

about rotorua district

About Rotorua District

Rotorua District lies largely within the Bay of Plenty Region and partly within the Waikato Region. With an estimated population count of 68,100, Rotorua ranks 16th of New Zealand's 73 districts. The district is centred around a thriving urban area on the southern shore of Lake Rotorua, and extends to include a substantial rural area as well as lakeside communities. Rotorua is a bicultural district with an increasingly multicultural population. The local environment encompasses 14 lakes, active geothermal areas, and considerable public open space. Rotorua has an increasingly broad industry base that includes tourism, agriculture, forestry, retail, manufacturing, business services, social services and education.

Some vital statistics:

- The total area of the Rotorua District is 2,614.9 km².
- The district's population was 68,100 at the 2006 Census.
- Almost 20% of the population lives in rural and lakeside areas.
- Rotorua is a visitor icon in New Zealand and overseas, due in part to its geothermal and cultural attractions. On average, there are more than 8,500 visitors per day staying in Rotorua commercial accommodation.
- There are 800 ha of reserves managed by Rotorua District Council.
- There are almost 1000kms of local roads in the district, of which almost 82% are sealed.
- The gross capital valuation is around \$14.1 billion and gross land valuation is around \$7.9 billion.
- Rotorua's GDP is estimated at \$2.88 billion per annum.

Rotorua's Early History

According to oral history, many of Rotorua's Maori residents trace their ancestry to Tamatekapua, captain of the Arawa canoe that arrived in New Zealand from the fabled homeland of Hawaiki more than six centuries ago. The Arawa canoe was beached at Maketu on the Bay of Plenty coast where the new arrivals settled down to live. They had been at Maketu for some time when an ancestor called Kahumatamomoe journeyed inland to explore. He discovered what is now known as Lake Rotorua, and settled at what is now Kawaha Point. Prompted by reports from other explorers, including Tamatekapua's grandson Ihenga, other members of the Arawa tribe eventually moved from the coast and settled in the Rotorua and Taupo areas. The earliest Maori villages in Rotorua were located close to geothermal activity, including Ohinemutu and Whakarewarewa. Descendants of the original settlers have left their mark on modern-day Rotorua through song, dance, legends and place names.

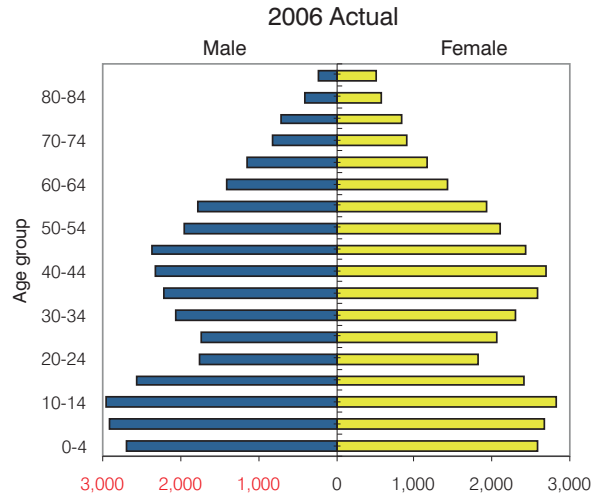
European settlers arrived in New Zealand throughout the 19th century. Subsequent development of the Rotorua area was driven by interest in the unique geothermal and cultural attractions of the area, coupled with the establishment of transport links, forestry and farming. The foundations of today's local government structure were laid by the Thermal Springs District Act of 1881, which made provisions for the establishment of certain amenities in Rotorua. An agreement was also concluded between the Government and the Maori people on the setting up of a town board to administer the affairs of the new township. Te Arawa sub-tribe Ngati Whakaue contributed generously to the development of the town through the gifting of more than 120 parcels of land for health and recreational purposes. These include Government Gardens, Kuirau Park, Pukeroa Hill, the Lakefront Reserve, and many other reserves. Today, policy issues about Rotorua's gifted reserves are discussed by a joint committee of the Pukeroa Oruawhata Trust and the district council.

