



**Atihau back in profit**  
**P2**



**Iwi's river hikoi**  
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**Pass mark for RDC build team**  
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**Reservists dig the Army**  
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## HMW uses last 2025 meeting to halve rates impact

Horizons Regional Council used its last meeting of 2025 to make decisions to reduce the next proposed average rates increase and "continue to protect the economy and the environment from possums".

Council made a series of decisions at a meeting on Tuesday 16 December:

- Signal an intention to work towards an average rates increase of between 4.6% and 4.9% in the 2026/27 financial year.
- Provide funding to ensure school buses between Ashhurst and Palmerston North continue to run.
- Pause work on the proposed new building to replace Palmerston North Regional House.

Horizons chair Nikki Riley says the proposed average rates increase for the 2026/27 financial year was about 10% before the meeting.

"The new Council knew the pace of rates increases was unsustainable and have acted quickly after October's local government elections to do something about it."

"While work to bring this figure down was underway before central government's proposals for local government reform and rates capping were announced, this direction of travel aligns Horizons with central government's desire for councils to move towards the proposed rates cap band."

The new signalled rates increase would allow for the following:

- Improvements to the Whanganui public transport

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## Nanny and Billy finish The Goat



**Fastest 'billy' Jackson Cole and fastest 'nanny' Maia Flint at the finish line for The Goat trail run on Saturday. Photo: Photos4sale.co.nz.**

Jackson Cole was the fastest "billy goat" and Maia Flint was the fastest "nanny" in Saturday's successful trail run, The Goat, organised by Ohakune Events Charitable Trust.

Cole completed the run on the Round the Mountain track from Whakapapa to Tūroa in 2 hours 4 minutes and 51 seconds.

Flint finished in 2:18:16 and was fourth overall.

The fastest local home was Ben Swift, from Ohakune, in 2:31:22, winning the Hamish Har-

land Memorial Trophy.

There were than 50 locals taking on the challenge – well up on previous years when almost all participants have been from out of the District.

As well as the 'goats', there were also 96 entries for The Kid run, on the 3.2km Mangawhero Forest bush track – around 20 more than last year.

Of the 405 'goats' there were also a number of internationals, from Australia, Canada, South

Africa, Germany, France and the UK.

There was a slight change in the course this year, with an extra 50 metres added at the Tūroa Ski Area base, with runners having to climb the stairs to the Plaza area.

Event co-ordinator Jaye Lowe said there were a few grumbles from some competitors, but it meant that the finish was in a more sheltered area amongst the base buildings and they could set out the stalls and picnic tables around the finish

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# Fire destroys Raetihi garage, vintage vehicles



A garage at a Pitt Street, Raetihi, property was destroyed by fire on Friday evening, along with two vintage vehicles stored inside. They were believed to be a Morris Minor ute and a vintage fire appliance. Despite the intensity of the blaze, firefighters from the Raetihi, Ohakune and Waiouru brigades were able to save the surrounding buildings from damage. Photo: Liz Brooker.

## Ruapehu Events & What's On

### JANUARY 2026

Mahi Aroha - DoC Summer Programme 1 - 30 January  
For further information: [www.tongariro.org.nz](http://www.tongariro.org.nz).

The Goat Adventure Run 17 January  
Have you Goat what it take? [www.thegoat.co.nz](http://www.thegoat.co.nz)

### FEBRUARY 2026

Waimarino A&P Show 21 February  
For further information contact: [info@waimarinoshow.com](mailto: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](http://www.blazinghills.nz).

Waimarino 103rd Rodeo 21-22 March  
Secretary: Cathy MacLean 06 385 4636 or 027 240 1090. Email: [c\\_d\\_maclellan@xtra.co.nz](mailto:c_d_maclellan@xtra.co.nz). Raetihi Rodeo Grounds, Parapara Highway

Ring of Fire 27-28 March  
See [www.rof.co.nz](http://www.rof.co.nz) for more information

Tussock Traverse 28 March  
See [www.tussocktraverse.co.nz](http://www.tussocktraverse.co.nz) for more information

Raetihi Wild Food Challenge 28 March  
For more information email: [localwildfoodchallenge@gmail.com](mailto:localwildfoodchallenge@gmail.com)

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# Ātihau Whanganui returns to profit as new governors join board

By Moana Ellis, Local Democracy Reporting

One of the country's largest farming operations has returned to profit with a \$9.7 million after-tax surplus, reversing two consecutive loss-making years.

The Māori-owned Ātihau-Whanganui Incorporation has more than 9000 shareholders and 42,000 hectares of ancestral land under management from Ohakune to Whanganui, including eight sheep and beef stations, a dairy farm, forestry and beehives.

Its shareholders are descendants of the original owners, who belonged to Te Ātihaunui-a-Pāpārangi and Whanganui iwi.

Shar Amner has been re-elected to the board, with Jonelle Hiroti-Kinane and Hayden Potaka joining as new governors, following the incorporation's annual general meeting in Whanganui in December.

Three of the seven board members stood down under the board's rotation policy, including long-serving governor Whatarangi Murphy-Peehi, who did not seek re-election after serving 41 years.

Amner, Hiroti-Kinane and Potaka were selected from a field of eight candidates. They join Dr Rawiri Tinirau, Hamish Blackburn, Kemp Dryden and Keria Ponga for the next term.

#### Stabilisation

In his chair's report for the year ended 30 June 2025, Amner said the incorporation had returned from a period of "stabilisation to performance", turning two years of losses into profit.

Net profit after tax shifted from losses of \$6.7 million in 2023 and \$5.7 million in 2024 to a \$9.7 million profit.

An operating profit of \$0.8 million was also reported, compared with a \$1.3 million operating loss in 2024.

Amner said the turnaround had been achieved "through discipline" and during a period of leadership transition.

The incorporation reduced debt by 25 percent (\$10 million) through sales of honey and carbon credits, and more than doubled its dividend to shareholders from 28 cents in

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Ātihau-Whanganui Incorporation chair Shar Amner reported a \$9.7 million profit, 25 percent debt reduction and a doubled dividend to shareholders. Photo: Liz Brooker.

