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**Colin & Manu with Boars**  
P2



**Art for whio funds**  
P3



**Raetih's puanga plans**  
P5



**Steam trains & Mardi Gras**  
P12

## Mardi Gras 'a ripper of an event': OECT

After a shaky period earlier this year when it looked like the Ohakune Mountain Mardi Gras wasn't going to happen, the Ohakune Events Charitable Trust is very happy with "another successful event delivered for our town", says new trust chair Janelle Hinch.

A dispute between the Trust and event organisers Audiology about financial reports meant the event was likely to be cancelled.

But Pure Tūroa director Cam Robertson stepped in, setting up Ohakune Boost to help secure the event for 2026.

Audiology director Mitch Lowe said there were "a key few people", who worked hard to keep the event in Ohakune.

"Without them, it just it wouldn't have happened."

Cam Robertson, from Pure Tūroa and Ohakune Boost, said he was "very much happy with the investment", to support the Trust and see the event go ahead for 2026.

Pure Tūroa offered up to \$1 million in day passes to people who bought Mardi Gras tickets and so far, around 10% of tickets had been redeemed for snow passes.

"The idea was to encourage people to come back and take a look at the ski area and try it."

Janelle Hinch said the event is a great way to introduce the town and Tūroa to people who might not otherwise ever visit.

"It was a ripper of an event and everybody seemed to have a great time.

"When I was driving home after, I must say, everybody just looked quite pleased with themselves walking home and big groups and all in their costumes still.

### 8000 people

Mitch Lowe said he was still waiting on figures for the number of tickets scanned but it looked like they had just over 8000 people attending.

"We've worked out that no matter what we do, we always cap out at the same numbers in Ohakune.

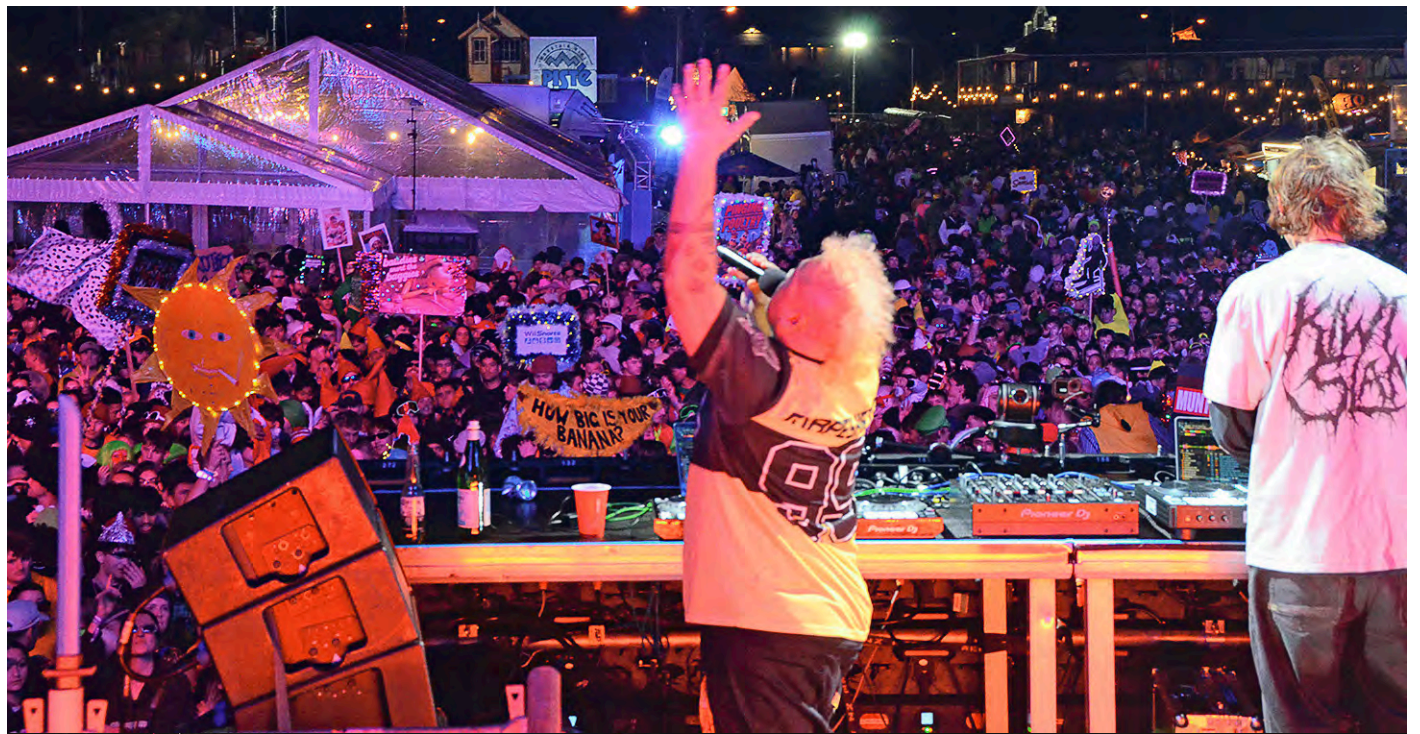
"It was actually the fastest selling Mardi Gras we've had in five years.

"But what happens is it sells really, really fast and then as the accommodation dwindled down, so did the numbers, so it was, yeah, it was kind of an interesting year, because we thought, wow, this is gonna be the biggest Mardi Gras ever.

"And then it kind of hits this point where just no one else can come, so it's about the same numbers as last year.

"It that doesn't matter how big the artists are. It doesn't matter how much hype there is. That's just the reality – that's what the town can handle, and so now we're just super happy at that and comfortable at that level."

With an outdoor festival held in winter, the weather is always a question.



Turn to Page 3

TOP: Shapeshifter perform their DJ set to round out the street party section of the Ohakune Mardi Gras. Photo: Robert Milne. ABOVE: a drone shot of the street shows the thrumming crowd. Photo: Audiology.

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## Rising star between two rivers

An Ohakune accommodation business has won the "Rising Star Bed and Breakfast of the Year" award for 2026.

Scott and Ula Tansley, from Two Rivers picked up their award at the Bed & Breakfast Association NZ conference in Christchurch.

The couple have owned Two Rivers for very nearly two years.

"Externally, the improvements from the full refurbishment and environmental changes are clear to see," says Scott.

"Internally, however, we've also made significant improvements to processes and systems. Something that really pleased the judges, was the growth that has come about by working with agents.

In a little over 18 months, the business has gone from Qualmark 4 stars plus/Silver to Gold, achieved BBANZ Quality Assured status.

"We are looking at further operational improvements, increasing guest privacy, and doing more work to restore our river banks.

"Our solar system has settled down very well in the two months since installation, and most days we sell back to the grid. We will add more battery capacity as soon as possible."

Their river bank restoration is establishing with new plants.



Scott and Ula Tansley with their 'rising star' award. Photo supplied by Two Rivers.

