

Our Story





The meaning of Te Pae

Te Pae Christchurch Convention Centre was gifted its name by Ngāi Tūāhuriri, who are tangata whenua (people of the land) for the area on which Te Pae Christchurch is located.

Meaning ‘gathering place’, Te Pae is based on a Māori word with several other definitions, including: the horizon, rest, orators’ bench, place of oratory, and place to greet people.



The name also draws inspiration from several phrases in te reo Māori:

Te Pae Maunga

Our mountain views – the source of our origin and central to our land and people, mountains are a key element of the southern landscape, just as Te Pae is a central point within our city.

Te Pae Whenua

The vast plains we inhabit – with our strong ties to mountains and the rivers and plains they create, it is only natural this influence can be found in the building’s design, where shapes and lines represent the contours of our Southern Alps and braided rivers of Canterbury.

Te Pae Tangata

A place to meet and converse – to talk, to be hosted, to share, entertain and to inform. For Christchurch, Te Pae is a gathering place.



Our home

Te Pae Christchurch sits at the heart of Ōtautahi Christchurch, in the centre of Te Waipounamu, the South Island of Aotearoa New Zealand. Our home has not only shaped who we are, but the way Te Pae Christchurch presents our region to the world.

Being located in the dynamic and energetic centre of our city is an important part of what makes Te Pae Christchurch connected to its community and environment. From Te Pae Christchurch, you can access the very best of our city's cultural, retail and entertainment precincts – with inner-city shops and restaurants, art galleries and museums all within walking distance.

You can also experience more of the city and region that has influenced our venue, by enjoying a broad array of natural attractions that are just minutes from the venue. Or travel just a short distance from the city to immerse yourself in the unique grandeur and stunning beauty of our environment – the rivers and coastlines, plains, forests and mountains that you see reflected in the design of Te Pae Christchurch.

Our place

Te Pae Christchurch sits on a site of great significance for tangata whenua (people of the land). For over a thousand years, local Māori lived, harvested and traded food here, gathering on the place where Te Pae Christchurch now stands, to share the bounty of the sea and the land.

Between 1000 and 1500 AD, the site of Te Pae Christchurch was the home of Puari, an early Waitaha pā (early South Island iwi/tribe settlement), and an important source of mahinga kai (natural resources). The Waitaha pā stretched along the banks of the Ōtākaro Avon River, close to Victoria Square.

Later, the area was the location of a market where Māori, particularly Ngāi Tūāhuriri from Kaiapoi, came to sell their produce on the banks of the Ōtākaro Avon River. The central city area of Ōtautahi Christchurch was also of great significance to local Māori as a traditional meeting place, and local iwi, Ngāi Tahu, made the region their home in the early 1700s.

For early European settlers, the area was also the commercial centre of the burgeoning settlement, with a market square that formed a vital hub for the newly-established city of Christchurch.





Our Story

Te Pae Christchurch was designed as one of the New Zealand Government's anchor projects for the rebuild of Christchurch. Conceived as a way to not only restore and reimagine the city, but to inject vibrant and dynamic life into its centre.

As well as a site of cultural and historic significance, which has acted as a meeting place since the region's earliest settlement, Te Pae Christchurch also represents a firm focus on the future. In keeping with the site's traditions, the city, the Canterbury region and the South Island engages with local people and visitors from around the country and across the world through knowledge-sharing, education, commerce and entertainment, in a truly 21st century environment.

An aerial photograph of a wide, braided river system flowing through a valley. The sun is low on the left, casting a golden glow and long shadows across the landscape. The river's multiple channels and sandbars create a complex, organic pattern. In the background, dark, rugged mountains rise against a hazy sky. The foreground shows the intricate details of the river's flow and the surrounding terrain.

Our design

To focus on the future, we must understand and respect the influences that shaped us.

The design of the Te Pae Christchurch Convention Centre draws on both our people and our place. The venue was designed in collaboration with the region's local iwi, Ngāi Tahu and hapū Ngāi Tūāhuriri. The natural beauty and unique culture of the Canterbury region are also reflected in the world-class design of the venue.



