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Ruapehu Bulletin

24 June 2026
Issue No 2111

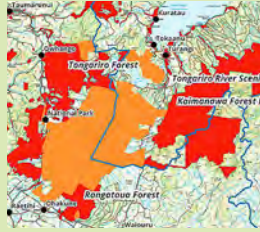
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Pool plan on hold P3



Maori music gift for museum P5



F&B maps DOC land change plan P12



Ruapehu rolls up sleeves for win P12

Eruptions recalled: 'I was in awe'

By Moana Ellis, Local Democracy Reporter

'I cried. I was in awe': The day Ruapehu erupted, told by those who saw it.

Thirty years on, eyewitnesses remember not fear, but awe.

When Ruapehu erupted on September 23, 1995, Korty Wilson wasn't afraid.

Standing on her ancestral mountain on a beautiful evening, she watched the volcano explode into life after months of restlessness.

"I cried because I felt overwhelmed. I felt like I was in the right place at the right time. I was in awe," Wilson remembers.

"I couldn't hear anything. I just saw 'boom!'



"It was actually awesome to be there, seeing what was happening. It was special."

Around her, others reacted very differently.

"Some people were a bit afraid. People were running and screaming."

Wilson was working at the time as a Tūroa snow hostess.

Three decades later, Wilson was among scientists, emergency managers and iwi representatives gathered at Maungarongo Marae in Ohakune to mark 30 years since



Dr Harry Keys – has spent decades studying and experiencing the Ruapehu volcano. Photo: Moana Ellis.

the 1995-96 Ruapehu eruptions and reflect on the lessons learned.

For Wilson, of Ngāti Rangi – an uri (descendant) of Te Whare Toka o Paerangi (Paerangi's House of Stone) – the experience was shaped by a lifelong relationship with the mountain.

"He's our koro," she said. "We've known this since we were probably in our mum's womb."

Her sister Deanna Wilson remembers watching the eruption from her mother's home.

"We saw the black lahar going down the left-hand side of the maunga," she said. "We were just in awe, calling out to each other, 'Come and have a look'."

The memories stand in contrast to the violent forces being released on the mountain's summit.

Escalating activity

Harry Keys, then a Department of Conservation scientist, remembers months of escalating activity before the major September eruption. Smaller eruptions, including one on 18 June, had unleashed a series of avalanches.

Then, at three minutes before 5pm on 23 September, the volcano unleashed one of the most dramatic eruptions in

its recent history.

"I was with my wife and our two boys, who were quite little, looking at the lahars of the previous week at Tukino," Keys said.

"As we drove off, on the Desert Road, I was thinking 'thank goodness, we've got through the day, it hasn't erupted, the skifield will be closed now."

"And then, suddenly, up it went – a jet of volcanic ash, boulders, steam and water, just flying out."

On the mountain and viewed on a clear day from miles around, the eruption was spectacular. For those tasked with public safety, it was also deeply concerning.

"Most people are not on or around the summit where the hazards are really close and intense," Keys said. "But rocks are coming out individually as well. Basically flying rocks."

The rocks were hurled more than a kilometre into the air. Some travelled as far as three kilometres from the Crater.

One landed on one of the trails on Whakapapa ski field, Keys said.

At the same time, water and debris racing down the

Turn to Page 2



Korty Wilson – was in awe of the eruptions. Photo: Robert Milne.

BRINGING GREATER ENERGY TO THE RUAPEHU DISTRICT

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FMC appalled by 'the biggest threat to outdoor recreation in 40 years'

The Federated Mountain Clubs of New Zealand (FMC) is calling for three sections of the Conservation Amendment Bill to be dropped entirely.

"Right now, DOC holds our conservation land in trust for all New Zealanders," FMC president Allan Brent says.

"This Bill starts to dismantle that. It opens the back-country to commercial development, concentrates decisions in ministerial hands and makes it far easier to sell land off permanently. New Zealanders never agreed to that trade-off."

The Bill changes the legal basis on which that land is managed, and not in the public's favour.

Buried in the Bill is a purpose change that was never publicly consulted on, says FMC. The government is requiring economic use and development of conservation land to be enabled "to the greatest extent practicable."

"That runs through every level from national policy down to decisions about specific rivers, forests and mountains.

"The Bill also guts public accountability, stripping the New Zealand Conservation Authority of its power to approve how National Parks are managed and replacing it with ministerial discretion."

It also prevents consideration of recreation when selling or swapping conservation land.

"A valley floor trampers have used for generations, a river corridor that's been hunted for decades, none of that counts," says Brent.

FMC is urging the Environment Select Committee to remove the new economic development purpose from the Bill, restore the New Zealand Conservation Authority's approval role, require recreational values to be considered before any conservation land can be disposed of, and restore the disposal threshold to land with no or very low conservation value.

Submissions on the Bill close on 2 July 2026.

Pop-Up art day to celebrate new public sculpture



An example of Raynor Dunn's work: he has specialised in steel sculptures in the past.

A 'pop-up art day' is planned at the Taumarunui Art Centre on Saturday 27 June – family-friendly event that will feature hands-on creative activities and the chance to help shape a new public artwork for the district.

Attendees will be able to meet sculptor Raynor Dunn, who is creating a new piece to be installed outside the Taumarunui Art Centre on Hakiha Street. The sculpture's theme, Kotahitanga / Unity – Together We Are Stronger, reflects the strength, resilience, and shared identity of the Ruapehu community.

"We want this artwork to come from the community as much as it is for the community," says Councillor John Chapman, coordinator of the Mayoral Arts Advisory Group.

"Kotahitanga is about standing together, listening to each other and celebrating the creativity that makes Ruapehu unique. This event is a chance for people of all ages to contribute their ideas and be part of something lasting."

The project has been funded by Pub Charity and supported by Ruapehu Creative, with the Mayoral Arts Advisory Group coordinating the initiative.

The mayor, Weston Kirton, says the project reflects the district's growing commitment to arts and culture.

"Public art brings people together and strengthens the places we share. It's wonderful to see local artists, community groups, and funders working alongside Council to create something that will inspire pride for years to come.

"Everyone is welcome to attend. Bring your whānau, bring your creativity, and enjoy a relaxed community art day, including a sausage sizzle."

The event starts at 11.00am.

Ruapehu Events & What's On

JULY 2026

Royal Theatre Movies, starts 7pm American Graffiti (M)	4 July
Mardi Gras	4 July
Tūroa Opening Day See www.turoa.com for details	4 July
Whakapapa Opening Day See www.whakapapa.com for details	4 July
Puanga Night Market, Raetihi Primary School Contact kayhenare06@gmail.com or maakituatini@gmail.com	16 July
Matariki	10 July

AUGUST 2026

Royal Theatre Movies, starts 7pm Smash Palace (R16)	15 August
Winter Art Exhibition Paul Stieglbauer - paul@4thames.co.nz	23 Aug - 6 Sept

SEPTEMBER 2026

Retro Day Paul Stieglbauer - paul@4thames.co.nz	26 Sept
Waimarino Art Awards See WaimarinoArtAwards.org.nz for more information	26 Sept - 2 Oct

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Eruptions recalled: 'I was in awe'

From Page 1

slopes formed lahars that swept through parts of the ski fields below – "a major hazard".

Decision saved lives

A decision made only minutes before the eruption may have prevented a tragedy.

The high-altitude Far West T-bar on Whakapapa Ski Area had closed for the day shortly before the eruption – despite earlier plans to leave the lift open later than usual.

"That saved many lives, possibly as many as 20 lives, maybe even more," Keys said.

Had the lift remained open, skiers would probably have still been queuing or lingering on the upper slopes when volcanic bombs and ash began raining down.

"That was the closest shave. That was a very close event," Keys said.

The close call continues to trouble Keys three decades later.

"National parks are open to everyone and free to visit. It's a cherished principle," he said. "But public access can't outweigh public safety."

Whether that means closing the Tongariro Alpine Crossing, shutting ski lifts or restricting access to high-risk areas,

authorities must be prepared to act before the danger is obvious to visitors, he says.

The eruptions continued through 1996, spreading ash across a swathe of the North Island, as far as the Bay of Plenty and Whakaari, disrupting tourism, affecting infrastructure including roads, water supplies and power lines, and forcing communities to adapt to life alongside an active volcano.

Keys says a key lesson from that time is the need for fast and efficient communication.

"I'm talking about the first minutes, hour, two hours, five hours – when you've got to make a series of decisions very quickly."

But for many who live at Ruapehu's heels, the mountain remains far more than a volcanic risk.

