



*Western Lake Road, Rimutaka Ranges*

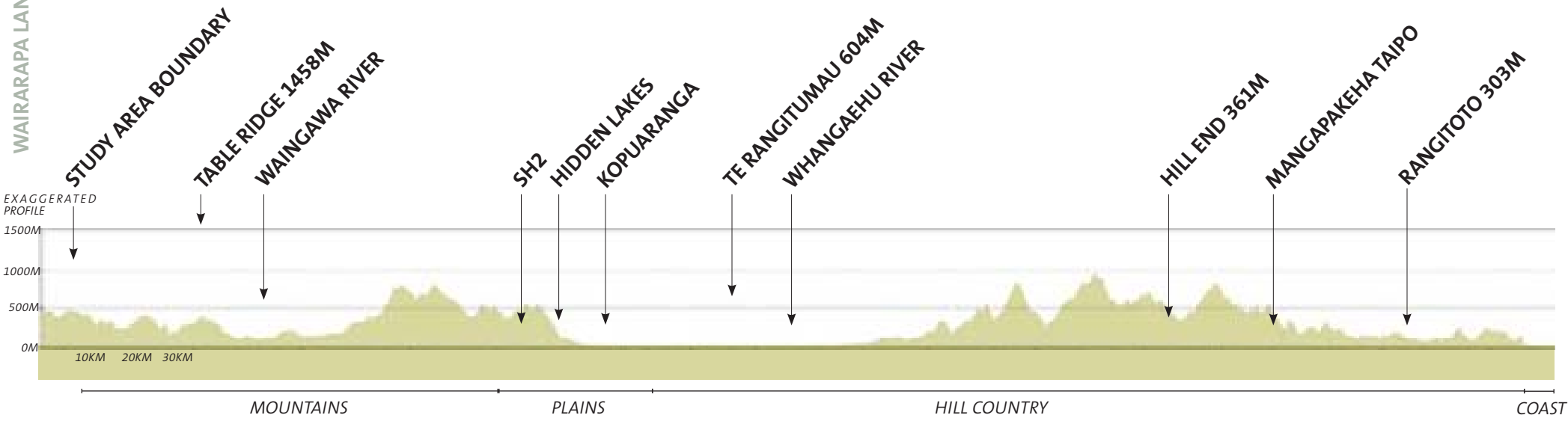
## SECTION B: LANDSCAPE CHARACTER DESCRIPTIONS

# BROAD LANDSCAPE TYPES

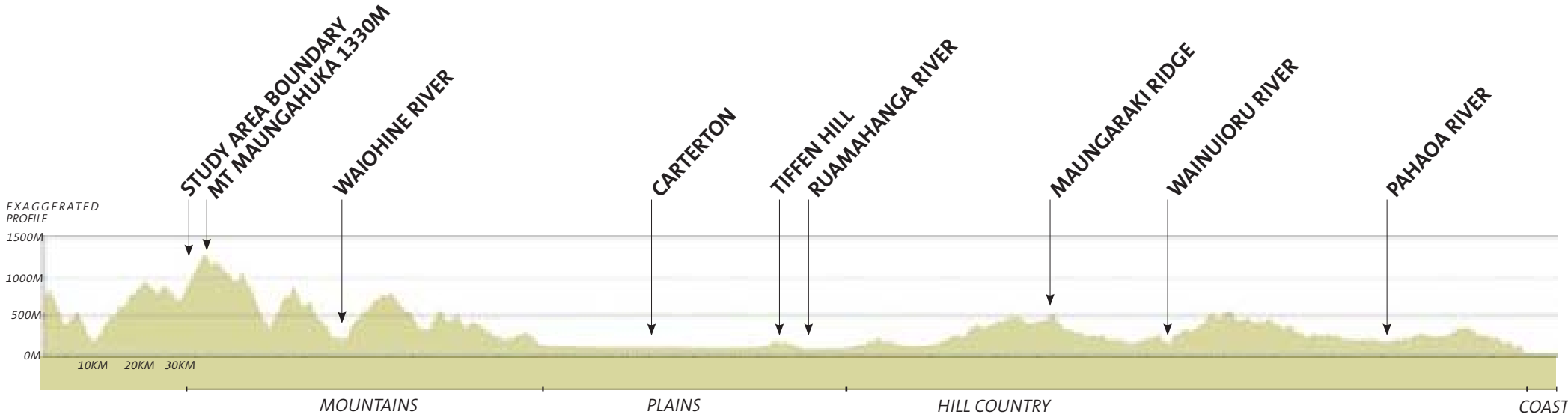
This section begins with a description of each of the four broad landscape types in the Wairarapa followed by descriptions of each of the 32 landscape character areas identified. Each landscape character area description includes a map, photographs, narrative and a summary of key landscape characteristics.

The Wairarapa comprises four broad, readily identifiable landscape types which are described in the following section:

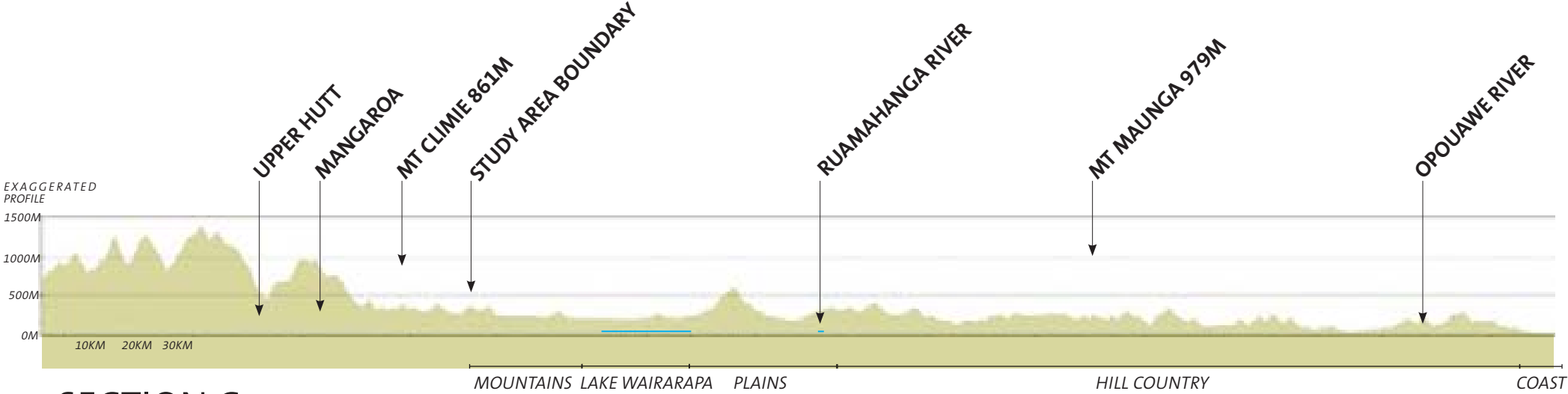
- Ranges (Tararuas, Rimutakas and Aorangi);
- Plains
- Hill Country
- Coast.



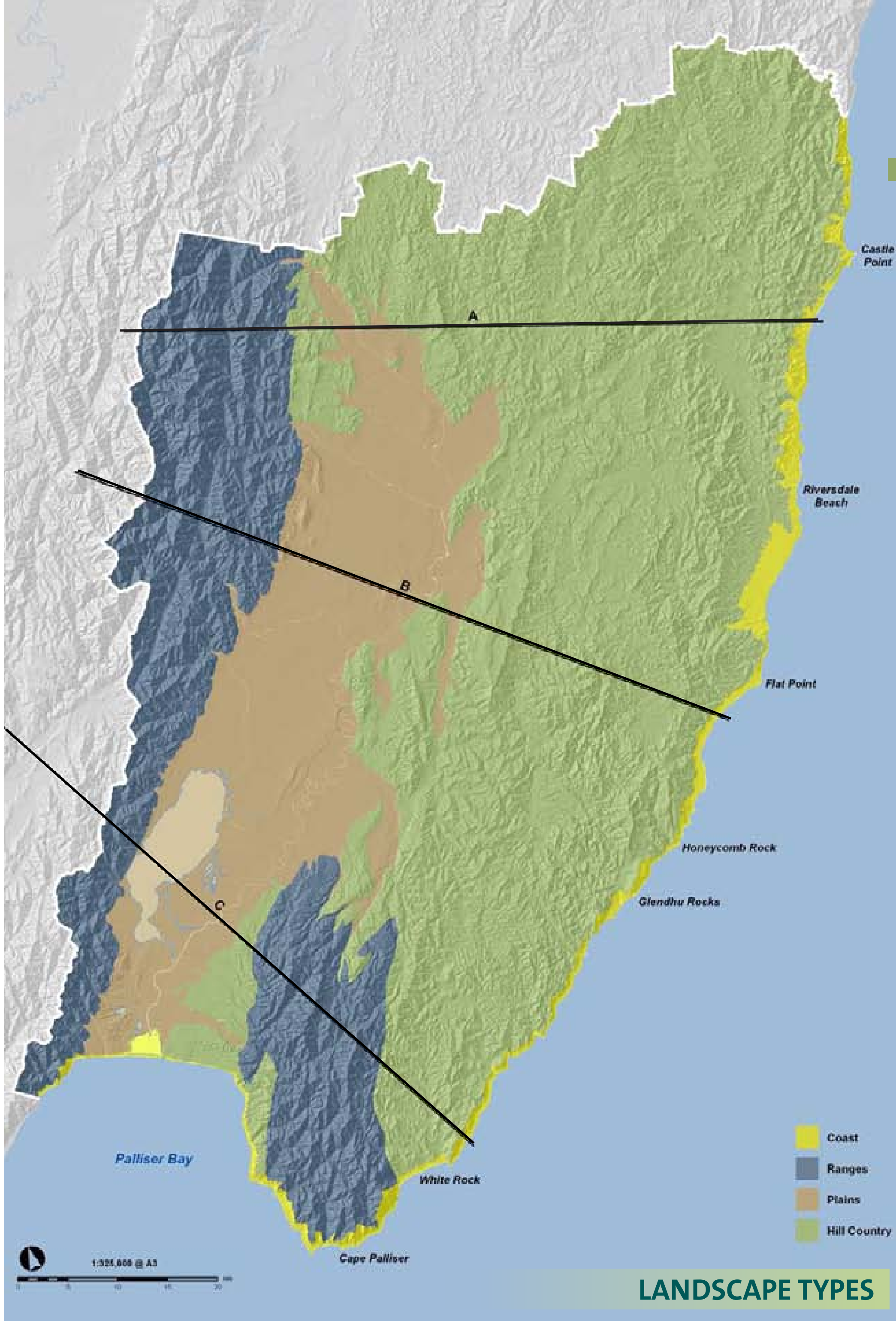
SECTION A



SECTION B



SECTION C



## RANGES

The axial mountains of the Tararua and Rimutaka Ranges clearly define the western edge of the Wairarapa while the Aorangi Range forms a large mass on the south-eastern corner.

The Tararua and Rimutaka Ranges provide a fairly sharp and abrupt definition to the plains and lowlands. They are steep and mostly clad in native forest and form a strong and distinctive boundary to the Wairarapa and separate it from adjoining territorial districts of Upper Hutt, Hutt City and Kapiti Coast.

Aligned northeast-southwest, these steep ranges are primarily composed of greywacke and contain a series of steep-sided streams that drain into Lake Wairarapa in the south (Rimutaka Range) or the tributaries of the Ruamahanga River system (i.e. Waiohine, Waingawa and Waipoua Rivers) in the north (Tararua Range).

The Tararua and Rimutaka Ranges occupy around 14% of the Wairarapa land area. Much of the ranges are protected in the Tararua and Rimutaka Forest Parks, which are administered and managed by the Department of Conservation. The Tararua Forest Park is extensive with at least half of it lying in adjoining districts to the north and west.

The Tararua and Rimutaka Ranges are dominant elements of the Wairarapa landscape, forming a backdrop and formidable physical boundary, which has had a profound influence on settlement, land use and development. The ranges are largely responsible for the Wairarapa developing and retaining its identity as separate and distinctive from its western neighbours.

A broken line of foothills that extend along the base of the ranges provide a transition between the steep native forest-clad ranges and the Wairarapa Plains. These foothills vary in width; they form a wide distinctive band in the northern part of the district whereas in the south they are much narrower and discontinuous. The foothills have been mostly cleared and are farmed or in places are reverting back to native vegetation.

The West Wairarapa Fault which can be seen clearly in many places as a 'scarplet', extends along the foothills. The fault forms the eastern margin of the Rimutaka Range; a single fault line runs along the western shores

of Lake Wairarapa and north-eastwards as far as the Waingawa River and then it splits into a series of faults, which pass through Mauriceville. At the Waiohine River, the fault has cut through a series of river terraces, which mark the down-cutting of the river.

The higher and more northern Tararua Ranges have a relatively moist climate with an annual rainfall of between 1600-1800+mm, the lower elevation Rimutaka Ranges have a lower rainfall of 1200+ mm and the Aorangi Ranges rainfall varies from 1200-2400+ depending on elevation. In many places along the foothills, early European settlers established their homesteads and farming operations and in recent times rural residential subdivision has been established in places.

While the original native forest on the foothills was cleared for agriculture, the gullies contain 'fingers' of young secondary native regeneration that connect to the native forest on the mid and upper hill slopes. Parts of the western foothills are included in the Rimutaka and Tararua Forest Parks. The Aorangi Range forms a prominent hard rock landmass, most of which is included in the Haurangi Forest Park. While the Aorangi Range occupies less than 7% of the land area of the Wairarapa, it has a formidable presence and forms a distinctive backdrop to the southern plains. It comprises dissected steep to very steep slopes with extensive areas of native forest. On the forest margins, areas that were formerly cleared have reverted to native and exotic scrub with grazing on some of the lower pasture-covered slopes.

*The Tararua and Rimutaka Ranges are dominant elements of the Wairarapa landscape, forming a strong, vegetated backdrop to the plains.*





## PLAINS & LOWLANDS

The Wairarapa valley has been formed by downwarping along the West Wairarapa Fault. The valley is open at its southern end, forming Palliser Bay, between the Rimutaka Range on the west and the Aorangi Range on the east. In the past, the sea occupied this southern part of the valley but in recent times the Ruamahanga River built up a dam across the seaward end of the depression, forming Lake Onoke and converting Lake Wairarapa into a freshwater lake.

The Ruamahanga River and its tributaries are a dominant feature of the plains, and have essentially created them through deposition of river gravels.

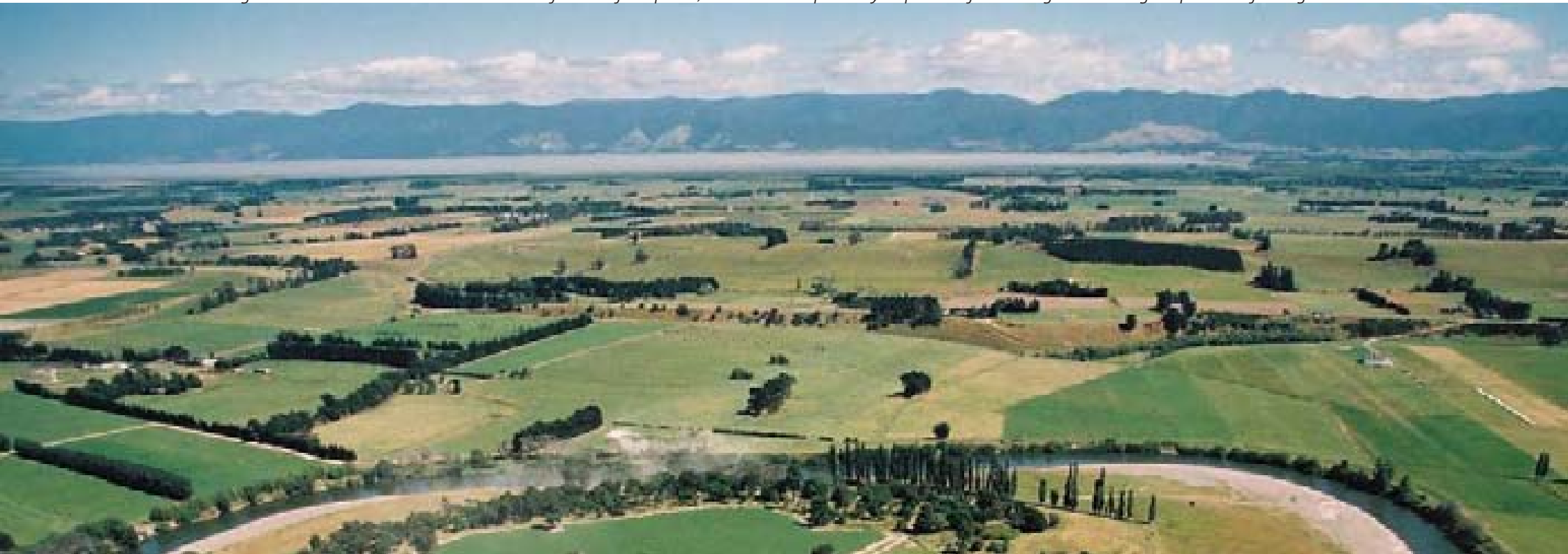
River gravels and alluvium form the underlying geology. The fertility and ease of development for agriculture meant that the plains and lowlands were readily developed for agriculture and they have been extensively modified. The plains are intensively grazed, with areas in horticultural crops declining during the past decade, apart from the areas in grapes around Martinborough and Gladstone, and also more recently north of Masterton. The majority of the towns and settlements in the Wairarapa are located on the plains.

The plains, which occupy around 20% of the land area of the Wairarapa, can be broadly subdivided into two, the northern plain comprising flat, gently undulating to rolling land most of which is intensively grazed with shelterbelts, amenity plantings and small areas of native forest remnants. The northern plain is also where most of the Wairarapa towns are located (Featherston, Greytown, Carterton, Masterton) and consequently a smaller subdivision and settlement has occurred around each of these towns.

The southern plain is dominated by Lake Wairarapa, which covers approximately 8000ha. Martinborough and the small coastal settlement of Lake Ferry are the only substantial settlements in the southern plains. Drainage and reclamation of the margins and swamps located around the periphery of the lake have been converted to farmland, which is intensively grazed. Realignment of the Ruamahanga River and construction of flood protection measures, especially continuous stopbanks have contained the river and in places affected its visibility from surrounding areas.

The southern plains have several sizable remnants of the once extensive kahikatea forest that was prevalent throughout the plains, together with groups of scattered kahikatea, which are not generally found in the northern part.

*The Ruamahanga River and its tributaries are a dominant feature of the plains, and have been primarily responsible for creating them through deposition of river gravels.*



## HILL COUNTRY

Hill country dominates the Wairarapa in terms of land area, covering around 60% and together with the Aorangi Ranges enclose the plains. The broad tract of hill country wraps around the northern and eastern edges of the plains and in the northwestern corner, west of the Waipoua River. The hill country extends beyond the study area into the Tararua District in the north and also eastward to the coast.

There is considerable variation in this hill country in terms of the underlying geology, elevation, and steepness, which in turn has significantly influenced land use. There is also considerable variation in vegetation cover from extensive areas in pasture, to large tracts of exotic forestry, smaller woodlots, to large areas of remnant and regenerating native forest, and areas of exotic scrub.

Moving eastwards between the relatively narrow band of rolling hill country along the edges of the plains and the coast, there is a wide swathe of steep to very steep hill country. Characterised by alternating sandstone and mudstone and jagged sharp hill-slope summits, much of the Wairarapa's radiata pine forests have been established on this hill country. Much of it is also in pasture and is farmed with extensive areas of regenerating secondary native vegetation and reverted scrubland on the upper steeper slopes. The hill country is drained by numerous streams and waterways often in steeply dissected gullies and narrow valleys, some of which drain eastwards and others to the west.

In places, massive bodies of erosion-resistant sandstone known locally as 'taipo' are prominent landscape features, and form a distinctive backdrop to the scrublands and pasture on the mid and lower hill slopes. Areas of limestone are also present; many of these limestone areas lie on the western periphery of the hill country, adjacent to the plains.

A band of varying width of gently rolling hill country is located along the northern and eastern edge of the plains. These areas have long been cleared and are grazed, although in recent times there have been changes in land use, especially in the vicinity of the towns with rural residential subdivision in many places. However, each of these subdivisions generally comprises only five or so allotments. In addition, rarely have these subdivisions entailed construction of a new public road. Instead, they are accessed by rights-of-way off existing roads.

The hill country generally receives less rainfall (1000-1400mm) than the ranges and typically, there is a summer dry period.

