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# Rangiwahia Community Plan



30 March 2015

Updated: 15 February 2018



Rangiwahia Community Hall



St Barnabas Anglican Church



Rangiwahia Road

## Document Quality Assurance

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Signage on Rangiwahia Road

## What you'll find in this Community Plan

This Community Plan has been prepared by Boffa Miskell Ltd on behalf of the Rangiwahia Community.

The content in this Community Plan is a summary of discussions from two community planning workshops and general feedback received from a newsletter that was sent out to the Rangiwahia community.

The Community Plan provides:

- A summary of the Community Planning process;
- A shared community vision statement;
- Three strategies that will help implement the vision;
- A list of actions that have come from the community;
- History and heritage of Rangiwahia; and
- Activities you'll find in Rangiwahia.

This Community Plan is intended to be a living document that is updated and refreshed on a regular basis.

Please contact the Rangiwahia Community Committee for further information on this Community Plan.

# What you'll find in this Community Plan

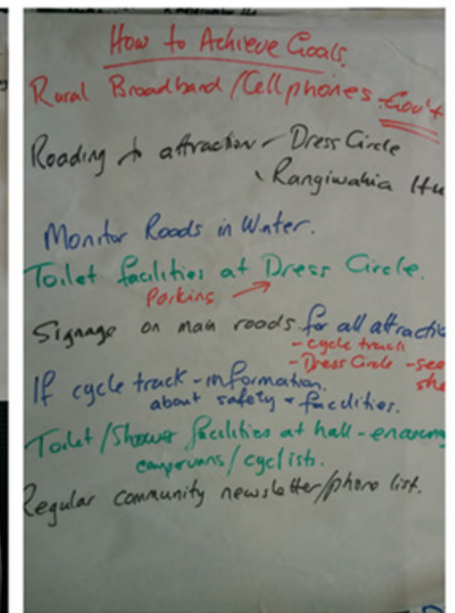
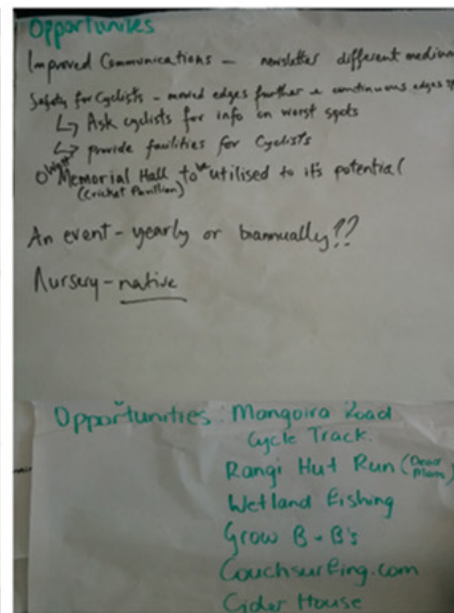
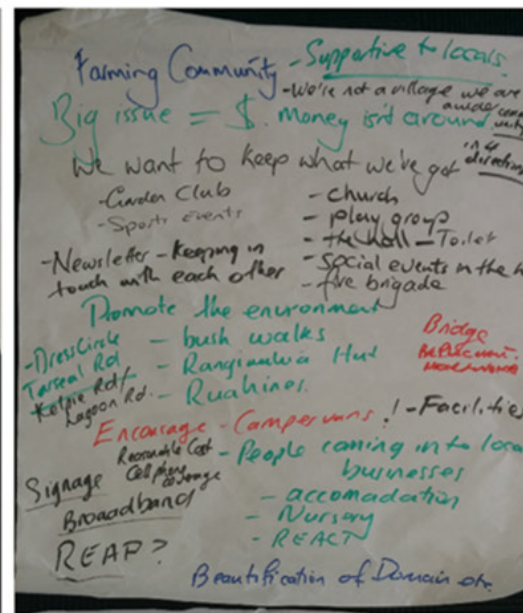
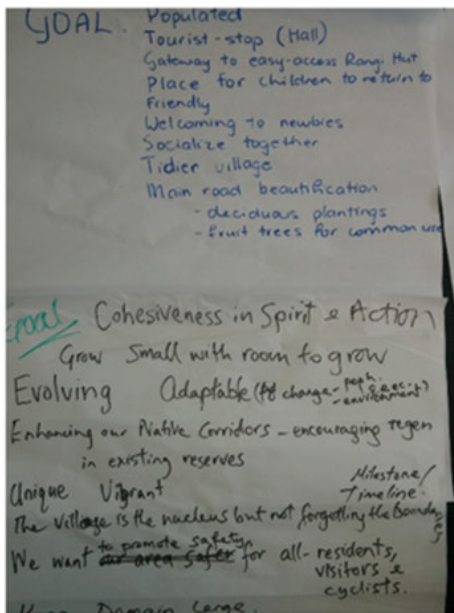
**“The Community Planning Programme is a partnership between district communities and council to develop and implement shared visions”**

