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# Ruapehu Bulletin

13 May 2026  
Issue No 2105

P: 06 385 8532 E: ads@ruapehubulletin.co.nz

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## Ruapehu needs 'proactive approach to merger'

The recent announcement from the Local Government Minister Simon Watts on possible reforms is a game changer, says Ruapehu District mayor Weston Kirton, who says RDC should take a "proactive approach".

"Instead of resisting the Government's plans, the district should take a more proactive approach," says Kirton. "The focus should be on voluntary co-operation with neighbouring councils."

Kirton said the community would be involved in the process from the beginning through consultation and open communication.

He says residents will have opportunities to share their views on the different options but the final decision will be made by councillors.

"Representation must remain a top priority during these discussions. It is important the district keeps strong local representation with the right number of councillors."

He adds that an agreement with a new water entity involving Whanganui District Council does not automatically mean future amalgamation.

"There are many possible options."

Kirton said he has already spoken with neighbouring mayors who are interested in discussing amalgamation. "Existing positive relationships between councils will help future discussions."

Minister Chris Bishop said if councils did not submit credible proposals, the Government would step in and make the decisions.

There were 78 city and district, regional, and unitary councils, a high number for a country of New Zealand's

**Turn to Page 3**

## \$2.2m boost for Mountains to Sea cycle trail upgrades

By Moana Ellis, Local Democracy Reporting

A new Government investment of up to nearly \$2.2 million into the Mountains to Sea - Ngā Ara Tūhono cycle trail will make the network safer, more accessible and more resilient for riders, says Lynley Twyman, kaihautū ara / general manager of Ngā Ara Tūhono Charitable Trust.

Twyman says the funding will be used to complete work on the Ohakune Old Coach Road, removing some of the more difficult sections to make it accessible for all riders, and to replace 12 ageing swing bridges on the Kaiwhakauka and Mangapurua sections.

"The new funding will absolutely help to improve the accessibility of our trails and make them a better, more exciting, safer, more resilient

experience," she told Local Democracy Reporting.

More than 56,000 journeys are made annually across the Mountains to Sea - Ngā Ara Tūhono network, supporting local businesses, accommodation providers, transport operators, hospitality and communities across Ruapehu and Whanganui.

"These upgrades are about ensuring the trail network continues to evolve to meet growing visitor expectations while remaining safe, resilient and enjoyable for a wide range of users," Twyman said.

The work will include improved access for e-bikes and maintenance machinery.

**Turn to Page 3**



Funding for the Mountains to Sea - Ngā Ara Tūhono Great Ride will support surface improvements on the Ohakune Old Coach Road section. Photo supplied.

**AUTUMN ALERT**

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# Pork pie classic at the Royal

A little yellow Mini graced the foyer of the Royal Theatre in Raetihi on Saturday evening, 2 May, for the screening of the classic kiwi movie *Goodbye Pork Pie*.

"The theatre looked stunning all lit up with the Goodbye Pork pie Mini in the foyer," says Theatre trust chair Gary Griffin-Chappel.

Showing for the first time in over 40 years on the big screen at the Theatre, the audience thoroughly enjoyed the trip down memory lane of how New Zealand once was.

"The laughter throughout and an applause at the end

of the movie showed how much they enjoyed the movie, some seeing it again after so many years and others seeing for the first time, but the feedback afterwards was that it was an outstanding night."

Comments included: 'it was hilarious ... wonderful night (terrific supper)', 'such a good night, really enjoyed it and will be back'; 'Great movie, great night'.

People comment also on the warmth of the theatre, having had insulation added to the auditorium in the recent upgrades and redecoration. The theatre plans to show more

movies and bring back the nostalgia of yesteryear, with an interval part way through, though instead of ice-cream and Jaffas they offer a supper and a bar facility, so everyone can share their thoughts of the first half.

"Our grateful thanks go to Horopito Motors and museum for bringing the Pork Pie mini down for people to enjoy having their photo in," said Griffin-Chappel.

The next stage of the ongoing upgrade of the theatre is to raise \$100,000 to upgrade the sound system and stage lighting.

Over the coming months there are range of movies and events happening at the theatre, advertised in the *Bulletin's* What's On column and the theatre's Facebook page.



One of the original Goodbye Pork Pie little yellow Minis was a feature at the Royal Theatre in Raetihi recently. Photo: Theatre Trust.

# Raetihi flagpole use up for discussion



In discussions over how best to commemorate Anzac Day at the Raetihi Māori Cemetery, from left, Damien McDonnell, Matiu Haitana, Murray Haitana, Major Mark Taylor, Cr Viv Hoeta and Tony Pikari. Photo: Rabbit Nottage.

Enhancing Anzac Day commemorations at the Raetihi Māori Cemetery is the aim of discussions being held amongst local iwi, with councillor Rabbit Nottage and Major Mark Taylor, president of the Waimarino and Ohakune RSA.

The discussions have followed concerns expressed after a flagpole was installed on the hill above the cemetery.

Nottage explains that he offered the pole for the cemetery, so that the New Zealand flag could be flown at Anzac Day services.

The pole had come from the Ohakune War Memorial Gates, after it was replaced with two matching poles so that the New Zealand and Australian flags could be flown.

He said he offered the flag to Robert Williams, who regularly represents the Church at the cemetery Anzac Day service.

But some members of the community objected to the flagpole being installed.

Col Taylor attended the preliminary meeting.

"It was great listening to your kōrero and gaining a better understanding of the history and your perspective. It forms a great platform to move forward positively," said Col Taylor.

He said raising the flag on Anzac Day was to be "a genuine act meant to show respect for those that have gone before" but has "created the opportunity for deeper understanding, conversation and a chance for all to be heard and for us to move forward together".

"Should there be a flagpole? What flag should fly and why? What protocols, under whose authority?"

"We have the time to answer these questions and to do it right and we want you to be part of that conversation."

A decision on the pole is yet to be made.

## Ruapehu Events & What's On

### MAY 2026

Royal Theatre Movies, starts 7pm  
Beatles A Hard Day's Night (G) 29 May  
King Kong (1976) (PG) 30 May  
Elvis Presley Jail House Rock (G) 31 May

Vintage & Classic Auto Show 31 May  
For more information email [autoshow.at.the.park@gmail.com](mailto:autoshow.at.the.park@gmail.com)

### JUNE 2026

Royal Theatre Movies, starts 7pm  
Bruce Lee Way of the Dragon 20 June

### JULY 2026

Royal Theatre Movies, starts 7pm  
American Graffiti (M) 4 July

Mardi Gras 4 July

Tūroa Opening Day 4 July  
See [www.turoa.com](http://www.turoa.com) for details

Whakapapa Opening Day 4 July  
See [www.whakapapa.com](http://www.whakapapa.com) for details

Matariki 10 July

### AUGUST 2026

Royal Theatre Movies, starts 7pm  
Smash Palace (R16) 15 August

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LINK YOUR EVENT TO [EVENTFINDA](http://EVENTFINDA) FOR FREE