## Ruapehu Events & What's On

### JULY 2026

Matariki 10 July

Puanga Night Market, Raetihi Primary School 16 July  
Contact kayhenare06@gmail.com or maakituatini@gmail.com

Whacky Winter Art Exhibition July-August  
Volcano Vibe - contact Barbara for more info 027 829 8973

### AUGUST 2026

Rally Taumarunui 8 Aug  
Follow the Rally Taumarunui page for details. #RallyTaumarunui2026

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

Winter Art Exhibition 23 Aug - 6 Sept  
Paul Stieglbauer - paul@4thames.co.nz

### SEPTEMBER 2026

Retro Day 26 Sept  
Paul Stieglbauer - paul@4thames.co.nz

Waimarino Art Awards 26 Sept - 2 Oct  
See WaimarinoArtAwards.org.nz for more information

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## Ruapehu stars with Colin and Manu



TV chefs Manu Feildel and Colin Fassnidge, at centre, with the team at the Boar's Nest in Ohakune. Photo: TVNZ.

Ruapehu's spectacular landscapes, local characters and distinctive food experiences were in the spotlight as TVNZ's popular food and travel series *Off the Grid with Colin and Manu* on Sunday night.

The Ruapehu episode is now available to watch on TVNZ+, following My Kitchen Rules favourites Manu Feildel and Colin Fassnidge as they travel through Aotearoa discovering local places, local faces and local produce.

Filed over several days in February, the episode features Ruapehu tourism operators, hospitality experiences and community members who helped bring the region's story to life.

"We loved hosting Colin and Manu, despite

the challenging weather. It was a fantastic opportunity to showcase Ruapehu's world-class rivers and fly fishing experiences with champion angler Peter Scott," says Glenn Martin, owner of Fly Fish Ruapehu.

The Ruapehu road trip includes New Zealand's highest dining experience at Whakapapa, Mt Ruapehu, and a visit with the Boars Nest crew in Ohakune.

"Being part of series filming was an incredible chance to highlight Whakapapa's summer season and go beyond winter skiing and snowboarding," says Phil Lemalu, Marketing Manager of Whakapapa, Mt Ruapehu.

"Serving up the highest dining experience in New Zealand with a side of sightseeing, walking trails and a spectacular gondola ride above the UNESCO Dual World Heritage site of Tongariro National Park, we're excited to inspire more visitors to explore our maunga and the wider Ruapehu region."

Jamie Turama Tu Ahururi Downes, Te Hoata Mahinga Kai programme, Boars Nest recalls the morning spent with the film crew.

"What a privilege it was to have Colin, Manu and Betty visit us all at the Boars Nest. Amazing opportunity to share kōrero, eat kai and be inspired," said Jamie.

"Ruapehu has so many incredible stories to tell, and *Off the Grid with Colin and Manu* offers viewers a taste of just some of the people, places and experiences that make our region special," added Jo Kennedy, general manager, Visit Ruapehu.

"We're grateful to everyone who helped bring the episode to life and look forward to welcoming visitors inspired to come and experience Ruapehu for themselves."

Viewers can watch Season 2 of *Off the Grid with Colin and Manu* on TVNZ+ to see Ruapehu-inspired recipes come to life, including Colin's Lamb & Salsa from Boars Nest and Manu's Smoked Trout Dip.

## Eating out in the Ruapehu District

Call 06 385 8532 to list your business here  
or email ads@ruapehubulletin.co.nz

### KINGS BAR & RESTAURANT

3 Rimu St Ohakune Junction Ph: 06 385 8648

Est in 1913, historic Kings offers an inviting menu by international chefs, a great selection of boutique wines and craft breweries including award winning Ruapehu Brewing Co beers in the fridge and on tap. See our Facebook page for what's on. Please check our open times as these will vary.

### LKNZ LODGE & CAFE

1 Rata St, Ohakune Ph: 027 257 LKNZ (5569)

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### THE CYPRUS TREE

79 Clyde St, Ohakune Ph: 06 385 8857

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### UTOPIA CAFE

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## Community and Emergency Services

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

Budget Advice - Email waimarinobudgetingservices@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 0800 647 483, Raetihi 06-385-4805

Mountains to Sea - Ngā Ara Tūhono - Lynley Twyman, Trail Manager, +64 21 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 Budgeting Service Ohakune. Budgeting License No 119423. Email: Ruapehubudgetingservice@gmail.com or call Justin on 0211-735-767

Ruapehu Maori Wardens - Email: ruapehumaoriwardens@gmail.com

Ruapehu Neighborhood Support Groups - Email: Ruapehuneighborhoodgroup@gmail.com or call Justin 0211-735-767

Ruapehu REAP - 0800 00 REAP (0800 007 327)

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 - waimarinetoylibrary@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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# Mardi Gras 'a ripper of an event': Ohakune events trust

From Page 1

"Don't ask me how – almost every year we get this beautiful bluebird weather, and then as it finishes, after midnight, it rains and then the next day it rains.

"I feel like that's like the fourth or fifth time that we've pulled that off, so I'm very happy about that. In terms of the operational side of the festival, we're pretty slick – we've obviously done it so many times now, but the weather is the one thing you can't control, and it's always a thing that I'm, you know, cross my fingers and just hope."

Asked about the artists and their experience, he says coming to New Zealand has always been a highlight.

"They speak so highly of it. They get this amazing content (for their social media promotion).

"In turn, it just self-markets the event for us."

He said they get UK artists that didn't even know what Ohakune was – all of a sudden seeing this event tagged in the post. It's kind of internationally renowned now and the artist always want to come play it."

He added that having the Queenstown Mardi Gras on the following weekend helps with getting artists here.

It means the artists have a break in between to spend time together, some taking off for New Zealand adventures and some taking the time to record music.

"So they get a bit of a break as well."

"You'll see all of them hanging out together for the week because they've come from around the world."

## Trains on time

Hinch, who runs Opus Fresh at the Ohakune Railway Station, said it was very busy through the day with multiple trains, including two GVR trains bringing people

too and from Waimarino/National Park, the Northern Explorer, freight trains and the Mainline Steam excursion.

"It was probably the busiest day that the train station has had in the history of my time here."

"The trust is happy with another successful event delivered for our town."

This year, the Events Trust issued a licensing agreement for the Mardi Gras – for use of the Mardi Gras intellectual property, and will receive a percentage of all tickets sold, which insulated the trust against any losses.

"This ensures that we have the funds to continue the other fantastic events at the trust runs."

## Police happy

Ohakune Sergeant Bruce McLeod said the event was very well run.

"We were impressed with the security provided, keeping people out who shouldn't be there."

He said there were no arrests at the event. "Everyone was in good spirits and well behaved."

He said the streets looked very good the following day and that the Police had received no complaints from the public.

The Alcohol Prevention Team stopped just over 1000 vehicles over the weekend, with checkpoints set up at all entrances to Ohakune.

Two people were charged for showing an EBA over 400 mcg; two tickets for EVAs under 400 tickets; and one EBA for an under 20 year old driver ticket issued.

Tickets were also issued for speeding, not wearing restraints and cellphone use while driving.

