

Section 2 - The District

Although most Eastern Bay of Plenty Māori took no active part, the area nevertheless became embroiled in the New Zealand land wars during the 1860s and 70s. In 1869, the famed fighting chieftain Te Kooti raided Whakatane, razing its few buildings. This led to the stationing of a unit of armed constabulary in Whakatane and the construction of a defensive redoubt on the promontory above the town centre.

With the advent of more peaceful times, industrial and agricultural development continued, that process accelerating from 1910 onwards when work began to drain the swamplands of the Rangitaiki Plains. Between 1911 and 1925 the Rangitaiki wetland was drained with the diversion of the Rangitaiki River direct to the coast and the channelling and stopbanking of the Tarawera River. This enabled major development to occur in the Rangitaiki Plains. Reclamation in Whakatane also created new land for residential and commercial development.

Fort Galatea was established as a military redoubt in 1869. In 1884 Hutton Troutbeck purchased 21,694 acres and established Galatea Station. In 1931 the estate was purchased by the Crown to be offered for ballot for farms. The Galatea Basin was further developed after the 2nd World War when land was offered to ex-servicemen for ballot.

The establishment of industrial complexes in Kawerau were the impetus for major development in the District. This included the construction of an integrated pulp, paper and timber mill, utilising largely radiata pine from Kaingaroa Forest, during 1953-1956 by a consortium of construction firms. Associated with the development of the mill was the development of the town of Kawerau. At first there were no shops and supplies had to be brought in from businesses at Edgecumbe, Te Teko and Whakatane.

The Murupara township was also developed in the 1950s to house bush-gangs and as a railhead for logs going to the Pulp and Paper Mill at Kawerau.

The development of housing at Otawairere took place in conjunction with the development of the industrial complexes at Kawerau to provide accommodation for senior mill staff.

The diversion of part of the Whakatane River meander into a new channel alongside the township was completed in 1969. The diversion was a major project of the Bay of Plenty Catchment Commission's scheme which aimed at protecting the town from a "100 year flood event" (the highest likely flood to occur in a century).



The Heads 1930s

Courtesy of Whakatane District Museum and Gallery

THE WHAKATANE DISTRICT TODAY

The Whakatane District has a central location in the Bay of Plenty Region covering the coast from Otamarakau in the west to Ohiwa Harbour in the east. It also extends inland over part of the volcanic plateau and covers 4,442 km².

The Whakatane District boasts an attractive climate with temperatures generally between 25 and 28 degrees (Celsius) in the summer months. The temperature is usually in the high teens during winter and is seldom lower than 11 degrees. Whakatane generally records the highest temperature in New Zealand for about 55 days of the year.

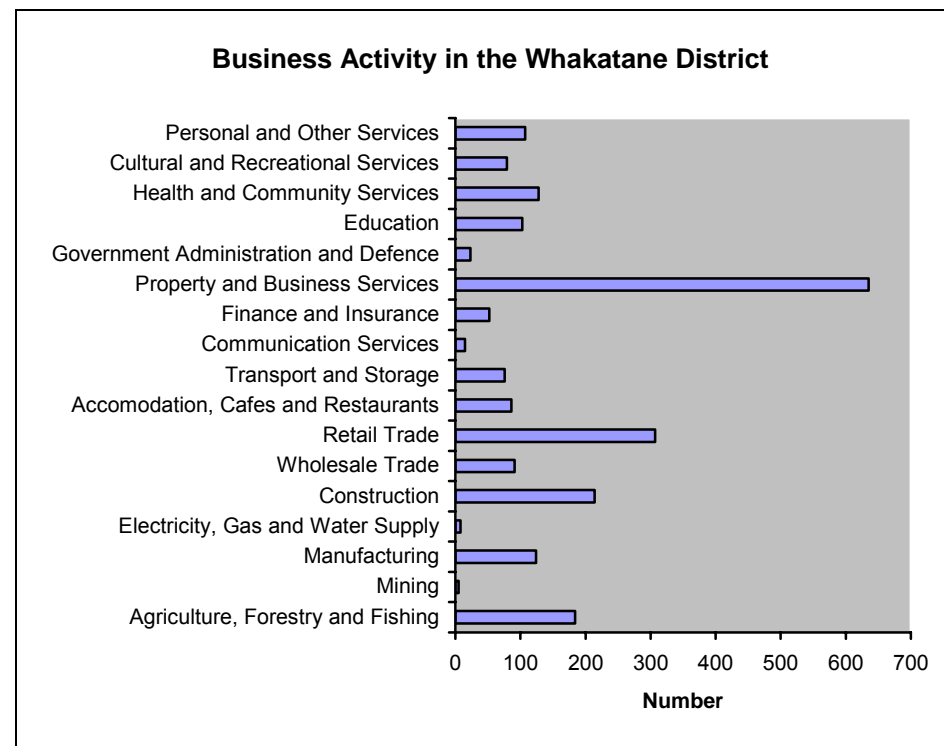
Whakatane is 302km from Auckland, 96km from Tauranga, and 85km from Rotorua by road. It provides a tourist gateway to Urewera National Park (the third largest national park in New Zealand and ancestral home of the Tuhoe people) and Whakaari/White Island, an active volcano which can be visited by boat or helicopter. Whakatane's premier game-fishing waters extend to offshore islands, offering a range of species to anglers.

