

FROM THE MAYOR'S DESK

As you are all aware, Rangitikei was hit with a storm that has had a significant impact on much of our infrastructure throughout the district, particularly our roads. We're yet to work out the full cost of the damage caused but we're looking into millions of dollars' worth of repairs, and many months of work ahead to get things back to normal, or near enough to how they were before.



Firstly, I want to acknowledge all the people, volunteers and organisations who have responded to the storm both during the event and in the aftermath. The way that people came together to assist and help those who needed it is inspiring, and shows what a great community we have here. It's been fantastic to read people's accounts of generosity, the likes of Winiata Marae in Taihape opening their facilities to help stranded travellers, the farmer who helped free trapped motorists on the Turakina Valley Road, the Marton Friendship Club who opened their doors for people impacted by power outages to charge devices and get a cup of tea or coffee, Marton Rugby Club who allowed people to use their showers. Along with Winiata Marae, Rātana also opened its doors and looked at effective ways of sharing resources such as generators and food. There were many many other cases of community helping community and that is the thing that makes me incredibly proud to live in the Rangitikei.

I'd like to make a special mention of Powerco, who have worked incredibly hard to restore power to thousands of properties in our district, and the wider region. The weather conditions they had to work in at times were appalling, and yet they made great progress and managed to restore power to the majority of properties by Friday 20 February.

I also want to give a mention to our roading team, including our contractor Downer NZ, and our Parks and Reserves team. Roads are critically important to our people and economy, especially the rural roads, and so the work that has been done to open up dozens of roads that had to be closed following the storm cannot be underestimated. They have done an outstanding job, and will continue to do so as we clean up the mess.

For our Parks and Reserves team, the damage has been devastating. I know the great pride that they take in the work that they do to ensure that our parks are looking beautiful for the community and visitors alike. They have made some great progress in opening up some of our parks again following the storm, and working with the likes of the Bulls Rugby Club to clear trees that had fallen at the domain that could impact their season preparations.

Following on from the storm, this is a good opportunity to reflect on those people who helped out that might be worthy recipients of a Community Volunteer Award. The nomination period is open until Sunday 15 March at 5:00pm, so please start getting your nominations in.

On Saturday 21 February the survivors of the Abuse Under Care met with Council and the Hon. Erica Stanford, the Minister in charge of the response to the Royal Commission into state abuse, to unveil a memorial headstone in memory of those who suffered in the Children's Unit at Lake Alice. The headstone was inscribed "In Memory of those that never left Lake Alice, Rest Easy. Also those that had the mana to survive and continue to survive, God Bless". The Minister's speech was undeniably on point, she highlighted the absolute abuse that was suffered at Lake Alice, she didn't mince words, saying that there were many many Government departments that should have been aware of what was happening at the time. The memorial is a simple reminder of what transpired. The memorial is a simple reminder of what transpired. In my speech I also recognised that there were a number of people who worked at Lake Alice who were there for the right reasons and we shouldn't forget that. Council will continue to maintain this memorial.

On other Council matters, it was great to be able to reach an agreement on the shareholders' committee for Central Districts Water. Deputy Mayor Dave Wilson and myself have been appointed to the committee as representatives of Council, with Councillor Fi Dalgety appointed as an alternate should either Dave or myself be unable to attend a meeting. Marj Heeny has been appointed as the iwi representative for Rangitikei, with Suze Hepi as her alternate.

Ngā mihi, Mayor Andy - Rangitikei District Council.

COMMUNITY VOICES

MEET YOUR COUNCIL TEAM - PAUL CHAFFE

My name is Paul, and I have worked in emergency management between Horizons Regional Council and Rangitikei District Council for a combined 14 years.



Emergency Management is a challenging space to work in but I love helping the community in their times of need and working with people to ensure that they're prepared for emergencies should they arise.

Outside of my day job, I also volunteer for the St John's Youth Cadets, as an Emergency Medical Technician for St John Ambulance, working from Whanganui Station, the Rangitikei Response Team and have previously been a volunteer firefighter.



RAPID RURAL DAMAGE ASSESSMENT

The Manawatū-Whanganui Civil Defence Emergency Management Recovery Office is gathering information from across the Horizons region following the recent storm. They want to better understand how farms and rural properties have been affected.

Your feedback will help guide the recovery work ahead. The aim is to make sure you and your community get the right support where it's needed most.

The survey only takes a few minutes, and all information will be stored securely and deleted 28 days after the recovery is complete.

We welcome responses from anyone in the rural community, and it's especially helpful if property owners or managers can self-report. If you'd like help completing the survey, Rural Support Trust, On Farm Support, and industry organisations are here to assist.



COMMUNITY VOLUNTEER AWARDS 2026

Back after a three-year break, the Rangitikei Community Volunteer Awards celebrate the many volunteers who make a difference across community service, welfare, sport and recreation, culture, arts and education sectors in Rangitikei.

It's time for you to start thinking about who you would like to see acknowledged for their contributions.

Nominations will open on Friday, 6 February and close on Friday, 13 March. The nomination form is available on our website.

www.rangitikei.govt.nz/communityvolunteerawards

THE LOBBY



With the school holidays over and kids back on term time, both #YHQ in Marton and The Lobby in Taihape are open again for rangatahi to hang out, cook some kai, and connect with others.

