

# New Zealand National Day Special

## Discover history and culture in the national capital

Every year on Feb. 6, New Zealand celebrates Waitangi Day. A commemoration of the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840, the document is of central importance to the nation and its mythos.

Currently housed at the National Library of New Zealand in Wellington, the document comprises nine sheets which have survived the years and several rounds of restoration work. Permanently exhibited alongside New Zealand's 1835 declaration of independence and 1893 Women's Suffrage Petition as part of the He Tohu exhibit, all three iconic documents can be visited free of charge at the library. On Waitangi Day, the National Library holds special events to commemorate the occasion and inform visitors about the history of the treaty.

The nation's capital is also home to many other important buildings and monuments. The Old Government Buildings served as the home for various government departments from 1876. By 1990, the building was vacant as the departments had gradually outgrown the space and relocated. Built on reclaimed land along Lambton Quay and constructed entirely

from wood (making it one of the world's largest all-wood buildings, alongside Nara's Todaiji Temple), the structure has been expanded and restored several times, most recently in 1994. The latest project restored the 1907 appearance of the building, parts of which are open to the public.

The building's wooden structure caused concerns about fire from the outset, so a smoking ban was in place from the time of its opening — making it the first building in the world to have a smoke-free policy. The flexible wooden building has also proved to be earthquake resistant, surviving seismic events that may well have damaged or flattened stone and concrete structures.

Pukeahu National War Memorial Park lies a short walk from the city center, built around the National War Memorial and Carillon Tower. Expanded into a park in 2015, the flowers and trees represent New Zealand's military history. Rengarenga lilies symbolize peace, red flowers on pohutukawa trees represent the blood of Tawhaki (a Maori spirit ancestor who guides the way to heaven), olive trees are for universal peace and friendship and rosemary bushes

are for remembrance. Other features in the park include gifted memorials from Australia, Turkey, the U.K., France, the U.S., Belgium, Germany and the Pacific Islands.

The Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa is the largest museum in the country, with a collection of over 800,000 artworks, artifacts and specimens. Its exhibitions showcase not only the history of New Zealand, but also its native flora and fauna.

Bush City is a living outdoor exhibition at Te Papa that includes an onsite bushwalk. For another exhibition, "Gallipoli: The Scale of Our War," the museum collaborated with Weta Workshop to bring to life the experiences of New Zealand's soldiers during World War I. The dedicated gallery space, Toi Art, spans almost 4,000 square meters and aims to showcase artworks with the intention of removing the barriers between the works and viewers.

*This content references excerpts from the official New Zealand government tourism and heritage websites. For more information, visit <https://www.newzealand.com/int> and <https://www.visitheritage.co.nz>.*



Far left: Some areas of the Old Government Buildings in Wellington are open to the public. Left: The National War Memorial honors those who have served in overseas wars. GETTY IMAGES


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