

REOPENING OF MT RUAPEHU

WELCOME RELIEF FOR CENTRAL NORTH ISLAND REGION



TAUPŌ DISTRICT AND Ruapehu Mayors David Trewavas and Don Cameron are calling the reopening of Whakapapa and Tūroa ski fields this winter a welcome relief for their tourism sectors, heavily impacted by COVID-19.

The Sky Waka Gondola will also open from Queen's Birthday weekend.

Taupō District Mayor David Trewavas said Mt Ruapehu is an important attraction for the Central North Island.

"As a tourist destination, we know it is going to be a long road ahead for us. A third of employment in the Taupo District is related to tourism.

"Reopening the ski fields and gondola offers an important opportunity to attract local tourists from all over the country.

"We need to use that to our advantage while our borders remain closed to international tourists. Now, more than ever, we need to see kiwis exploring their own backyard."

Ruapehu District Mayor Don Cameron said the ski fields and gondola play a vital role in the local economy.

"With every dollar being spent on the mountain rippling through to \$5 of spending in the wider economy this will

provide a significant financial shot in our regional economic arm," he said.

"As well as the positive spending impact the opening of the ski areas will provide a lot of local employment opportunities both on and off the mountain.

"The news is already providing a major boost to personal and business confidence with people hoping for some great snow and sunny days."

Ruapehu Alpine Lifts Chief Executive Jono Dean said they are looking forward to welcoming skiers back to the slopes and sightseers back to the Sky Waka.

"At this stage we're looking at around late June, early July to open the ski fields, however, this will depend on a number of factors, including snowfall," he said.

"Our operations will be different to what visitors may have previously experienced, and we are working through our facilities and what we will be offering for winter 2020.

"Physical distancing, contact tracing and increased cleaning and sanitation requirements will be in place to ensure the safety of staff and visitors to the ski fields."



WATERFRONT PALM GETS A NEW HOME

A RECOGNISABLE PALM on our waterfront is being moved, as erosion control measures begin opposite Tremaine Avenue on Lake Terrace.

The mighty palm has been tree spaded to release all the roots from the surrounding soil, in a process that will allow the team to transplant it to a new location approximately 8 metres north of its current spot.

Taupō District Council landscape architect Fraser Scott said the palm had to be moved as there was no way to install the new erosion mitigation rock slopes and adjacent path with the palm where it was.

"Moving the palm at this time of year gives it the best chance of survival. We're also taking the opportunity to install root guard around the perimeter of the drip line to prevent the roots damaging the new rock revetment, pathway and surrounding services," he said.

AC BATHS RENOVATIONS PROGRESSING WELL

OUR AC BATHS private pool upgrade is in full swing, as contractors returned to continue the project at Alert Level 2. The upgrade will allow for bigger pools in each private room, along with a new outdoor area for users to enjoy.

The construction team have also started on upgrade the reception area, with the walls of the existing space now removed. The new check-in will also include an improved shop area.

Business and operations manager Scott Attenborough said the new reception area will create a better customer experience for users.

"Our reception is often very busy as we are servicing a number of facilities within the complex so we're exciting about being able to offer a much more efficient and welcoming environment for everyone," he said.

During this construction phase, there is no access to any private pools and a temporary reception area is now in place.

The reception area is expected to be complete by mid-July, while the private pools are expected to be complete by the end of September.

HELP SHAPE THE FUTURE OF OUR DISTRICT!

A NEW COMMUNITY-LED group has been brought together to help shape our District's recovery to COVID-19.

As a tourist destination, we know there will be long lasting and far reaching effects. A third of employment is related to this sector.

A new 'state of the district' report has been put together that will give you an insight into some of the issues we are facing as a District, along with the opportunities for recovery across our economic, social, cultural and environmental wellbeing.

But we'd love to hear from you about how you think we could not only recover, but ideally flourish, in a post-COVID-19 setting.

You can read the report and share your ideas on our online form at www.taupodc.govt.nz/regeneratetaupodistrict.

HAVE YOUR SAY TONGARIRO DOMAIN PLAYGROUND

Hey parents, grab your kids! We are planning to upgrade the playground on Tongariro Domain and we want your feedback!

Do you like climbing? Do you like balancing? Do you like water play? What you tell us will help guide the choices we make when we choose the new play equipment. Have your say here www.surveymonkey.com/r/TongariroPlayground.



QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY CHANGES

OUR CUSTOMER SERVICE centres and district libraries will be closed on Queen's Birthday Monday, June 1. You can still head to the Taupō Museum, AC Baths or the Turtle Pools, as these facilities remain open.

There is no change to kerbside rubbish and recycling collections and our landfill and transfer stations will also be open.