Understanding our cultural narrative

There are five important Māori kaupapa (principles) that underpin the cultural narrative behind Te Pae Christchurch – these are reflected in the design, spaces and artworks that are integrated into the centre:

Whakapapa

Identity and connection to place

Manaakitanga

Hospitality, respect and care for others

Mahinga Kai

The knowledge and values associated with customary food gathering places and practices

Mana Motuhake

Being able to act with independence and autonomy – being ourselves in our places

Ture Wairua

Being able to exercise spirituality and faith

Architecture



Bruno Mendes
Principal architect

Woods Bagot
Principal architecture firm

Warren and Mahoney
Local architecture firm





Exterior

Te Pae Christchurch is given its strong sense of place through the reflection of our region's mountains, rivers and lands in its design.

The distinctive, jagged outline of the Southern Alps is evident in the venue's angular skyline, while the exterior façade of Te Pae Christchurch features 43,000 herringbone tiles and flowing windows which are designed to evoke Canterbury's braided rivers.

Taken as a whole, the architectural narrative aligns with the Māori concept of ki uta ki tai (from the mountains to the sea) – the movement of water through the landscape and the numerous interactions it has on its journey.

The tiles were individually placed on 1605 panels and are comprised of five varied tones.



Interior

The interior of Te Pae Christchurch reflects the diverse culture, history and values of our city and our community.

As with the exterior of Te Pae Christchurch, the concept of flow is also a distinctive part of the building's interior. Large windows reflect the fluidity and curves of our braided rivers, while flowing interior spaces are linked with the curved gardens and pavings of its exterior.

Each room and area is designed to be both engaging and purposeful. From feature furnishings to the numerous artworks telling stories of Māori culture, every design element has been carefully considered for its contribution to the overall narrative.



Spaces

Te Pae Christchurch has been created to offer practical, engaging and beautiful spaces for visitors and locals alike, reflecting cultural tradition and evoking the rich and varied landscape of the Canterbury region.

Auditorium

The contours of the local landscape, including the Port Hills which dominate Christchurch's eastern skyline – characterised by their eroded appearance, have been applied to the exterior linings of the auditorium through the recessive or 'hollowed' timber cladding.

The meeting rooms on the auditorium side of the building continue this language into their interior with the striking, scalloped timber wall panelling. The soft, natural tones of the wood are also a reflection of manaakitanga – the warmth of the welcome given to every visitor.

The interior of the auditorium draws inspiration from Te Waihora (Lake Ellesmere). A fluid, back-lit blue ribbon wraps around the space, reflecting the vibrancy and life which exists within the undulating waterways and rivers. The design also connects the earth and sky, by folding up and across the ceiling of the auditorium.

To provide flexibility for staging events, the 1400-seat auditorium can be split into two acoustically separate spaces with dedicated audio and video capabilities, each accommodating 700 people.



Exhibition Hall

The strong vertical language of the forest can be seen in the exterior wall lining of the exhibition halls, clad with rounded vertical elements. This timber cladding also helps emphasise the height of the pre-function space and provides a warmth to the interior, contrasting with the tones of the exterior tiles.

The inside of the exhibition hall features striking, woven acoustic wall panelling on its upper walls. Not only does this material help provide great acoustics, but it also references the concept of traditional weaving techniques which were practiced by local Māori.

The exhibition hall also incorporates multiple, moveable walls to ensure maximum flexibility for a vast range of events and exhibitions.

Offering 2,800m² of flat floor space (expandable up to 3,300m²), the area can be divided into four separate halls to accommodate a wide array of events.



River Rooms

Named after two of Canterbury's iconic braided rivers – Rakaia and Waitaki – the Te Pae Christchurch River Rooms offer an immersive, banquet experience like no other.

The rooms' expansive windows and unique ceiling design provide a warm and open space with captivating views of the Ōtākaro Avon River. This ceiling was inspired by the undulating nature of the braided rivers and is a modern take on a traditional chandelier.



Pre-function spaces

The fluid façade of our pre-function spaces, which wrap around the two main internal areas of Te Pae Christchurch, reflect our connection with the rivers and the ocean – a rich source of food, travel and trade for the region. This theme is also echoed in the organic floor and ceiling patterning and the articulation of the interior spaces.

These fluid surface treatments, evident in the carpet and tile patterning of the pre-function spaces, help with natural orientation and movement through the various internal spaces, while referencing the braided rivers of our local landscape.