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Budget Advice - Email [waimarinobudgetservices@gmail.com](mailto:waimarinobudgetservices@gmail.com) or phone 027 259 5285.  
CCS Disability Action (Whanganui) - Sheryl Brightwell 0800-789-654  
Child, Adolescent and Sexual Health Nurse - 06-385-5019  
Child Youth and Family Service - 0508-326 459  
Churches: Anglican, 06-385-4957. Baptist, 027-206-1874. Catholic, 06-385-8858 or 027 606 5186. Gospel Chapel, 06-385-8453. Presbyterian, 06-388-0675 or 06-385-8708. Waiouru - duty chaplain 06-387-5599 ext 7031 or 021-493-692  
Civil Defence - Simon Osborne, Emergency Management Officer (EMO), RDC - 07 895 8188, or 027 220 0569. Simon. [Osborne@ruapehudc.govt.nz](mailto:Osborne@ruapehudc.govt.nz)  
CLAW community free legal advice: Whanganui 06-348-8288, 0800 00 36 36  
Doctors: In an emergency call 111. Ruapehu Health Ltd 06-385-4211  
Information Centres - Ohakune 06-385-8427, Raetihi 06-385-4805  
Mountains to Sea - Ngā Ara Tūhono - Lynley Twyman, Trail Manager, +64 21 403036  
Ngāti Rangī Community Health Centre - 06-385-9580  
Plunket Society - Plunket Nurse 06-385-5019  
Police and Search & Rescue Emergency, call 111  
Ohakune 06-385-0100, Raetihi 06-385-4002, Waiouru 06-387-6884, Military Police 0800-50-11-22  
Red Cross - 0800 RED CROSS (0800 733 27677)  
Rotary Club Raetihi - Ohakune - 027-344-5669  
Ruapehu REAP - 0800 00 REAP (0800 007 327)  
Ruapehu Maori Wardens - Email: [ruapehumaoriwardens@gmail.com](mailto:ruapehumaoriwardens@gmail.com)  
St John - in an emergency call 111  
Taumarunui Counselling Services: For confidential counselling in Waimarino phone 07-895-6393  
Victim Support Contact Centre - 0800 842 846  
Waimarino Cancer Society: Co-ordinator 06 348 7402  
Waimarino Health Care Centre - Raetihi 06-385-5019  
Waimarino Community Toy Library - [waimarinotoylibrary@gmail.com](mailto:waimarinotoylibrary@gmail.com)  
Women's Refuge - 0800-REFUGE 0800 73384

Ruapehu Mayor - Weston Kirton, enquiries to 06-385-8364 or 07-895-8188.  
Owhango-National Park Community Board:  
Peter Zimmer - Chairperson 027 479 1926; Gail Gray - Deputy Chair 027 434 6599; Anthony Gurr 021 487 742; Eddie Marsters 021 108 0279; Murray Wilson 027 542 9079; Luke Pepper - (RDC Rep) 027 329 2849  
Taumarunui/Ohura Ward Community Board:  
Molly Jeffries, Chairperson 021 431 833; Sophie Stockbridge, Deputy Chairperson 020 401 1190; Johnny Dryden 027 573 4726; Brian Portland 027 558 5585; Oriwia Wanakore 020 498 4088; Robyn Gram (RDC Rep) 027 389 1912  
Waimarino-Waiouru Community Board:  
John (Luigi) Hotter - Chairperson 027 274 2616; Stu Robinson - Deputy Chairperson 021 024 07657; Kay Henare 027 924 7252; Colin Pakai 021 091 67315; Emma Young 027 347 1457; David (Rabbit) Nottage - (RDC Rep) 021 111 6514  
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# \$2.2m boost for Mountains to Sea cycle trail upgrades

**From Page 1**  
**Widening**

Twyman said many of the Mangapurua and Kaiwhakauka bridges were historic tramping bridges and included narrow single-way swing bridges.

“While having served the trail network well over many years, [they] no longer fully meet the requirements of a modern Great Ride experience.”

Replacing and widening them would make the tracks safer and “a more fun” experience for riders, as well as allowing easier trail maintenance.

“These upgrades will bring these important structures up to contemporary New Zealand Cycle Trail Grade 3 standards.”

She said the upgrades would build on earlier investment.

“It’s about really connecting people with the whenua and the taiao we’re in – and of course the awa.

“It’s really good news, something we’ve all been working really hard on in the background and we’re grateful for the help to bring this together so we can continue growing our visitors.”

The Government announced the funding as part of a wider \$7.1 million package for six Great Rides across New Zealand.

The Mountains to Sea project will receive up to \$2.197m, co-funded through the New Zealand Cycle Trail Fund and the Department of Conservation.

The other investments, covering infrastructure and remedial projects, are for: Roxburgh Gorge Trail to close the 12 km gap in the trail (up to \$1 million); Queen Charlotte Track realignment (up to \$1,457,500); St James Cycle Trail upgrades (up to \$2,012,000); Otago Central Rail Trail restoration (up to \$302,000); Remutaka Cycle Trail at the Wild Coast Section, resurfacing and upgrades (up to \$165,000).

## Tourism driver

Tourism and Hospitality Minister Louise Upston said the trails were a major driver of regional tourism, helping create jobs and support local businesses.

“This investment supports the continued growth of New Zealand’s world-renowned cycle trails, one of our most successful regional tourism assets,” Louise Upston says.

“The Great Rides boost economic growth by creating jobs, supporting local businesses, and attracting new hospitality and accommodation services to set up nearby.

“They are vital to our local economies with people enjoying more than 2.5 million trips on the 23 Ngā Haerenga Great Rides of New Zealand each year and spending an estimated \$1.28 billion in the regions.”

Conservation Minister Tama Potaka said the investment will strengthen the connection between people and New Zealand’s natural environment while supporting long-term conservation outcomes.

“Our conservation estate is one of our greatest assets, and these trails give people safe, meaningful access to experience it.

“This investment supports a Bluegreen future, where we grow tourism and regional economies while protecting the natural places that make New Zealand unique.

“It also helps ensure these trails are resilient, well-maintained, and able to support both visitors and conservation outcomes for generations to come.”

## With DOC

Twyman said Mountains to Sea - Ngā Ara Tūhono was delighted to be working with the Department of Conservation to continue improving the trails.

“Both of our trails sit in national parks, and we’re delighted to be working together with the Department of Conservation to continue to bring our Great Rides to the standard that make them the best great rides they can be.”

She said the Ohakune Old Coach Road holds a special place within the New Zealand Cycle Trail story, having been the very first sections of Great Ride trail to be opened in New Zealand, by then Prime Minister John Key in July 2010.

“Its ongoing evolution reflects both the success and maturity of the Great Rides network, ensuring the trail continues to deliver a safer, more enjoyable, and more accessible experience that matches modern rider expectations while protecting its unique heritage and landscape values.”

She said DOC will manage the delivery of the upgrade programme, with the support and input of the Ngā Ara Tūhono Charitable Trust. Delivery is expected to occur over the coming winter and early summer period to maximise the benefit to the region ahead of the peak visitor season and to ensure the travel trade and operator partners can plan with greater certainty.

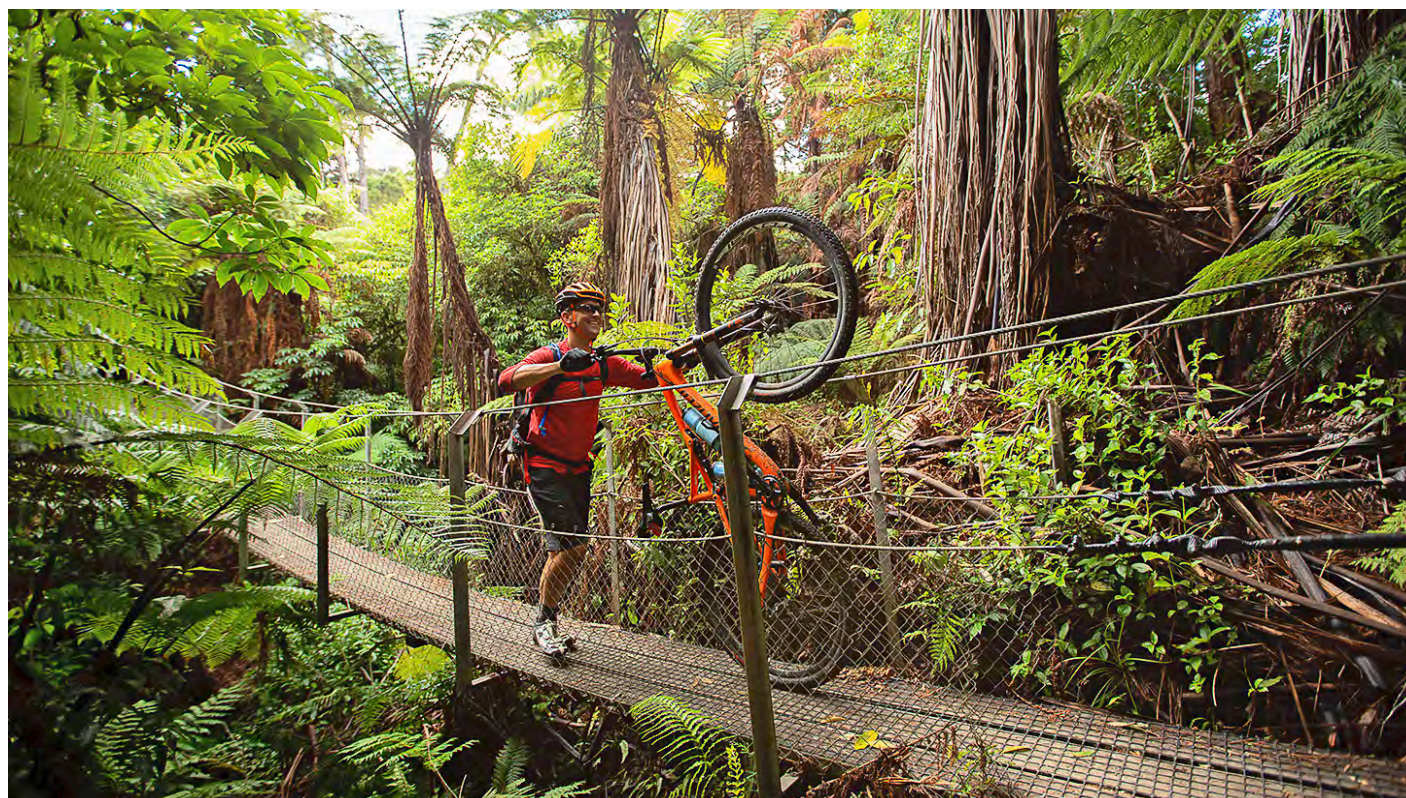
She added that the work also aligns closely with the recently tendered bridge replacement programme across the Mangapurua and Kaiwhakauka sections, which includes the replacement of existing structures with upgraded aluminium truss and timber bridges — similar to those recently installed and already being enjoyed by many users on the newly opened section of Te Hangāruru — designed to improve long-term resilience, accessibility, and visitor experience.