2024 to 60 cents.

Amner said the year had been turbulent, but the incorporation's response had been measured and deliberate.

"We have undertaken fundamental structural reforms while honouring the vision our tūpuna established for their mokopuna."

The board consolidated its strategic focus from seven priorities to three: farm performance and productivity, strategic partnerships and relationships, and data-driven decision-making.

"This restructuring reflects a fundamental shift from broad aspiration to targeted execution."

#### Realities

Amner said market realities continued to shape results.

"Operating in global commodity markets exposes us to volatility we cannot control. Yet our scale brings resilience and responsibility."

"While market fluctuations affect all agricultural enterprises, our institutional stability and operational diversification position us to weather these cycles more effectively than smaller operators."

Livestock prices were strong for both meat and milk, while wool also showed signs of recovery, improving the economics of shearing.

Spring production saw 86,359 lambs and 3790 calves born, with 58,832 lambs sold. Milk production resulted in sales of 279,423kg of milk solids, averaging 436kg per cow.

Honey production showed long-awaited signs of recovery for the incorporation's AWHI Miere apiary business, with 56,500kg of mānuka honey extracted alongside 23,000kg of native bush honey retained for hive feeding. More than 148,000kg of honey stock was sold.

The board increased its distribution to the incorporation's charitable arm, Te Āti Hau Trust, from \$250,000 in 2024 to

\$325,000.

The trust supports shareholders and their descendants through kaumātua, education and marae grants.

Te Āti Hau Trust chair Dr Rāwiri Tinirau said that despite the reduced distribution from the incorporation for the year to the end of June, the trust was able to distribute more than \$362,000 in 527 general and education scholarships and grants.

This included 210 kaumātua health and wellbeing grants totalling \$166,000, \$105,000 in 175 education grants, \$45,000 in marae grants, and tangihanga grants for wharemate.

"We have seen a steady increase in applications from kaumātua seeking support with healthcare costs, particularly in key areas such as dental care, optical services and hearing aids," Tinirau said.

Amner told Local Democracy Reporting the incorporation was well positioned for the future, with recently appointed chief executive John Tatere ready to lead the next phase of growth.

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



Recently appointed chief executive John Tatere. Photo: Liz Brooker.



Retiring governor Whatarangi Murphy-Peehi is presented with a pounamu patu in recognition of 41 years of service. Photo: Liz Brooker.

# Triple-whammy storm leaves Ruapehu facing multi-year repairs

Severe weather in June, July and October have left Ruapehu District Council facing a multi-million-dollar repair bill across its roading network, with works expected to take several years to complete.

Damage ranges from minor surface issues to major slips and road dropouts, with some areas temporarily isolated. Around 1000 sites across the district have been affected.

Ruapehu District Council land transport manager Jodeci Waru-Savage said the three events caused an estimated \$10 million to \$14 million in damage.

"Our contractors and local communities did an outstanding job restoring access and addressing safety issues in the immediate aftermath of the October event," Waru-Savage said.

"Many sites remain vulnerable, however, and full reinstatement is now underway to restore long-term resilience and reliability."

Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency emergency funding arrangements allow the council to prioritise urgent remedial works, but permanent repairs often require full engineering assessments and detailed costings.

"These processes take time, and we appreciate people's patience as we work through the necessary steps to ensure repairs are done properly and at the lowest possible cost to ratepayers," Waru-Savage said.

To make the most of the limited summer construction season, more contractors are being brought in to support the council's main contractor, Inframax. Sites are being grouped into work packages based on location, repair type and contractor expertise to improve efficiency and reduce traffic management costs.

Ratepayers are benefiting from NZTA emergency works funding, which significantly reduces the council's share of repair costs.

The June and July events alone caused about \$4.2 million in emergency works damage, with the council's share estimated at \$1.2 million across the 2025/26 and 2026/27 financial years.

Under normal conditions, NZTA funds 75 percent of eligible roading costs. When emergency works exceed 10 percent of the council's annual land transport operational budget, the funding assistance rate increases to 95 percent, leaving ratepayers to cover just five percent.

A handful of sites from the August 2024 weather event, and about 75 percent of the June and July emergency works, are expected to be completed this financial year, with the remainder finished in 2026/27.

The October weather event triggered more than 350 callouts and caused substantial damage on more than 30 roads.

Early estimates suggest between \$8 million and \$10 million will be needed to repair about 420 sites, with works expected to take two to three years depending on contractor availability, design requirements and weather conditions.

Some sites are expected to take more than a week to repair, with motorists likely to encounter stop/go controls or diversions.

Affected roads are in the north of the District and include Kururau Rd, Makokomiko Rd, Ohuramokau Rd, Ohura Rd, Oio Rd, Okahukura Bridge Rd, Otunui South Rd, Pukeatua Rd, Saddler Rd, Taringamotu Rd, Uepango Rd, Viles Access Rd and Whanganui River Rd.

Over summer, the council is asking drivers to slow down, take extra care and follow all instruc-

tions at work sites to help keep crews and road users safe.

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



**Fixing all damaged road sites from the October event is expected to take two-three years depending on contractor availability, design requirements, and the weather.**

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## HMW uses last 2025 meeting to halve rates impact

**From Page 1**

network as consulted on and decided as part of the 2025/26 Annual Plan process.

• More possum control to cover areas no longer serviced by OSPRI.

- Funding for Ashhurst school bus services.
- Contracted inflationary costs.
- Changes to KiwiSaver contributions.
- Depreciation.

"We have halved the signalled average rates increase, while still managing to save Ashhurst's school buses and keep the pressure on possum populations," says Cr Riley.

Bringing down the signalled rates increase means a range of proposed new roles will not be filled; no additional work programmed for policy, science and biodiversity; the delay of a proposed new regional public transport service and proposed new Horowhenua public transport service; and the removal of an insurance premium increase, says Cr Riley.

