

Welcome to Matamata

From a roadside prefab to the Hobbit home on the corner — the story of Matamata's information office

Stung by criticism a Public Relations Committee was formed in 1955 as a subcommittee of the Chamber of Commerce owing to the “constructive criticism by it's members of the lack of effort in 1954 by business firms to attract both business and visitors to Matamata over the Christmas Season.”

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A permanent organising secretary, **Mr A. D. Turner**, was appointed almost immediately. Its first undertaking was the **Christmas Festival**, held over three weeks at the end of that year. By May 1956 the Committee had grown into the **Association**. A permanent office followed, erected in Hetana Street close to the railway station by 1961.



In 1982 the modest roadside office was still the public face of the town



July 1988

A new i-SITE was built and opened, giving Matamata a striking new civic landmark. A small crowd gathered on opening day to see the town's new information centre for themselves.



The Hobbiton Effect

After the worldwide success of *The Lord of the Rings* and the opening of Hobbiton nearby, the building was converted to the hobbit-inspired facade seen today, and enlarged to welcome the visitors who now find their way to Matamata.