed them to their limits.”

Biggest challenge

Smith says the biggest challenge will be creating and sticking to a clear, evidence-based and achievable recovery plan — “one that balances cultural values, ecological needs, and practical realities”.

As the plan develops, there will likely be opportunities for whānau to be involved through: wānanga on the whenua; cultural monitoring; invasive species control; seed collection and propagation.

“Summer will be a crucial period for observing the first stages of regrowth, so whānau presence and knowledge will be valuable.”

Re-cloaking the maunga in practice, as well as weed control, would include protecting emerging native seedlings and ensuring that the recovery improves the condition of the land beyond what it was before the fire.

“The encouraging news is that we’re already seeing native shoots pushing through the ash layer in some places — signs that the whenua is fighting to recover.

“These species are adapted to volcanic and fire cycles, and their return gives us confidence as we plan how to best support the re-cloaking of the maunga.”

Strengthening resilience against future fires is also likely to be part of the plan, following advice that often, “fire begets fire”.

“Every fire event gives us insights into how we can build resilience. Key opportunities include: strengthening response systems, especially in remote alpine areas; reducing fuel loads where appropriate, while protecting ecological values; long-term pest control, ensuring exotic weeds don’t create unnatural fire pathways; monitoring climate-driven changes such as drier summers, altered wind patterns and shifting vegetation zones.

More information on the Ngā Whenua Rahui is on their Facebook page.

On-site location photographer
GLYN HUBBARD PHOTOGRAPHY

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Gallery: 14 Manuka Street, Ohakune

Playground pirate ship sets sail, arrrrr!

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family along with Peter Hammond reimagined it as a haven for pirate adventure and play. They generously donated it to the Ohakune Carrot Park, where it has found a new life.

Carrot Park trustee Peggy Frew said that with Dave Scott's vision, Wayne Gunnell's master craftsmanship, Tina Drayton's artistic flair, and a major donation from the Laurenson family – along with many other generous contributions and sponsors – the project transformed into a “world-class pirate ship”.

“When the idea to turn it into a pirate ship was first raised, about two years ago, I just thought it was the silliest idea,” said Peggy Frew.

“I didn't see how we could do it but Paul donated it to us and it's happening. It really is one of a kind.”

Park Trustee Dave Scott said he was thrilled to see the reaction to the facility.

“What a great sight after the ribbon cutting,” said Dave.

“To see the stampeding of kids surging forward to board the pirate ship – that was my highlight of the day”

Ruapehu's mayor Weston Kirton said the new attraction would further cement Carrotland Adventure Park as a must-visit destination

for families across the country.

“The Ohakune Carrotland Adventure Park is already one of the most distinctive and loved playgrounds in New Zealand,” said Kirton.

“The addition of the Pirate Ship is going to take the experience to another level.

“You could see from the huge turnout on Saturday just how much this park means to both locals and visitors. It was a great day for pirates of all ages.”



Children 'pirates' storm the HMS Laurenson on the ship's launch day in November. Photo: Glyn Hubbard.

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Tongariro huts overcrowding gone



DOC claims that adding all Tongariro National Park huts, including Waihohonu, to its booking system makes overcrowding a thing of the past.

Overcrowding is a thing of the past now all Tongariro National Park huts are on the Department of Conservation booking system, says Stu Smith, Tongariro principal ranger heritage and visitors.

Instead of people sleeping on every surface when too many people arrive, visitors will know they have a secured bed for the night after a day naturing in the national park.

Bookings will also ensure the right fees are paid, helping DOC maintain huts for their continued use.

Smith says the change will bring certainty for visitors.

“Some people love a last-minute mission into Tongariro National Park, but it’s never fun if you end up with 30 other people stacked in like sardines, or you’re forced to sleep outside in the rain without a tent.

“With booking, you can still be spontaneous and book last-minute,

but booking in advance will ensure you don’t miss out altogether.

“Your booking is adjustable and it also means we can contact you if changes in track or weather conditions might affect your plans,” Stu says.

Backcountry huts are always unlocked and available as emergency shelter to those who need it.

Any huts currently in the Backcountry Hut Pass will continue to be included, with users able to make a booking online with the relevant pass.

Bookings for these facilities opened on 4 December for stays beginning from Friday 5 December.