"We don't see the maunga as a hazard," Deanna Wilson said. "When you live under an active volcano, you don't really think of the volcano as that."

"That's my maunga. He's our koro. "I mean, every day when you can see the maunga like it is today, you just feel blessed."

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

Funding for Ohakune Pools plan on hold

Funding for a project to upgrade the Ohakune Swimming Baths is on hold, local board members were advised at their June meeting.

Ruapehu District staff provided the Waimarino-Waiouru Community Board with an update on the status of external funding options for the proposed Ohakune Pools feasibility and options study.

Arnold Andrews, RDC governance manager, advised that the proposed feasibility and options study has been placed on hold pending further clarification from the Department of Internal Affairs on the new Lottery funding arrangements, from July 2026.

The Board acknowledged that RDC's application to Sport NZ for partial funding was declined at this stage, with the matter able to be reconsidered in the next financial year and/or once DIA has clarified its position.

Andrews said the Ohakune Pools Project has been identified as a matter of community interest, with further work required to

assess the feasibility, options, and potential pathway for the project.

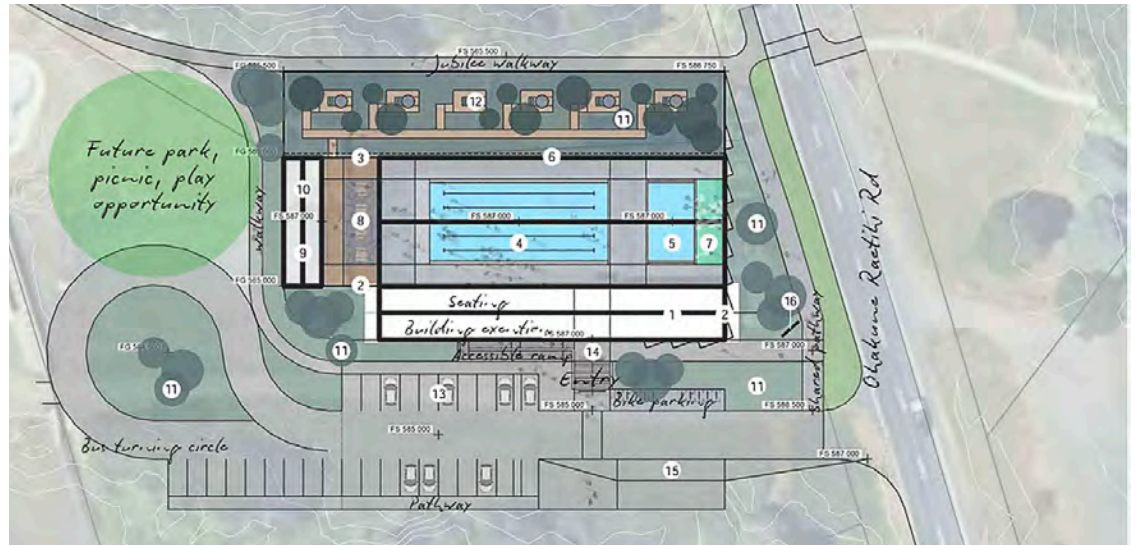
He said funding was being sought to support a study into the feasibility and options for the project.

The intent of the proposed study was to provide a clearer evidence base for future decision-making and to help determine the options available for progressing the project.

Andrews said an update was provided verbally to Dave Scott and in writing to the relevant group on 7 May 2026, to raise awareness of the situation.

He said the feasibility and options study cannot proceed as originally anticipated, due to external funding changes outside Council's control.

"Council officers will continue to monitor updates from DIA regarding the new Lottery funding arrangements. Officers will review the new funding criteria once DIA releases further information from July 2026."



Plans for redeveloping the Ohakune Swimming Baths are on hold until funding is found.

Eruption recollections at the Marae

As well as the vulcanology conference on Friday (see separate story), Maungarongo Marae hosted an afternoon session for people to share their recollections of the 1995-1996 eruptions.

Following are just some of the memories: **Merrilyn George**

Ohakune retired teacher and textile artist Merrilyn George told the gathering that on 23 September 1995, she was at a rugby game at Spriggens Park in Whanganui.

"Whanganui had beaten North Otago and I looked up at the maunga and he was erupting like, 10,000 feet.

"I was so excited. I said, Ken (Merrilyn's husband), we're not staying for the after-noon. We're going home!

"On Monday, I had several classes (at Ruapehu College). I turned the seats around, to face the mountain because I thought those kids may never ever see this again."

She said some of the kids weren't as excited as she was and that some were worried, including one who asked if she could ring her dad so she could tell him she loved him.

So they stayed facing the mountain, and the kids would say "here he goes again" and she would take her camera off outside for more photos.

Merrilyn described some of her quilts that she has created with the theme of the eruptions, including one that features excerpts from poems and stories written by some of her pupils about the events.

Johnny Nation

One speaker talked about Johnny Nation, from Skiers Inn, the Chocolate Éclair Shop, when the mountain was erupting. There was talk around town at the time about a possible evacuation.

"They're sitting outside the shop and (someone) come past and says, Johnny, aren't you gonna leave town?"

"And he says, well, those Māoris out down at the marae leave, that's when I leave.

"And he said, you want a pie?"

David 'Rabbit' Nottage

'Rabbit' Nottage was driving logging trucks at the time of the eruptions.

"I went across The Desert Road maybe eight times a day, always with my camera."

He said he had been working all week but on the weekend he was home, with his camera on a tripod.

"And whoa, you know, up she goes.

"And by the time I said that F word, all the neighbours came running out, but they missed it.

"It was that fast."

However, by the time he got his photos developed, other pictures had been all around the word.

He said he was driving trucks in the area in 1996 when Ruapehu erupted again, getting stuck in Turangi.

"We had the wipers on, the lights on – you just couldn't see in front of you.

"We had to change all the air cleaners on the trucks (because they were clogged with volcanic ash)"

Bruce Thompson

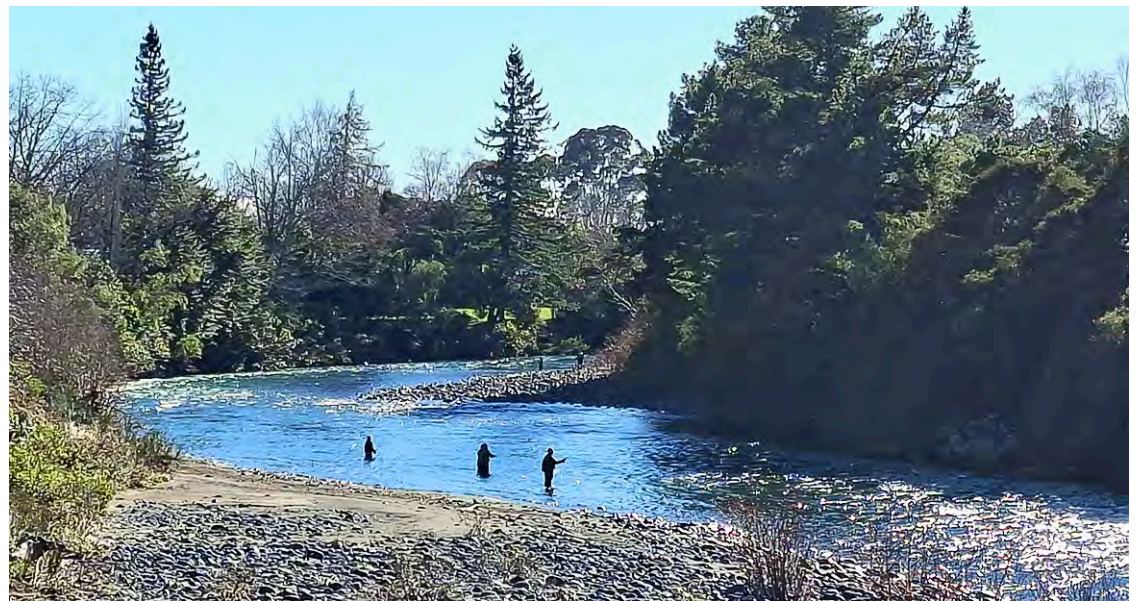
Bruce Thompson recalled memories from two eruptions and the 2007 lahar, when he was a boy; when he was a power board employee and when he was a fire fighter.

"I can remember standing at the back of the Ohakune Primary School, and the eruption happened – but this was 1945.

"It was exactly the same as 95. It was

Turn to Page 7

Regulation changes to enhance the Taupō fishery



Anglers enjoy the Tongariro River. Rules changes mean they will be able to take more trout.

Regulation changes designed to improve trout quality and benefit anglers will be in place for the start of the new fishing season, which begins on 1 July 2026.

