

Four of the best: Public toilets

5:30 AM Sunday Jun 26, 2011

1. Helensville

Creek Lane (beside Unichem Pharmacy), Commercial Rd

The newest in a growing trend, these loos are by local sculptor Jeff Thomson, using his favourite corrugated iron. The exterior artwork reflects the district's relationship with the Kaipara river and harbour. The portholes let people peer inside the tank to see the historic shipwrecks that foundered on the treacherous Kaipara Bar. Sustainable too, it has a rainwater tank.



A Helensville public toilet made of corrugated iron sculpted by Jeff Thomson.
Photo / Supplied

2. Kawakawa

State Highway 1, Bay of Islands

The loos that inspired all the others. Austrian architect and artist Friedensreich Hundertwasser started the trend in 1997 with his eye-catching pottery columns, smashed tile mosaics and bottle walls, topped off by a grass roof. The Gaudi-esque colours and curves have inspired a mini-trend for some enterprising shops and cafes along this tiny main street.

3. Matakana

Intersection of Matakana, Leigh and Matakana Valley Roads

After much controversy, local art student Steffan de Haan won the competition to design these toilets, finally installed in 2009. The arched rooms evoke the area's boats and boat-building history, many local artists and contractors contributed their time and skills. At a cost of about \$400,000 these are worth lingering in.

4. Tirau

State Highway 1, north Waikato

The Tirau community has claimed corrugated-iron art as its own, with local artist Steven Clothier creating the information centre's famous giant sheep and, later, dog (officially opened in late 1998). The loos reflect the town's position in the heartland of the rich Waikato farming territory.

Have we missed out your favourite?

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