*On the hill country there is considerable variation in vegetation cover from extensive areas in pasture, to large tracts of exotic forestry, smaller woodlots, to large areas of remnant and regenerating native forest, and areas of exotic scrub, as shown here in the Kaiwhata River Valley.*



## COAST

The Wairarapa coast is a distinctive broad landscape type that occupies a narrow fringe of land along virtually the entire coastline. It comprises uplifted marine terraces, which are frequently dissected, steep escarpments, alluvial fans and smaller areas of dunes. The features along the coast are many and varied, from the spectacular 160m high cliffs at Castlepoint (Rangiwhakaoma), the alternating sandstone and mudstone beds at Whakataki, prominent limestone reefs (Castlepoint and White Rock), the cobblestone beds at Uruti Point, honeycomb rock formations along the Glenburn coast, to the huge slab of sandstone that is Kupe's Sail.

Large farm landholdings, many of which were established in the early days of European settlement, occupy the uplifted marine terraces and coastal flats and also extend inland on to the adjoining eastern hill country. There are few roads to the coast and so much of it is relatively isolated. However, there are several small and distinctive settlements, most of which have a small permanent population; some such as Ngawi and Castlepoint, were established as small commercial fishing bases, whilst others such as Riversdale, were originally developed as a coastal holiday settlement.

In recent times, there has been considerable pressure in places for larger scale coastal subdivision and the small clusters of traditional small-scale bachs are being replaced by many extensive subdivisions of large holiday homes, many of which are often very urban in character.

Thirty two character areas have been identified and are described and mapped in the following pages. The character area descriptions are ordered according to the broad landscape types that they loosely fall within. However, the boundaries of the character areas do not necessarily align with those of the broad landscape areas.

*Castlepoint is well known for its lighthouse, horse races on the beach, and 160-metre-high Castle Rock. The reef, lagoon, sand dunes and Castle Rock form the Castlepoint scenic reserve.*



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## LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

# TARARUA - RIMUTAKA RANGES

The Tararua-Rimutaka character area includes the steep, forested Rimutaka and Tararua Ranges which provide strong visual and spatial separation between the Wairarapa and the neighbouring Hutt Valley and Kapiti Coast. The Tararuas cover 3,168 square kilometres from the Manawatu Gorge 100km south to SH2 (Rimutaka Hill Road, north of Upper Hutt), while the Rimutaka Ranges extend from the SH2 to Turakirae Head.

Although lower than the Tararua Range to the north, the Rimutaka Range is still formidable, with peaks from 700 to 940 metres high. It consists of parallel ranges interspersed with deep river valleys. The western extent of the character area is defined by the territorial boundary, whilst the eastern extent is determined by an abrupt change in slope where the ranges abut either the plain or the more gently rolling and farmed foothills (below 350m asl).

The predominant land type is western greywacke (Land Type 4, 5) which is characterised by a faulted and heavily dissected and uplifted landscape with narrow, sinuous undulating terraces and gravel choked riverbeds. With each major movement of the fault (associated with an earthquake) the land to the west has been both uplifted and displaced to the north-west (relative to the plains side of the faultline).

The Tararua Ranges (north of of SH2) are typically higher in elevation and have greater rainfall than the Rimutaka Ranges to the south. The slope is steep (26-35°) to very steep (>35°), with the elevation ranging from approximately 5m asl to 1529m asl at the peak of Mount Hector (Pukemoumou).

The Waiohine Faulted Terraces are a significant feature, marking the movement of the West Wairarapa fault over the last 35,000 years. They are partially protected in a scientific reserve on the southeast margin of the Tararua Forest Park.

The steep, largely inaccessible terrain and moist soil conditions support an extensive and diverse variety of native flora and fauna. At low altitude the dominant vegetation type is lowland podocarp/tawa or podocarp/kamahi forest, and as elevation increases this changes to montane podocarp/beechn, then subalpine pure beech (forming a sharp treeline), then to alpine tussock grasslands.

Many of the peaks and streams along the Tararua Ranges were named by Kurahaupo people and are still used today. The mountains connected the tribes on both sides and this is evident in tribal whakapapa (genealogy) and migrations for food such as Otaki hapu travelling to Wairarapa Moana for tuna. A myriad of tracks through the mountains reinforce

the relationships between people on both sides. A number of camps, papakainga and pa were situated on the foothills of the ranges .

Three-quarters of the Tararua Range falls within the Tararua Forest Park which was established as the first of a series of forest parks in 1954. Extending from the Pahiatua Track in the north, to the Rimutaka Saddle on SH2 in the south, the 116,535 ha park is now the largest conservation park managed by DoC in the North Island, and provides the people of Wellington (Te Whanganui o Tara), Wairarapa, Horowhenua and Manawatu with an outstanding variety of tramping, hunting and walking opportunities. The park has a very important role in conserving the indigenous biodiversity of the lower North Island.

The 22,000 ha Rimutaka Forest Park encompasses much of the Rimutaka Range. Easily accessible from Wellington (Te Whanganui o Tara), the area is popular with trampers and hunters. A rail route established in 1878 between the Hutt Valley and Featherston carried passengers up the steep incline from the Rimutaka summit to Featherston until the opening of the Rimutaka rail tunnel in 1955. DoC and Greater Wellington Regional Council now jointly manage the rail land from Kaitoke to Cross Creek as a recreational and historic area. Beech forest dominates much of the range, joined by podocarps at lower altitudes.

During the early years of European settlement, the catalyst for the exploration of the Tararua Range was the need to survey the plains to the east and west of the range for occupation by new settlers. This required triangulation using sight lines from the highest peaks (on which were placed ‘trigs’).

Due to the steep and densely forested terrain, the Ranges themselves are difficult to access and aside from the occasional tramping hut have remained undeveloped.

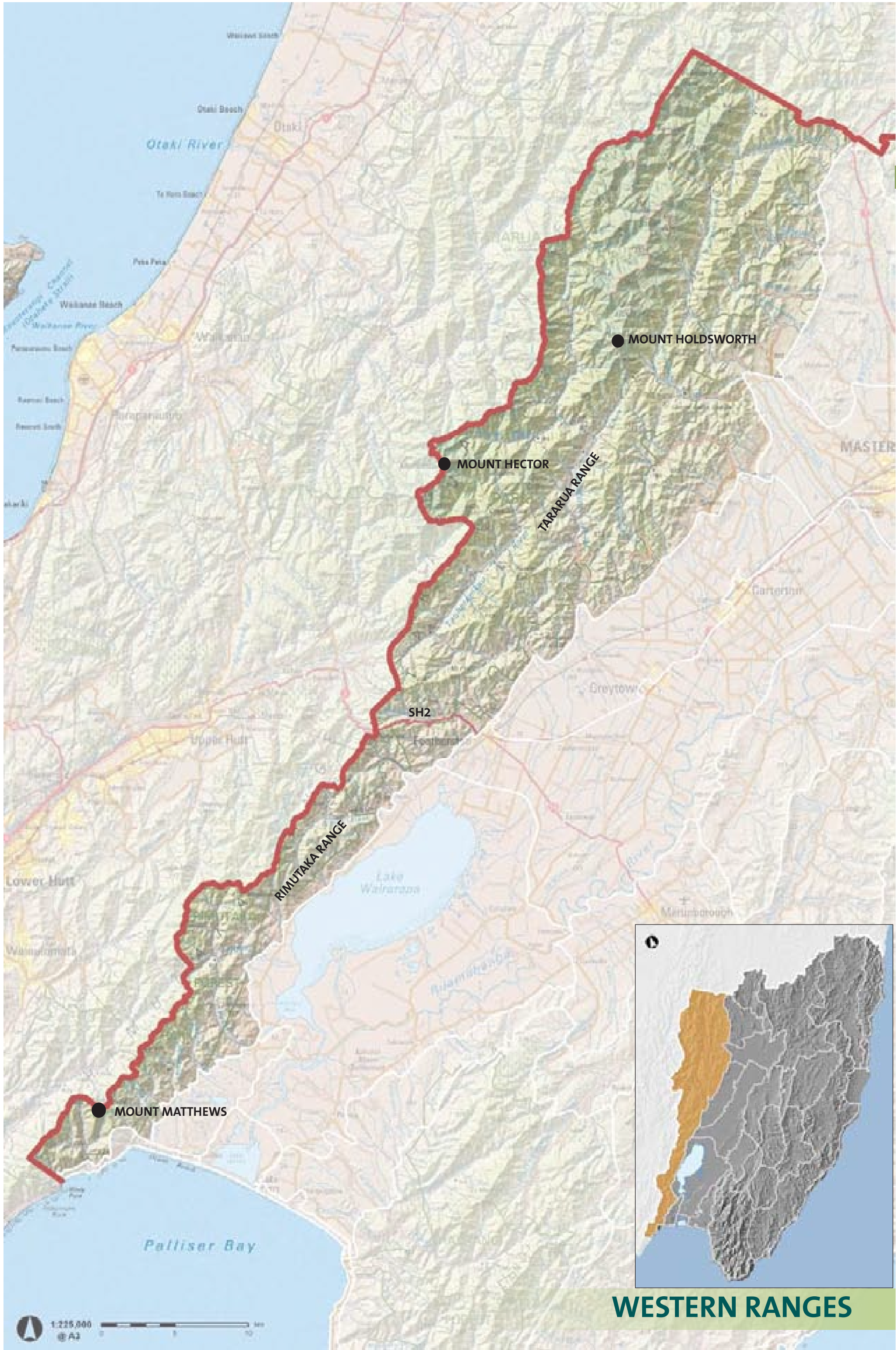
KEY LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISTICS

- Waiohine Faulted Terraces
- Cross Creek railway settlement
- Orongorongo (816 metres)
- Mount Holdsworth (Taratahi) (1470m)
- Mount Hector (1529m) tallest peak in the Tararuas
- Mt Mathews (949m) tallest peak in the Rimutaka
- Tararua Forest Park
- Rimutaka Forest Park
- Cone Hut, Field Hut, Rimutaka Rail Trail (heritage sites)

Left: West of Carterton, exotic pine forest and regenerating native forest on the foothills; Tararua Ranges beyond densely-clad in native forest. Middle: Reservoirs located in the high rainfall ranges. Right: Fingers of native vegetation extend from the Tararua Ranges along stream gullies to the plains.







# AORANGI RANGES

Also known as the Haurangi Range, the Aorangi Ranges are the southernmost mountain range in the North Island and extend more than 20 kilometres north from Cape Palliser. Mt Ross (Hikapu Maunga) (983m) in the northern block of the ranges is the highest point. Aorangi means ‘cloudy skies’, (it can also relate to special peaks on islands in the Pacific Ocean. When early people arrived in New Zealand they named peaks Aorangi to remember their homelands. The name can also relate to the closeness to the gods on mountains where the air is clear and the world is illuminated as opposed to the shadows that fall upon the land below) alluding to frequent southerly squalls that assail the bleak Wairarapa Coast. The greater portion of these mountains is covered in native forest which is protected and set aside for public recreational use as part of the Aorangi / Haurangi Forest Park.

The park and surrounding area feature some dramatic landforms. They include the Putangirua Pinnacles which is a popular tourist attraction. Access to the rugged Aorangi Range and the network of tracks within Aorangi Forest Park is gained via several major streams. Several of these routes are across private land and require landowner permission.

The predominant land type is eastern greywacke (Land Type 6) and is characterised by steep (26-35°) to very steep slopes, sinuous terraces and floodplains, coastal cliffs and slumping along the southern coast. Elevation varies from 5.0m asl to 981m (Mt Ross). The landforms are raw and weathered, particularly the coastal escarpments which are subjected to strong desiccating north-westerlies and salt laden south-westerly winds. Key peaks include: Mangatoetoe (855m), Mt Barton (Tuhirangi Maunga) (899m), Kaiwhiri (807m), Mt Mabel (785m), Bull Hill (Aorangi Maunga) (863m), Te Maunga (979m), and Makara (778m).

The southern block of indigenous forest (7730 ha) was gazetted as a State Forest in 1900 and the northern block was added in 1936. The country between the two forest blocks was farmed, but stock was removed in June 1974 when the New Zealand Forest Service took over management and exotic species were planted to control erosion. The area was gazetted as a forest park in 1978.

Vegetation has been modified by fire, wild animals and grazing stock, while land clearance and logging have impacted on the foothills, coastline and river headwaters. Beech forest dominates the north of the range with hinau and matai characterising the hardwood forests and lower altitudes. Mahoe dominates on the moister soils in gully heads and on stream banks with fuchsia, makomako, heketara, kohuhu, titoki, rewarewa, rimu, and miro among other species present.

The shrublands of the river terraces and coastal foothills are generally dominated by tauhinu while elsewhere manuka and kanuka are the



Much of the Ranges is covered in native forest, some patches of original forest remain but most of it is advanced secondary native forest.

prevalent species at low altitude. Small areas of sub-alpine shrubland occur on the higher peaks.

Given the topography, the area is largely inaccessible except by foot. The area is relatively remote, and uninhabited aside from tramping huts. The forest park is popular with recreational hunters and trampers but there are also short walks with spectacular views (e.g. to the Putangirua Pinnacles). Access to the higher and more rugged parts of the park is via several major streams. Several of these routes are across private land and require landowner permission.

Aorangi Forest Park contains sites of early Maori occupation, including the Putangirua pa site.

## KEY LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISTICS

- Rugged, weathered, steep topography, coastal winds
- Important recreational resource
- Sense of remoteness
- Extensive areas of native regenerating bush, with beech forest on upper slopes
- The dramatic Putangirua Pinnacles – an example of badlands erosion
- The highest peak - Mt Ross (983m)
- Maori heritage sites are commonplace alongside streams inland from the coast because as well as shelter these places provided important access points to the forest for food and other resources

Left: The southern end of steep ranges were cleared for grazing and now support small native remnants and regenerating native scrub. Ngawi in foreground. Right: The rugged, steep and complex topography is largely inaccessible and remains covered in forest, (native forest, regenerating native forest, exotic pine plantations).







AORANGI RANGES

The Putangirua Pinnacles is one of the best examples in New Zealand of badlands erosion and earth pillar formation. The Putangirua Stream has exposed this ancient layer of gravels to the erosive forces of rain and floods. Where cemented silts or rocks within the gravel beds prove more resistant than the underlying sediments, spectacular individual pinnacles or “hoodoos” are formed.





# NORTHERN PLAINS

The Northern Plains character area takes in the northern part of the plains, and includes semi-enclosed valleys and lowlands around the base of the Tararua Ranges and Mauriceville West, the plains south of Mount Bruce (Pukaha), and Kopuaranga down to the boundary which includes the plains and hills at Matahiwi, to just north of Opaki. Whilst the land is largely flat, a series of undulating river fans and terraces aligned in a north-south direction are identifiable. These have been formed through ongoing deposition of gravels and are frequently offset by active faults in the west. The scale and immediacy of the Tararuas mean that they have a strong presence, and they provide a sense of enclosure to the plains.

The rounded, discrete landform of Tirohanga (306m) is a distinctive feature within the south-eastern extent of the character area. The Hidden Lakes, two small freshwater lakes in the hills above Kopuaranga, are another distinctive feature and landmark within the northern plains. The lakes were formed during the 1855 earthquake which triggered a large landslide that temporarily blocked the Ruamahanga River and destroyed the pa on the hill and papakainga downstream .

The Ruamahanga River, the ancestral river of Maori, is an important natural feature which is relatively unmodified (such as with stopbanks in the mid and lower reaches of the river); the channel however has gradually been pushed to the east by the alluvial deposits of the Tararuas. The soil is stony, and stacked boulders are commonly seen in paddocks or used to construct dry stone walls.

The distinctive peak of Te Rangitumau (603m), although located within the neighbouring Mauriceville character area, forms a highly recognisable feature from within the northern plains.

Rainfall is relatively high due to its proximity to the ranges. Mature, exotic amenity plantings of poplar and oak are extensive, whilst small scale pine woodlots and shelterbelts are common place. Apart from the 942 hectare of native forest at Mount Bruce, of which only a small portion is located in the Masterton (Whakaoriori) District, and some scattered totara on the plains, there are few remaining areas of native vegetation in the Northern Plains.

Local Maori called this area Te Kauru which can be translated to mean ‘the source’. The name refers to the upper-Ruamahanga catchment that snakes out of the Tararua Mountains south of Pukaha. This area was heavily forested and constituted the southern extent of the Seventy Mile Bush (Te Tapere Nui o Whatonga). Oral histories state that Maori used the forest as a source of food; for medicine, to learn about the forest and as a place to live. Stories are told of the forest being so dense that torches were used in daytime to help navigate the routes north.

Settlement is characterised by scattered, established farms and landholdings typically larger than 10 hectares. Land use is dominated by sheep and beef farming, and structures within the landscape relate



Hidden Lakes and the Ruamahanga River



Low hills, areas of scattered native forest remnants and groups of native trees fringe much of the northern plains.

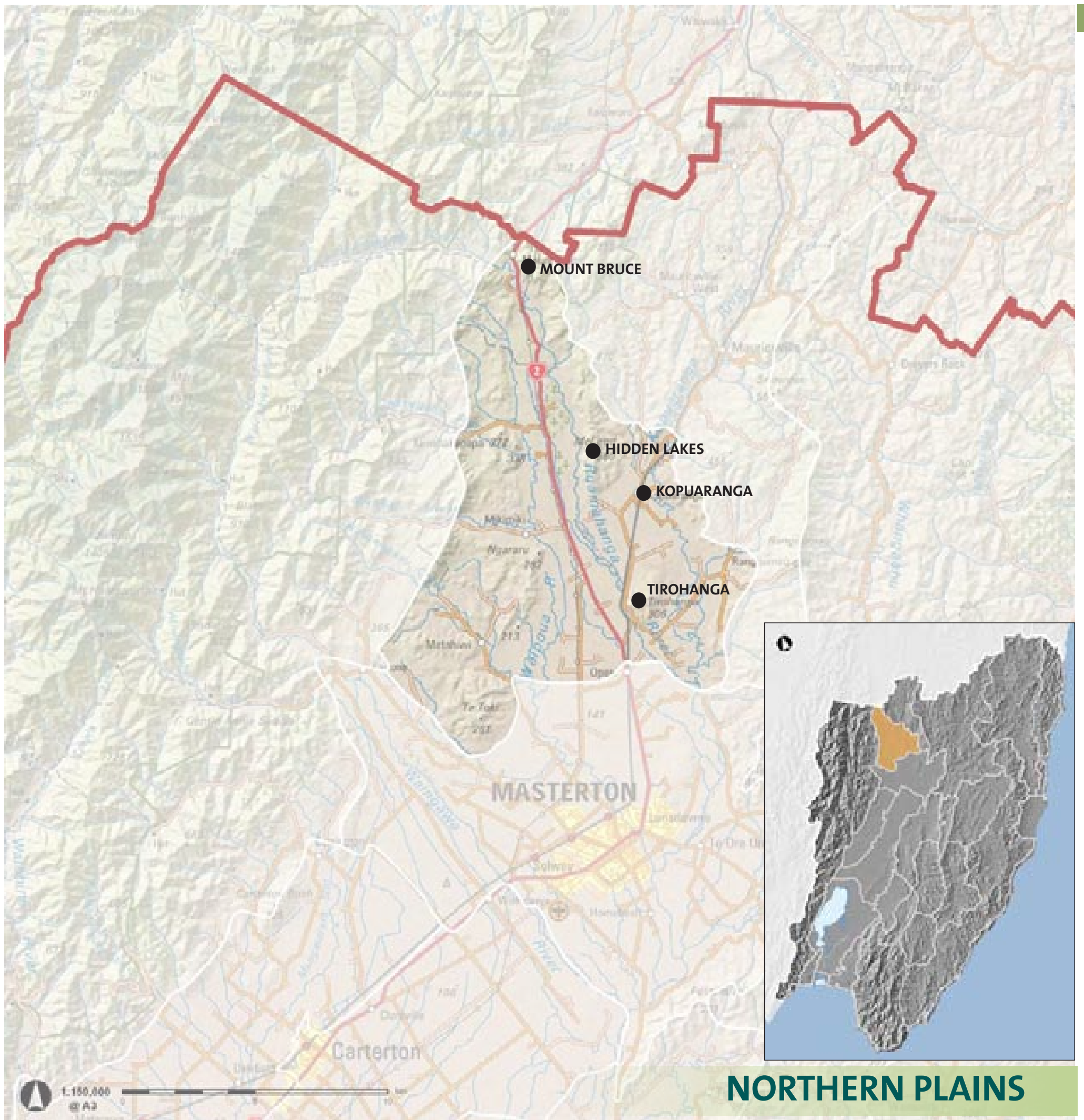
to farming operations (e.g. hay sheds, stock yards). Landscape change is minimal and gradual in comparison to the neighbouring character area around Masterton. The alignment of roads and railway lines is based on a modified grid pattern which reflects the flat topography of the plains and historic settlement patterns.

## KEY LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISTICS

- Largely flat to undulating topography, some elevated landforms
- Scattered settlement, larger landholdings, well established sheep and beef farmsteads
- Extensive exotic amenity plantings
- Isolated totara remnants on river terraces
- Proximity to Tararua Ranges
- Significance of landforms to Tangata Whenua: Tirohanga, Hidden lakes, views to Te Rangitumau
- Mt Bruce remnant of 70 mile bush

The distant skyline of the Tararua Ranges is a defining feature of the northern plains.