Bookable huts in Tongariro National Park: Blyth, Mangaehu, Mangaturuturu, Rangipo, Whakapapaiti, Waihohonu and Mangatepopo, at bookings.doc.govt.nz/web/

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Get naturing with Mahi Aroha

From art auction to overnight jetboat hikoi – the Central North Island summer programme will connect people to nature in January 2026.

Mahi Aroha – a collaboration between community group Project Tongariro and the Department of Conservation invites visitors and locals to get naturing this summer with 30 trips on offer across the region.

Project Tongariro chief executive Kiri Te Wano says the programme has a variety of options thanks to community groups across the region.

“It’s a collaborative effort; we all love this area and want to share it with others.

“New offerings this summer include an art auction, a presentation on invasive gold clams and an awesome opportunity to enjoy an overnight hikoi via jetboat on the Whanganui River.

“And we still have some of the old family-favourites like trap-building workshops, nature-art, and of course, tramping!”

Popular events such as heli-hikes and tours at Wairakei Golf + Sanctuary fill up quickly each year. Early booking is recommended.

DOC community ranger/project lead Charlotte Fletcher says Mahi Aroha provides an ideal opportunity to enjoy nature with friends and whānau.

“Mahi Aroha provides so many fun ways to explore, protect, and enjoy nature, so check out the calendar online and get naturing this summer!”

Some activities are free, and some carry a charge to cover operating costs for the trip.

Book your adventure at: www.tongariro.org.nz/mahi-aroha



Stunning views on the Mount Tihia trip. Photo: NZ Pocket Guide www.nzpocketguide.com



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George's War: survival, memory and legacy from World War Two

A powerful new installation, *George's War*, is on display at the National Army Museum in Waiohuru, bringing to light the remarkable and harrowing journey of New Zealand soldier George William Heydon, who endured more than four years as a prisoner of war during World War II.

The exhibition, created by his daughter Sue Heydon, is the culmination of extensive research over six years starting in 2019. Drawing from archives across New Zealand, Britain, Germany, Greece and Austria, together with visits to his former POW camps in Austria and Slovenia, the installation explores both the historical context and the deeply personal cost of war.

"This installation is my attempt to understand how it was for him to experience this level of deprivation for so



Sue Heydon at the opening of her exhibition about her father.

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George's War: survival, memory and legacy

long,” Sue said.
“George rarely talked about what he had experienced, perhaps reluctant to bring into the daylight events which haunted him in his dreams. He died on 17 February 1963, as a result of his experiences, when I was ten.”

George William Heydon enlisted on 27 June 1940, despite being deaf in one ear. He married in November of that year before departing New Zealand in December with the 20th Battalion. By early 1941, George and his division were deployed to Greece. Vastly outnumbered, the Allies fell back under German assault and on 29 April 1941, George was among 7000 captured at Kalamata.

He spent four years and four days as a prisoner of war under German command, enduring hunger, exhaustion, disease, and the daily threat of death. Liberated in 1945, George returned to New Zealand that September to reunite with his wife and begin a quieter life in Kaiteriteri, Nelson. He died in 1963, his health permanently damaged by his wartime experiences.

The display features a series of frames, each space carrying a burnt matchstick, each one representing a day in captivity



Burnt matchsticks represent the days that George Heydon spent in prisoner of war camps in Sue's exhibition at the National Army Museum.

ity – four years and four days. The clear plastic frames are lit from above, casting shadows on the wall, reminiscent of prison windows. The exhibition also features a line of boxes of soil – each one collected by Sue from the sites of the prisoner of war

camp. It also features a slide show display of photos of the prisoners through the War. *George's War* is on display at the National Army Museum until May next year. For more details see www.armymuseum.co.nz.



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Angling for summer in Ruapehu

Rivers and streams in the Ruapehu District support some of the most productive trout fisheries in the region and locals and visitors alike have some great fishing right on their doorstep, says Allen Stancliff, senior field officer for Fish and Game New Zealand.

Fish the Manganui o Te Ao

Granted a National Water Conservation Order in 1989, the Manganui o Te Ao River near Raetihi supports a nationally significant fishery for brown and rainbow trout. These trout average 1.6kg, though some fish reach 4kg or more.

“The river is also notable for its outstanding scenic values and whio (blue duck) population,” says Stancliff.

“Angling use is low by national standards – many anglers visiting this part of the world flock to the upper Whanganui and Whakapapa Rivers yet overlook the Manganui o Te Ao, which provides a similar though much less utilised experience.”

