

- Lochmara
- Mariner
- Havelock Blue
- Malibu
- Jordy Blue
- Governor Bay
- Sonic Boom
- Decadence
- Wave Rider
- Night Moves
- Bullitt
- Astra
- Gin Fizz
- Alto
- Cosmos
- Maverick
- Viola
- Disco



**Maitai School Playground**  
Tasman Street, Nelson

Maitai School is a specialist centre catering for students with a wide range of special needs. The student population is drawn from the wider Nelson region. The main school is located on the banks of the Maitai River and adjoins the Queens Gardens in central Nelson. Students at Maitai School range in age from 5 to 21 years. The school has 33 students, with around half being primary aged and half secondary aged.

At Maitai School, staff and students were faced with a large blank fence that encircled the school playground. Diane Whyte (Principal), Lynn Cadenhead (Landscape Architect), Anne Rush (artist), and Sam Laidlaw (technician) collaboratively conceived the sensory wall. Anne worked with Sam to design and construct the multi-sensory (tactile, auditory, olfactory and visual) panels.

Children with autism frequently do not

engage with others or their environments unless they are encouraged to do so. Sensory experiences improve co-ordination and cause and effect skills, and are ideal for encouraging exploration and developing self-esteem. In 1997, the Journal of Intellectual Disability Research published research that showed how lights, textures, sounds and smells could relax people with severe and profound intellectual disability and reduce aggression. Regular school playgrounds are not stimulating for many students who often withdraw into themselves and/or exhibit challenging behaviors.

The Sensory Wall is divided into two sections: The Queen’s Garden, and the Maitai River. Plywood panels (1780 mm by 600mm) were individually block painted using 32 Resene colours tinted into Resene Lumbersider.

Colour was the vehicle to create harmonious sequencing, and command the initial attention of the students.

The Resene colours were meticulously selected by the artist to give an overall continuity to the design, which had to be coherent from both close up and more distant vantage points in the playground.

The brief for the Queen’s Garden Wall was for a colourful, tactile mural that depicted night and day. The brief for the Maitai River wall was for highly interactive panels that challenged the senses and catered to the various motivational attributes of the students.

Extensive research was conducted into materials that could withstand the rigor of student exploration and Nelson’s climate. This was a challenge. These materials were sourced from a wide range of outlets, but most frequently encompassed industrial



products from the marine and building industries. However some treasures were located at \$2 Shops, Trade Aid, The Warehouse, cycle, transport and hardware stores. Materials included: marine matting, metal sheeting, tiger turf, soft brushes, acrylic mirror, textured fabrics, PVC, bathmat, plastic insects, cycle reflectors and hooters, CD rack holders, highly textured industrial drainage materials and fragrant air fresheners.

