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Third time's a charm for Tūroa 2026

Over half-way through the snow season, Pure Tūroa is pretty happy with 2026 from a business point of view, looking likely to be in the black after two fairly poor seasons.

"Without giving away the numbers, it's up significantly on last year," says Pure Tūroa marketing manager James Simpson.

"Like-for-like, this time of the season, we're well ahead both in skier days and in top line turnover.

"So, it's positive all around in terms of people showing their support and us having a good working crew."

He said Tūroa is getting good repeat business and they're getting mostly good feedback on the product.

Simpson was reluctant to give numbers – partly because there's still several weeks of the season to go and "anything can happen" – but he said it's not double "but certainly a large percentage".

Asked what the snow was like on the day we called, Simpson said his day's skiing was very good.

"The rain that came (Monday 7 September) definitely wiped out some of the lower slopes, but up top, it caught all that new snow, so it's actually looking pretty good and it's skiing really well."

"So it's going to be a good spring and we're actively selling spring passes and they're getting quite good pick up.

"It's a good sign that it's been both a good season to date, good snowfall and then a product for people to commit to a spring pass at this point."

He added that more snow is on the way and several possible snow top-up storms over the coming weeks.

The long-term forecast is for a series of fronts that are likely to deliver more snow "fingers crossed".

Future for Pure Tūroa

Halfway through its third year, with the numbers up and being in the black, it's looking promising for a reinvestment programme over summer, says Simpson.

"We'll be able to reinvest in infrastructure, which will then help boost the product, which will then keep the momentum going, to be able to reinvest in the town in the region.

"It's still early days, only Year Three of business post a fairly apocalyptic end to RAL.

"We're trying to rebuild trust."

As an example, Pure Tūroa was not able to get access to RAL's pass sale database.

"So we've rebuilt that from scratch."

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Tūroa - Out West. One of the great places to be in spring. Photo: Tommy Pyatt.



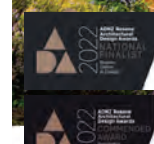
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Photo by Glyn Hubbard



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Investments make Whakapapa an 11-month operation

A large investment in snowmaking for Whakapapa Holdings Limited – around \$2m – since it took over the skifield last year has ensured a good season so far for the ski area.

“We had good snow making earlier on, hit our markers with that early season Snowland and snow play,” says operations manager Steve Manunui.

“But more importantly, we had some really good weather, which was that cold clear snowmaking weather, but good weather in between.

“And as you know, sometimes we have these big snow storms and we can’t bloody get open.”

He said the combination of good snowmaking weather, with good weather for visitors in between, has made for a very good first half of the season for the company.

Manunui says guest numbers are pretty much on target, “which we haven’t seen for a long time.”

Happy Valley was seeing around 1700 people a day, taking advantage of the new Snowland facility for sledding and tubing.

The Snowland idea followed the success of the sledding product in Happy Valley of the past 5-6 years.

The top carpet lift is dedicated to the facility.

“We were basically running out of capacity, pretty much all of last winter.

“We thought we could extend the capacity and make it an even better product.

“We introduced the tubing, which sort of shaped the area. Its own dedicated area and has been a game changer for us.”

He said they were limited to about 30 people in the old sledding area.

“Now we can do 200 at a time in this new area.

“Just to give you an idea, on Saturday Tūroa open to 1700 guests. On the same Saturday, we did 1700, just in Snowland.”

Sightseeing on the Sky Waka also continues to prove very successful for the company.

Manunui confirms that the upper mountain has been a challenge, with a shortage of natural snow.

“We’ve been short of that bloody 30-odd centimetres throughout the season.

“But we’ve had the East T bars open since end of July.

“Traditionally, we’ll move over to the west by the second week of August,

but that’s been limited with the natural snowfall.

“We’ve managed to get a day out on the West Ridge and we’ve only just got to the Far West this weekend gone and have had a couple of half days.”

Spring

Manunui says they have “a firm eye” on completing the school team, with schools and groups, in the next two weeks.

“We’re hoping that we have that Snowland product that’ll see us through the holidays.

“And we’re hoping with these wee top ups we’re getting up high that we can keep up a mountain skiable through to the end of the holidays.

“Anything beyond that will be a bonus for us at this stage.

“We know we don’t have that big base that gets us deep into spring.

“But we’ve got the fingers crossed – last year we picked up quite a bit of snow in September.”

Manunui says that the investments that the new owners have made mean that they are now “firmly open for 11 months of the year”, (closing in May for maintenance).

“If we lose the spring skiing a little earlier, it just means we transition straight into summer, so we don’t close. We’re quite excited about that.”

The company is reopening the Knoll Ridge restaurant this spring/summer, kicking off on Friday 11 September.

