

District Profile

The South Waikato District has a population of approximately 23,000 residents and is located in the central North Island of New Zealand. The District extends over 182,000 hectares of predominately lush pasture and forested land. The infrastructure and community spirit within the South Waikato has created a top-class District to work and live in, with considerable potential for economic growth and development.

Central Location

South Waikato's three main towns - Tokoroa, Putaruru and Tirau – are linked by State Highway 1, and the village of Arapuni, located adjacent to the Lake Arapuni, is on the Waitomo Caves-Rotorua tourist route. With half of New Zealand's population within a 200 km radius, the bonus of direct rail access to the ports of Tauranga and Auckland and ski-fields, beaches and hundreds of theatres and restaurants all within an hours' drive, the area offers a great lifestyle option plus significant commercial advantages.

As well as being centrally located on State Highway 1, the South Waikato District offers:

- A sealed all-weather airfield with capacity for aircraft up to 5700kg, or heavier by arrangement.
- Direct rail to export ports of Tauranga and Auckland.
- Direct State Highway access to markets in the King Country and Bay of Plenty regions.
- A well developed, fully sealed rural roading system.

Diverse Population

South Waikato has a relatively young and diverse population. As at the 2001 Census, 29% of people in the South Waikato District were under the age of 15 years, compared with 23% for all of New Zealand. This younger age profile is partly due to Maori and Pacific Islands people having a higher birth rate than European ethnic groups. As at 2001, 31% of South Waikato residents identified with the Maori ethnic group compared with 15% nationally. Similarly, 13% of South Waikato residents identified with Pacific Islands ethnic groups compared with 7% nationally. The proportion of Maori and Pacific people is projected to continue growing in the South Waikato District over the coming ten year period.

Ethnic Groups 2001

	South Waikato	New Zealand
European	70.7%	79.2%
Maori	31.0%	15.1%
Asian	1.7%	7.0%
Pacific	12.8%	6.7%
Total	100.0%	100.0%

Note: Figures add to more than 100% because people can belong to more than one ethnic group.

Recreational Opportunities

Many recreational opportunities exist, centred around the area's abundant forests and waterways. The District's boundaries to the west and south are formed by the Waikato River and six lakes, offering limitless potential for recreation and tourism activities. The District has a well developed network of reserves, including 17,000 hectares created by Carter Holt

Mountain Bike Track



Harvey Forests Limited (CHH), for public for recreation and forest protection, and around 240 hectares of parks and reserves administered by Council. In addition, Council manages a range of leisure facilities, including heated and cold water swimming complexes. Sports and recreation facilities range from modern indoor complexes, gymnasiums and golf and squash clubs, to a number of Council-maintained playing fields.

Business Support and Infrastructure

The South Waikato District welcomes new commerce and industry, and delivers exceptional support and opportunities for businesses, including:

- The South Waikato Economic Development Trust - providing free and confidential advice, support and training for new and existing businesses, as well as assistance to interested investors and developers (refer www.southwaikato.com)
- Mainstreet programmes and business associations, which support local business activities.
- Sites with outstanding potential for greenfield industrial expansion.
- Pure, export-quality water supply, providing 70% of NZ's bottled water. One of the local water supplies is sourced from pristine springs. The quality of this water is recognised by residents and local industries alike and is bottled and distributed nationally and internationally from Putaruru's Blue Spring.
- Excellent water and waste reticulation, with capacity for twice the current population.
- Environmentally sustainable, low cost landfills and efficient local recycling operations.
- Surplus electricity supply (1500MW surplus in 2000) which includes a double-feed system in Tokoroa, due to strategic siting within the national grid and co-generation plant at Kinleith, delivering increased reliability.
- High quality gas supply with surplus capacity. Pipelines run through South Waikato with offtakes at Tirau, Putaruru, Okoroire Springs, Lichfield, Tokoroa and Kinleith.
- Rates Rebate Policy to assist larger businesses in their initial stages (refer www.southwaikato.govt.nz).

South Waikato District Council has a track record of being planning-friendly and ensuring regulatory requirements are met with a minimum of fuss.