www.mdc.govt.nz

The first community planning workshop was held in November 2014. This helped establish shared goals, ideas and identify some of the challenges for the community. Those who attended the workshop worked together to answer three questions:

- What do you want Rangiwahia to be like in the future?
- What is it like at the moment?
- What are your ideas to improve Rangiwahia?

The answers generated from these questions have directly inputted into the content to this community plan.



Ideas and opportunities generated from Rangiwahia community planning workshop

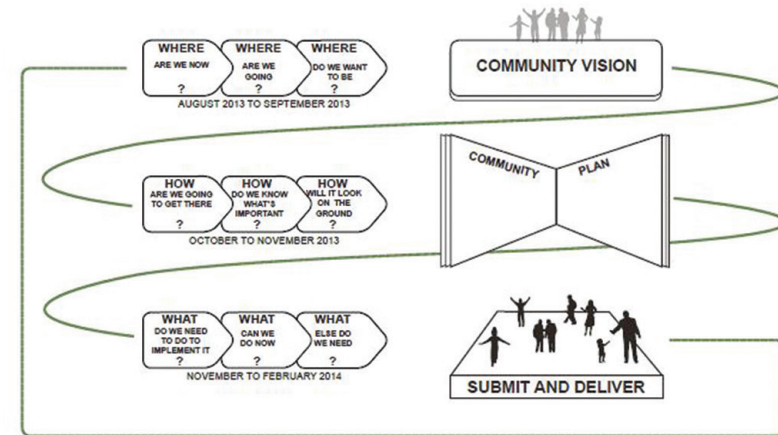


Information gathered from the first workshop was summarised into an update newsletter and sent to the community for feedback.

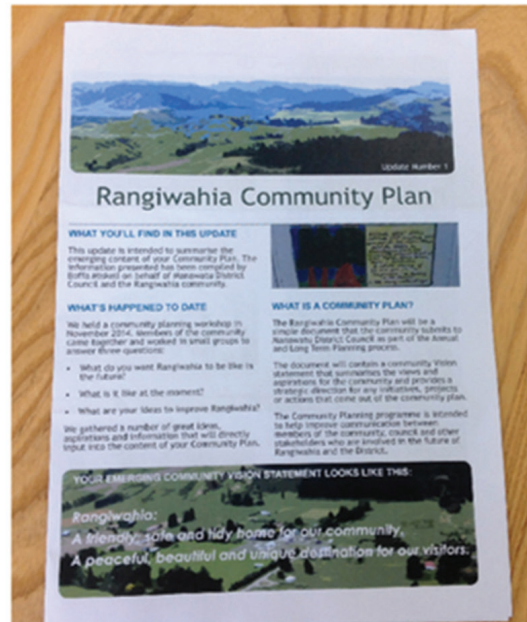
Feedback was received with further ideas being suggested.

A second workshop was held at the Community Committee meeting in February 2015 to help refine the vision statement and the content of the Community Plan.