"Clearly the message got out that Police were out and about and that vehicles would be stopped."

# Whio painting for funds



A painting of whio has been donated for a raffle to raise funds for conservation.

A painting featuring whio – blue ducks and chicks – is being raffled to help fund conservation work protecting one of New Zealand's rarest native birds.

Owhango Alive is offering supporters the chance to win "Whio Whānau", a 91cm x 61cm canvas print by Taumarunui artist Kathleen Lennie.

The artwork features a family of whio (blue duck) on the Whakapapa River, inspired by the view looking upstream from the Whakapapa Bridge. The river and surrounding Ohinetonga Scenic Reserve are home to an important population of these nationally vulnerable birds.

Funds raised from the raffle will support Owhango

Alive's ongoing predator control programme along the Whakapapa River. Volunteers maintain an extensive trapping network designed to protect native wildlife and improve breeding success for whio and other indigenous species.

"Kathleen's generous donation provides the community with an opportunity to support local conservation while also taking home a striking piece of artwork celebrating one of New Zealand's most iconic native birds," says Maree Surrey for OA.

Only 100 tickets are available at \$5 each: contact Kim on 022 047 4204.



'Doof sticks' – totems used to help festival-goers find each other – are also a way for people to express themselves – often with humour. Photo: Robert Milne.



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# Letters

## Funding fails

The recent letter from Bruce Rollinson attacking the federation proposal under Head Start repeats familiar claims, but none withstand basic scrutiny.

The “turkeys voting for Christmas” line is a convenient insult, not an argument. A federation is not about protecting councillors; it is about protecting communities from being absorbed into a single authority that would erase local voice entirely.

The writer says we are “not well represented today.” That is precisely why a federation is being advanced. It strengthens representation by keeping elected members accountable to their own communities rather than collapsing them into a single remote structure. Calling that “self-importance” is simply rhetoric.

Describing a federation as a “Clayton’s amalgamation” is factually wrong. Government documentation is explicit: amalgamation abolishes councils; federations retain them and share services where efficiency is gained. The two models are not interchangeable.

The suggestion to “downsize to a single representative” is not reform; it is democratic amputation. One person cannot carry the mandate of an entire district. Government floated this as an extreme option because the real issue is not councillor numbers; it is decades of unfunded regulatory obligations imposed by central government.

The letter claims “more of the same has failed us.” What failed was the funding model. Councils were required to meet rising standards, compliance burdens, and infrastructure demands without the revenue tools to pay for them. No governance structure can succeed under those conditions.

The idea that other councils “are not welcoming Ruapehu and its debt” ignores the source of that debt: mandatory, unfunded infrastructure requirements. A federation addresses this by pooling expertise, reducing duplication, and strengthening financial discipline, without erasing local democracy.

The status quo didn’t fail. The funding model did. A federation is the first credible alternative that fixes that without sacrificing local representation.

Ruapehu District councillor John Chapman

## Conservation economics

A guest on RNZ on 3 July was explaining that the current Bill to change the Conservation Act, is explicitly written to change the main purpose of conservation land from Conservation, to Economic Development.

A group of businessmen broke RAL, then groups of businessmen have taken over the ski fields, and now a group of politicians (most of the above appear to be Wellington based) have decided that Conservation Land should be primarily used for economic development.

I’m not currently wearing a tinfoil hat, but I might start getting my head measured.

Lucy Conway

# Rural trust ‘blown away at post pickup response



Friday’s post pickup proved popular. Photo: RWRST.

By Ali Kydd

The Ruapehu-Whanganui Rural Support Trust (RWRST) was “absolutely blown away” by the response to its Flood Recovery Post Pick-Up held on Friday, with trucks and trailers lining a foggy Katarina Street, Taumarunui, well before the scheduled 11am start.

The Post Pick-Up was made possible through a shared commitment to supporting rural communities, with the RWRST and Ruapehu District Council Mayoral Relief Fund each contributing 50% of the funds needed to secure the fence posts and culverts.

“By 1pm every post and culvert had been collected, proving that when real help is put in front of the right people, it does not sit around for long,” says RWRST Trustee Edie Neill.

“The overall feeling on the day was one of gratitude, community spirit and locals supporting local. Farmers and their families came along to collect materials, share a yarn, grab a feed and be reminded that while the weather event may have passed, they have certainly not been forgotten.”

“To see trucks and trailers lined up before we had even started really showed us how much this kind of practical support was valued,” she said. “We were just thrilled to be able to offer something practical that will make rebuilding that little bit easier. Our farmers work bloody hard, and it meant a lot to be able to show them their community is standing beside them.”

She thanked everyone who made the day possible, including Downers for the road cones, Taumarunui Cosmopolitan Club for the use of their carpark, Sam from Absolute Meats for the barbecue meat and cooking, the truckie who delivered and loaded the posts and culverts, and neighbouring businesses Gillard Motors, Taumarunui Honda and Taumarunui Plumbing for their patience and support.

“Recovery is never a one-day job it’s an ongoing operation – remember that the RWRST will continue to stand alongside our rural communities when times are tough on farm now and into the future. If you or someone you know is feeling under the pump, call 0800 787 254 / 0800 RURAL HELP for a free and confidential chat.”

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

858

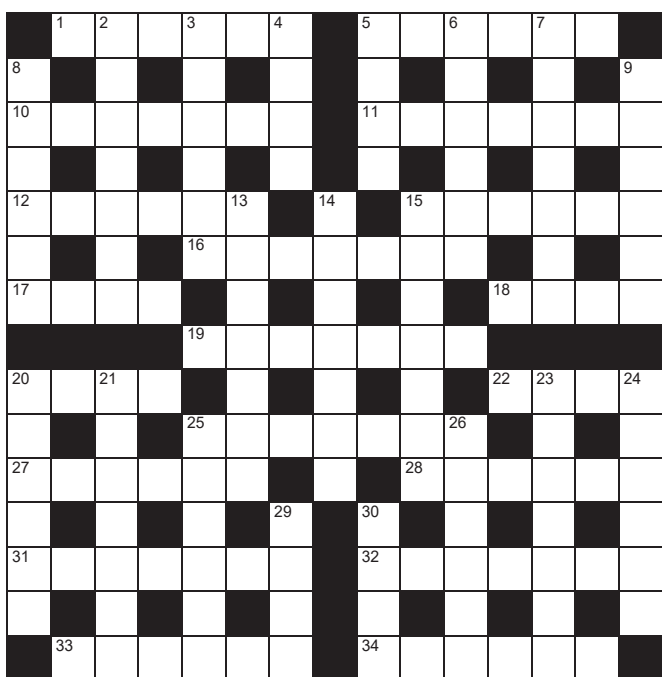
### QUICK CROSSWORD

#### Across

- Cheerful (6)
- Endure (6)
- Come to light (7)
- Spread from (7)
- Astounded (6)
- Sequence (6)
- Dedicated (7)
- Simple (4)
- Small valley (4)
- Spear (7)
- Dodge, avoid (4)
- Dull pain (4)
- Abundant (7)
- Plaid (6)
- Position (6)
- Twinkle (7)
- Caution (7)
- Free (6)
- Detective (6)

