

IN PROGRESS

TE PAPA: TAIAO | NATURE

Visual communication style guide for external suppliers

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Introduction to the guide

Te Papa is redeveloping all its core, long-term exhibitions for the first time in 20 years.

This guide applies to the new TAI AO | NATURE zone. It contains advice and examples to help external suppliers create illustrations, animations, and graphics in a way that supports visual consistency across all content. Te Papa's Design Team has developed the samples and will oversee and approve all graphical elements.

- This is a guide, not a prescriptive rule book, and it will continue to develop over time.
- Think 'in character' rather than 'on model', and please feel free to propose variations. We welcome your creative ideas!

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Design process

As suppliers, you'll be co-creating content with us, following an iterative, audience-centred design process. At a practical level, this means you'll:

- develop working drawings and/or designs as an initial response to the brief, seeking guidance from us as needed
- validate those drawings and/or designs via user testing to ensure that they meet the specified visitor goals
- present them to key Te Papa staff members
- take in feedback and repeat above steps as necessary.

The work can then be approved.

Structure of the TAIAO | NATURE zone

The visual language of the TAIAO | NATURE zone will ultimately comprise coherent and sometimes repeated images, symbols, and characters – to be developed in collaboration with you. As a starting point, you can be guided by the following zone structure.

1. ZONE LEVEL

The overall TAIAO | NATURE zone is associated with particular big ideas (section 4), target audiences (section 5), and 2D design principles (section 6).

2. EXHIBITION LEVEL

There are three exhibitions within the zone, which communicate specific key ideas and are informed by distinct genres and/or tones (section 8).

3. COMPONENT LEVEL

Particular components within exhibitions target particular audiences, and have specific visitor goals: think, feel, do, and do next (see the relevant RFP).

Big ideas

1. **TAONGA | UNIQUENESS** – Aotearoa New Zealand’s natural environment is a taonga: unique, diverse, and central to our culture and well-being.
2. **TOKOTOKO RANGI | THREAT** – Our environment faces serious threats – and, through natural hazards, poses threats to us. (Some threats are hard to see at first, but there’s more than meets the eye.)
3. **KAITIAKITANGA | ACTION** – Our future depends on the action we all take now to protect the environment.

UNDERLYING IDEAS

1. **WHANAUNGATANGA | CONNECTION** – All things are connected. Humans are part of the natural world and are obliged to look after it, as in the tuakana/teina concept of young caring for old.
2. **MAURI | ABUNDANCE** – Mauri is the life force of the natural world that promotes abundance and helps us thrive. We must work to sustain it.
3. **TE KAWA | INNOVATION** – New Zealanders are generating innovative solutions to environmental problems, drawing on science and mātauranga.
4. **AO TŪROA | WORLD OF DISCOVERY** – Mātauranga and science are all around us, not just in classrooms or laboratories.

Target audiences

Te Papa thinks about its audiences in terms of their psychographic characteristics (their motivations and values in relation to cultural experiences) as well as their demographic characteristics (their age, cultural background, gender, and so on). We use MHM's 'culture segments' – personas developed specifically for the arts and cultural sector and used by museums internationally.

The TAI AO | NATURE zone targets the following audiences. Specific components often have a more specific audience, as identified in the RFPs.

DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS

1. Families with children (cross-generational audience)
2. Young Māori
3. Educators and learners

PSYCHOGRAPHIC GROUPS (CULTURE SEGMENTS)

1. Expression (creative communicators) – seek fun, social, hands-on, immersive experiences
2. Stimulation (experience seekers) – seek cutting-edge, fun, social, challenging/risky experiences
3. Affirmation (quality timers) – seek fun self-development and learning ('edutainment')

Playful components aimed at younger visitors are likely to require a different approach from those aimed at older, more science-literate users – but overall, we're aiming for a cross-generational audience seeking immersive, social, fun, hands-on experiences.

Design principles

Various design principles apply to the TAIAO | NATURE zone.