Tūroa so far

From Page 2

But he says this has proved to be an advantage in some ways.

“Now we have a database of original, hardcore, passionate fans.”

Regarding reinvestment, Simpson says top of the wish list is a snow factory for the Alpine Meadow.

“There’s a whole bunch of the programme that we need to just to keep things turning, but a snow factory is number one on the list.

“The modern ones will allow us to make snow and much warmer temperatures. That will allow us to get a full Alpine Meadow product for the whole of June.

“So we’ll get a full month of business, which means a full extra month of families and first timers, which means a full extra month of people coming to town. It’s a big investment, but we’re tracking towards being confident enough to get it.”

Coming up

Now it’s spring, the idea of a closing date is on some people’s minds.

Simpson says they are aiming for Labour Weekend, conditions dependent.

“But as we all know, you just never know what this place is like – the other day it was forecast to be horrific weather and it was bluebird.

“So, all signs points to Labour Weekend but we’ll reassess virtually weekly and then daily throughout October.”

FRONT PAGE PIX: canoeing and kayaking the Whanganui River and tributaries is a great experience. Austin Roxborough had a great time visiting Tūroa with his dad, Tim. And mountain biking in the Ruapehu area.



Whakapapa’s Snowland has been deemed a real success.



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Goat hunt comp for conservation

Heading to Ruapehu for skiing in spring for a lot of people means chucking the bike on the back as well – but what about your rifle too?

“Turn your wild goat hunt – whether it’s your first or your fourth, solo or with mates – into meaningful action. Help reduce pressure on New Zealand’s landscapes and go in the draw to win,” invites the Department of Conservation, who is organising a competition to help reduce the numbers of these pests, that cause immense environmental damage, especially in the Whanganui National Park.

The competition runs until 26 November 2026.

“Every eligible hunt contributes to a nationwide effort to reduce wild goat numbers,” says DOC.

DOC asks hunters to follow the rules and hunt safely, legally and ethically, have the required permits or landowner permission. Then take eligible goat heads or tails to an official entry location.

“This competition is about getting out there and giving back.

“Wild goats can cause real damage when numbers are left unchecked. They put pressure on landscapes and ecosystems.

“Hunters and landowners already help keep numbers down and protect the land. This competition recognises and supports that effort.

“Every eligible hunt makes a difference.”



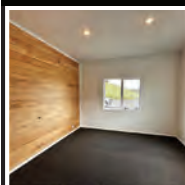
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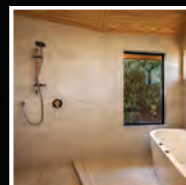
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Best spring corn snow in the world at Ruapehu

By Clancy Miller

There is no need to set your alarms so early at this point in the season. The roads are dry, the lines are short, and the spring sun is warming up the snow, creating soft, fun conditions across the mountain.

At Tūroa, it is apparent just how underrated spring skiing really is. For some people, their season on the slopes has only just begun and, arguably, this may be the most enjoyable time of year for skiing.

With a welcome 10cm top-up at 'The Giant' lift, (7 September) snow-goers have been given hope for the next phase of the season. With more snow in the forecast later in the week, the mountain is coming alive again,

and holidaymakers are packing their bags to visit Tūroa for what is shaping up to be a promising spring.

After being in the ski industry for many years, James Foubister knows a thing or two about spring conditions on Mount Ruapehu. He says spring brings "longer days, warmer temps, and some of the best spring corn in the world." He also made a note of the numbers on the mountain at this time of year.

"Generally, especially midweek, fewer people, great conditions. And generally, the road and car parks are dry."

Turn to Page 7



Tūroa spring skiing – 'the best I've ever found in the world', says ex-patroller Chris Conway, who provided this photo.



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Local climber reaches new heights on Te Hangāruru trail

For former Vertigo Climbing Wall owner Jeremy Hamer, helping construct the spectacular new 99-metre suspension bridge on Te Hangāruru is more than another job—it is an opportunity to bring his passion and skills back into the local tourism economy.

Jeremy joined representatives of Te Korowai o Wainuiārua, including Aiden Gilbert, Chad Hooton of Impel and Ngā Ara Tūhono Charitable Trust general manager Lynley Twyman at a blessing held at the Manganui o te Ao bridge site (see story Page17).

Now working alongside the specialist team from Abseil Access, Jeremy is helping build one of the defining features of the next section of Te Hangāruru.

“I have always loved climbing, ropes and working at height, so being able to use those skills on a project like this is pretty close to a dream job,” Jeremy said.

“To be working outdoors, with a really experienced team, on an incredible bridge in my own backyard is hugely satisfying. This is something the community will be able to feel proud of for generations.”