The most obvious change for many people will be the increased 'bag limit', which increases from six to eight trout. This move aims to increase trout harvest and help maintain a healthy balance between trout and their main food source, smelt.

DOC Taupō operations manager Dave Conley says Taupō spawning streams are considered hyper-productive.

"This means recruitment of juvenile fish is extremely high, and harvest is an essential tool to keep numbers in check and maintain a healthy trout population.

"We operate a comprehensive technical monitoring programme, which guides regulation changes and helps us to focus our efforts and efficiently deliver a world class wild trout fishery.

"We also listen carefully to the angling community and a number of changes this year reflect this," Dave says.

A significant regulation change will benefit anglers at Lake Otamangakau. Next season will see the fixed February closure replaced by a more responsive management approach. Weather patterns will be closely monitored and closure decisions tailored according to the heat risk to trout.

Other minor changes are designed to simplify the regulations, making them easier to understand; for example, the regulations around soft baits have been streamlined.

Additionally, to increase fishing opportunities for anglers, fly-only restrictions have been relaxed at the underutilised Otaketake and Waitetoko stream mouths.

DOC manages the Taupō Fishing District as a sustainable wild trout fishery, which attracts thousands of anglers each year, allowing people to enjoy fishing and natur-ing in the outdoors.

Dave says fishing regulations are designed to protect the future of the fishery.

"To support the regulations we have fishery rangers out on the rivers and lakes ensuring everyone follows the rules – helping to protect the fishery we love."

DOC aims to make trout fishing in the Taupō Fishing District as affordable as possible. In line with that goal, licence fees remain unchanged from previous years, ensuring anglers can access world class trout fishing at a reasonable price.

The 2026/27 season licences go on sale 24 June – a week before the season starts.

Taupō District fishing licences are available 24-hours a day, 7 days a week from the website: www.doc.govt.nz/fishinglicence.

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Letters

Federation balance

The Government's Head Start programme asks councils to demonstrate stronger regional collaboration, but it does not require small districts like ours to give up our identity in the process. For Ruapehu, the most constructive and least risky way to meet the reform expectations is through a federation, potentially involving Taupō, Rangitikei, Whanganui, and any other neighbouring councils that see value in joining. The point is not to lock in a fixed grouping now, but to build a flexible regional partnership that strengthens capability while protecting local voice.

A federation allows councils to collaborate where scale genuinely matters—sharing specialist staff, co-ordinating infrastructure planning, and aligning long-term strategies—without forcing ratepayers into the disruption and cost of a full amalgamation. Most importantly, it preserves Ruapehu as a distinct district with its own elected members and its own mandate from its communities.

That matters. Ruapehu is not a satellite of any city. Our identity is shaped by the mountain, by strong iwi partnerships, by visitor-load roads, and by small communities that rely on local knowledge and local advocacy. These priorities are easily lost inside a large, amalgamated authority dominated by bigger population centres. Under a federation, Ruapehu remains at the table as an equal partner, not a junior member permanently outvoted on issues that affect our towns and villages.

A flexible federation also reflects the real connections across our region. Taupō's tourism economy, Whanganui's cultural and urban base, Rangitikei's rural strengths, and Ruapehu's alpine and visitor-driven identity complement each other well—and other councils could join if the model proves beneficial. This creates a balanced regional grouping without erasing the individuality of each district.

Reform should strengthen communities, not hollow them out. A federation delivers the collaboration the Government is seeking while keeping Ruapehu recognisably Ruapehu.

John Chapman, RDC councillor

Te Ara Mangawhero

To John Archer – your points about the state of Te Ara Mangawhero trail have been made repeatedly – editor.

Letters

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

Resource Recovery Centre celebrates five years with special sale

The Taumarunui Resource Recovery Centre is celebrating its fifth anniversary with a three-day sale, offering five items for five dollars over Friday 26, Saturday 27, and Sunday 28 June.

Taumarunui Resource Recovery Centre manager Emily Jasmine said the milestone was an opportunity to thank staff, volunteers, and community whose support had made the Centre's success possible.

It's a "huge thank you to everyone who has supported us on our journey towards a more sustainable and resilient Ruapehu", says Jasmine.

"From our humble beginnings operating part-time from a single 40-foot container, the Resource Recovery Centre has grown into a purpose-built facility that has diverted more than 720 tonnes of material from landfill, rehomed 388,339 items and donated \$70,000 worth of resources to community groups and projects over the last five-years.

"None of this would have been possible without the tireless efforts of our staff and volunteers, and the unwavering support of our community," Jasmine said.

Beyond reducing waste, the Resource Recovery Centre plays an important



Emily Jasmine at the Taumarunui Resource Recovery Centre, which is celebrating five years this weekend.

role in helping local people save money and access affordable goods and materials.

"Whether it's whānau facing financial pressures, people tackling home projects, or hobbyists looking for materials, the Resource Recovery Centre has become a valuable community resource.

"It's inspiring to see the incredible ways people reuse recovered materials that would otherwise have ended up in landfill," she said.

"By providing access to reusable goods and materials, produce from our garden, firewood, and other resources, we're helping whānau stretch their budgets while promoting

more sustainable consumption.

"Through promoting waste prevention, reuse, repair and recycling, we're helping build a circular economy supporting both community wellbeing and New Zealand's wider environmental sustainability goals."

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

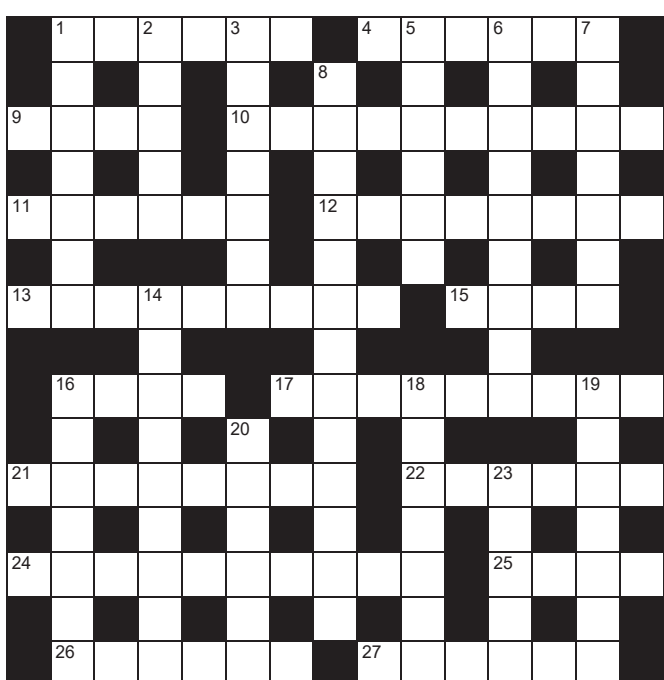
QUICK CROSSWORD

Across

- 1. Method (6)
- 4. Samples (6)
- 9. Walking stick (4)
- 10. Dried up (10)
- 11. Ship's officer (6)
- 12. Egg dish (8)
- 13. Puzzled (9)
- 15. Reasonable (4)
- 16. Complain (4)
- 17. Dim-witted or foolish person (9)
- 21. Unfounded (8)
- 22. To some extent (2,1,3)
- 24. Cocktail (4,6)
- 25. Lots (4)
- 26. Bicycle for two (6)
- 27. Hired (6)

Down

- 1. Law (7)
- 2. Searches (5)
- 3. Express support for (7)
- 5. Bewildered (6)
- 6. Distinctive characteristic (9)
- 7. Be uncomfortably hot (7)
- 8. Pancake day (6,7)
- 14. China (9)
- 16. Horse-drawn vehicle (7)



- 18. Army unit (7)
- 19. Erudite (7)
- 20. Stand for (6)
- 23. Confess (5)



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Puzzles © The Puzzle Company

SUDOKU

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

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

1 EASY 2

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

MEDIUM

The Top 10

1. Which two colours are most often confused in colour blindness?
2. My Aim Is True is which English singer-songwriter's 1977 debut album?
3. What does tempus fugit mean?
4. What is NZ's second-highest mountain?
5. Which fiction writer has sold more books than any other?
6. A range of hills between Scotland and England is also the name of a sheep breed introduced to New Zealand in 1845. What's the breed?
7. Which plant produces the drug digitalis?
8. Meryl Streep reprises her role as Miranda Priestly in what 2026 sequel to a 2006 film?
9. What was New Zealand's capital city from 1840 to 1865?
10. In one end of a curling game, how many shots does each player get?