Other spaces



Foyers and reception

Te Pae Christchurch offers multiple spacious and impressive access points for all guests and delegates. With four distinct foyers – Exhibition, Dobson, Ground Floor and Level One – and a nine-metre marble reception desk, our entry spaces have been created to reinforce the importance we place on welcoming every guest.

Integrated seamlessly into the overall design, each foyer has a number of digital screens for wayfinding and welcome messaging. As a subtle but distinctive way-finding device, the ceiling features a reflective ribbon leading from the Ground Floor main entry to the Guest Services Desk, symbolising Canterbury's braided rivers.

Meeting rooms and organiser offices

Stylishly appointed and comfortable, with built-in audio-visual and some with views of nearby Victoria Park, our meeting rooms are ideal for small breakout events, stand-alone seminars, board meetings, functions or conferences.

Te Pae Christchurch has 1,600m² of meeting space across 14 individual rooms, located in three distinct clusters – Bealey, Conway and Dobson, named after local rivers which flow from the Southern Alps.

Our conveniently located organiser meeting offices, including a boardroom, parents' room and speaker preparation areas, cater for small teams of up to 12.



The art of Te Pae Christchurch

One of the most important ways we have chosen to not only tell our stories, but also contribute to the unique experience and cultural engagement of every visitor, is through the art that is interwoven within the design of the centre.

From sculptures and traditional designs, to furniture and digital displays, local and national artists have contributed to the artwork that you'll see around Te Pae Christchurch.



Hana

Te Pae Christchurch's signature art piece, Hana, by Ngāi Tahu artist Lonnie Hutchinson, features three koru-shaped, chandelier-like installations made up of 11,000 glass and acrylic beads. Each koru includes 109 individual strands, some up to four metres in length. Each strand is finished with an individual piece of ponamu.

The artwork was inspired by the Ngāi Tahu creation story and the concept of Ahikā or keeping the home fires burning. Hana, which means to illuminate or brighten, is designed to draw people into the Centre and make them feel welcome.

Te Ngutu: Te Aika (ceremonial entranceway)

Te Aika is the name of te ngutu, the entranceway that marks the spiritual boundary for visitors during formal cultural ceremonies.

Designed by two South Island artists, Rachael Rakena and Simon Kaan, Te Aika is a Ngāi Tahu version of te ahi kā, meaning ‘the home people – keep the home fires burning’.

Te ngutu expresses the mana (respect), whakapapa (genealogy), manaakitanga (hospitality) and ture wairua (spiritual mission) of Ngāi Tūāhuriri and Ngāi Tahu, as mana whenua (indigenous people of the area) exerting their authority and extending a welcome to manuhiri (visitors) to Te Pae Christchurch.