1. **CHARACTER:** Bring wildlife ‘to life’ and convey a sense of character.
2. **IMMERSION:** Create an immersive world that transports visitors out of their ordinary lives, and encourages social interaction.
3. **ORIENTATION:** Offer a clear information hierarchy (key ideas should be highlighted), a close connection between objects/images and text, and clear wayfinding (physical and digital).
4. **MĀTAURANGA:** Be informed by Māori concepts, motifs, and materials (section 7). All content is bilingual.
5. **ACCESSIBILITY:** For each element’s design, consider the target audience and how they’ll behave in the space. Ensure access for people with disabilities – eg, via legible text and subtitles. (Also see section 11: Digital standards.)
6. **UPDATEABILITY:** Where relevant, allow for quick, cost-effective updates and rapid responses.
7. **SUSTAINABILITY:** Live the sustainability message. Select materials and printing methods that model recycling, offer alternatives to PVC, plastics, and other petrochemical-based products, and generally minimise impact on the environment.

Mātauranga Māori

Science and mātauranga – a Māori system for understanding and living in the natural world – sit side by side in the TAI AO | NATURE zone. Many exhibition components represent significant Māori taonga (objects), people, places, and ideas, as identified in the RFP documents.

MĀUI: A GUIDING CHARACTER

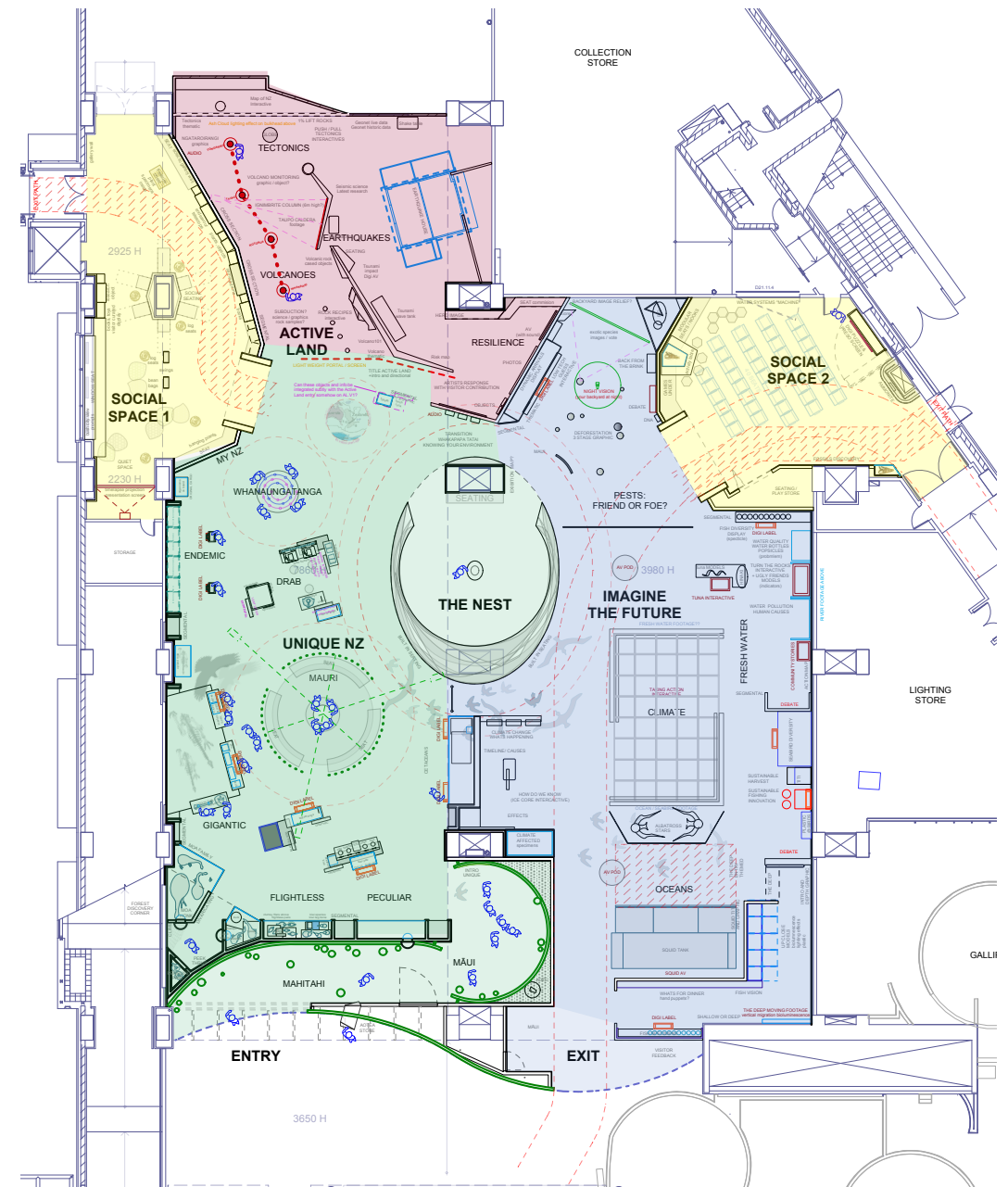
The Māori cultural hero Māui is a guiding figure throughout. This charismatic, cheeky, provocative character allows us to explore many facets of our interaction with the environment, from exploration (Māui the inquirer) to exploitation (Māui the trickster) to problem-solving (Māui the innovator). The shadow-play-inspired encounter with Māui at the entry point informs the design style elsewhere, as well as the tone for high-level text.

