

Welcome to Te Mata Park and its famous Peak, one of the most loved and visited places in Hawke's Bay. Gifted in perpetuity to the community in 1927 by the Chambers family, the 99 hectare Park is managed by a small group of volunteer Trustees. A recreational, historical and cultural treasure, Te Mata Park offers visitors stunning and varied scenery, unique topography, geology, history, flora and fauna and a wide range of outdoor activities.

The Giant Among Us

Te Mata Park is a place of immense spiritual importance to Heretaunga Māori. Te Mata Peak and its adjacent hills are believed to be the final resting place of Rongokako, grandfather of Kahungunu, the founder of the Ngāti Kahungunu tribe. His prone form can be seen in the hillscape, called Te Mata-o-Rongokako (the face of Rongokako). European settlers, also drawn to the hill, thought it resembled a man lying down, and named it the Sleeping Giant.

The Giant's Landscape

Te Mata Park is home to the Peak, standing at 399 metres above sea level at the eastern boundary of the bountiful Heretaunga Plains. The Park lies on the edge of dramatic uplifted limestone hill country, cut through by the Tukituki River. From the summit, with its spectacular views, a series of scarps, spurs and valleys drop away. Massive rock cliffs and outcrops are studded with fossils of marine shells, while bush remnants and wetlands remain nestled in the valleys. Native vegetation clings to the cliffs and several of these plants are unique to Te Mata Park, and as a result are some of the rarest in New Zealand.

The Peak is a 'Hog's Back' ridge of erosion-resistant limestone dropping steeply to the east. These sedimentary rocks, originally deposited in horizontal layers on the seabed, have been tilted and bowed upward by the geological forces of the Pacific and Australian tectonic plates. The limestone is built from the remains of billions of sea creatures that lived and died near the coast over innumerable millennia and this lime-rich substrate strongly influences the nature of the native vegetation found in Te Mata Park. There are fossilised sea creatures visible throughout the Park.

Many native birds of national and regional significance call Te Mata Park home, along with additional visitors like the New Zealand Falcon and Kaka. The Park is of vital importance as a plant food source for native birds, especially in winter. Look out for the beautiful Kereru, Bellbird, Tui and Morepork which rely on food plants in the park. Their favourites include Kowhai, Lacebark, Cabbage Tree, Karaka and Flax, plus some of the introduced Eucalypts, Banksias and Tree Lucerne.

Te Mata Park
Ours forever

Why do we need the Te Mata Park Visitor & Education Centre?

- Te Mata Park is the most visited destination in the Hawke's Bay region.
- It is a unique and vital outdoor educational, environmental and recreational green space for all to share.
- There are no practical amenities in the Park: no drinking water or toilets; no place to share insights or information on the history, cultural heritage and natural environment of the area.
- The wider Hawke's Bay region lacks a free public facility, focused on the region, and suited to use by a wide cross section of people from individuals, through to schools and special interest groups.

What will the Centre be?

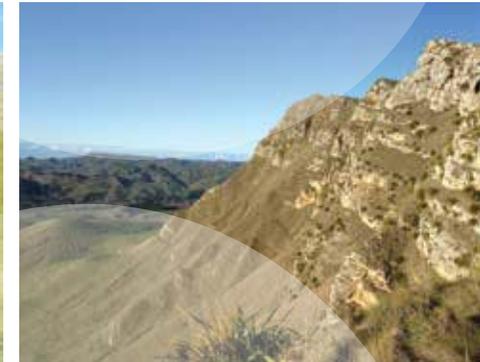
- A stunning, practical, sustainable building that is free and open to all.
- A regional asset that offers all visitors a deeper understanding of the region and its rich human and natural history.
- A wonderful resource for schools and recreational groups – providing flexible education and interpretation areas and a small theatre. Suitable for lessons, meetings, lectures, coaching sessions and more.
- A hub for the Park with a cafe, toilets, drinking water, and protected indoor and outdoor seating areas, plus a children's play area in the landscaped surrounds of the Centre.
- A community meeting space to bring people together for powhiri, events and social gatherings in the central courtyard area.
- A premium tourist attraction providing a unique visitor experience complete with a purpose built facility of international architectural significance.



