



SECTION 2: Rodney Today

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Rodney District, stretching from Te Hana in the north to Kumeu in the south, and spanning from the east to the west coasts, is one of the fastest growing areas in New Zealand. It is the largest by area and the most northern of the seven territorial local authorities that make up the Auckland Region.

Rodney's communities

In terms of population, Rodney is the 11th largest local authority in the country. Home today to over 96,000 people, Rodney's population growth of around 2,000 new residents each year is predicted to continue, increasing the population to over 120,000 people in the next 12 years.

The population of the district is not only growing – it is also changing. Although some parts of Rodney are well known as retirement communities and holiday beach resorts, younger permanent residents are moving into the district, especially to areas within commuting distance of metropolitan Auckland. The district population remains predominantly ethnically European although proportionally, other ethnic groups are growing rapidly.

Rodney District falls within the tribal boundaries of Ngati Whatua, Ngati Manuhiri (a hapu of Ngati Wai), Ngati Paoa and Te Kawerau a Maki.

The rapid growth in the district is a natural consequence of the proximity to metropolitan areas of the region. The southern areas of the district in particular are increasingly seen as providing a desirable lifestyle in commuting distance of employment opportunities.

In Rodney District, 23.1% of people aged 15 years and over have no formal educational qualifications in comparison with 25% of people for New Zealand as a whole.

In general, Rodney residents feel they had a positive overall quality of life and they have the highest happiness rating (92%) of the 12 local authorities that are part of the biennial Quality of Life survey.

Rodney's environment

Rodney District is a place of contrasts with indigenous forests, scrubland, wetlands, and coastal areas comprising river flats, sand dunes, wetlands and sheer cliffs. In addition there is a diverse range of townships and urban areas as well as large rural areas.

The district comprises 46% of the Auckland region and is surrounded by 1,019 kilometres of beautiful coastline. Almost 90% of the district can be described as rural with about 80% of the rural area used for rural production and the remaining 20% in reserves, parks and conservation areas under the control of the Rodney District Council, the Auckland Regional Council and the Department of Conservation. Around 70% of the rural production area is in pasture and used for beef, mixed beef and sheep, and dairy farming. Approximately 21.5% is planted with exotic forest, while the remaining 8% has varied uses including quarrying and rural residential properties. A very small proportion of the rural area is used for horticulture.

Landscape features in Rodney include historic and significant pa, wahi tapu and Maori settlement and cultivation sites as well as landmarks of early European settlement. These include Mansion House on Kawau Island, the Riverhead portage and Henry Williams' landing site.

Rodney's economy

Rodney's economy is strongly oriented towards primary industries such as agriculture and forestry. Along with the primary industries, construction, retail, property and business services are the largest employing industries in the district. In 2007 there were 13,200 businesses in the district generating around \$2.19 billion in GDP with approximately 27,000 full time equivalent employees³.

Many people in the district commute to work outside the district. This is in part a lifestyle choice and in part a response to a lack of diverse employment opportunity in the district.

The 2006 census tells us that unemployment in the district for those aged 15 or more was 3.4% in comparison to 5.1% for all of New Zealand. However, there is considerable variation in the district depending on where people live, their ethnicity, and their educational achievement. Given the current economic climate, this figure may increase during the period of this Plan.

Income levels also vary. At the time of the census, 29% of the district's working population had a personal income of more than \$40,000, and 32% of residents had incomes of less than \$20,000 annually. Overall, income levels are lowest in northern Rodney and in parts of the Hibiscus Coast, and highest in southern and western Rodney.

³ BERL, Profile of Rodney District and key sectors, July 2008