## Investment in people

“The upgrades represent far more than infrastructure investment alone. They are an investment in our people, our communities, and the future of our region — helping strengthen local businesses, tourism operators, visitor experiences, conservation outcomes, and employment opportunities.

“Importantly, these improvements will make a real difference ahead of the coming summer visitor season, ensuring riders, walkers, runners, and visitors continue to experience the very best of what our connected pathways have to offer.”

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



Historic single-way tramping swing bridges will be replaced on the Kaiwhakauka and Mangapurua tracks with the latest Government funding. Photo supplied.

# Ruapehu needs ‘Proactive approach to merger’

**From Page 1**

size, he said.

Kirton said he was part of the last local government reforms in 1989, when several authorities amalgamated to form Ruapehu District Council.

The 1989 reforms consolidated 850 organisations into 86 local authorities.

“That was an easier fix, joining up county and borough councils because they lived in the same area,” Kirton said.

“In this situation, you’ve got distance and communities not aligned to each other naturally.”

Kirton said councils needed to visualise what would happen after the Government’s Local Water Done Well reforms.

Water delivery was “half the income and half the debt” for the council.

“I would say we’re in a situation where amalgamation needs to be looked at on that basis alone,” Kirton said.

“Our situation, which is not unusual for small rural communities, is rates are our only form of revenue.”

Last November, the Government announced a plan to abolish elected regional councillors and replace them with Combined Territories Boards (CTBs), comprising regional mayors.

That option was scrapped after strong opposition during consultation.

The Government said new proposals must be submitted by groups of councils, not individual councils acting alone, and should focus on creating unitary authorities.

Unitary authorities combine territorial and regional councils and perform both roles in their area.

“This means combining regional and local council functions into a single organisation, reducing duplication and simplifying decision-making, and creating a structure that works better at a regional or subregional level.”

Kirton, a former Horizons regional councillor, said unitary authorities were not a new concept and operated in Auckland, Tasman and Gisborne.

But he was concerned rural communities could lose representation.

“I’m leaning towards the continuation of mayors in each of the communities and, similar to Auckland [Council], having community boards.

“We’ve got a lot of work to do and I have no idea how it’s going to unfold.”

Horizons Regional Council chairwoman Nikki Riley said she welcomed the chance “to engage in a once-in-a-generation reform for local government”.

“The regional council is ready to enable meaningful change through this process, supporting our mayors, communities and staff as we work towards unitary arrangements for our region,” she said.

“I look forward to working with our region’s leaders to see what the best model is to deliver the best outcomes for our communities.”



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# Letters

## Amalgamation force

The Government's newly announced push for forced amalgamations, alongside its wider local government reforms, represents one of the most aggressive recent attempts to centralise power and weaken community representation. These proposals are being marketed as "simplification," but the substance tells a different story: fewer elected voices, less accountability, and decisions drifting further away from the people they affect.

Abolishing regional councils and replacing them with boards dominated by mayors or appointed members was already a serious step backwards for democratic oversight. Adding forced amalgamations to the mix only compounds the problem. Amalgamation may appear tidy on a Wellington briefing slide, but on the ground, it means larger bureaucracies, diluted representation, and communities, especially rural ones, being pushed to the margins. Auckland's experience should be a cautionary tale, not a template.

What's most striking is the disregard for timing and capacity. Councils are already navigating major changes to water services, resource management, and climate-driven infrastructure demands. Forcing structural upheaval on top of this is not reform, it is destabilisation. When councils themselves warn they cannot absorb more disruption, and the response is to accelerate it, something is badly off-course.

The consultation process only deepens the concern. More than a thousand submissions raised clear, consistent warnings about democratic erosion, risks to Treaty-based relationships, and the loss of local autonomy. Yet the final proposals bear little resemblance to that feedback. Consultation is supposed to shape policy, not simply legitimise decisions already made.

And at the heart of all this sits the issue the Government refuses to confront: chronic underfunding. Councils are being asked to maintain ageing infrastructure, respond to extreme weather, and meet expanding regulatory obligations with rating bases that cannot keep pace. No amount of restructuring will fix a pipe, reinforce a stopbank, or rebuild a washed-out road. Without a sustainable funding model, these reforms are little more than political theatre.

Communities deserve reforms that strengthen democracy, not strip it back. They deserve a government that listens to evidence, not ideology. And they deserve a partnership model that respects local voices rather than overriding them. Forced amalgamations and weakened regional representation take us in the wrong direction. If we want resilient, responsive local government, we should start by empowering communities — not sidelining them.

John Chapman, Ruapehu District councillor

# Local history comes alive for Ōhura pupils



Pupils from Ōhura Primary School at the Taumarunui Rail Action Centre (TRAC) goods shed and museum, with adults, from left, Jim Austin (TRAC), Tina Bevan teacher aide, Weston Kirton and Ivan Stevens (TRAC).

Students from Ōhura Primary School enjoyed a visit to the Taumarunui Rail Action Centre (TRAC) on Tuesday (5 May), where they were welcomed by the mayor Weston Kirton and other TRAC members.

Kirton said it was wonderful to host the Ōhura students following the recent flash flooding that heavily impacted their community.

"These kids and their whānau have been through a lot over the past few weeks, so it was great to see them out enjoying themselves, learning something new, and having a few smiles and laughs along the way," said Kirton.

The TRAC Goods Shed and Museum is home to a wide range of

vintage machinery, historic rail and steam engines, carriages, rail memorabilia, and model railways celebrating Taumarunui's rich rail and pioneering history.

Kirton said the museum was always a hit with young visitors because many of the displays are interactive and hands-on.

"The students loved being able to climb inside the old railway carriages, explore the machinery up close, and see the large-scale model railway operating," he said.

"It's fantastic to have community facilities like TRAC that help bring local history to life in a fun and engaging way for our young people."