"If we wanted to make further savings, we would have had to look at reducing our current levels of service."

The average rates increase will be different across districts due to different levels of service and rating revaluations, says Cr Riley.

"Whanganui urban areas will see the biggest rating increase due to additional flood protection

work related to Te Pūwhā – the port revitalisation project – and the public transport improvements. Those projects were signed off earlier this year as part of the 2025/26 Annual Plan process.

"Full confirmed figures will be available closer to when the next Annual Plan is signed off next year."

Council is aware of the wider context of reforms proposed by central government, including rates capping, resource management changes and regional governance restructure, says Cr Riley.

"This is why we have pushed pause on the proposed new build project. We cannot proceed with this until we have more certainty on the proposed reforms."

The reform programme from central government will keep Horizons busy throughout 2026, says Cr Riley.

"We are still looking at exactly what resources we will need to implement the reform programme, as this could impact the final average rates increase.

"We will be working with other councils across the region during this period of reform, and with central government, to ensure we get the best possible results for those who live in the region.

"We want to be a collaborative partner with all stakeholders to ensure we protect our environment, enhance our economy and enable our communities to be the best they can be."

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# 'The only noise is ourselves': Inside iwi's two-week Whanganui River journey

By Moana Ellis, Local Democracy Reporting

A Whanganui iwi leader says reserving stretches of the Whanganui River exclusively for the two-week tribal river journey has transformed the experience for participants.

Almost 40 years old, the annual Tira Hoe Waka was launched in the late 1980s. It is an iwi wānanga [learning and discussion space] for descendants of the river tribes paddling from Taumarunui to Whanganui.

Two years ago, iwi entity Ngā Tāngata Tiaki o Whanganui activated a customary activities provision in the Te Awa Tupua (Whanganui River Claims Settlement) Act 2017 for the first time, setting aside sections of the river for the sole use of the Tira Hoe Waka.

It closes parts of the river to tourists, tour and jetboat operators and all other river users for up to three days at a time as paddlers travel down the river.

The restrictions include Department of Conservation campsites, the Great Walks Whanganui Journey and tourists on the Te Araroa Trail.

Ngā Tāngata Tiaki o Whanganui kaihautū/chief executive Nancy Tuaine said the customary activities provision has enabled the Tira Hoe Waka to make the journey without any other activities or users on the river, banks and campsites.

In the past, tourists would seek to interact with the Tira "when we're actually in wānanga, giving to ourselves and giving back to our river".

"As [river] traffic has increased, it's impacted on us. In the past two years,

we've experienced the ability for our kids to embrace their awa in totality without any tourist interaction or any impacts of that in terms of jet boats or canoeists coming and going.

"The biggest thing I've noticed is the peace. The only noise is ourselves, with ourselves. It's made an immense difference to our ability to kōrero ki te awa [speak to the river] and spend time with the river."

## Ancient river marae

Nearly 160 paddlers and their road crews started out on the 14-day event from Ngā Huinga near Ngāpuwaiwaha Marae in Taumarunui on January 5, making their first camp at Ōhinepane. They then travel to ancient river marae sites including Tāwata, Whitianga and Tieke, arriving at Te Ao Hou Marae in Whanganui on 19 January.

For the first time, the Tira also stayed at the restored Te Pōti marae across the river from Pīpīriki township, with rare stays also at Ātene Marae and Rākātō.

Organiser Hayden Potaka said about 20 waka with more than 100 paddlers were on the river this year. Only a handful launched from Taumarunui because low water levels made stretches of the first day's paddling dangerously shallow for six-man Canadian canoes.

Variable river flows and changeable weather were expected.

"Our approach is to move with the awa, guided by tikanga, experience and a strong safety-first mindset."

The full Tira launched from Ōhinepane on Wednesday 7 January.

Marama Ellis paddled the river with her mother Anna Te Waimātao Rihia 35



**Waka arrive at Ōhinepane campsite after their first day of paddling on their journey from Taumarunui to Whanganui.**

**Photo:** Moana Ellis.

years ago. She completed her 11th Tira, paddling with her 19-year-old daughter Erena, supported by her tāne and 12-year-old son Daniel as "roadies". Her sister, nephews and niece have also travelled the awa.

"It's about reconnection, learning who we are, hearing the kōrero, trying to hold it in my head and in my heart."

Hēni (Mateparae) Unwin was on her sixth Tira.

"First it was about reconnecting back to the river, to my people, and finding out about who I am as a person, and then I kept coming back because it's just how I start my year and how I can really set my intentions for the year."

Palmerston North deputy mayor and Māori ward coun-

cillor Debi Marshall-Lobb – a former principal of Hato Pāora College – paddled with her daughter, two nieces and a mokopuna, with her tāne supporting as a roadie.

"It's a privilege to be on the Tira. I think it is a stunning strategy that our tūpuna some 30 years ago had and fulfilled. If those who established it could be here, I think they'd marvel at how it's exceeded their expectations."

Marshall-Lobb said the initiative unites all the marae, hapū and descendants of the awa from its Tongariro source to the Tasman Sea.

"It's something to be proud of. We learn about the

**Turn to Page 4**

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# Ruapehu boost from international tourism collaboration

Ruapehu is set to benefit from the government's Regional Tourism Boost Fund – Round Two, announced in Taupō recently, as the region works closely alongside neighbouring Regional Tourism Organisations (RTOs) to attract more international visitors to the central North Island and beyond.

While Ruapehu is not the lead agency for the successful funding bids, says Jo Kennedy, general manager, Visit Ruapehu is an active delivery partner, collaborating with surrounding regions to ensure Ruapehu's experiences, trails and hospitality offerings are well represented in offshore markets, particularly Australia and the United States.

The funding round specifically encouraged regional collaboration, a model that Ruapehu and its neighbouring RTOs have strongly embraced. Lead RTOs are coordinating activity on behalf of wider regions, with Ruapehu contributing product, insight and market-ready experiences to each initiative.