*Mature shelter belts are a feature of the plains. Te Rangitumau, is a prominent land mark.*





# MASTERTON

The Masterton (Whakaoriori) Plains character area is defined largely by the intensification of land use patterns, which radiate out from the centre of Masterton. This ‘halo’ has been subject to increasing development pressure as the town has grown, pushing rural-residential development to the edges of the plains and surrounding foothills.

This area has a long history of Maori occupation and has been a major settlement since early times. Migration routes out to the coast and the convergence of three main rivers connected it to other major food sources e.g. Lake Wairarapa. The original name was Whakaoriori which refers to the bird chorus prevalent in these parts. The earliest known pa site is Matewera west of Masterton which can be traced back to the early 15th century. The Westside of town had rich swamp soils and were used for large extensive gardens.

In 1853, a group of Wellington (Te Whanganui o Tara) and Hutt Valley workingmen, led by Cooper, Joseph Masters, formed a Small Farm Association, and petitioned Governor Grey for land upon which to establish their settlement. Following negotiations with local chief Te Korou, a piece of land on the banks of the Waipoua River was purchased, and on May 21 1854, the first settlers from the Association arrived on the site of the new township of Masterton. It has grown from a rural service town to a diverse community that has brought with it an increasing requirement for choice in terms of size of land holdings and opportunities for different types of living environments.

The outer edge of the Masterton Plains reflects an abrupt change in lot size and is approximately bounded by the Waingawa River in the south, the Tararua Ranges and northern plains to the north and west, and the low-lying hills behind Te Ore Ore to the east.

The alignment of roads and railway lines is based on a modified grid pattern which reflects the flat topography of the plains and historic settlement patterns.

A number of rivers, such as the Ruamahanga, Waipoua, and Waingawa, flow through the area and have had an important role in shaping the land. The resulting topography is flat to undulating, being characterised by river terraces and alluvial gravel fans. An isolated river terrace immediately north of the town (167m), is distinctive as it provides contrast with the general flatness of the surrounding plains. The Masterton Plains comprises stoney and free-draining gravels (Land Type 2), which also cover the northern central plains. The foothills flanking the plains are moderately steep, and largely comprised of limestone.

When compared to the northern plains, which are dominated by sheep and beef farming, the Masterton Plains has a much more diversified and small scale pattern of land use including vineyards, orchards, olive groves and rural residential allotments. There is a distinct rural-residential fringe around the town, with landholdings typically of 1-10 hectares. Rural-residential properties appear to be well established in Kaituna, with



Well established rural-residential development extends up either side of the Waingawa River valley, along Norfolk and Upper Plain Roads.



Recent rural-residential subdivision is occurring on the low lying hills north of Lansdowne, on the northern outskirts of Masterton. This activity has resulted in extensive amenity planting being established.

more recent subdivision activity focused around the toe of Fosters Hill/ Te Ore Ore (Black Rock Road), at Opaki, and Lansdowne,(elevated terrace immediately north of the town).

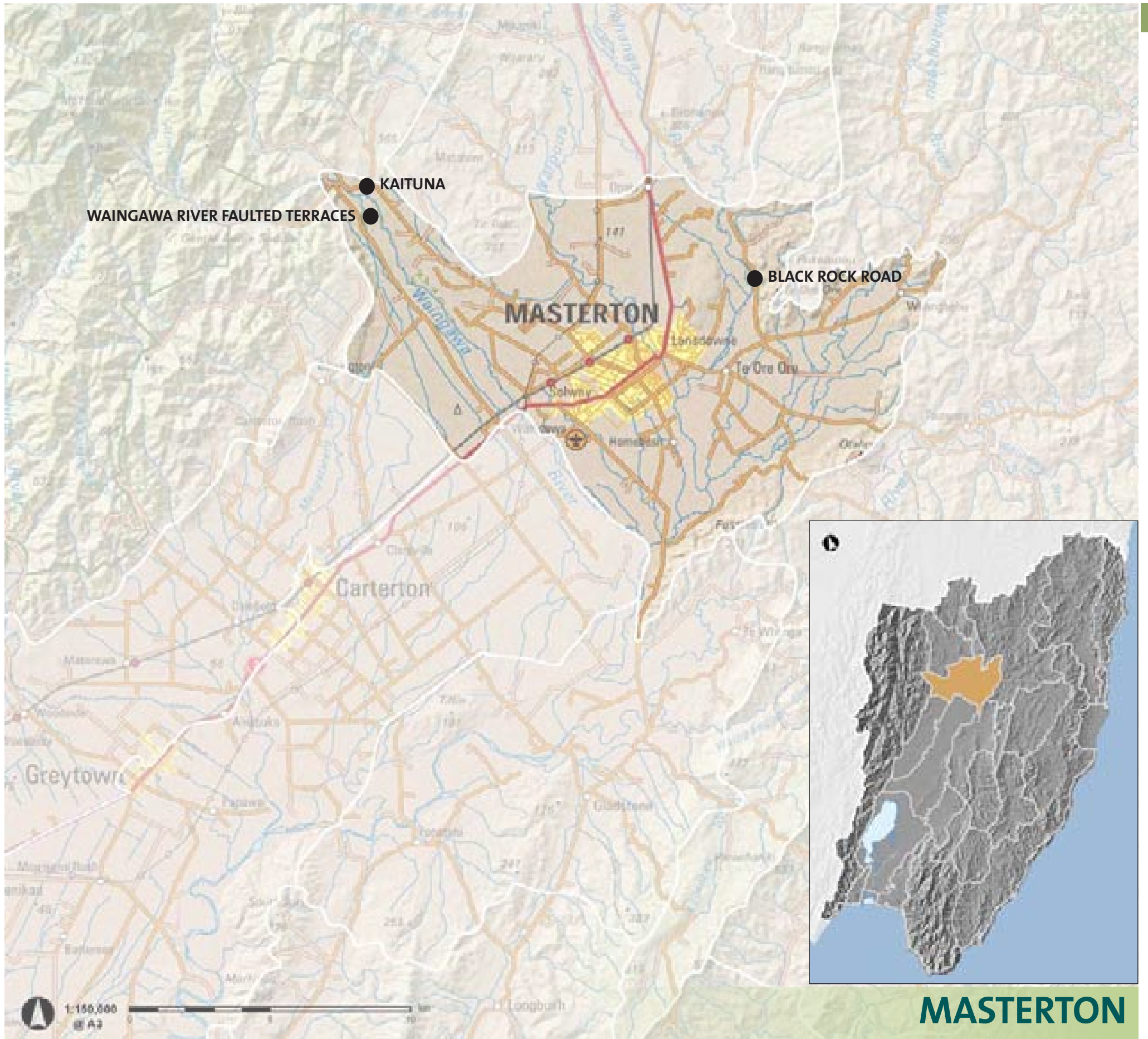
Amenity plantings (ash, oak, pine, willow and poplar) in both the old and newer rural-residential areas have transformed the appearance of these areas, creating park-like settings and a high level of visual amenity. In addition, there are groups and also substantial blocks of totara forest remnants scattered throughout the area, particularly around Kaituna. In places, there is a proliferation of small scale orchards, vineyards and olive groves.

### KEY LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISTICS

- Flat to rolling topography – alluvial terraces
- Diversified, small scale pattern landuse with rural-residential on the fringe
- Extensive amenity plantings
- The various local rivers – Ruamahanga, Waipoua, and Waingawa Rivers which have influenced character of the area
- Waingawa River faulted terraces

The low lying hills around Te Ore Ore are desirable for rural-residential development. A number of new subdivisions are evident along Black Rock Road, which have been well integrated through careful siting and extensive amenity plantings.





The view from Te Ore Ore (246m) and the Black Rock Road subdivision reveals the diversified and small scale pattern of land use around Masterton, which includes sheep and beef farming, dairying, orchards, vineyards, olive groves and rural residential allotments.



# WESTERN PLAINS

The Western Plains character area includes the plains and lower foothills that abut the Tararura Ranges to the west. To the east SH2 forms the approximate boundary, Featherston to the south and Wiltons Road to the north. A number of waterways traverse the Western Plains from west to east, bringing with them sediment from the ranges which have formed the characteristic alluvial fans, terraces and floodplains. The topography is generally flat to gently undulating, with free-draining soils and significantly higher rainfall than the Central Plains due to the proximity to the Tararua Ranges. The area is particularly frosty in the winter.

The Tararuas form a dominant backdrop to the western plains due to their immediacy and scale. The Waiohine Faulted Terraces along the West Wairarapa Fault are a significant geological feature; and remnants of the old braided river floodplains are readily identifiable and preserved within grazing land.

The western plains were used as a walkway for Maori travelling along the western foothills of the Tararua range towards Te Whanganui o Tara. While Maori know of the trails, remnant kahikatea stands point to the previous state of the land which contained wetlands and therefore food for travelers.

The area is characterised by well established rural-residential enclaves with landholdings typically between 1 and 10 hectares. There are several recent rural-residential developments, particularly near the main trunk railway line east of Featherston, Greytown and Carterton (eg Belvedere Subdivision). Outside of rural-residential enclaves, landholdings are typically greater than 10 hectares and characterised by sheep and beef farming.

The alignment of roads and railway lines is based on a modified grid pattern which reflects the flat topography of the plains and historic settlement patterns.

Land cover is dominated by pasture but most rural residential properties are extensively planted with exotic amenity species such as ash, willow, oak and poplar. In places, such near Fernside/ Woodside (north of Featherston) and Cobden Road (Carrington), there are several native forest remnants (mainly kahikatea and totara).



The Tauherenikau River meanders across the western plains north of Fernside. Although pasture is the dominant land cover, exotic shelterbelts are common, and there are several kahikatea and totara remnants.



The Tararua Ranges form an imposing backdrop to Featherston, due to their scale and proximity.

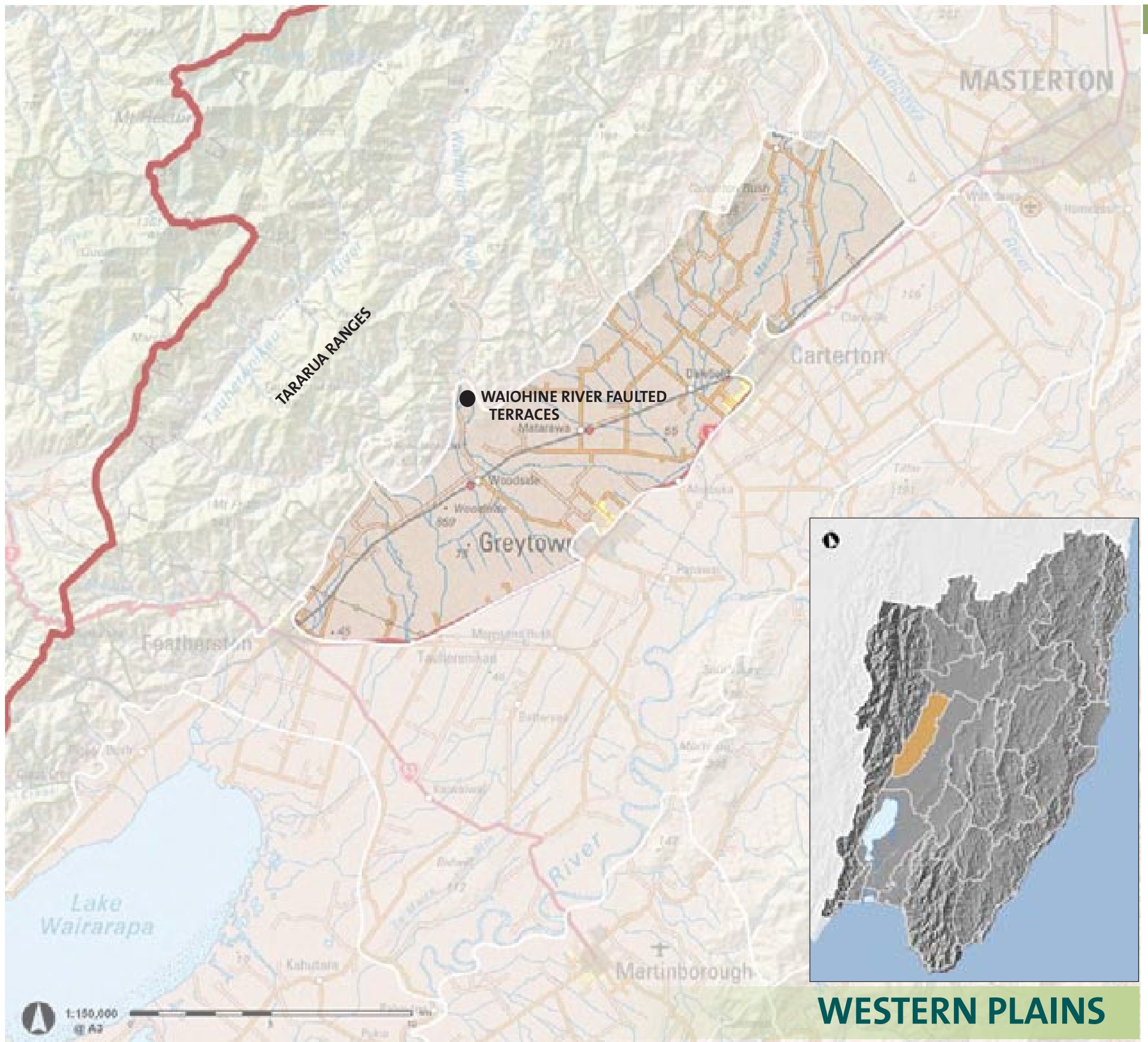
## KEY LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISTICS

- Climatic conditions – more rain, frost, more sheltered when compared to the Central Plains character area
- Tararua Ranges prominent due to their scale and proximity
- Established sheep and beef farmsteads and rural-residential areas, some evidence of recent rural-residential development
- Some sizable native remnants
- Extensive amenity and shelterbelt planting
- West Wairarapa Fault, evidenced by Waiohine River

The low-lying hills at Carrington, north-west of Carterton, form the boundary between the Western Plains and the Tararua Ranges character areas.







View from the Waiohine Gorge Road looking east, shows the extensive patchwork of pastoral land use and mature shelterbelts on the Western Plains.



# CENTRAL PLAINS

The Central Plains are defined as the area from Featherston to just south of the Waingawa River and Masterton (Whakaoriori). Morrison ridge (191m) defines part of the eastern boundary, and to the west, the boundary is defined by State Highway 2. The townships of Featherston, Greytown, and Carterton all lie within the Central Plains character area. The northern part of the character area is also known as the Taratahi Plains. Like the adjoining Western Plains character area, the Central Plains consists of flat to gently undulating, free-draining, old and recent gravel fans, terraces and floodplains, but with lower rainfall it is drier than the western and southern plains. There is a greater sense of openness to the Central Plains landscape compared to the Western Plains because of its distance from the Tararua Ranges. To the east, the distinctive profile of the Nga Waka - a - Kupe and Maungaraki Ranges are prominent landmarks and backdrops.

The Ruamahanga River is a dominant feature in this character area. It meanders tightly, hugging the eastern side of the plains due to the large quantities of gravel which have been swept down from the Tararua Ranges.

The alignment of roads lines is based on a modified grid pattern which reflects the flat topography of the plains and historic settlement patterns.

Land use is quite diversified and includes dairy, sheep and beef farming, scattered areas of market gardening, and orchards. This includes the the region’s biggest pipfruit grower and packhouse, JR Orchards Ltd, located on Pah Road (east of Greytown). Some arable farming occurs in this area with irrigation systems on some of these properties. Land cover is dominated by grazed pasture and shelterbelts; whilst amenity plantings are less extensive than on the western plains. Indigenous vegetation is very limited and insignificant, limited to some distinctive stands of kanuka, and small isolated lowland forest remnants such as the 13 hectare Trenair (Lowes Bush) broadleaf remnant, and occasional groups or single trees.

Land parcels on the plains tend to follow a regular, linear pattern, with drainage ditches and shelter belts creating a distinctive patchwork. The area is characterised by well established rural and rural-residential enclaves with some evidence of recent rural residential development. Smaller landholdings around the fringe of the urban areas between 1 and 4 hectares characterise the area with a larger scale and less dense settlement pattern further from the towns. Transmission line pylons are also present and in some places are prominent elements in this flat landscape.

In pre- European times the central plains area was dominated by waterways and wetlands and so with the exception of elevated places was used mainly for temporary camps by people walking through the main valley. The area was valued because of the bountiful supply of animal and plant food sources found within the patchwork of swamps, streams



While there is very little native vegetation present on the Central Plains, those that remain are important in terms of their contribution to landscape charcter and biodiversity. This isolated 13 hectare broadleaf forest remnant is located at Trenair, south of Masterton.



Carterton is in the Central Plains character area; there is a greater sense of openness and more abrupt transition between residential and rural land use around the perimeter of the town than occurs in the Western Plains.

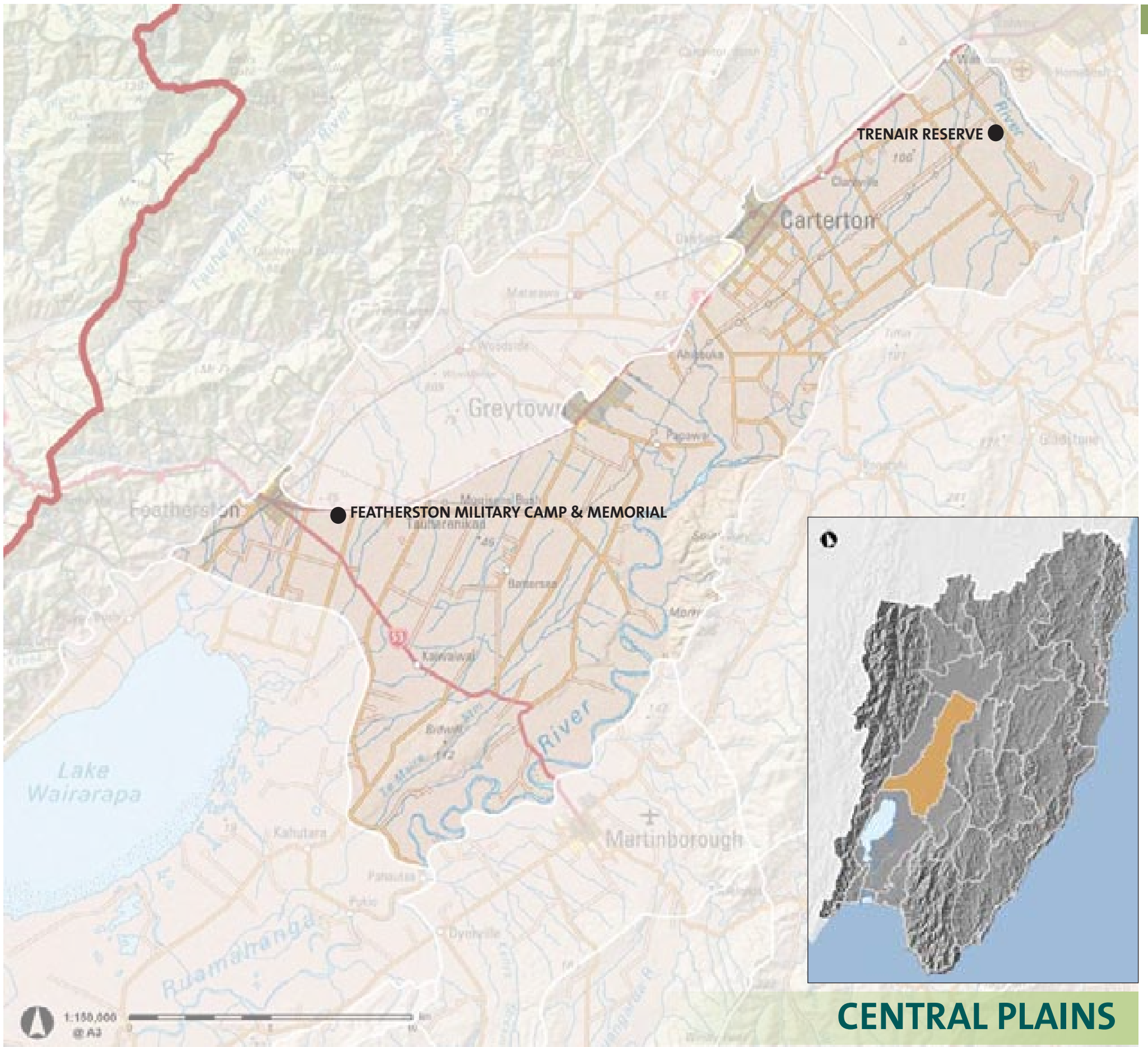
and forests. The Ruamahanga River was used for transporting people and goods the length of the valley when bulk items were required to be moved between pa that were built on rises near the banks of the river. As modification of the land occurred following European settlement Maori started to build marae such as Papawai at Greytown and Puanani at Carterton, often becoming involved in agriculture and other introduced industry in those locations.