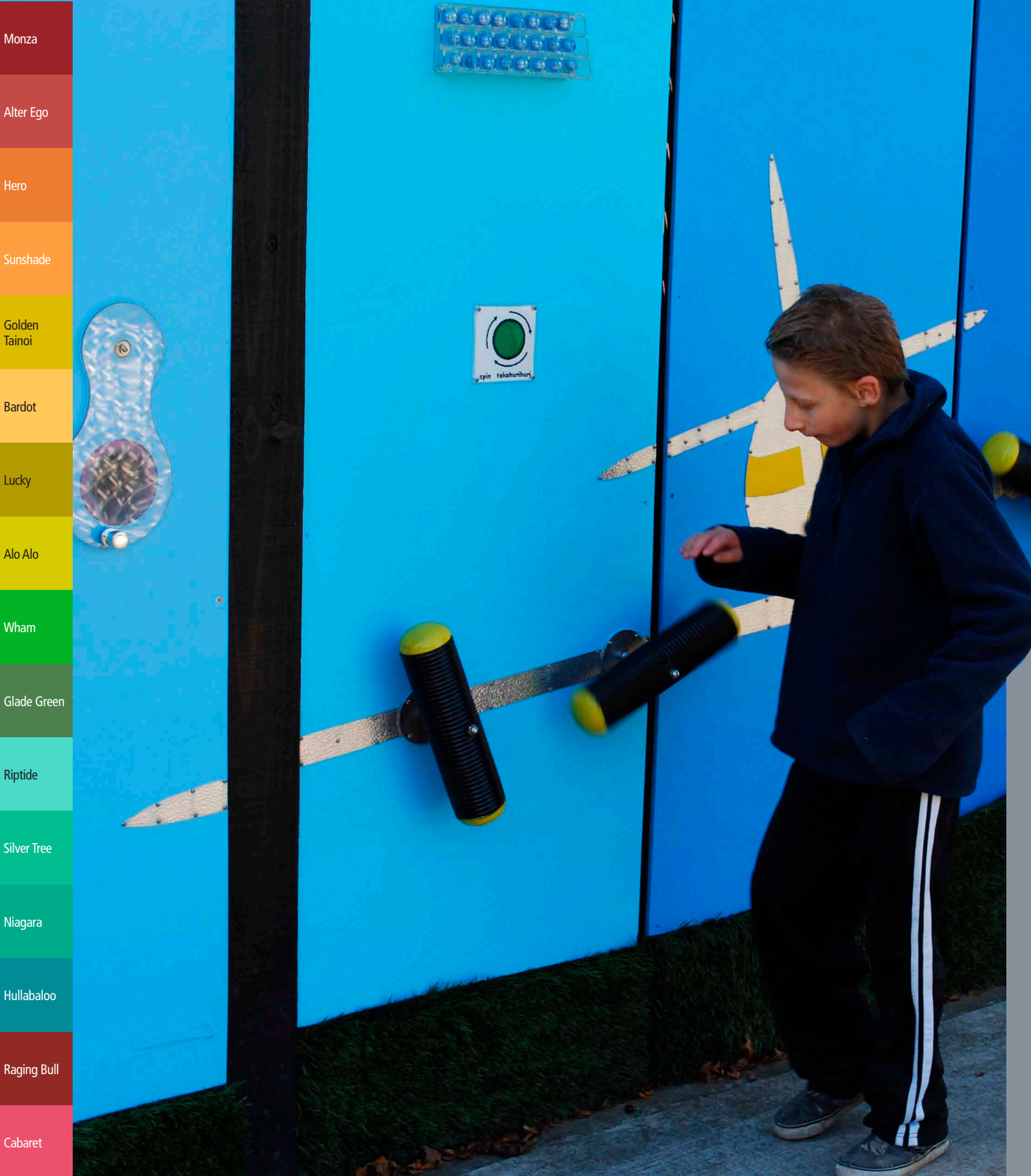
On completion, the sensory walls consisted of 72 panels. They collectively provided a huge range of activities for independent student experimentation and continue to act as a teaching aid.

This innovative highly experimental and challenging project has aroused considerable enquiry from throughout New Zealand since its completion. It continues to evolve and be refurbished.

But most of all it is highly appreciated by the students, parents and teaching staff of Maitai School.

The colour palette includes Resene Lochmara, Resene Mariner, Resene Havelock Blue, Resene Malibu, Resene Jordy Blue, Resene Governor Bay, Resene Sonic Boom, Resene Decadence, Resene Wave Rider, Resene Night Moves, Resene Bullitt, Resene Astra, Resene Gin Fizz, Resene Alto, Resene Cosmos, Resene Maverick, Resene Viola, Resene Disco, Resene Monza, Resene Alter Ego, Resene Hero, Resene Sunshade, Resene Golden Tainoi, Resene Bardot, Resene Lucky, Resene Alo Alo, Resene Wham, Resene Glade Green, Resene Riptide, Resene Silver Tree, Resene Niagara, Resene Hullabaloo, Resene Raging Bull and Resene Cabaret.





Monza

Alter Ego

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Tainoi

Bardot

Lucky

Alo Alo

Wham

Glade Green

Riptide

Silver Tree

Niagara

Hullabaloo

Raging Bull


Cabaret

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**Building and Painting Contractor:** Sam Laidlaw

**Colour Selection:** Anne Rush Artist [annerush@orcon.net.nz](mailto:annerush@orcon.net.nz)

**Other Key Contributors:** Diane Whyte, School Principal, Artists in Schools Programme, Private Benefactor

 Resene Exponent