Minister of Tourism Louise Upston has expressed strong support for the collaborative approach being taken, noting early positive signs of increased visitation and welcoming the strengthened partnerships forming between RTOs.

"Visitors don't experience regions in isolation. Working together allows us

to showcase the full journey and inspire visitors to travel further, stay longer and do more," said Jo Kennedy.

"We're grateful to our neighbouring RTOs – Tātaki Auckland Unlimited, RotoruaNZ, Hamilton & Waikato Tourism and Destination Great Lake Taupō – for leading these campaigns and for their strong spirit of regional collaboration."

## Initiatives

Key initiatives Ruapehu is contributing to include:

- \$1.2 million North American campaign encouraging visitors from the USA and Canada to explore all corners of New Zealand, led by Tātaki Auckland Unlimited. Ruapehu is contributing product and regional storytelling to ensure central North Island experiences are included.

- \$600,000 cycling-focused initiative aimed at Australian visitors, promoting Ngā Haerenga Great Rides of New Zealand and led by Destination Great Lake Taupō. Ruapehu will work closely with Taupō to ensure flagship trails such as Timber Trail and Mountains to Sea - Ngā Ara Tūhono Trail are strongly represented.

- \$459,000 international marketing initiative promoting travel via nonstop Jetstar flights from Sydney and the Gold Coast into Hamilton Airport, led by Hamilton & Waikato Tourism, with Ruapehu, Taupō and Taranaki collaborating to convert ar-



**Louise Upston, Minister for Tourism – second from right, with Visit Ruapehu staff Catherine Pakai-Dewes, left, Jo Kennedy and Lynley Twyman, Mountains to Sea - Ngā Ara Tūhono Trail champion. Photo: Visit Ruapehu.**

rivals into extended stays across the wider central North Island.

- \$2.5 million "Kiwi North" campaign, announced last year, focusing on attracting visitors from Australia's eastern seaboard between November 2025 and July 2026, delivered through a partnership of 15 North Island Regional Tourism Organisations.

"Together, these initiatives support increased inter-

national visitation, longer stays, and greater hospitality spend, while reinforcing Ruapehu's position as a must-visit destination within the central North Island journey," says Kennedy.

Visit Ruapehu acknowledges the Government for its investment through the Tourism Boost funding programme and for its commitment to supporting regional collaboration to grow international visitation and hospitality spend.

## RDC is a 'low risk building consent authority'

Ruapehu District Council is celebrating its building control team being reassessed as a 'low risk' Building Consent Authority (BCA).

The assessment, conducted on behalf of the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE), ensures that councils meet rigorous standards to deliver trusted, legally compliant building control services.

Executive manager - regulatory & customer services Sharon Robinson praised the building control team for their hard work and dedication.

"We are thrilled that the 2025 assessment has validated the building team's on-going commitment to maintaining high standards and this vital accreditation for the community.

"The assessment as a 'low risk' BCA is especially rewarding for the building control team as it reconfirms their capability and consistency in delivering building control functions," she said.

Robinson noted that the leadership of Building Control manager Darryn Cosford

was critical to the team maintaining its low risk assessment.

"Last year Council was required to undertake a special accreditation assessment to check on progress in addressing non-compliances identified during an earlier 2023 assessment.

Cosford oversaw the performance improvements that reestablished Council as a low-risk BCA.

Being assessed as a low-risk BCA confirms that the improvements in the team's performance have been effectively maintained," she said.

Cosford expressed pride in the team's professionalism and the positive feedback received.

"It was especially pleasing to hear from the assessors that they recognised the team's and Council's commitment to supporting and implementing our systems.

"We are committed to maintaining our low-risk BCA accreditation and ensuring construction compliance in Ruapehu," he said.



**Ruapehu District Council's building control team has been reassessed as a 'low risk' Building Consent Authority (BCA) reconfirming their capability and consistency in delivering building control functions. From left, Chris Dassen - McKenzie Builders foreman with Darryn Cosford - building control manager and Kowhai Te Manu - building control administrator. Photo: RDC.**

## Pouri Hut fire a summer safety reminder

Pouri Hut in Whanganui National Park has been destroyed by a fire, prompting a warning to visitors to bring their own shelter and water.

On 11 December a fire broke out in the 12-bunk hut, which provides a critical link on the Matemateāonga Track. The fire razed the hut completely. No-one was in the hut at the time and the fire did not extend to the surrounding forest.

Fire and Emergency New Zealand investigators were unable to determine a cause, but have ruled out the wood burner, gas bottle and cooker. Visitors who had left the hut in the morning saw no signs of fire.

DOC principal ranger heritage and visitors Joshua Kilmister says the fire presents a reminder to practice safe fire management this summer.

"We don't know exactly what caused this fire, but with the dry conditions we're experiencing, it's a reminder to all of us to be careful storing fuel, disposing of ashes, and using fire."

"This is also a perfect time to check any charging equipment, batteries and power banks you travel with to ensure they are in good, safe condition."

Fire and Emergency New Zealand cau-

tions damaged or incorrectly used batteries can pose a fire risk both at home and when travelling.

Joshua says Pouri Hut, built in the 1970s, was critical for biodiversity work in Whanganui National Park and its loss will be felt.