## KEY LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISTICS

- Flat to gently undulating topography
- Climatic conditions – drier than the western plains
- Sheep and beef farming, dairying, large scale orchard operation, pockets of rural-residential development on fringe of towns
- Very little native vegetation present
- Distinctive backdrops of the Waka and Maungaraki Ranges.

The Nga Waka a Kupe forms a prominent element in the view from many parts of the Central Plains, including the uplifted marine terrace 4km north-west of Masterton.





## CENTRAL PLAINS

Left: While transmission lines transverse from Featherston to Waingawa, they form a prominent element in the Central Plains character area due to the flat topography and absence of tall vegetation. Right: Land parcels on the outskirts of Carterton tend to follow a regular, linear pattern, with drainage ditches and shelter belts creating a distinctive patchwork.





# GLADSTONE

The Gladstone character area includes the low-lying hills and valleys which fringe the eastern edge of the central plains. It includes the lower Maungaraki slopes, Tiffen Hill and Morrison Hill (295m). The area is defined by the Ponatahi Hills, the slopes up to the first lower ridge of the Maungaraki Range, the toe of Fosters Hill, and the Ruamahanga River. The low hills enclose the Gladstone and Ponatahi areas and together form an important backdrop to the Central Plains Character area. The area has been under increasing rural-residential development pressure due to its proximity to the towns of Martinborough, Greytown, Carterton and Masterton (Whakaoriori), and opportunities for an elevated position and views over the plains.

Land Type 10 is dominant and expressed in the distinctive limestone strike ridges, and readily erodible dip and scarp slopes. The area also includes Land Type 9, soft rock mudstone, which is manifest in the smooth rounded form of the Morrison and Ponatahi Hills.

The topography ranges from flat to gently undulating and hilly topography on the lowlands; elevation ranges from approximately 40m asl to around 400m asl.

The area contains a number of Maori place names which point to long Maori association. A number of highly visible features such as Hurunui o Rangi marae and urupa are further pointers. Not so apparent are Maori land blocks, discreet urupa, pa sites and post European homesteads. The prominent cliffs (Te Ana o Parakawhiti) near the Gladstone Inn are associated with the famous legend of the taniwha Ngarara Huarau.

Tiffen Hill (191m) is a distinctive landform, readily identifiable by its gently sloping, relatively symmetrical profile, and its physical separation from the lowlands. Tiffen Hill's distinctive profile is supported by current management practices which have left it grazed, largely free of structures, and with limited tree planting. A 16-lot subdivision was approved on part of Tiffen in 2009, which has not been developed to date.

A tall concrete tower which is part of the Kourarau Dam and Power Scheme is located on the hills east of Gladstone along the Tupururpuru-Te Wharau Road. The upper dam and reservoir were formed in 1925 by the construction of an earth dam in the Kourarau Stream.

Vegetation is largely pasture set within a complex mosaic of small scale, mature exotic woodlots, willows along waterways, and extensive plantings of poplar, eucalypt and conifer, particularly around new rural-residential clusters. Small areas of grapes and small scale cropping are evident in the Ponatahi Valley.

Land uses are predominantly sheep and beef farming, with small established rural settlements on the plains, interspersed with more recent



The lack of structures and vegetation on Tiffen hill reveals its gently sloping profile.



Fosters Hill encloses the Gladstone valley to the north, and forms an important backdrop to the Taratahi Plains. Mature pine woodlots are extensive within the character area, particularly around Te Whanga.

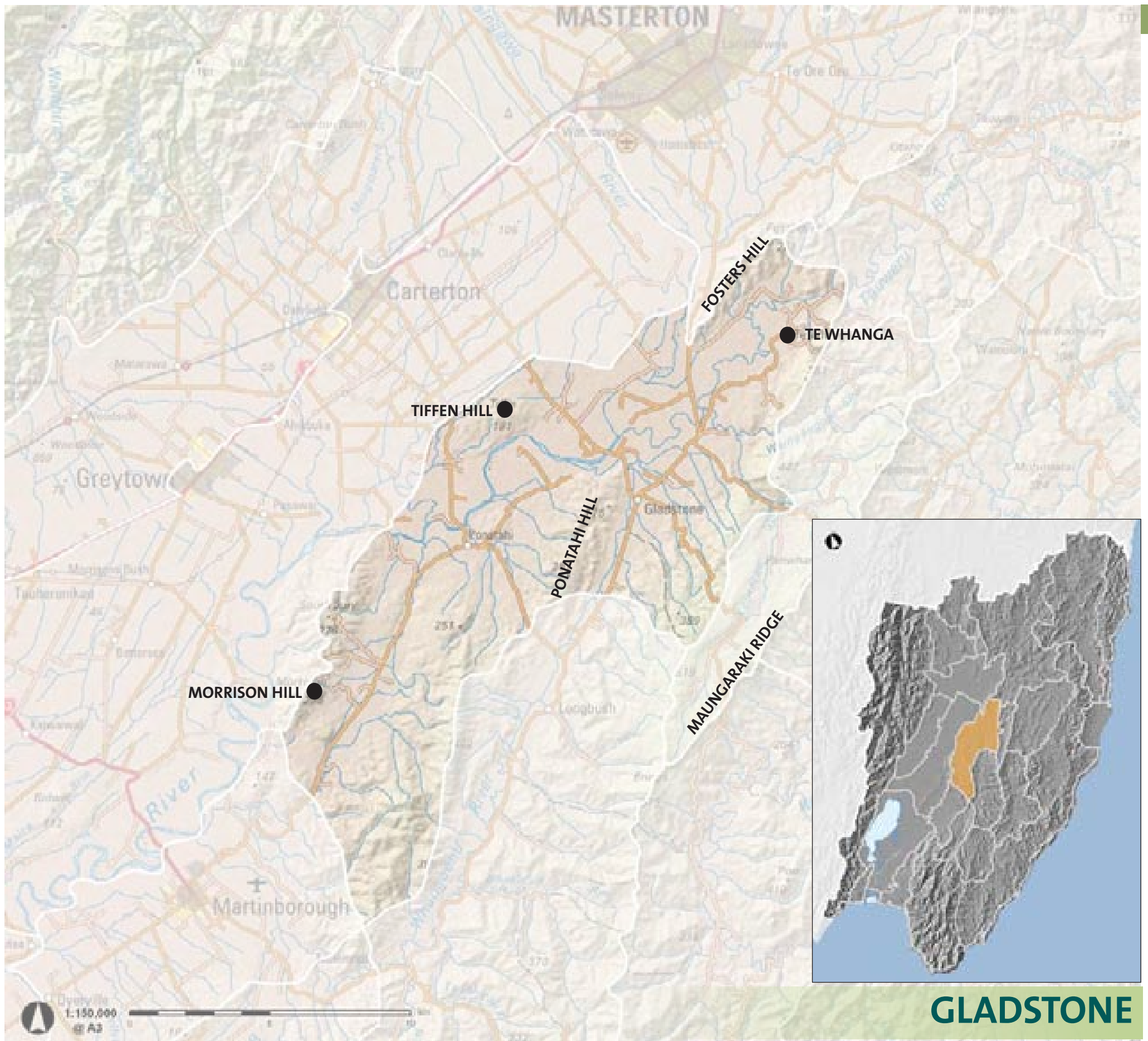
rural-residential development on the lowlands. The rural-residential development tends to occur in clusters on the lower slopes below 350m, particularly near Gladstone.

## KEY LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISTICS

- Rural-residential development on the low lying hills
- Low-lying hills form an important backdrop to Gladstone and the Central Plains
- Diverse mosaic of vegetation, extensive exotic amenity plantings
- Willow lined Ruamahanga River
- Lower slopes form part of the Maungaraki Range.
- Gladstone Cliffs

From the Martinborough- Masterton Road a band of low-lying hills enclose Gladstone to the east. There are enclaves of recent rural-residential development on the lower slopes, typically below 350m.





**GLADSTONE**

*In recent years there has been pressure for rural residential development on the footslopes around Gladstone, which are within commuting distance of the main settlements, have elevated views of the plains and rural amenity. These new properties bordering Te Wharau Road enjoy expansive views of Tiffen Hill, the Ponatahi Hills and Central Plains.*





# MARTINBOROUGH

The Martinborough landscape has been shaped by the Ruamahanga and Huangarua Rivers. The Martinborough landscape character area comprises the plains and lowlands around the town. The boundaries are the Ruamahanga River to the west, the toe of the Aorangi Ranges to the south, the Huangarua River to the north east, the toe of the Ponatahi hills to the north and a band of low-lying sandstone hills that separate the Martinborough character area from the Huangarua Valley, to the east.

Harris (164m) is the highest point of the lowland ridge south of Martinborough, and provides a backdrop to the town. The ridgeline from The Waka (Nga Waka a Kupe) to Windy Peak forms a distinctive backdrop to this landscape.

The Huangarua and Ruamahanga River corridors are relatively wide, and demarcated by extensive willow planting. The Ruamahanga River terrace, acts as a ‘threshold’ for access into the township from State Highway 53.

Land Type 1 (southern central plains), is predominant in the flatter parts of the character area and evident in the shallow stony soils, and loess deposited by the rivers. The more steeply sloping topography on the Ponatahi and Harris lowlands are included in Land Type 9, comprising soft rock mudstone and sandstone.

Land use has changed significantly in recent years, with rapid conversion from predominately sheep and beef farming to large areas of vineyards and olive groves. The area has low rainfall, and hot, dry summers, making it an ideal microclimate for the establishment of these land uses. On the plains, vegetation forms a linear patchwork of vineyards, olive groves, pasture, and amenity planting. Native vegetation is largely absent, except for some patches of regenerating kanuka within the lowland gullies.

The low hills around Martinborough were used by Maori for papakainga, one such example was Huangarua as per the name of the river. There are also pa, urupa, and post- European contact villages.

As the area has become renowned for its vineyards, a bustling tourism industry has developed around it. Annual attractions such as Toast Martinborough, the Martinborough Fair, and ‘Round the Vines’ are popular and have helped to develop tourism in the area.

A considerable amount of rural-residential development around the town has occurred in more recent years. Subdivision down to 1-4 hectares can occur on the south-eastern boundary, while all other areas are zoned Rural Special, and subdivision can occur down to a minimum of 4 hectares.



*Martinborough has become renowned for its vineyards, which are extensive and suited to the shallow stony soils and long, dry summers.*



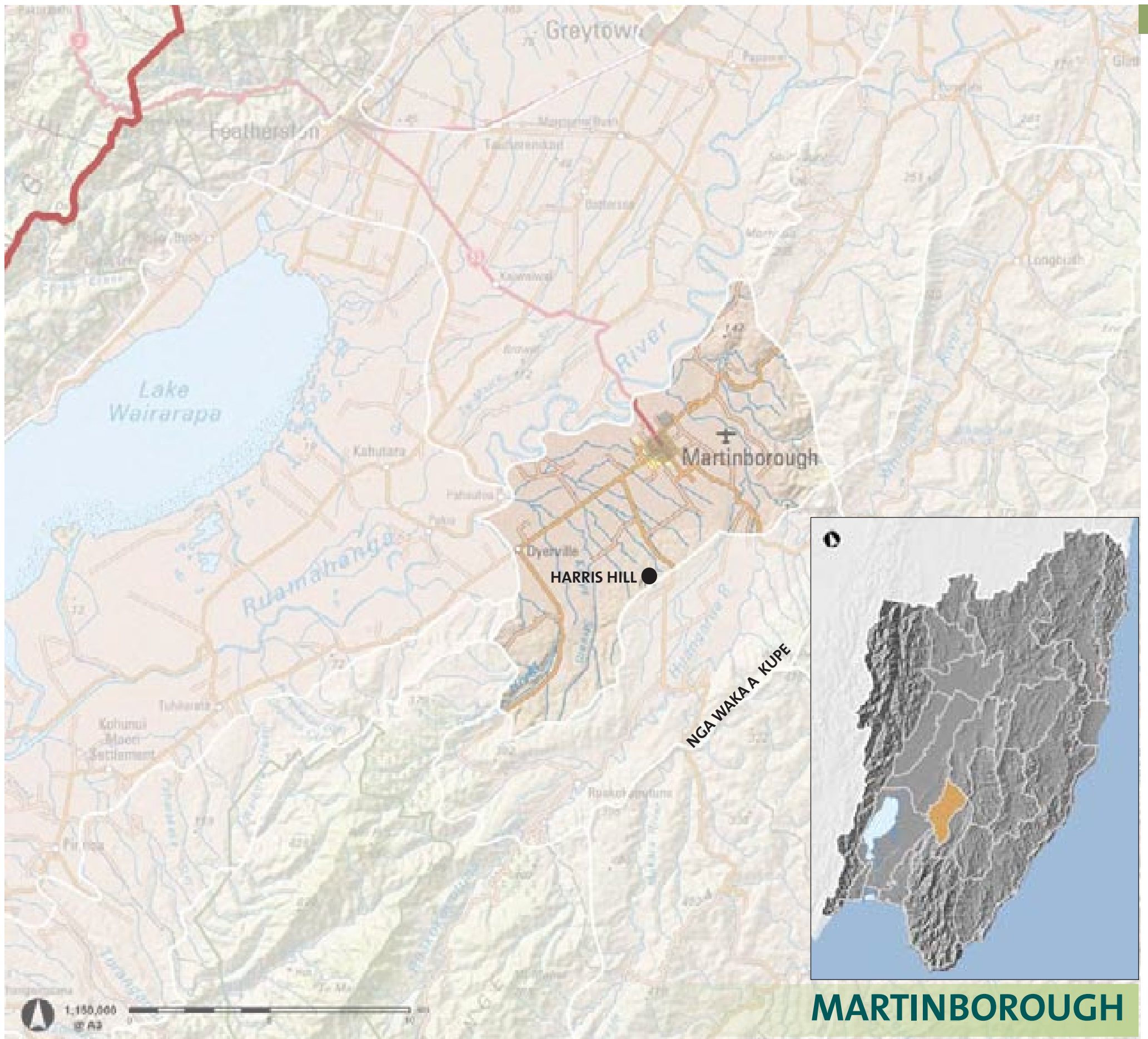
*Martinborough has become a desirable visitor destination, fuelling a number of upmarket rural-residential developments around the outskirts of the town, such as Martinborough Estate.*

## KEY LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISTICS

- Changing land use – extensive vineyard development and olives
- Flat to steep topography – linearity of lots of parcels on the plains
- Lowlands (Harris), Nga Waka a Kupe and Windy Peak form backdrop to Martinborough
- Patchwork of vegetation – pasture/ vineyards dominant
- Ruamahanga and Huangarua Rivers
- Hot, dry summers, free draining stony soils
- Tourism

*The distinctive profile of Nga Waka a Kupe forms an iconic backdrop to the township of Martinborough.*





*Land uses around Martinborough have diversified considerably in recent years and aside from the vineyards, include market gardening and olive groves.*



# HUANGARUA

The Huangarua character area consists of the basin and valleys east of Martinborough, including the catchments of the upper Huangarua and Ruakokoputuna (Ruakokopatuna) Rivers, and Blue Rock Stream. The upper Ruakokoputuna River features a large limestone cave - the Ruakokoputuna Chasm, and in the wider vicinity are a number of interesting limestone caves and limestone landforms, the most dramatic of which is Haurangi Bluff.

The northern end of the Huangarua River terraces is relatively wide and flat, creating a distinct basin between the enclosing hills. The river flats narrow at the southern end where the Ruakokoputuna River flows into the Huangarua River down a narrow steep-sided river valley. A distinctive ‘tongue’ of low sandstone hills encloses the basin on the west and separates it from Martinborough and the plains beyond. The eastern side of the character area is defined by the higher limestone ridge that includes Windy Peak (475m) and the ‘The Waka’ (Nga Waka a Kupe) landforms. The Waka landforms are a highly recognisable landmark that are identifiable from Martinborough and many parts of the southern plains.

The northern part of the area has a gentle topography of flat undulating river plains and rolling hills. To the south, where the character area adjoins the Aorangi foothills, the hills become higher and steeper (high point 390m). The eastern limestone slopes have a generally gentle gradient with a steep escarpment traversing the lower slopes.

Huangarua was a Maori papakainga (village) and a number of pre and post- European Maori settlements can be found in the area. The Waka east of Martinborough is perhaps the most known significant site in this area.

Pastoral farming is the dominant use of the area on both the river flats and the hills. Areas of vineyard have been established on the Ruakokoputuna River terraces in the southern part of the character area. There are mature pine shelter belts on the grazed rolling hills and terraces and small exotic woodlots and amenity tree planting. Native vegetation is sparse and generally restricted to patches in some gullies and on steeper higher slopes to the south.

The rural settlement pattern is typically aligned to the road layout with well established farmsteads enclosed with mature amenity planting. There is some evidence of recently built dwellings in the area. White Rock Road is the main route through the area. Ruakokopatuna and Blue Rock Roads provide access to the valleys and higher land in the south and Te Muna Road links the area to the north.

The Blue Rock glow worm caves and the Ruakokoputuna Chasm are well known visitor attractions in the area.



Vineyards on the river flats at Ruakokoputuna are a relatively recent land use in an area where sheep and beef farming is the dominant and long - established activity.



While secluded from the wide and expansive Wairarapa Plains, the broad (northern) end of the valley still seems a relatively open and uncluttered landscape.



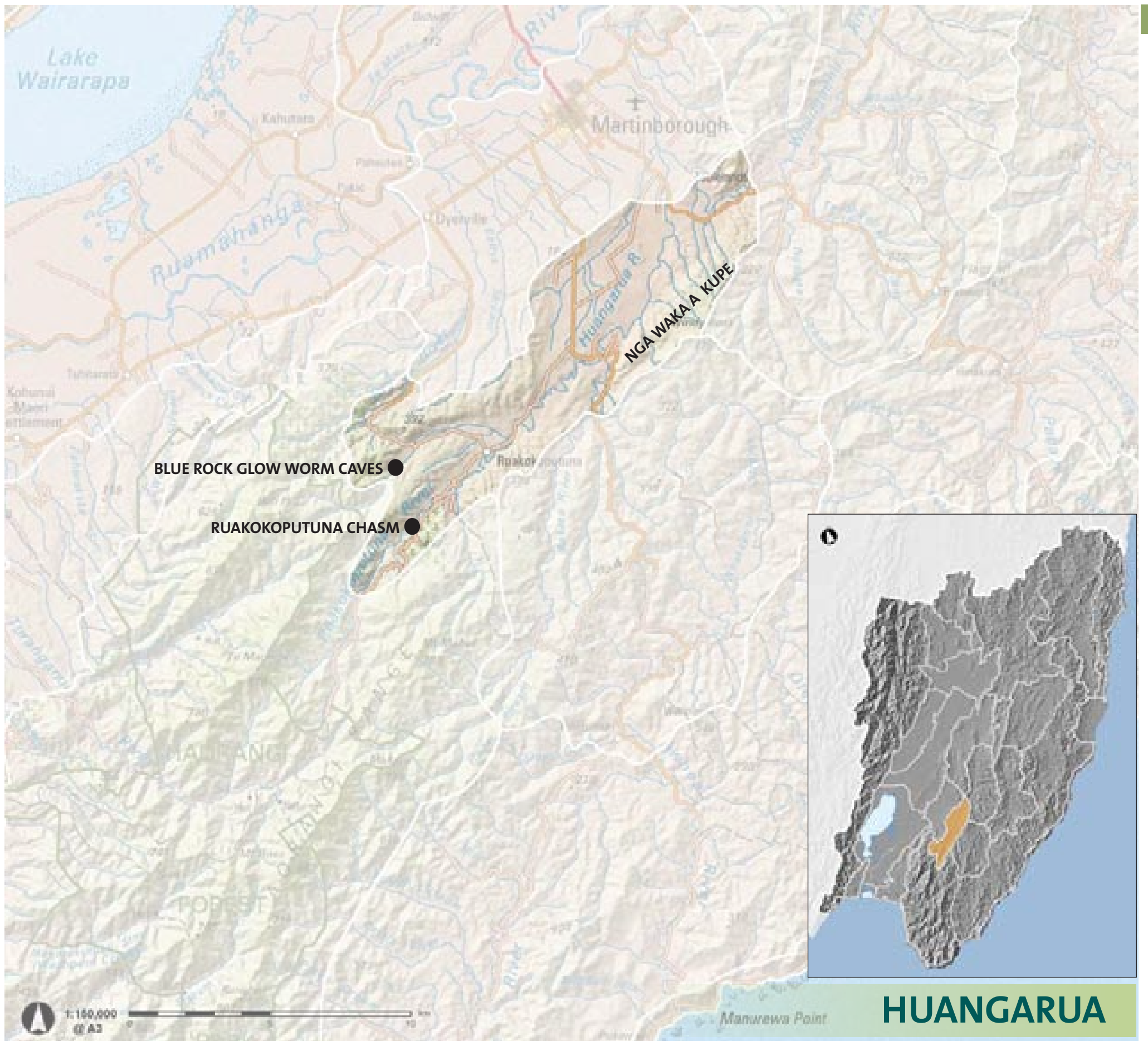
The Nga Waka a Kupe landform is a prominent backdrop to both the Huangarua Valley and the wider plains to the west. Shelterbelts and woodlots break up the valley floor. Below: The Blue Rock Road valley at the southern end of the character area is narrower and more enclosed by higher hills than the basin to the north.