Consequently, there are always easy to access, undisturbed

fishing spots to be found. The defined sequence of deep pools, runs and rapids creates a diversity of fishing water, which caters for all angling methods and levels of skill and a feature of the river is the evening rise, which occurs on calm, mild evenings throughout spring and summer.

In the middle reaches, the river can be accessed from a pleasant campsite at Ruatiti Domain. Access to much of the rest of the river requires landowner permission – contact details are in the Ruapehu Fisheries section on the Fish & Game website, but phone before you drop into the valley as there is no coverage close to the river.

Retaruke River

This Whanganui River tributary rising west of Raurimu contains a mixed population of brown and rainbow trout. At its best, the upper reaches are a delightful backcountry fishery that provides extensive fly-fishing water and is accessible from Oio Road (off SH4 just south of Owahango) and Upper Retaruke Road.

The remaining 20km of the river down to the Whanganui junction is larger and more tannin-stained, and best suited to spinning. Access to the lower river is via Oio Road down to Whakahoro.

For more information on local fishing opportunities go to <https://fishandgame.org.nz> and click on Fishing / Where to Fish / Regional info / Taranaki / Ruapehu Fisheries

Anglers are reminded that they need a current fishing licence, available online via the Fish & Game website or from local sports shops.

Mangawhero River

Flowing through Ohakune, the upper Mangawhero River contains a good population of brown trout averaging 1.5kg and

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For detailed and up to date angling & access information for local fisheries, go to www.fishandgame.org.nz

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Cottage escape

Nestled in a peaceful, private setting and surrounded by native plantings, this delightful one-bedroom cottage offers the perfect retreat in the heart of Waimarino. The open-plan living area is light and is heated by an efficient heat pump for year-round comfort. This Kirk Street cottage is one you should view!

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Angling for summer in Ruapehu

often reaching 2kg or more. In December, fish can gorge on brown and green beetle, as well as mayfly nymphs and, later on, wasps under the willow trees. As is common with most rivers in the area there is a good evening rise over spring and summer.

Often trout can be seen stationed just under the surface under foam-lines or against overhanging or instream cover. If a small, unweighted nymph or emerger pattern can be cast close to them they will often readily take this.

The 10km of river downstream from Ohakune is the most popular fishing reach and is characterised by gravelly rocky runs, pools and more placid willow-lined stretches. The Mangawhero River Walkway (Ayr Street carpark) gives access to some good pools within Ohakune. There is also access from the Mangawhero River Road and Pakihi Road.

From the Team at Taranaki Fish & Game.



Local angler Paul Larsen with a wonderful Waimarino brown trout.

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Te Hangāruru extends Ruapehu cycle network

The long-awaited cycle and walking trail that will eventually connect Horopito to Waimarino (National Park village) has been heralded as a major milestone for the Mountains to Sea - Ngā Ara Tūhono Great Ride.

Over 50 excited riders of all ages waited patiently for the opening ceremony to conclude before setting off to be the first to experience the new trail section in June.

“This is our gift to the community for Matariki,” trail champion Lynley Twyman said at the Horopito trail head in the central North Island.

Twyman said Te Hangāruru, the new section of the Great Ride, was a vital piece of the vision to complete a 320km journey from Ruapehu maunga to the Tasman Sea.

“The trail honours the stories and abundance of this land and builds a legacy for future generations.”

Twyman said the Mountains to Sea – Ngā Ara Tūhono trail was one of New Zealand’s most diverse cycle trails, traversing dual World Heritage landscapes, native bush, alpine streams, the volcanic plateau, historic viaducts and the Whanganui River.

The 9km southern section of Te Hangāruru, from Horopito to Pōkākā Road, features two new suspension bridges, including a 30m bridge over the Mangaturuturu River, a dramatic waterfall and a heritage tramway.

The 9km northern section follows part of the restored Marton

Sash & Door tramway.

The final section of the trail – awaiting funding for construction – includes a 225m suspension bridge over the Makatote River.

The Mountains to Sea initiative is a collaboration between iwi, local government and the community.

A charitable trust that leads and supports work on the trail includes representatives from Ngāti Rangi, iwi collective Te Korowai o Wainuiārua, Ruapehu and Whanganui district councils, the Whanganui Māori regional tourism organisation, trail users and community leaders.



The newest section of the Mountains to Sea - Ngā Ara Tūhono Great Ride was opened in June. Photo, Mountains to Sea.