The largest dairy processing plant in the Bay of Plenty is sited at Edgecumbe, on the Rangitaiki Plains, approximately 20km west of the Whakatane township.

Agriculture remains an economic mainstay in the District, but since the 1950s, plantation forestry and wood processing have become increasingly important.

A significant proportion of the District (41%) is protected native forest within Te Urewera National Park and there are areas of Māori land situated within or immediately adjacent to the park. Approximately half of the District's land area (51%) is classified by Statistics New Zealand as being 'farmed' (livestock, fruit, vegetables, arable crops, forestry, indoor crops and other outdoor crops). The statistics indicate a decline over the past decade in the amount of land devoted to pastoral uses, principally dairying.

The following graph represents business activity in the District showing the number of business units across seventeen industry classifications:



Source:
 Statistics New Zealand 2001 Business Directory Update Survey

Much of the growth in the number of business units occurred between 1999 and 2000, particularly in property and business services and in Construction. This reflects recent growth and development in the District.

In recent years, tourism has taken on an important role as more and more people have come to appreciate the region's rich heritage, wonderful coastal, bush resources and outstanding climate.

The People

The District had a population of 32,814 people at the 2001 Census. The population spread within the District is shown in the table below.

Distribution of the population within the Whakatane District

Census Area Units	% of District population	Population
	2001	2001
Whakatane Urban Area	46	15,024
Ohope	8	2,760
Taneatua	2	753
Matata	2	666
Edgecumbe	5	1,668
Murupara	6	1,959
Te Teko	2	630
Waimana	2	654
Remaining Rural Area	27	8,706

Between 1996 and 2001 the District experienced an overall 1% decrease in population. Projections for Whakatane District (see the following table) predict a rise in the total population for 2006. After that period, the current projections show a decline in the total population.

Population projections 2006-2021

Area	Years (ending June 30)			
	2006	2011	2016	2021
Whakatane	34,200	34,000	33,800	33,500
New Zealand	4,109,300	4,248,300	4,378,600	4,622,100

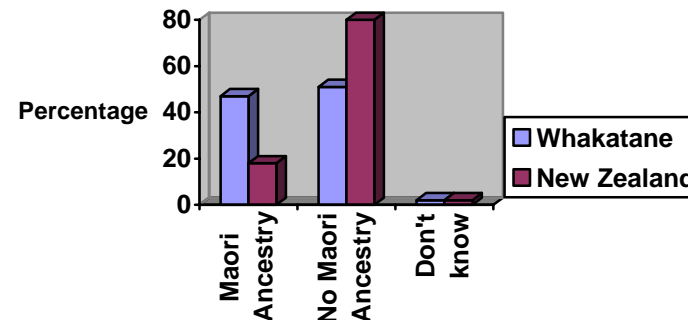
Note: These population projections are calculated assuming medium fertility, medium mortality and medium migration.

Some communities and rural areas are experiencing declining populations. The urban areas of Whakatane (including Ohope) and the coastal strip are expected to experience considerable growth over the next ten years.