MĀTAURANGA ADVICE

Brad Haami is Te Papa's key advisor for mātauranga-based content. Brad will consult with whānau, iwi, and Te Papa experts as necessary.

Exhibitions: Genres and tones

TAIAO | NATURE is made up of three exhibitions, each informed by different genres and/or tones, which in turn influence their visual style.



Exhibitions: Genres and tones

1: UNIQUE NZ

Overall tone: Abundant, celebratory/fun, exploratory, organic

ENTRY – IN MĀUI’S FOOTSTEPS:

Arrive in pre-human Aotearoa New Zealand – a pristine wilderness teeming with life. Meet Māui, your guide.

Genre: Mystery

Tone: Intriguing, exciting, enticing

PRIMARY SPACE DIFFERENT DOWN UNDER:

Discover NZ’s weird and wonderful wildlife, learn why it’s unique, and share your connections with the natural world.

Genre: Comedy

Tone: Quirky, playful

THE NEST:

Be immersed in the beauty of our native birds – then uncover which are extinct or on the brink. Turning point at the heart of the zone – a shift from uniqueness to threat and action

Tone: Wonder, beauty > sadness, surprise, reflection

Exhibitions: Genres and tones

2: ACTIVE LAND

Feel the power of the forces that have created New Zealand's dramatic landscape, and face the challenge of living in these shaky islands.

Genre: Action, drama

Tone: Powerful, dynamic, hot

An exception is the quake response area: Reflective, respectful, 'calm after the storm'

Note that Active Land diverges from the main visitor journey. It's less focused on taonga or kaitiakitanga, more on the underlying forces and how they affect us. It's the 'behind the scenes' or 'underground' story.

Exhibitions: Genres and tones

3: IMAGINE THE FUTURE

Overall tone: Man-made/industrial verging on futuristic (eg, grids, plastic, metal), yet still tenaciously alive (eg, sense of translucency, water, air)

PESTS – FRIEND OR FOE? Discover the pests ravaging our birds, and share solutions.

Genre: Detective, scene of the crime

Tone: Domestic, familiar, yet also surprising/disturbing

FRESH WATER? Meet the endangered tuna (longfin eel) and face the challenge of cleaning up our waterways.

Genre: Advertising (playing on 100% pure NZ)

Tone: Glossy, alluring – but are things what they seem?

OCEANS – DEEP, DARK, IN DANGER: Meet our most bizarre and abundant sea creatures, and explore the threats they face.