#### Down

- Maybe (7)
- Overjoyed (6)
- Adolescent (abbr) (4)
- Stalk (4)
- Imperfect (6)
- Shifty (7)
- Abscond (6)
- Ship (6)
- 10-sided figure (7)
- Clique (7)
- Solemn (7)
- Loathe (6)
- Pirate (7)
- Comprise (7)
- Vigour (6)
- Coffin (6)
- Deprive of food (6)
- Military dining room (4)
- Possesses (4)



### SUDOKU

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

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

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

1

MEDIUM 2

HARD

### The Top 10

- Swimmer Danyon Loader won two gold medals at which Olympics?
- Which 80s song contains the line “Who’s gonna drive you home, tonight?”
- Which Dunedin street is claimed to be the world’s steepest?
- The Khmer Rouge ruled which country from 1975 to 1979?
- The Green Party won how many constituencies in the 2023 election?
- Who released a book titled *A Mayor of Two Cities* in 2008, and died in 2026 aged 78?
- Cob and pen are male and female what?
- Which boxing division is between flyweight and featherweight?
- Soft solder is an alloy of which two metals?
- Which drug took its name from the Greek god of dreams?

### CROSSWORD

29. Mess, 30. Owns.  
 Consist, 24. Energy, 25. Casket, 26. Starve.  
 15. Serious, 20. Defest, 21. Corsair, 23.  
 Escape, 9. Vessel, 13. Decagon, 14. Coterie,  
 4. Teen, 5. Stem, 6. Flawed, 7. Evasive, 8.  
 34. Steuth. **Down:** 2. Perhaps, 3. Elated,  
 Stance, 31. Sparkle, 32. Warning, 33. Grats,  
 Duck, 22. Ache, 25. Copious, 27. Tartan, 28.  
 Devoted, 17. Easy, 18. Dell, 19. Javelin, 20.  
 11. Emanate, 12. Amazed, 15. Series, 16.  
**Across:** 1. Uppat, 5. Surfer, 10. Surface.

### SUDOKU

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

### THE TOP 10

- Atlanta, 1996, 2 “Drive” by The Cars, 3 Baldwin Street, 4 Cambodia, 5 Two – Wellington Central, Auckland Central, 6 Tim Shadbolt, 7 Swans, 8 Bantamweight, 9 Lead and tin, 10 Morphine.



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Puzzles © The Puzzle Company

# Puanga under the stars, with a market day

With Puanga mā Matariki Day coming up this week, southern Ruapehu has had plenty to celebrate this last month, with more celebrations happening in the community.

“It’s wonderful to see thousands actually acknowledging this time of year,” says Kay Henare on behalf of Puanga ki Ruapehu.

“Our local Ruapehu College celebrated by holding their Inter-whānau Kapa Haka with a shared hāngi.”

At Nancy Winter Centre families were to gather yesterday, Tuesday 7 July, with their torches and soft toys to remember those who are no longer here. On Thursday 16 July Puanga ki Ruapehu will host the Puanga Night Market starting at 4pm.

“The night market is our fifth year operating and for convenience and being sheltered, it will be held at Raetihi Primary School.”

The team is led by Kay Henare and Maaki Tuatini celebrate under the theme Matariki herenga waka, which is all about emphasising inclusion, diversity and all coming together to celebrate.

“We take this opportunity to share how tirelessly our teamwork behind the scenes to make this event worthwhile. Helen Cussins of Raetihi Promotions Charitable Trust volunteers her time to make our Puanga hot soup. Maaki Tuatini supports our market stall holders by ensuring they are looked after. Our ongoing supporters

Linda Walker, Aroha Williams, Miriama Lucas, Graham Bell and Rua Eagle always lend a hand where help is needed.”

With many roles and responsibilities to help bring this event together Kay Henare has taken this time to fill a gap with the loss of Debbie Clunie who would tirelessly work behind the scenes, and write stories.

“We truly miss our dear friend,” said Kay.

This year they will gather to enjoy Puanga celebrating under the stars at the night market with local musicians Brutha Rodz and Kayz Lucas. There will be activities for kids of all ages to join in with poi making, balloons, crafts and a silent disco.

There will be plenty of foodstalls available up until 7.30pm, there will be seafood, Thai, chop suey, burgers, hāngi, cakes, crepes, toffee apples and sweet desserts.

“Other stalls will be selling candles and cookies by Kye Abductions, crochet and games by Taylor Made and welcoming kaumatua Forget Me Nots with their spinning genie raffles.

“We welcome rangatahi electoral officer Luana-Rose (Lulu) Sinai this evening to ensure you’re informed and registered for this coming election.

“Come along to support our local athletes, community groups, schools and businesses; it will definitely be a night to remember.”



The 2025 Puanga ki Ruapehu team. They are working on the 2026 event that runs on 16 July.

# Applications open for Horizons green fund

Applications for Horizons Regional Council’s Environmental Leaders Action fund are open, offering schools and early childhood centres (ECE) across the region an opportunity to bring their environmental projects to life.

Horizons support schools and ECEs through education sessions, resource kits, hui, workshops, and delivering the Enviroschools Programme, a national sustainability programme. Previously, funding was available only to Enviroschools through the Pat Kelly Enviroschools Action Fund.

This year, the fund has been expanded and redesigned to ensure all schools and centres in the Horizons region have the opportunity to apply.

Horizons senior environmental educator and Enviroschools regional leader Sarah Williams says the change reflects the council’s commitment to empowering more young people to take environmental action.

“Projects must align with one of our strategic priorities – supporting healthy ecosystems, building sustainable and empowered communities, strengthening relationships with iwi, and increasing resilience to climate change.”

“This opens the door for a wide range of meaningful projects.”

Past projects funded through the previous scheme have included initiatives focused on water conservation, māra kai and plant-to-plate programmes, composting, worm farming, recycling, biodiversity enhancement, and pest control says Williams.

“This year we will be unable to fund trapping projects, however schools with an interest in this area can reach out to us discuss support with these types of projects.”

She said they are keen to connect with schools

they haven’t worked with before.

Applications close on Sunday 16 August 2026 at 5pm. Visit <https://haveyoursay.horizons.govt.nz>

“We also have a transport fund available, where schools can apply for support with travel costs to visit icon sites in our region. These are Manawātū Estuary, Te Āpiti – Manawātū Gorge, Tōtara Reserve Regional Park, Pūkaha National Wildlife Centre, Bush Park Tarapurui, Central Energy Trust Wildbase Recovery Centre, the Otorohanga Kiwi House, plus they can visit their local re-

source recovery centre.

“We know that transport costs are a barrier to schools to get their students outside of the classroom so we hope that this fund will help in some way for them to visit one of our icon sites, says Williams.

The transport fund is open all year round, or until all funds have been allocated. Visiting [www.horizons.govt.nz/grantsandsponsorships](http://www.horizons.govt.nz/grantsandsponsorships).