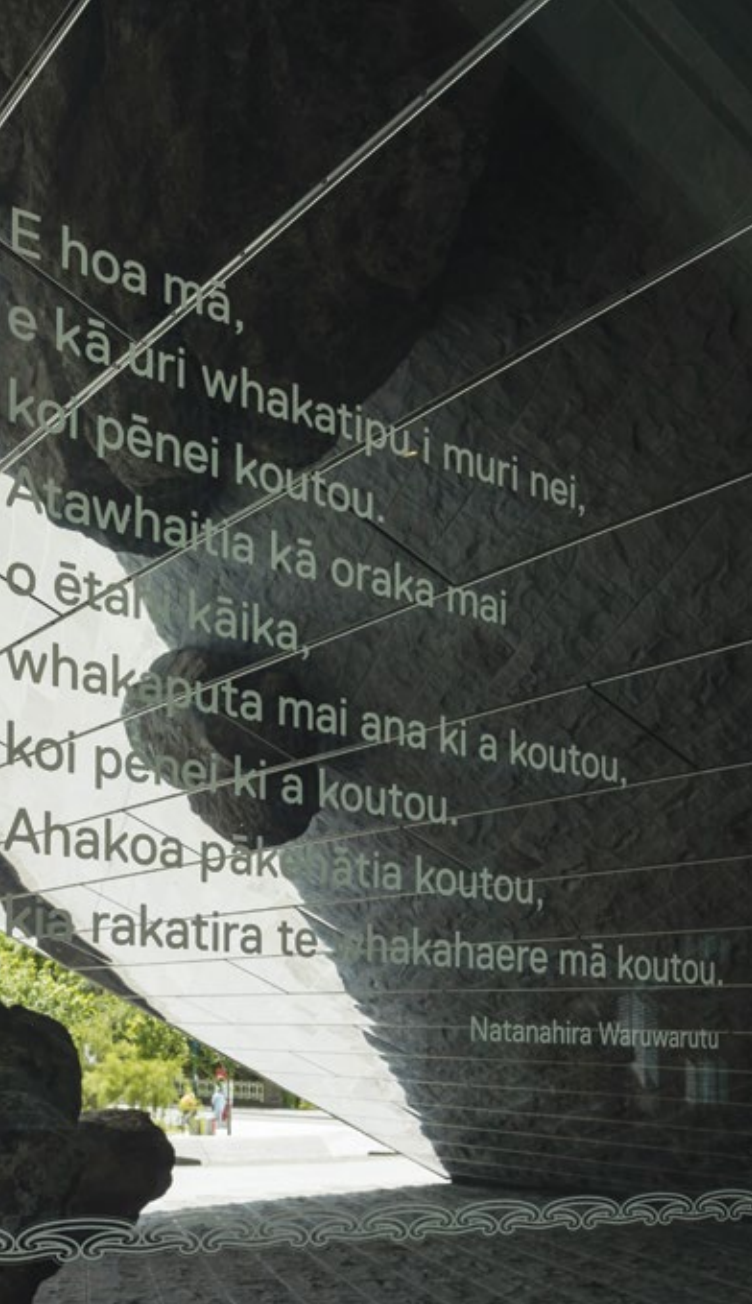
Te Aika reflects the distinctive maihi (diagonal bargeboards) commonly used on the ancestral houses of local hapū, Ngāi Tūāhuriri. The white exterior of the structure also resembles the kōtuku (the white heron), a bird of good omen whose shape also recalls the flight of visitors to gather at Te Pae Christchurch.

The white edges of the intertwining ribbons signify Te Ao Mārama (a Māori concept relating to wisdom and understanding, and the natural world of life and light), while the weaving pattern is a tribute to Ngāi Tūāhuriri wahine (women) and reflects a feather cloak, a symbol of welcome, warmth, mana (respect) and protection.



Kōwhaiwhai glass façade

The kowhaiwhai patterning of the glass façade celebrates Aoraki and his brothers, who formed the South Island’s highest peaks, when their waka capsized.



Pepeha

E hoa mā,
e kā uri whakatipu i muri nei,
kōi pēnei koutou.
Atawhaitia kā oraka mai
o ētahi kāika,
whakaputa mai ana ki a koutou,
kōi pēnei ki a koutou.
Ahakoa pākehātia koutou,
kia rakatira te whakahaere mā koutou.

The pepeha, or introduction, inscribed at the entrance to Te Pae Christchurch, was gifted by Ngāi Tahu.

Told by Kaiapoi elder, Natanahira Waruwarutu before his death in 1895, the pepeha is a message to his descendants that “the measure of ‘rangatira’ is their capacity to show kindness and charity to one another.”¹



Constellation walk

An arrangement of lights set into the paving – known as a ‘constellation walk’ – reflect the star cluster Matariki (also known as the Pleiades star cluster), on the Cathedral Square side of Te Pae Christchurch.

Matariki rises in mid-winter, and for Māori, it heralds the start of a new year, with a new national holiday established in New Zealand to mark the occasion. Matariki translates to the ‘eyes of God’.

¹T.M. Tau, ‘I Whanau au ki Kaiapoi: The Story of Natanahira Waruwarutu’, as recorded by Thomas Green, University of Otago Press (2011)

Ngā Whāriki Manaaki

Ngā Whāriki Manaaki is a series of 13 weaving patterns that feature within the Te Papa Ōtākaro Avon River precinct. In sequence, they reference the whakamanuhiri (welcome ceremony on a marae) process of welcome for all people visiting Christchurch.

Outside Te Pae Christchurch is Piripiri Takitahi – Togetherness. It represents the coming together of people to guide, teach and exchange threads of commonality through whakapapa (genealogy), establishing historical connections and clarifying the kaupapa (principle) of the day.



Kōwhaiwhai glazing pattern

Patterned paving outside the main entrance to Te Pae Christchurch reflects the strands of whakapapa and mahinga kai.