He has also worked on the Tongariro River bridge and the Whangaehu Bridge on the Te Araroa Trail

Jeremy originally came to Ohakune for a three-month winter season but quickly fell in love with the maunga, the outdoor lifestyle and the local community. He went on to run Vertigo Climbing Wall, where he shared his enthusiasm for climbing and helped local children and adults build their skills and confidence.

His new role brings that experience into an ambitious local infrastructure project, combining technical rope skills, a head for heights and Jeremy’s deep connection to Ruapehu.

Abseil Access has designed and built the three suspension bridges already completed on Te Hangāruru, including the striking 30-metre crossing above the Mangaturuturu River. The specialist bridge and rope-access company is also currently working on the replacement Major Jones suspension bridge on the Tongariro River Trail in Tūrangi.

“Abseil Access has designed and built some spectacular bridges, and there is a huge amount to learn from the team,” Jeremy said.

“It is exciting to be part of bringing this design to life above such a powerful awa.”

The bridge will carry walkers and cyclists across the Manganui o te Ao and form part of a new 1.1km connection to the historic Last Spike site. The extension will build on the first 9.1 kilometres of Te Hangāruru, already open between Horopito and Pōkākā Road.

Lynley Twyman said Jeremy’s involvement represented exactly the kind of local outcome the wider project was intended to create.

“This is about much more than constructing a bridge,” she said. “It is about partnership, connection and creating opportunities for local people to contribute their skills to the future of Ruapehu. Jeremy’s journey is a wonderful example of that.”



Climber Jeremy Hamer working at height on a swing bridge. Photo supplied.

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What is spring corn snow?

Corn snow is a type of granular snow formed by repeated daily cycles of melting and refreezing, most common during the spring.

How It Forms: Melt-freeze cycle: Daytime temperatures rise above freezing to melt the top layer of snow, while clear nighttime temperatures drop below freezing to refreeze it.

Crystal Growth: Repeated freezing and thawing causes small, fragile snow crystals to bond and round into large, smooth, spherical pellets that look like kernels of corn.

Skiing and Riding Conditions: The Sweet Spot – It provides a smooth, fast, and forgiving surface that allows for excellent ski edging and grip,

often compared to riding on velvet.

Timing is Key: The ideal window is usually mid-morning (between 10:00am and noon) when the top five centimetres or so are softened by the sun while the base remains firmly frozen.

Spring corn can have some issues: The transition, skied too early, corn snow is rock-hard ice; skied too late in the afternoon, it degrades into heavy slush or “mashed potatoes”.

But at Tūroa, this transition period takes much, much longer than at almost every other ski area, thanks to the south-facing slopes that mean the sun is hitting the slopes at a more oblique angle.

Best spring skiing

From Page 5

With the peak season behind us, Foubister is not wrong about the crowds. No more long queues, filled car parks, and chock-a-block cafes. Head on up to the mountain, and you're in for a cracker day.

Ohakune local Robert Milne has a similar feeling towards spring skiing.

“Spring skiing is great at Ruapehu. The freeze-thaw means you don't need to rush up – you can cruise up and start skiing about 10 when the snow has softened and ski until it gets too heavy – at least 2 pm or even through to 4 pm.”

Tuesday's fresh snow (8 September) was an absolute hit: for those who ventured off-piste, they enjoyed some of the best gully conditions we have had this season. The warmer weather also means fewer layers, making traversing back from the gullies to the main runs a little more comfortable.

The benefits of spring skiing don't end when the lifts stop. Milne states: “You can head home, sit on the deck with a beer or a G&T, or jump in the spa”.

The spring sun provides the perfect atmosphere for cold beers at the end

of the day, which can be enjoyed outside with your mates.

Foubister agrees: it's all about “the cold beers at the end of the day.”