A group of Raetihi School pupils get instructions before they set about planting an area near the school.



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# Our Story

# Thank You, King Country

King Country Energy, KCE, closed its doors in June 2026. This marked a 34 year history of the company's relationship with the homes, businesses and communities around the district

## Late 1980s

Reforms change Power Boards to commercial businesses.

King Country Energy (KCE) is established.

## 1992

## 1994

KCE expands with a joint venture with Todd Energy and the purchase of the Mangahao Power Station.

KCE swaps network lines for the generation and customers with Waitomo.

## 1999

## 2000s

KCE grows its retail base and builds a reputation as a trusted local energy retailer.

KCE acquires the remaining share of the Mangahao Power Station from Todd Energy.

## 2014

Trustpower and King Country Trust acquire full ownership.

KCE's retail customers transfer to Trustpower and KCE becomes a generation-only business.

## 2018

## 2017

Trustpower becomes KCE's major shareholder after acquiring Todd Energy's shares.

## 2025

Contact Energy becomes KCE's major shareholder.

Contact takes full ownership of KCE and amalgamates the company into its business, bringing KCE's 34-year history to a close.

## 2026

Scholarships for the next generation



10 Years of Waikato and Grassroots helicopter sponsorship



Tree of Light - Celebrating special events



Taumarunui Mobility - providing transport freedom to all the community



Duffy Books in Homes - Helping our tamariki to read



## More than Electricity

Everything we have achieved has been made possible by the people and communities who have supported us along the way. Their trust, partnership and shared commitment to the region have helped shape the legacy we leave behind.

# Young councillor's exit plan to make way for new leaders

By Moana Ellis

Ruapehu district's youngest councillor is self-imposing a term limit of six consecutive years – two back-to-back terms – on his service.

Kuru Ketu, 33, is also calling on fellow councillors to help build a leadership pipeline to the council chambers.

"For those around the table to be effective, fresh, relevant and active, a limit of six consecutive years for holding an elected position is appropriate."

A term limit would protect local government from "career politicians, stagnating progress and gatekeeping succession".

Regardless of what structures emerged from the Government's looming council shake-up, Ketu says local government needs a succession plan.

The first-term councillor, who was elected in October to one of three Māori ward seats, wants to provide opportunities for young people to become skilled governors on boards, trusts and councils across his community.

"We've actually got no line of succession. I was the youngest person that stood. I saw that the average age of a councillor is around 60, excluding myself. And that scared me a little bit."

Ketu said he was not suggesting fellow councillors should follow his lead on limiting their terms, but there was a lack of focus on succession and a limited number of potential future leaders waiting in the wings.

"Where we stay on for long periods, we can create dependencies by our communities and stagnation in the succession process."

## Governance training

Ketu launched governance capability training sessions within three months of being sworn in, hiring out the Taumarunui arts centre at his own expense to run weekly workshops for rangatahi aged 16 to 40.

"I'd put on a little kai and keep the sessions short, focused and informal."

The sessions cover a range of areas, including local government, Māori land and marae trusts, corporate and whānau-based governance. Those attending have been Māori.

Ketu said people often feared governance.

"They do not want to be front and centre and absolutely do not want to be in the line of scrutiny and criticism."

His focus was on sharing practical skills for rangatahi to enter governance roles equipped to handle the responsibility.

"Leadership is a heavy burden and governance is complex, but if you have the tools and a foundation to guide you, you can be satisfied that you've done everything you could to do a good job."

Ketu hopes to take the training into existing governance environments, such as the council's new youth council, and says other pressing areas for succession are post-settlement governance entities, which manage redress from Treaty of Waitangi settlements.

## Staying put

David (Rabbit) Nottage, who is serving his fifth term and is consistently one of the highest polling councillors, said he would not consider limiting his term at this point.

"I get out in the community and make myself available.

"If I started dropping off in the polls I'd seriously consider flagging it, but I still got the second highest polling in this round.

"I'm always open to new ideas but I'm happy with the way the system is."

Nottage said it often took a term for councillors to get to grips with "rules and regulations, the long-term planning, the annual plans".

He said knowledge accumulated by longer-serving members was often critical to decision-making.

"I learnt a lot from councillors before me who had been on for a few terms."

Nottage said he supports the idea of councillors pitching in with succession training but said it was sometimes hard to get people to stand, and he was not sure how interested younger people were.

"When we have public meetings, we very rarely see the younger generation. It's mostly middle-aged or seniors."

Fourth-term councillor Viv Hoeta agrees that the council should help develop lines of succession.

However, she said limiting the term would not encourage more people to stand.

She said councillors who were active and connected to their community tended to bring constituent views back to the council table.

Hoeta said there were councillors who were "seat warmers", who were not community focused or only spoke on topics that interested them.

"Some ... do get bogged down in the weeds, forget who they are there for and become disconnected with the community."



Ruapehu district councillor Kuru Ketu wants fellow councillors to pitch in with a succession drive to grow new local government leaders. Photo supplied.

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

## ADVERTORIAL

# Farewelling King Country Energy: a legacy beyond electricity

Local electricity company, King Country Energy, reflects on its role in this region:

• For many people, electricity is something we rarely think about until the lights go out.

Yet behind every flick of a switch lies a story of people, places and communities working together to harness the power of the region's rivers and waterways.

That story took on a new chapter in 1992, when electricity industry reforms brought together the King Country Electric Power Board and the generation assets of the Taumarunui Borough Council to create King Country Energy (KCE) – a company owned by the community, for the community.

Over the next 34 years, KCE evolved alongside New Zealand's changing electricity industry. It operated generation assets, power lines and a retail electricity business, complete with a local call centre in Taumarunui, before adapting to successive rounds of industry reform to become a renewable electricity generator.

KCE's shareholding was predominantly the local community with the King Country Trust holding a significant stake in the company over the years, supporting its growth.

"KCE never stood still," says general manager Chris Fincham.

"Every major change in the electricity sector challenged us to evolve, but one thing never changed; our commitment to the communities we served."

As the business evolved, so too did its contribution to the region. KCE supported local initiatives such as Books in Homes, Taumarunui Community Van, KiwiCan, Sports Awards, Foodbank, Trees of Light and the Heartland Fund, while continuing to invest in renewable generation and the long-term care of its hydro schemes. The company also recognised that it was only ever a custodian of the generation assets

entrusted to it. Working alongside iwi, community groups, environmental organisations and local partners, KCE sought to protect the rivers and waterways that underpin its hydro schemes, understanding that these assets would one day be passed on to future generations.

"We've always believed our role extended beyond generating electricity," says Fincham.

"Our communities supported us for 34 years, and that support gave us the opportunity to invest back into local initiatives, build lasting relationships and care for the environment around our hydro schemes. That's something we're incredibly proud of."

Over time, changes in regulation, competition and shareholding reshaped the business. Through a series of ownership changes, KCE ultimately became part of Contact Energy, bringing to a close its chapter as an independent company.

