



PRESS RELEASE

Mt Ruapehu Cadetship Opens Career Doors for Locals

MT RUAPEHU, 26 SEPTEMBER 2019: Mt Ruapehu is opening up mountains of opportunity to local career seekers.

Each year Ruapehu Alpine Lifts (RAL), which operates both Whakapapa and Turoa ski areas, offers cadetships to up to 14 people across all areas of its business. There is a strong focus on jobseekers in and around Ohakune and Raetihi for Turoa ski field, and Taumarunui, National Park and Turangi for Whakapapa.

Run in partnership with the Ministry of Social Development the cadetship focusses on locals looking for work on the mountain offering crucial on-the-job skills training. It incorporates qualifications from ServiceIQ and training, with activities provided by the Outdoors Pursuit Centre.

The programme began six seasons ago as part of the Ruapehu Whanau Transformation (RWT) Plan devised to upskill locals and improve employment prospects. Cadetships have been open to local candidates with a connection to the local area and receiving a Work and Income benefit.

RAL General Manager Whakapapa Jono Dean, says it's a privilege for RAL to help grow its local community through the programme with the aim of helping locals into a new career. "And our need for staff is growing with the new Sky Waka transforming Mt Ruapehu into a true year round visitor experience; the cadetship is a great way to source new staff."

The cadetship begins with classroom work where participants learn about the ski area, customer service and kaitiaki before moving into full time roles over winter. Previous cadets have returned in subsequent season to supervisor positions.

Jono says cadets don't have to be an amazing skier, or aspire to be a ski instructor to take part. "There are a wide range of jobs on the mountain - we need people to work in field operations on lifts and roads, we need staff in the rentals department, as well as food and beverage and customer relations."

Successful cadetship applicants are given a 17-week placement in a front line department on the mountain. On the job skills learned vary depending on which part of RAL cadets work in, but the over-riding focus is on customer service. Lift attendants also finish with a lift qualification and food and beverage cadets come out with food safety training.

"We want these cadets to come out with a good level of baseline customer service skills that they can build on and which will help them into jobs, either with us on the mountain or in other work," Jono says.

Cadet Shaun Barnes from Reporoa is loving it and is hoping for a full time position once the cadetship ends. "It's my first season working on the mountain, so it's an experience I will never forget and something I would like to continue doing. It's a real upbeat vibe in rentals, it keeps you pumping all day, we can get quite busy, sometimes we sort of feel overworked and it can be draining so you have to have fun in our department and we do.

"My team is actually what has kept me here, since day one we have bonded like family."

Charone Gordon from Raetihi has enjoyed working in customer relations and also rentals during her work experience. "I'm loving it! I've had the chance to meet new people in the cadetship and also the Mt Ruapehu team."

She too is hoping to be offered a full time job once her cadetship is complete.

And it's not all work and no play. Part of the classroom-based part of the programme includes a ski or snowboard lesson and following that cadets are given the same benefits as other RAL employees, which includes a season pass and free group lessons. They also get to be out on the snow either in ride breaks or in their days off, depending on the department they work in.