

Official opening for new Taneatua playground

THE Taneatua community gathered at Jack Knowles Reserve yesterday to celebrate the official opening of the town's upgraded playground.

A joint Tuhoe and Whakatane District Council project, the playground has been progressively redeveloped over the past two years to provide a new family recreation attraction for the wider Taneatua and Ruatoki area.

Key features include barbecue and picnic facilities, an exciting climbing frame, play equipment suitable for younger children and teen-focused activities such as a basketball half-court.

The inspiration for the development came initially from Ngai Tuhoe, with the iwi wanting to use donations received after the 2007 police raids at Ruatoki to create a lasting and positive resolution and resource for those affected – especially the children.

"A playground seemed the perfect solution and it was great to be able to bring together the enthusiasm and knowledge of our kohanga reo and school leaders with the infrastructure expertise provided by the council to create this special place," Tuhoe-Te Uru Taumatua chairman



CELEBRATION: Taneatua children, kaumatua, police, Taneatua community board members and representatives of Te Komiti o Runanga gathered to open the playground at Jack Knowles Reserve yesterday.

Photo Andy Taylor

Tamati Kruger said.

"This is a start of other whanau gathering places across the Tuhoe rohe."

Whakatane Mayor Tony Bonne said the council was delighted to be able to help deliver a community facility

that the people of Taneatua and Ruatoki could be proud of and enjoy.

"The raids were a devastating time for this area and the fact that something so positive can rise from that experience is just wonderful," he said.

"First and foremost, this is for our tamariki, who are our future leaders.

"May it evolve and develop to meet the community's needs, so that tomorrow's children can laugh and learn here, too."