Architect's illustration of the Te Mata Park Visitor & Education Centre

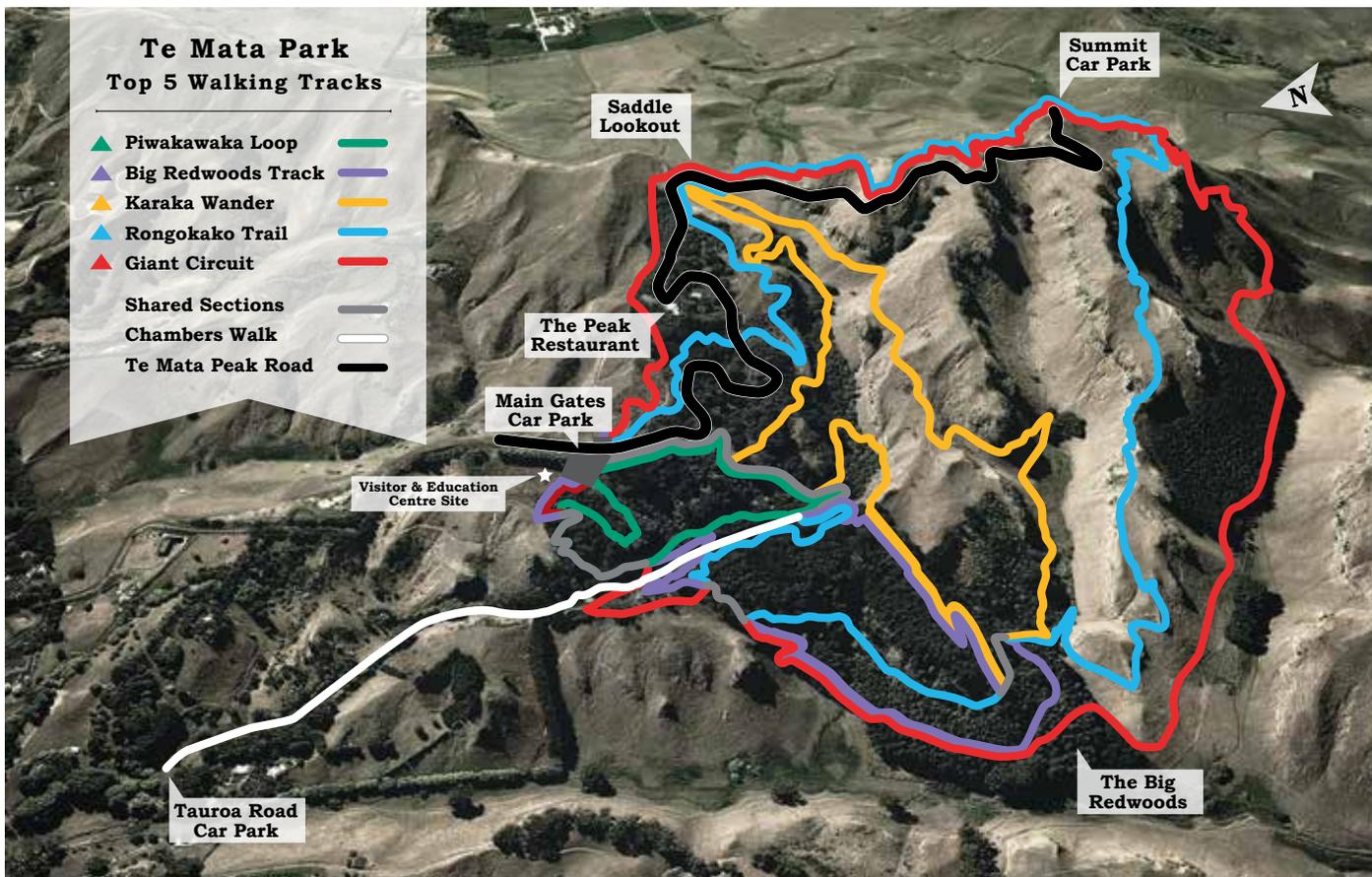
Your Support Is Needed

The Centre will be a testament to the generosity of many. We hope you will consider being part of this project. All donations are tax deductible – for more information please visit www.tematopark.co.nz.



