



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **Ruapehu District Council**

**Contact:** Paul Wheatcroft, Communications Manager, 027 24 33 064

**Date:** Friday 25 March 2011.

#### **COUNCIL APPOINTS YOUTH CO-ORDINATOR**

Ruapehu District Council (RDC) in partnership with the Ministry of Social Development's Work and Income service has appointed a Youth Coordinator with the goal of assisting young people under the age of 25 to make the most of their potential and mentoring them on how to find and succeed in sustainable employment.

The Youth Coordinator role is funded by Work and Income in partnership with RDC and is the first of three partnership programmes council has been working to develop with government Ministries.

The other two programmes are a 'Youth Development Partnership Fund' under the Ministry of Youth Development and a 'Community Relationship Fund' under the Department of Internal Affairs.

RDC Group Manager Community and Regulation, Marion Smith, said that the 'Youth Project' supports the 'Mayors Taskforce for Jobs' vision that all young people under 25 years be in paid work, in training or education, or in useful activities in our communities.

"One of the programmes main objectives is to increase the pool of suitably skilled young employees available to local businesses and enhance the retention of skills within the Ruapehu labour market, both of which can play an important part in facilitating employment and economic growth," she said.

"The Youth Project has the goal of achieving a minimum of 20 work placements for youth by 31 December this year."

Mrs Smith said that there was a huge interest in the Youth Coordinator position.

"Usually there would be a shortlist of three or four final candidates from which to make a final appointment, however, such was the number and quality of the applicants for the Youth Coordinator position that the final shortlist had eight candidates on it," she said.

"The successful candidate was 25 year old Ariaan Gage-Dingle who is of Ngati Tuwharetoa descent."

"The Youth Project is extremely excited about Ariaan's appointment and believes someone of her calibre will be able to have a significant impact on Ruapehu's young people and in assisting them to achieve their potential and help them make sound decisions about the issues and opportunities that they face."

Mrs Smith noted that the Youth Coordinator will become the single point of contact for the participating young people and will facilitate the opportunities for them to increase their skills and knowledge, gain work experience, achieve certification where appropriate, and to succeed in sustainable employment."

Ariaan said that since graduating from the University of Auckland (BA/LLB {Maori/Politics/Law}) she has had a range of amazing jobs including researching, writing, and presenting Maori language based TV programmes and most recently as an Advisor to the Maori Party Co-Leader, Tariana Turia, but for some time has wanted to come back home to the central North Island to live and work.

"The Youth Coordinator role is the perfect opportunity for me to do that and I am really excited about the chance at working to help Ruapehu's young people achieve their goals and aspirations," she said.

"The people I will be working with will be no older than myself and I believe my own experiences of growing up and going to school in the central North Island, and striving to achieve my own personal goals, while staying true to the people and place where I come from, will give them confidence that they too can make their own dreams a reality."

Ariaan commented that community support will be critical to the success of the Youth Project and she will be proactively establishing an on-going relationship with employers in the Ruapehu District.

"Any business or organisation who would like to find out more about the programme and what is involved can contact me at Ruapehu District Council's office in Taumarunui (07 895 8188)," she said.

"If you have a genuine enthusiasm for helping people succeed and would like to contribute to a programme that has real, measurable benefits to the Ruapehu District and its community, I would like to hear from you."

DAVID HAMMOND  
**CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

CJH : PRW