



## New rural fire manager

With the departure of principal rural fire officer Phil Parker, you might be wondering who is taking over the role.

Step up, Roger Nelson! Our new rural fire manager is a long-serving member of the rural fire team and Phil's second in command for many years.

Roger, 46, joined the rural fire team eight years ago and he has battled some of the district's biggest fires. In his first summer he dealt with a 20 hectare fire near Kinloch which destroyed scrub and grasslands.

His previous experience includes working with and training rural fire volunteers and volunteering for the Civil Defence team at council.

Roger is looking forward to settling into his new role, which he says will be a challenge.

"I just like being able to help the community. You go out there to help people when they're in need, which is great," he said.

He's played an active part in helping out with Civil Defence emergencies in the district and is no stranger to working under pressure and difficult conditions.

The rural fire team have attended 14 call



outs this season and tackled some large fires such as the one just north of Taupō Airport in February that lasted several days.

Roger's role includes managing and running the fire team and issuing fire permits. He also recruits volunteers, and is currently seeking civic-minded individuals keen for the challenge to join the team.

Contact Roger at the council on 07 376 0899 for more information.

## Change of season for fire

The fire season has been downgraded to open, which means fires can now be lit in rural areas without a permit.

The Taupō District has been in a restricted or prohibited fire season since October last year due to dry conditions making fires susceptible to spreading quickly.

It has now reverted back to an open season and is likely to remain in this season until October.

There were 14 call outs for volunteer firefighters this season, who dedicated 235 hours of service to attending and extinguishing fires.



## Fostering global connections

A few weeks ago I was fortunate to attend a conference at Government House hosted by the Governor General that focussed on Sister Cities and the benefits they have for communities.



It was a great opportunity to catch up with Governor General Jerry Mateparae. Being of Tūwharetoa descent, he has a keen interest in the Taupō District and he tells me he will be heading our way for a visit soon. It will be great to see him back in our part of the world.

The theme of the conference was 'Citizen Diplomacy – Its power locally and globally' and how important the relationships are in fostering global connections and opportunities in our everyday lives.

The focus was on how we are all citizens of a global community and each and every one of us has the power to make a difference in the world.

New Zealand has about 150 Sister City Relationships around the world including our own with Noumea in New Caledonia, Suzhou in China and Hakone in Japan.

Hearing the benefits of such relationships was timely too, as the same week I was invited to lead a delegation to Shaoxing to further cement the friendship relationship we entered into last year following an investment made by a Shaoxing-based business in our district.

They believe it is an important step in continuing to build a long term relationship for continued investment our district and I hope by accepting their invitation we can continue to foster international understanding and friendship, encourage exchange, and where possible promote tourism and trade.

Sister City and friendship relationships are an important tool particularly in a commercial context for China, as business and government are intrinsically interlinked.

At the end of the day, it is people who make things happen and I will always do what I can to encourage economic growth, put our district on the world stage, and let people know we are open for business.

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## What goes down the drain...

Have you ever considered what you're putting down the drain? If it could cause a blockage, it should go in a bin!

We are currently seeing an increase in the number of blockages in our sewerage system. These are causing sewer spills which contaminate waterways and can overflow onto private property.

Each time there is an incident, it increases our costs because we have to repair the sewerage system and contain the spill.

To prevent blocking of the sewerage and the pumping system we ask that residents avoid putting unsuitable items down drains and toilets including:

- Oil, grease and fat – it might be liquid when it disappears from view but it will quickly cool and solidify in the pipes.
- Bandages and sanitary pads.
- Nappies, rags and fabric wipes.

In recent months we have seen some unusual things that have been put down drains, including curtains, pieces of steel and concrete.

With your help we will be able to continue to deliver an efficient wastewater service and keep costs down.

## ANZACs commemorated in style

The centenary of the landing of the ANZACs at Gallipoli was remembered last week through a series of services throughout the district.

In Taupō, hundreds gathered at the cenotaph outside the Great Lake Centre to pay their respects. An upgrade on the cenotaph has just been completed and its fresh new look was unveiled for the dawn service.

The new design was modelled on the emblem of the centenary commemorations, with the paving being coated in red and black to resemble a poppy underfoot. New granite panels and refurbished plaques were affixed to the cenotaph itself. The work on the cenotaph was a community effort, with one business donating its time free of charge.

We would like to thank local firm Cheal for carrying out the surveying work on the site for free. Other businesses did work on the site at a discounted rate. Ian Smith Project Services did the design work on the cenotaph and surrounds, Higgins Contractors completed the new paving work and Creative Stone completed the granite panel work and the plaque refurbishment on the cenotaph itself. This is greatly appreciated by the council and it is great to see the community coming together to help with such an important project.

The cenotaph work was done in conjunction with the Returned and Services Association, Ngāti Tūwharetoa and Towncentre Taupō.

We received a grant of \$144,000 toward the project from central government's Lottery World War One Commemorations and Environment and Heritage Committee.



## What's on

- 1-3 May Taupō Home and Garden Show, 10am-5pm, Great Lake Centre
- 13 May 2degrees Comedy Convoy, 8pm-10pm, Great Lake Centre
- 14-23 May Zirka Circus, Tongariro North Domain
- 16 May International Museum Day – Old Fashioned Gala, Taupō Museum
- Until 8 June Taupō Ink – Drawings by DiDi Chapman, Taupō Museum

For more information on Taupō District events visit [www.GreatLakeTaupo.com](http://www.GreatLakeTaupo.com)

Email your elected members at [councillors@taupo.govt.nz](mailto:councillors@taupo.govt.nz)

For more information call 07 376 0899 or go to [www.taupo.govt.nz](http://www.taupo.govt.nz)



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