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Te Hangāruru extends network

“Te Hangāruru is a tangible expression of partnership,” Te Korowai o Wainuiārua chair Aiden Gilbert said.

The name Te Hangāruru was gifted to the trail by Uenuku, one of three iwi represented by Te Korowai o Wainuiārua.

It refers to the native forest – traditionally a place of abundance for local Māori.

“The name Te Hangāruru recalls a time when the skies of the Waimarino forest were dark with birds such as kākā,” Gilbert said.

“It was a place where tangata whenua gathered kai and lived in harmony with the taiao.”

Gilbert said the trail winds through regenerating ngahere, past waterfalls and toward the proposed iwi-led Pōkākā alpine ecosanctuary.

“Through this trail, our people have opportunities to care for the land and to welcome visitors through manaakitanga. It’s part of a bigger journey, one where we walk together.”



After the opening in June, the first riders head off on the 9km southern section of Te Hangāruru, from Horopito to Pōkākā Road, which features two new suspension bridges. Photo, Mountains to Sea.

BAYLEYS



Ohakune 5 Conway Street

1910's era villa

If you are looking for a spacious family home or the perfect holiday retreat, this three-bedroom villa is awaiting new owners. Built in the 1910s, this character-filled property is nestled on a generous 741sqm (more or less) section. This property will be sold furnished, making moving in stress-free.

bayleys.co.nz/2900755

741sqm 3 1 1 1

Asking Price \$365,000
Kay Blaney 027 480 8845
kay.blaney@bayleys.co.nz
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BAYLEYS



Ohakune 26 Moore Street

Moore mountain retreat

Set on a flat, generous 1,315sqm (more or less) section, this welcoming chalet is just a short stroll from the Mangawhero River, shops, cafés and restaurants. The open-plan kitchen, dining and living area forms the heart of the home, with a woodburner for warmth, and an upstairs area that can sleep four additional guests.

bayleys.co.nz/2900819

1,315sqm 2 1 1 1

Asking Price \$425,000
Jenny Dekker 027 455 5674
jenny.dekker@bayleys.co.nz
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A buyer's Ruapehu property market

After some tough years in the property market, local real estate agents are quietly positive about the market around the Ruapehu District.

In Ohakune, the market is still largely driven by people seeking holiday houses – commonly called chalets in the town.

Bayleys agent Jenny Dekker says the recent mortgage rates cuts and a predicted general improvement in the economy is seeing people more confident about buying.

At the time of writing, she had offers in play on properties for permanent residences, holiday homes and also some interest from investors.

Polly Ingles from Property Brokers said they are excited about where the Ohakune and Raetihi markets are heading.

“It has been a hard couple of years with property values dropping and extended time on the market when selling, but things are starting to look brighter. Recently we have found the prices to be holding, indicating a turning point in the market.

“Overall enquiry levels are on the rise with buyers looking to invest in holiday homes and also to move to the area on a full-time basis.

“We have also seen an uptake in first home buyers which are looking to capitalize on the value the area possesses, along with the lowering of interest rates purchasing a home in the Ruapehu is very affordable compared to the main centers.

“The continuing investment in cycle and hiking trails, increased activity up the mountain and great hospitality the area offers also have attracted those buyers looking for base to live or holiday.

“We are enjoying seeing all the new faces around town and see 2026 as an exciting year for the area in Real estate and the region.

“Although it generally gets a little quiet just before Christmas, once Boxing Day has come around, visitors to the area will ramp up.

“We enjoy introducing buyers to our range of properties and helping them see what a fabulous location this is to invest in – there’s always something that will suit their budget.”

A bonus

Emphasising the view that first-time buyers have better opportunities, back in October, *One Roof* reported on a newlywed couple who couldn’t believe their luck when they found a property of their dreams in Ohakune.

The article, perhaps with a bit of hyperbole, claimed that “first-time buyers rescue ski town from the brink collapse”.

Buyers were enjoying the benefits of a \$100,000 fall in Ohakune house prices.

Local buyers had almost disappeared from the market since the start of the slump. Last year’s high-profile mill closures put the squeeze on the local economy and curbed any remaining appetite to buy.

Both Property Brokers and Bayleys said that the WPI pulp mill closure – probably the biggest employer in the area – didn’t have as big an effect as expected.