This collaboration between landscape designers and Ngāi Tahu artist Fayne Robinson includes a whāriki (mat of welcome) on either side of the main entrance that represents the six local papatipu rūnanga (hapū/sub-tribe that come together as an iwi/tribe), and etched kōwhaiwhai patterns in the paving stone.



Seating

Designed by David Trubridge, feature seating in the entrance hall and foyer is influenced by the mounds of tussock grass that exist in the wetlands around Ōtautahi Christchurch.

The wetlands were an important source of food and fibre for Māori. The wooden tops of the seats mirror the rich colours of the tussocks, while the incised surface patterns denote the grass stems.



Moment of movement

On the Colombo Street side of Te Pae Christchurch, Moment of Movement is a sculptural façade that transitions between the public space surrounding the building and the gathering spaces within.

The work was designed by New Zealand Korean multi-media artist, Seung Yul Oh, in association with John Troy O’Sullivan.

The artwork incorporates the soft structures of sound patterns and the rhythmic movement of light to reflect the transitory sensations that inform our sense of place.



Our Values

Te Pae Christchurch also expresses the importance we place on world class standards, seamless service, and a warm welcome for every guest of our venue.

These values are highlighted in every element of Te Pae Christchurch. From the scale of our monumental design, to the smallest detail of hygiene and safety, the care we take in hosting you reflects who we are as a team, and as a community.

Tūturu: Authentic
Maia: Courageous
Pākiki: Curious
Tūtika: Responsible
Mahi Tahi: Collaborative
Kiritaki: Customer-centric



Backed by
ASM Global

Te Pae Christchurch benefits from having an all-local team, backed by the global resources and talent of a world leader in venue management.

Te Pae Christchurch is proudly managed by ASM Global – a highly experienced venue management group with a long-standing track record of successfully operating and marketing convention and exhibition centres, theatres, arenas and sporting stadia across the world.

Built by Rau Paenga

Te Pae Christchurch Convention Centre is owned by Rau Paenga Limited (formerly Ōtākaro Limited) on behalf of the New Zealand Government.

Manaaki o Te Pae

New Zealanders place enormous value on our long tradition of being hosts and the warm welcome we call manaakitanga.

At Te Pae Christchurch, we want you to experience our special way of making people feel welcome. For us, planning an event at Te Pae Christchurch is about more than a visit – it is about designing a tailored experience.

We will go out of our way to ensure that you can enjoy a fully immersive encounter with our city and its people. And we want you to make the most of every moment of your trip, and leave having gained a new and rich experience not only in your field of expertise, but of our culture, heritage and environment.

Our food philosophy

How we nourish our guests is an expression of who we are, and the care we take in making them feel both at home and valued in our community.

To create a culinary experience that also draws on the traditions, culture and creativity of our region, Te Pae Christchurch takes its inspiration from the land and sea around us.

It's through the food we create for you, that we tell our story. Our food is sourced from some of the country's finest producers of high quality, fresh, natural produce, fine wines and unique and flavoursome beer. Talented local farmers, producers, growers and artisans are essential partners in our menu design, providing the fundamental ingredients for every meal we serve. Our menu allows everyone to taste the very best Canterbury and Aotearoa New Zealand has to offer.

Sitting at the heart of Canterbury, Aotearoa New Zealand's food bowl, Te Pae Christchurch is spoiled for choice when it comes to showcasing the rich and varied flavours of our country. We mix global expertise and world class standards with unique local experience to bring the very best in regional cuisine to your table. Our expert culinary team enjoys cooking with sustainable, fresh and locally-sourced foods, and has embraced the traditions and philosophy of Māori cuisine.



The food of our home

Known as the food bowl of New Zealand, Canterbury provides an extensive selection of food offerings for us to share. This allows us to source over 90% of the produce we use from within 60 kilometres of Te Pae Christchurch.

