

# Te Motu-o-Poutoa

Anzac Park, Cliff Road, Palmerston North

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NZHPT Registration Number:	9562
NZHPT Registration Type:	Wāhi Tapu
NZHPT Registration Date:	22/06/11
City/District Council:	Palmerston North City Council
District Plan Status:	Listed in District Plan Schedule of Objects and Sites of Cultural Heritage Value to Tangata Whenua.



## Brief History

Te Motu o Poutoa is located on an elevated bank above the Manawatū River and is accessed on the east side of the Fitzherbert Bridge from Cliff Road. A prominent lookout, it provides extensive views over the city and the Manawatū Plains and looks north to Mount Ruapehu and east to the Ruahine Ranges. The site, also known as Anzac Park, consists of a grassed area and a car park and includes an area of native bush and a plantation of pine trees. The NZHPT registration includes the observatory building.

Te Motu o Poutoa is an integral part of Rangitāne history and is one of their most significant historical, cultural and spiritual sites. The name may be translated as ‘the grove of Poutoa’ being named after a prominent Rangitāne ancestor, Poutoa. Through his mother Uaroi he was descended from Rangitāne, the grandson of Whātonga who was one of the principal chiefs of the Kurahaupō waka. Through his father Ruatāmore, Poutoa was descended from Tara. The descendants of Rangitāne migrated south from the Mahia Peninsula to settle much of the lower North Island and the top of the South Island. The Paewai, Te Awe Awe, Durie and Te Rangiotū families of Palmerston North trace their descent from Poutoa.

Poutoa established his pā c400-500 years ago. It became one of the earliest and most longstanding fortified pā in the area. It was also a place of residence. The pā was strategically placed with views over the river, the main route north and south, and protected the cultivations across the river. It also provided access to food and resources from the surrounding bush, waterways and wetlands. Ngāti Apa, who also trace their descent from the Kurahaupō waka, occupied land to the north of Rangitāne along the banks of the Rangitīkei River and many battles were fought between the two iwi. During the 1820s Ngāti Apa attacked and destroyed Te Motu o Poutoa. Many Rangitāne warriors were killed and the site has further significance as the resting place of those ancestors who are buried there. At one time a number of finely carved tōtara posts marked the burial place but they were later removed to Puketōtara pā at Rangiotū to avoid theft by curio hunters. Rangitāne tradition records the presence of an urupā on the flat land between Cliff Road and the riverbank. Bones were taken to Rangiotū and reburied in the 1880s. In 1962-63 the carpark of Anzac Park was lowered and the fill was used in the reconstruction of Summerhill Drive. This would have removed archaeological remains from that area. There is slight evidence of terracing in the bush and pine plantation areas. The Palmerston North City Council has prepared an Archaeological Protocol for the site to cover any future restructuring activities.

The site of Te Motu o Poutoa was sold to the Crown in 1864 as part of the sale of the Ahuaturanga (Te Ahu a Tūranga) block. It became part of the farm of J O Batchelar who sold it to the Fitzherbert Road Board (later the Kairanga County Council) which began the construction of Cliff Road. During World War I the Council transferred the land to the Manawatū Patriotic Society for fund-raising purposes, who in 1916 sold it to the Palmerston North Borough Council to be used as a park and gardens. The area was given the name Anzac Park to commemorate soldiers from the local area who died in World War I.

Currently Programme 560 of the PNCC Long Term Plan 2013-22 provides capital funding to create a Reserve Management Plan for the park and also implement works arising out of a Development Plan to showcase the extensive history of the site.

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*Principal Sources:*

Tipene, Anthony, NZHTP, *Registration Report: Te Motu o Pouto*. Register No. 9562. 2/6/11

*Cliff Road – Anzac Park Lookout Site*. PNCC Town Clerk's Department 1954-1986. Ian Matheson Archives  
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Nuwynne Te Aweawemohi, PNCC, personal communication.

Manu Kawana, Te Manawa Museum, Palmerston North, personal communication.

Matthew MacKay, PNCC, personal communication.