

Mt Ruapehu Crater Lake Lahar threat response

– NGATI RANGI POSITION STATEMENT

Ngati Rangi, whose rohe (tribal area) includes the southern part of Mt Ruapehu, have issued the following statement which outlines their position on the Crater Lake lahar threat:

“Ngati Rangi as Tangata Whenua has discussed the information presented and would like to make the following position statement:

Ngati Rangi unilaterally opposes any interference with the natural landscape created by the 1995-96 eruptive forces on the peaks of Mount Ruapehu and see it as a cultural affront and a major degradation of the sacred regard in which Ngati Rangi hold their mountain peaks to even consider any option that would seek to artificially alter that mountain landscape.

Ngati Rangi have an ancestral relationship with the mountains of the Central North Island. These mountains are the ancestral matua of our people, the elder figures marking the transition from the volatile procreation of earth and the development of man on this planet. Monumental symbols of the power of creation.

Hence Ngati Rangi have the deepest spiritual association with Ruapehu, an association that can not be easily explained by words. To Ngati Rangi, Ruapehu is a most sacred place held in the highest sacred regard not only because of ancient burial places or historical physical associations they hold with their mountain but because of spiritual and powerful forces that emanate from it. Things that can not be described but only felt. This is the Mana of Ruapehu and must be protected at all cost.

The peaks of our mountains are the most sacred and to consider excavation of the walls of the Crater Lake is to challenge the very spiritual and cultural being our people and challenges the indigenous integrity and strength of the cultural world heritage status that Tongariro National Park currently commands.



Department of Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai

We take issue with the fact that there are any potential environmental effects of a crater lake wall failure as this natural phenomenon must be considered environmentally natural in the purest of conservation values.

It is heartening to see in the media that there are many other New Zealanders that share these same opinions and support our valued principles.

We agree that there is a real issue of public safety and protection of material property which are quite separate from conservation or environmental issues being discussed. We would like however to suggest that there are modern warning systems that can prevent the possible tragedy of another Tangiwai disaster occurring and insurance to cover those who are foolhardy enough to build man-made structures in the path of natural disasters. Mankind is far too slow to learn that nature can not be contained, and that it is safer to let it take its own course.

The humble words of one of our Kuia summed up Ngati Rangi opinion recently during the consultation process. When told about the effects of the eruption and options being proposed for the mountain she replied "*That be natural, leave things alone*".

This issue is one which cuts to the very heart of our people and we accept no compromise. We trust this makes our position quite clear."

The Department of Conservation's mission is: To conserve New Zealand's natural and historic heritage for all to enjoy now and in the future. Ko ta Te Papa Atawhai he whakaute he tiaki i nga taonga koirora me nga taonga tuku iho hei painga mo te katoa inaianei, mo ake tonu ake.