Genre: Adventure (deep); comedy (fishing/birds)

Tone: Mysterious, thrilling (deep); light-hearted with darker undertones (fishing/birds)

CLIMATE CONVERTER: Get active together to create a positive, carbon-zero future.

Genre: Sci fi

Tone: Positive, energetic, futuristic

Exhibitions: Genres and tones

SOCIAL SPACES

The TAI AO | NATURE zone includes two social spaces – relaxing areas with comfortable furniture where visitors can rest, socialise, recharge phones, settle children, and enjoy occasional pop-up public programmes.

SOCIAL SPACE 1 (TREEHOUSE) – Looks out over Bush City

Target audience: Millennials and adults without families

Tone: Eclectic, restful, homely/comfy, conversational

SOCIAL SPACE 2 (CONNECTION POINT, with systems focus) – Looks out over iwi planting

Target audience: Families and education/public programme groups (they can move furniture)

Tone: Fun, flexible, playful

Digital standards

For digital components in the exhibition, the following standards and documents apply.

ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS

Te Papa and its suppliers must conform at AA level to the WCAG 2.0 Web Content Accessibility Guidelines, and the same principles apply to exhibition-based digital experiences. WebAim is a helpful tool to check visual contrast for text on screen.

CONSISTENCY

Te Papa's Digital Language System (<https://te-papa.github.io/>) allows us to maintain a consistent user experience across our digital content, inside and outside the museum. It sets principles and patterns for all digital experiences, and will continue to evolve as we further develop digital products.

APPENDIX: 2D DESIGN SAMPLES

The exhibition's three main exhibitions – Unique NZ, Active Land, and Imagine the Future – each have a distinct colour palette and contain unique graphic elements, but are integrated through a consistent visual approach. This appendix provides examples of treatment.

- A. Typeface
- B. Graphic hierarchy
- C. Image treatment

A. Typeface

National 2 Thin
Wildlife Refuge

National 2 Extralight
Rerewhakaaitu

National 2 Light
Society Range

National 2 Regular
War Memorial

National 2 Medium
Quackenbush

National 2 Bold
Tauotikirangi

National 2 Extrabold

The exhibition typeface is Klim Type Foundry's National 2.

klim.co.nz/retail-fonts/national-2

Please refer to Te Papa for guidance on purchasing and licensing of this font. Separate licences exist for print and web.

Text hierarchy

The text hierarchy is currently in development. It will be flexible to cover the many different graphic treatments in the exhibition. There will be a clear hierarchy of text sizes to establish different types of messages and their relative importance.

Sub-headings will be set in National 2 Light

Body text will generally be set in National 2 Medium.

Ready to go!

Kiwi's all set for life on
the forest floor.

B. Graphic hierarchy

Entry

Exhibition entry facade: abstract mountain forms, refer to Maui's first arrival at Mahitahi/Bruce Bay.



Big ideas

The big ideas are signalled by large bilingual titles, easily read by visitors from afar as they journey through the space.



Key messages

Key messages in the next layer of the information hierarchy are located close to relevant objects and images, embedded into the 3D displays rather than distanced from them (as they often are on label rails).

For mass object displays, more detailed content is conveyed through digital labels.



Bilingual text

Exhibition text is fully bilingual, consistent with Te Papa's goal of supporting Māori language learning/revival. Te reo Māori and English have equal status visually, but are differentiated by colour and typographic style.

Na, kua rite!
Kua tino tau te noho koropuku mai a Kiwi.

Ready to go!
Kiwi's all set for life on the forest floor.