KEY LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISTICS

- The Waka (Nga Waka a Kupe) Landform
- Blue Rock Glow worm caves
- Broad secluded valley
- Ruakokoputuna Chasm
- Haurangi Bluff







*The low hills of the western side of this character area (the hills separating the Huangarua valley and Martinborough) have gentle rounded tops with steep-sided gullies often with stands of semi-mature kanuka.*



# SOUTHERN PLAINS

The Southern Plains is characterised by low-lying flood plains, the Ruamahanga River, Lake Wairarapa and the Kahutara dunes - a belt of sand dunes located between Lake Wairarapa and the Ruamahanga River. It is defined approximately by Lake Onoke to the south, Lake Ferry Road to the east, and SH53 to the north. The extensive hinterland around this large freshwater lake is periodically inundated by flood waters. Prior to the Ruamahanga River diversion (opened 1968) and flood control barrage (opened 1974), the hinterland was permanently water-logged and originally supported an extensive wetland. Lake Wairarapa and its associated wetlands and scattered forest remnants are the largest wetland system in the lower North Island. The area is considered to be of national and international importance for indigenous plant and animal communities.

While the diversion and floodgates and subsequent drainage measures transformed the hinterland, its flood-prone nature makes it largely unsuitable for more intensive development other than extensive grazing. There are remnant wetlands and native forest in places along the margins of the lake, but generally vegetation clearance and establishment of pasture and grazing occurs right up to the lake margin.

Lake Wairarapa is spiritually and traditionally important to Maori as an area for gathering food and fibre, including: eel, fish, waterfowl, and plant material, including flax and raupo. This area's section of the Ruamahanga River was as important to iwi as the lake and many early reserves associated with urupa and marae were located there.

The diverse habitats in the Lake Wairarapa wetlands have been recognised as a potential international RAMSAR site. Almost 100 bird species have been recorded over the past two decades, including some international migratory birds. The majority of the wetlands are protected as either conservation areas or wildlife and scenic reserves, managed by the Department of Conservation. Fish and Game New Zealand owns and manages an area of wetland for game birds, and the Lake Domain recreation reserve is managed by the South Wairarapa District Council. The area offers many activities, including game bird hunting, fishing, and bird watching.

This area consists of fertile plains and river terraces. Land Type 1 is predominant, and is evident in the fine grain silt, sand and gravels which have been deposited on the floodplain from upstream from the ranges. Whilst pasture is the most common type of land cover, there are widespread plantings of poplar, dense plantings of willow along the Ruamahanga River channel, as well as scattered kahikatea remnants and stands of cabbage trees. The area is largely frost free, with moderate rainfall. Land use is dominated by sheep and beef farming, and extensive dairying, which is well established in the southern plains, and some



*The Southern Plains around Lake Onoke have a low density of settlement and are extensively grazed.*



*The Ruamahanga River diversion has made thousands of hectares of land available for farming. However, because it is still susceptible to occasional flooding, the area is not suited to more intensive development.*

small scale cropping. Widespread use of large scale boom irrigators is evident.

Settlement in the area is sparse, consisting mainly of farmsteads, clusters of farm buildings and the small settlement of Pirinoa and Kahutara.

## KEY LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISTICS

- Fertile, low-lying flood plains
- Lake Wairarapa & wetland margins
- Established dairy operations, pastoral land use dominant
- Fragmented kahikatea remnants
- Sparse settlement – constrained by flooding
- The Ruamahanga River bringing silt from the north
- Kahutara dunes

*From Ponui Ridge the Southern Plains are defined by the Southern Lowland character areas to the east and west.*







# SOUTHERN LOWLANDS

The Southern Lowlands character area includes the ‘Turanganui lowlands’ (below approx. 200 asl) on the lower Aorangi Ranges bounded by Lake Onoke and Pirinoa to the north; and the ‘Pounui lowlands’ (below approx. 200 asl) encompassing Wharekauhau and Lake Pounui, to the south of Lake Wairarapa (Alsops Bay). Topography and land cover is characterised by a transition between the flat, extensively grazed southern plains and the steep to very steep forested ranges. The ranges on both sides of the plains provide a dominant backdrop to the lowlands.

The Turanganui and Pounui lowlands are former marine terraces with yellow-brown earths. The main differences between the two are that the Pounui lowlands tend to be significantly wetter and frostier than the Turanganui lowlands, and they are also more deeply dissected, whereas the Turanganui lowlands are more gently rolling.

The Turanganui lowlands are a combination of Land Types 1 and 9, incorporating the broad, undulating central plains land type with the soft rock mudstone and sandstone hill country. The slopes are flat to gently undulating, with narrower, steep gullies along the transition between the Turanganui lowlands and Aorangi character areas.

Vegetation on the lowlands is a mosaic of regenerating native bush, with large continuous even-aged stands of kanuka on the upper slopes, and isolated pine plantations and grazing on the mid to lower slopes.

The Pounui lowlands are Land Type 1, forming a continuation of the central plains land type. Topography varies from gently undulating near the plains to the steeper and more dissected gullies and ridges near the border with the Rimutaka/ Aorangi Ranges character areas.

Lake Pounui is located within the Rimutaka foothills, within 5km of the Palliser Bay Coast, and is surrounded on three sides by rolling hills. Remnant native bush, dominated by black and hard beech is extensive to the north and west of the lake. Scattered podocarps such as matai and rimu also occur on the lower foot slopes. Lake Pounui is of regional significance as a habitat for fish, birds, and invertebrates. It has been extensively studied by Victoria University and is protected by a QE2 National Trust open space covenant.

The settlement pattern across the lowlands is characterised by scattered, well established homesteads, interspersed with more recent rural-residential subdivision such as a subdivision on the lowlands east of Lake Pounui. The lowlands have been a desirable place as a weekend getaway, being within comfortable driving distance of Wellington (Te Whanganui o Tara) whilst being remote enough to provide an ‘isolated’ rural experience. There are a number of small hospitality businesses in the area, some such as Whangaimoana (Maori for “hospitality by the sea”) having significant heritage value. Another is an exclusive retreat,



The Southern Lowlands are characterised by a steep, deeply incised coastal escarpment, and an uplifted marine terrace (Wharekauhau Country Estate).

Wharekauhau Lodge and Country Estate, located on the uplifted coastal terraces west of Lake Onoke.

As with other areas that include significant waterways and native remnants this landscape provided seasonal resources for hapu that had established rights within the area. In particular the Turanganui lowlands have several historic Maori sites in the coastal vicinity and alongside the southern waterways. For pre-European Maori, this area was a corridor they occupied and also a passage between the forested and coastal areas. The remains of a house dated to 1180AD, the oldest known structure of its kind in New Zealand was unearthed by archaeologists in the Omoekau valley.

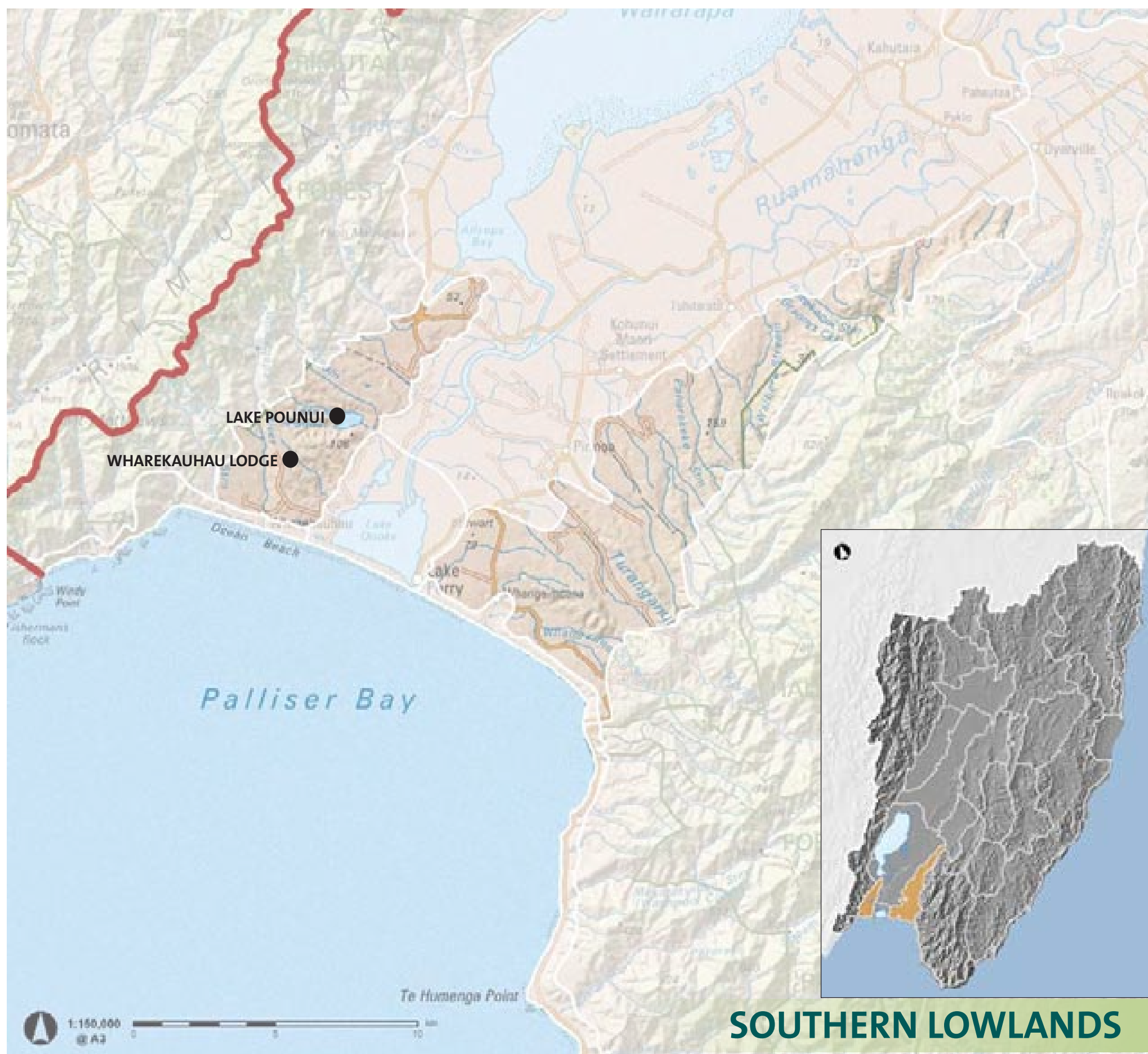
## KEY LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISTICS

- Transition between the flat, extensively grazed southern plains and the steep to very steep forested ranges
- Ranges provide a dominant backdrop
- Former marine terraces and a dramatic coastal escarpment
- Lake Pounui has high ecological, scientific and scenic values
- Mosaic of vegetation, including significant native remnants
- Scattered, well established homesteads and exclusive country retreats, interspersed with more recent rural-residential subdivision
- Maori historical sites

Lake Pounui is nestled within the lower Rimutaka foothills; over 284 hectares of native vegetation, including the lake itself are protected by a QE2 covenant.







## SOUTHERN LOWLANDS

Left: The Southern Lowlands (western side) are extensively vegetated, including large fingers of remnant vegetation which extend down from the Rimutaka Ranges. Right: The Southern Lowlands (eastern side) also include significant fingers of remnant vegetation, which provide connectivity between the Aorangi Forest Park and the Southern Plains.





# MAURICEVILLE

The Mauriceville character area lies in the north-western part of the Wairarapa and comprises the valleys and hills associated with Mauriceville, Mauriceville West, the Kopuaranga River and the ridgeline and western slopes of the Te Rangitumau landform. This character area encloses and provides a backdrop to the eastern side of the adjoining Northern Plains landscape character area.

The Te Rangitumau Ridge and its rounded highpoint (604m) is an imposing and distinctive landform in the local area and provides a highly recognisable reference point from further afield, especially the northern plains and Masterton (Whakaoriori) and environs. The northern boundary of the Wairarapa Landscape Study traverses the summit of Bruce Hill (710m) and is the highest point of this particular character area.

Te Rangitumau, the associated low hills and valleys, and the eastern slopes of the Kopuaranga River valley, are predominantly limestone (Land Type 10), and are characterised by rounded spurs and ridges. West of the Kopuaranga River the geology of the hills is soft base rock, predominantly mudstones and sandstones (Land Type 9), but there are also pockets of limestone. This generally soft country is susceptible to erosion and stabilisation planting has been established in some steep gullies and on some slopes.

The hills and valleys are predominantly open grazed pasture land with bare ridges and upper slopes, which clearly reveal the underlying landform. Erosion planting of hybrid willows is evident on some steeper slopes. Amenity exotic tree planting and woodlots are confined to the base of the valleys, and around farmsteads. Stands of mostly even-aged kanuka and areas of regenerating native vegetation occur in some gullies. With the exception of the native podocarp-broadleaf forest remnant on Bruce’s Hill, there is very little mature native vegetation in this character area.

Te Rangitumau is the ancestral mountain for Maori of the central and upper Ruamahanga River valley. Several important papakainga and pa sites are located within this area. The Kopuaranga valley was heavily cultivated and was also the location of the main pre-European track going north towards Eketahuna and other northern villages.

European settlement and clearance of the native forest known as Seventy Mile Bush (Te Tapere Nui o Whatonga) began in the early 1860s. A temporary camp for settlers at Kopuaranga, known as the



The lime works at Mauriceville utilise the building that was once the Mauriceville Dairy factory.

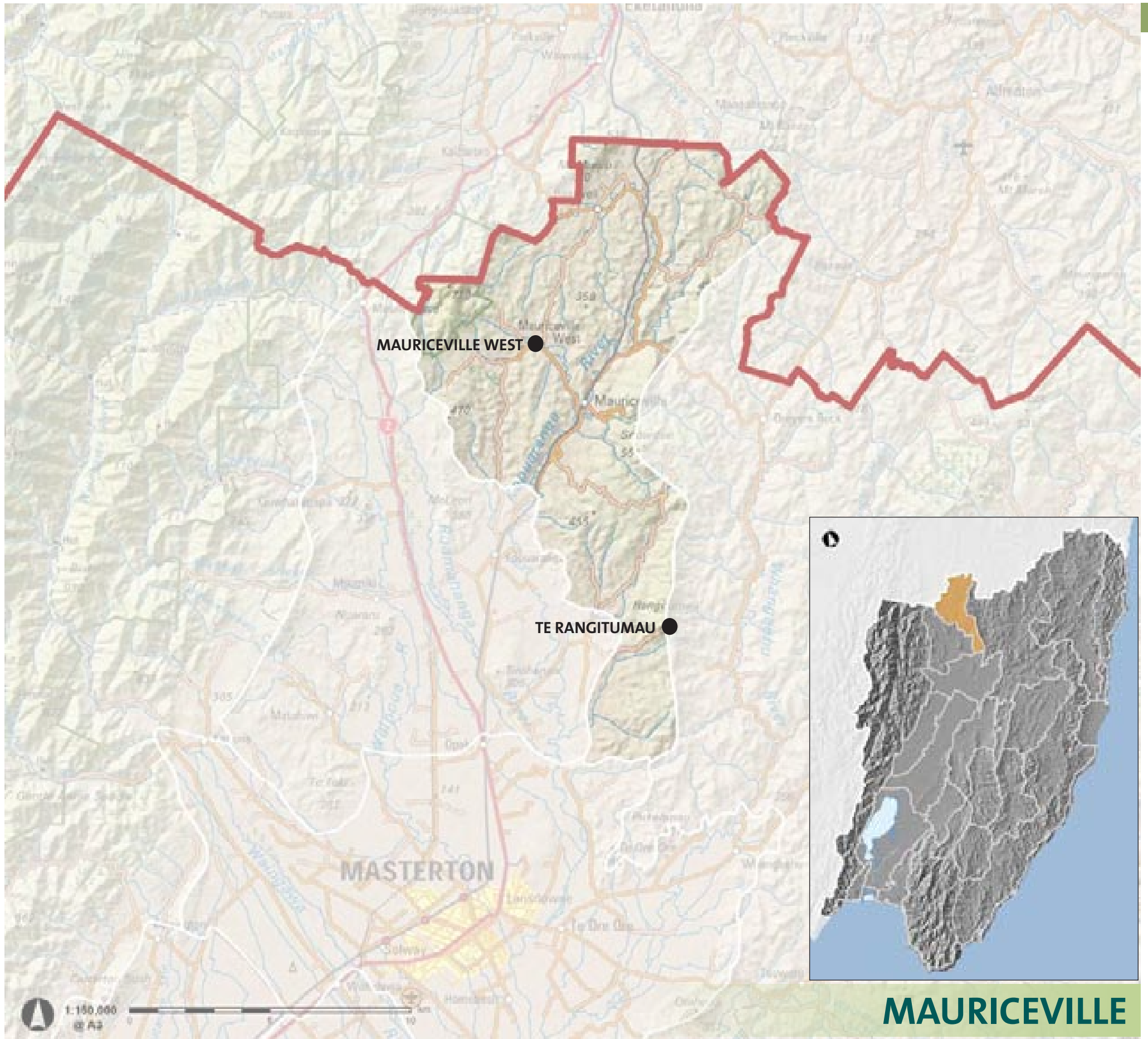
‘Scandinavian Camp’, provided short term accommodation for the Danes, Swedes, Norwegians and other settlers, who came to the area under a New Zealand government subsidised scheme to farm, clear the bush or build the road to Napier. A predominantly Scandinavian settlement was established at Mauriceville West when the railway was constructed through the Kopuaranga River valley. Mauriceville became the focus of the community and remains so today with the lime company and school currently located there.

## KEY LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISTICS

- Te Rangitumau landform, local landmark and identity in Wairarapa
- 1860s Scandinavian settlement at Mauriceville West

Left: The smooth rounded hills and ridgetops that dominate the character area express the underlying limestone geology. Right: Pastoral farming is the dominant land use. The hilltops are generally bare of woody vegetation with tree planting concentrated near the base of valleys.





Left: Mauriceville village has remained the focus of the community, and was first established as a rail-head on the Wairarapa-Napier railway line providing transport for timber and dairy products from the area. Middle: Memorial to the Scandinavian pioneers that first settled Mauriceville West. Right: The distinctive shape and physical presence of Te Rangitumau make it a prominent landmark throughout the northern Wairarapa plains area.



# WHANGAEHU - TAUWERU

The Whangaehu and Tauweru character area includes the river catchments of the Whangaehu and the Tauweru Rivers, extending from the study area boundary in the north, to the Wairarapa Plains near Te Whanga in the south. The western boundary is defined in the north by the steep eastern scarp and slopes of Te Rangitumau (603m) and in the south by the lower ridges of Fosters Hill and the high point Otahoua (351m). The dissected hills to the east range from 350-500m and separate this character area from the Tinui-Whareama catchments. The Bideford, Whangaehu and Tauweru communities are included in this area.

This hill country is a complex of hills and valley systems, that drain into the two main rivers. The predominant land type is soft rock mudstone and sandstone hill and steeplands (Land Type 9). These softer materials result in gentle and rounded hills, ridges and spurs, and can be prone to erosion; there is some evidence of this in places. They also indicate a limestone resource and explain the presence of extraction operations such as Tauweru Quarry. The softer materials are interspersed with areas of harder material (Land Types 7 and 8) which are evident as steeper hills with sharper ridges and spurs.

The Whangaehu and Tauweru character area is significant to Maori as they are the main northern and eastern gateways to Masterton (Whakaoriori). Thus settlements, wahi tapu and mahinga kai areas are found around the valleys going to and from the coast and northern Wairarapa.

The primary land use is pastoral farming. The hills and valleys are predominantly grazed pasture with relatively bare tops and upper slopes clearly revealing the underlying topography. Areas of recent erosion are evident and erosion stabilisation planting is also evident on some of the steeper faces. The hilly farmland is interspersed with substantial tree planting, particularly in some gullies, in the base of the river valleys, and around farmsteads. The trees are a combination of shelter, and amenity planting in association with dwellings, small production woodlots and remnants of native vegetation.