CROSSWORD

23. Admit.
18. Brigade, 19. Learned, 20. Denote, Tuesday, 14. Forelain, 16. Charlot, Added, 6. Trademark, 7. Swelter, 8. Shrove, Down: 1. Statute, 2. Seeks, 3. Endorse, 5. Many, 26. Tandem, 27. Rented, 25. Baseless, 22. In a way, 24. Pina colada, 21. Perplexed, 15. Fair, 16. Carp, 17. Numbskull, 10. Dehydrated, 11. Pursor, 12. Omelette, 13. Across: 1. System, 4. Tastes, 9. Cane,

SUDOKU

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

Museum welcomes contemporary taonga pūoro Māori collection

By Karen Hughes

The Whanganui Regional Museum has welcomed a significant new collection of taonga pūoro (Māori musical treasures) into its collection, following support from the Blumhardt Foundation.

The collection was formally welcomed into the Museum with a special blessing ceremony attended by the artists and Museum staff.

Funded through the Blumhardt Foundation, the acquisition supports the work of contemporary New Zealand craft practitioners and strengthens the Museum's growing collection of contemporary taonga Māori.

The Museum commissioned 12 taonga pūoro pieces from Grammy Award-winning taonga pūoro producer and composer Jerome Kavanagh Poutama and his partner Ruiha Turner. In a generous gesture, the pair created and gifted a total of 16 pieces for the collection.

Both Jerome Kavanagh Poutama and Ruiha Turner are highly respected taonga pūoro practitioners and performing artists. Specially named Te Whaanau Rongoa Puoro Māori o te Ranga Tupua, the collection reflects the ceremonial and healing roles of taonga pūoro Māori (musical treasures).

Jerome Kavanagh says the collection encourages people to reconnect with taonga pūoro through a te ao Māori

perspective.

"We invite whānau to re-remember and re-indigenise the way we interact with and value our own taonga pūoro Māori through an ancestral lens, rather than through a Western mainstream art and music approach," he says.

"Ceremonial use is the primary function. Next to that, they were used to help support the hauora (health) of our people in times of old. Part of the tikanga (of the collection) is reviving that practice and maintaining the reverence and respect these taonga deserve – recognising that they are far more than musical instruments or toys."

Acting pou ārahi at Whanganui Regional Museum, Trish Nugent-Lyne, says the acquisition marks an important moment for the Museum.

"These are powerful contemporary works that connect artistry, mātauranga and cultural practice," she says.

"To welcome these taonga into the Museum through ceremony, and to receive such a significant contribution from Jerome and Ruiha in the creation of this collection, has been incredibly special."

The Blumhardt Foundation was established in 2003 in the name of Dame Doreen Blumhardt ONZ, DNZM, CBE – a passionate ceramic artist and arts educator – to support the growth and development of New Zealand craft and object art.



Jerome Kavanagh Poutama demonstrating the poi aawhiwhio at Whanganui Regional Museum. Photo: Karen Hughes/Whanganui Regional Museum.



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The Bayleys Manawatū-Whanganui regional team, spanning six offices across the region, recently came together for our annual awards celebration to recognise the outstanding people who continue to deliver exceptional results for our clients and communities.

Among the many achievements celebrated on the evening, we were proud to acknowledge Pete Stratton's contributions and accomplishments in the rural sector. Pete was recognised as Bayleys' Top-Performing Salesperson across all six of our regional offices, Top Salesperson in the Bayleys Ohakune office, Top Country Salesperson across the region, and recipient of the Highest Individual Sale award.

Bayleys Manawatū-Whanganui Regional General Manager, Rachel Thompson, says "Pete's recognition is incredibly well deserved. His consistency, professionalism, and dedication to his clients set a high standard within our industry. We're proud to have him representing our business and the rural communities we serve."

With nearly 30 years of rural real estate experience and more than four decades of hands-on farming knowledge, Pete brings a unique understanding of the rural property market to every client he works with. His success reflects the values that underpin our business, deep local knowledge, trusted advice, strong client relationships, and an unwavering commitment to achieving the best possible outcomes.

Pete's achievements are a testament to both his personal dedication and the strength of the Bayleys network that supports our clients across the Manawatū-Whanganui region. Congratulations, Pete, on an exceptional year and this well-deserved recognition.

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VOICE OF THE RUAPEHU REGION
 Tuesday 24 June 1986. Volume 4 No. 4

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More steps in councils' merger

The long-running saga of local council amalgamation in the Waimarino looks set to limp on for the foreseeable future after the Waimarino County and Ohakune Borough councils met last week.

After discussion of a letter from Brian Elwood, chairman of the Local Government Commission, the Ohakune Borough Council agreed to initiate another meeting with Raetihi Borough and Waimarino County.

The letter dated 13 June said that elections could now be held between normal triennial local government elections. Until recently it had been assumed that councillors from all three local councils would remain in office until the following triennial election.

Mayor Bill Taylor said he thought an election would be the fairest and cleanest way to solve this problem.

"But I believe it will be the triennial election after next before outstanding issues are settled," he said.

Mr Elwood's letter concluded: "If agreement cannot be reached it seems that the only option is for the commission to initiate a proposal and allow it to proceed through the statutory process."

Meanwhile at the Waimarino County Council meeting last Thursday chairman Bruce Berry presented the draft of a letter he planned to send to the Local

Government Commission.

Mr Berry referred to a letter sent to the commission by the Ohakune Borough Council on 3 June. The letter, among other matters, said that the Ohakune council was unhappy with the agreed allocation of representatives on the proposed district council of five to the county and three each to Ohakune and Raetihi boroughs.

The letter stated that Ohakune required one further seat.

Mr Berry's letter said that it was inconsistent for Ohakune to state they were unhappy with representation when they had previously agreed to 5-3-3.

"What has now been resolved should now be final," said Mr Berry.

In the original draft Mr Berry included Raetihi Borough Council in his comments. However it was decided that these be removed in the final version.

"There have been allegations that there has been collaboration between Waimarino and Raetihi councils. Sending that as a joint letter might add weight to that," said Cr Gavin Jones.

Mr Berry said in the letter that there was no gain by any council taking sides and the county never intended to have a takeover attitude.

"This council should stand up and put its case to the commission in view of Ohakune Borough Council's letter," he said.

Officer cadets graduate



Chief of Defence Staff, Air Marshall Sir Ewan Jameson, centre, inspects the guard of graduating officer cadets at Waiouru last Wednesday. Fifteen senior class students graduated out of the 47 on parade. Chief of General Staff Major General John Mace also attended along with invited guests and parents.

Great night at Chills off

The Chills Off cabaret held in Raetihi on Saturday night to help raise money for the enclosure of the Raetihi pool was greatly enjoyed by everyone who attended.

Several people spoken to paid tribute to the organisers and the high quality entertainment. Barbara Dobsaid that it was a great evening and everyone had a ball. She said it was a pity more people did not come.

Robert Dowman said it was a very good evening that

was extremely well run and that he enjoyed himself.

Grant Price said that the band was excellent, the floor show did a really good job, the supper was sumptuous and all in all it was a great night out.

One of the organisers Lance Langdon thanked those who helped to make the evening go with a zing including Walter Sue's karate kids for decorating the hall, Raewyn Quinn who sewed the floor show uniforms and helped with choreography and makeup,

John Compton the MC, the Misfits band from Taumarunui who set the mood for the evening, bar-persons Ted Binzegger and Ron Hope, and the public who supported the event.

Mr Langdon said thanks should go to all who put in so much time and effort.

Mr Langdon said that at present it appeared that costs of the event had not been completely covered. He said that 110 people attended when they needed about 120.

Sewerage problem prevents permits

The Waimarino County's health inspector Mr M. Sigley has recommended that no further permits for drainage systems be granted in Rangataua until sewerage reticulation and treatment is installed.

Mr Sigley's report, presented at last week's council meeting, said that permits should not be granted to blocks I to VIII which includes most of the area of Rangataua except some high land.

The report also said that there was no information whether the Rangataua scheme would be eligible for a complete Health Department subsidy.

The Rangataua sewerage sub-committee was delegated to write to the Minister of Health on the matter.

Smash cuts Ohakune's electricity

When a Falcon Utility struck a power pole in Goldfinch Street Ohakune at about 1am on Sunday morning power was cut in parts of Ohakune for three hours.

The weight of the fallen pole on wires broke another pole further up the road.

The driver had left the scene of the accident by the time police had arrived. Sergeant Neil Coker of Ohakune Police said that enquiries were continuing.

County replies on Mt Road

An article in the Bulletin last week about the Ohakune Mountain Road has prompted a reply by Waimarino County Councillor Malcolm Whale.