He huruhuru ōna
Feathers like fur

He ngutu rawe
Clever beak

He waewae pakari
Strong legs

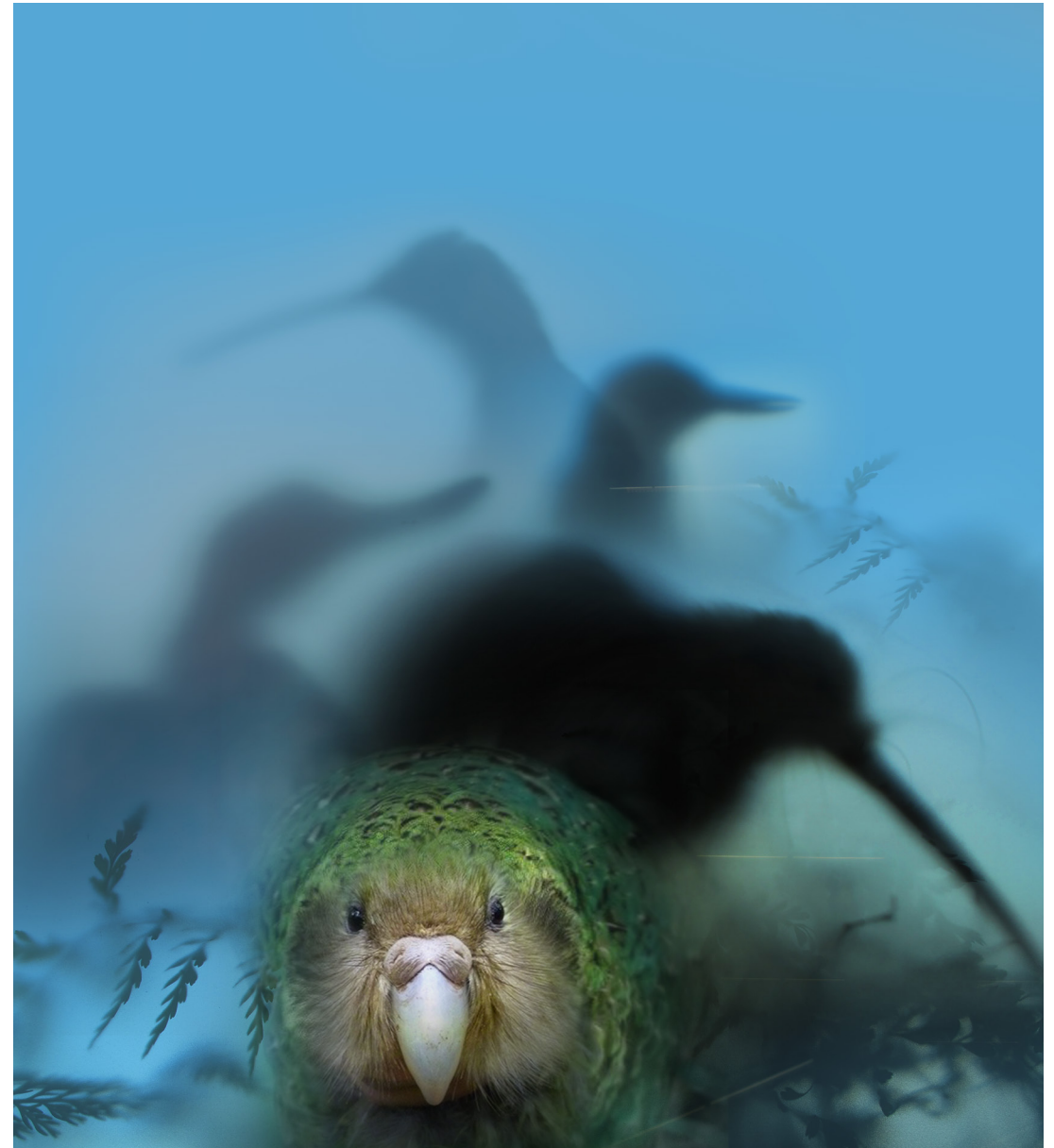
C. Image treatment

Bold images from nature bring the exhibition's heroes to life and help visitors connect with them.

Spotlights and shadows

Informed by the treatment of Māui (a guiding character introduced on entry), the exhibition's heroes are spotlighted to bring them into focus.

Silhouettes and translucency create drama and support immersion, but with a playful rather than eerie touch.



Examples of image treatment