Ethnicity

Approximately 47% of residents identified that they had Māori ancestry, 51% said they didn't and 2% did not know. This is significantly higher than the national average of 18%.

Ethnicity



Education

Residents of the Whakatane District generally have a lower level of educational qualifications when compared with national figures. There are increasing educational opportunities being provided in the District at all levels. The most notable of these is the development of Te Whare Wānanga o Awanuiārangī in Whakatane.

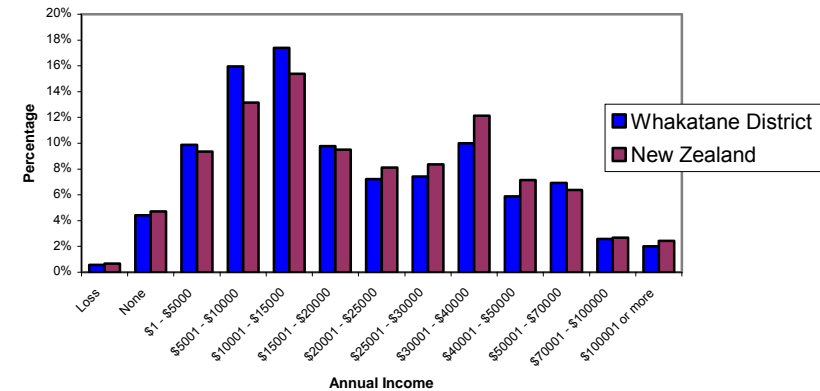
Employment

In 2001, 42% of residents were employed full-time, 15% employed part-time, 8% unemployed and 35% not in the labour force.

The majority of people are agricultural and fishery workers with agriculture, forestry and fishing being the largest industry group in the District. However this industry has experienced the largest decrease since 1996 (16%). The occupational group with the biggest increase since 1996 was professionals (20%).

The mean personal income for the District was \$23,774; the median personal income was \$15,916. 58% had an annual personal income of \$20,000 or less, 11% had an annual personal income of \$50,000 or more. These figures are compared nationally in the following graph.

Personal Income for Residents of Whakatane District 2001

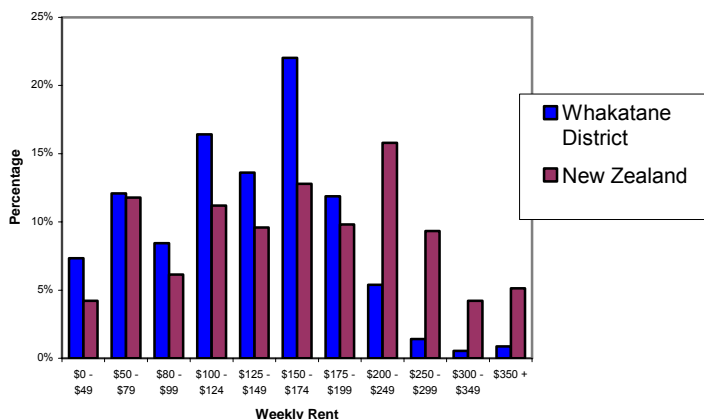


Housing

In 2001 the total number of private dwellings in the Whakatane District was 11,469 and the total number of non-private dwellings, eg, hotels, hostels and hospitals, was 66. There was an increase since 1996 of 369 private dwellings and a decrease of 24 non-private dwellings, and since 1991 an increase of 1,149 private dwellings and a decrease of 42 non-private dwellings.

A total of 68% of dwellings were owned or partly owned by the occupants. This has increased from 67% in 1996 but is down from 73% in 1991 owing to a decrease in the number of owner-occupiers and an increase in the number of rental properties. Nationally 68% of dwellings were owned or partly owned by the occupants in 2001, and this is down from 74% in 1991. The mean weekly rent was \$133.