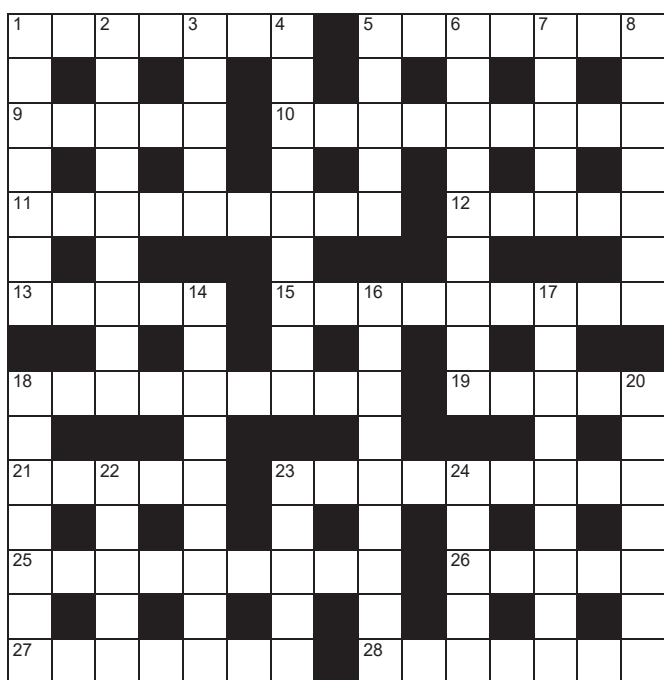
## THE WEEKLY WORKOUT answers for each puzzle are included on this page

850

### QUICK CROSSWORD

#### Across

1. Noble (7)
5. Fragrant spring flower (7)
9. In a state of excited movement (5)
10. Cuttings album (9)
11. Keep trying (9)
12. Consumed (5)
13. South American animal (5)
15. Idle or frivolous action (9)
18. Elated (9)
19. Friends (5)
21. Simple (5)
23. Duplicity (9)
25. A lengthy rebuke (7-2)
26. Grab (5)
27. Old and unsteady (7)
28. Odd (7)



#### Down

1. Surgical blade (7)
2. Take turns (9)
3. Spooky (5)
4. 24 hours ago (9)
5. Ludicrous situation (5)
6. Polite term (9)
7. Breath of contempt (5)
8. Suspiciously (7)
14. Describing word (9)
16. Preposterous (9)
17. Sustenance (9)
18. Circled around (7)
20. Open and honest (7)
22. Firm (5)
23. Shabby or untidy (colloq) (5)
24. Puzzling question (5)

### THE TOP 10

- 1 General de Gaulle, 2 Gottfried Lindauer, 3 Culture Club, 4 Space Invaders, 5 Wheelbarrow, 6 Fingerprints, 7 Rum, 8 John Brown's Body, 9 Golf, 10 Heights



Puzzles © The Puzzle Company

### SUDOKU

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

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

1 EASY 2

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

MEDIUM

### The Top 10

1. In *The Day of the Jackal*, who is the target of the assassin?
2. Who was the Czech-born artist famous for his portraits of Māori?
3. Which band asked *Do You Really Want to Hurt Me* in 1982?
4. Released in 1978, what game is credited with starting the golden age of the video games industry?
5. What is the longest common word starting and ending with the letter w?
6. Arch, whorl and loops are parts of what?
7. Captain Cook promised a gallon of what to the first man who saw land as his ship approached New Zealand in 1769?
8. Which marching song from the 1860s proclaimed: "He's gone to be a soldier in the army of the Lord"?
9. In what sport can you get a mulligan?
10. Acrophobia is a fear of what?

### CROSSWORD

- Across: 1. Stately, 5. Freesia, 9. Astrir, 10. Scrapbook, 11. Persevere, 12. Eaten, 13. Scapbook, 14. Persevere, 15. Dalliance, 18. Overjoyed, 19. Mates, 21. Basic, 23. Deception, 25. Talking to, 26. Seize, 27. Dodder, 28. Strange. Down: 1. Scalpel, 2. a, 3. Eerie, 4. Yesterday, 5. Farce, 6. Euphemism, 7. Snort, 8. Askance, 14. Adjective, 16. Ludicrous, 17. Nutrition, 18. Orbited, 20. Sincere, 22. Solid, 23. Daggly, 24. Poser.

### SUDOKU

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

# Why rates so high? Federated Farmers challenge Kirton



**Ruapehu's mayor Weston Kirton discussed rates, roads and future services with Ruapehu Federated Farmers members, including the possibility of ending maintenance on some rural roads and bridges that primarily service uninhabited forestry blocks or only a very small number of properties.**

Ruapehu's mayor Weston Kirton was a guest speaker at the Ruapehu Federated Farmers meeting on Sunday (3 May 26) where he discussed rates, roads and future services.

Federated Farmers members challenged him on why the projected average rates increase of 9 percent could not be reduced further.

Kirton acknowledged the significant contribution made by the farming sector to the district's rates base and that farmers do much of the heavy lifting.

"While many councils had rates increases of 15–20 percent in recent years, Ruapehu District Council had committed to an average increase of 9 percent over the first three years of its Long-Term Plan," he said.

He said rising costs for construction, electricity, contractors, depreciation, debt servicing and KiwiSaver contributions, all largely outside Council's control, pushed the actual rates requirement to around 15 percent.

"To bring that increase back down to our 9 percent commitment, Council needed to make a number of targeted adjustments to planned works and spending."

He said RDC carefully considered options for reducing rates below the 9 percent target but concluded the risks and future costs outweighed the short-term savings.

"A significant portion of any further reductions would have needed to come from roading, which risked network deterioration and could have affected future NZTA funding support," said Kirton.

"Significantly reducing levels of service would also require a formal amendment to the Long-Term Plan including a full audit process costing around \$400,000, which would have defeated the goal of reducing rates."

Kirton said Council was currently tracking toward an average rates increase of 8.7 percent, slightly below the 9 percent target.

"That will help ensure Council remains on a sound financial footing heading into the new 2027/37 Long-Term Plan period," he said.

Kirton said the next Long-Term Plan would be one of the most significant and consequential the district had faced, particularly given the removal of water services, rates capping, Government's announcement on council amalgamations, and ongoing financial pressures.

He said elected members and staff had already begun a comprehensive review of Council services, including how services are delivered and the levels at which they are provided.

"Council will need to make some difficult decisions about future services, and those conversations will be challenging for both Council and the community," he said.

"The reality is that we have too much infrastructure for the size of our rating base."

One issue discussed with Federated Farmers members was the possibility of ending maintenance on rural roads and bridges that primarily service uninhabited forestry blocks or only a very small number of properties.

"With such an extensive roading network, there are kilometres of low-use gravel roads and isolated bridges where reducing or stopping maintenance could potentially save ratepayers significant amounts of money," said Kirton.

He said the community has the opportunity to provide feedback on these and other potential service changes as part of engagement on the 2027/37 Long-Term Plan.

## Ohakune squash

In the final round of the Ohakune Squash Club inter-house, Karakal managed to narrowly retain their overall lead beating Head 102/86 at Raetihi. Stellar almost caught them, beating Tecnifibre 106/91 for the second place. Unsquashable beat Prince 96/82 and Dunlop beat Salming 101/96.

Final points are Karakal 725, Stellar 723, Tecnifibre 698, Salming 697, Head 664, Dunlop 664, Unsquashable 647, and Prince 557.

This week's Thursday club night sees Ohakune travel to Raetihi for the annual Club challenge.

Entries close this week for the Central Districts Masters age groups and the Central Districts junior age groups, both of which are being held at Ohakune weekend of 22/23 May. Already over 70 entries are in.

# Ōwhango whio information panel replaced

A whio information panel at the entrance to Swimming Hole, in the Ohinetonga Scenic Reserve has been replaced, after having been apparently stolen earlier, reports Ōwhango Alive.

"It was still in good order, so it seemed really strange that it was gone," said OA member Sally Lashmar.

Jenny Hayward, DOC principal ranger heritage and visitor, confirmed that DOC knew nothing about its removal.

"So the conclusion was reached that someone had decided that they wanted it more, so duly pinched it."

"It was a really big sign and would have taken quite an effort to dig it out, lug back to a vehicle and drive away with it."

The sign was originally installed in 2015, after Ōwhango Alive requested that a whio information panel be placed

at the Swimming Hole, as it is such a popular spot for visitors and locals.

"There is a strong population of whio on that stretch of the river, which are regularly seen, along with their ducklings in the spring and early summer months.

"The information on the sign gives lots of detail about whio, the fact that they are an indicator species on the health of the rivers they live on and are regularly seen at this spot."