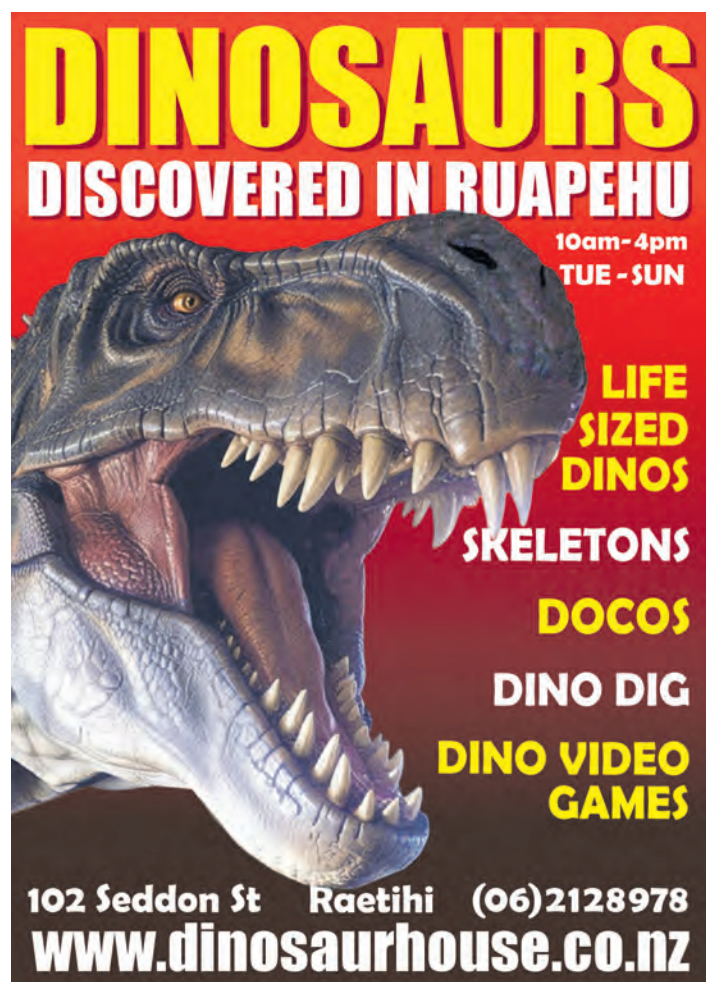
Ben Wiggins – aka Mr Positivitynomatterwhat – loves spring skiing too.

“Sunshine, sunburn, beers on the balcony at the Giant caff. slashing up the mountain in the morning and golf and biking in the afternoon. Just multi, multi games in one day. Longer sunshine hours means you can do more in a day.”

Chris Conway – ex-ski patroller is a big fan:

“Spring skiing at Turoa is the best I have ever found anywhere. It doesn't get any better. Long gliding hot-knife-through-butter turns out Far West or coming home from a day tour to Whakapapa. Simply the best.”

So if you're on the fence about spring skiing this year at Turoa, pack your spring mitts and head on up for some playful conditions. With shorter queues and longer days, spring might just be the mountain's best-kept secret.



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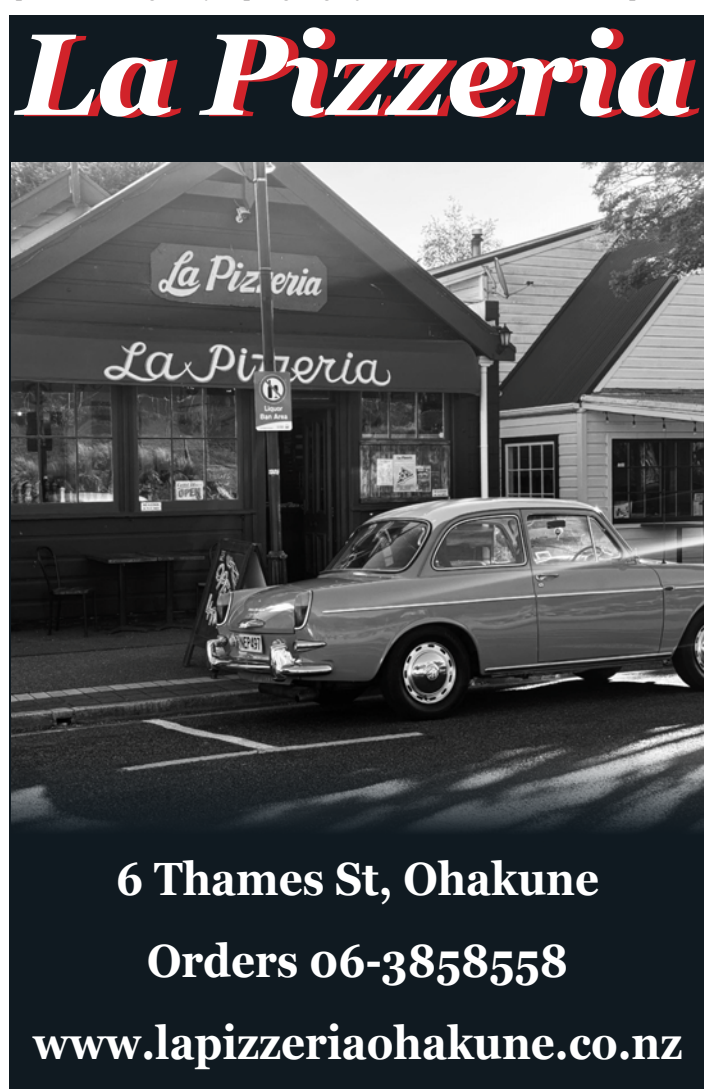
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Fashion show returns after two-year break

The Ohakune Fashion Show, a staple of the local community calendar since the 1980s, returns to the Matterhorn on 17 October, following a two year hiatus.