There were definitely sales of residential properties as people had to leave town to find work, but nowhere near as many as predicted.

Dekker said in October that she had sold five properties to first-home buyers, telling OneRoof that there was a steady trickle of locals returning to the district.

Turn to Page 22

BAYLEYS



Ohakune 8 Cordyline Place

Prime time on Cordyline

Here we have a beautiful flat 1,038sqm (more or less) flat site in a quiet cul-de-sac location, just waiting for your grand design. From here you can enjoy the clear views of Mount Ruapehu rising to the north and appreciate the pretty stand of native trees right in your own backyard. Get in touch today.

bayleys.co.nz/2900660

1,038sqm

Asking Price \$235,000

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BAYLEYS



Ohakune 17A and 17B Ti Kouka Place

Chalet plus bonus section

Escape to your alpine hideaway at 17A & 17B Ti Kouka Place, Ohakune. This classic chalet features one bedroom plus a mezzanine, open-plan living, and seamless indoor-outdoor flow to a sunny deck with a hot tub — perfect for relaxing under the stars. This property also includes a vacant section, offering future potential.

bayleys.co.nz/2900833

1 1 1

Asking Price \$365,000

Jenny Dekker 027 455 5674
jenny.dekker@bayleys.co.nz
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Biking and climbing back under one roof

Max at Kune Bikes has knocked a hole in the wall and reunited mountain biking and indoor climbing after four years of being run as separate businesses.

Max Carling-Currin has operated Kune Shuttles & Bike Hire, with 120 mountain bikes and 24 e-bikes. He takes a lot of pride in his rental fleet – every bike is cleaned, checked and serviced after each ride and the whole fleet has been renewed since Max took over.

His shuttles take riders to Ruapehu's classic trails: the Ohakune Old Coach Road with its viaducts and lush native forest, the epic 36km backcountry Mangapurua Track including the Bridge to Nowhere and Jet Boat transfer and of course the famous 17km, 1000m volcanic descent down the Ohakune Mountain Road from Tūroa, including the beautiful Te Ara Mangawhero trail section.

Next door to the bike shop is Vertigo Climbing, owned by his old flatmate Jeremy Hamer. The two



Max Carling-Currin, at left, and Jeremy Hamer up the wall in Ohakune's climbing gym – back under one roof with bike hire and shuttles.

Kune Shuttles & Bike Hire

Te Ara Mangawhero

Old Coach Road

Te Hangaruru

Bridge to Nowhere

Open 7 Days
8am - 6pm



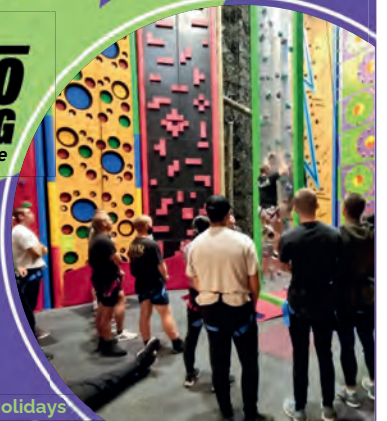
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56 Clyde Street, Ohakune

Biking and climbing back under one roof

From Page 19

lived together and spend their free time out in the hills, on the slopes and riding the trails around Ruapehu. Both cut their teeth working for the previous owner Mike Fraser at SLR, so bringing the businesses back together was a no-brainer.

Max enjoys climbing indoors and out: he was part of the team who built the indoor climbing wall at Blue Mountain Adventure Centre in Raurimu and has helped in the Vertigo Climbing wall over the last 14 years.

For all the friends and fans of Jeremy, don't worry – Jeremy is staying on through the summer holiday season to train the team, help with both climbing and bikes and will be staying in Ohakune. This move opens the door for new adventures and pathways for him to continue to develop skills and take on new challenges.

The gym will be open seven days during school holidays 10am - 6pm with sessions running on the hour. Kids go wild on the Clip 'n Climb walls and there are challenges for everyone with no climbing or rope experience needed due to the automatic Trublue belay system.

"Summer is really starting to take off with bikes, winter is busy with climbing," Max says. "Now we've got both, rain or shine."

One door in Ohakune now covers shuttles, bikes and climbing including a wealth of local knowledge.

"Swing by and say hi – we would love to see ya!"





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Meet the makers - the Rush story

“My old man ran McDonald’s for over 35 years, so you could say I was born into the game,” says Hungry Rush proprietor Angus Rush.

