

## Concert Review: Jack Johnson, Vector Arena

By [Jacqueline Smith](#)

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Jack Johnson brought favourites and a fresh repertoire to the Vector Arena. Photo / Richard Robinson

Being a surfer from Hawaii and all, it's no wonder Jack Johnson has a strong affinity with New Zealand.

He looks like he belongs here – as he stands in his Jandals and squints through the lights at the sea of happy fans, he could be emerging from a coastal bach and checking out the waves.

He definitely brings the sound of summer, and waves, sand and barbecues to Vector Arena.

He may have played an exclusive gig out at Piha the night before, but as far as his inner-city audience is concerned, they are also on a windswept beach having a good ol' bonfire singalong.

Johnson is so in the zone that it is not until a good half hour of new and old hits has passed that he speaks to his enthusiastic audience.

Sometimes, he says, he gets to the end of a concert before he thinks, "Holy cow, I didn't say anything", he says.

He thanks the audience for being so welcoming, filling the venues and singing along whenever he comes here.

But while they do sing to the wildly popular openers Taylor and then Sitting, Waiting, Wishing and all the other hits such as Bubble Toes, Fortunate Fool and Breakdown, Johnson is also here to give them something they have never seen before.

It's not just the facial hair that's grown since he last visited.

Johnson's also got a whole new repertoire to show off from his new album *To the Sea*, which charted at number one when it was released in New Zealand this year.

New numbers and *To the Sea* give Johnson, his bouncy bassist, wild guitarist and Crocodile Dundee-looking pianist a chance to ditch the laid-back acoustic strum and indulge in the odd bluesy jam, distorted, almost psychedelic rock bridge and even impromptu rap.

The crowd claps, sways and whoops to it all. One person even whips out his harmonica.

Not only does Johnson's unassuming, laid-back performance send ripples of warm summer evenings through the arena, but fans know that one hundred per cent of the proceeds of this concert is going to environmental protection.

No, Jack Johnson is not your average super–star and this is not your average charity gig.

**Who:** Jack Johnson.

**Where:** Vector Arena.

**When:** Last night.

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