Gifted in perpetuity to the community in 1927, Te Mata Park offers 99 hectares of stunning landscapes and over 30km of walking tracks to explore.





With over 30km of tracks throughout its 99 hectares, Te Mata Park offers a huge range of recreational activities. The Top 5 Walking Tracks provide a variety of options to explore some spectacular areas of the Park on foot. Each of the tracks is a different loop route, which may be travelled in either direction. To access the Top 5 Tracks, enter the Park via the Main Gates Car Park or Tauroa Road Car Park. Note: starting at Tauroa adds 0.7km and an extra 15 minutes walk each way, via Chambers Walk.

Fitness and Safety

The times for walking each track are estimates only. Based on adults of average fitness, allowing time to enjoy the spectacular views and Points of Interest.

Take care on the tracks – they traverse a variety of landscapes, including very steep areas. Tracks may be slippery after wet or wintery weather. Wear suitable footwear and clothing, and use sun protection. Some parts of the Park are quite exposed to the elements. Note there are no toilets or drinking water within the Park at present. Please help keep our Park beautiful.

The Trust is very grateful to visitors who collect litter found in the Park. Rubbish bins are located at the Main Gates Car Park, Tauroa Road Car Park, and the Summit. The whole Park is an off-lead area for dogs. Please note that stock is regularly grazed, and dogs must be controlled at all times.

Bikes permitted on sections of track marked with 

Points of Interest on the Top 5 Walking Tracks

Many features contribute to the uniqueness of Te Mata Park. A number of sites have been identified in the Park as “Points of Interest” to be shared with visitors.

Look out for small signs with Quick Reference (QR) codes on the Top 5 Walking Tracks. Scanning the QR codes with a smartphone provides instant access to detailed information on these particular sites. There is good mobile phone reception in most areas of the Park, apart from the valleys. This information is also available at www.tematapark.co.nz.

For more information about the tracks and the points of interest for each, visit www.tematapark.co.nz.

Piwakawaka Loop 1.3km / Est 40 mins



Named after the cheeky fantails seen along the way, this track passes through majestic gum trees and native bush, the Small Redwoods Grove and passes beautiful lemon-scented eucalypts on the upper section of Chambers Walk.

Big Redwoods Track 2.7km / Est 1 hour



An outing to the stunning Big Redwoods is the perfect spot for a picnic, or game of hide and seek. The loop track takes in a great lookout point over the Heretaunga Plains, the Big Redwoods, and beautiful native bush.

Karaka Wander 4.0km / Est 1 hr 15 mins



A wonderful ‘wander’ through the varied landscapes of the upper parts of Park—mature trees, native bush and open grassland to dramatic cliffs and panoramic views. The route passes a large grove of Karaka trees, believed to be at least 200 years old.

Rongokako Trail 5.5km / Est 2 hrs 15 mins



Taking you to the very top of the Peak, this is a more challenging trail. Offering spectacular views, the track passes through the Big Redwoods, includes the locals’ favourite ‘Goat Track’, the Peak summit, and travels over the Millennium planting - another great spot for a picnic. Steep sections, care needed.

Giant Circuit 5.4km / Est 2 hrs 15 mins



Best walked anti-clockwise, the Giant Circuit takes walkers around the perimeter of the Park and up to the summit via the southern face, offering a great sustained workout and several new areas of track including the challenging ‘Snakes & Ladders’. Steep sections, care needed.