

Our home turf



1960

Waikato v Canterbury

Credit: Photo credit: Mana Archive/Waikato Times

The stadium is known for having one of the best turf playing surfaces in the sporting world – it's part of the venue's strong reputation.

But producing world-class turf is not as simple as throwing on some grass seed, watering and adding fertiliser: turf management is a specialist skill – combining art and science – and the pitch needs constant care and attention. After all grass is a living thing! The turf needs food, water and air to flourish for players and performers.

The pitch is made up of three levels of material: gravel as a base layer, a sub-surface of turf-specific washed sand, and then the grass itself. The FMG Stadium Waikato turf is what is known as a hybrid system, comprising rye grass and artificial fibres which provide the advantage of underfoot stability for players.

A small team of staff maintain the pitch year-round, factoring seasonal weather and a busy event schedule into their work. In summer irrigation is essential – an automatic pop-up sprinkler system is just below the surface – while in winter drainage is key to ensure the players or performers can be at their best for the fans. Forty-two sprinklers allow for scheduled night-time watering, while 1700 metres of hidden drainage system means winter sports can still be played in wet conditions.

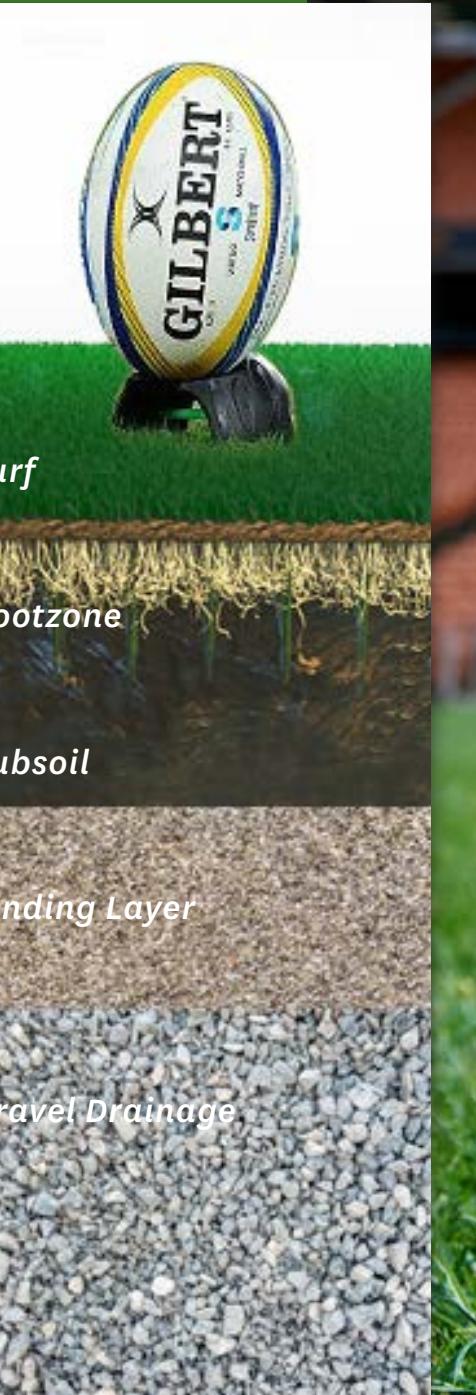
In the week leading up to a big game, the turf will be mown daily to a specific length. Line marking and the painting of sponsors' logos happens one or two days before a match – tasks often repeated, even on game day, to ensure the surface looks its best.

The turf team sees their work as art, with the playing field as the canvas. Our turf is seen by audiences around the world and our team are always striving for perfect presentation.

Below the surface...

In 2019 a \$1.3 million project saw state-of-the-art Desso Hybrid Turf installed at FMG Stadium Waikato. This system includes high performance artificial fibres that deliver a reinforced natural grass playing surface – ensuring stability to a predominantly sand-based structure and providing an anchor around which grass roots can entwine. A Desso Hybrid Turf is proven to last for up to 15 years or more.

LOOK HOW FAR TURF TECHNOLOGY HAS COME! WOULD YOU RATHER PLAY ON THE TURF FROM THE 1960'S OR TODAY?



2020

Our turf today

"Having travelled the world, FMG Stadium Waikato is without a doubt the best surface we play on"

- Chiefs Team Management

"The pitch is probably the best on the World Sevens Series and as a result the sponsor logos look amazing"

- World Rugby's Brand Experience Manager