

## Background to Auckland

The Auckland metropolitan area, in the North of the North Island of New Zealand, is the largest in land area and the most populous urban area in the country (1.4 million residents).

Auckland (Tamaki-makau-rau: land of a thousand lovers) is a volcano-strewn isthmus which lies between the Waitemata and Manukau Harbours. The region extends out to the Hauraki Gulf to the east, the low-lying Hunua Ranges to the south-east, the Manukau Harbour to the south-west, and the Waitakere Ranges and smaller ranges to the west and north-west.

The isthmus was settled by Maori around 1350 and because of its rich fertile soils and access to marine resources was heavily settled with an estimated pre-contact population of about 20,000 Maori. Auckland became the country's capital by 1842 at the decision of Governor William Hobson. The area was named after George Eden, Earl of Auckland, then Viceroy of India. However, the capital was shifted to Wellington in 1865, with Auckland remaining as the principal city of the Auckland Province until the provincial system was abolished in 1876.

Auckland is New Zealand's main gateway from overseas and is the pre-eminent national centre for commerce, entertainment, education and recreation, and most urban functions apart from central government. It houses 31% of the country's population and is likely to continue to grow faster than other regions, thus cementing in its predominant position.

Substantial continuing population growth through immigration and natural population increases are expected with the urban region expecting to reach an estimated 1.9 million by 2031. A concern for urban sprawl arising from this growth has led to a 'Regional Growth Strategy' being adopted that sees limits on further subdivision on the rural outskirts and intensification of existing urban areas within 'Metropolitan Urban Limits' as its two main sustainability goals.

The median age is 33.9 years for people in Auckland Region. 9.9% are aged 65 years and over, whereas 22.1% are aged under 15 years. As the population of Auckland ages, the number of older people is expected to double in the next 25 years.

There are some 440,000 households in Auckland the 2006 census. The number of households is expected to grow faster than the overall population rate and therefore household size will tend to reduce over time, with one-person households in particular declining as a proportion as the population 'ages'. One-family households comprise 70% of households, 20% have one-person and small proportions are multi-family. The average household size in Auckland Region is 2.9 people. In terms of families,



couples with children comprise 46.3% , couples without children are 35% and just under 20% are single parent families.

Auckland has the largest Polynesian population of any city in the world, and over the last two decades many people of Asian ethnicity have settled. In terms of ethnicities, languages, religions and life-styles Auckland is a particularly cosmopolitan city.

Auckland provides a wide range of attractive (and mainly low-density suburban) living environments and is regarded as a safe and well-serviced place to live. The 2010 Mercer Quality of Living Survey ranked Auckland 4th equal place in the world, while The Economist's World's Most Liveable Cities index of 2010 ranked Auckland in 10th place. The Hauraki Gulf in particular is a marine playground and swimming beaches abound. In terms of affordability Auckland appears in a mid-position when compared with other cities, with housing being particularly expensive.

Most information is collected because it indicates likely problems or the actual occurrence of problems and has a generally 'deficit' pall. However, it is also possible to point to areas where community social capital is built up so that demands on the community can be better met, or where there are likely to be fewer needs. Aspects include length of stay of the resident population, tenure, and proportion involved in community volunteering. This community resilience is an important further dimension to Auckland life.

A unified local governance structure for Auckland was set up in 2010, amalgamating eight former councils into one authority delivering council services in conjunction with 21 local boards and seven Council Controlled Organisations (CCOs).