In the original article it was noted that from this year the National Roads Board will no longer pay for snow clearance on the Mountain Road, leaving it to the county to find the money.

Cr Whale says: "The Waimarino County Council has faced the fact that NRB rules have changed.

Discussions held by the council over recent months have endeavoured to have the rules reversed or to find ways to accommodate the new rules.

The NRB insists that AHI Turoa Skifields, being concessionaire, bear the cost of snow clearing. But the county can only work within

NRB rules. These rules could be unfair when you consider that snow is cleared on the Bruce Road leading to Iwikau Village, by the Department of Lands and Survey.

It should be noted that all machinery associated with snow clearing on the Ohakune Mountain Road, is owned and operated by AHI. Yet on Bruce Rd, Treasury, or the New Zealand taxpayer, has funded much of the equipment."

Cr Whale also replies to Tongariro National Park Chief ranger Bruce Jefferies who in last week's article asked why the Waimarino County wished to maintain control of the Ohakune Mountain Road.

"There are only two roading authorities in the Waimarino County district, one the Ministry of Works and Development for state highways, the other the county, which has control

over all other legal roadways.

As the Mountain Road lies within the county there is no question about county control.

We are legally bound to control it, as we are all other roads. It is not our intention to ask Lands and Survey to take over control of our roads whenever a problem arises.

But we do ask Lands and Survey as an invited member on the Mountain Road committee, to offer constructive inputs to the committee."

On the question of road control Cr Whale said that authorisation had been given for Lands and Survey staff to control the Ohakune Mountain Road.

"Unfortunately the letter conveying this information to the National Park Board had not left the county office. The matter has since been cleared up."

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Eruption recollections at Maungarongo Marae

From Page 3

just a big plume above it.

"I don't remember hearing it, there was no noise. It was dead silence.

He said unlike 1995, ashfall in Ohakune was quite bad.

"But, okay, you got really covered in ash, (but) I think it did the gardens and everything else, a lot of good

He said in 1995 he was watching a Ranfurly Shield match when Ruapehu first erupted."

He said ash from the 1995 eruption got down into the sewerage pipes, and settled and blocked it.

"It was a real problem for the council."

He said ash in house guttering was also a problem, sometimes collapsing with the weight.

When the lahar came down, following the collapse of the Crater Lake tephra dam, he was in the Ohakune Volunteer Fire Brigade, who were called out to Tangiwai to assist with the road closures.

He said there is news footage from a helicopter that shows the concrete toilet block at the Tangiwai Disaster site, being picked up by the lahar and floating away

Bruce also talked about the road bridge,



Dennis Buckingham – veteran snow groomer operator – recalls driving on Tūroa while the mountain was erupting, showering his machine with volcanic ash. He spoke about the corrosive effects of the ash and gasses on machinery, with staff taking on the job of constantly removing ash from lifts and buildings



Karen Williams, wife of DOC scientist Dr Harry Keys, recalls waiting at their home in Turangi for a property valuer to come to reassess their house. She said by the time the man arrived, the house was covered in volcanic ash from the eruption. She said that, unsurprisingly, the event had an affect on their property value at the time.



Merrilyn George shares her memories of teaching at Ruapehu College while the volcano was erupting. Photos: Robert Milne.

which had been raised by two metres so it would be less affected by lahars.

"That was only just enough, because people that were standing on the bridge – they weren't supposed to be there – actually got wet.

Rabbit Nottage said at that time they could hear boulders smashing against the bridge piers.

Bob Norling

Bob Norling, president of Main Trunk Rail Ohakune (MTRO), recalled preparing for a rail excursion when the

September 1995 eruption started.

"We're just having a meeting, and getting our food prepared for the train.

"So we were sitting there at the table, talking, discussing it, when Ruapehu erupted.

He said they didn't know what the railway lines were going to be like – whether the excursion the next day would be able to run.

"But we ran the excursion and everyone was very happy with it and we got away with it."

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Young photographers invited to capture Ōwhango

Ōwhango Alive is inviting young photographers to help capture the spirit of their community as part of the newly-launched Ōwhango Alive Youth Photo Competition 2026.

The competition is open to anyone aged 25 years and under and aims to encourage young people to explore and photograph the landscapes, wildlife, community life and seasonal beauty of Ōwhango and the surrounding area.

One winning photographer will receive a \$250 Photo Warehouse voucher, sponsored by KoruForm, with selected images also potentially featuring in the 2027 Ōwhango Alive Calendar.

Organisers say the competition is about more than just photography.

"It's a chance for young people to show Ōwhango through their own eyes," they said.

"Whether it's frosty mornings, bush walks, rivers, local events or everyday moments around town, we want to celebrate the beauty and character of the place we live."

Phone photography is welcomed alongside camera photography, with organisers encouraging anyone interested to take part regardless of experience level.

Submissions open on 1 July and close on 31 July 2026.

Photos must be: high-resolution original images; taken in or around Ōwhango or the Ohinetonga Scenic Reserve; landscape orientation; non-AI-generated.

Selected photographers will be credited in any calendar or promotional use.

Further details and submission information will be shared through the Ōwhango Alive Facebook page over the coming weeks.

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Budget Advice – Email waimarinobudgetservices@gmail.com or phone 027 259 5285.
CCS Disability Action (Whanganui) – Sheryl Brightwell 0800-789-654
Child, Adolescent and Sexual Health Nurse – 06-385-5019
Child Youth and Family Service – 0508-326 459
Churches: Anglican, 06-385-4957. Baptist, 027-206-1874. Catholic, 06-385-8858 or 027 606 5186. Gospel Chapel, 06-385-8453. Presbyterian, 06-388-0675 or 06-385-8708. Waiouru – duty chaplain 06-387-5599 ext 7031 or 021-493-692
Civil Defence – Simon Osborne, Emergency Management Officer (EMO), RDC – 07 895 8188, or 027 220 0569. Simon.Osborne@ruapehudc.govt.nz
CLAW community free legal advice: Whanganui 06-348-8288, 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
Ngati Rangī Community Health Centre – 06-385-9590
Plunket Society – Plunket Nurse 06-385-5019
Police and Search & Rescue Emergency, call 111
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Ruapehu Neighborhood Support Groups – Email: Ruapehuneighborhoodgroup@gmail.com or call Justin 021-735-767
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Waimarino Health Care Centre – Raetihi 06-385-5019
Waimarino Community Toy Library – waimarinotoylibrary@gmail.com
Women's Refuge – 0800-REFUGEE 0800 73384
Ruapehu Mayor – Weston Kirton, enquiries to 06-385-8364 or 07-895-8188.
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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; Oriwila 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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Whenua Whispers to re-screen in Raetihi

Over 150 invited guests braved the rain and the cold earlier this month to attend the premier of a locally-made documentary *Whenua Whispers*, accompanied by a book launch of the same name at the Royal Theatre in Raetihi.

Both are created by local man George Potaka, who wanted to put down in history the stories of the elders of the community.

The movie consists of interviews of 12 locals with their amazing stories about growing up in the Waimarino area. Stories of their families in small homes with no electricity, how the times were tough, but enjoyable and a simpler way of life than today.

"It was wonderful to see an enthralled audience captured by every word from each interviewee," says Gary Griffin-Chappel, from the Theatre trust.

At the end of the movie the audience was treated to a performance by the locally mature kapahaka group followed by Katie Westermere and Steve Gray, with backing singers singing the theme for *Whenua Whispers*.

This was followed by people reminiscing about their own memories of a time when Raetihi and the region was a thriving rural community.

"I am sure we saw a few tears in the eyes rendering the bustling town and comparing it to today.

Everyone who attended was given a copy of the book, with so much interest in it, a second run has already been ordered.

"There was so much interest generated in the premier, with people still calling George and the theatre to attend an already full house it was decided that the theatre should run the documentary again."

The second showing will be on 11 July, with tickets available online.



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Rangitikei landowners to benefit from funding to tackle wild deer

Government funding of \$250,000 for the Rangitikei River Catchment Collective has been announced, with local MP Suze Redmayne saying it will give local landowners stronger tools to respond to the growing impacts of wild deer.

The funding is part of three pilot projects across Rangitikei, Wairarapa, and North Canterbury to trial more coordinated and practical approaches to wild deer management on privately owned productive farmland.

The \$250,000 is applied to the Rangitikei River Catchment Collective, which covers southern Ruapehu – the Whangaehu River catchment.

“This investment recognises what many in rural communities are already seeing on the ground; increasing deer numbers are starting to seriously affect pasture quality, forestry, crops, and native vegetation,” says Ms Redmayne.