Education and Training

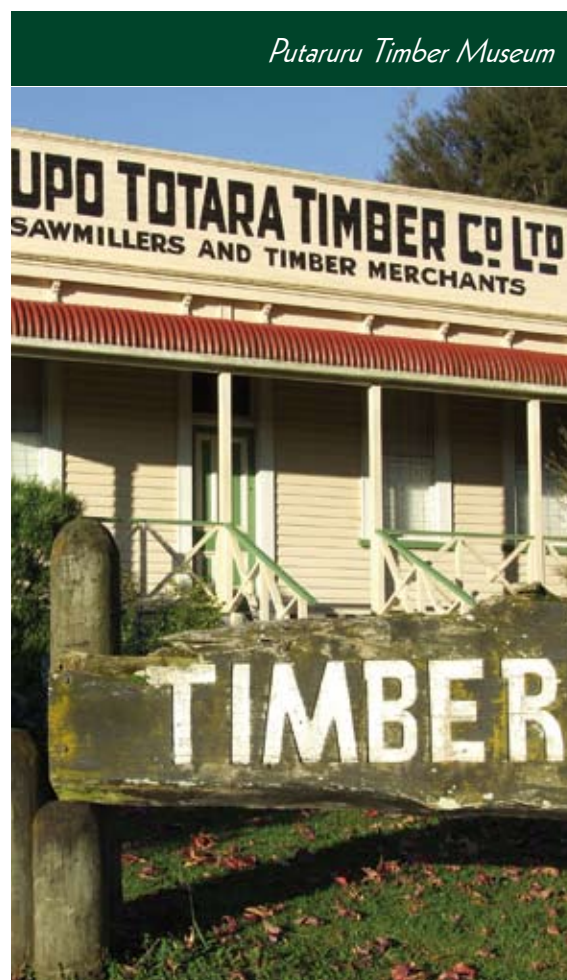
In addition to its excellent pre-schools, crèche facilities and schools, the District is well provided for by industry training and tertiary institutions. Waiariki Institute of Technology has a centre at Tokoroa, providing a range of courses to suit the needs of the community. The University of Waikato, located in nearby Hamilton, also provides a wide range of options for tertiary education and distance learning.

Health Services

Tokoroa Hospital, part of Waikato District Health Board, was recently upgraded. It has an in-patient capacity of 17 general medical beds, four maternity beds, a day stay service for minor surgery and a 24-hour accident and emergency department. Outpatient clinics cover virtually all medical specialties and laboratory, radiology and pharmacy services are provided. South Waikato residents are also serviced by around 18 general medical practitioners.

Primary and Secondary Industries

Forestry, agriculture and related manufacturing are the industries most closely associated with the South Waikato, with tourism also becoming increasingly important.



New Zealand is a world leader in international dairying, accounting for around 25% of the world's traded dairy products. South Waikato District, with its lush pastures has, for many years, been the base for a prosperous farming industry. Diversification from traditional dairying to a more mixed regime including deer, goats and ostrich, is another opportunity being developed in the District.

The central location of the District on State Highway 1 has been a major influence in the continued success of agriculture, along with well developed supporting services. Engineering, transportation and construction services are particular strengths. The rail link between the District and the port of Tauranga is well utilised by the dairy processing industry.

Dairy production is reaching new heights and supplies the Fonterra Cheese Factory at Lichfield (built in 1994). This location, between Putaruru and Tokoroa on State Highway 1, is close to many important resources.

The central North Island is the most developed forestry region in New Zealand, with approximately 550,000 ha of planted production forest. The area of CHH's Forest in the South Waikato District is 85,650ha (47% of the total area of the District). Of this area 75,709 is productive, with the remainder native reserve and infrastructure (roads etc). CHH employ approximately 70 staff in Tokoroa, and around 475 direct contract staff in the Central region. This does not include the number of people employed in processing and support industries.

The District's central location has been the key factor in the continued success of its forestry and processing

sectors, including the many local engineering, transport and construction services which have evolved to support the industry. Access by road and rail to the major export port of Tauranga is well utilised and is complemented by the District's well developed infrastructure.

The area's central location means additional raw materials and services can be readily sourced and products can be efficiently moved to national and international destinations. The internal infrastructure of the District is well developed, facilitating manufacturing, transport and distribution. The major export ports of Auckland and Tauranga are both linked to the South Waikato by road and rail.

Retail and Hospitality

Shopping and commercial services in the District include a number of major national chain stores, fast food restaurants and other dining opportunities. The town centres in Tokoroa, Putaruru and Tirau have all developed characteristics that make them distinct, adding variety and choices. The local towns all have large rural catchments of retail customers, supplemented by through traffic on State Highway 1, which is travelled by up to 10,000 vehicles per day. Competitive pricing and quality product are further enhanced by the local business community's pride and enthusiasm for the District. Businesses are supported by local Mainstreet Co-ordinators, as well as other business organisations. According to Statistics New Zealand, around 1,400 businesses function and trade from South Waikato.

Businesses in South Waikato District