Rotorua's People

Rotorua is a bi-cultural district with a multi-cultural population. Currently around 56% of the resident population identify as European, 36% as Maori, 4% as Pacific peoples and 4% Asian ethnicity. More than half of Rotorua's young people are of Maori descent. According to Census results, around 8,000 Rotorua residents are affiliated to the Arawa tribe that originally settled in the central Bay of Plenty area. In addition, many of Rotorua's Maori residents are affiliated to tribes from other parts of New Zealand. Rotorua's population profile is becoming much more multicultural than it in the past, including increases in residents from the Pacific Islands, Asia, and many other parts of the world. Rotorua's population profile is also relatively youthful but, like other parts of New Zealand, is gradually growing older. Official projections show that the district is expected to have only moderate residential population growth over the coming decade, with more rapid growth in the eastern suburbs, northern rural areas and eastern lakeside areas.



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Te Arawa and Geothermal Activity of the District

Included in the mythology of Te Arawa people is an explanation for the origins of geothermal activity within the district. The story of the tohunga (person of great knowledge) Ngatoroirangi is known and has been recited by both Te Arawa and Tuwharetoa, people of the Rotorua and Taupo areas, for hundreds of years.

The following is a brief excerpt from the legend of Ngatoroirangi and the Pacific Ring of Fire:

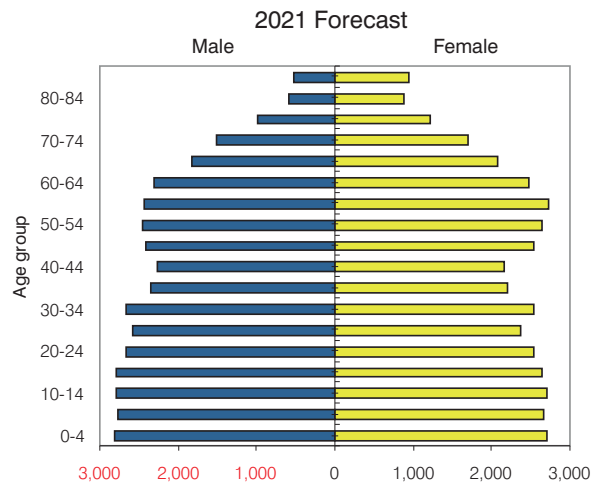
The explorer Ngatoroirangi of the Arawa canoe was ascending Mount Tongariro when he called to his sisters from Hawaiki to bring him warmth or he would surely die. Ngatoroirangi's prayers were heard and his sisters called upon the fire demons, Te Pupu and Te Hoata, who plunged into the sea and swam to Ngatoroirangi. Te Pupu and Te Hoata surfaced for the first time at Whakaari (White Island), where the earth burst into flames. They found that they still had many miles to go so continued on their journey, stopping briefly at Mou-tohora, Okakaru, Rotoehu, Rotoiti, Rotorua, Tarawera, Orakei-Korako and Taupo.

Rotorua's economic base has been changing at a rapid pace, with considerable innovation in the traditional sectors of tourism, forestry and agriculture. These industries jointly contribute an estimated 25% of Rotorua's total economic output. There is an increasing number of smaller lifestyle farming blocks in the district, as well as rationalisation and more intensive use of larger farming blocks. In sectors such as education, manufacturing and retailing, Rotorua's competitive local environment has enabled many businesses and organisations to excel. There is also an internationally recognised depth of local expertise in the transport and engineering sectors.

Rotorua's occupational profile is gradually changing, with fewer agricultural workers and more manufacturers, professionals, teachers and other service occupations. Career opportunities exist across a wide range of industries. Fast-growing sectors over the coming years are expected to include trade and tourism, manufacturing, health, education and transport. Despite continued uncertainties in the forestry sector, the outlook for forestry and wood processing also remains optimistic. Emerging industries in Rotorua include spa and wellness, biotechnology, and film and television. There is also considerable scope for increased commercial development on land and resources owned and managed by local Maori.

Economic Recession

This Ten Year Plan is being prepared against a background of international economic turmoil unprecedented in the lives of most New Zealanders. How this international environment will affect the Rotorua economy is as yet unclear. However, it is unlikely that the tactical responses that have served us well over the last three years will still be as effective, or indeed valid, in the future. Flexibility in responding to changing circumstances will be critical.



This is but one legend that talks about the geothermal wonders of New Zealand. These stories act to inform future and current generations about the geothermal and volcanic activity, provide warnings, and create an aura of importance about these treasures so they are respected and protected.