The slopes either side of the valley north of Bideford have large areas of exotic pine plantations, including Tivdale, Awaroa and Ngaumu forests on the eastern hills. There is very little exotic forestry elsewhere, with the exception near Dreyer’s Rock at the northern end of the Whangaehu valley and southeast of Tauweru at Big Hill. Smaller plantations and exotic woodlots are scattered throughout the area.

Native forest remnants are few and are typically associated with regenerating native vegetation which together remain in steep gullies and on steeper slopes. One important collection of remnants, the 334 ha Rewanui property, is owned by the Montford Trimble Trust Foundation and is located on the Masterton-Castlepoint Road, 23 kilometres east of Masterton.

Several roads that connect to other areas pass through this character area: the Whangaehu Valley Road to Alfredton in the Tararua district; Masterton-Castlepoint Road to Tinui and beyond to the coast; and the Masterton-Stronvar Road to Wainuioru. The area is one of rural settlement that is closely based on the roading network. The area is well established as a rural area with little sign of recent subdivision for residential purposes.

**KEY LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISTICS**

- River valley environment
- Well established and long settled rural community
- Limestone resource
- Rewanui bush remnants



Farmsteads located in the base of the valleys surrounded by mature amenity and shelter trees are a common feature of the character area.



Large areas of exotic forestry in the Bideford valley contrast with the predominantly bare open hilltops that dominate the area. Below: Castlepoint – Masterton Road: Trees are often prevalent in the gullies and on the lower slopes, with willow common in the river beds, regenerating native scrub occurs in some gullies and on some steeper slopes.





**WHANGĀEHU - TAUWERU**

TE RANGITUMAU ●

MASTERTON

TAUWERU QUARRY ●

1:150,000  
@ A2



*From the Central Limeworks on Stronvar Road: The gentle topography of Tauweru valley and river plain.*

# TINUI - WHAREAMA

The Tinui-Whareama character area comprises the catchments of the Whareama and Tinui Rivers and the Mangapakeha Stream, including the enclosing hills, slopes and valley floor. River valleys tend to be broader and more open in the south, but together, these catchments drain a large inland area at the northeastern extent of the study area and run more or less parallel to the coast. The valley system is separated from the coast by a low range of forested hills. The Whareama River extends along the length of the character area and discharges to the sea 8-9km north of Riversdale Beach. A small part of the northern tip of the character area drains northward into Tararua District catchments.

Mt Misery (371m) is the highest point in the area and separates the Whareama and Tinui valleys. Low, gently rolling hills enclose the broad valley floor. The flood plains that extend from Tinui Village to the coast vary in width, and are narrower at the northern end. They provide a relatively large area of flat fertile land that largely characterises the area. The middle and lower parts of the catchment, while enclosed by hills, are open and spacious and contrast with the dissected surrounding hill country.

The Tinui and Mangapakeha Taipo are two distinctive geological features and are prominent and notable landmarks. Their jagged vertical rock formations rise abruptly (300m) above the surrounding land. Mature pines are well established around the lower parts of the Tinui Taipo, and their dark green conical forms help to accentuate the taipo. Due to their close proximity to the Masterton-Castlepoint Road, the taipo are highly visible and are well recognised features of the landscape.

The Tinui and Mangapakeha Taipo were used as geographical markers by Maori. A story regarding seasonal eel fishing includes both Taipo. Otherwise the area was passed through and resources exploited during annual migrations.

Grazed pasture is the dominant vegetation on both the flats and the hills. Sheep and beef farming are the dominant land uses. Pine and eucalypt production forest has been established on some of the steeper slopes and willows line the river courses along parts of the valleys. There are areas of mature amenity tree planting, especially in association with dwellings and farmsteads. Small patches of regenerating native scrub, and small native bush remnants are also evident throughout.

Settlement is well established with farmsteads and associated mature tree planting, woolsheds and stockyards aligned along the main roads which follow the valley floors. The landholdings are generally large on the hill country with smaller properties on the better land in the base of vallies.

The ANZAC Memorial Cross near the summit of the Tinui Taipo, just north



*Tha Mangapakeha Taipo are a memorable and distinctive feature from the Masterton-Castlepoint Road.*



*The Tinui Taipo is geologically significant and highly visible from Tinui Village and environs; the ANZAC memorial cross near its summit, the first such memorial in Australasia, adds heritage value to this site.*

of Tinui village, adds another dimension to the significance of the taipo. It is claimed that the first ANZAC service in New Zealand was held in 1916 at the Church of the Good Shepherd in Tinui.

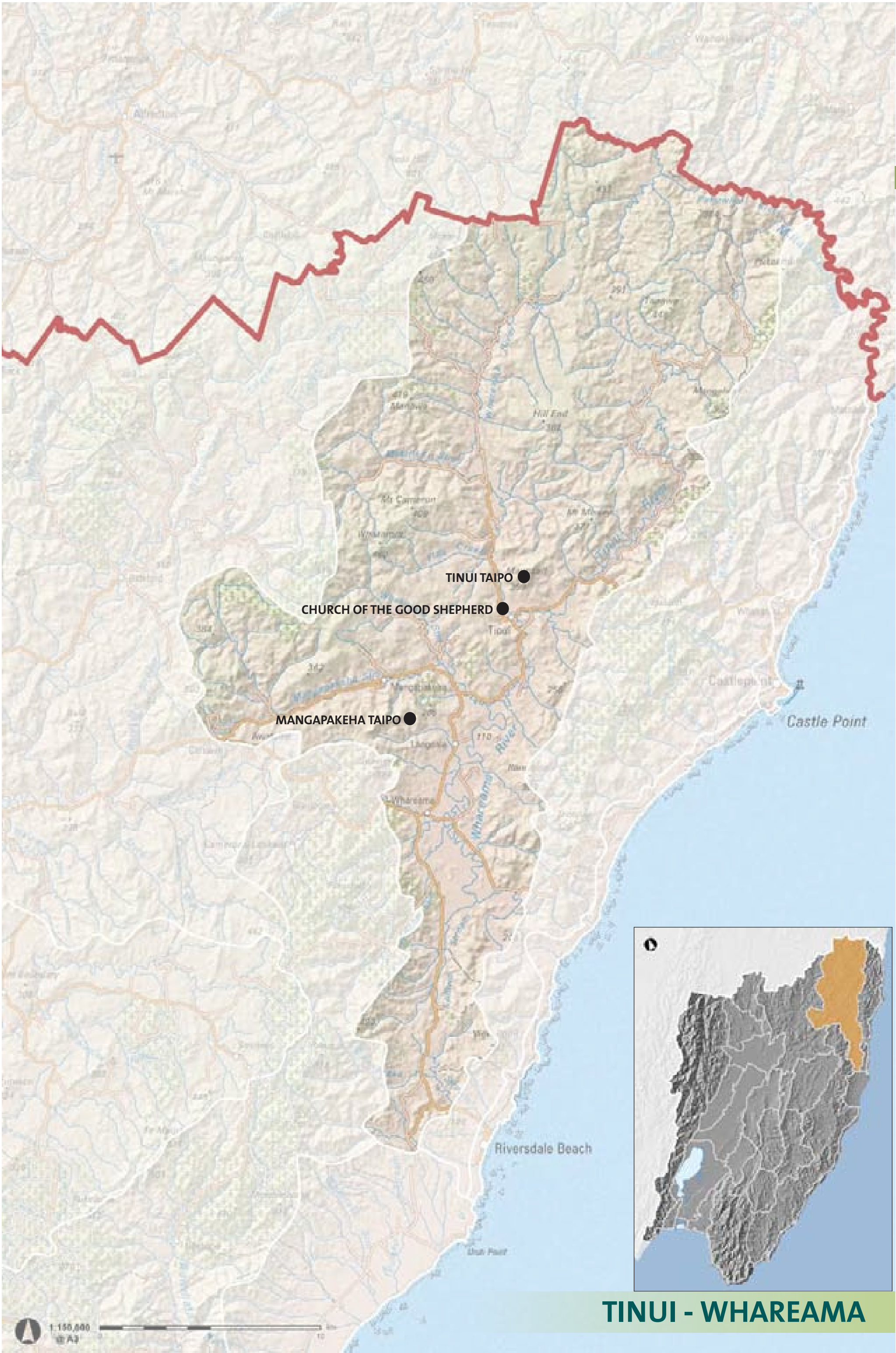
**KEY LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISTICS**

- Tinui Taipo (369m)
- Mangapakeha Taipo (376m)
- Broad flat valley floors enclosed by hills

*The broad flat river plains of the Whareama Valley are a key feature of this character area.*







TINUI - WHAREAMA



# MAUNGARAKI

The Maungaraki landform is a classic limestone hill with a gently sloping dip slope on the west, and a much steeper scarp on the east. The scarp is referred to as the Pariwhariki Escarpment and is a topographical feature of the neighbouring character areas (Wainuioru and Hinakura). The Maungaraki Range provides a substantial backdrop to the Gladstone area and is an identifiable feature from across the plains.

The Maungaraki character area includes the main ridge and upper part of the western dip slope together with the lower secondary ridge (much of which lies between 200m and 500m). The main ridge’s distinctiveness is due to its long flat near horizontal profile and its height. The main ridge’s elevation is relatively even across its 17km length varying from 501m at its northern end to the highest point Eringa 575m at the south. Eringa in itself is also a highly visible and recognisable landform from many locations throughout the plains. The secondary ridge, which runs parallel to the main ridge but at a lower elevation, is seen as the dominant ridgeline from the Gladstone area below. From the toe of the slopes the secondary ridge partially obscures the higher main ridge from view. However, from locations further out in the plains the main Maungaraki Ridge is seen on the skyline. Consequently, this character area provides the overall backdrop and forms the skyline to the wider plains. By contrast, the lower slopes, included in the Gladstone and Ponatahi character areas, provide the immediate hill backdrop to the plains and immediately adjacent valley floors.

The Kourarau Stream valley is a secluded and elevated valley enclosed between the two ridges and drains to the upper Kourarau Dam that is contained behind the secondary ridge adjacent to Te Wharau Road. Te Wharau Road passes through the saddle between two high points of the main ridge Pariwhariki (537m) and Maungaraki (531m). The secondary ridge is more defined at its southern end (519m), breaking down into a series of hills and stream gullies north of the Kourarau Dams.

The rounded undulating to hilly landforms typical of the underlying limestone dominate the area. Steep slopes are few and where they occur they are associated with the ridges, rock outcrops, escarpments and the sides of gullies.

A special Maori connection is found in the famous legend of the taniwha Ngarara Huarau from Kourarau and his sister Parakawhiti after whom the prominent cliffs to the south of the Gladstone tavern are named. The alternative name for the taniwha is mokonui, another name for moa, which may point to the giant bird being found in the area when early people first stayed there. The names Eringa and Te Wharau are taken from a pa and papakainga.

The hills are primarily grazed pasture, relatively bare of woody vegetation. There are several pockets of native broadleaf-hardwood forest remnants remaining, often associated with regenerating kanuka, in the base of gullies (for example below the lower Kourarau Dam).

The area is a sparsely settled rural area accessed by three roads. Admiral Road passes through the area linking the Hinakura and Ponatahi Valleys. Te Wharau Road, the busiest road, also passes through the area linking the coast at Flat Point (Te Unu Unu) and Glenburn with the plains in the west. Te Awa Road provides access to the slopes at the northern end from Te Whanga.

The Kourarau Dam is a reservoir for the Kourarau Power Scheme consisting of two small power stations commissioned in the early 1920s.

**NOTABLE CHARACTERISTICS**

- Elevated rounded limestone hills and valleys
- Long flat Maungaraki Ridge/skyline
- Eringa (575m)
- Kourarau Power Scheme



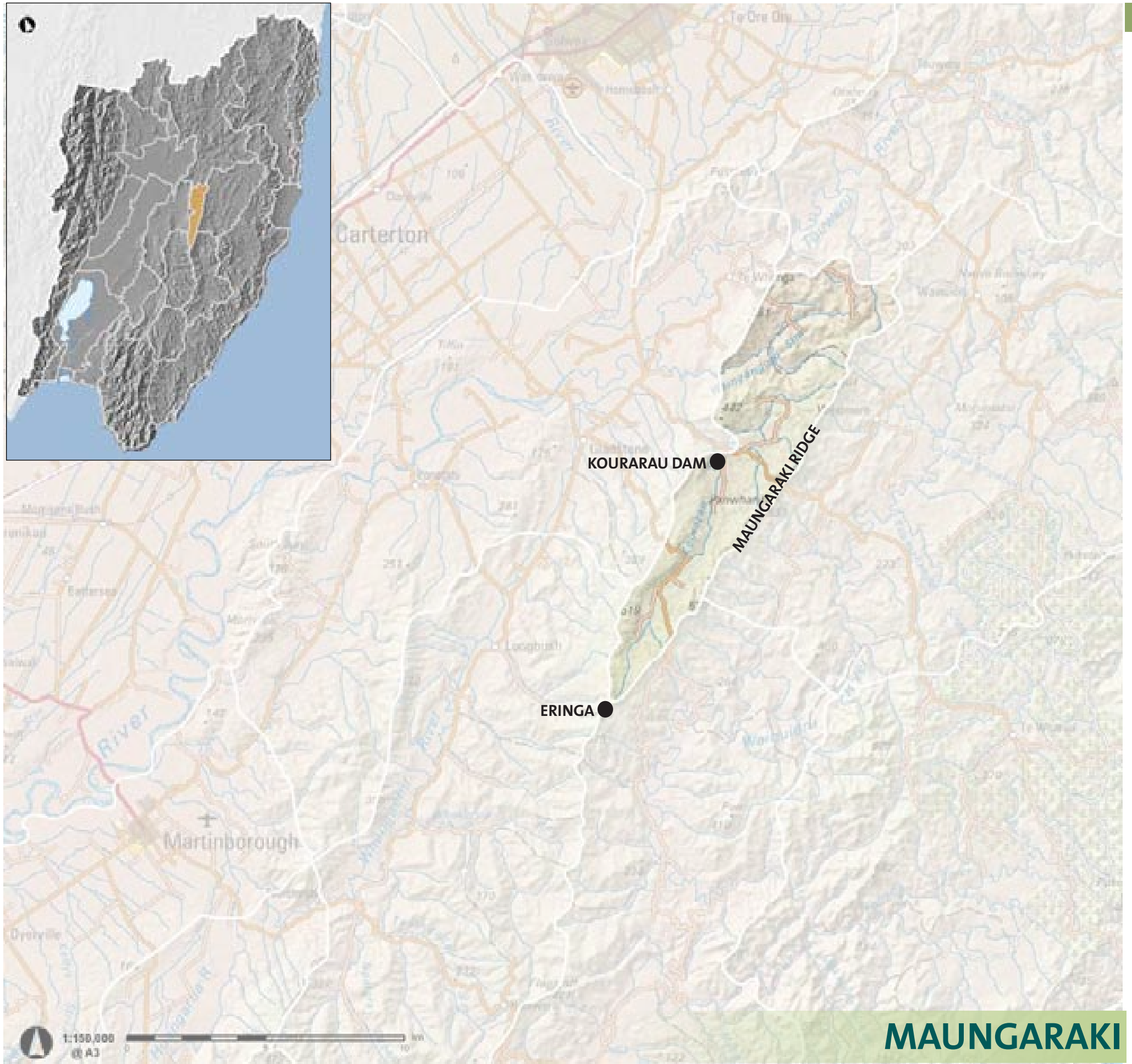
From the Gladstone Plains the secondary ridge forms the skyline with the higher main ridge obscured from view.



The Kourarau Stream valley perched between the main Maungaraki Ridge and the secondary ridge is elevated above the plains. Small native forest remnants remain in places.

Below: The long and virtually horizontal Maungaraki Ridge forms a distinctive skyline with the high point, Eringa, marking the end of the ridgeline and this character area (right of photograph)..





The secondary ridge that forms this skyline encloses the eastern side of the Gladstone Plains. The tall concrete structure is part of the Kourarau Power Scheme.



# WAINUIORU

The Wainuioru character area is an elevated basin lying between the more densely settled outskirts of Masterton (Whakaoriori) and the eastern hill country that become more rugged and isolated heading towards the coast. It comprises the valleys and low hills of the upper Wainuioru River catchment, with the floor of the basin being approximately 200m asl rising to 300m in places. The basin is enclosed by the Maungaraki Range in the west and the dissected hill country in the east. The eastern scarp slope of the Maungaraki ridge, known as the Pariwhariki escarpment, is a dominant landform on the south-western corner of the basin rising to 536m.

The distinctive taipo, Te Maipa and Pukekowhai, are highly visible from Stronvar Road in the northern part of the character area and provide prominent reference points.

The Wainuioru area contains several fine examples of pre- European Maori pa sites whose earthworks have survived modification by machinery and stock grazing. Valleys within the area were used for walking between the inland areas and the coast. Numerous artefacts have been found in the area.

The area is fairly uniform, with open, low, rolling, pasture-covered hills. The only steep topography is confined to the banks and terraces of down cut rivers and the prominent Pariwhariki escarpment. Sheep and beef farming are the dominant land uses, with some deer farming and one or two alternative crops such as small olive groves. One large area of pine forestry near Stronvar lies within the character area, relatively close to the extensive Ngaumu forest on the hill country to the east. Small pine and eucalyptus woodlots are scattered throughout the basin. Exotic amenity and shelter trees such as poplar and eucalyptus are also present throughout. Some scattered patches of kanuka remain on steeper slopes or in gullies but there are few remnants of native forest.

Given the ‘easy’ topography, this area appears long settled, with well established scattered dwellings which are often surrounded with mature exotic trees and amenity plantings. There is very little evidence of recent subdivision.

The school, community hall and fire station at the junction of the Masterton-Stronvar Road and Westmere Road provide a community focus to this well settled and mature rural landscape.



The eastern side of the Maungaraki Range (and Pariwhariki escarpment) encloses the southern Wainuioru valley.



The Te Maipa and Pukekowhai taipo near Stronvar are distinctive and memorable features of the area.

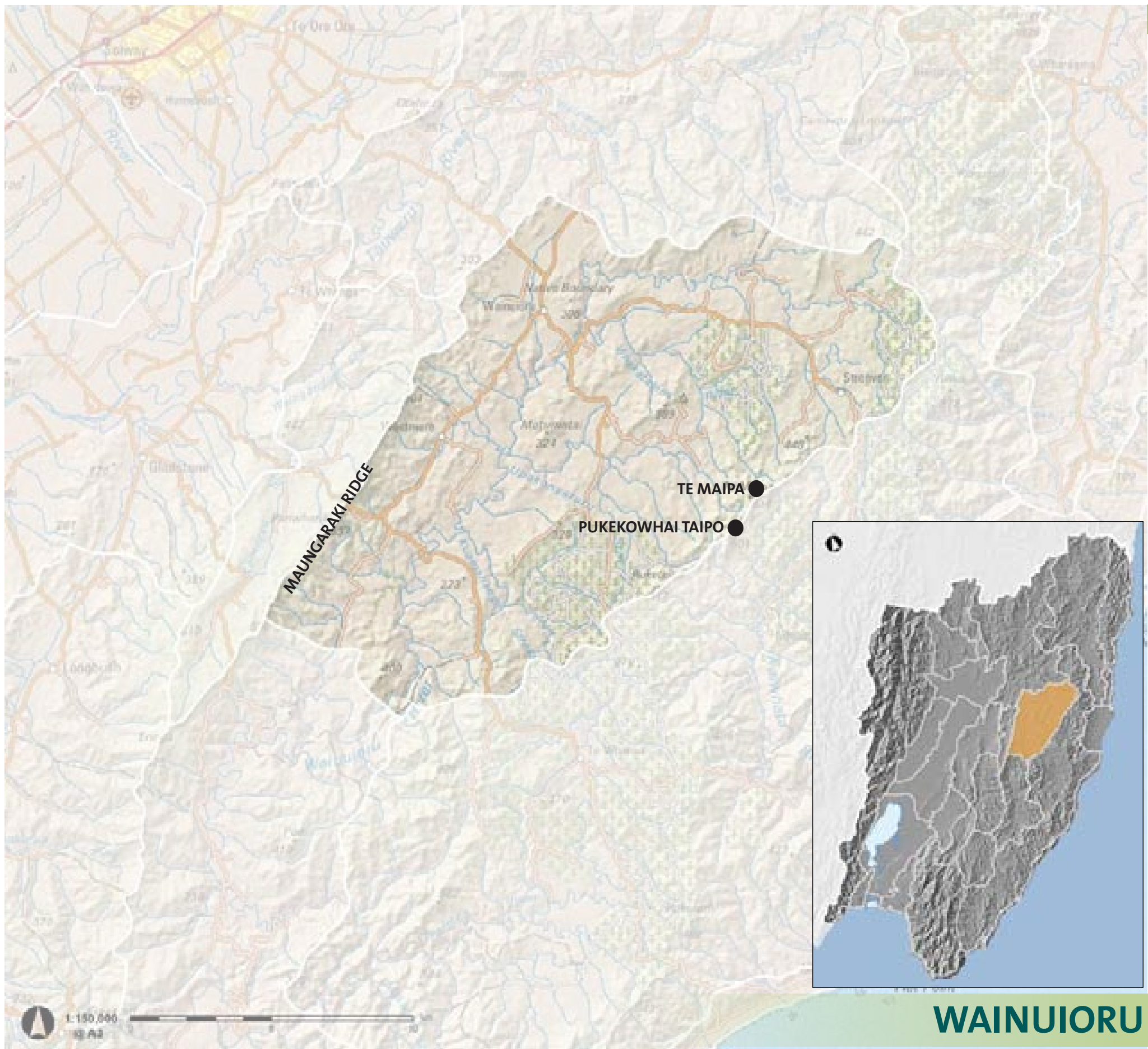
## KEY LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISTICS

- Open rolling country
- Te Maipa and Pukekowhai Taipo near Stronvar

Left: Native forest remnants remain on the dissected hill country at the fringe of the exotic forest at Stronvar. Right: Farmsteads nestled amongst mature exotic trees contrasting with the relatively bare pastured hills, a pattern that typifies this long settled rural area.







