

Whakapapa

MEDIA RELEASE | 5 JUNE 2025

ONE MONTH IN — THE MAGIC IS BUILDING

“Mate atu he tētēkura, ka whakaeke mai he tētēkura.”
As one frond perishes, another rises to take its place.

One month ago, a new chapter began at Whakapapa.

Since Whakapapa Holdings Limited (WHL) officially took the reins on 5 May 2025, the ski area has felt the shift — a sense of renewal, momentum, and purpose taking root.

In just four weeks, the groundwork for a revitalised season has been laid, and already, the magic is showing.

Whakapapa is open!

A free snow play area in Happy Valley is now welcoming families and first-timers, thanks to the powerful all-weather Snow Factory capable of producing 4 tonnes of snow per hour.

Add to that the Sky Waka gondola is running daily (weather allowing) and sledding lanes are open for early-winter fun.

Ten new state-of-the-art TT10 snow guns — fully automated and efficient in marginal conditions — have been installed, expanding snowmaking capacity by 20%.

Investment in a winch-enabled PistenBully 600 groomer adds further strength to Whakapapa’s winter readiness.

And the timing couldn’t be better. Snow is forecast to fall from Friday night and throughout the weekend — reaching as low as the Chateau in Whakapapa Village.

With a record 1,700 applications for winter roles, a team of around 300 will bring our world-class adventure playground to life this season. Events are returning in



force, with something happening nearly every week — from race weekends and film nights to community activations.

That sense of momentum extends beyond the operations team. A wide network of mountain clubs, including those connected through the Ruapehu Mountain Clubs Association (RMCA), also call Whakapapa home. RMCA President Phill Thomass says there's a strong sense of alignment emerging.

"I'm excited by the cooperation we're seeing develop between clubs, with WHL and with DOC. It's giving a really positive feeling to the start of the season, and I look forward to RMCA working with Whakapapa Ski Area going forward."

Travis Donoghue, CE of Whakapapa, says the team is proud of what's been achieved in just 30 days.

"We're seeing the impact of careful planning, bold investment, and a belief in what this place can be. This is the strongest start we've had in years — and we're only getting started."

The forecast snowfall also coincides with the final days of Whakapapa's season pass sale. With the best-value season pass in Aotearoa — including free passes for children aged 10 and under — Whakapapa is focused on making snow sports more accessible and the maunga more welcoming than ever. Season passes available [here](#) until midnight 8 June.

"This is about legacy, but it's also about future generations. Whakapapa is a taonga. And it's time to share it widely, boldly, and with care — and definitely to have a lot of fun while we're at it."

We might not be calling ourselves the biggest — but we're proud to be something better: uniquely Whakapapa.

ENDS

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.

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 maunga to 2020m above sea level and offers panoramic vistas out across the volcanic terrain and neighbouring mountains, Mt Tongariro and Mt Ngāuruhoe. Skiers, boarders,



and sightseers are welcomed to the architecturally awarded Knoll Ridge Chalet and highest year-round eatery in the country.

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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