

Palmerston North's premier park, with 26 hectares of bush walks, bike tracks and formal gardens, has something for everyone in the family. Explore the thousands of mature trees, splendid roses, barbecues, croquet lawns... and the kids will love the Junior Road Safety Park, miniature railway, playground and paddling pool.

Named after Queen Victoria, the Esplanade began life in 1897 as a gravel footpath. The form it more closely follows today is largely attributable to Peter Black, Palmerston North's Curator of Reserves between 1908 and 1946. Peter Black's tree plantings are a legacy still much in evidence – the Arboretum, which contains a number of protected trees, the flowering cherries along the Esplanade drive and the Phoenix canariensis palms of Palm Drive.



Palm Tree Lined Road at the Esplanade, 1939

### Toro mai ki tō tātou awa

Visit our awa

The Victoria Esplanade backs onto the mighty Manawātū River – our city's taonga.

You can access our river park (awa) from the Esplanade by three main points- close to the Junior Road Safety Park, mid-point through the native bush, and by the Scenic Railway station.

Explore our award winning and iconic He Ara Kotahi bridge, visit our famous star paths at night, and learn more about what our awa means to Rangitāne.

If you head a bit further, you could visit our Urban Eels platform, ride our mountain bike tracks, retrace the footsteps of moa, and play in our forest forts.



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# TE PAPA RĒHIA O WIKITŌRIA

## VICTORIA ESPLANADE

One of Palmy's Premier Parks!



**Hongia te kakara o ngā pua**  
Smell the roses and check out the camellias

A feast for your senses – the Dugald MacKenzie Rose Garden has been one of Palmy’s must-see summer attractions since it opened in 1968.

More than 100 species of roses are on show from November to April – including the famous Sexy Remy, Margaret Merrill, Loving Memory and the newest addition – Pride of Palmy.

Explore 1.74 hectares of roses on your visit. There are two trials within the garden. The first, on the northern edge of the park, has roses which will be judged to determine if they should become officially recognised varieties and then commercially sold. On the southern side are trial beds for garden roses. The judging includes inspecting leaves and flowers to determine the roses distinctiveness, uniformity and stability. If successful, growers can receive royalties for each bush sold.

You’ll be able to spot the roses from early November to May, with the camellia walking loop around the borders for you to view in winter and early spring.

When you visit, you may be lucky enough to witness someone’s special day too. Our gardens are one of Palmy’s most popular wedding venues.



**Kuhu atu ki te papawai ... ka tā te manawa**  
Take a dip ... or take a breather

The Esplanade’s paddling pool is a Palmy institution – if you grew up here, you’ve most certainly taken a dip at some point in your life.

This pool was presented to the children of Palmerston North in 1937 by the Returned Services Association. It is of an art deco design, in the shape of the RSA badge.

The pool operates from December to around Easter each year, and is free to use. Free BBQs next to the pool make it a popular spot each summer. If waterslides are more your thing, next door to the Esplanade is our famous award winning aquatic centre – The Lido.

Across from the pool is the Esplanade Café, where you can grab a cuppa, or an ice cream for a stroll around the park. The Café is housed in Victoria House, Palmy’s former post office relocated to this site in 1989.



**Tūhuratia te taiao o nuku**  
Explore nature’s playground

With native bush, lush landscaping and beautiful gardens, the Esplanade offers a relaxing gentle walk through interesting surroundings, no matter your age or ability. Many of the pathways through the park are pram and wheelchair-friendly.

The pathways are clearly signposted so you know where and how far you’re going! Take the 1350-metre Route A (follow the red markers) or the 900-metre Route B (the green markers), which is part of the national KiwiWalk initiative. If you’re after a serious exercise session, you can access the nine kilometre riverside pathway from the Esplanade.

Explore the Esplanade’s living museum and discover how the Manawatū looked more than 100 years ago. This five hectares of native bush is home to rare and endangered plant species and to a wealth of animals and birds, including bellbirds, falcons, grey warblers, morepork, shining cuckoos, tui and wood pigeons. A New Zealand icon, ferns of many varieties thrive in The Fernery. Nearby is The Aboretum in which you can find a dazzling array of exotic and native trees, some of which are rarely found in New Zealand. Spring brings the delight of the Esplanade’s cherry trees. First planted in the 1950s and 60s, 100 new Awanui trees were planted in 1997 to reinvigorate this glorious springtime vision.

Flower beds provide year-round colour. The annual beds around Palm Drive are replenished twice yearly to maintain spectacular all-year blooms. The extensive plantings of herbaceous perennials and bulbs throughout the more established gardens provide seasonal interest. After something more exotic? Seek out the Peter Black Conservatory and Lath House for a wide range of tropical and subtropical plants. Orchids feature as the largest single collection.



**Ekea te rerewhenua**  
Choo choo – all aboard!

One of the Esplanade’s (and Palmy’s) most popular attractions is our 2.2km miniature railway. You can jump onboard either at the station close to Park Road, or from within the playground area.

The railway is a great place to start your adventure and travel around the park and plan what you’d like to do while there – visit Central Energy Trust Wildbase Recovery Centre, play at the playground, explore the native bush, have lunch at the café, take a dip in the paddling pool, admire the roses and so much more.

You can do a full circuit or a half-trip if you want to save time traveling to a different area of the Esplanade.

The railway is proudly run by volunteers and there is a small charge to travel on the train.



**Ekea ō wīra!**  
Zoom zoom

Palmy’s Junior Road Safety Park is always humming. Complete with a miniature roundabout, give way and stop signs and even traffic lights, this is the perfect safe space for kids to ride their bike or scooter. The park has been built to scale and looks and feels like Palmy’s streets.

It’s designed to be a family-friendly, fun environment for children aged two to 10 to learn about basic road safety while gaining confidence.

It’s proven so popular that it’s received national acclaim and was nominated for top national awards.



**E kori e!**  
Burn off some energy

If the kids need to burn off some energy, our huge playground is the place to be. The wooden structures will make you nostalgic for playgrounds of your past. All the old favourites are there - swings, slides, trampolines and climbing frames. Kids will also love the mouse wheels, whisper dishes, fireman’s pole, jump pit, three-storey pole house and flying fox. We’ve also got a toddler playground for the littlies.

**Mātakitia ngā pīpī manu**  
Check out the chicks!

With free entry to the general public, Central Energy Trust Wildbase Recovery Centre is located in the heart of Palmy’s Victoria Esplanade.

The centre is made up of specially designed recovery aviaries, a walkthrough aviary that houses tuatara and a variety of native birds, two breeding aviaries for the endangered whio (blue duck) and pāteke (brown teal), a treatment room for wildlife care, and the interactive Powerco Education Centre.

Just behind Central Energy Trust Wildbase Recovery Centre are our aviaries. take a stab at identifying the 55 birds varieties at the Esplanade’s aviary. See if you can spot some exotic species including zebra finches, peach-faced love birds, cockatiels, canaries, Indian rose-ringed parakeets and java finches. The endangered native blue ducks and brown teals also call the Esplanade home in a specially created natural habitat designed to help repopulate the species.

Across the road from Central Energy Trust Wildbase Recovery Centre is the parks duck pond, many of whom will come up close to say hello!

