

Our region

People



At a glance

- Northland is home to about 158,000 people, one-third of whom are Māori.
- Ours is the most rurally-based population of any region in New Zealand.
- Primary industry accounts for 16% of our Gross Domestic Product (compared with 7% nationally).
- We have the highest proportion of non-working age people in the country.

Population and society

Just over half of Northland's 158,000 people live in the Whāngārei district, 37% in the Far North, and 13% in Kaipara.

Our population is evenly split between urban and rural – quite different to the rest of New Zealand, which is 86% urban and only 14% rural.

Northland's working age population has the lowest proportion of 15-39 year olds in New Zealand, at around 27% compared with the national average of 33%.

Economy and income

Like the rest of New Zealand, Northland's economy has been impacted by the recent recession.

Unemployment in the region rose from 4.3% in 2007 to 8.5% in 2011. Annual economic growth for Northland for the same period was 0.2%, compared with 3.5% over the previous five years.

Forestry and logging grew, accounting for almost 11% of the national harvest in 2011. Meanwhile farming returns dropped – likely due to extreme weather – with regional milk production falling by nearly 10% and beef stock numbers by 20%.

Northland's median household income in 2011 was \$1044 per week, about 81% of the national median and the lowest of the 12 New Zealand regions for which data is available.

Tangata whenua

Te Tai Tokerau (Northland) has nine iwi whose tribal boundaries fall within it, either partially or fully – Te Aupōuri, Ngāti Kuri, Ngāti Kahu, Te Rarawa, Ngāi Takoto, Ngāti Kahu/Ngāpuhi ki Whaingaroa, Ngāpuhi, Ngātiwai and Ngāti Whātua.

Two treaty settlements have been legislated for and, as at July 2012, four Deeds of Settlement had been agreed between iwi and the Crown.



A key regional policy objective is to involve tangata whenua in the management of Northland's natural and physical resources.

Iwi planning documents help council understand what's important to an iwi or hapū and better involve them the management of our resources.

Place



At a glance

- Northland has a land area of 12,548 square kilometres and its coastline is 3200km long.
- Our climate is mild, humid and fairly windy.
- Flooding is Northland's most frequent natural hazard.
- Marsden Point is the deepest natural harbour in New Zealand. Its port handles 31% of merchandise imported through the country's sea ports.

Climate and environment

Mean annual temperatures in the Far North, eastern and south-west coastal areas of Northland are the highest in New Zealand. Our climate is generally mild, humid and fairly windy, with plentiful annual rain.

No part of Northland is more than 40km from the sea. Unlike most other regions we have few mountain ranges – the highest point is in the Waima Range, Hokianga, at just 781m.

Our region has a diverse landscape, from rolling hill country and modest areas of flat

low-lying land, to a dense network of rivers and distinctive coastline and harbours.

Northland is home to half of the nation's remaining kauri forest and a rich diversity of wildlife with large populations of many rare or declining species.

Natural hazards

Flooding is the most frequent natural hazard affecting our region, putting life and property at risk.

Our northerly geographical setting exposes the region to ex-tropical cyclones – on average, one ex-tropical cyclone passes nearby every year.

Current flood hazards have been compounded by historic widespread settlement on flood-prone areas, and modification of the natural environment.

Tsunami are also considered a high risk hazard for Northland, especially amongst our coastal communities.

Infrastructure

Infrastructure is an integral part of modern life. If well-chosen and operated, it can bring benefits that extend for many generations.

Wastewater systems are improving, with upgrades now operational in Mangawhai and Whāngārei and consents granted for new schemes in Ruakaka and Kerikeri.

Recent droughts have highlighted the need for more water storage in the region to increase resilience in 'dry' years.

Marsden Point, the deepest natural harbour in New Zealand, is a busy port and requires significant development of facilities and access to expand.

