# [***Morning after the night before***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:47K8-JK00-01K9-41CB-00000-00&context=1516831)

The New Zealand Herald

January 2, 2003 Thursday

Copyright 2003 The New Zealand Herald. All Rights Reserved.

**Section:** NEWS; General

**Length:** 690 words

**Byline:** By STAFF REPORTERS

**Body**

Hundreds of arrests - and the sexual violation of a teenage boy in Whangamata sand dunes - belied the relatively good mood of most New Year celebrations.

The year began with plenty of hangovers in police cells yesterday morning after more than 780 revellers were arrested, mainly for breaches of liquor bans in North Island resorts and in Auckland.

Fewer than 100 were arrested in South Island resorts such as Queenstown, where nude partygoers plunged into the chilly waters of Lake Wakatipu.

Headaches of a different sort are still being suffered by thousands of Vodafone mobile phone users in various Coromandel and Bay of Plenty resorts, as the company struggles to find the cause of transmission problems which began at midday on New Year's Eve.

Parental concerns are running high among those unable to contact teenage offspring to ensure they did not end the night in a cell.

But despite the size of the round-up - bigger in some traditional troublespots than last summer - police around the country are pleased most crowds rang in 2003 in good humour.

Their largest catch was in Whangamata, where they swooped on 195 revellers for breaching a ban on drinking liquor in public places after 4pm and on a further 23 for driving offences.

One was a disqualified drink-driver clocked at 120km/h in a 50km/h zone.

The police are also investigating several sexual violation allegations, including one involving a 16-year-old youth attacked in sand dunes about 2am yesterday near Beach Access No 6.

They are seeking a Pakeha man aged in his 50s, and witnesses including a woman in her mid-20s who went to the youth's aid.

Sergeant Vince Ranger says there were relatively few arrests considering the size of crowds at the popular Coromandel resort, and he is hailing Whangamata's tightly enforced liquor ban for preventing any recurrence of major disturbances.

About 40,000 holidaymakers descended on the town, up to 25,000 of whom gathered at Williamson Park and the adjoining surf club for the big countdown.

"It was a good night with a big crowd - I would say it was one of the biggest crowds we have had down here for a number of years."

Down the coast at Mt Maunganui, Senior Sergeant Duncan MacLeod hailed the night as "a complete success" despite 188 arrests - 54 more than last year - among about 20,000 revellers.

The Mount's most outlandish tourist attraction, a temporary holding pen dubbed "Alcatraz", hosted up to 50 offenders at a time waiting to be processed and bailed as several drunks slept off their excesses in two furniture trucks set up behind the town's police station.

Auckland police arrested 130 people among about 150,000 gathered in the city's centre, mostly for breaches of a liquor ban in force for the first time during New Year festivities.

Inspector Brent Holmes praised the ban, saying there was considerable less drunkenness than last year and very little threatening behaviour.

Police in Northland arrested 70 people, but only six at the Haruru Falls rock concert near Paihia, which drew a crowd of 11,000.

Most were for liquor offences, with cases of general crime, including assaults and theft, reportedly down on last year.

About 30 people were arrested in Hamilton and 24 in Taupo, where seven revellers were hurt falling down the same lakeside bank that claimed the life of a Wellington man on Sunday.

Meanwhile, Vodafone suspects a computer software problem for continuing and puzzling failures in large parts of Pauanui, Hahei, Whitianga and Whangamata on the Coromandel Peninsula and Ohope and Opotiki in the eastern Bay of Plenty.

Acting technical director Steve Gallie said crews were working around the clock to isolate the problem, which was persisting intermittently in 11 of its ***cellphone*** sectors, affecting thousands of voice and text messages.

Company spokeswoman Sarah Williams said the problem was highly unusual, and not one that could be blamed on overloading by revellers.

Some calls were getting through, with the system running at near-normal capacity yesterday morning before blinking out again.

"We understand this is extremely frustrating for our customers," said Ms Williams.

"We just can't apologise enough."

**Load-Date:** January 1, 2003

**End of Document**