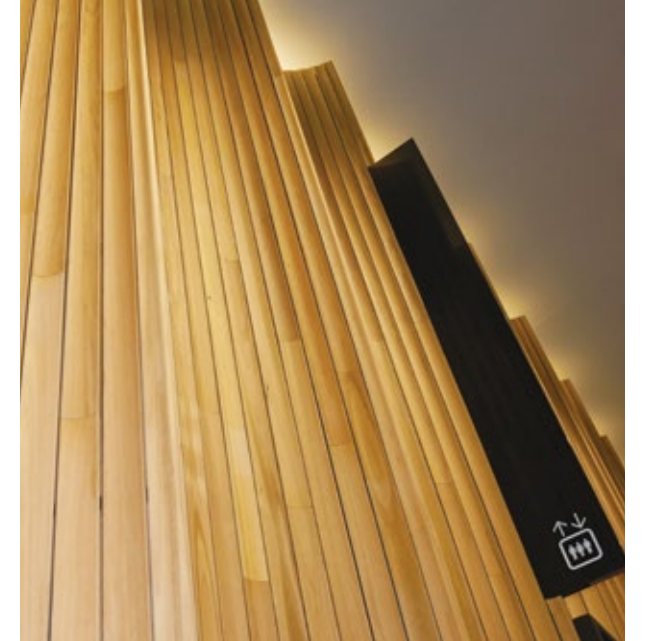


Technology

Seamlessly interwoven through the building, the latest technology is designed to help our guests connect, collaborate and share even more.

Te Pae Christchurch has been able to draw on leading edge solutions to create richer, more memorable experiences. A range of online options can be provided enabling conferences to connect with an audience regardless of their geographical location. From livestreaming to video conferencing, or webinars requiring live audience participation, our services seek to create a truly immersive event experience.

Provided in a safe and secure manner utilising the latest cyber security innovations, you can have confidence in online platform performance and the ability to ensure a visually rich interface that maximises audience participation.



Our focus on sustainability

In valuing and celebrating our land, sea and local environment, we also recognise the vital importance of protecting it.

Te Pae Christchurch's commitment to sustainability and sustainable operations goes beyond just measuring waste and offsetting carbon emissions. Our focus is on what we leave behind for future generations, and how we can instil the values that will ensure we are not only environmentally responsible but leading the way for years to come. We are also committed to bringing our clients and suppliers on that journey, by looking at ways to work with them to minimise the overall impact of the events we host.

Toitū enviromark programme



Te Pae Christchurch has achieved Toitū Enviromark gold certification. The Toitū Enviromark programme has been tailored for New Zealand businesses to establish and maintain an effective environmental management system.

Reaching gold certification means that Te Pae Christchurch has implemented controls for both regulatory obligations and significant opportunities to improve our performance. Our environmental impacts are measured so they can be properly managed on an ongoing basis.

Qualmark



Te Pae Christchurch also holds a Gold Sustainable Tourism Business Award from Qualmark.

Qualmark recognises businesses that are delivering a holistically sustainable experience, and is judged on sector specific criteria across four areas – economic, environment and culture, social/people and health and safety. Gold is the highest of three levels, recognising the best sustainable tourism businesses in New Zealand – those involved in leading the way in making the New Zealand tourism industry a world class sustainable destination.

Toitū Brighter Future Award

Te Pae Christchurch was awarded top honours for Exceptional Achievement in Environmental Management at the Toitū Brighter Future Awards 2022.

The Toitū Brighter Future Awards acknowledge Toitū-certified businesses that are leading the way in environmental sustainability. The awards are based on demonstrated impact, and winners must provide scientific proof that they are making a positive difference to the world around them.

Toitū net carbonzero

Te Pae Christchurch has committed to becoming a net carbonzero organisation, reducing or offsetting emissions to reach net zero by the end of the 2024 financial year, under an agreement with Toitū Envirocare.

Toitū's carbon programmes, which are certified under the ISO 14064 standard (organisation) and ISO 14067 standard (product) by the JAS-ANZ (Joint Accreditation System for Australia and New Zealand), are internationally recognised, with a rigorous, science-based approach.

Here's a snapshot of how Te Pae Christchurch is approaching sustainable operations:

Reduce

Food miles

We source at least 85% of our food and beverage needs from within Canterbury. The remainder of our produce is sourced from the wider South Island in the first instance.

Carbon reduction

We have committed to reaching net carbonzero. Our business vehicles are electric, including the forklifts, lifters, booms and ride-on cleaning equipment; and we have dedicated staff bicycle storage facilities to encourage green transport. Whatever we cannot reduce, we will look to offset.