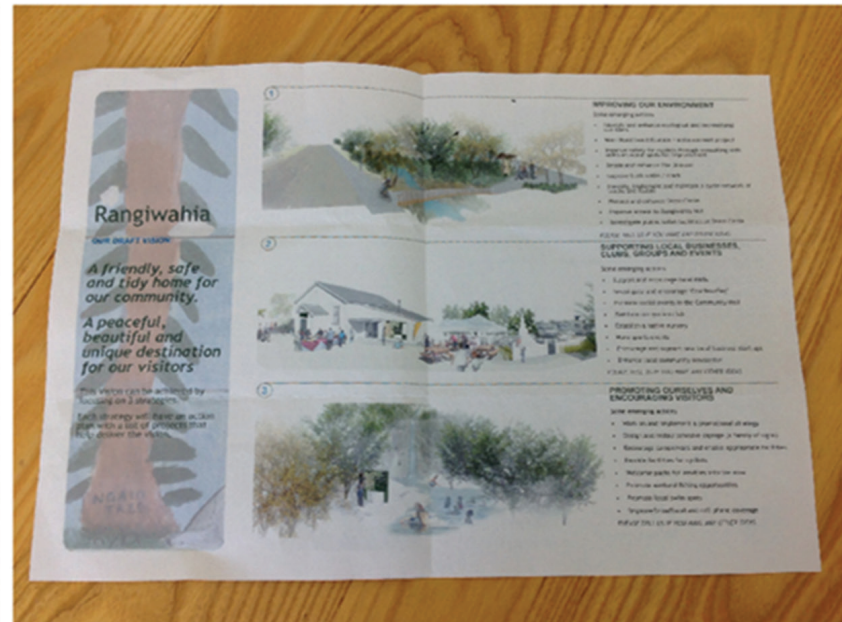
The Rangiwahia community planning process enabled the community to establish a shared vision, content for this plan and enabled further discussions on what the community would like to collectively submit to Manawatu District Council as part of the 2015 Long Term Plan submissions.



The community planning process



A newsletter was sent to the community for comment prior to the second workshop



## Vision

Our shared vision statement for Rangiwahia has been developed through a series of community workshops. The vision provides us with an over arching aspirational statement that is specific to our community.



## Strategies

We have identified three strategies to help implement our vision. Each strategy has a list of actions that we see as priority. The list of actions can be reviewed and updated on a regular basis making this a community plan a 'living document' that's kept up to date and relevant.



Improving our environment



Supporting local businesses, clubs, groups and events



Promoting ourselves and encouraging visitors

# Improving our environment



## Action Plan

- Identify and enhance ecological and recreational corridors
- Enhance / beautify Main Road and Village with plantings
- Undertake traffic safety audit and make improvements for all road users (from pedestrians, cyclists through to trucks)
- Keep access road to the Dress Circle maintained
- Add more signage for cyclists (share the road 1.5m)
- Possible stock movement signs (share the road signage)
- Retain and enhance the Domain
- Improve Bush walks / Tracks
- Establish appropriate maintenance programmes to keep Rangiwhahia beautiful
- Improve access to Bobs Bush
- Motorhome parking for winter weather conditions
- Graze the ex school site to remove the weed and fire risk
- Enhance Pemberton corner as the southern gateway into Rangiwhahia
  - Give a general tidy up and install a picnic table
- Rangiwhahia Hall
  - Maintain Hall as Community Hub
  - Upgrade and improve ablution and disabled facilities
  - Ensure ongoing structural maintenance continues
  - Look into refurbishment options including adding a kitchen



Artist impression of potential green corridor enhancements



# Supporting local businesses, clubs, groups and events

## Action Plan

- Support and encourage local B&Bs
- Increase social events at the Community Hall
- Maintain our existing sporting events and social clubs
- Investigate how we source our plants
- Encourage and support new local business start ups
- Maintain the community newsletter and communications networks
- Continue to work with appropriate people to improve broadband and cell phone coverage



Artist impression of community hall enhancement and future use



# Promoting ourselves and encouraging visitors

## Action Plan

- Work on and implement a promotional strategy that builds on the work we have already started
- Design and install cohesive signage that builds on the works we have already started
- Encourage campervans and enable appropriate facilities at the Hall, including the possibility of hardstand area for wet weather conditions
- Provide facilities for cyclists
- Establish welcome packs for newbies to the area
- Promote wetland fishing opportunities
- Promote local swim spots
- Promote the rich heritage and history of Rangiwahia
- Promote broadband and cell phone coverage (once implemented)



Artist impression of potential enhancements to the dress circle and local swimming holes

## History and Heritage

Rangiwahia means "piercing the sky", "cloud piercer" or "opening in the heavens". This is because the site of Rangiwahia was a natural clearing of about 100 acres in amongst the tall trees of the virgin bush. The application for & future development of land in Pemberton-Rangiwahia began in 1885 after the surveyors had done their marathon of work of surveying the land into 100 and 200 acre sections.