Rotorua's Economy

Rotorua's central North Island location provides easy road, rail and air access. The district has enjoyed a sustained period of investment, providing a solid infrastructure for growth. Council has invested significantly in improving public amenities in the district. Rotorua is home to an increasing number of industry clusters including forestry, tourism and education. These are made up of professional bodies committed to working together to improve their operations.

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Rotorua's Environment

Rotorua's unique environment has shaped the development and identity of the district and provides a wide range of social, cultural, recreational and economic resources. The landscape and its cover have been substantially altered over time by geological events and human activity. Land cover in the district is now dominated by pasture (48%) and planted forest (20%), as well as indigenous forest and lakes. There are 137 Protected Natural Areas in the district, covering more than 30,620 ha. More than half of this is scenic reserve.

The district's 14 lakes form a backdrop to an abundant variety of natural resources, recreation options, visitor attractions and economic opportunities. The lakes and geysers of Rotorua are icons, recognised in this country and known throughout the world. Around 80% of Rotorua residents visit the district's lakes on at least a monthly basis. Lake water quality is an issue of significant community concern. In general, lake water quality has been declining over the long-term due to increased nutrient levels and resulting in sporadic algal blooms on a number of lakes. A collaborative approach is being taken by RDC with Environment Bay of Plenty, Te Arawa Lakes Trust and lakeside communities to better manage lake water quality.

Rotorua's Population in the Future

Introduction

Each year there are around 5,400 births in Rotorua District and approximately 2,500 deaths, so the natural increase is around 0.8% per year. However, over the period 1996 to 2001 the Rotorua District population remained unchanged due to excess out-migration to other parts of New Zealand and to overseas. The population grew by 2.2% between the 2001 and 2006 census.

The Rotorua District population was 68,100 in 2006. As well as overall population changes, the demographic profile of Rotorua is projected to change. In particular, the population profile is ageing, there is an increasing number of Maori residents, and also an increasing diversity of people belonging to Asian, Pacific Islands, and other ethnic groups.

Migrational 'churning' is a distinctive feature of the Rotorua District and wider Bay of Plenty. The latest population projections assume that Rotorua will continue to have slightly more out-migration than in-migration each year, resulting in an expected population growth rate of around 0.4% per annum over the coming 20 year period, compared with a national growth rate of 0.8%. The Bay of Plenty as a whole is forecast to grow at 1.25% per annum over this period, due to an expected continuation of rapid growth in Tauranga City and Western Bay of Plenty District.

The Rotorua District population is forecast to reach 71,986 in 2021 and 75,359 by 2051. These upper and lower limits are fairly arbitrary, but give some indication of the likely population increase.

Forecasting Growth

To ensure there is accurate and consistent information for the basis of planning, the council has developed a growth model which looks at all the factors impacting on growth in the district.

This model includes assumptions around the type of growth, eg residents compared to visitors, and demographic make-up. This information underpins our projected services included in the 2009-19 Ten Year Plan. It is crucial that our planning for services, infrastructure and funding is realistic and coordinated across the district. Key findings of the growth model are:

- Population Growth is forecast to grow by 0.38% per annum between 2001 and 2021, and a further 0.15% per annum to 2051.
- Household occupancy will trend down from 3 people per occupied dwelling in 2001 to 2.67 in 2021, and 2.6 in 2051.
- The number of households will increase from 26,493 in 2006 to 29,988 in 2021, and continue to grow to 32,058 in 2051.
- An additional 0.72 million visitor nights will be generated by 2021.
- Total visitor nights were 3.7 million in 2006 and are estimated to be 4.42 million by 2021.
- An additional 44 hectares of industrial/employment land will be needed by 2021 and a further 29 by 2051.
- An additional 8ha of retail/commercial land will be needed by 2021 and a further 5ha by 2051.
- The eastern suburbs show continued growth through to 2021 whilst the city experiences a reduction in population numbers. It is also believed that Hamurana, Ngongotaha and northern planning units will experience steady growth.

Aging Population

The implications of an aging population for local government are considerable. As the age structure of a population changes, the services required by the community will change. As a community ages, its demand for road construction and maintenance is likely to stagnate (or even decrease) while demand for passenger transport and total mobility services may increase. The nature of open spaces may change from playgrounds and fields for contact sports to requests for walkways and fewer sports grounds. In short, local communities will demand changes in the type and scale of a range of community services.