

Ruapehu District Council

23 hrs ·

CAR PARK BOOKING SYSTEM WILL IMPROVE VISITOR EXPERIENCE

Ruapehu Mayor Don Cameron said that the new Whakapapa and Turoa ski area car park booking system is part of the commitment to giving visitors the best possible experience while helping to manage other critical issues such as road safety, the environment and maintaining Kaitiakitanga (guardianship) and Manaakitanga (host) responsibilities.

"As an organisation with a vested interest in promoting Ruapehu tourism we have noted the response online to the announcement of the car park booking system.

"I would urge everyone who loves Mt Ruapehu and has some doubts about the new system to look at the bigger picture and understand the very serious issues this is part of helping to resolve," he said.

"Mt Ruapehu as part of the World Heritage Tongariro National Park is a nationally significant area with landscapes and culture that attracts hundreds of thousands of visitors each year.

This has ultimately stretched facilities, core infrastructure and systems with an increasing impact on cultural values, the environment and the overall visitor experience.

One of the key issues with increasing visitor numbers is higher traffic volumes and transport demands and with it growing road safety and management concerns.

Anyone who has been skiing on Mt Ruapehu over the years knows that the mountain roads and the car parking can be the source of recurring frustration especially during peak visitor periods.

In addition to traditional Park users such as skiers and trampers there has been strong growth in non-traditional users with the success of the Whakapapa gondola being a major attraction.

While COVID has temporarily held up the growth in international visitors it is important to note that 80% of Ruapehu tourism is domestic and we expect this to grow due to our location and constraints on international travel.

In response to these issues Council with RAL, DOC, Iwi and other key stakeholders including Government have been working cooperatively over a number of years on a range of projects and initiatives to support sustainable visitor growth.

The ski field car park booking system and new Park and Ride transport hub in National Park are both outcomes from this process.

They are part of an integrated solution specifically designed to help manage the growth in visitor numbers, reducing congestion, accident, environmental, cultural and social impacts.

Being a flexible, two-way communication tool that will aid visitor's planning the booking system will help encourage transport efficiency and reduce informal parking demand at Turoa and Whakapapa."

Mayor Cameron added that Council, RAL, DOC and our partners are continuing to work on improving systems and infrastructure in support of sustainable visitor growth and improving people's experience of the Tongariro National Park.

"We feel that once people start using the booking system they will quickly embrace it," he said.

"Before heading up the mountain visitors should go to [mtruapehu.com](https://www.mtruapehu.com) for the latest updates, snow cams, weather conditions and to book a carpark.

If it is a peak period and they are full they can make use of one of the many local shuttle operators servicing both ski fields as well as the Park and Ride facility in National Park Village if skiing Whakapapa."

Clive Manley
Chief Executive
Ruapehu District Council