“There’s even a photo of me at 10 months old, chilling in the bath with a McD’s paper hat on!”

By eight he was already flipping patties and racking fries.

Wife Sara – award-winning barista – and he spent 15-plus years at Mac-cas, both in franchise and corporate, before shifting gears into Kiwi hospo.

“I became GM of Lone Star NZ and later, Mum, Dad, Sara and I bought Lone Star in Whangārei. We grew it, smashed it, and after selling up, we knew one thing: it was time to do our own thing.”

That’s how The Hungry Rush was born. It started in Whangārei as a full-blown food truck passion project, a place where they brought together the best Kiwi classic food, “done properly, no shortcuts. no mucking around”.

“Then life throws you a curveball and next thing you know you are packaging up and in four weeks we moved the whole family to Ohakune. What a trip!

“The special thing about this move is we are coming home to a place that the Rush family have been since the early 1900s. From farmers in Raetihi, who worked on the ‘Bridge To No-



Sara and Angus Rush: ready with a feed for you.

where’ and owning a local bicycle shop ... it’s time to continue the family legacy.

“So now, The Hungry Rush has found its new home in Ohakune. Fresh mountain air, good people, and plenty of hungry bellies to feed.

“Our mission hasn’t changed: we’re here to serve up the food we all grew up on, the way it’s meant to be ... fresh, New Zealand local, handmade and straight-up delicious.

“So pull up, grab a feed, and dig in! We got you.”



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The Double Burger



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Ohakune 99 Clyde Street

Clyde Street cutie

Step back from the street and back in time with this picture book cottage in the heart of Ohakune. Sitting behind a white picket fence with its bullnose verandah and red front door, you'll feel at home before you even step inside. This cherished family holiday home is looking for its next loving owner. Could that be you?

bayleys.co.nz/2900836

3 1 2

Asking Price \$375,000
Antony Greenfield 021 102 3594
antony.greenfield@bayleys.co.nz
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A buyer's Ruapehu property market

From Page 18

"Buyers are out there," she said. "They are being very mindful of what they pay because of the employment and the conditions of living here. But if they buy, they're usually getting a very nice house and a great lifestyle to go with it."

At the height of the market, first-home buyers weren't even competing, said Dekker.

"About eight years ago, I was selling properties to young local families, but not after prices started to rise."

The October OneRoof figures showed the average property in Ohakune has tumbled by 21% (-\$128,000) in the last three years to \$469,000, with the majority of the properties for sale in the town now sitting in an affordable price bracket.

Dekker had sold a four-bedroom home with award-winning gardens on Arawa Street to newlyweds Allayne Wallace, 36, and Kahl Elers-Green, 29.

The first-time buyers, who are from the local Te Ātihaunui-a-Pāpārangī iwi, couldn't believe their luck when their offer was accepted.

"For Kahl, this is a dream," Wallace told OneRoof. "I'm a bit older, so I knew this was going to happen. When we got approved, it was like, 'Wow, we're approved to buy a home. This is amazing!'"

The couple had started saving for their deposit in 2021, which was a daunting time to consider buying a home in Ohakune. They initially planned to build a home on family land, whilst living with Wallace's parents, but family events forced them to change tack.

Even though they faced a steeper climb, the couple were undeterred, and by the start of this year, they had enough saved to get finance approval.

Their first offer on a home was declined, but their second attempt landed them the keys to Arawa Street. Wallace said that she was keen to share their story with other first-time buyers "because



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A buyer's Ruapehu property market



First-home buyers – a newlywed couple – couldn't believe their luck when they found they could afford this 4-bedroom property in Ohakune.

I do see some stressful stories” on social media.

“We’ve been very blessed. The whole process has been very enjoyable. Even when we put in an offer on the first house and it didn’t work out, we knew we’d get there, and we did.

“We found a beautiful home within our price range. We were like, ‘Oh my God, what a bonus.’ We feel incredibly blessed.”

Redundancy

Dekker said recent problems in the nearby ski fields had led to a decline in investor buyers, but the mill closures hadn’t had the disastrous effect on the market that some had expected.

“Some of those families got their redundancy and stayed on.”

She said people were starting to feel more confident in the town. “I have a young couple moving to Raetihi from Hawke’s Bay. She’s a local, he’s not, but he sold his family home and they’re moving here.