The men arrived first and began to clear the land. The women came later. Although there were one or two natural clearings, the pioneers faced a mammoth job of cutting down giant trees, which would be used for building houses and fences etc. These were terrible hardships to endure, such as in the summer of 1897, when raging fires swept over the country destroying homes, fences and stock. The fires did, however, rid the land of acres of valueless logs allowing room for more stock and cropping. Dairying and sheep farming would become the main source of income, with dairying becoming the hub of the economy of Rangiwahia for many decades. Rangiwahia became an excellent potato growing area.

Over the following years, a bustling village emerged, with the addition of a Hotel, Post Office, saddlery, black smith, a butchery, a fine butter factory, sale yards, a hall, a school, boarding houses, a store and three churches - plus other key businesses. Because of the abundance of logs, saw mills also became established. The remoteness and difficult transportation links meant Rangiwahia was a community that was reliant on helping one another and working the land to the best of its potential. Rangiwahia was the centre for the districts of Main South, Karewarewa, Ruahine, Mangarimu, Hinau and Peep O Day with a combined population of approximately 862 in the early 1900's. The population of Rangiwahia Town at the 1911 census was 216.



The farming township of Rangiwahia in KIWITEA county. This photograph was taken in 1923.

## Back in the Day

In 1906, the Wanganui Chronical reported, "The dairy industry in Rangiwahia has become one of the most profitable branches of agriculture". The article also stated that, "Rangiwahia is one of the rapidly growing inland towns of the West Coast". In April 1898 the Rangiwahia-Ruahine Co operative Dairy Company, Limited was formed. In December 1898 the Rangiwahia Butter factory was built 600m south of the village and was opened for business. It was built on a sloping section using gravity to save labour and pumping.

"Quail" was voted for the trademark of the butter just ahead of the name "Emerald". Two creameries were built - the first at Main South and the other at Ruahine. Around 1910, people started separating their own milk at home using hand-turned separators. This led to the closure of some of the smaller creameries, including the Ruahine Creamery. The Cheese Factory at Ruahine was established in 1910, running through until 1918.

Milking cows was the main source of income in the local area, aside from bush felling and road building. Often men did a combination of all three to keep their families fed and clothed.

On the 15 Feb 1936, a new factory was opened, complete with electricity and, at the time, modern equipment. This Dairy Factory can still be seen today, and is now home to REACT.

Did you know? Quail butter produced at Rangiwahia was rewarded for its outstanding quality when it won the World Championship Butter at Auckland Exhibition in 1925. There were 81 entries received from all over the world, so this was a major win! The Quail bird is still a local icon around Rangiwahia to this day.

During the 1950's dairying virtually disappeared from the Rangiwahia District, and with wool & meat prices improving, sheep farming boomed. The 21st century has seen the population of Rangiwahia slowly decline with the amalgamation farms, some for the purpose of establishing a few large dairy farms. Potato growing and forestry continue and tourism is emerging in recognition of the unique splendour of the mountains, hills, rivers and valleys in the region around Rangiwahia.

## World War One and World War Two

Rangiwahia District saw a number of its young men volunteer for service overseas in both World War One and World War Two. In 1919 a memorial was erected beside the Hall to remember & honour the 21 men who fell in WW1. The Memorial Hall opposite the Main Hall was opened in 1954 and was dedicated to the memory of Rangiwahia's sons, who fell in the first and second World Wars. There were 8 men who died in World War Two.



Information file displayed on the Community Hall



## The Three Hotels of Rangiwahia

Rangiwahia has been home to three hotels over the years. Each hotel replaced the one before it, and all were located on much the same spot. Unfortunately, all three hotels suffered the same fate. Fire.

On the 27 February 1897, the Mitchell's Hotel burnt to the ground, which devastated the local community. Out of the ashes a second hotel was built reasonably quickly, and was owned by Mrs. Ryan of Feilding. On the 26 May 1906, the two-storied hotel was totally destroyed by fire. The third and final hotel burnt down in 1958, in what has been said to be suspicious circumstances.

## Church Life

There have been three Church buildings in Rangiwahia. St Anne's Catholic Church was built in 1925. It was relocated in the 1970's. The Methodist Church was built in 1895, but was relocated to Aokautere near Palmerston North in 1988.

The Anglicans were also an active group in the early 1890's and the present Anglican building was opened in 1903. St Barnabas Anglican Church remains in Rangiwahia providing a place of worship on a monthly basis for all denominations.