“The Rangitikei River Catchment Collective is well placed to lead local action because it brings together farmers and landowners who are already working collaboratively on

wider catchment and environmental considerations.

“They do an outstanding job bringing locals together to tackle environmental challenges with practical solutions. Their work has built a strong network across the region, helping farmers protect waterways, improve biodiversity, and strengthen the resilience of our rural communities.

“This is a practical approach. By working together at a catchment scale, landowners can better understand what’s happening with deer populations and respond in a more coordinated and effective way.

“I expect the pilot to provide valuable, locally grounded data that will help shape smarter long-term decisions about wild deer management and investment.

“National backs our rural communities – we’re fixing the basics and building the future.”

The pilot will run through to August 2027, with findings intended to inform future approaches to managing wild deer impacts across New Zealand.

Ruapehu ski area concessions process case in court

Iwi says case doesn't end skiing on Mt Ruapehu, but seeks reconsideration of the terms on which it can be approved.

Ngāti Tūwharetoa and Te Patutokotoko were in court last week alleging Ruapehu concession decisions failed to consider Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

The Taupō iwi and the southern Ruapehu hapu were working together in court for judicial review applications of the Crown’s actions in the wake of the failure of Ruapehu Alpine Lifts.

The Department of Conservation issued a 10-year concession to Pure Tūroa Ltd in 2024. Then in 2025, the department issued a 10-year concession to Whakapapa Holdings Ltd.

The two parties say the concessions to operate the Whakapapa and Tūroa ski fields were issued without cultural assessment reports, and Māori groups like Patutokotoko and Tūwharetoa feel they weren’t listened to.

The point of Patutokotoko’s judicial review isn’t to end skiing on Ruapehu or shut down Whakapapa Holdings or Pure Tūroa, says Hayden Tūroa, representing Te Patutokotoko.

But he wants confirmation that the Crown acted illegally in their decision-making and that they will work meaningfully with Māori in future conservation processes.

Te Patutokotoko is seeking a declaration that the Department of Conservation failed to comply with section 4 of the Conservation Act when issuing the Pure Tūroa concession, and that any future dealings with this concession must give effect to section 4.

Section 4 requires anyone working under the act to give effect to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi when interpreting or administering anything under the Conservation Act.

The legal action argues the Crown treated the law as imposing only a nominal duty to consult mana whenua – which did not have any, or any significant, bearing on its ultimate decisions about granting the concessions.

Variations

It is also seeking an order quashing or setting aside variations to the Pure Tūroa concession, sending the applications back to the Department of Conservation to remake decisions.

The judicial reviews were lodged too late to challenge the initial Pure Tūroa concession, but Patutokotoko is seeking a declaration that the process to award the second concession was unlawful and of no effect, as well as an order quashing or setting aside the second concession and sending the application back to the Department of Conservation to remake the decision.

The applications don’t end skiing on Ruapehu, but seek reconsideration of the terms on which it can be approved.

Timeframes to approve these concessions were rushed in to get the ski fields out of the hands of liquidators and receivers and operational in time for winter, meaning the processes ran for a few months.

A decision from the court is expected to take some time.



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FOR SALE

FIREWOOD 4 SALE. Mixed blend, pine, wattle, lawson, \$120 per cube delivered local, two cube loads minimum, txt Jock 0273 602 700.

GARAGE SALE, 733 Raetihi Road. Saturday 27 June 10am-2pm. Oak wardrobe, queen bed/mattress, bed settee, cane lounge chair, dining room table/6 chairs 2.7m kayak, tents, pottery, dart board and lots more household items.

TANK SPECIALISTS, water or septic. Delivered price quoted. Buy direct. Ph 0800-487-633.

PUBLIC NOTICES

Ohakune Raetihi Garden Club

Sunday 28 June - 11am
New members welcome.
Contact Di 021 165 7343.

BUSINESS NOTICES

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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



**Winter Pasture Spraying
Pasture - Crop - Porina**



Agspraying call Neil 021 926 315

PUBLIC NOTICES

Ohakune Raetihi Senior Citizens AGM

Wednesday 1 July, 1pm
at the Elder Care Centre, Raetihi

Agenda:

- Election of officers
- Confirmation of last years minutes
- Chairman's Report
- Financial Report
- General Business

Lunch for members at 11.30am

**For everything Ohakune, visit
www.ohakune.info**

PUBLIC NOTICE

ABANDONED VEHICLES POSSESSION NOTICE

To the persons registered under part 17 of the Land Transport Act 1998 in respect of the vehicles described below impounded from within the Ruapehu District pursuant to Section 356A of the Local Government Act 1974.

Vehicle ID	Make/Model	Colour	Location	Last Known Registered Owner
LJM723	2009 Mazda MPV Station Wagon	White	Burns St, Ohakune	Justin Ainsley Allen

If you do not claim the vehicle within ten (10) working days, Council will sell/dispose of the vehicle. To claim your vehicle, contact Ruapehu District Council on 07 895 8188 or 06 385 8364.

SITUATIONS VACANT



Mo Te Whānau Te Kōhanga Reo – Raetihi

Kaiwhakahaere (Administrator)

15 Hours per Week

Mo Te Whānau Te Kōhanga Reo is seeking an organised, reliable and motivated Kaiwhakahaere (Administrator) to support the day-to-day administration, financial management and compliance requirements of our kōhanga.

This is a part-time position (15 hours per week) working closely with the Chairperson, Whānau Komiti and Kaimahi to ensure the smooth operation of the kōhanga.

The successful applicant will preferably have experience with:

- EDGE Student Management System
- Smartly Payroll
- Xero Accounting Software

Key responsibilities include administration, payroll support, financial processing, record management, reporting, meeting administration, and supporting communication with whānau and kaimahi.

Applicants should have excellent organisational skills, attention to detail, strong computer skills, the ability to work independently, and a commitment to maintaining confidentiality. Knowledge of Te Kōhanga Reo kaupapa and tikanga Māori would be an advantage.

To apply, please send your CV and a brief cover letter to:

Lou Brider, Chairperson
Mo Te Whānau Te Kōhanga Reo
Email: lou.brider@xtra.co.nz
Applications close: Monday 6 July 2026



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Reaching homes every Wednesday in Ohakune, National Park, Raetihi, Waiouru and surrounding rural areas.

Printed by NZME, Auckland

Advertising Deadline 5pm Friday

Flood recovery continues: rural trust still helping

By Ali Kydd

The April flooding event that impacted Ōhura township and surrounding rural communities left a lasting mark across much of the district. While the immediate response phase has long since passed, many farmers continue to face the ongoing reality of recovery, with extensive repairs still required to fences, tracks, culverts and other essential farm infrastructure.

Across the affected valleys, recovery work remains well underway. The warmer and dryer autumn enabled many farmers to begin clearing slips, restoring access, rebuilding damaged fences and preparing their properties for winter. While significant progress has been made, there is still a considerable amount of work ahead for many rural families.

Recognising the demands that recovery places on farmers and their wellbeing, the Ruapehu Whanganui Rural Support Trust recently delivered approximately 60 "Take a Break - Smoko's On Us!" bags to some of the farms most affected by the April flooding event. With the support of Taumarunui New World, Craigs Investment Partners, NZ Landcare Trust, Whanganui Region Catchment Collective and Tūi & Gordon from NZ Post Rural Delivery, the bags were packed with a range of treats and practical goodies, the bags served as a simple reminder for farmers to take a moment, put the tools down, and enjoy a well-earned break.

"Craigs Investment Partners is proud to stand alongside the Ruapehu Whanganui Rural Support Trust in its work supporting farmers affected by the Ōhura storm recovery," said Jay Shah from Craigs Investment Partners.

"Backing rural communities is central to who we are, and with more than 40 years of working alongside farming families across New Zealand, we understand the importance of connection, resilience, and coming together during challenging times."

As the cooler months arrive, the Trust hopes the initiative encourages farmers and rural families to pause, reset and look after themselves while continuing the recovery journey and daily farm operations. While repairing tracks and fences is important, so too is maintaining personal wellbeing through what can be a long and demanding process.

The Ruapehu Whanganui Rural Support Trust has also been working alongside the Ruapehu District Council Mayoral Relief Fund to develop a practical recovery package for eligible farmers. The focus has been on providing meaningful support that can be put to immediate use on-farm, helping landowners continue rebuilding infrastructure damaged during the weather event.

As part of this initiative, eligible farmers will be able to access a recovery bundle consisting of bundle of 1/4 round posts and a 350x6m culvert. These items have been prioritised based on the common needs identified across affected properties, where floodwaters and slips caused significant damage to access ways, drainage systems, and boundary fencing.