Flat to undulating river flats are enclosed by relative low rolling hills, giving this secluded valley a sense of openness.



# LONGBUSH

The Longbush character area includes the valley and enclosed by the Ponatahi Hills(440m) to the west and the slopes at the southern end of the Maungaraki Range (400-500m) that skirt around the back of the Windy Peak Ridge. The hill/valley character area is a transitional area between the plains and the more rugged hill country to the east. The Gladstone, Central Plains and Martinborough character areas wrap around the north and west sides of the Longbush Character area and the Hinakura, Tukurumuri, and Huangarua character areas bound the eastern and southern sides.

Longbush Road follows the valley floor and provides a connection between Gladstone and Martinborough with Hinakura Road providing access to the coast via Hikawera, near the ridgetop in the south east corner of the character area.

The slopes of the Maungaraki Range were used extensively as pa locations, while several urupa are located in the area. Papakainga were located near Tablelands. The remains of the Uwhiroa swamp provide clues as to one of the attractions that drew Maori to Longbush.

Relatively soft mudstones and sandstones make up the hill country (Land Type 9). This geological base is reflected in the smooth rounded forms of the hills and ridgetops which are a feature of the area, and clearly recognisable under the grazed pasture. The steep-sided gullies, often supporting regenerating native vegetation, provide a distinctive separation between the rounded ridges and spurs. The relatively broad and undulating valley floor, supports a patchwork of paddocks and shelterbelts.

Erosion is occurring on some of the steeper slopes and planting of exotic erosion stabilisation species is a common feature on the steeper land. Grazed pasture dominates the area which is interspersed with shelterbelts, exotic woodlots and occasional exotic forestry blocks and small areas of grapes have recently been established. Amenity planting of exotic tree species is established around farmsteads.

The broad valley and low rounded hills combine to create a semi-enclosed medium scale landscape. The ‘easy’ topography means that this area has been long settled with well established farmsteads situated along the valley floor and roads. Buildings are generally not prominent as they are nestled into the folds of the hills and typically surrounded by trees. There is little evidence of recent subdivision.

The smooth grazed hills interspersed with clusters of trees give the appearance of a well managed rural landscape. There are no settlements in this character area but it is closely associated with the Martinborough, Gladstone and Ponatahi communities.



The broad and undulating valley floor supports a patchwork of farmsteads, typically set within well established amenity planting.



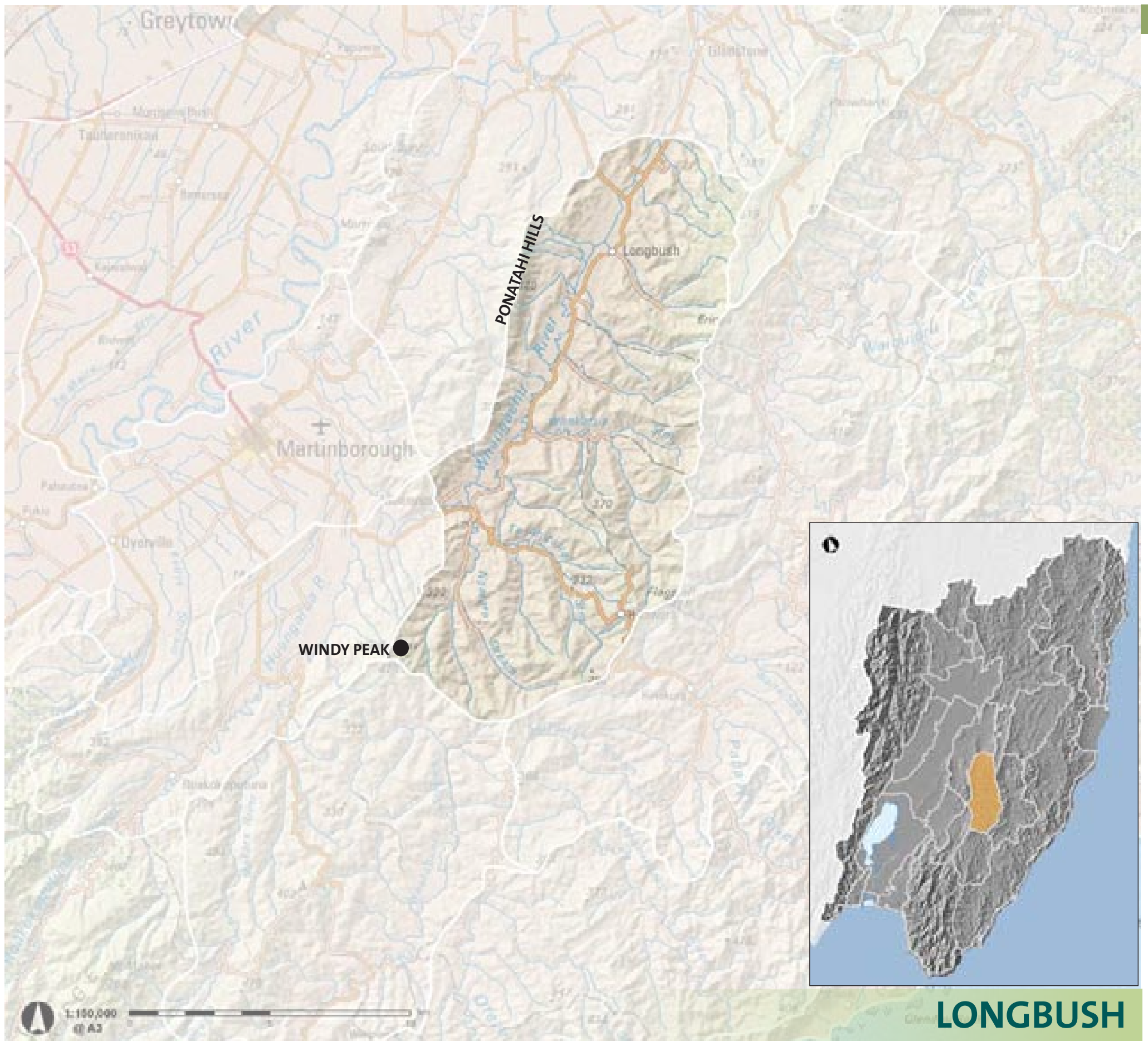
Kanuka on steeper land and in some gullies, together with pine woodlots, are common in the area.

## NOTABLE FEATURES

- Smooth rounded grazed pasture hills & valleys
- Uwhiroa swamp

Grazed pasture is the prominent land cover on the rolling hills. From this point on (Millars Road looking east), the distinctive Maungaraki Range provides the backdrop.





*The smooth grazed hills interspersed with clusters of trees give the appearance of a well managed rural landscape.*





# HINAKURA

The Hinakura character area is an inland river valley system and elevated basin between the high rugged coastal hill country and the Maungaraki Ridge. This area encompasses the valleys and hills of the lower catchment of the Wainuioru River and the mid-catchment of the Pahaoa River. The Wainuioru River runs into the Pahaoa River and together the rivers combine to form a single valley system that largely defines the area. The meandering river channels have formed a distinctive pattern on the valley floor, creating discrete areas of flat land between the winding river channels. The valley at the southern end of the area has a relatively wide floor and gently sloping toe slopes that together create a distinct basin, compared to the narrower river valley of the north. The north-western corner of the character area is defined by the southern end of the Maungaraki Ridge scarp.

A complex of rolling to steep hill country flanks both sides of the valley. The dissected hills of the western side are predominantly mudstone/sandstone (Land Type 9) and generally comprise more gentle slopes and rounded features than the harder and more jagged rock types on the eastern side (Land Type 7). The rugged eastern side of the valley is higher and steeper, with distinctive rocky outcrops, which are not dissimilar to the adjoining Coastal Hill landscape character area to the east.

The valley floor descends from approximately 100m asl in the north to about 40m at the Hinakura Hall in the south. The hills on both sides that rise to about 400m enclose the valley. The meandering river and valley floor is broken near the middle of the character area where the Wainuioru River diverts around the eastern side of Tawhanga, a 400m hill, via a winding steep sided gorge complex.

Hinakura was named after a Maori woman. The story of Hinakura highlights a settlement pattern of tangata whenua in that she eventually met her loved one after they missed a rendezvous with each other. The story takes place between the coast at Pahaoa, through Hinakura and further west to Huangarua (Martinborough).

The traditional Maori walkway from the villages in and around the Martinborough area to the East Coast used the Pahaoa River to connect to the sea .

The hills and valley floor are predominantly used for extensive grazing but there are continuous tracts of kanuka and native forest remnants associated with gullies and steeper land. Small areas of pine forestry and woodlots of other exotic tree species are scattered throughout the valley.

The European settlement pattern is sparse with farmsteads scattered along the bottom of the valley and along the road which traverses this



*Native forest remnants remain on some of the flood plains in the base of the valley.*



*View down the valley with the green and fertile river flood plains nestled amongst the hills.*

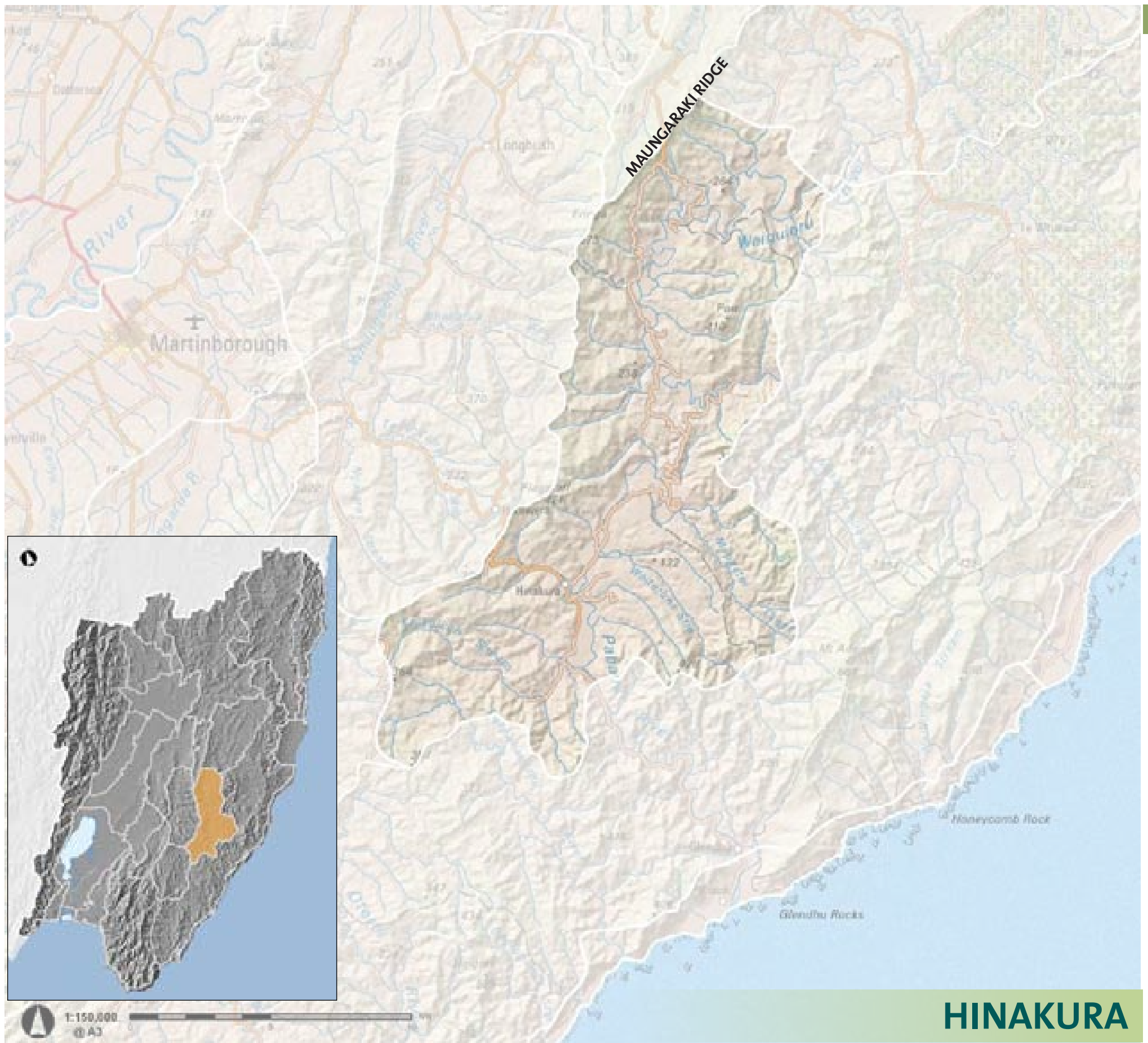
area. This road, which is known by different names along its length (Clifton Grove Road/Wainuioru Road/Ngakonui Road/Moeraki Road) provides access from both the northern and southern ends of the valley. The Hinakura Hall, located at the southern end, marks the centre of this sparsely populated extensively farmed area.

## KEY LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISTICS

- Inland isolated valley, with distinct basin in the south, sparsely settled with extensive grazing
- Meander floodplains and down-cut river.

*The Pahaoa River meanders through the wide basin at the southern end of the valley. There is dense tree cover in the down-cut river beds.*





From the summit of the Maungaraki Range (Admiral Road) looking east, the Maungaraki Valley is a complex of steep to rolling hills, extensive pasture and relatively dense tree cover. The higher and rugged eastern hill country can be seen beyond.



# TUTURUMURI

The Tutarumuri character area comprises the Big Hill ridgeline (where the Hau Nui windfarm is located) and associated slopes either side. The area includes the upper tributaries of the Awhea River (east of the ridge) and the Makara River that drains to the Huangarua River (west of the ridge). This character area is part of the more gentle lower hills that lie between the rugged coastal hills to the east and the plains and lowlands to the west.

The area is bounded by the Aorangi Ranges to the south, the coastal hill country to the east and the Ponatahi and Hinakura character areas to the north. The western edge of the area is defined by the ridgeline that includes Windy Peak (475m) and The Waka (Nga Waka a Kupe) landform which together form a distinctive backdrop to Martinborough. The Waka area is also easily distinguishable from the eastern side of the landform.

This character area is a medium scale rural landscape. The underlying geology of the northern part of the area, including Windy Peak and ‘Nga Waka a Kupe’, is soft mudstone/sandstone (Land Type 9) which is reflected in the rounded nature of the ridgetops and spurs. The southern portion comprises a harder rock type which is more jagged in nature with steeper slopes.

The Whakapuni Stream runs into the Awhea River and together these form the main valley toward Tutarumuri and the sea beyond. The narrow valley floor of accumulated alluvial material is lined in places with willow trees. White Rock Road follows the base of the river valley with several bridges crossing the river as it winds its way down the valley.

Grazed pasture is the dominant land cover on the often steep hill slopes, which are bare in terms of tree cover. The western side of the main river valley has a denser cover of trees than the east, comprising exotic pine plantations and regenerating native scrub. The Makara River valley is primarily grazed pasture with pockets of regenerating native vegetation in the gullies. A mix of exotic trees is generally associated with the base of the river valley and farmsteads and dwellings. There is little native forest but there are areas of regenerating native scrub. Small exotic woodlots are scattered throughout the area. The only large area of exotic plantation occurs on the hills north of Tutarumuri. These exotic plantations are interwoven with areas of regenerating native vegetation that extend further west to the Aorangi Range. Erosion mitigation planting has been established in places, particularly on the steeper slopes and gullies of the softer and more erosion prone northern areas.



The ridge with the Nga Waka a Kupe landform forms part of the western boundary of the Tutarumuri character area.

The settlement pattern is sparse, with rural dwellings aligned along the roads in the valley floor, with the school at Tutarumuri the community centre.

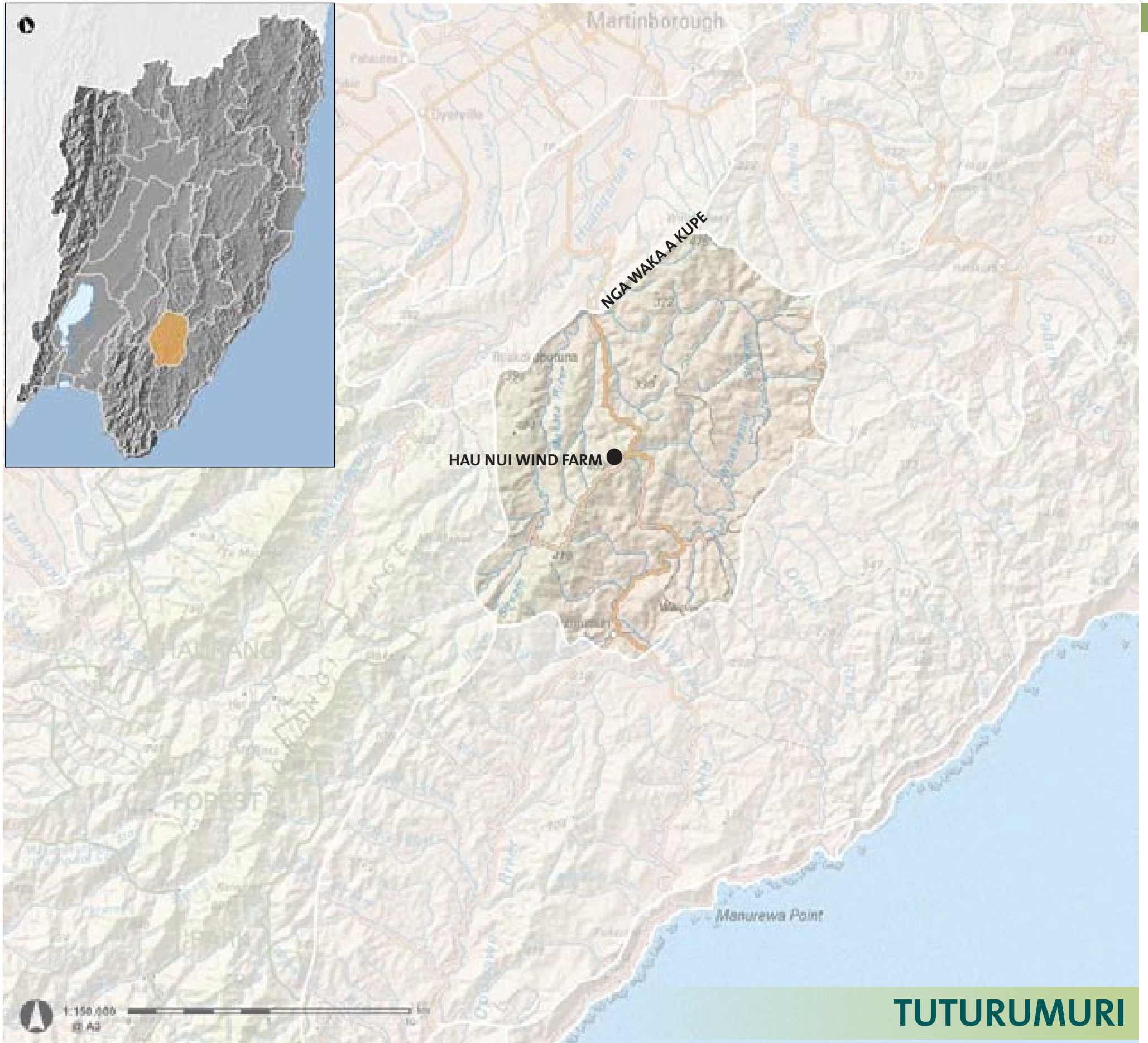
## KEY LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISTICS

- The Waka (Nga Waka a Kupe) Landform
- Enclosed valley floor with linear settlement pattern.