A new whio sign was installed at the same spot last week by DOC and Ōwhango Alive would like to acknowledge this replacement.

"Much appreciation goes to Jenny for organising this and to the team of Trish, Mark and Ant who did the carrying, digging and placing."



**From left, Mark Judd, Anthony Purchase and Trish Meremere from DOC and Mark Fredericks from Ōwhango Alive with the replacement whio sign at the Ohinetonga Scenic Reserve. Photo: Ōwhango Alive.**

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# WAIMARINO BULLETIN

VOICE OF THE RUAPEHU REGION  
Tuesday 13 May, 1986. Volume 3 No. 48

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## Mill workers redundant in shutdown

Nearly 20 workers in Raetihi and Ohakune are made redundant with the closure of one timber mill and the slowdown in production at another.

Timmo's Mill at Raetihi will close this Friday while an Ohakune mill on Dreadnought Road will have its production reduced. Both are run by Bell Block Building Supplies.

Mr Mark Watchman who manages both mills said Timmo's Mill was closing because of the downturn in the building and farming industries.

Bellblock Mill in Ohakune will still operate, but with a skeleton staff. Four contractors and three wage workers lose their jobs.

The retail timber hardware outlet which was popular at Timmo's Mill will be re-established at the Ohakune mill. Mr Watchman said he would try to provide a better range of supplies for customers.

Of the 14 workers on the payroll at Timmo's Mill, 12 are made redundant and two have transferred to the Ohakune mill.

Timmo's, originally established by Mr Jack Timmo about 50 years ago, was

bought by Winstones in 1960.

However, the mill lay idle for 18 months before Bell Block took it over a year ago.

Manager of Bellblock Building Supplies in New Plymouth, Mr Sid Russell, said the closure of the mill was an example of the consequences of the downturn in the economy. He believed that other similar industries might also close soon.

He said the mills were mainly at the mercy of the farmers. "Until their economic situation improves, the mill will continue on this scale," he said.

No decision has been made about the future of Timmo's mill by Winstone Afforestation Ltd, who own the mill, and lease it to Bell Block.

Manager of Winstones Afforestation, Terry Tapp said that with the market as at present it was unlikely that his company would reopen the mill for the time being.

Several of the workers have already left and have gone deer and goat hunting. Some are believed to have jobs in the pipeline.



The "Fashion and Fun" fashion parade held at Pipers Kings Court last week was a big success. Sisters Pixie Chambers, Jocelyn Lilburn and Sonia Robb were among models to entertain. About \$1000 was raised which will go towards redecorating Ohakune School's hall.

## Minister of Defence in Waiouru

Minister of Defence Frank O'Flynn, made a familiarisation visit to Army Training Group, at Waiouru Camp last week.

He arrived at Waiouru on Monday 5 May by Airforce Andover just before the airstrip closed due to mist and drizzle.

He inspected 4 ATG Workshops guard and was given a briefing on ATG activities by camp commander, Colonel Graham Birch.

The Minister chatted with sergeants in the Sergeants Mess over morning tea.

Major David Mowatt showed Mr O'Flynn around 4ATG Workshops, explaining their functions and the work carried out there.

Mr O'Flynn also visited Waiouru Training Depot, the refurbished Officer Cadet School, the School of Armour and Waiouru's Army Museum.

The Minister viewed Officer Cadets' minor training tactics at Helwan satellite camp and had lunch with ATG Officers.

Chief of Staff, Lieutenant-Colonel Russell Martin said after the visit that it was very important for the Minister to keep contact with working levels of the Army.

## Problems for Waimarino radio

Waimarino residents will probably have to wait at least a year before a permanent radio station can be clearly heard here.

Wanganui radio 2ZW and Palmerston North's 2XS are competing to put repeaters in the area so their stations can be heard.

The matter of which station gets a warrant to broadcast here is up to the Broadcasting Tribunal.

The Manager of 2ZW, Mr Godfrey Gray, said that when 2ZW applied for a warrant to broadcast in the Waimarino 2XS filed a notice of interest which meant that a defended hearing was necessary.

A date has not been set for the hearing but Mr Gray said it would not be until later this year or next year.

Managing director of Palmerston North's 2XS, Mr Larry Summerville, said his station had been interested in the Waimarino for a number of years.

The station ran Mountain Radio in the area about four years ago for two winters. If 2XS were to be granted the warrant the sound heard from Waimarino radios would be stereo FM.

The Broadcasting Corporation's repeater for 2ZW however, would relay FM mono sound.

Mr Summerville said that the quality of FM stereo would be much better. In the meantime, radio listeners can look forward to the return of Ruapehu Radio during the ski season.

## 'Chills off' warm up

"Chills Off" is the name of the fundraising campaign about to start to pay for the enclosure of Raetihi Baths.

The enclosed pool could be used year round instead of for only two or three summer months.

A committee of enthusiastic people has planned a lavish cabaret to kick off the fundraising on 21 June.

The evening, to be held at Raetihi School hall, will include a band, supper and

floor show. Committee Chairman, Lance Langdon said the show would be very up-market.

A raffle is also being organised. The prize includes return air tickets to Auckland, a night in an expensive hotel, and fares on the Casino Royale gambling vessel for two, plus \$500 spending money.

Donations to "Chills Off" of stock from local farmers and cash are already coming in.

## Children farewell principal

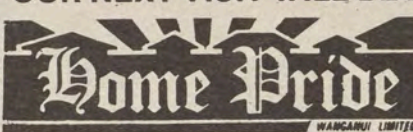


Ohakune Primary School principal, Bill Taylor was farewelled by the school last Thursday. He is pictured holding one of the many gifts he received, this one from the Karioi bus children. Pupils with Mr Taylor are, from left, Scott Wise, Pikamai Mareikura, George Wilson, Lee Akapita and Shane Darbyshire.

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The news, 40 years ago. The other pages and other Bulletins can be found at the Papers Past website, paperspast.natlib.govt.nz

# Raurimu railcar ride for Mother's Day

A 1938 railcar was the Mother's Day ride for a sold-out excursion to the Raurimu Spiral on Sunday.

RM31 Tokomaru – a vintage railcar owned by the Pahiatua Railcar Society – was brought up from Pahiatua for the event.

The Society president said they could have run three more trips if time had allowed. He said they will return with a longer stay time next time, perhaps overnight.

The Railcar was built at the Hutt Valley work shops in 1938 and generated a large interest from the locals.

The MTRO museum was open and many passengers were interested in the Tangiwai display.

The day consisted of a return day trip from Pahiatua to Ohakune, with seats then available on to the Spiral.

## Unique day

"Whether you are a railway enthusiast, a lover of New Zealand history, or simply looking for a unique and memorable day out with family and friends, this journey offers a front-row seat to the stunning landscapes of the North Island," says the Society's publicity.

"Travelling in a vintage standard railcar is a completely different experience from a modern train ride:

"The Nostalgic Soundtrack: feel the rhythmic clatter of the tracks and listen to the distinctive hum of the twin diesel engines – a sound that defined provincial travel in mid-20th century New Zealand.

"Intimate charm: With limited seating, the RM31 offers a cozy, community atmosphere. It's a fantastic way to mingle with fellow passengers and the passionate volunteers who keep this incredible machine running."

Six 'Standards' were built in the NZR Hutt Workshops in 1938 and 1939, each with a semi-streamlined design featuring slanting ends. Each car had two compartments, the larger with 36 seats (second class) and the smaller with 12 seats (first class) or 16 seats (second class).

The first two railcars were initially first and second class, but later became second-class only. The other railcars were always second-class in both compartments.

Driving controls were located at each end of the railcar so that they did not have to be turned at terminals. Each was powered by two diesel engines, mounted on the bogies. They wore out three sets of engines; the

original Leyland engines were replaced with Meadows engines.

The original silver body colour with a green stripe was inconspicuous, and was soon replaced

by plain red with grey or black roofs. In 1951, the Standard railcars became red with silver (later white) stripes and a grey roof as used on other railcar types and some locomotives.

All six of the Standard railcars were named after Māori canoes:

The Standard railcars were withdrawn in 1972, and two-thirds of the class have been preserved.