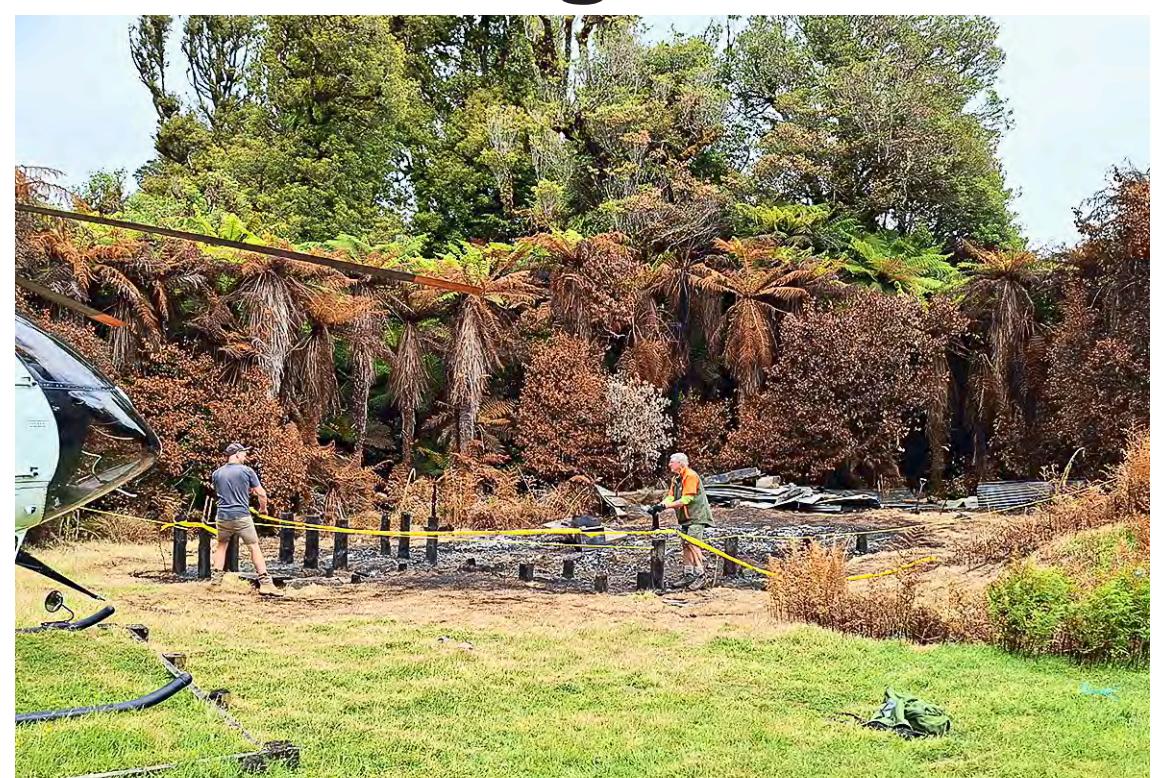
"We'll be working with partners ... to see how we can replace this. We're a bit gutted to be honest, especially after the work Backcountry Trust has put in to support us with this hut."

Backcountry Trust Manager Rob Brown says he's always disappointed to see this sort of thing happen.

"The Backcountry Trust, along with other groups like the Greater Wellington Backcountry Network, have put a lot of time and effort into the Matemateāonga Track in the last few years, and I really feel for the DOC team as well – we've all been quite invested in this special part of Whanganui National Park," says Rob.

"Hopefully we'll find a way forward in the new year, we're always ready to play our part for ensuring these places are maintained for future generations."

Any visitors planning on nature in the area should bring their own shelter and water, as these are not currently available at Pouri Hut.



**What little remains of Pouri Hut on the Matemateāonga Track in the Whanganui National Park – the cause of the fire is unknown. Photo: DOC.**

# Central North Island high on summer lists

New Zealanders are into another summer of naturing, based on a newly released DOC report – and the central North Island is high on many lists.

Frequently visited spots include Tongariro National Park, Huka Falls in Taupō, and the Bridge to Nowhere in Whanganui National Park.

Short walks and accessible locations are favourites for kiwis looking to make the most of the warmer weather.

DOC Central North Island acting director Sandy Woodhead says the report shows people want to pack a lot of nature and heritage into short visits.

"We're seeing people enjoying beautiful short walks, keeping it simple and affordable, especially as we've all been facing a tough year," says Sandy.

Domestic visits to protected natural areas dipped slightly over the past year, something the report links to storm events, slips, road closures and the cost of living.

Sandy says despite this, people are still keen to get outdoors.

"Central North Island has so many beautiful locations and experiences on offer, you can find all of these on our website to plan your summer naturing."

International visitation has now rebounded to more than 90 percent of pre-Covid levels. Beaches and national parks remain the backbone of the international itinerary, with 57 percent

visiting a beach and 52 percent visiting a national park and 72 percent heading out for a walk.

Tongariro National Park is the third-biggest drawcard for international visitors, with its world-famous Tongariro Alpine Crossing and Dual World Heritage listing for its cultural and ecological values.

Sandy says even after the devastating fires of November and early December, the park is a popular destination.

"It's iconic, but we do want people to know it's more than just the Tongariro Alpine Crossing, there are many incredible experiences to be had in the national park, and if the weather is bad they'll definitely be better options."

Sandy says as New Zealanders and internationals approach their summer naturing it's important they take the time to prepare, even for short visits.

"Keep yourself safe with the right gear, check the forecast, and plan for changing conditions.

"You can help keep the places we love safe by keeping your distance from wildlife, checking the DOC website for the rules around dog access, and taking your litter home with you."

"If we protect New Zealand's unique spaces, our tamariki and their tamariki will be able to enjoy nature as much as we do."

Editor's note: at the time of going to print, the Mangapurua section of the trail was temporarily closed due to a rock fall on the bluff section. DOC advised that they hope to have it open by Wednesday 21 January.



The Bridge to Nowhere on the Mangapurua Track. Access to the bridge was closed between the Whanganui River and the Bridge due to a rock fall, but DOC hoped to have it reopened this week.



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# Intense six weeks produces motivated reservists

Pack marching, digging a shell scrape and learning to navigate unknown terrain while on leave from employment or university isn't everyone's idea of enjoyment but the 92 Army Reserve Force soldiers who graduated in December took it in their stride.

After six intensive weeks of basic training they have developed resilience, learnt the basics of warfighting and made new mates.

Recruits learn a wide range of skills including weapons training, navigation, field craft and first aid. They are introduced to the first level of the New Zealand Defence Force Leadership Development Framework, Lead Self, says Lieutenant Colonel Kevin Williams, Commanding officer of The Army Depot (TAD).

