



EXTREME WEATHER IN NATIONAL PARK

The first cold snap of the year this week saw the need for some of our Civil Defence team to spring into action to help our neighbours down south.

Emergency manager Ian Connon and four member of our response team, NZRT6 were deployed to National Park Village following a tornado and a decent dump of snow.

There was also a light dusting of snow on Mount Tauhara and on the Kaimanawa ranges.

Mr Connon said it was a timely reminder for people to make sure they are prepared when travelling in adverse weather conditions.

HERE ARE SOME HANDY TIPS:

- » Consider having essential emergency survival items in your car. If you are driving in extreme winter conditions, add windshield scrapers, brush, shovel, tire chains and warm clothing to your emergency kit.
- » Store a pair of walking shoes, waterproof jacket, essential medicines, snack food, water and a torch in your car.
- » When planning travel, keep up to date with weather and roading information.



MAYORAL COLUMN

By now you would have undoubtedly seen or heard about the possible loss of our rescue helicopter service in the Taupō District. It is something we simply cannot let happen.

The issue came to our attention last week when a tender was advertised for the provision of helicopter services across New Zealand. I immediately became concerned when the expression of interest process did not provide for a Taupō-based helicopter service.

As the Mayor of this great district, I have been very vocal in this space over the past week and will continue to be so as our area has a long history of being well served by a rescue helicopter operation based in Taupō. I have joined with Sir Tumu te Heuheu in writing a letter to the Minister of Health, imploring him to take another look at the process.

You see our district is in a unique situation, with Tongariro National Park, Taupō Moana, and other significant natural areas of the Central Plateau, the extensive State Highway Network and the related high tourism numbers resulting in a high workload for the rescue helicopter service. Add to this the unpredictable weather and the physical distance from the alternative urban bases, which means that should a helicopter service not be based in Taupō, it is inevitable that lives will be lost. The Taupō-based machine does not only service the Central Plateau, but we are aware of many situations where due to weather conditions, the only access to adjoining areas such as Te Urewera and surrounding back country, was from Taupō. Furthermore, our pilots are highly-skilled and masters at flying among difficult terrain.

We have told the Minister the matter is of utmost importance to the people of the Taupō District and surrounding areas. Since the news broke, an overwhelming number of messages of concern have been received, from all walks of the community, including many who credit their lives to the provision of a Taupō based service. Historically Ngāti Tūwharetoa have held grave concerns for the wellbeing of people who are encouraged to access tribal lands without the authority of the land owners. The responsibility and liability for their safety rests with the Ngāti Tūwharetoa landowners. The high visitor numbers justify a need to retain this emergency response capability within our rohe. The Mayor of Ruapehu District has also written to voice his concerns.

Our community have asked that we do everything possible to retain a Taupō based service and we are therefore committed to doing everything required to have this matter reviewed. Lives depend on it.

Mayor David Trewavas > dtrewavas@taupo.govt.nz

HOLIDAY FUN

Do your little ones drive you nuts over the school holidays? Start climbing the walls? Between the Taupō and Turangi Libraries and Taupō Museum we may have some options to get them out of the house for a while.

Over these school holidays, the team have again got a programme sure to stimulate and captivate young minds. With everything from pottery to building a crocodile there is sure to be something for everyone. It's not all for the kids however, adults can join in along the way and spend some quality time making creations too!

» Further details can be found at the libraries and museum or online at taupo.govt.nz/holidayprogramme

SUBMISSION CLOSURE REMINDER

» LONG TERM PLAN

You can still have your say on the future of our Taupō District. We're keen to hear from you on all things to do with where we are headed in the next 10 years. Submissions can be made online, emailed or posted this week, up until Monday, April 16 at 5pm.

- ONLINE** taupo.govt.nz/consultation
- EMAIL** 10yearplan@taupo.govt.nz
- POST** The Chief Executive Officer
Taupō District Council
Private Bag 2005
Taupō 3352
Freepost No. 112497

» ROAD CLOSURES

All road users are advised of the following road closure this weekend:

» **APRIL 14, DURING THE 100K FLYER CYCLE RACE**
Tauhara Road between Rifle Range Road and AC Baths Avenue: 10am – 4pm.

A detour will be in place via Taharepa Road and Rifle Range Road.

Thank you for your co-operation.

» WHAT'S ON?

- Apr 14 Rotorua to Taupō 100k Flyer, Tauhara Rd, Taupō
- Apr 14 – 29 Red Bike Treasure Hunt, Taupō Domain
- Apr 14 – May 21 I Don't Know/Tell Me, Taupō Museum
- Apr 16 – 27 Holiday Programme, Taupō, Turangi libraries, Taupō Museum
- Until May 14 3 Pot Colour, Taupō Museum

For more information on Taupō District events visit www.GreatLakeTaupo.com