

## Description of the district

Waitomo District encompasses 3,546 km<sup>2</sup> of predominantly rural land on the west coast of the Central North Island. The district's diverse coastline stretches almost 140km from the settlement of Kinohaku in the north to the Mokau River mouth in the south.

In 2018, the census indicated that Waitomo district had a population of 9,300 people. Te Kūiti is the district's main administrative and trading centre, with approximately 45% of the population residing there. There are several other smaller settlements located throughout the district, including the popular coastal settlements of Mokau, Awakino, Marokopa, Te Waitere, Kinohaku and Taharoa. The main rural communities are Aria, Maniaiti/Benneydale, Piopio and Waitomo Caves Village. The district caters for a wide variety of land uses including pastoral farming, mineral extraction, forestry, industry and tourism activities.

Maniapoto is the main Iwi in the district and has strong ties and affiliations to Rereahu and Waikato-Tainui who are located respectively in the south-eastern and north-western corners of the district.

While approximately 95% of the district's land area is contained within the Waikato Region, the south-eastern corner is within the Manawatū-Whanganui Regional Council jurisdiction. Ōtorohanga District is adjacent to the north, Taupō District to the east, Ruapehu and New Plymouth Districts to the south. Almost 40% of the district is held as conservation estate.

The district has a diverse landscape which is variously dominated by the Herangi Range, the internationally significant areas of karst around Waitomo Caves Village, and the rugged and remote western coastline. It is traversed by expansive tributaries feeding the Waikato and Whanganui River systems. The district includes the southern part of Kawhia harbour which is a distinctive and important ecosystem, containing large areas of intertidal flats and coastal wetlands. In the eastern area of the district is the ancient podocarp rainforest of Pureora.