To ensure support reaches those most impacted by the April event, eligibility criteria will apply. Farmers will need to present a current rates invoice as proof of residence within one of the affected areas: including River Road, Otunui, Ōhura, Kirikau, Tokirima, Kaitieke, or Ruatiti. Properties must also be a minimum of 100 hectares to qualify for assistance.

Thanks to the support of the Taumarunui Cosmopolitan Club the "Post Pick-up" distribution event will be held on Friday 3 July, between 11am and 3pm, at the Taumarunui Cosmopolitan Club carpark. Farmers and their families are encouraged to attend during this time to collect their supplies.

A barbecue will also be available on site, providing an opportunity for farmers and whānau to enjoy a hot meal, catch up with others from across the district, and take a short break from the ongoing demands of recovery.

While the floodwaters receded some time ago, the recovery continues. It's great to see the collaboration between community organisations, local government, businesses, and rural support networks demonstrating the strength and resilience of the district's rural communities.

Deadline for all advertising bookings and copy is 5pm Fridays!

It's important that we get your ad booking and copy in on time, so that we have time to check it, plan the best layout and work on producing a better paper for you!

Ruapehu will erupt again. Are we ready?

Another Ruapehu eruption is not a matter of if, but when – but 30 years after the volcano's last major eruption cycle, scientists say New Zealand is much better prepared.

By Moana Ellis, Local Democracy Reporter

Modern monitoring systems watch Ruapehu around the clock, providing information in real time that simply wasn't available when the volcano erupted in 1995.

Scientists say that means New Zealand is far better equipped to detect the warning signs, manage the risks and respond to a future event than it was during the dramatic 1995-96 eruptions.

Advances in monitoring technology mean volcanologists have a much clearer picture of what is happening inside and beneath the mountain than they did three decades ago, and improved hazard modelling and emergency management procedures are in place.

"We've done a lot of planning over the last 30 years," says Geoff Kilgour, chief scientist of Volcanic Hazards at Earth Sciences NZ.

"We've got the 24/7 (monitoring) centre, we've got on-call volcanologists, and we've even got on-call people above them. I think we're just so much better prepared. We've got our procedures in place – we're ready."

Scientists, emergency managers and iwi representatives gathered at Maungarongo Marae in Ohakune last week to mark 30 years since the eruptions and to reflect on what was learned.

"Thirty years ago, we had a sparse network of sensors, and a couple of those were seismometers, detecting earthquakes. We might have had three or four in the national park. Now we have about eight, and we have a lot of other different sensors," Kilgour said.

Live data

In the 90s, there were occasional field visits to survey for ground deformation and take samples. Volcanologist Graham Leonard, general manager of the Geological Hazards Science Mission at Earth Sciences, said the work was "completely different" today.

"We've got so many more data streams and in different places, and they come through live."

Advances included real-time monitoring, satellite deformation data, gas sensors, automated earthquake detection and alert systems when activity is building.

"We're in a better position than we were 30 years ago," Richard Smith, director of the collaborative national Natural Hazards and Resilience research programme Te Pae Tūroa, says.

"One of the challenges with volcanoes is that it's all happening underground until it isn't, and so it's really hard to know in detail and to measure is difficult.

"A lot of the advances are the various new technologies that enable us to look underground and work out what's going on.

"There's a whole new way of being able to detect and track what is happening, and so we're getting much more information."

Smith said the challenge is bringing that information together and communicating it effectively.

"There's still a need for a lot of work on bringing together a message that resonates with the community, so they can understand what are the actions that we can take based on that information."

Difficult communications

Former Department of Conservation scientist Harry Keys recalled the hindrance of "slow communications" in 1995.

"It was so difficult compared with now. In those days we had smart faxes – you put a whole lot of addresses in. I remember doing that after meetings. We'd be at it for hours to get all the information out."

The 30-year commemoration brought together a group that has been gathering every decade since the eruptions to look at the science evolving to help the country understand how best to live with volcanic activity.

Smith says part of the reason for bringing this group back together is to keep awareness alive.

"Awareness is important in preparing for the next event."

Smith said the tragedy at Whakaari remained front of mind. A key focus was helping communities understand the risks associated with volcanic environments and how those risks can be managed to avoid further loss of life.

In the meantime, scientists are using their new technology to watch for signs of future eruptions.

"We're tracking for magmas rising toward the surface," Kilgour said.

"When that happens, it generates earthquakes and there's different gases that we can detect at the surface, monitoring in near real-time."

Ground sensors and satellites can also detect whether the ground is inflating or doming, tracking movement at very small scale – "by several millimetres up or to the side".

How likely is another eruption?

Leonard says the basis for anticipating a future eruption



Graham Leonard – "we've got soe many more data streams and in different places, and they come through live. Photo: Moana Ellis.

is mostly the past.

"We're lucky we've got quite a good historical record here for the last 100 or 200 years, and before that through mana whenua.

"That gives us a feeling for the tempo of the frequent smaller eruptions.

"For bigger eruptions, we look to the geological past – understanding the rocks and the ash lying in the landscape and making the volcano, and finding out when they erupted."

Leonard says Ruapehu remains one of the

country's most active volcanoes and there is "a decent chance" of an eruption in any decade, with larger eruptions like those in 1995-96 every 50 to 100 years.

Very large eruptions – "the really big ones, the ones we haven't seen in human history" – were much rarer: once every thousand, 2000 or 3000 years.

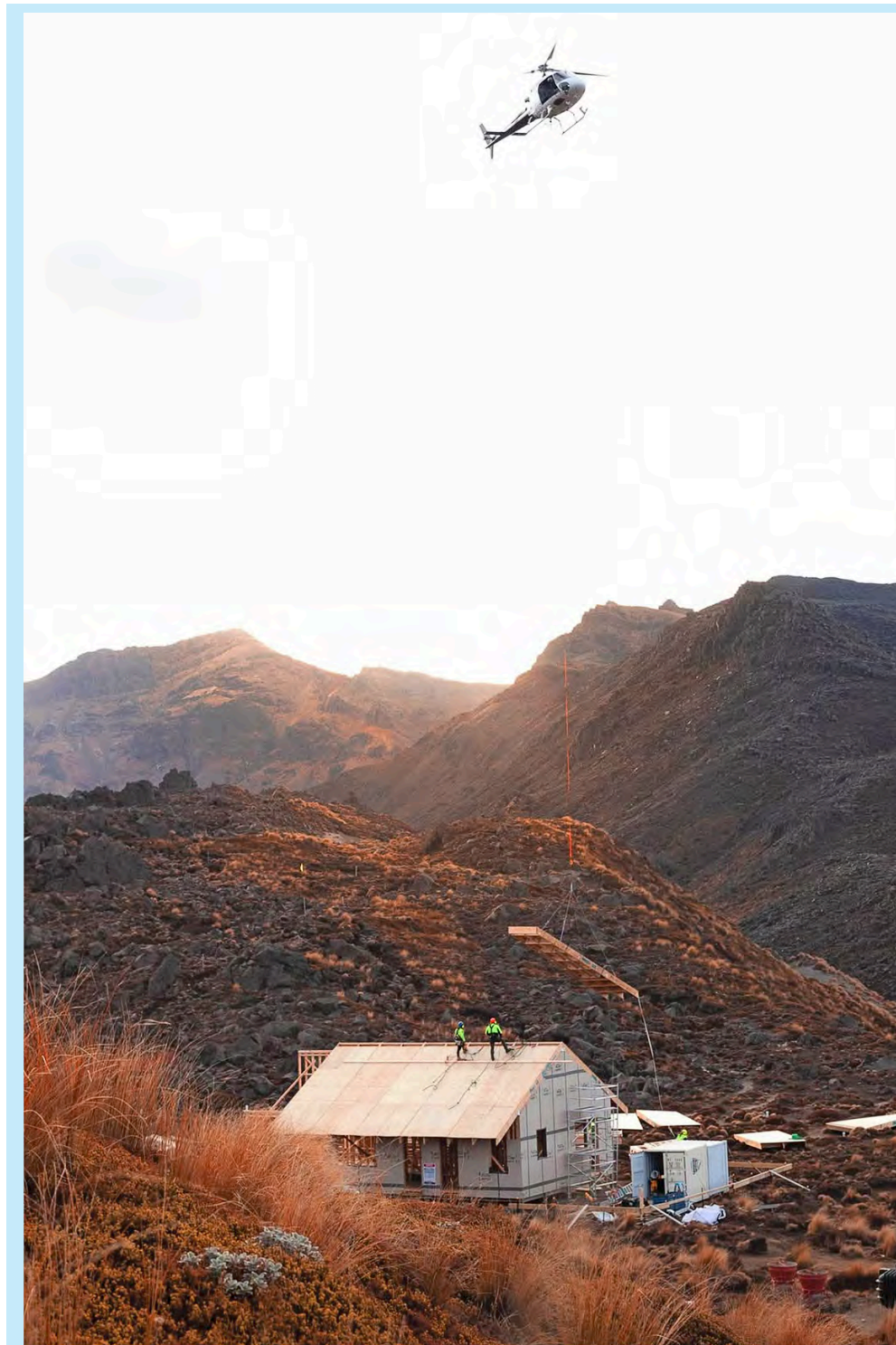
There is no recorded history of a Ruapehu lava eruption, although the volcano is built from lava.