Energy

100% of the energy used in Te Pae Christchurch is from renewable sources. We operate software that allows us to monitor and analyse our energy outputs.

Reuse

Circular economy

All food waste is processed in our onsite GAIA dehydrator. The system coverts food waste into a nutrient-rich "soil food", which is donated to the Canterbury Community Garden Association to share amongst their network of gardens.

Nothing goes to waste

Food from events that's suitable to be donated is passed to Foodbank Canterbury to distribute to their patrons as appropriate.

eWater

We've installed a specialised system in our kitchens, which produces a chemical reaction that turns water and salt into a sanitiser and cleaner. It kills bacteria and microbial elements more effectively than bleach – this system will reduce our chemical use significantly.

Recycle

Packaging

Our packaging is compostable, and we are working towards being a 100% plastic free venue.

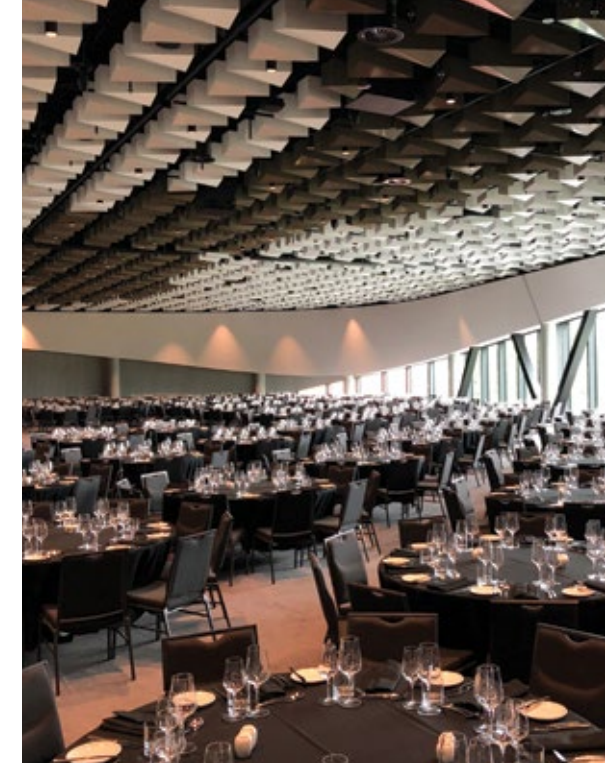
Te Pae Christchurch: a sustainable venue

It was important to us that when designing Te Pae Christchurch, it was developed as a sustainable venue. Incorporated into Te Pae Christchurch are a range of the latest waste management systems, automatic controls to conserve energy across the building, and a one-stop-shop for specialised venue management.



Our building credentials:

- Te Pae Christchurch is designed to a NZBC Green Star 5-star rating
- The venue includes a highly intelligent and configurable building management system. This system learns the building's capabilities and will automatically adjust heat up/cool down in relation to outside conditions and building performance
- Our IBAMS system allows all specialised building services metering/controls/alarms to be captured in one platform, ensuring all critical elements get full attention. This will interface to our security, AV, vertical transport, and event management systems
- Te Pae Christchurch has automatic lighting controls that complement natural light levels through the day as required, and extensive window glazing that ensures natural light is in all of our pre-function areas
- Navigator software is present for extensive energy analysis
- And we have systems to ensure all waste and recycling streams are weighed and tracked.



Our operational standards

We're always aiming to be the best venue possible for you, our guests.

We are currently working towards international accreditation – ISO9001 and ISO22000 – in business management systems and food safety systems to fulfil our goal to be a truly international convention centre. This will ensure we meet our high expectations at every stage.



ASM Global VenueShield: hygiene protocols

As an ASM Global facility, Te Pae Christchurch has adopted ASM Global VenueShield – a comprehensive and industry-leading hygiene and sanitisation programme.

ASM Global VenueShield aims to provide the highest levels of safety, security and consumer confidence, and align with advice and protocols from local government officials and healthcare experts. Here's what we are focusing on through ASM Global VenueShield's guidance, to ensure your utmost safety at Te Pae Christchurch:

- Workforce safety
- Public awareness
- Customer journey
- Food and beverage safety
- Environmental hygiene
- Technology and equipment.





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tepae.co.nz

A Rau Paenga venue, proudly managed by ASM Global