Doors open at 6.30pm, with drinks available and live popular cover music from Lisa Lou setting the tone for the evening.

The main performance begins at 7.30pm, featuring local models showcasing collections from retailers based in Ohakune and further afield including Taupō and Taihape. The lineup spans everything from streetwear to high end fashion, along with upcycled clothing and wearable art.

Designers and retailers on the night include millinery by Tasha Paladin, pieces from local designer Teena Juanita, skiwear from TCB, premium merino adventure wear by Opus Fresh, wearable art by Ohakune Primary school TOI programme, and collections from High Country and Milly Black.

"This eclectic mix reflects the creativity of Ohakune retailers," says organiser Cecilia Roke.

"Showcasing local creations has been the whole idea since the early years."

Performance sound for the evening is provided by Double Drop.

Former All Black Glen Osbourne will MC the night, which also includes spot prizes such as clothing packages and a silent auction, with a 2027 Turoa ski pass and other vouchers up for grabs.

Attendees will also have the chance to shop from the comfort of their seats, with the option to purchase displayed fashion pieces after the show.

Tickets are \$30 for an individual seat, or \$400 for a VIP table seating up to six people, which includes champagne and nibbles provided by the Powderkeg.

Tickets are available from the Powderkeg or the Ruapehu Bulletin office at 56 Clyde Street, Ohakune (next to the iSite).



Snow styling is part of the Ohakune Fashion Show, coming up. Photo: Alex Roke.



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Adaptive fliers on the way to Tūroa

A group of adaptive skiers – including three who have represented New Zealand at the winter Paralympics – are converging on Tūroa this month for a filming session, showcasing their sport and their adventures around New Zealand ski areas including Mt Ruapehu.

They will be filming at Turoa for 8-10 days between 21 September – 3 October, weather dependent.

One of the riders is Aaron Ewen, a T12 paraplegic sit skier and New Zealand Paralympic representative (Beijing 2022).

“I was paralysed in a mountain bike accident at 16, and after a few years working as a bicycle mechanic I moved to Wanaka and pursued ski racing for New Zealand, competing in the Beijing 2022 Paralympics through High Performance Sport New Zealand.

“That experience showed me how little disabled-led media there is in New Zealand, so I set out to change that.

“I made *Us and Them*, the first New Zealand-made ski film told entirely through the lens of disabled skiers, featuring four adaptive athletes who’ve all represented their countries internationally.”

The group are: - Aaron Ewen, Billy Dravitzki – T5 paraplegic sit skier from Nelson (NZ representative), James Thurston – L1 paraplegic sit skier from Palmerston North (NZ representative), and Patrick Halgren, above-knee amputee stand-up skier, currently racing for Team USA.

“The goal is to show newly disabled young people, especially teenagers adjusting to life as paraplegics, that an exciting, independent life is still possible. When I was 16 in the spinal unit, there was nothing showing me that.”



In a chair, but still getting air – expert adaptive skiers are coming to Tūroa for filming.

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Great trout fishing right on Ruapehu's doorstep

Rivers and streams in the Ruapehu District support some of the most productive trout fisheries in the region and locals and visitors alike have some great fishing right on their doorstep.

Manganui o Te Ao River

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

The river is also notable for its outstanding scenic values and whio (blue duck). Angling use is low by national standards and there are always easy to access, undisturbed fishing spots to be found. The defined sequence of deep pools, runs and rapids creates a diversity of fishing water, which caters for all angling methods and levels of skill.

Spin fishing using veltecs, tobys and paddle-tail softbaits is a good way to start. Nymphing with a Tongariro-style two-nymph rig can also be productive.

A feature of the river is the evening rise, which occurs on calm, mild evenings throughout spring and summer.

In the middle reaches, the river can be accessed from a pleasant campsite

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

Mangawhero River

Flowing through Ohakune, the upper Mangawhero River contains a good population of brown trout averaging 1.5kg and often reaching 2kg or more.

In November and December, fish can gorge on brown and green beetle, as well as mayfly nymphs and, later on, wasps under the willow trees. As is common with most rivers in the area, there is a good evening rise over spring and summer. Often trout can be seen stationed just under the surface under foam-lines or against overhanging or instream cover. If a small, unweighted nymph or emerger pattern can be cast close to them they will often readily take this. The 10km of river downstream from Ohakune is the most popular fishing reach and is characterised by gravelly rocky runs, pools and more placid willow-lined stretches. The Mangawhero River Walkway (Ayr Street carpark) gives access to some good pools within Ohakune.

There is also access from the Mangawhero River Road and Pakihi Road.

