

The geology of Mount Taranaki/Egmont



The igneous rocks of Mount Taranaki and their origin.

Mount Taranaki is made up of an igneous rock called andesite. Andesite is a fine-grained volcanic rock that is found in stratovolcanic form volcanoes. These volcanoes have steep sides and look like how volcanoes are drawn.

Andesite is a mixture rock made where the Pacific plate dips under the North Island. Andesite flows slowly. The rock type forming on the subducting plate is andesite and occurs due to melting of the Pacific plate. Andesite is erupted in a volcanic eruption.

Andesitic volcanoes produce lava that is fairly viscous and does not travel far. The maximum lava flow on Mount Taranaki is about 15 km long. Andesitic volcanoes are quite high and have steep sides because of the thick lava. When the volcano is not erupting lava it erupts ash deposits so the mountain is layered with ash layers and lava flows. The ash deposits are very weak. (1)

Lahars as an erosional force that helps shape Mount Taranaki.

Mount Taranaki is famous for its lahars. Much of the landscape around the volcano is the result of lahars. Lahars are where the snow on the mountain top is melted and the water rushes down the mountain slope causing erosion. It forms steep gullies on its way to the sea. Lahars form a humpy land. (2)

Lahars are a real concern for future eruptions and since Mount Taranaki could erupt at any time in the future damage from lahars is a major concern. They can travel up to 40 km from the vent area and end up in the sea.