Railcar RM31 Tokomaru stops at the Ohakune Station on Sunday. Photo: Opus Fresh, who provided coffee for the visiting passengers.

# Spruce up for Mangatepopo Hut



Mangatepopo Hut has had a spruce up to weather the winter thanks to volunteers from the Backcountry Trust Aotearoa/New Zealand. Volunteers Graham, Mark, Aaron and Sally were joined by some DOC Tongariro team to touch up the paint job on this well-loved hut. "Thanks also go to our partners at Dulux New Zealand who supplied the paint to ensure the hut is ready to endure the rain/snow/hail/wind of a Tongariro winter. Photo: DOC.

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# Celebrating Mervyn and Lesley's Ōwhango Alive work

When Ōwhango Alive was first formed in 2011, Mervyn and Lesley Aitken were keen to be involved with developing an Ōwhango conservation group with the founders.

As time went by, Mervyn became treasurer and, for over 10 years, crunched the numbers.

Lesley was always supportive of the group's endeavours, helped write articles and generally "got stuck in", says member Sally Lashmar.

Merv and Lesley became very involved

with the group, attended working bees to clear weeds, plant trees, join workshops and offer support and ideas as the group grew. Mervyn attended all World Rivers Day celebrations and, along with iwi, offered a blessing of the area, the river and the people gathered.

After 15 years of their involvement, Merv and Lesley are now leaving Ōwhango village to reside permanently at their Wellington home.

There were many farewells for them, as both were very involved with the Ōwhango and Taumarunui communities.

A kowhai tree was presented to them at a farewell, which they took down to the car park at the Whakapapa Bridge to choose a planting spot.

"It was a simple gesture to acknowledge all the heart and soul they had put into helping Ōwhango Alive grow to the conservation group it is now.

"Thank you Merv and Lesley and may you enjoy your next chapter in a colourful life – and do come and visit us from time to time."



Mervyn and Lesley Aitken, staunch supporters of Ōwhango Alive.



## Wheelchair roundabout ready to ride

Ohakune's Charlie Gilbert has been having fun on the new wheelchair roundabout at the Ohakune Carrot Park, which was installed in April, after determined fundraising by Park Trustee Peggy Frew. Peggy said they were finally successful in gaining a Lotteries grant, after five attempts. She said other supporters included LKNZ lodge and cafe. Photo: Jessica Gilbert.



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# Police make Ruatiti murder arrest

Police confirmed on Thursday that a 30-year-old man had been arrested and charged in relation to the deaths of Brendon and Trina Cole on Murumuru Road in December 2025.

Detective Inspector Gerard Boutery says this arrest represents a significant milestone for the investigation team and Police are pleased to have this result for the Brendon and Trina's families.

"While this is a great result, considerable work remains and investigators will continue to pursue all outstanding lines of enquiry.

"We acknowledge that there are members of the public who may have information relevant to this investigation that has not been shared with us.

"We strongly encourage anyone who has information or knowledge of this incident, including the events, movements, or items involved, to contact us if they have not yet done so."

As part of enquiries, Police have identified that a semi-



automatic shotgun should have been at the Murumuru Road address, but this was not located during the initial scene examination or in subsequent searches. Investigators believe the firearm may have been modified, with the end of the barrel cut down.

While Police have not yet located the shotgun, the recovery of this firearm remains a priority.

Police are also in the process of completing a search at the Murumuru Road scene as part of the ongoing investigative work. This activity is being conducted to ensure all potential evidential opportunities are thoroughly examined as the investigation progresses.

"We want to reassure the community that this investigation is ongoing and remains active."

"The cooperation shown by the community has been invaluable during our investigation, and we thank them for their support.

"We continue to follow all lines of enquiry and carefully assess information as it is received. We are committed to ensuring the safety of the wider community and at this stage, there is no information to suggest any ongoing risk to the general public."

The 30-year-old man appeared in Whanganui District Court on Thursday last week charged with two counts of murder. He was granted interim name suppression and was remanded in custody until his next appearance on 22 May.

Information can be provided through 105, either online or over the phone, referencing file number 251213/6207 or Operation Murumuru.

Alternatively, people can provide information anonymously through Crime Stoppers on 0800 555 111.

**Brendon and Trina Cole**

# Conservation Reform Bill will 'boost economy and protect nature'

## Tongariro Alpine Crossing charges coming for international visitors

Faster decisions, more jobs, and stronger protection for nature are at the centre of a landmark overhaul of New Zealand's conservation system, Conservation Minister Tama Potaka says.

The Government has lodged the Conservation Amendment Bill to modernise how conservation land is managed, support economic growth, and improve environmental outcomes.

"This is the most significant reform of conservation legislation in nearly 40 years.

"Tourism on conservation land generates around \$5.3 billion a year and supports jobs across the country. More than 1600 businesses operate on or around conservation land, contributing to regional economies and local livelihoods.

"But the system has not kept pace. The Conservation Act is nearly 40 years old, and outdated rules and slow processes have created unnecessary cost and delay.

"These changes mean less red tape,

faster approvals, and more investment into biodiversity, tracks, huts, and visitor infrastructure."

Potaka says the reforms will make it faster and easier to get concessions by removing unnecessary rules and lodged exempt and pre-approved activities. Up to 30 to 40 percent of applications will no longer require individual processing.

A new National Conservation Policy Statement will replace overlapping plans, providing clear national direction and greater consistency.

The Bill will:

- support economic growth and regional jobs on conservation land
- cut red tape and speed up decision-making
- reinvest revenue directly into conservation and visitor infrastructure
- provide clearer, more consistent processes for applying Treaty obligations

Turn to Page 12

**Ruapehu Bulletin**

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**PUBLIC NOTICES**

**Opera at Taihape I Puritani (Bellini)**

Thursday 21 May - 4pm, Taihape Majestic Theatre  
Contact Di 0211 657 343 for more information. Transport available.

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**Ruapehu Mayor Weston Kirton**

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



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**BUSINESS NOTICES**

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**PUBLIC NOTICES**

**RAETIHI Country Market**  
**Saturday 16 May**  
at The Centre, Seddon St until 1pm  
For stall info phone Angel 0274 316 327  
Only \$10 per stall – third Saturday of each month

**Notice of Annual General Meeting 2026**

**Dream Makers Charitable Trust**  
advice on Annual AGM

Friday 5th June 2026  
10.00am – 12pm  
52 Seddon Street, Raetihi

All welcome.

**Rating Information Database Inspection & Objection**

The Rating Information Database (RID) records all the information about properties necessary for the setting and assessment of rates.

Once the 2026/27 Annual Plan is adopted the Funding Impact Statement will be applied to the information in the RID to determine rates for the 2026/27 year.

Pursuant to s.28 of the Local Government (Rating) Act 2002 (the Act), the RID for the Ruapehu District is currently available for inspection.

The RID will be available for inspection on Council's website: [www.ruapehudc.govt.nz/our-services/rates/rating-information-database](http://www.ruapehudc.govt.nz/our-services/rates/rating-information-database) or individual properties in the RID can be requested at all Council service centres:

- Taumarunui, 59-63 Huia Street 8.00am-5.00pm
- Ohakune, 37 Ayr Street 8.30am-5.00pm
- Raetihi, corner of Duncan and Seddon Streets 8.30am-4.00pm

Information on individual properties in the RID will be posted, faxed or emailed (pdf format) to ratepayers upon request. Pursuant to s.29 of the Act, ratepayers may object to the completeness and correctness of the information in the RID. An objection form is available and ratepayers need to submit any objection to the RID with Council by Friday 12 June 2026.

Objections received by this date that result in a correction to the RID may affect the 2026/27 rates set. Objections received after this date that result in a correction may not be applied until the following rating year (2027/28).

If an owner wishes their name, postal address or both to be withheld from the RID, a written application pursuant to s.28C(2)(a) of the Act must be submitted to Council.

**QUERIES:**

Any queries on the Rating Information Database please contact the Rates Team on 07 895 8188.