## Rangiwahia School

In 1891, the first school in the area opened at Pemberton, (a few kms south of Rangiwahia village), but closed in 1896 when the new Rangiwahia school opened. Other schools sprang up around the district, including Ruahine, Mangarimu, Karewarewa, Main South and Bluff schools.

In 1937 there were significant changes in the district school system. Over the next 10 years, improved roading and transport gradually led to the closing of the other district schools in favour of the new Rangiwahia school built in 1938. The smaller areas were losing their individuality and were becoming part of a centre - Rangiwahia.

After the present school was built, the old school building was later used for a Play Centre. This was demolished several years ago and a Play Group was established in the Memorial Hall, opposite Rangiwahia Hall.

In 1950 there were 101 students at the school, from the ages of 5 to 17 years. Some of the older students in the area travelled into Feilding to attend High Schools instead of attending the local school. This led to a decline in numbers at Rangiwahia School. In 1962 there were 81 students, but by mid 2013, there was only one pupil left. On the 25th January 2014 a ceremony was held declaring Rangiwahia School officially closed.



St Barnabas Anglican Church

## Tourism

Rapidly changing farming practices, population decline, including the closure of the school and increased mobility with better roads, has meant Rangiwahia District has had to adapt to these changes. Since 2000, there have been plans in progress to realise the potential of tourism in the region and to support those directly involved in this industry. Two key unsealed roads proved to be huge obstacles in the way of this development - Ruahine Road known as The Cliffs (the northern access into Manawatu) and Main South Road, (the link between Rangiwahia and Apiti). The Council finally agreed after several submissions from Steve & Mary Bielski that these roads be sealed. This work has now been completed.

The northern Manawatu is relatively bypassed by tourists and visitors, because the main highways bypass this region. The sealing of the two roads has opened up the way for the northern Manawatu to be promoted. The area has untapped potential with amazing scenery.

Rangiwahia was once described in a 1906 Paper's Past as follows:

"There are men in New Zealand soul hungering for the sight of something green, and yearning to be away from the grey flatness of things in general, who knock down enough in one red spree to do a trip around Rangiwahia and take in all its marvellous wonders and exquisite beauty spots."

Destination Manawatu have worked with locals all over the Manawatu to create The Country Road, bringing together many of the different activities and accommodation onto a map, so that visitors have the chance to see unique places and people.

A website has been developed to promote The Iron Gates Experience - [www.iron Gates.co.nz](http://www.iron Gates.co.nz). Rangiwahia is part of The Iron Gates Experience. It has the advantage of having easy access to tramping into the Ruahine Ranges. One of these walks is the track to the Rangiwahia Hut, which has recently been upgraded by the Department of Conservation, creating a beautiful 2-hour walk to the Rangiwahia Hut.



Rangiwahia Hut

## Activities in and around Rangiwahia

### The Rangiwahia Bush Reserve

This 130 acre (53 hectares) native virgin bush reserve is just behind the Rangiwahia Village on the south side. The early settlers left this area of bush untouched, as it was considered an ideal water catchment for the growing village. As a result Rangiwahia now has this beautiful treasure, with many magnificent labelled native specimens, including Rimu, Miro, Matai, Maire, Kahikatea, Karewarewa and several species of Rata. The marked track is about 90 minutes medium walk and well worth taking the time to experience what the Rangiwahia district used to be like before settlement. Bird life is plentiful, though not always easy to see.

### The Cemetery Bush Reserve

The Rangiwahia Cemetery is just south of Rangiwahia at the end of Mangaroa Street. Just before the cemetery entrance on the right is another smaller stand of native bush, which includes a short walk. The flora of this bush is different in certain respect to the Rangiwahia Bush in that there are different species not common in the Rangiwahia Bush such as the Fuchsia.

### Bobs Bush

A QEII reserve of 14 acres of native bush is located at Pemberton Farm on the corner of Rangiwahia Rd and Mangamako Rd. The bush contains upwards of 250 very large trees, including some giant Kahikateas and Maire trees. There are three tracks totalling 2 hours walk. Bird life is plentiful. Tours may be arranged by contacting owners Bob and Prue Wakelin, who are also building a bird corridor access to the Bush.

Email wakelin@clear.net.nz

### Rangiwahia Environmental Arts Centre

Based in the Butter Factory of 1936 REACT was formed to inspire sustainable use of materials through capping and reuse/recycling and to help further understanding of sustainable practices. It is a non-profit group with charitable status.

