

# Waretini wins talent show

MORE than 500 people packed into the Waitomo Cultural and Arts Centre in Te Kuiti on Friday night to cheer on the top 10 finalists in this year's Waitomo's Got Talent show.

Featuring a talented line-up of musical and dance acts, the judging panel of Tai Huata, Julie Radice and Matahaere Clark, crowned Otorohanga songstress Talesha Waretini the No1 star.

Hosted by the Waitomo District Youth Council, Piopio's Trae Aitken claimed the runner-up prize with his original song and Te Kuiti's Arma-deus Hita was awarded third place for his hip hop dance performance.

The winner took home \$300, second place won \$200, and third placegetter \$100.

## FINALISTS

The other finalists were: Jasmin Kennard, Tipene Thackray, Ariana Joseph and group acts Taylor Matthews and Chris Bio, Paige Bell and Charm Rhind, Stevie-Lee Williams and Baylee Rangitaawa, and Tahlia Matthews, Tamea Te Rauna, Montesha Perawiti, Puhī Ngawaka, Te

Awhina Anderson and Tailah Teddy.

Youth council co-ordinator Donna Macdonald says Waretini's cover of Sam Smith's – *I'm Not the Only One* was "superb".

"Talesha was quite shy when she first came on, but once she started singing with her amazingly powerful voice, it was like a complete transformation. She was absolutely fantastic.

"All of the top three winners really stood out on the night, but everyone who made the finals is very talented.

"This hopefully shows other talented youth out there that if these young people can do it, so can they."

Adding to the entertainment, last year's winner Rikihana Rhind and members of the youth council also performed on the night.

To sum up the event, Mrs Macdonald says: "Waitomo definitely has talent."

"There was a sell-out crowd, the performances were great and the whole event ran very smoothly.

"Well done the youth council members for hosting an amazing event."

Discussions are already underway to host another event next year.



**VOCAL POINT:** Otorohanga singer Talesha Waretini won the top prize against nine other acts at Friday's Waitomo's Got Talent show in Te Kuiti. PHOTO MUSICARE



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