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TROUT & PERCH FISHING

The Taranaki Fish & Game Region offers a wide variety of freshwater fishing experiences in a scenic and uncrowded environment.

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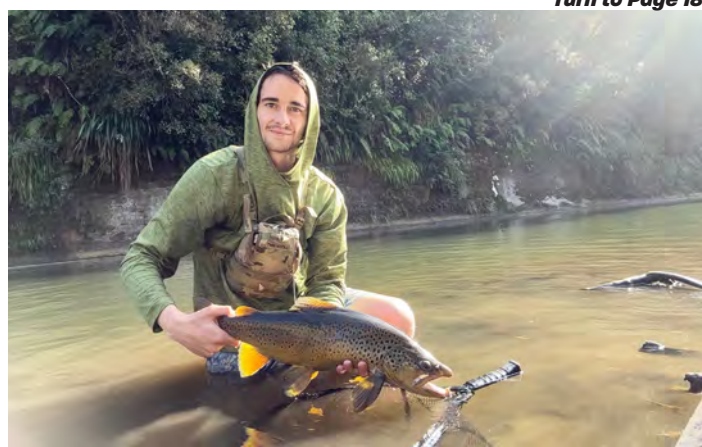
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Adaptive snow experiences come to Ruapehu



Whakapapa Ski Area is hosting their Adaptive Festival from 11-13 September – “an inclusive and empowering experience for all”. The Festival is a three-day celebration of inclusive snowsports on the maunga, giving people of all abilities the chance to ski, ride and enjoy the alpine environment in a welcoming and supportive setting. Hosted by Whakapapa’s Adaptive team, the festival brings together athletes, first-timers, whānau and supporters. With guided sessions, adaptive equipment and plenty of opportunities to get involved, it’s all about making snow sports more accessible and celebrating the joy of being on the mountain together.

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Dynamic duo one of a kind



Polly Inglis, left, and Jenna Hovelle with one of their sold properties. They call themselves the “ultimate two-for-one” package.

They call them the ‘Ruapehu Dynamic Duo’ – a couple of women real estate agents who teamed up to make a difference in the North Island’s summer and winter adventure playground.

They’re the ultimate two-for-one package, known throughout the Ruapehu region by their business handle, Jenna & Polly.

You talk to one, you talk to two. You don’t pronounce one and not the other. Think Fisher & Paykel, Black & Decker, Marks & Spencer ... Their email address tells it like it is: jenna.polly@arizto.co.nz

Jenna Hovelle and Polly Ingles, both live with their families – and dogs and horses – on lifestyle blocks minutes from Ohakune, known popularly as ‘The Mountain Town’.

Its resident population hasn’t changed much over the years. These days it’s around 1300 – in 2005 it was just short of 1200.

It is in the winter where visiting skiers, snowboarders and the like can more than triple the population. In summer the place swarms with backpackers, mountain bikers, and canoeists on the Whanganui River.

Jenna settled in Ohakune 20 years ago. Polly came later. Both worked for real estate companies before joining Arizto.

“Polly and I moved over to Arizto because we both felt their systems were the way real estate was heading,” says Jenna.

“Everything is done online and made a lot easier for our vendors and buyers. We felt the commission was much fairer for our vendors as well.

“And with the free marketing and no-sale, no-fee motto it was a no-brainer for us to make the change.”

They’ve nailed their Arizto shingle on at least 20 properties in the region. So, how’s it going?

“We’ve got some of our properties going through the sale process already,” says Polly.

Both women are looking forward to the town’s next big event, the Peak to Powderkeg. It’s a skiing, running, cycling race down Mt Ruapehu to the Powderkeg bar and a post-race barbecue.

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More than snow sports: school trips to Ruapehu Maunga

School buses from around the country pull into Ohakune each winter, from primary schools through to high schools. At the busiest point of the season, Pure Tūroa hosts up to 12 schools and around 300 students in a week.

The trips are largely parent-driven. Parents often come along themselves to help supervise, making the week as much a community effort as a school one. Schools can stay up to a week, and trips are subsidised, through fundraising and through preferential tariffs Pure Tūroa offers to schools.

Organisers at Pure Tūroa say the trips are about more than skiing and snowboarding. For many children, it's their first time seeing snow. Staff use snowsports as a means to build autonomy in the kids, and to teach kaitiakitanga, environmental care. On clear days, the scenery stretches across much of the North Island, as far as Mount Taranaki, and Ruapehu becomes an outdoor, full-scale geography class.

Classes are often merged for the trips, and lasting links form between schools that return year after year. Many of Pure Tūroa's ski instructors are themselves international, adding a cultural dimension to the week, alongside simple time for kids to spend with friends and family.

