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Kia Pai Ngā Hararei ~ Happy Holidays

ISSUE 103

FROM THE Mayor's Desk

Happy holidays everyone!

As we head into the festive season myself, Beth and Councillors would like to wish you all the best for a happy, peaceful holiday time however you choose to spend it. It has been another incredibly busy year and it's important to take some time out to relax and unwind and recharge ourselves for 2025. Stay safe and enjoy the break.

Ngā mihi, Andy Watson, Mayor of Rangitikei.



Rangitikei District Council Temporary Holiday Hours

The operating hours for our council offices, community hubs and waste transfer stations will be changing over the Christmas period.

- Council head office on High Street, Marton will be closed from Monday 23 December 2024 and will reopen on Monday 6 January 2025.
- All waste transfer stations will be closed on 25 and 26 December 2024, and 1 and 2 of January 2025. Operating hours may also differ slightly outside of these days.

Taihape Community Hub	Closed 25 & 26 December
Te Matapihi - Bulls Community Hub	Closed 25 & 26 December
Marton Community Hub	Closed 25 & 26 December Closed 1 & 2 January 2025

If you have an urgent issue to report, please remember you can always call us on our 24/7 phone number 0800 422 522.



Kuia Byford had the honour of cutting the ribbon to open the Ōtūpae Station Swingbridge - Te Pou o Ōtūpae. From left to right; Joe Byford, Matthew Thomas; Kuia Byford; Cr Piki Te Ora Hiroa; Donald Tantrum, and Mayor Andy Watson

Hautapu River Parks officially opened

Years of mahi, including planting days, earthworks, fundraising and design culminated in the official opening of the Hautapu River Parks on Wednesday, 11 December.

The project is a collaborative effort between the Friends of Taihape Charitable Society, Ngāti Tamakōpiri, the Rangitikei Environment Group, and the Rangitikei District Council. Collectively, they have worked on restoring the natural beauty of the area between Papakai and Memorial parks, and improving its accessibility for the community and tourists.

The bridge that was opened at the official unveling is called the Ōtūpae Station Swingbridge - Te Pou o Ōtūpae, symbolising the support provided by Ōtūpae and the Williams family.

Historically, Papakai Park was a hive of summer activity in Taihape, but over the years the park and the surrounding trails had deteriorated. Plans to revitalise the park were set in motion eight years ago, with a restoration project officially launched in 2019. The central bridge at Papakai Park is complete. With fundraising, the collective hope is to have all 5 bridges open in March 2026, adjoining a total of 12kms of walking trails for people to enjoy.

Located just a 2 minute drive from State Highway 1, the park is home to vibrant podocarp forests (which are critically endangered in New Zealand) and includes trees such as mature Totara, Matai, and Kahikatea (New Zealand's tallest native tree).



Rangitikei District Council acknowledges long-term benefits in partnering with neighbouring councils to deliver water services

Rangitikei District Council will consult with the Rangitikei community in late February, early March 2025 on its preference to partner with neighbouring councils to deliver drinking water, wastewater and stormwater in the future.

At the Thursday, 12 December 2024 Council meeting, Rangitikei District Council agreed on its preferred water services delivery model under the Government's Local Water Done Well initiative.

- **First preference: A multi council-controlled organisation (CCO) with Rangitikei District Council, Whanganui District Council and Ruapehu District Council**

In discussing this option, Council spoke to the benefits of working together with councils who directly border the Rangitikei to develop a CCO that achieves economies of scale, with a local flavour.

- **Second Preference: A multi council-controlled organisation with as many councils in the Manawātū-Whanganui region as possible.**

Councillors agreed the cost effectiveness of a larger multi council-controlled organisation should be put forward for public consultation. The importance of other councils in the region being aware that Rangitikei are willing to work together was also recognised in discussing this option.

- **Enhanced Status Quo: Maintain the current delivery model, in-house management.**

This is essentially how water services are currently managed in the Rangitikei. Councils are legally required demonstrate this option as a baseline, despite it being unlikely to meet legislative requirements for financial sustainability.

In preparation for Thursday's meeting, Rangitikei District Council elected members and staff have been actively involved in internal review, regional collaboration and community engagement to understand the most viable path forward for water services in the Rangitikei.

"Central Government has strongly indicated that collaboration is a vital component of Local Water Done Well, and we as Council recognise working together will achieve the greatest efficiencies for the Rangitikei," Mayor Andy Watson says.

Rangitikei District Council has considered all the options available in developing its preferred position, including continuing to manage water services in-house, developing a stand-alone CCO, and collaborating with neighbouring councils.

It is important to note Council's indication of preference does not equate to a final decision. Rangitikei District Council staff and elected members are eager to hear the perspective of the Rangitikei community during consultation in early 2025.

"Rangitikei residents deserve to have access to clean, reliable and sustainable water services for generations. It is incredibly important we get this right. Understanding the perspective of the community we serve is always a vital component of our decision-making process," Mayor Andy says.

SHOP LOCAL THIS CHRISTMAS