The framework progresses through various leadership courses that are part of the NZDF culture, encouraging each rank level to actively embrace change and responsibilities.

All Army recruits are trained at The Army Depot (TAD) at Waiouru Military Camp. Lt Col Williams, explains the recruit training is the entry level into the Army Reserve Force.

"It is an intensive and compact course due to the high number of learning objectives that need to be achieved in a short period of time.

"Recruits arrive motivated to learn - they are taking time away from employment or are accustomed to study through university.

"However, while the course is intense there is opportunity to put the lessons into practice during the field exercise. Exercise Kairangi is the final part of recruit training and consolidates all soldiering skills taught in a realistic environment."

Company Sergeant Major for this course, Staff Sergeant Mike Halliday, says recruits are given a presentation on the recruit training, prior to coming to Waiouru.

"I give them a presentation so they understand what to expect, they can talk to their employer and prepare family for the time away. I've spent many years in both the Reserve and Regular Force so can answer the variety of questions that come up.

"On completion of training, recruits find many of the skills are directly transferable to their civilian employment – leadership, time management and resilience are skills useful in any occupation."

After completing recruit training, soldiers head to a variety of trades and corps, including infantry, armoured, medic, combat engineer, and combat driver where they will complete specific training.

"One of the interesting points of the recruits is their broad civilian life occupations," said Staff Sergeant Halliday.

"They include pilots, farmers, police officers, students, stay at home parents, software engineers, tradies and even a flight paramedic, so recruits come from all walks of life."



Reserve Force recruits dig their first shell scrape during the Open Country phase at Waiouru Military Training Area.

## New emergency website launched for the region

Manawatū-Whanganui Emergency Management Group has launched its new website, giving people in the region another trusted source of information before, during and after emergencies, reports Horizons Regional Council manager emergency management Chay Hook.

He says the new website, at [mwcDEM.govt.nz](http://mwcDEM.govt.nz), "provides a one-stop shop for emergency management information".

"Until now, emergency management information for the region has been housed on Horizons Regional Council's website. Having a standalone emergency management website is best practice, bringing us in line with other emergency management groups across the motu."

The new website gives enhanced options for displaying information, says Hook.

"The website will update automatically when MetService issues weather alerts, while people can get information about smaller-scale emergencies via a Regional Alerts section.

"The homepage also features a situation map, which will update in real time with information such as the MetService alerts, NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi state highway road closures, and tsunami evacuation zones."

While the website will generally feature preparedness information, including district-by-district information recognising the unique features of each part of the Manawatū-Whanganui Region, there is also the option to flip the website into an 'emergency response mode' during large-scale emergencies, says Mr Hook.

"This emergency response mode will strip out the preparedness information and a lot of imagery, instead prioritising the most urgent information about the specific emergency event. This ensures people get the most important information immediately. It also reduces the data load on people's devices and telecommunications infrastructure."

"We can then put the website back into its

original mode once we are through a response and transitioning into the recovery phase of an emergency."

The New Zealand company that built the website, Effect, has provided a hosting solution which gives an extremely high level of reliability, says Mr Hook.

"This helps to mitigate the risk of the website going down when people need to access it most."

The new website is just one method that will be used to communicate information before, during and after emergencies, says Hook.

"Councils in our region will also continue to use their communications channels to keep their communities informed."

People who have feedback about the new website can email [help@horizons.govt.nz](mailto:help@horizons.govt.nz) with the subject "MWCDEM website", or send a direct message to the Civil Defence Manawatū Whanganui Facebook page.



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## PUBLIC NOTICES

**Raetihi Ohakune Garden Club**  
Sunday 25 January - 1pm  
Local garden tour.  
New members welcome.  
Contact Di 021 165 7343.

## UNVEILING

**LEO PUNCH & KAREN TUKAORA HAYDEN (nee Williams).** The unveiling for Leo and Karen will be held on 7 February at the Raetihi Cemetery at 11am. A 'hakere' at the Centre in Seddon Street will follow at approximately 1pm. For further information contact Bill Hayden at 027 220 4771.

## PUBLIC NOTICES

### PUBLIC NOTICE OF TENDER OF ABANDONED LAND



Under conduct of the Registrar of the District Court at Taumarunui at the request of the Ruapehu District Council and in exercise of the power of sale contained in the provisions of the Local Government (Rating) Act 2002, the Ruapehu District Council offers by public tender the property listed below:-

#### Whanui Street, Matiere, Otangi-Heao

**Valuation number: 0622030900**

**Section 9 Block IX Town of Matiere** and being all the land contained in Certificate of Title TN90/7 approximately 1214 square metres more or less. The property is situated at Whanui Street, Matiere, Otangi-Heao and is within the territory of the Ruapehu District Council.

#### Whanui Street, Matiere, Otangi-Heao

**Valuation number: 0622031300**

**Section 3 Block X Town of Matiere** and being all the land contained in Certificate of Title TN90/12 approximately 1214 square metres more or less. The property is situated at Whanui Street, Matiere, Otangi-Heao and is within the territory of the Ruapehu District Council.

**TENDERS CLOSE 4pm, Friday 30 January 2026.**

**Tender documents are available by contacting Debt Management Central (DMC),** on 0508 436 269; dmc@mw.org.nz, DMC, DX PA84005, Feilding or from <http://www.debtmanagementcentral.org.nz>

Tender documents and all enquiries are to be submitted to DMC the agent for the Local Authority.

**Late tenders will not be accepted.**

**This notice is authorised by:**

Clive Manley  
Chief Executive  
Ruapehu District Council  
26 November 2025



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## PUBLIC NOTICES

### Roadside Herbicide Applications



Asplundh will carry out seasonal roadside herbicide applications to weed trees growing on the rural road reserve in both the Rangitikei and Ruapehu districts between November and March. A spray plan is available for viewing on request.