Visitors are welcome to take a tour, with activities available in sustainable creativity, recycled art workshops and bush restoration projects.

With living structures outside and giant puppets in the old dairy factory, visitors are often amazed at what they find.

REACT has available jams and preserves throughout the year with seasonal produce available in the more clement months. [www.rangienvironartscentre.org](http://www.rangienvironartscentre.org)

### Ruapuna Park and Museum

This stunning park and museum is situated just north of Rangiwahia at the beginning of Te Parapara Road. Ngaire Hancock and her late husband, Alan, have developed it over many years. Contact - 063282885.

### Ian McKean Pinetum

The late Ian McKean developed this over many years. It has the biggest collection of conifers in the southern hemisphere and is situated on Renfrew Road just north of Te Parapara Road. The pinetum is open to the public.

### Mangahuia Wetlands

Michael Bourke has developed these beautiful wetlands surrounded by hundreds of trees. It is home to a variety of waterfowl, water lilies and trout & perch for fishing. The wetlands are open to the public at any time without appointment.

### Ruahine Dress Circle Picnic Spot and Lookout

This is a unique picnic and swimming spot of Ruahine Road onto Kelpie Road & then left down Lagoon Road.

There is also a lookout just off Ruahine Road, revealing a panoramic view of the Ruahines and the Ruahine Valley, as well as a view of the Dress Circle itself.

### Rest Areas

Pemberton Historic Site - 3.2 kms south of Rangiwahia at Mangamako Road

Ruahine Dress Circle Lookout on Ruahine Road - 15 kms from Rangiwahia

Te Parapara Corner just off Rangiwahia Road - 1.3 kms north of Rangiwahia

Te Parapara, Renfrew & Main South Roads Junction - 5 kms from Rangiwahia



## Accommodation

### Rangiwahia Domain

The domain beside the Rangiwahia Hall has been developed to allow campervans to stay overnight. Complete with public toilets, running water, power connections and a dump station, the Rangiwahia Domain welcomes Motor Homes, Campervans, and cyclists with tents to utilise this great community-run space. There is a small fee per night, which goes towards helping the community maintain the Hall, which itself is available for hire. [www.iron Gates.co.nz](http://www.iron Gates.co.nz)

### Mairenui Rural Retreat

On Ruahine Road [www.mairenui.co.nz](http://www.mairenui.co.nz)

### Mt Huia Farmstay

and Bed and Breakfast, including Hodd Cottage on Ruahine Road [www.mthuia.co.nz](http://www.mthuia.co.nz)

## Activities & Accommodation in the wider Iron Gates Experience

### Apiti Area

#### Tramping

Within the Iron Gates Experience are other popular tramps and huts, which are accessed from the car park at the end of Patersen's Road, off Table Flat Road north of Apiti. These include -

Alice Nash Memorial Lodge Track and Hut

Iron Gates Gorge via the Oroua River and The Stoat Trap's Track

Tunipo Track

Deerford Track

Tracks to The Iron Gates and Triangle Huts.

#### Cycling

Destination Manawatu have initiated cycle routes throughout Manawatu. Ruahine and Main South Roads are part of these routes and are also part of The National Cycleway.

## Other Activities

Apiti Bar and Grill

Limestone Caves and Bush Walk

Sixtus Lodge Outdoor Education Centre

Glencone Lodge

Apiti Golf Club

Mageo Woodcraft and Garden

Table Flat Horse Trekking

Piazza Verde

Makoura Lodge with outdoor activities and adventures

For further information visit [www.iron Gates.co.nz](http://www.iron Gates.co.nz)

### Kimbolton Area

Crosshill's Garden and Cafe (Just north of Kimbolton) - [www.crosshills.co.nz](http://www.crosshills.co.nz)

Hansen's Cafe (Kimbolton) - [www.hansenscafebar.co.nz](http://www.hansenscafebar.co.nz)

### Mangaweka Area

Papa Cliff Cafe, Mangaweka - [www.facebook.com/papacliffcafe](http://www.facebook.com/papacliffcafe)

Mangaweka Camping Grounds

Mangaweka Adventure Company

Awastone Campervan Park - [www.mangaweka.co.nz](http://www.mangaweka.co.nz)



**RANGIWAHIA**  
Community Plan