Instructors say one of the best parts of the job is watching children come back year after year, from their first snowplough as young kids to confident skiers and snowboarders by high school, with some going on into competitive coaching.

Local kura from Ohakune, Taihape and Waiouru visit far more often, up to three days a week through the season, rather than one trip a year. For these kids, the mountain is a familiar presence they get to know across the seasons, as part of growing up alongside their Koro.

Going to school in local towns often means missing out on a lot of the advantages of being enrolled in a city school – making up for that for Ruapehu pupils is that they get easier access to the snow slopes.



SHREDUCATION: Local schools are well-looked after by the skifields so that children can enjoy a snow experience on their doorstep. Pictured is a happy group of Ohakune Primary School pupils.

Whakapapa

On the other side, Whakapapa is proud of the support they give to schools.

Operations manager Steve Manunui says 165 schools have visited this season so far – 16,000 pupils in total.

“That is up 33% up.

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Retro time, 2016 – haming it up for Jude Chevin's camera.

Go retro, go have fun

Are you ready to go retro? Have you got your outfit sorted and your vintage ski gear ready?

Retro Day is back and the organisers are ready to rock 'n' roll at Tūroa Ski Area and at the Kitchie at Ohakune Junction on Saturday, 3 October 2026

"Keep an eye out for the Retro Police on the mountain — they'll be on patrol throughout the day, handing out spot 'fines' ... the fun kind! You could also score some fantastic spot prizes for embracing your best retro style," says organiser Paul Stielgbauer.

Then keep the celebrations going at the Retro Party, from 3pm–7pm at The Kitchen, Ohakune Junction: live music and DJs, great food and drinks, retro air guitar competition, the "infamous" Chocolate Éclair Eating Competition, as well as interactive games and prizes, thanks to "our amazing supporters", including Tūroa, Head, Marmot, Scott, Vuarnet, TCB, SLR, Ski Shed, Ohakune Hot Tubs, Powderkeg, La Pizzeria and more.

"So, dust off those flares, dig out the retro ski suit, throw on your brightest colours and join us for a day of mountain madness, music, prizes and good old-fashioned fun."

"Get dressed. Get retro. Get amongst it" — Paul from The Kitchen.

Retro on retro – from the history files – the event in 2007. Photo: John Archer.





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Creating and caring for connected trails together

Ruapehu cycle trails champion Lynley Twyman explains why the Trust needs support to extend and maintain the trails from Tūroa Ski Field to the Whanganui River mouth:

- The Mountains to Sea – Ngā Ara Tūhono trail network stretches more than 300 kilometres from Tongariro National Park to the Tasman Sea, connecting communities, supporting local businesses and providing unforgettable experiences for residents and visitors alike. As the network grows, so too does the effort required to maintain and improve it.

Behind every kilometre of trail is a significant amount of work. The Ngā Ara Tūhono Charitable Trust co-ordinates trail development, maintenance, safety inspections, vegetation control, signage, bridge repairs and infrastructure upgrades across the network. This work is made possible through partnerships with iwi, councils, the Department of Conservation, funding agencies, contractors, volunteers and the wider community. The Trust brings together representatives of iwi partners, local councils and the wider trail community to help guide the future of the network.

One of the major achievements this year has been the continuing development of Te Hangāruru north of Horopito. Following the opening of the first 9.1-kilometre section, construction is now underway on the final connection to the historic Last Spike. This includes a spectacular 99-metre suspension bridge across the Manganui o te Ao River, creating another world-class experience for trail users and bringing us closer to completing the trail network.

As use of the trails grows, community involvement becomes increasingly important. Whether you are a regular rider, walker, runner or visitor, there are several simple ways you can help support the future of the trail.

If you notice hazards, damaged signage, slips, fallen trees or maintenance issues, please report them so they can be addressed quickly. Completing visitor surveys provides valuable information that helps secure funding for future improvements and demonstrates the value of the trails to the region. Donations, sponsorship and volunteer support also help maintain and enhance the network for everyone.

The future of Mountains to Sea – Ngā Ara Tūhono depends on all of us.

Together, we can ensure these trails continue to connect communities, share stories and create opportunities for generations to come.

To report an issue, complete a survey, make a donation or learn more about the Trust, visit mountainstosea.nz/support.

Planning for the complex programme of construction of the next Phase of Te Ara Mangawhero is underway with partners the Department of Conservation and Ngāti Rangi working together. Timelines for each stage are still to be confirmed.



Representatives of Te Korowai o Wainuiārua, from left, Aiden Gilbert, Jackson Tutahi, Jeremy Hamer and Chad Hooton of Impel at the site of the new 90m swingbridge on the Te Hangaruru trail.

