

# The Waimakariri District

**Waimakariri is a Māori word meaning 'river of cold rushing water'.**

The Waimakariri District was created on 1 November 1989, when the Kaiapoi Borough, Oxford County, Rangiora District and Waimakariri/Ashley Water Supply Board were amalgamated with a part of the Hurunui County.

It lies to the north of the Waimakariri River and covers some 225,000 hectares, extending from Pegasus Bay in the east to the Puketeraki Range in the west.

Land to the east of the District is relatively flat and fertile, while the District's western landscape is hilly and dominated by Mt Oxford, Mt Richardson, Mt Thomas and Mt Grey.

For the past 15 years, Waimakariri has been one of the fastest growing districts in New Zealand, and now, around 66,246 people call it home (Stats NZ 2023 Census estimate).

The population includes relatively large numbers of children and older adults, many of whom are "New Zealanders" or "European" in origin.

Almost all of those wanting work are able to find employment, either full or part-time.

Around half choose to both live and work in the District, (mostly in manufacturing, retailing, and the community sector).

Families make up the majority of the District's households.

Most residents own their own home.



## Settlements

In pre-European times there were several important Ngāi Tahu settlements in the area, including the pa of Tūrākautahi, known as Kaiapoi.

Today the hapū Te Ngāi Tūāhuriri is based at Tuahiwi, to the north of the river town.

Early European settlement concentrated on the fertile soils of the plains where, until the middle of the 20th century, extensive agriculture and pastoral farming predominated.

More recently, horticulture and forestry have gained in importance.

The introduction of the Waimakariri Irrigation Scheme on the upper Waimakariri-Ashley plain in 2000 has seen the development of large-scale dairy farms on land previously used for sheep, cattle and cropping.

If you are new to our District you can find information on the North Canterbury Newcomers Network in the CINCH Community Database on the library page of our website [waimakaririlibraries.com](http://waimakaririlibraries.com)

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Kaiapoi and Rangiora remain the two main towns.

Woodend, Oxford and Pegasus are the other major urban settlements. The District also has a number of villages and beach settlements.

During European times, Kaiapoi developed as a river port, Rangiora was the area's main market town, and the development of Oxford was based on timber milling.

Where land use has evolved over time, similarly the role of the urban areas has also changed, mainly because of the rapid population growth.

Increasingly residents are choosing to live in the rural areas with many new smallholdings created.

Some of these are used for full-time or part-time horticultural enterprises, including vegetable and flower growing.

### **People tell us Waimakariri is a great place to live, work and play**

Its sandy beaches, estuaries, river gorges and braided rivers offer a range of opportunities for fishing, boating and rafting.

The foothills and mountains provide for tramping experiences, which complement a growing range of walking trails and formal recreation areas throughout the district.

Its two high schools, two composite schools and many primary schools are well supported by the community.

There are an increasing number of pre-schools in the District.

There is also an extensive range of community and recreational organisations; and a relatively high proportion of residents are involved in one or more of these.

Despite rapid growth, Waimakariri retains its rural/small town character.



**Find out more at [waimakariri.govt.nz](http://waimakariri.govt.nz), or contact Customer Services on 0800 965 468.**