

Whakapapa

UPDATE | 27 MARCH 2025

Whakapapa is planning significant investment in its snowmaking infrastructure ahead of the winter 2025 season, with upgrades across its Waterfall, Hut Flat, and Rockgarden terrain.

Whakapapa Holdings Limited (WHL) has committed to the addition of 10 new TechnoAlpin TT10 automated snow guns, if successful in taking ownership of Whakapapa, ensuring more reliable snow across a 2.5-kilometre trail, from the Knoll Ridge Chalet (2020m) down to the base area and Happy Valley. This upgrade will provide better snow conditions earlier in the season, allowing for more terrain to open and more variety in runs for longer.

In 2024, Whakapapa repositioned some of its existing snowmaking equipment higher up the mountain. The newer automated technology has allowed us to open areas that would normally need more natural snowfall. This improvement, along with replacing older manual guns, allows us to optimise snowmaking, making it more efficient and reducing energy usage.

Thanks to electrical infrastructure upgrades, Whakapapa will have its snowmaking network operational six weeks earlier in 2025. This, combined with the addition of the 10 new guns, will improve coverage on key beginner and intermediate terrain, ensuring smoother, more reliable runs throughout the season.

Shane Buckingham, Whakapapa Trails Manager, explains, “These upgrades focus on the heart of Whakapapa, providing the best experience for a wide range of guests. In the future, we intend to continue to improve our snowmaking network.” The upgrades will also mean snowmaking will return to Tennants Valley, offering alternative runs and alleviating congestion on Rockgarden.

Chris Bashforth, Whakapapa Snowsports Manager, adds, “This will create fantastic early-season teaching terrain, offering our instructors the ability to deliver high-quality lessons to skiers and snowboarders.”

Snowmaking remains a critical part of Whakapapa’s operations, and these upgrades are an important step in enhancing the guest experience. Whakapapa will continue investing in snowmaking to improve the seasons ahead.

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About Whakapapa

Whakapapa is situated in the heart of New Zealand's central North Island spanning 550 hectares on the northern side of Mt Ruapehu in Tongariro National Park, an easy three-hour drive from Hamilton, four from Wellington and five hours from Auckland.

Since 1953, New Zealanders have been discovering their first love of snow at Whakapapa's premier learner facility, Happy Valley, while more advance skiers and riders hone their skills exploring natural bowls, wind lips, exhilarating chutes, and remnants of old volcanic crater rims on descent from 2320m – New Zealand's highest lifted point.

Naturally volcanic terrain is formed by solidified lava, with snow filling in natural gullies and rocky crevasses from June through to October. Traditionally a snow base upwards of 1m from August is enhanced by Whakapapa's expert team and makes for some of the best free ride terrain in the Southern Hemisphere.

Whakapapa is home to the Sky Waka gondola, New Zealand's premier gondola experience (wheelchair accessible). It transports guests 1.8km up the Whakapapa side of the maunga 2020m above sea level and offers panoramic vistas out across the volcanic terrain and neighbouring mountains, Mt Tongariro and Mt Ngauruhoe. Skiers, boarders, and sightseers are welcomed to the architecturally awarded Knoll Ridge Chalet and highest year-round eatery in the country. The Sky Waka gondola runs daily, 10am – 4pm.

For families looking to give their kids a snow play experience, a snow experience zone at the top of the Sky Waka gondola can be accessed with a sightseeing pass. Or the Whakapapa sledding zone in Happy Valley offers fun for snow-seekers of all ages. Kids need to be 8 years+ to ride their own sled unaccompanied.

For more visit [whakapapa.com](https://www.whakapapa.com) | [Facebook](#) | [Instagram](#)

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