

Whakapapa

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The North Island Primary & Intermediate Schools Ski Championships is back in 2025.

The North Island Primary & Intermediate Schools Ski Championships — affectionately known as 'Nips' — has been a cornerstone of New Zealand's snow sports community for over 30 years.

Hosted annually at Whakapapa on Mt Ruapehu, the event offers young skiers a chance to compete, connect, and grow a lifelong passion for snow sports. First held with just 12 school teams, Nips has grown to host more than 150 teams at its peak, making it one of the largest snow sports events in the country.

Originally focused on primary-aged athletes, the event expanded in 2016 to include intermediate schools — opening the door for more tamariki to experience alpine racing in a fun, supportive environment. Whakapapa, with its unique terrain and deep alpine legacy, has always been the natural home for Nips.

Over the years, Nips has become more than just a competition — it's where many of New Zealand's top skiers first stepped onto a race course, where friendships are formed, and where a love for the maunga is sparked.

In 2025, Nips enters an exciting new chapter. For the first time, the event will be officially sanctioned by Snow Sports New Zealand, with rohe results awarded. This is a key step forward in aligning the event with national development pathways, ensuring young athletes have every opportunity to progress.

At its heart, Nips remains true to its purpose: to provide a safe, inclusive, and competitive space for young people to develop their skills and passion for snow sports. It's a celebration of community, connection, and the future of alpine racing — and we're proud to continue that legacy here at Whakapapa.

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About Whakapapa

Whakapapa is situated in the heart of New Zealand's central North Island spanning 550 hectares on the northern side of Mt Ruapehu in Tongariro National Park, an easy three-hour drive from Hamilton, four from Wellington and five hours from Auckland.



Since 1953, New Zealanders have been discovering their first love of snow at Whakapapa's premier learner facility, Happy Valley, while more advance skiers and riders hone their skills exploring natural bowls, wind lips, exhilarating chutes, and remnants of old volcanic crater rims on descent from 2320m - New Zealand's highest lifted point.

Naturally volcanic terrain is formed by solidified lava, with snow filling in natural gullies and rocky crevasses from June through to October. Traditionally a snow base upwards of 1m from August is enhanced by Whakapapa's expert team and makes for some of the best free ride terrain in the Southern Hemisphere.

Whakapapa is home to the Sky Waka gondola, New Zealand's premier gondola experience (wheelchair accessible). It transports guests 1.8km up the Whakapapa side of the maunga 2020m above sea level and offers panoramic vistas out across the volcanic terrain and neighbouring mountains, Mt Tongariro and Mt Ngauruhoe. Skiers, boarders, and sightseers are welcomed to the architecturally awarded Knoll Ridge Chalet and highest year-round eatery in the country. The Sky Waka gondola runs daily, 10am - 4pm.

For families looking to give their kids a snow play experience, a snow experience zone at the top of the Sky Waka gondola can be accessed with a sightseeing pass. Or the Whakapapa sledding zone in Happy Valley offers fun for snow-seekers of all ages. Kids need to be 8 years+ to ride their own sled unaccompanied.

For more visit [whakapapa.com](https://www.whakapapa.com) | [Facebook](#) | [Instagram](#)

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