- The Lobby opening hours are: Monday and Wednesday 3 - 5pm Monday - Ages 12-18 years Wednesday - Ages 10-11 years
- #YHQ opening hours are Tuesday and Wednesday 3 - 4:30pm Times and days may vary.

A massive thank you to New World Marton for their continued sponsorship of #YHQ, donating kai for after school snacks and meals.



We're going through the applications for Youth Council 2026 and will finalise who the new Council is very soon, so keep an eye out on social media and our website for details.

www.rangitikei.govt.nz/youthcouncil

YOUR RATES AT WORK

CIVIL DEFENCE RESPONSE - RANGITĪKEI STORM 15 & 16 FEBRUARY 2026



Fallen tree on Makuhou Road, Marton.

ROADING

The storm caused the closure of many of our rural roads, due to fallen trees, slips, and other debris blocking access, as well as flooding in some places. Approximately 20 roads across the district were significantly impacted, and whilst we've been able to reopen most that were fully closed, there are lots of others that have restrictions in place such as light vehicles only, 4 wheel drive access only, or reduced to one lane.

Some of these restrictions will be in place for a while, but we're constantly updating our Current Road Status Map on our website, which has all the information about what roads are accessible and any restrictions that may be in place.

PARKS AND RESERVES

At the time of writing this update, many parks and reserves in the district remain closed or partially closed while the team carry out assessments of trees that potentially pose a risk to users. Many of the trees that had come down due to the strong winds have been cleared but there's still a lot of clean-up of branches and debris to take place.

WATER

There were water supply issues for Taihape, Mangaweka, Hunterville and Rātana, as strong winds brought down powerlines across the district and took out power to our water treatment plants in these places. Conserve water notices were issued to help our operation team get ahead of repairs that were needed.

Power was able to be restored to all these treatment plants reasonably quickly, and our operations team worked hard to ensure that water taken from the reservoir supplies could be replenished once power was up and running again.

ARE YOU PREPARED?

Storms like the one we had on 15 and 16 February are a good reminder to us all that while Council is there to help respond to people's needs, we all have a responsibility to take care of our own needs, and that of our household.



Not everyone who needs help will be able to be reached immediately. The National Emergency Management Agency advises that people should aim to have a minimum of three days' worth of food, water and any medicines that you require should you be isolated for a period of time. Ideally seven days' worth is better, but anything is better than nothing.

You should also have a first aid kit at home or included in a vehicle that you can easily access.

Many people during the storm experienced power outages, some properties are still without power now. Think about if a generator is something you should invest in for your home, or failing that, some alternative power sources such as battery packs for electronic devices.

If you do end up losing power for a period of time, you need to ensure that you have food that doesn't require cooking, or have an alternative method of cooking such as a portable gas cooker or a BBQ.

Take the time to go through www.getready.govt.nz to ensure that you're setting yourself and your family up for survival should another emergency happen.

Did you know?!

The new Emergency Management Bill that is before Parliament currently is estimated to cost \$82.8 million to implement over a four year period. This cost will be passed on to councils to absorb.



FEST-A-BULL

WHEN 28 February 2026
TIME 10am - 5pm
LOCATION Te Matapihi - Bulls Community Centre

COST Free
Fest-a-Bull is all about whānau, fun, and spending quality time with each other. Enjoy live music, FREE face painting, FREE balloon twisting, FREE giant games, FREE rides & obstacles, and an epic team relay challenge. There's truly something for everyone to enjoy!



MARTON RUN CLUB

WHEN Every Sunday
TIME 9.30am
LOCATION Tūtaenui Reservoir, Marton
COST Free

Yes it's a 'run club', but you DON'T have to run! Walkers, kids, strollers, furry friends, anyone who just wants to move is welcome. It's all about motivation and having a reason to get out there and move your body!



RANGITĪKEI ADVENTURE RACE

WHEN 21 March 2026
TIME 10am - 5pm
LOCATION Taihape & Mangaweka
COST Free

The Rangitikei Adventure Race is based around different sections of the Rangitikei River known as 'The Jewel in the Crown' of the region and thus gives its name to the surrounding district which in fact means "The Day of Striding Out" which is rather fitting for an adventure race!



REDLINE KUSTOMZ HARDPARK

WHEN 28 February 2026
TIME 10am - 2pm
LOCATION Marton Park
COST Spectators Free

Redline Kustomz will be hosting their very first Hardpark. It's a family friendly day with live music, food, drink, and a kids zone. Open to all vehicles and bikes (\$5 entry). An unmissable event for car lovers. All proceeds go to the Marton Fire Brigade.



CAMP FEST NZ

WHEN 6-9 March 2026
TIME All weekend
LOCATION Bulls Domain
COST \$30-\$40 / Children free

Whether you have a tent, campervan, caravan, bus, housetruck, teardrop camper or 4WD you are welcome to join for a weekend of camping activities, friendship, workshops, live music, and plenty of time to relax and meet up with other campers.



MARTON HARVEST FESTIVAL

WHEN 12 April 2026
TIME 10am - 3pm
LOCATION Sir James Wilson Park, Marton

HOME BREW COMPETITION
Ales, Lagers, Stouts, Ciders and Specialty Brews. Bring your best brew and be in to win amazing prizes. Entry forms available online.

STALL HOLDER AND FOOD TRUCK REGISTRATION NOW OPEN.

www.martonnz.com