For further information, please contact [planning@asplundh.co.nz](mailto:planning@asplundh.co.nz)

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## PUBLIC NOTICES

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### Pipiriki Incorporation

#### PROPRIETORS OF PIPIRIKI TOWNSHIP NO 1 AND OTHER BLOCKS INCORPORATED

### NOTIFICATION OF ELECTION RESULTS

Election of Four Committee Members at the 2025 Annual General Meeting

Rachel ADAMS	7,247.9838 Votes
Teresa HOHEPA	7,151.4657 Votes
Adrian PUCHER	6,828.6293 Votes
Don ROBINSON	6,469.3918 Votes
Paora TOHO	1,169.2101 Votes
Phillip Reweti	1,001.1015 Votes
Richard CRIBB	349.6772 Votes

The members elected to the Committee of Management for a three-year term as a result of a vote on shareholding are, Rachal Adams, Teresa Hohepa, Adrian Pucher and Don Robinson.

*Robert Spicer  
Secretary*



### NOTICE OF DAY OF ELECTION OF TRUSTEES

Whakarato Te Rohe Pōtae

Under the Trust Deed for King Country Trust, notice is given that the following persons have been duly nominated as candidates for the office of Trustee to King Country Trust when nominations closed at 4pm on Wednesday 17 December 2025:

#### Nominations received (two vacancies):

GREENSLADE, Sandra (Turangi)  
JACKSON, Melissa (Taumarunui)  
PEPPER, Luke (Taumarunui)

As there are more candidates than there are vacancies to be filled, an election will be held on Thursday 26 February 2026, under the First Past the Post electoral system by postal and online voting.

#### Issue of voting packs:

Voting packs will be issued from Friday 30 January 2026 to all eligible consumers:

- by email (for consumers with an email address recorded with The Lines Company); or
- by post.

#### Return of voting documents:

Consumers who receive their voting pack by email will be able to vote online (using the unique voter credentials included in the email).

Consumers who receive their voting pack by post will be able to vote by:

- voting online (using the unique voter credentials shown on the voting document); or
- posting their completed voting document back to the Returning Officer using the ReplyPaid envelope included in their voting pack.

#### Consumers not natural persons:

Under the Deed of Trust, consumers that are not natural persons will need to appoint a person whose name does not appear on the Consumer Roll to vote on the consumer's behalf. For these consumers, a declaration will be included with the voting pack for the person to complete. If a person is unsure if their name is on the Consumer Roll, they may contact the Returning Office on 0800 922 822 to check.

Dated at Taumarunui, 21 January 2026

Dale Ofsoske, Returning Officer  
Independent Election Services Ltd  
for King Country Trust

phone 0800 922 822

Phone 06-385-8532.

Email: [ads@ruapehubulletin.co.nz](mailto:ads@ruapehubulletin.co.nz)

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- Helping tenants with lockouts
- Checking vacant flats and halls after hires
- Moving office and hall furniture

If something bigger needs fixing, you'll flag it and help organise the right contractor.

#### What we're looking for

- Handy, practical person with general building or handyman experience
- Able to work on your own and manage your time
- Physically fit and able to move furniture when needed
- Good people skills - friendly, respectful, and patient with tenants
- Takes pride in doing a tidy, solid job
- Own tools a bonus but not essential
- Full, clean driver's licence

Applications can be done online through our careers portal at [www.ruapehudc.govt.nz](http://www.ruapehudc.govt.nz). If applying online isn't your thing you're welcome to call into our Taumarunui office and one of our HR team can help you through it. Applications close Friday 23rd January.

## PUBLIC NOTICES

### Ruapehu Mayor Weston Kirton

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



### Extraordinary Special General Meeting

Notice is hereby given that an **Extraordinary Special General Meeting** of the Raetihi Cosmopolitan Club Inc. will be held at the Club Premises 32 Seddon Street Raetihi on **Thursday 5th February 2026 – 6pm**

The purpose of this meeting is to Reregister as an Incorporated Society under the Incorporated Societies Act 2022.

#### Special Agenda:

- Welcome by Club President
- Agreement to Reregister under Incorporated Societies Act 2022
- Implementation of Constitution
- Implementation of Club Officers
- Implementation of Club Contact Person
- Close of Special General Meeting

# Local rangatahi chasing basketball dreams on the world stage

A young local basketballer is preparing to take a major step towards his dream, representing his whānau, his community and Aotearoa on the international stage in the United States.

Manaaki Bell-Morehu, a talented and dedicated 15-year-old rangatahi from Ohakune, has been selected to tour in Las Vegas in the United States in 2026 as part of the Hoop33 Basketball Programme. This opportunity will see him competing in a high-performance environment, learning from elite coaches and testing himself against top young athletes from around the world.

For Manaaki, this opportunity is the result of years of commitment, sacrifice, and perseverance.

Growing up in Ohakune, where access to competitive basketball was limited, Manaaki and his whānau made significant sacrifices to support his passion. At times, this meant travelling to Whanganui up to three times a week so he could train, play and continue developing his skills when there were no local opportunities available.

As his journey progressed, the demands increased. Trials, training camps and development opportunities now regularly take Manaaki to Auckland, where he continues to push himself in elite basketball environments. These commitments require time away from home, long hours of travel and a level of discipline well beyond his years.

His coaches are clear that this opportunity is not a holiday — it is a high-performance programme that requires focus, resilience and a strong work ethic, both on and off the court.

Those who know Manaaki describe him as humble, hardworking, and respectful — a young person who consistently shows up, puts in the mahi, and represents his whānau and community with pride.

While this opportunity is life-changing, it comes with significant costs, including international travel, accommodation, uniforms, tournament fees, and specialised training. Manaaki and his whānau are now reaching out to the wider community for support through sponsorships, grants, and donations to help make this dream a reality.

"This journey is about more than basketball," his

whānau say.

"It's about resilience, growth, and showing our rangatahi that with belief, sacrifice, and community support, big dreams are possible."

For those who would like more information, are interested in sponsorship opportunities, or wish to support Manaaki in other ways, they are invited to get in touch with his mum Miriama. She can be contacted by email at [mjay4232@gmail.com](mailto:mjay4232@gmail.com) or by phone on 021 088 56244.