While the KCE name may disappear, its legacy will remain in the renewable electricity generated by its hydro stations, the communities it supported, the partnerships it built, and the people who helped shape its story.

"The business may be changing, but the contribution made by our staff, customers, shareholders, iwi, community organisations and partners over the past 34 years will always be part of KCE's legacy," says Fincham.

"There are so many people in our community that have worked for KCE over the years, and everyone has made a valuable contribution in their own way. You should all be proud of what was achieved at that time."

For everyone who has supported King Country Energy over the past 34 years, thank you. It has been our privilege to serve this community.

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT CHANGES

Monday 13 July from 6pm,  
Taumarunui Cosmopolitan Club

**Why? These local government changes will affect your future, including your rates for the next decade at least. The main reason for the meeting is to set the facts straight about what's on the table, because there's been a fair amount of confusion.**

For example, the meeting will clear up these FAQs:

- if we get lumped in with another council, will we get included in the PC1 boundary?
- what's the story with PC2?
- if we did go with Waikato or Taupō regional councils, for example, what happens to my farming consents?

Regional Councillors to attend (both from Waikato and from Horizons) and hoping for some of the Horizons mayors, too. The full VIP guest list is to be confirmed.

**We shouldn't leave something this big up to councillors to decide, so please come along to be part of the conversation.**

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RUAPEHU

# Regional rates up 5.9%

Horizons Regional Council has adopted its next Annual Plan, confirming funding for key projects while aiming to mitigate the financial impact on ratepayers, landing on an overall 5.9% increase.

Council adopted the 2026-27 Annual Plan at a meeting on Tuesday.

Horizons chair Nikki Riley acknowledges the final figure is higher than the range of 4.6% to 4.9% signalled in December, and the 4.76% Council preliminarily settled on in May.

"The difference between May and now is investment into our River Management team, Regional Spatial Planning, and Plan Change 2 implementation," says Cr Riley.

"While the final average rates increase is higher than we were aiming for, it is down on the 9% average initially contained in the Long-term Plan for this coming year.

"We know rates increases are not ideal. That's why we've brought the average rates increase down by deferring new roles, delaying new public transport services in parts of the region, removing or reducing additional spend in some areas, and using reserves to fund work.

"At the same time, we have invested in select areas where we see real need: more possum control, funding Ashhurst school bus services, and the three items we've added since May's preliminary decisions."

The Plan Change 2 decision from the Environment Court, released in June, contains clear expectations on delivery, Cr Riley says.

"We must properly resource this work to fulfil these

expectations, and to help the farmers and growers across the region who will be applying for consents under the Plan Change 2 framework.

"Central government's resource management reform requires our region to have a Regional Spatial Plan. These plans will set 30-plus year direction for the region's growth and infrastructure, while also considering key constraints for growth and development such as natural hazard risks and outstanding natural landscapes and features. This work will be a collaboration with and co-funded by city and district councils in the region.

"As part of work to bring the average rates increase lower, a range of roles were deferred," says Cr Riley.

"Two currently vacant roles within the River Management team were previously proposed not to be filled. However, Council has decided to reinstate those roles to support a significant flood protection work programme."

The rates increase will differ between property types, as well as between districts, for a range of reasons, says Cr Riley.

"This is particularly true for those districts that have had a revaluation completed this year: Horowhenua, Manawatu and Whanganui. Targeted services, such as the new Whanganui passenger transport network, which was approved under the previous Council as part of the previous Long-term Plan, will also impact ratepayers differently."

The full 2026-27 Annual Plan will be published within a month, both in printed version and online via the Horizons website horizons.govt.nz.

# Ruapehu rates rise: looking deeper

By Nicolas Schneyer

Ruapehu District Council met on 24 June – top of the agenda, the 2026/27 Annual Plan and how to sustain it. A general increase on rates, plus fees on certain specific items. Both take effect from 1 July, with the first rates instalment due 20 August.

Here's a guide for local taxpayers:

## Same categories, new rates

Rates rise by an average of 8.7% district-wide, covering the general rate, the Uniform Annual General Charge, and the targeted rates for land transport, water, wastewater, stormwater, solid waste, economic development and environmental resilience.

Fees rose by an average of 3.4%. Council also added one new exemption: it will stop billing itself rates on its own water-network land, sparing water users a flow-on cost of about \$42 each.

On specific fee items: hall hire is up \$4 to \$16 an hour; a temporary road closure without inspection is up \$40.30, now \$443.30; one requiring inspection is up \$45.80, now \$655.30 plus a fee for any damage. A few fees are brand new: \$180 for resource-management compliance checks, \$650 for a small-dwelling building consent memoran-

dum, \$280 for a Manunui Cemetery grave, \$25 for a half-day meeting room hire.

Nothing changed in the rate categories themselves. They all continue exactly as before.

## Trade-offs

Holding rates below 9% came with trade-offs.

But the Council's own Annual Plan acknowledges that staying below that ceiling relied on measures it describes as "short-term relief to ratepayers" while noting they are unsustainable in the long run.

The next Long-Term Plan is meant to bring the rise down further, to 2-4%. However, the plan does not clearly show how this would be achieved: the same plan concedes that today's deferred road, cycleway and water-plant maintenance will simply resurface as costs "in later years."

Budget restraint also involves broader—and often politically contentious—choices about what to cut or defer. The Council has already signalled one such decision by pausing the Iwi Development Funding Rate.

As the next Long-Term Plan is developed, what additional trade-offs will be required, and how will those choices be made?



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# Taupō has Ruapehu amongst amalgamation options

By Bronson Perich

Taupō District Council has decided which amalgamation options it will look into further, with two of four options including the Ruapehu District.

Elected members directed their staff to assess and report back on four options.

Local councils have until 9 August to tell central government who they want to partner up with.

If they don't, central government will determine how an amalgamation would occur.

Taupō's elected members voted to direct their staff to investigate the following options:

One option is a Central North Island unitary authority that would include Ruapehu, Waitomo, Ōtorohanga, South Waikato and Taupō district councils or various combinations of those councils.

Their Option Three is a Rotorua, Great Lakes and South Waikato unitary authority, that would cover Rotorua Lakes, Ruapehu, South Waikato and Taupō district councils or various combinations of those councils.

The other options are: a single unitary Waikato authority; and to wait for the Government to decide Taupō's fate.

Te Papamārearea Ward councillor Wahine Murch said Option Three would incorporate the Waikato Headwaters, Tongariro National Park and the Geothermal Corridor while keeping Taupō at the core.