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Great trout fishing right on Ruapehu's doorstep

From Page 10

Retaruke River

This Whanganui River tributary, rising west of Raurimu, contains a mixed population of brown and rainbow trout. At its best, the upper reaches are a delightful backcountry fishery that provides extensive fly-fishing water and is accessible from Oio Road (off SH4 just south of Owahango) and Upper Retaruke Road. The remaining 20km of the river down to the Whanganui junction is larger and more tannin-stained, and best suited to spinning. Access to the lower river is via Oio Road down to Whakahoro.

For more information on local fishing opportunities go to <https://fishandgame.org.nz> and click on Fishing / Where to Fish / Regional info / Taranaki / Ruapehu Fisheries. Or visit the new Fish & Game knowledge hub at:

<https://www.fishandgame.org.nz/freshwater-fishing-in-new-zealand/fishing-knowledge-hub/>

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

Report from the Team at Taranaki Fish & Game



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Great Ride boost for Horopito

Visitor facilities at Horopito on the Mountains to Sea – Ngā Ara Tūhono Great Ride are in for an upgrade.

Tourism and Hospitality Minister Louise Upston has announced that the Government is investing \$405,000 in facilities there.

“More than 67,000 people pass through Horopito, including on the Great Ride each year, creating lasting memories while contributing the local economy along the way,” Upston says.

Horopito is located on the edge of the Tongariro National Park, near Ohakune.

“This investment of \$405,000 will help to rectify the current lack of visitor infrastructure at a key junction, through the construction of public toilets, safe shuttle access, parking and other visitor facilities at Horopito.

“This will benefit visitors and locals alike while helping to ensure one of New Zealand’s Great Rides continues to provide a safe, high-quality experience for the thousands of people who use the trail every year.

“The project is ready to start and expected to encourage longer stays in the region while improving accessibility, safety and visitor satisfaction, ensuring the visitors continue to flow for many years to come.

“As visitor numbers continue to grow, we need to ensure destinations have the infrastructure in place to support that growth.

“By investing in the infrastructure that supports great visitor experiences, we’re helping set regional New Zealand up for the future, ensuring communities can welcome more visitors, deliver great experiences, and local businesses and communities benefit from sustainable tourism growth.”



A so-far unheralded bonus of the new Mountains to Sea trails is the access they give to people of limited mobility, who can now access the Tongariro National Park on wheels. Pictured is a group of friends including and adaptive electric bike rider on the Te Ara Mangawhero trail.

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Peak to Powderkeg is back

After a six-year break, the Peak to Powderkeg race returns to Ohakune Saturday 26 September.

The “sprint, ski, run, bike, sprint, scull” race remains the formula that has made this race a fixture of the Ruapehu spring calendar.

The 30th anniversary alpine relay kicks off from the top of Tūroa Ski Area. Entrants can take on the mountain solo or as part of a three-person team, with every team required to include at least one woman.

The route unfolds in stages: a ski or snowboard leg from top to bottom of the ski area, a 4.8km downhill run along the sealed Ohakune Mountain Road, and an 11.5km downhill bike leg, finishing with a 300m sprint then the trademark scull (beer, or lemonade if under-age). Expect a full afternoon on the mountain: competitors gather at the base at 3pm, with the event finishing at the Powderkeg once the last beer has been sculled.

This year marks the event’s 30th running, a milestone made more notable by the fact that recent editions have repeatedly fallen victim to the weather. Poor snow conditions and high winds on the mountain road have forced cancellations or postponements in past years. This time, organisers are committed to running the race no matter the weather, so long as enough entries come in to make it worth holding.

Category winners and lucky entrants alike will be in for prizes at the Powderkeg, with a barbecue for all to round out the evening. This year’s race is backed by Scott, Opus Fresh, Powderkeg, and TCB.

Registration has just opened, and early bird pricing is available for a limited time: \$99 for competitors, \$69 for juniors, \$179 for teams, or \$59 for spectators wanting in on the barbecue.



ABOVE: The starters before the 2001 event. **BELOW:** father and son competitors Rowan and Kurt Eves in 2013 – Kurt being a winner of the event more than once.



A promotional poster for the 'Peak 2 Powderkeg' event. The top half features a group of skiers in various colored gear (red, blue, yellow, black) racing down a snowy slope. The text 'SKI-RUN-BIKE-SCULL' is written in a curved banner above the large, bold text 'PEAK 2 POWDERKEG'. Below this, it says 'SATURDAY 26TH SEPTEMBER' and 'INDIVIDUAL AND TEAM ENTRIES WELCOME'. In the bottom left corner, there is a QR code and the text 'Register online at Turoa.com'. The bottom right corner features logos for 'SCOTT', 'Opus Fresh APPAREL CO.', 'THE POWDERKEG - ESTABLISHED SINCE 1984', and 'TUROA'.