Manaaki Bell-Morehu — fundraising for basketball training in the USA. Photo supplied.

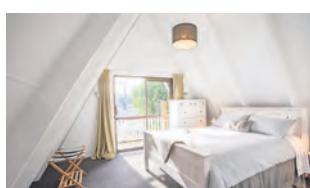
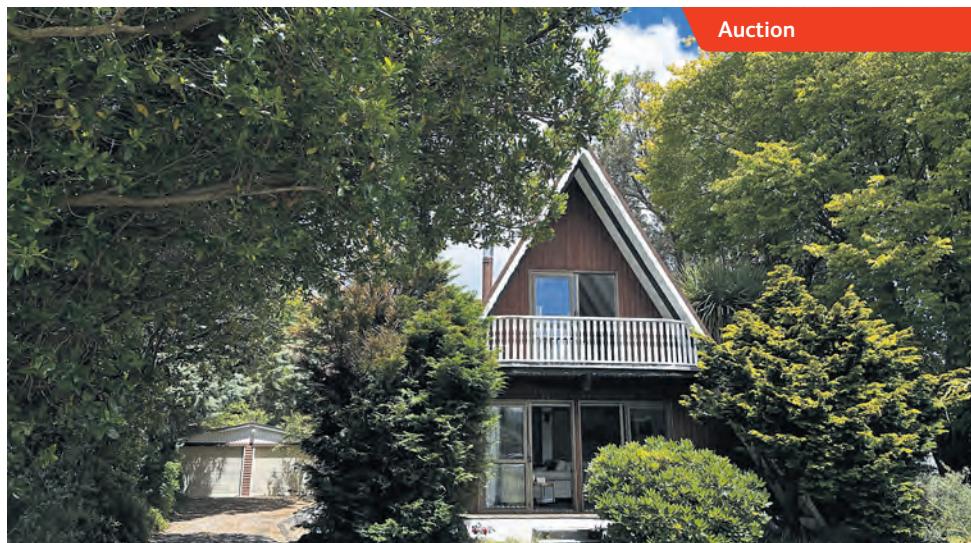
# Start of weeds clean up for Te Hangāruru



*"What I did on my holidays" talks by a group of locals and holiday-makers will include helping deal to a large area of weeds — mostly gorse — near the underpass on the new section of the cycle track Te Hangāruru at Pōkākā on 16 January. As well as the individual volunteers, there were people from Te Korowai o Wainuiārua, Mountains to Sea, Project Tongariro and the Department of Conservation — Tongariro. The group created "a very large heap of weeds" ready for mulching by councillor Rabbit Nottage and Alan Whale who are also donating their time and machines in support of the project. Photo: Liz Brooker.*

## Property Brokers<sup>B</sup>

### Ohakune 9 Moore Street



#### Canadian style chalet

This delightful Canadian Style home is not your average A Frame. The family sized Chalet is set on a quarter acre section and has three double bedrooms, complemented by a versatile fourth room, ideal as a snug single or perhaps a study or office, and is only a five-minute leisurely stroll to Town.

- 3 Bedrooms + office
- Open plan living
- Selling fully furnished
- Powered double garage
- Established fruit trees
- Quarter acre section
- Potential Rental Income \$480pw

**Auction**  
Auction 1.00pm, Wed 11th Feb, 2026  
View Sat 24 Jan 10.30 - 11.00am  
Mon 26 Jan 10.30 - 11.00am  
Web [pb.co.nz/OHU204438](http://pb.co.nz/OHU204438)

 **Polly Ingles**  
M 027 315 8368  
 **Jenna Hovelle**  
M 027 361 0167

### Ohakune 73B Arawa Street



#### A practical property

This super tidy low maintenance chalet sits in a central location in Ohakune and is ready waiting for you to either move into or rent out. Come and live your best life in the Ruapehu, you won't regret!

- Modern chalet
- 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms plus a mezzanine area
- Drying room/storage room
- A generous size chalet
- Mountain view
- Fenced back yard
- Healthy Homes Standard
- Rental appraisal \$420pw

**Auction** 1.00pm, Wed 11th Feb, 2026, (unless sold prior), Taumarunui Squash Club, 41 Turaki Street, Taumarunui

View Sat 24 Jan 10.30 - 11.00am  
Mon 26 Jan 10.30 - 11.00am  
Web [pb.co.nz/OHU207002](http://pb.co.nz/OHU207002)

 **Jenna Hovelle**  
M 027 361 0167  
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# Fastest billy goats and nannys



ABOVE: Jackson Cole crosses the Mangaturuturu River. ABOVE RIGHT: Maia Flint heads up the Silica Rapids slope. BELOW LEFT: Jackson Cole with his Goat trophy. BELOW RIGHT: Ben Swift, the fastest local. Credit: Photos4sale.co.nz.



ABOVE: Flynn Funnell was the fastest in The Kid race on Saturday, home in 16:49.

BELOW: although not in the top places, Ava Drummond was still a winner in the event. Photos: Liz Brooker.



## From Page 1

line. With people staying in the finish area, each finisher was cheered on by more people.

"There was a little bit of shelter and it improved the vibe. I think we'll keep that."

Weather is always an important factor for the event, with a contingency course mapped out in case conditions are not safe for runners.

Lowe said the forecast leading up to Saturday was changing daily, with high winds forecast earlier.

"Luckily the wind dropped down enough so we could go ahead."

She said at 5am on Saturday Whakapapa weather was "beautiful and still, thank goodness".

Lowe said the team were very happy with the way the event ran, with no issues and no major injuries in the very technical track.

She praised the 60-plus volunteers who made the event possible.

"It was epic. The volunteers were absolutely awesome, with high energy, supporting and welcoming the runners all day long."

A number of local community groups and organisations provided volunteers, with OECT able to give back to the community through grants for local projects – expected to be around \$8000-\$10,000 this year.



## True Team Promise means our whole team works for you.

Contact your local Ohakune Consultant today!



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