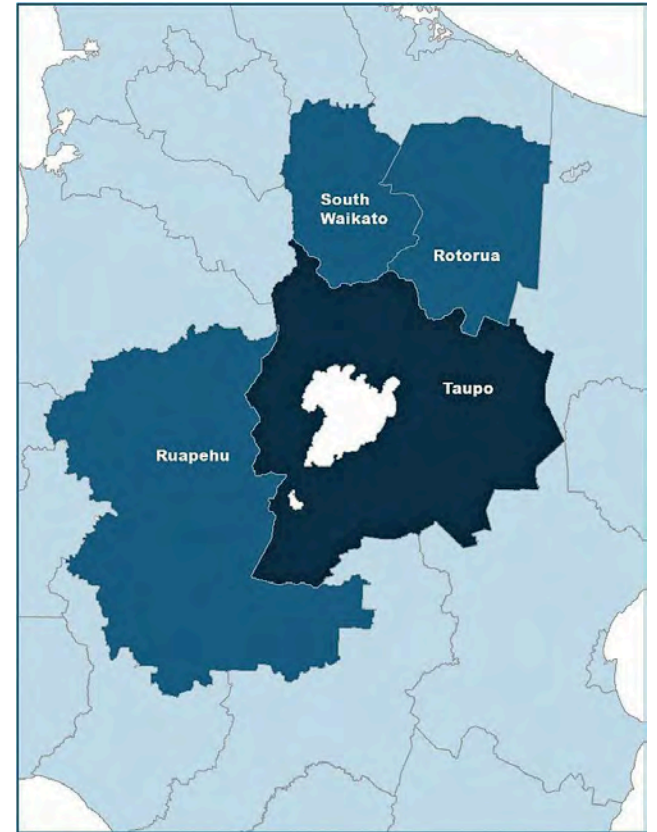
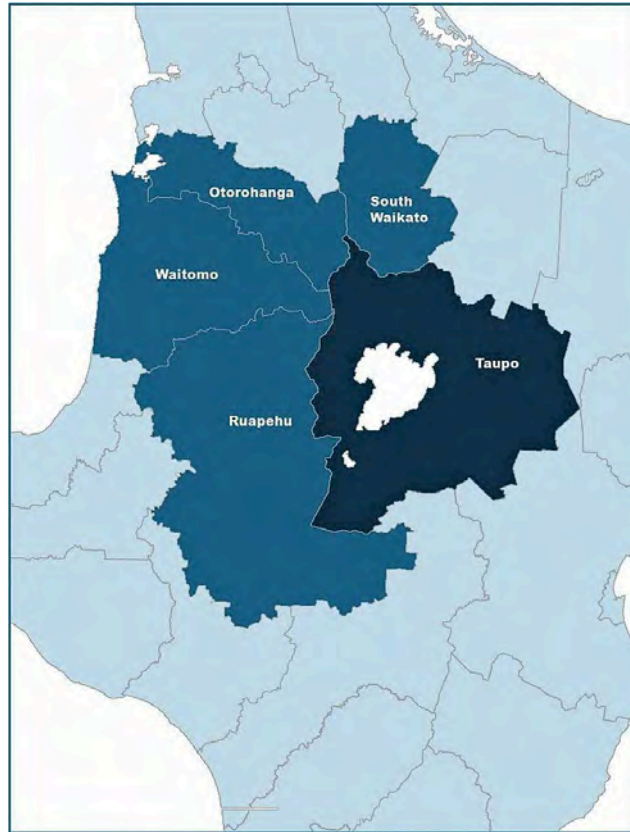
"This option also inverts the logic and asks what governance boundary makes sense for the Central Plateau."

It would also give the area a council-wide population of 103,000 residents.

Tūrangi Ward councillor Sandra Greenslade supported Murch.

Greenslade said Taupō was surrounded by nine councils, and there was a lot of room for overlap and shared interest.

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



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**Whacky winter art on show**

Volcano Vibe Collective's latest exhibition is a culmination of a joint venture between The Boring Gallery in Whanganui, and local artist Megan Arden. Together they have transformed the shop and gallery space into a whimsical wonderland - perfect for the 'Whacky Winter' theme.

Megan Arden is a Rangataua-based artist who spends her days at Strange Dog making posters, stickers, T-shirts, and all manner of printed things. Evenings are reserved for painting—the part of the day when work disappears, the paints come out, and her imagination is free to wander.

Seven years ago she traded Auckland for the Ruapehu region and, surrounded by forests, mountains and wild places, rediscovered the simple joy of painting that had quietly been there all along.

Rather than chasing perfection, she tries to paint with the same freedom and curiosity children have before they believe there are 'right' and 'wrong' ways to make art. She works primarily in acrylics, creating bright, colourful worlds where impossible creatures appear and ordinary moments become just a little bit magical.

Megan's paintings usually begin with something real: a walk through the forest, a swim in the ocean, or a persistent odd thought that refuses to go away. She follows those ideas wherever they lead, blurring the line between memory, imagination and reality.

Her work is a celebration of curiosity and the belief that there is something strange, beautiful and magical waiting to be discovered in everyday life—if we remember to slow down and look a little closer.

Kim Rees creates delightfully quirky ceramic "Odd-entities". These handcrafted whimsical creatures are full of personality, charm and just the right amount of mischief. Every piece is completely unique, lovingly made by hand, and created with one simple purpose — to bring smiles and spark joy wherever they end up.

Kim Rees is based in Whanganui where she runs and curates art at The Boring Gallery, a part of the Whanganui Community Arts Centre at 19 Taupo Quay.

Volcano Vibe Collective has entered an art-sharing initiative with The Boring Gallery in Whanganui, swapping art every two months to bring variety to both spaces and to give local artists in both areas more opportunities to showcase their work to new audiences.

The Whacky Winter programme includes two workshops for children during these school holidays - Tuesday 7 July and Tuesday 14 July, with Barbara van der Woerd. They will play with polymer clay, creating creatures inspired by Kim Rees, and paint rocks inspired by Megan Arden. The sessions run from 11.30 till 1pm, at 45 Seddon Street, Raetihi. For more information or to book, contact Barbara on 027 829 8973.

Volcano Vibe hopes the Whacky Winter exhibition brings colour, creativity, and delight, offering a welcome lift to spirits throughout this winter season. Come in to see the exhibition and shop other arts, crafts and gifts from over 100 local suppliers at 45 Seddon Street, Raetihi (opposite the Four Square).



Kim Rees's quirky ceramics on show at Volcano Vibe in Raetihi.

**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!

**FOR SALE**

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

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

**BUSINESS NOTICES**

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

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**BUSINESS NOTICES**

**Ohakune Health Hub**  
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**PUBLIC NOTICES**

**WAIMARINO MUSEUM SOCIETY INC.**  
**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**  
Monday 13 July 2026 at 5.30pm  
Waimarino Eldercare Lounge  
Seddon St, Raetihi

An invitation to all people in the Raetihi and Ohakune to attend this meeting to assist and help us to preserve the history of this area.

**GUEST SPEAKER**  
**Patron - Colin Fredricksen**

**Agenda**  
Chairperson Report  
Financial Report  
Election of officers  
Subscriptions \$10

Noeline Churton, Secretary. 027 2445226

**Friends of Orautoha Orautoha School Fundraising Committee**  
**Annual General Meeting**  
Tuesday 21st July 2026 at 6pm  
Te Korowai o Wainuiārua office,  
28 Queen Street, Raetihi  
All welcome

*The Royal Theatre, Raetihi*  
**Community Entertainment**  
**Whenua Whispers**  
Saturday 11 July – 7pm – \$15  
Supper included. Bar available.