"It's been very dominated by ash coming out through the summit lake, but there'll be future lava eruptions," Smith says.

"It is still an active system, and it's got a long history going back hundreds of thousands of years. It's a big volcano – and it's still got plenty of life.

"Ruapehu will erupt again."

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



Roof flies on to new Park hut

Raising the roof (or lowering it?) at Oturere Hut - Department of Conservation contractors have been working hard to make the most of fine weather when they get it, to complete the new Hut on the Tongariro Northern Circuit.

Photo: Jess Montaperto

Public conservation land maps show risk of sale

Forest & Bird has released maps highlighting public conservation land across Aotearoa New Zealand that could be more exposed to development or sale.

Looking at the Manawatu-Whanganui region, there are several areas that fall under the proposal that could see some conservation land up for sale.

The Government's Conservation Amendment Bill proposes a new economic development function for the Department of Conservation, which would impact all conservation land. The Bill would also make it much easier to sell off conservation land, with up to 60% of public conservation land potentially available for exchange or disposal.

"These maps show the scale of what's at stake," says Richard Capie, Forest & Bird's group manager for conservation advocacy and policy.

"We wanted to be very clear, because it seems almost unbelievable. Your local reserve, your favourite holiday spot, beaches, forests and iconic landscapes – they could be at risk of being sold."

Forest & Bird's maps show conservation land at risk of economic development in orange and areas at risk of both economic development and exchange or disposal in red.

Under current legislation it is only possible to sell some categories of conservation land if it has no, or very low, conservation value. The Bill would widen

that and make the test much weaker, essentially only requiring Ministers keep land that is important to threatened species or ecosystems, or if the habitat is one of the best examples of its type in that ecological region. Foreshore, and some land subject to Treaty claims and settlements, would also still be protected from sale.

A few of the numerous areas at risk of sale or exchange could include parts of the following areas, if they are not considered to be "important for the conservation of threatened species or threatened ecosystems, or both" or if they are not considered to be "the best, or one of the best" examples of ecosystem-type in an ecological district:

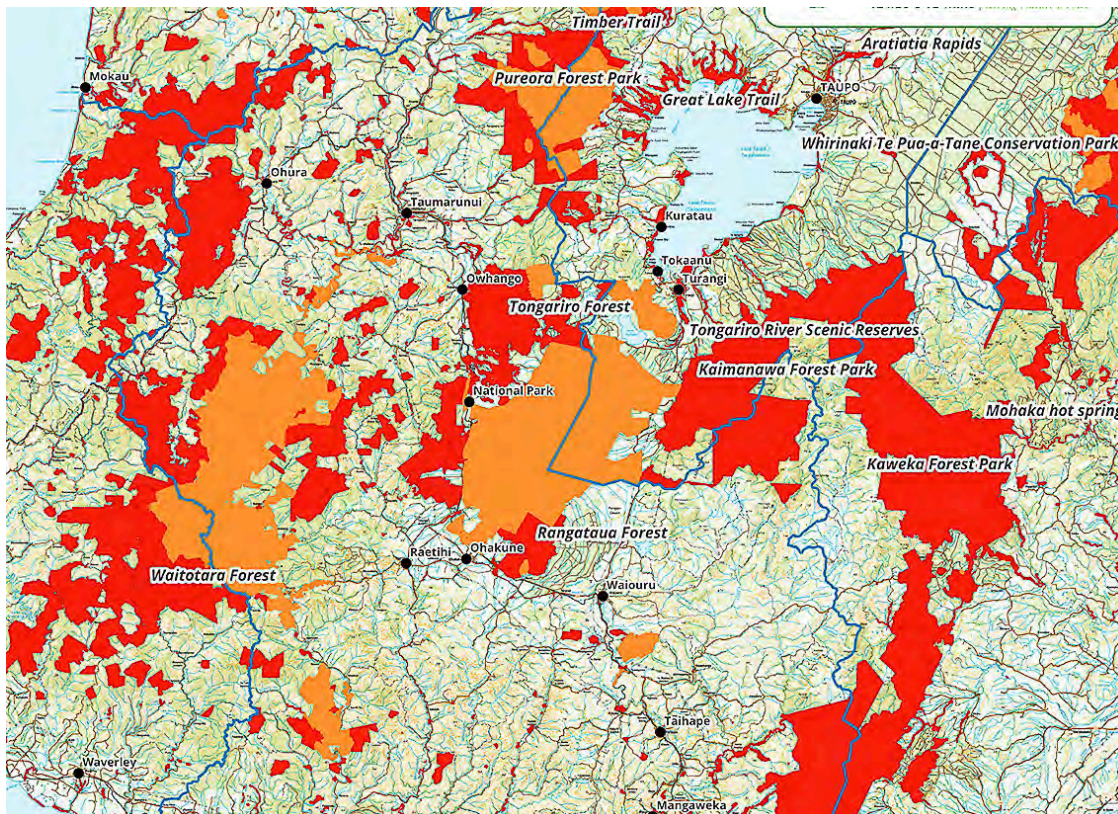
Lower North Island: Kaimai Mamaku Conservation Park, Kaimanawa Forest Park, Manawatu Gorge Scenic Reserve, Tararua Forest Park.

"Allowing even parts of these places to be sold or exchanged is a major shift," says Capie.

"The Bill isn't just about modernisation, it's also opening the door to privatisation.

"New Zealanders take pride in protecting public conservation land, these are the mountains, wild rivers, and forests we value and explore.

"In a climate and biodiversity crisis, with our special habitats and unique wildlife under pressure, we should be strengthening protections and ensuring conservation land is safeguarded for future generations."



Orange areas represent areas of public conservation land protected from exchange and/or disposal, but still at risk of increased economic activity. In the Ruapehu area, this includes the Tongariro National Park, according to Forrest and Bird. Red areas represent areas of conservation land able to go through the test for exchange and/or disposal (as well as allowing increased economic activity). The red areas shown on these maps may include public conservation land that is excluded from exchange and/or disposal because of a Treaty settlement or Treaty settlement claim.

Ruapehu rolls up sleeves for the win

Saxon Trow touches down, with the try assisted by Kevin McDonnell. Ruapehu Rugby and Sports Club's Championship team had to roll their sleeves at Rochfort Park on Saturday to overcome Utiku Old Boys in another rugged encounter from the Memorial Park men, Ruapehu retaining the Challenge Shield by 17-6. HT score, 7-3 to Ruapehu. Tries to Te Orangi Te Riaki and Saxon Trow; Conversions, Jack Petterson (2). Penalty, Jack Petterson (1). Ruapehu head to Whanganui on Saturday to meet Marist Celtic at Spriggens Park, 1pm kick off. Photo: Aciana Akapita.



Ohakune squash

Results from last week's Ohakune Squash Club interhouse saw Tecnifibre extend their lead slightly, beating Salming 118/84, Unsquashable beat Head 110/91, Dunlop beat Prince 110/89 and Stellar beat Karakal 108/74. Points to date: Tecnifibre 448, Stellar 428, Dunlop 405, Unsquashable 395, Salming 390, Head 382, Karakal 365 and Prince 355.

Draw for this Thursday is at Ohakune: 5:00pm Karakal vs Prince, 6:30pm Unsquashable vs Stellar, 8:00pm Dunlop vs Tecnifibre and at Raetihi at 5:30pm Salming vs Head.

During the weekend over 20 Ohakune players and supporters travelled to New Plymouth for the Central Open and PSA satellite tournament.

Best results came from Jessie Harding who won women's division two beating fellow Ruapehu College student Paige Drinkwater in the final, Madison Lee won women's division three, Derek Fraser won men's division six and Xaviah Marumaru won the junior division. Simon Barlow was runner up in men's division five and Lila Doolan was runner up in women's division four.

Dylan Budge was 4th in the men's PSA division.

True Team Promise means our whole team works for you.

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