RMCA Newsletter – 23rd August 2026



Whakapapa is turning it on with a massive mix of groomed runs, open lifts, and fresh lines for the 2026 winter season! The Sky Waka, Rangatira, Delta, Valley T and Knoll Ridge T-Bar are cranking. The Far West has opened this weekend. And for beginners, Happy Valley and Snowland are fully pumping for learners and snow play. The RMCA thanks WHL for all the mahi getting these facilities up and running.

Ruapehu District Council Rates

Clubs will be aware that there has been a 2 year delay from the RDC with charges of rates to RMCA clubs. All clubs will now have now received the 2024 and 2025 RDC rates charges. These RDC rates have been on charged by DOC to clubs. The rates are charged under one ratable unit. Assessment Number: 06090 17601A, Address: State Highway 48, Whakapapa.

The RDC apportions the rates across the clubs. And advise DOC. DOC then on-charge the rates to clubs. The methodology of apportioning rates across the clubs has been the cause of the delay in charging the last 2 years of rates to clubs. With DOC unable to get clarity from RDC on how the rates were being calculated.

The RMCA filed a LGOIMA on the RDC on 7th July. From this, we now understand that QV have been responsible for the methodology of apportioning the rates across the individual clubs. It is worth noting that The Chateau Tongariro sits in this rating unit. The RDC has been charging rates for the Chateau Tongariro, However, after an objection by DOC to RDC, the rates charged against this magnificent building and its ancillary buildings were suspended by RDC. Therefore, we understand that clubs are not paying additional rates for the unoccupied buildings in the Whakapapa Village.

The RDC's substantiative response to the LOGIMA is now due by no later than 4 September 2026. RDC have been reluctant to communicate and share information and have extended the deadline for the sharing of information. The RMCA wishes to thank our Legal Counsel Donald Webster for his advice. Please note Donald is assisting us with no cost incurred by the RMCA or clubs.

We are objecting to the RDC rates based on:

<u>The Methodology Applied</u>

- We seek to understand the QV methodology of apportioning the rates.
- If this is based on market value, we believe our clubs have very low market value worth.
- The legal letter from Donald Webster (attached again to this email) states we believe that In the light of the restrictions and obligations contained within our license agreement, the likely real value of our buildings may be $1.00, especially considering the recent history of the value club buildings have been traded as of late.

The Validity of Charging Rates

1. Under New Zealand's **Local Government (Rating) Act 2002,** national parks and public conservation areas owned by the Crown are classified as non-rateable land
   Non -rateable Crown land can still be liable for specific targeted rates—such as for water supply, sewage disposal, or refuse collection—if the property actually receives and uses those direct services.

   Clubs collect their own water. DOC manages the refuse collection. DOC and the Clubs jointly own the sewerage ponds.

2. If a private commercial entity operates inside a national park via a concession (like a guided tourism business or lodge), they may pay lease fees or concession fees to the Department of Conservation, but the underlying conservation land itself remains non-rateable by the local authority.

Clubs are strictly not commercial entities. Clubs are also not for private use. Clubs are used by members and members guests.

Next Steps:

The RMCA is working closely with DOC who have again confirmed they are comfortable with clubs applying for a payment extension to 20 October 2026.

Please note clubs are not in a default position through non-payment of rates. **The rates charged are in a position of dispute.**

DOC has received 11 letters requesting an extension to the payment of rates through to 20 October 2026:

1. Levin Waiopehu
2. Manawatu Tramping
3. Ngauruhoe Ski Club
4. Otaihape Alpine Club
5. RSC
6. Tauranga Tramping
7. Tauranga Ski Club
8. Tauwira
9. Tongariro
10. Waitomo
11. Wellington Tramping

If you have submitted a letter of extension to DOC and have not received acknowledgement from Mitch Black, please follow up directly with Mitch.

For clubs who have not yet submitted the request for an extension, we really encourage that you do so. A strong case for the challenging of these rates will need 2 /3 of clubs to file a request for an extension. The legal letter is attached again.

Bruce Road Access in the evenings

The RMCA continues to work closely with DOC and TPP on safety. We are advocating for the road to stay open on Friday and Saturday evenings. A Friday night road closure at 4pm impacts clubbies who must then find alternative accommodation.
Please see the letter attached **for clubs to send to all members**. By working together, we can demonstrate that we are committed to adhering to road updates and mountain road safety.

Bruce Road Weekend Traffic Congestion

Road access is particularly challenging on fine weekends with the road being closed for up to 4 hours on Saturday's this season. The RMCA has approached DOC around facilitating a road management plan to enable clubbies, buses, shuttle vans and food supplies to have priority access.

We have also met with WHL and discussed solutions for this issue. We suggest that clubbies holding a season pass are allowed access. Whilst WHL are in agreement, DOC are not over the line yet!

Clubbies are advised to plan to be up the mountain road before 9.30am on Saturdays and Sundays for the rest of this season. DOC are committed to reviewing the road management plan at the end of this season.

Whakapapa Adaptive Sports

Debbie Evans (RMCA and NSC), Trish Oosterbann (Rangitira) recently completed the Whakapapa Adaptive Sports Training. It was a super fun day and we learnt some amazing new skills. This is an opportunity for clubbies to give back. And it is an opportunity for clubs to have additional guests staying over weekends. Volunteers in the Whakapapa Adaptive Sports programme receive reciprocal rates for staying in clubs. This has been agreed and facilitated by the Halberg Trust. If your club isn't comfortable offering reciprocal rates, there are other clubs that will happily facilitate a booking request.

The Halberg Trust is a massive supporter of the programme. Another key support is Snowsports New Zealand, who help to fund and maintain the Adaptive gear alongside Whakapapa.
There's massive potential for clubbies to support the Whakapapa Adaptive Programme in the future. There is huge potential for growth. There is a waiting list of people wishing to enjoy this mountain experience. And a real shortage of volunteers in the Whakapapa programme. To put things into perspective, the South Island Adaptive Festival held this year was open to 70 participants, with 70 volunteers supporting. This is the goal for Whakapapa. If you are keen to make a difference, please contact Whakapapa Adaptive Sports to register your interest.

adaptive@whakapapa.com

DOC Rent Review Proposal

Just a reminder that the timeline for the DOC rent review is now a late October / November delivery to clubs. With clubs having a 3 month right of reply. Rent reviews will now be effective in early 2027.

Nga mihi,

Debbie Evans

Chair: Ruapehu Mountain Clubs Association

Email: **president@rmca.org.nz**

RUAPEHU
Mountain Clubs Association