**PUBLIC NOTICES**

**PROPOSED ROAD CLOSURE FOR SILVER FERN RALLY 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 Silverfern Rally 2026 is proposing to close the following roads:

**Thursday 3 December 2026 01:25PM to 05:55PM – full closure:**

- Turakina Valley Road, from 7544 Turakina Valley Road to 1km from its intersection with Tangiwai Station Road

**Friday 4 December 2026 07:25AM to 11:55AM - full closure:**

- Kaitieke Road, 200m from the intersection with SH4 to 200m from its intersection with Oio Road

**Friday 4 December 2026 07:50AM to 12:20PM - full closure:**

- Kawautahi Road, 200m from its intersection with Oio Road to its intersection with Hikumutu Road
- Hikumutu Road, from its intersection with Kawautahi Road to 874 Hikumutu Road

**Friday 4 December 2026 09:05AM to 01:35PM - full closure:**

- Opotiki Road, 200m from its intersection with SH4, continuing along Ararimu E Road and Otunui N Road
- Kururau Road, from its intersection with Otunui N Road to 200m from its intersection with Wanganui River Road (SH 43)

**Friday 4 December 2026 09:50AM to 02:20PM - full closure:**

- Roto Road, 100m from its intersection with SH 43 to Huia Road
- Huia Road, from Roto Road to its intersection with Ohura Road

**Friday 4 December 2026 11:10AM to 03:40PM - full closure:**

- Ohura N Road, 200m from its intersection Ohura Road to Waikaka Road
- Waikaka Road to Mangakahikatea Road
- Mangakahikatea Road to intersection with Munday Road and Ohura Mokau Road
- Ohura Mokau Road to Matiere Road
- Matiere Road to Oniao Road
- Oniao Road, 200m from its intersection with Mokauiti Road

**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 Thursday 20 August 2026 at the office of Ruapehu District Council at Private Bag 1001, Taumarunui 3946 or [info@ruapehudc.govt.nz](mailto:info@ruapehudc.govt.nz).

**PUBLIC NOTICES**  
**Section 101, Sale and Supply of Alcohol Act 2012**  
**Raetihi Cosmopolitan Club Inc** have made an application to the District Licensing Committee at Ruapehu District Council for the **Renewal of a Club Licence** in respect of the premises situated at **32 Seddon Street, Raetihi**, known as **Raetihi Cosmopolitan Club**. The general nature of the business to be conducted under the licence is that of a **Club**. The days on which and the hours during which alcohol is intended to be sold under the licence are: **Monday – Sunday: 9.00am – 1.00am**. The application may be inspected during ordinary office hours at the office of the Ruapehu District Licensing Committee at Ruapehu District Council, 59-63 Huia Street, Taumarunui. Any person who is entitled to object and who wishes to object to the issue of the licence may, not later than 25 working days after the date of the publication of this notice, file a notice in writing of the objection with the Secretary of the District Licensing Committee at Ruapehu District Council, Private Bag 1001, Taumarunui 3946. No objections to the renewal of a licence may be made in relation to a matter other than a matter specified in section 131 of the Sale and Supply of Alcohol Act 2012. This is the only publication of this notice.

**For everything Ohakune, visit [www.ohakune.info](http://www.ohakune.info)**

# **RUAPEHU SNOW BULLETIN**

**Priceless  
newspaper!  
Winter  
2026**



*Ohakune extreme skier Jess Hotter jumps with joy during a visit to her home hill – Tūroa – last season. Jess is a world-champion freeride skier and usually spends her time travelling the world, skiing for photo shoots, but she's taking a year off for 2026 to recover from surgery before she gets back into life on snow. Photo: Aden Simons.*

## **Snow Bulletin is out now!**

### **Pick up a copy around the Ruapehu district.**

**Next issue is out in Spring. Call us today to  
book your space – 0274 993 697.**

# Ohakune Squash

Three Ohakune players competed in the National Graded champ finals in Tauranga over the weekend, with Ohakune's Dylan Budge meeting up with world number two, Paul Coll, in the second round.

Many locals watched him play on live stream, proud to see him wearing his Ohakune Club shirt. Even though he lost 11/7, 11/5, 11/7, Dylan was very happy with his game and can proudly say he took more points off Coll than anyone else over the weekend. Coll went on to win his ninth title.

Also at the Nationals, Jessie Harding was third in the women's D grade, Olivia Gray was ninth in the women's C grade and Jason Haitana was seventh in the men's D grade.

Results from the penultimate round of Ohakune Squash Club's interhouse saw Tecnifibre hold on to their overall lead with a 117/86 win over Head, Unsquashable beat Karakal 102/90, Stellar beat Dunlop 106/86 and Salming beat Prince 102/76. Points with one round to go: Tecnifibre 664, Stellar 635, Salming 603, Unsquashable 585, Dunlop 581, Head 559, Karakal 543 and Prince 522.

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



Dylan Budge, at right, with squash legend Paul Coll.



Two friends from Auckland made the trip to the Mardi Gras and were keen to use their free Tūroa passes to come back to experience snow for the first time.



A group of friends split between Auckland and Wellington converged on Ohakune for the Mardi Gras, with the theme of tarot card characters for their costumes and doof sticks. Photos: Robert Milne.

## Steaming into Ruapehu

Mainline Steam Heritage Trust, based in Plimmerton north of Wellington, sent a vintage train load of passengers north to Ohakune and Waimarino/National Park on Saturday, coinciding with the Mardi Gras set up at the Ohakune Junction.

The passengers disembarked at Ohakune with most travelling on to Waimarino and Whakapapa on buses, with the locomotive "Joanne" – JB1236 – was serviced and turned at Ohakune in preparation for the return journey.

The train then travelled to Waimarino to pick up its passengers, ready for the trip back to Plimmerton.

It turned into a very long day, due to a network fault on the line, that the Trust was grateful to KiwiRail for their swift response to the problem.

"While the day didn't quite go to plan, we're grateful to have such supportive passengers and a fantastic team behind the scenes who make it all possible," stated the Trust.

KiwiRail repaired the network fault and arranged a replacement crew. "With no steam-qualified drivers available, a diesel locomotive had been arranged to attach to the front of the Ruapehu Mountaineer to assist us home."



## Ruapehu holds firm for another convincing win



Ruapehu Rugby and Sports Club's senior team held firm at the fortress, Rochfort Park, and made sure of it on Saturday, winning 45-12. Nothing was given, it was earned, with tries flowing across the park to seal the win over Marist Celtic and a place in this Saturday's final. Marist Celtic put up a hard-fought contest, but credit goes to the Ruapehu boys for their effort. Scorers: Gabriel Hakaraia (2), Tahatika Te Riaki, Harry Rowe, Callum Tahau, Rangihaereroa McLeod, Te Orangi Te Riaki. Jack Pettersson (5 conversions). Ruapehu face the Pirates in the final – a big job ahead. Photos: Glyn Hubbard.





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