Whakatane District Weekly Rental Charges



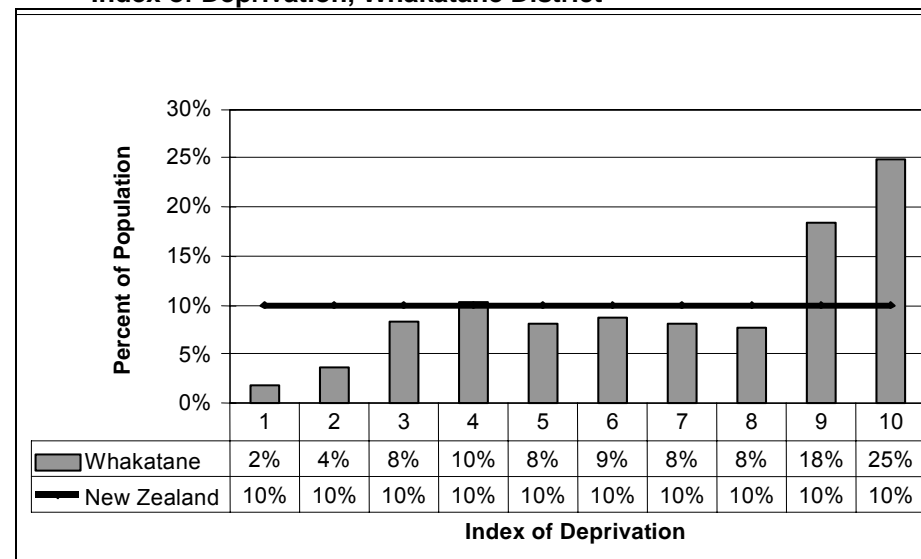
A total of 11% of households had no motor vehicle and 8% had no access to telecommunication systems (telephone). A total of 46% of households had two or more motor vehicles and 28% had internet access. For New Zealand 10% of households had no motor vehicle and 4% had no access to telecommunications systems. 49% of households had two or more motor vehicles and 37% had internet access.

Deprivation

The New Zealand Deprivation Index ranks areas from 0 to 10, 10 being the highest levels of deprivation. Factors that will increase the score include low income, high unemployment, no academic qualifications, overcrowding, no car, no telephone, living in rental accommodation and single parent families. Whakatane District as a whole had an average rating of 8.

The Whakatane District has fewer people than the New Zealand average in the less deprived Index of Deprivation levels 1 and 2, is slightly below average in levels 3 to 8 and scores far higher than average in more deprived levels 9 and 10 (see the following table).

Index of Deprivation, Whakatane District



Development

The Whakatane Urban and adjacent coastal areas are currently undergoing a surge in development and investment. The District continues to grow as land is developed and subdivided. This is part of an international trend where people are seeking a lifestyle near the coast or near any significant areas of water. During the last two years there has been a dramatic increase in coastal-related subdivision throughout New Zealand.

The opportunity for investment and the growth potential of the District is being increasingly recognised and taken advantage of by investors from within and outside the area.

In 2000, the number of building consents for new dwellings in the Whakatane District was 120. In 2003 this figure increased to a total of 182 consents. Revised 2004 estimates for potential residential dwellings in the main urban centres indicate that there are currently 288 sites in the Whakatane urban area, 245 in Ohope and 633 in

Coastlands/Piripai, that are either vacant, proposed residential land or have infill potential. These figures show that there is future capacity within the Whakatane urban area, Ohope and Coastlands/Piripai for further residential development, although the demand for residential sites may be higher than the available land area for Whakatane urban area and Ohope over a sustained 10-year period.

There is also market pressure to redevelop the downtown harbour endowment land in Whakatane for commercial and residential use.

The continued development of apartment complexes and more intensive forms of residential development at Ohope and in the Whakatane urban area, and potentially at Coastlands/Piripai, will provide a greater density of accommodation units to be constructed. The figures above do not include the potential redevelopment of existing sites for higher density residential development.

There continues to be a demand for rural residential lots in rural areas of the District. Over the last four years there has been an average of 56 building consents per year issued for new dwellings in rural areas and rural settlements.

In business areas, 13 new commercial and five new industrial developments are created each year (based on building consents issued over the last four years). These developments vary widely in terms of size and demand for services. There is a demand for larger floor retailing in Whakatane.

The Whakatane District Council has a number of projects under way to manage this growth, as the Council does not envisage it reducing in the future.

The use of land for housing, visitor accommodation or large business activities can put pressure on existing services, community infrastructure, roads, Whakatane town centre car-parking and reserves. These services and reserves need to be upgraded as the District grows.



The Heads 1998