**PUBLIC NOTICES**

**Hui a Hapu Ngati Hineraro Karanga Mai**

Sunday 17 May, 10am  
105 Seddon Street, Raetihi

Ki nga uri o Toitaha Haweia

Ihakara rangiahua Takana rangitauria

Agenda:

Assert the mana of Ngati Hineraro

Contact Damion McDonnell on 0272044 987

**Ruapehu District Council**  
**Te Kaunihera-ā-Rohe o Ruapehu**  
**Boards and Committees**  
**UPCOMING MEETING DATES**



Agendas are published on our Public Portal two working days before each scheduled meeting.

To speak at our Public Forum and share your thoughts directly with Elected Members, please contact our Governance team at [governance@ruapehudc.govt.nz](mailto:governance@ruapehudc.govt.nz).

**Taumarunui-Ōhura Community Board**

5PM, Thursday 14th May 2026  
Miriama Community Centre, 10 Miriama Street, Taumarunui

**Extraordinary Risk & Assurance Committee**

**NEW START TIME:** 11:30 AM, Monday 18 May 2026  
War Memorial Hall, 149 Hakiha Street, Taumarunui

**Ruapehu District Council**

10AM, Wednesday 27 May 2026  
War Memorial Hall, 149 Hakiha Street, Taumarunui

**MEETING CONTACTS**

Ruapehu District Council	07 895 8188
Taumarunui-Ōhura Community Board	
Molly Jeffries, Chairperson	021 431 833
Ōwhango-National Park Community Board	
Peter Zimmer, Chairperson	027 479 1926
Waimarino-Waiouru Community Board	
John (Luigi) Hotter, Chairperson	027 274 2616
Risk & Assurance Committee	
Philip Jones, Chairperson	027 499 9408

**Mangamingi Pa Trust**  
**Special Meeting**  
**Rapana Paora Whanau Trust**  
**Special Meeting**  
**Reureu 1 Sub 20A Trust**  
**Special Meeting**  
**Mangamingi Farm Trust**  
**Special Meeting**

Saturday 20th June 2026 – 10am  
Mangamingi Pa, Ohakune Road, Raetihi

- Agenda:  
Karakia  
Apologies  
Minutes  
Matters Arising  
General Business  
Election of Offices  
Karakia

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**PUBLIC NOTICES**

**PROPOSED ROAD CLOSURE FOR OHAKUNE MARDI GRAS 2026**



Pursuant to the Local Govt. Act 1974 Sec 342 Schedule 10 notice is hereby given that the Ruapehu District Council for the purpose of holding Ohakune Mardi Gras on Saturday 4 July 2026 is proposing to close the following streets:

**Mardi Gras Main Event:**  
**Saturday 4 July 2026 3pm – 11pm**

- Part of Thames Street from Mangawhero Terrace - one lane closure:  
Sunday June 28th 7am - Friday 3rd July 7am
- Thames Street from Mangawhero Terrace to Rimu Street - full closure:  
Friday 3rd July 7am - Saturday 4th July 7am (leaving Rimu Street open for access to the Train Station)
- Thames Street, Tyne Street, Rimu Street, Uthua Place and Ohakune Station Road - full closure:  
Saturday 4th July 7am - Sunday 5th July 1am
- Mangawhero Terrace and Miro Street at Lee Street Intersections - resident vehicle access only:  
Saturday 4th July 1pm - Sunday 5th July 1am
- Thames Street from Mangawhero Terrace to Rimu Street - full closure:  
Sunday 5th July 1am - Monday 6th July 7am (leaving Rimu Street open for access to the Train Station)
- Part of Thames Street from Mangawhero Terrace - one lane closure:  
Monday 6th July 7am - Tuesday 7th July 7am

Detours will be in place. Resident access: Controlled road closure points will be in place throughout the event period as stated above. Resident access to properties within the closure area will be managed by traffic management staff.

Any person objecting to the proposal is called upon to lodge notice of their objection and grounds thereof in writing before 5pm on Wednesday 24 June 2026 at the office of Ruapehu District Council at Private Bag 1001, Taumarunui 3946 or [info@ruapehudc.govt.nz](mailto:info@ruapehudc.govt.nz).

**Community and Emergency Services**

- Alzheimers Whanganui Inc – Email [admin@alzheimerswhanganui.org.nz](mailto:admin@alzheimerswhanganui.org.nz) or for support phone 06-345 8833  
Budget Advice – Email [waimarinobudgetservices@gmail.com](mailto:waimarinobudgetservices@gmail.com) or phone 027 259 5285.  
CCS Disability Action (Whanganui) – Sheryl Brightwell 0800-789-654  
Child, Adolescent and Sexual Health Nurse – 06-385-5019  
Child Youth and Family Service – 0508-326 459  
Churches  
Anglican, 06-385-4957. Baptist, 027-206-1874. Catholic, 06-385-8858 or 027 606 5186. Gospel Chapel, 06-385-8453. Presbyterian, 06-388-0675 or 06-385-8708. Waiouru – duty chaplain 06-387-5599 ext 7031 or 021-493-692  
Civil Defence – Simon Osborne, Emergency Management Officer (EMO), RDC – 07 895 8188, or 027 220 0569  
CLAW community free legal advice  
Whanganui 06-348-8288, 0800 00 36 36  
Doctors: In an emergency call 111  
Ruapehu Health Ltd 06-385-4211  
Information Centres – Ohakune 06-385-8427, Raetihi 06-385-4805  
Mountains to Sea – Ngā Ara Tūhono – Lynley Twyman, Trail Manager, 021 403036  
Ngati Rangi Community Health Centre – 06-385-9580  
Plunket Society – Plunket Nurse 06-385-5019  
Police and Search & Rescue Emergency, call 111  
Ohakune 06-385-0100, Raetihi 06-385-4002, Waiouru 06-387-6884, Military Police 0800-50-11-22  
Red Cross – 0800 RED CROSS (0800 733 27677)  
Rotary Club Raetihi – Ohakune – 027-344-5669  
Ruapehu REAP – 0800 00 REAP (0800 007 327)  
Ruapehu Maori Wardens – Email: [ruapehumaoriwardens@gmail.com](mailto:ruapehumaoriwardens@gmail.com)  
St John – In an emergency call 111  
Taumarunui Counselling Services  
For confidential counselling in Waimarino phone 07-895-6393  
Victim Support Contact Centre – 0800 842 846  
Waimarino Cancer Society  
Co-ordinator 06 348 7402  
Waimarino Health Care Centre – Raetihi 06-385-5019  
Waimarino Community Toy Library – [waimarinotoylibrary@gmail.com](mailto:waimarinotoylibrary@gmail.com)  
Women's Refuge – 0800-REFUGE 0800 73384  
To update your details call 06-385-8532



# RUAPEHU SNOW BULLETIN

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**[www.ohakune.info](http://www.ohakune.info) 56 Clyde Street, Ohakune**



# Rescue plan for Mardi Gras for 2026

A deal between Audiology and the new trustees of the Ohakune Events Charitable Trust, brokered by Tūroa's Cam Robertson means the Ohakune Mountain Mardi Gras will go ahead for 2026 – with tickets going on sale last Friday.

The Trust had earlier announced that the Mardi Gras would not be going ahead this year, stating that they had been unsuccessful in gaining financial statements from Audiology from past events. The Trust said they needed financial information so they could lodge their statements with the Charities Register, as they are legally required to do.

Soon after the Trust, under the previous chair Emma Young, announced that the event would not go ahead for 2026, Cam Robertson from Pure Tūroa, formed a new company, Ohakune Boost, to keep the Ohakune Mardi Gras going this year.

Since then, Robertson, Audiology and the Trust, under new trustees, have signed a deal to allow Boost and Audiology to run the event this July.

"The horse attempted to bolt, but we got

it back," new trust chair Janelle Hinch told *Newsroom*.

"Because the timeframes were just so short, we didn't really have much of an option."

The deal is just for this year and insulates the trust from incurring any further losses.

Over the previous three years, the Trust had lost around \$121,000 – just under \$50,000 in 2023, around \$20,000 in 2024, and over \$50,000 in 2025.

In previous four years, the Trust made between \$50,000 and over \$100,000. Profits, when made from the Mardi Gras, have been used to help establish other events and to support local community groups.

