



PRESS RELEASE

New car park booking system for Mt Ruapehu

Mt Ruapehu, 29 June 2020: Queuing for a carpark is set to become a thing of the past at Mt Ruapehu's Turoa and Whakapapa Ski Fields. A new parking booking system is being introduced this season to help ease traffic congestion at the mountain during peak times and ensure a sustainable level of visitation can be managed.

RAL CEO Jono Dean says, "This means that visitors can book a park in advance and put an end to waiting in frustrating queues and being turned around at the last minute".

"We've listened to the frustrations about queuing for parking and general volumes of visitors to the ski areas and we've come up with what we believe is a good solution that will ensure fair and equitable parking for everyone."

Jono is hoping that the booking system will also encourage visitors to plan their trip in advance and avoid busy times, like weekends. "While weekends will always be busy, skiers need to consider going up the mountain mid-week to avoid crowds and queues. The new booking system will show live availability so people can easily see when the best time is to visit."

Visitors will be able to book online at mtruapehu.com on a Wednesday which will include availability for the week ahead. Car number plates will be scanned on arrival to match to the booking at a controlled entry point on the Bruce Road or Ohakune Mountain Road.

"Visitors will also be asked how many people will be in each car, which will help us to manage the reduced Safe Carrying Capacities in place for both ski fields this season. Whakapapa is limited to 4,500 visitors and Turoa 3,700," Jono says.

He adds that besides driving there are other options to get up the mountain. "While RAL isn't operating a shuttle service this season there are a number of great local shuttle operators who transport visitors up the mountain from local towns."

The booking system will be in operation by Saturday July 11 and will be free this season.

And next week heralds the official start of winter 2020 season. Whakapapa ski area will open on Wednesday July 1, but due to Mother Nature not delivering enough snow yet the offering will be limited.

"Our snow machines are pumping snow but we're lacking a good base of natural snow. Sky Waka will be open next week for sightseeing and also Happy Valley

for learners. We're also hoping to have the tobogganing slope up and running for the school holidays but it very much depends on snowfall," Jono says.

Before heading up the mountain visitors should check the Mt Ruapehu website for the latest updates, snowcams, weather conditions and to ensure they book their Carpark. This is a mandatory component on visiting Mt Ruapehu this season. Further information about the new car parking booking system is also on the website Mtruapehu.com.

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