

# Venue and Location

The 11<sup>th</sup> International Symposium of Grass Microbial Endophytes (ISGME2025) will be held at the University of Waikato, in the city of Kirikiriroa Hamilton in Aotearoa New Zealand.

**The University of Waikato (Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato)** <https://www.waikato.ac.nz/about/>

The main campus of the University is in southern Kirikiriroa Hamilton. First established in 1964, the University is spread over 64 hectares with open space landscaping centred around three lakes. The campus has extensive native plantings, and boasts spacious sporting and recreational areas. The University is warm and welcoming, with a diverse range of affordable food outlets (cafés, restaurants and convenience stores).

The newly constructed University centre, **The Pā**, will be the central point for the plenary papers of the combined sessions with the NZ Grassland Association Conference. From there, the adjoining S-block will host more specialised science sessions.



*The Pā, The University of Waikato (Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato)*

<https://www.waikato.ac.nz/about/the-pa/>

A key highlight of the NZ Grassland Association Conference are two half day field trips, which are part of the overall registration package. On one of these half days, ISGME delegates will have the option of an *Epichloë* endophyte-focussed field trip.

## Kirikiriroa Hamilton

Hamilton, also known in Māori as Kirikiriroa, is a vibrant city situated in the heart of the Waikato region of northern New Zealand. The [city](#) is renowned for the scenic Waikato River and its captivating [Hamilton Gardens](#) (18 enclosed themed gardens), which delegates will visit one evening as part of the

Symposium. There are a range of activities, shops, cafes and restaurants to visit, in this multicultural city.

You can get around Hamilton by [bus](#), taxi or ride share.



*Waikato River flowing through the heart of Hamilton*

<https://www.waikatonz.com/walking-and-hiking-trails/hamilton-city-river-walks/>

## **Waikato**

The region is most famous for its dairy production, while the surrounding hill country supports sheep and beef cattle farming. The favourable soils and mild climate of the region also leans itself to horticultural production including berries, vineyards and locally grown tea at [Zealong](#) just north of the city.

For those who want to experience the great outdoors, visit New Zealand's largest pest-proof sanctuary at [Sanctuary Mountain Maungatautari](#), where native bush and wildlife thrive in a protected environment. Other great [walking tracks](#) lead you through some of the stunning landscapes of this region.

And for those looking for some fun then within 50 km of Hamilton, at Matamata there is the [Hobbiton Movie Set](#) which is a significant location used for The Lord of the Rings film trilogy.



*A kākā in mid-flight at Sanctuary Mountain Maungatautari*

<https://www.waikatonz.com/walking-and-hiking-trails/sanctuary-mountain-maungatautari/>

Just a short 40-minute drive away, you can catch some waves at the iconic black sand beaches to the west of Hamilton at [Raglan](#) and [Kawhia](#), perfect for surfing enthusiasts and those seeking a leisurely stroll along the shore. Along the way, call in to the [Bridal Veil Falls](#), which showcases the natural beauty of the area.

For the adventurous at heart, just an hour away lies the [Waitomo Caves](#), where you can marvel at sparkling glowworms and try blackwater rafting.

For those who are fans of *The Lord of the Rings* movie series, just a 45-minute drive from Hamilton, you'll find the enchanting [Hobbiton](#), an iconic filming location for this series. Explore the wonderful movie set and immerse yourself in the magic of *Middle-Earth*.

### **Surrounding regions**

If you're looking for a multi-day adventure, head to the bush clad [Coromandel Peninsula](#) (just over 2 hours away). Enjoy the [Rapaura Water Gardens](#) and wonderful beaches at Whangamata and the famous [Hot Water Beach](#) - don't forget to visit during low tide for the best experience!

Another must-see destination is [Rotorua](#) (1.5 hours' drive), renowned for its rich Māori culture, [geothermal wonders](#) and a raft of other activities. Indulge in world-class spa treatments, relax by the [crystal-clear lakes](#) and wander through 'The Redwoods' of Whakarewarewa Forest and enjoy a magical [tree top walk](#) and its world-renown 150 km of master crafted [mountain bike trails](#). For a unique perspective, take a night-time ride on the [Skyline](#) Gondola to enjoy a meal and the panoramic views from the Stratosfare Restaurant and/or zoom down the Luge. To get a greater understanding of our farming systems, visit the [Agrodome](#) for an informative and entertaining experience.



*Wai-o-tapu Thermal Wonderland <https://www.waiotapu.co.nz/>*

Further south is Lake [Taupō](#) and the central volcanic plateau, 2.5 hours' drive from Kirikiriroa Hamilton along State Highway 1. This region is famous for its trout fishing, stunning scenery, adventure activities, and the impressive Huka Falls on the Waikato River. It is also a gateway to one of the country's best [National Parks](#).

#### **Getting to Kirikiriroa Hamilton**

Most international visitors enter Aotearoa New Zealand through our largest city, [Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland](#). It celebrates a diversity of cultures, and is surrounded by regional parks, beaches and multiple harbours earning its name *City of Sails*.

Kirikiriroa Hamilton is about 1.5 to 2 hours' drive south of Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland. Travel options include bus, train, shuttle or rental car.

#### **Aotearoa New Zealand**

This will be the third time Aotearoa New Zealand has hosted this international symposium. We invite you to make the most of your time here, to experience our culture, scenery, unique fauna and flora, and an amazing diversity of activities, in the southern Pacific.



For more information visit [Tourism New Zealand](#), the official tourism website for Aotearoa New Zealand.

For getting to Aotearoa New Zealand see <https://www.newzealand.com/nz/getting-here/>.