“I have another person who works for the iwi, bringing their family back to the land. They want to buy something with a river, so I have found them a river with a beautiful home.”

The agent highlighted several listings that were within first-home buyer budgets, including a modern property at 45 Snow-mass Drive, which has price expectations of mid-\$500,000s, and 33 Willow Lane, which has a price of \$529,000.



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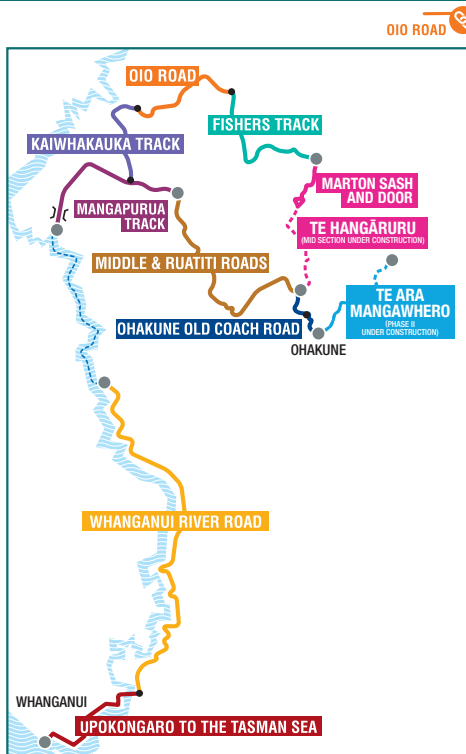
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Ruapehu – the heart

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FISHERS TRACK

GRADE
3

LENGTH
27 km

DURATION
2-3 hrs

MARTON SASH AND DOOR

GRADE
3

LENGTH
18 km

DURATION
2-3 hrs

TE HANGĀRURU

GRADE
2

LENGTH
9.1km (one way)
18km (return)

DURATION
2-3 hrs (return)

Discover more exciting sections of Mountains to Sea – Ngā Ara Tūhono. Over 300kms of connected trails from Ruapehu to Whanganui. Also check out our sister Great Ride – Timber Trail NZ.

Get detailed maps and information from the local isite or our Official Trail Partners, or download from mountainstosea.nz



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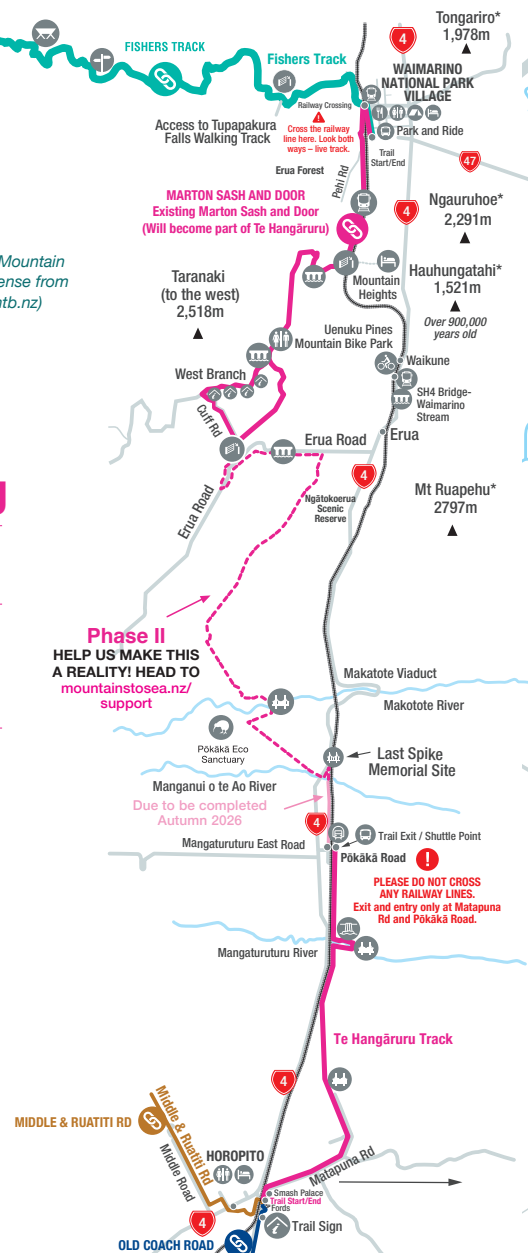
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Ngā Ara Tūhono

