

News

briefs

Quick thinking counters theft

A QUICK-THINKING Ohope resident who spotted a theft on Saturday was able to record and report the registration number of a getaway car to police.

Whakatane police Senior Sergeant Yvonne Parker said a member of the public spotted a vehicle stop along Harbour Road at 3pm.

The occupations stole a container of petrol from a parked car.

After the witness contacted police with the vehicle's registration officers were able to speak to a 16-year-old in connection with the theft.

School leaver scholarships

THE Waiariki Institute of Technology is offering Eastern Bay school leavers a \$5000 helping hand with their future study.

Five scholarships are available for secondary school leavers enrolling in a Waiariki degree programme in 2015.

The new scholarships will provide financial assistance with fees and living costs for the first year of full-time study.

Successful applicants will also be eligible for the fees refund scheme of a further \$2500 offered to students in their first and second years of study at Waiariki.

They would also be encouraged to become a part of the Waiariki Student Ambassador Programme.

Further scholarship information is available on the Waiariki website at www.waiariki.ac.nz.

Te Urewera board gathers for its inaugural meeting

Karla Akuhata
Maori Affairs reporter

THIS week's inaugural meeting of the Te Urewera Board – an event signalling the area's national park status has ended – almost did not happen due to wild weather playing havoc with some members' flights.

The meeting was scheduled for 10am on Monday at Te Kura Whare, the new Tuhoë headquarters in Taneatua, however, it was initially suggested those grounded in Auckland by bad weather should stay put and the meeting should be conducted via teleconference.

But Tamati Kruger, the board's elected chairman, with Matt Te Pou his deputy, said the members knew it was a momentous occasion that needed to be accomplished face-to-face.

"We were ready to crash the meeting but [the delayed members] were determined to get here and have this meeting."

"They believed it cannot be recorded that the first hui did not go down. We were determined to make the first meeting of the board a face-to-face one."

He said the board was taking its role seriously. All involved were aware of its historical significance and that it would set a precedent and establish a new way of governing conservation-type areas.

The Te Urewera area has been formalised by statute.

The meeting finally started at 1.30pm.

The new board includes Mr Kruger, Mr Te Pou, Lorna Taylor, Te Tokawhakea Temara, former prime minister Jim Bolger, Crown Treaty of Waitangi negotiator John Wood, Dave Bamford and Jo Breese.

Four members of the board were appointed by Treaty of Waitangi Negotiations Minister Christopher



NEW BOARD: Members of the new Te Urewera board met for the first time on Monday. It's members are Mathew Te Pou, deputy chairman, David Bamford, John Wood, Jo Breese, Jim Bolger, Te Toka Temara, Tamati Kruger, chairman, Kirsti Luke, Paul Beverley, Lou Sanson and Lorna Taylor. D1103-03

Finlayson and Conservation Minister Dr Nick Smith, and four by the Tuhoë governance entity, Te Uru Taumatua.

Under legislation passed earlier this year, the board is the primary decision-maker for Te Urewera – the Tuhoë homeland.

It is charged with governing Te Urewera in a way that strengthens the connection between the land and Tuhoë, preserves its ecosystems and biodiversity, and provides for continued public use and recreation.

The Te Urewera Act provides for the area formerly known as Te Urewera National Park to be established as a

legal identity with its own intrinsic values.

Mr Kruger said one of the board's key jobs would be to establish the personality of Te Urewera so it could be decided what was appropriate for the area and what was not.

"Once we agree what the personality is we will be able to say that 'no that doesn't suit the personality of Te Urewera' or 'yes that sits with the personality of Te Urewera'."

The Te Urewera board must also develop and accept a strategic plan. Mr Kruger said that should be in place by 2015.

He said there was interest among Tuhoë about how the new board would operate.

He said he had arrived at Te Kura Whare at 9am to prepare for the meeting and was greeted by several tribal members.

"After a while more and more of the locals arrived and before we knew it we probably had about 20 of them."

"When I told them that the start of the meeting had been delayed they said to me 'well let's sit down and have a meeting with you'."

"We all sat down and had a meeting for a couple of hours. They just wanted

to know about the board and about the Crown appointees.

"They wanted to know if the Crown appointees were nice people and if they could work with them."

Mr Kruger said he was optimistic about the future and believed the board had the right make-up to achieve its goals.

Monday's wild weather also meant that plans to fly a Cessna over Te Urewera towing a banner celebrating the former national park's new status also had to be cancelled.

Te Urewera Act - its purpose

THE Te Urewera Act 2014 describes the act's purpose as being to "establish and preserve, in perpetuity, a legal identity and protected status for Te Urewera for its intrinsic worth, its distinctive natural and cultural values, the integrity of those values, and for its national importance".

The legislation refers, in particular, to the act:

- strengthening and maintaining the connection between Tuhoë and Te Urewera; and
- preserving as far as possible the natural features and beauty of Te Urewera, the integrity of its indigenous ecological systems and biodiversity, and its historical and cultural heritage; and
- providing for Te Urewera as a place for public use and enjoyment, for recreation, learning, and spiritual reflection, and as an inspiration for all.