Hinch says the trust will still be looking into concerns about Audiology's financial transparency.

"To clean up any historical issues, we are engaging with our accountants and Audiology, working together for an amicable and equitable resolution. We expect this to be remedied soon," she told *Newsroom*.

"I also want to reiterate that there are no ac-

cusations of malice."

The Trust intends to put the event out to open tender for management.

Mitch Lowe from Audiology says the company and the Trust share in the risk of the event equally.

"And obviously there were many, many years of significant profit, and when the times are tough, this is actually a relatively minor loss in proportion, and they haven't paid us that in almost a year."

Robertson said the issue was between the Trust and Audiology.

"If I can help as an intermediary, then absolutely."

"I just said, let's just get it done this year, and then we can sort out the long-term plan of it after that," Robertson says.

"It's just too important to the town to lose an event that's been built up over 30 years."

Pure Tūroa is providing a lift day pass with each Mardi Gras ticket in a bid to help sales.

For the full *Newsroom* report, go to [newsroom.co.nz](http://newsroom.co.nz).

# Conservation reform

From Page 9

"New Zealanders shouldn't have to choose between protecting nature and growing the economy, this Bill delivers both.

"It supports jobs, improves visitor experiences, and protects the places New Zealanders value."

## Visitor access charges

The Bill will also enable international visitor access charges at a small number of highly visited sites.

"Just like when Kiwis travel overseas and pay to access national parks and visitor sites, these changes will allow a suitable contribution from international visitors using some of New Zealand's most iconic conservation locations.

"This is expected to raise around \$60 million a year, which will be reinvested back into conservation, biodiversity protection, heritage sites, tracks, huts, and visitor infrastructure. New Zealanders will continue to have free access."

All activities will continue to be subject to clear statutory safeguards.

The Bill will now progress through the legislative process, including select committee, where New Zealanders will have the opportunity to provide feedback.

# Last chance Saturday for Ruapehu for 1<sup>st</sup> Division

By Jared Smith

McCarthy's Transport Ruapehu are running out of runway to lift off and remain in the WRFU's top division as Dave Hoskin Carriers Marist showed their class with a big 60-15 win at Spriggens Park on Saturday.

Scoring ten tries to three, Marist's speed to reach the fringes in the first half, where they ran up nearly a half century of points, was truly impressive, especially as they took a 'no risk' approach by resting certain standout players who have picked up injuries in the last fortnight.

Lock Rongomai McLean-Wanoa continues what could truly be his breakout season as he covered not only the tough stuff against an always-rugged Ruapehu pack, but also showcased his speed and offload skills across the park to have a hand in so many key plays.

Marist's outside back three had the platform and the wind at their backs to cause havoc, and they didn't disappoint – American import winger Jacob Barry scored a hat-trick, including an excellent chip and chase, while laying on assists for his opposite, Ioane Hough-Aki, to get a double.

Fullback Dominic Devine attacked the fringes with impunity and had lots of goal-kicking practice, finishing with a 15-point haul.

Other standouts were hooker Atriane Marino with a double, while in the absence of two injured halfbacks, Wineti McDonnell stretched his versatility to cover the No. 9 jumper, while Paiki Ponga took over as chief playmaker at first-five.

## Hurt pride propelling

Come the second half, with the change of ends and hurt pride propelling them, the predominantly young Ruapehu team finally began to shut down Marist's rapid transfers and got back to their preferred game of solid carries through the middle.

The Te Riaki brothers – centre Tahatika and try-scoring flanker Te Orangi – were excellent in both halves of football while reserve halfback

Archie Harding unleashed his speed to score two tries, with the second being a straight 75m drag race after stealing a loose ball at the back of an attacking Marist scrum.

Mathematically, seventh-place Ruapehu still have a slim chance of 'beating the drop' as the sixth team, Silk Audit Rata-tier Championship grade, coach Chris Winter is thinking long term.

"We're stoked with how the boys are going, especially how young our team is, and we've had seven or so injuries during these games.

"But the boys who have stepped in and come to training, it's been good – a good learning curve and good for the future.

"Probably us adapting to [Marist's width attack] a lot quicker would have been better for us today.

"I thought the second half, the attitude changed a bit, the boys actually came on and played well – it was good to see."

Marist coach Steelie Koro concurred despite the big scoreline.

"Don't take anything away from Rua; they got a good, young team, and I believe in another year or so they'll probably be the team to look out for.

"They stayed in the fight and came back in the second half, so credit to them.

"Game of two halves, and I said to the boys – 'when balls stick, you start trusting the game plan that we set out,' and we're playing the rugby we want to play."

Koro was delighted that, despite a few chops and changes with certain players, the first-half attack flowed so well.

"During the week, it was a bit of a headache, trying to work out how to keep connections and keep the same game plan with a few people not playing.

"But it gave us a good look at certain players, obviously – Wineti playing halfback and coming up from Celtic, so that was a big void to fill, and a couple of other young fellas putting their hands up.

"It's good to see we got some depth."

Koro also heaped praise on McLean, who should no longer be Marist's best-kept secret.

"He's playing some great rugby, and is still trying to find his feet too because naturally he's a loosie, but still filling the void in the lock position, and that's the benefit we have with our players – versatility."

Ponga took charge early with a line break and chip ahead to the far corner, with Barry coming back on the second bounce to snatch it and score, Devine adding a good conversion.

The forwards then had their say. Following a couple of penalties, Marino charged over off a quick tap for 14-0 in 12 minutes.

Ruapehu replied through the Te Riaki brothers as Tahatika made a good line break, and when the cover caught him just short, the ball was transferred out to Te Orangi to score on the fringes.

Marist just lifted up another couple of notches off their set piece, following a penalty lineout, the pack drove on McLean-Wanoa and transferred back to Marino to dive in on the blindside, and then from an attacking scrum, Barry joined the backline for the extra man overlap and put Aki clear down the touchline to bring up the bonus point in just 25 minutes.

Second-five Shaun O'Leary made a strong run into Ruapehu's half, and from a penalty at the breakdown, he took a quick tap to keep going, with McLean-Wanoa taking off from the ruck down the blindside to race to the tryline corner flag.

Marist's ability to get from one touchline to the other fringe was too quick for Ruapehu, which was on show again, as after a penalty for a late tackle on Barry, a quickly spread ball saw Ponga run through a half-gap, and when scragged popped the pass up for Aki to dive over.

The hits just kept coming as from the restart, Barry got the ball on the far touch and this time could chase his chip kick to collect the high bounce in-goal and dive quickly to get it down before the dead-ball line for a spectacular try.

Ruapehu looked shell-shocked as a penalty had them back in their danger zone, and Marist swept to both sides before Devine just bumped his way through two tacklers to cross the try line and head back towards the posts for a simpler conversion at 48-5 on halftime.

But the river of points was finally dammed with the change of ends, while Marist also started to make personnel changes, and Harding caught them napping as he regathered an overthrown lineout and took off on an angled run to clear defenders and score a surprise try.

Marist now had to work harder to get into attacking position, and when the ball was bobbled at the back of a scrum, Harding came through again to steal in and take off for a 75m foot race, Barry closing on him but not enough to stop the try in the corner and raise hopes of securing an important Ruapehu bonus point.

But it was not to be as finally in the 70th minute Marist found the tryline again, as following an attacking lineout the ball was transferred to the near side touch and Devine fended off his marker and committed the cover to put Barry over clean in the corner for his hat-trick.

Impact reserve Ratu Epeli Delasau thought he had scored when he got put clean through a gap to the posts, only to be called back for a Ruapehu scrum, but it was only a temporary reprieve as, following a Marist 5m scrum, Delasau pulled himself through two tacklers to get his try with less than a minute remaining.

Marist 60 (J Barry 3, A Marino 2, I Aki 2, R Mclean-Wanoa, D Devine, R Delasau tries; Devine 5 con) bt Ruapehu 15 (A Harding 2, T Riaki tries). HT: 48-5.

## Next Saturday

It is now sudden death time for the Ruapehu side in the race to avoid Division 1 relegation as they host Wanganui Car Centre Kaierau at Rochfort Park this Saturday.

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