From near the Hau Nui windfarm, the high jagged forms of the coastal hills to the east are silhouetted as a distinctive skyline. Exotic woodlots and areas of kanuka are common on slopes such as those in the foreground







**TUTURUMURI**

Left: The Awheea River winds its way through the hills toward the sea. White Rock Road and farmsteads are located on the narrow river plains. Willows and poplars line the river bed in places, and erosion tree planting is common in many of the steep gullies. Right: The character area adjoins the Aorangi Ranges in the south east corner where large areas of native and exotic forest are located. Hau Nui wind farm middle left of photograph.



# COASTAL HILL COUNTRY

This large character area includes the generally steep to very steep, highly dissected and forested hills and ranges that run parallel to the coast from Mangapakeha in the north to the edge of the Aorangi Range in the south. Despite its size (90km long and 5-14km wide), this character area recognises the largely homogeneous nature of the topography, land use and land cover.

Land Types 7 and 8 predominate and are expressed as a complex of jagged ridges, taipo, and steep narrow valleys, and coalescing colluvial /alluvial footslope fans. The range of taipo south of Stronvar including the peaks Te Maipa (511m) and Pukekowhai (517m), are notable features of the area and are highly visible / prominent when viewed at close quarters from Stronvar Road (Wainuioru character area).

The northeast-southwest alignment of this hill country is a product of the faulting and geologically ‘restless’ nature of the eastern hill country. Elevation of most ridges varies between 300 and 500m with Mt Adams, just inland from Glendhu Rocks, the highest peak at 663m.

The fragmented and rugged topography and consequent sparse settlement pattern characterise the area, which is generally isolated from the more populated areas to the west. Public road access within the character area is limited to roads that access the coast at Homewood, Flat Point (Te Unu Unu), Glendhu Rocks, Tora and White Rock.

The area also includes the coastal foothills, seaward ridges and slopes that descend to the coastal edge between Flat Point and White Rock. Several rivers cut through the hills from the interior to the coast. The largest of these, the Kaiwhata, Pahaoa, Awhea, Oterei and Opouawe Rivers, each drain large interior catchments. The associated narrow river valleys also provide road access through the hills to the coast. These river valleys have a distinctly ‘wild’ and remote feel.

The Kaiwhata River (Kaihoata River) catchment comprises large areas of exotic forest inland of Homewood. The Pahaoa River drains a very large inland catchment that commences northeast of Masterton (Whakaoriori) as the Wainuioru River, and terminates at Glendhu Rocks via a steep sided winding gorge flanked with advanced regenerating native vegetation. The Department of Conservation manages three rare and sizable forest remnants in the Coastal Hill Country - The Tora Bush Scenic Reserve (550 ha); Rocky Hills Sanctuary Area (400 ha); and Rewa Bush Stewardship (1300 ha).

The Opouawe River differs from the other rivers, in that it carries coarse greywacke gravels brought down from the Aorangi Ranges. Both the Awhea and Opouawe Rivers frequently flood and have built up narrow floodplains of alluvial deposits enclosed by steep slopes. The plains become wider toward the coast. By contrast, the Awhea River Valley has a higher level of domestication and a wider valley and valley floor than the other river valleys. Its more accessible nature and associated settlement pattern have resulted in a greater degree of ‘domestication’,



The coastal hills are high, rugged and substantially covered with a mix of both native and exotic forest.

characterised by areas of exotic vegetation and amenity planting in association with dwellings and farmsteads.

The northern part of the character area (north of Glenburn Station) is dominated by extensive production pine forests, much of which are contained within the Ngaumu Forest. The southern part has extensive areas of kanuka-dominated native shrubland/treeland and large tracts of secondary native forest on steep faces and in narrow valleys.

Pastoral farming is a significant landuse within the character area, particularly on the more gentle hills and foothills along the coastal margin (Flat Point, Glenburn, Glendhu, Te Awaiti, Tora and White Rock) the river valleys (Kaiwhata and Opouawe), and also on the inland fringes of the Wainuioru basin.

There are only a few Maori sites of significance in this area although there are known migration routes that connected the inland valley to coastal sites.

This character area encompasses the inner reaches of both early and latter Maori populations that could be described as predominantly coastal. The hills and valleys of the area supported flora and fauna that were used extensively for food, shelter and implements.

## KEY LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISTICS

- Rugged, steep and high hills with extremely fragmented topography.
- Extensive production pine forestry
- Extensive areas of regenerating native shrubland and forest
- Isolated interior and sparsely settled
- Three sizable & rare forest remnants
- Te Maipa Taipo (Stronvar)
- The Tora Bush Scenic Reserve, Rocky Hills Sanctuary, Rewa Bush Stewardship Area

Left: Dense native forest extends to the top of the high and jagged rocky ridges of some of the coastal ranges. Right: Production pine forestry occupies large areas of the coastal hills, much of which were originally cleared of native forest to make way for pasture.









# WHAKATAKI HILLS

Running parallel to the coast in the northeast corner of the Wairarapa, this range of hills separates the Whakataki-Castlepoint coast from the inland Whareama-Tinui valley system. The area extends from the Mataikona River, (the northern boundary of the Masterton District), to the Whareama River mouth, south of Castlepoint (Rangiwhakaoma). The topography and land use in this character area is very similar to that of the 'coastal hills character area' to the south. The Whakataki character area has been identified as a separate area from the coastal hills in the south, due to the distinct separation provided by the broad Whareama-Tinui River valley.

The main body of the range is steep, dissected hill country rising to 500m at its highest point; but most commonly with hilltops of approximately 300m. A narrow margin of hill country between the main range and the coast composed of softer mudstones has a more rounded and gentle topography, and lower elevations than the main range. Several short river catchments, such as the Whakataki River, drain to the coast and dissect this low and rounded hill country.

The hill country is substantially vegetated with forest and scrub, with smaller areas of the lower coastal hills and inland slopes used for grazed pasture. Large areas of pine plantation (Ngaumu Forest) interspersed with small areas of native forest remnants typify the area. Regenerating native scrub and exotic scrub also cover large areas of the steeper and higher slopes. Pastoral farming is also a significant landuse within the character area, particularly on large stations along the coastal terrace and in river valleys.

Mount Percy Bush is the only substantial area of native bush in the character area. This substantial 1,369 ha block of advanced secondary growth is located on the steep coastal slopes south of Mataikona. A small part of the remnant is protected by a QEII Covenant, with the remainder identified by Department of Conservation as a Recommended Area for Protection.

The steep, relatively isolated forested hill country is sparsely settled with dwellings and farmsteads in the bottom of the narrow valleys adjacent to roads. The Tinui-Castlepoint Road is the only public access across the ranges in the north and the road to Otahome provides access to the coast in the south.

## KEY LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISTICS

- Large areas of pine plantation and regenerating native vegetation.
- Mt Percy
- Mt Percy Bush remnant

*The road to Castlepoint: Production pine forest has a continual cycle of harvesting and replanting with recently harvested areas appearing as visually prominent in the landscape.*



*The steep dissected hills provide an immediate backdrop to the coast at the northern end of the study area.*

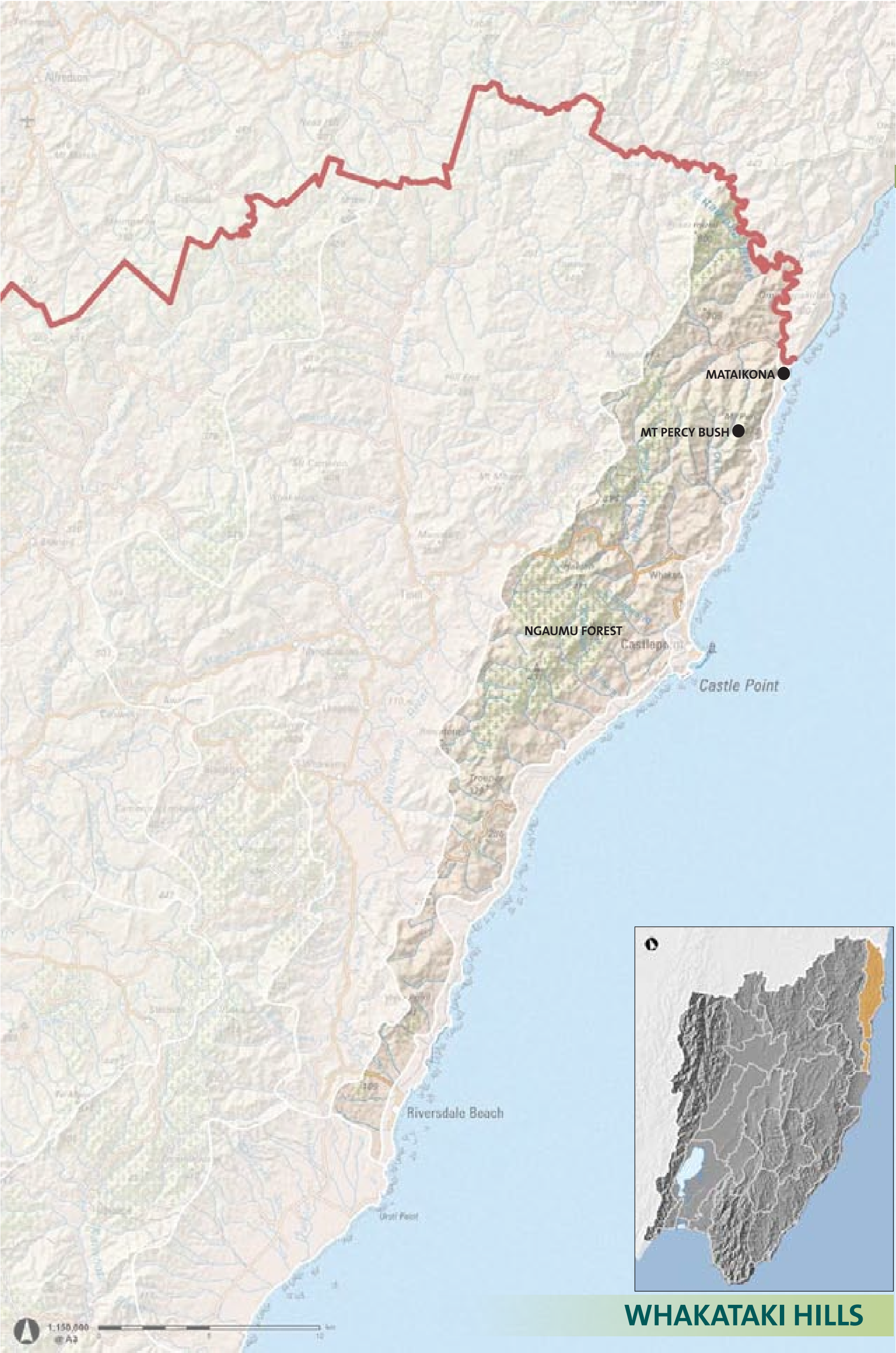


*The character area is largely covered with native and exotic forest and scrub, with some areas of pastoral farming.*



*Mt Percy is the most substantial native forest remnant in the character area, located on the steep slopes south of Mataikona.*





WHAKATAKI HILLS

# CASTLEPOINT

The Whakataki / Castlepoint (Rangiwhakaoma) character area includes the coastal strip from Castlepoint to the northernmost extent of the Wairarapa study area, near Mataikona. The narrow coastal platform consists of a smooth, sweeping sandy beach with a gravel access road located between the beach and the foot of the coastal hills. The transition between the coastal platform and wider coastal setting is well defined, with the coastal hills rising steeply from the coastal platform. The predominant land type is eastern coastal fringe and uplifted marine terraces (Land Type 11).

Castlepoint Reef and Scenic Reserve is a unique landscape. The main elements are the dominant rock landform called the 'castle', the lagoon, and the lighthouse which sits on a long curvilinear reef. The distant ridgelines of the Wairarapa hill country provide a distinctive backdrop and sense of scale for the lighthouse and Castle Rock landform. Castlepoint Reef and Scenic Reserve has well documented ecological, heritage and geological values.

Other geological features of note in the area are the Whakataki coast tongue and groove erosion patterns, Suicide Rock (Te Rerenga o te Aohuruhuru) and the Mataikona dunes and shore platform. The latter consist of a dramatic 100m landslide and a rock platform eroded in a distinctive parallel crest-trough pattern.

The area has a mild, dry climate, the highest average air temperature in the Wairarapa, and a long growing season. Westerly winds prevail. Sea breezes often occur in coastal areas on warm summer days. High temperatures are frequent in summer, which may be accompanied by strong dry foehn winds from the northwest. Vegetation within the coastal setting is varied. Where the coastal hills drop steeply to meet the coastal platform, the vegetation is either pasture or regenerating native scrub. There are also large tracts of pine forestry, which extend from the hills to the beach. Indigenous coastal forest is absent, but isolated patches of native vegetation, in the form of dune shrubland and wetland species, occur at various points along the coast.

This area is rich in Maori history and occupation due to the abundance of seafood, migration links inland and access to freshwater. Kupe is said to have chased the great Wheke (Octopus) of Maturangi to a cave beneath the reef at Rangiwhakaoma (Castlepoint). Whatonga, captain of the Kurahaupo waka established his marae there called Matira and a number of tribes have been associated with this area over a long period of time; of note are Te Hika o Papauma, Ngai Tara and Hamua. There are a number of pa sites between Mataikona and Whakataki that sit above the current road level. Rangiwhakaoma was also a safe haven for waka. The large dune system north of Castlepoint Beach is a well-known urupa (cemetery).



*With its fossil-rich limestone reef and magnificent 162 metre high Castle Rock, Castlepoint is one of the most spectacular sites along the Wairarapa coastline.*

There is a long history of farming in the Castlepoint area, and sheep and beef farming are still the dominant landuses. Many of these old stations remain intact, except for the coastal strip which has been subdivided off to meet the demand for holiday houses. The Mataikona beach settlement features traditional baches which are setback from the coast, preserving the intervening sand dunes and interdune wetlands.

Most of the area is accessible via a gravel, public road, which follows the coastal platform for most of its length. Castlepoint is the largest settlement within the character area and has long been a weekend retreat for Wairarapa families and for visitors from further afield. Castlepoint was Wairarapa's original port, a significant link in the chain for the early wool trade until the early 20th century when road access was established. It is popular for holidays and fishing, and has a safe swimming beach and tidal lagoon.

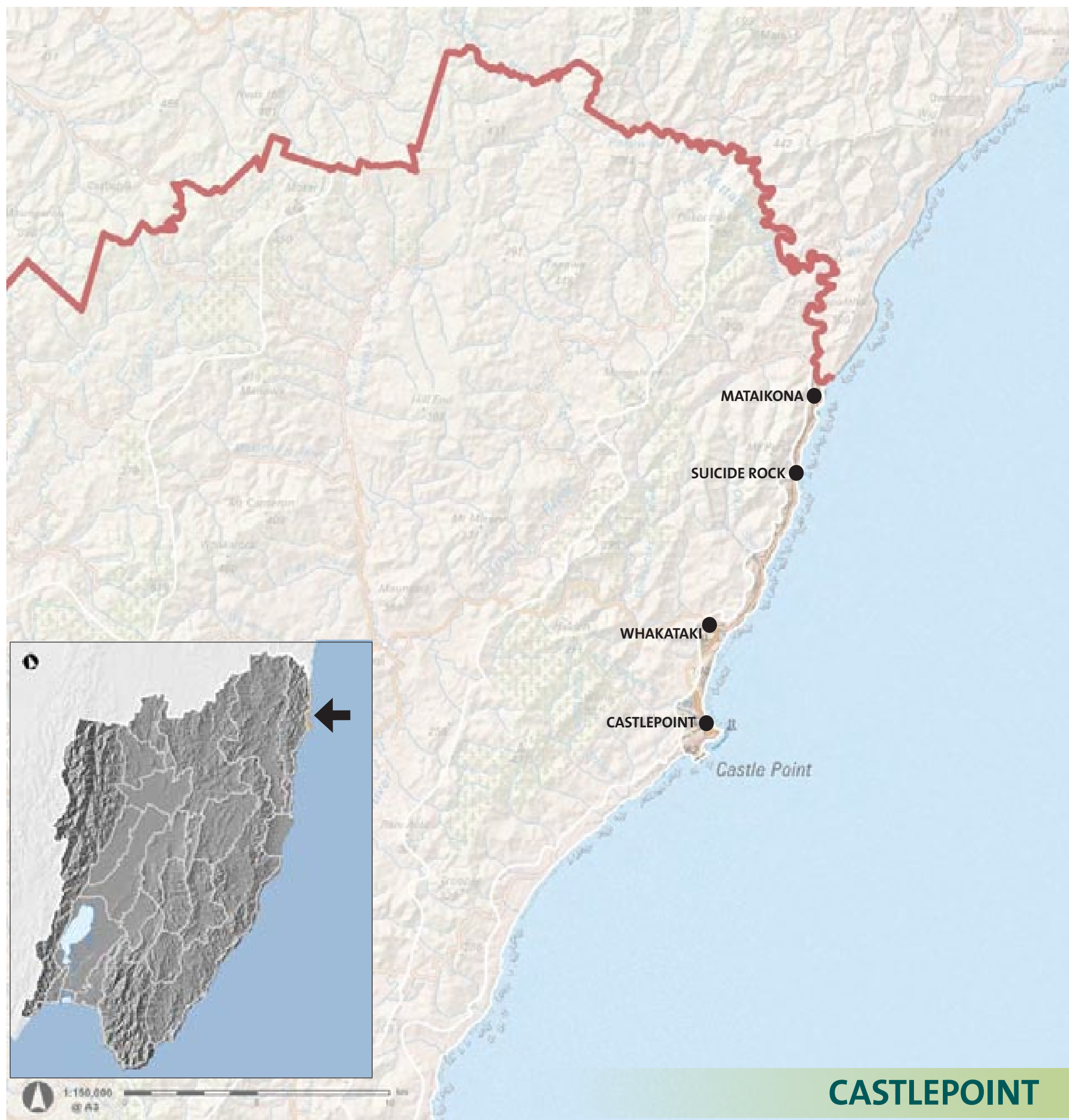
## KEY LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISTICS

- Main settlement is Castlepoint
- Long history of farming – sheep and beef
- Traditional baches – transient population
- Steep coastal hills abruptly meet beach
- Castlepoint Reef & Scenic Reserve and Mataikona dunes
- Mataikona beach settlements
- Suicide Rock

*The Whakataki River mouth forms a broad, fertile valley, and has a long history of farming.*







Left: The Whakataki Miocene Flysch is a series of deeply incised parallel lines which form a 'tongue and groove' pattern. Middle: The traditional baches along the Mataikona coast are well set back from the coast, retaining the sand dunes and interdune wetlands. Right: The sand bar across the Castlepoint lagoon provides access to the historic lighthouse.



# RIVERSDALE

The Whareama / Riversdale character area includes the coastal strip from Riversdale to just south of Castlepoint (Rangiwhakaoma). The coastal platform is predominantly a sandy beach, interspersed with short lengths of rocky shoreline and offshore reefs. The coastal setting is characterised by coastal flats (low dunes and wetlands) with rolling duneland topography up to approximately 100m asl. However, at Otahome, the transition between the coastal platform and coastal setting is more definite, being defined by the steeper escarpment along the uplifted terraces. At the river mouths, such as the Whareama River mouth, the river has carved a wide, relatively flat coastal platform, and the coastal influence extends further inland.

The area has low rainfall and strong north-westerly winds, which leave it prone to drought. Vegetation within the coastal setting is varied, with a thin ribbon of land adjacent to the coastal platform supporting a more historic pattern of coastal native shrubland. Extensive grazing typically occurs across the uplifted terraces, right down to the ribbon of native coastal vegetation along the coastal platform. There are small blocks of pine forestry and shelterbelts between Riversdale and Whareama. The large and relatively unmodified south Riversdale dunes and wetlands have regionally important native vegetation with pingao, spinifex, sand coprosma and sand daphne on fragile small dune systems and the unusual occurrence of matagouri.

The Whareama River mouth and associated dunes are considered one of the more intact areas of coastal wetland and duneland along the Wairarapa Coast. The Whareama River is regionally significant as the only tidal river estuary along this coast.

Maori kainga are located in many places along this coastline. They were typically located near good fishing spots, easy access and freshwater hence places such as Otuhaumi (Otahome), Waimimiha, Whareama, and Motukairangi (Riversdale). Evidence suggests that these places were used over many centuries. Most were seasonal as tribes spent the summer months collecting and drying food for winter.

A cluster of pa and garden sites are found on both sides of the Whareama River estuary. Maori buried their beloved in coastal dunes along this area thus bones are often uncovered even today.

Riversdale, the largest beach settlement in the Wairarapa, was developed in the late 1950s. Riversdale has around 250 houses, 60 of these are permanent residents, and the number of visitors swells to around 2000 during the summer holiday period. Whilst settlement has been traditionally limited to the immediate coastal edge, subdivision of the terraces above the settlement was recently approved and the roads and infrastructure built. As dwellings are developed on these elevated sites



At the Whareama River mouth, the coastal platform is wide and extends inland. It is a stark, dramatic landscape, and a popular spot for fishing.

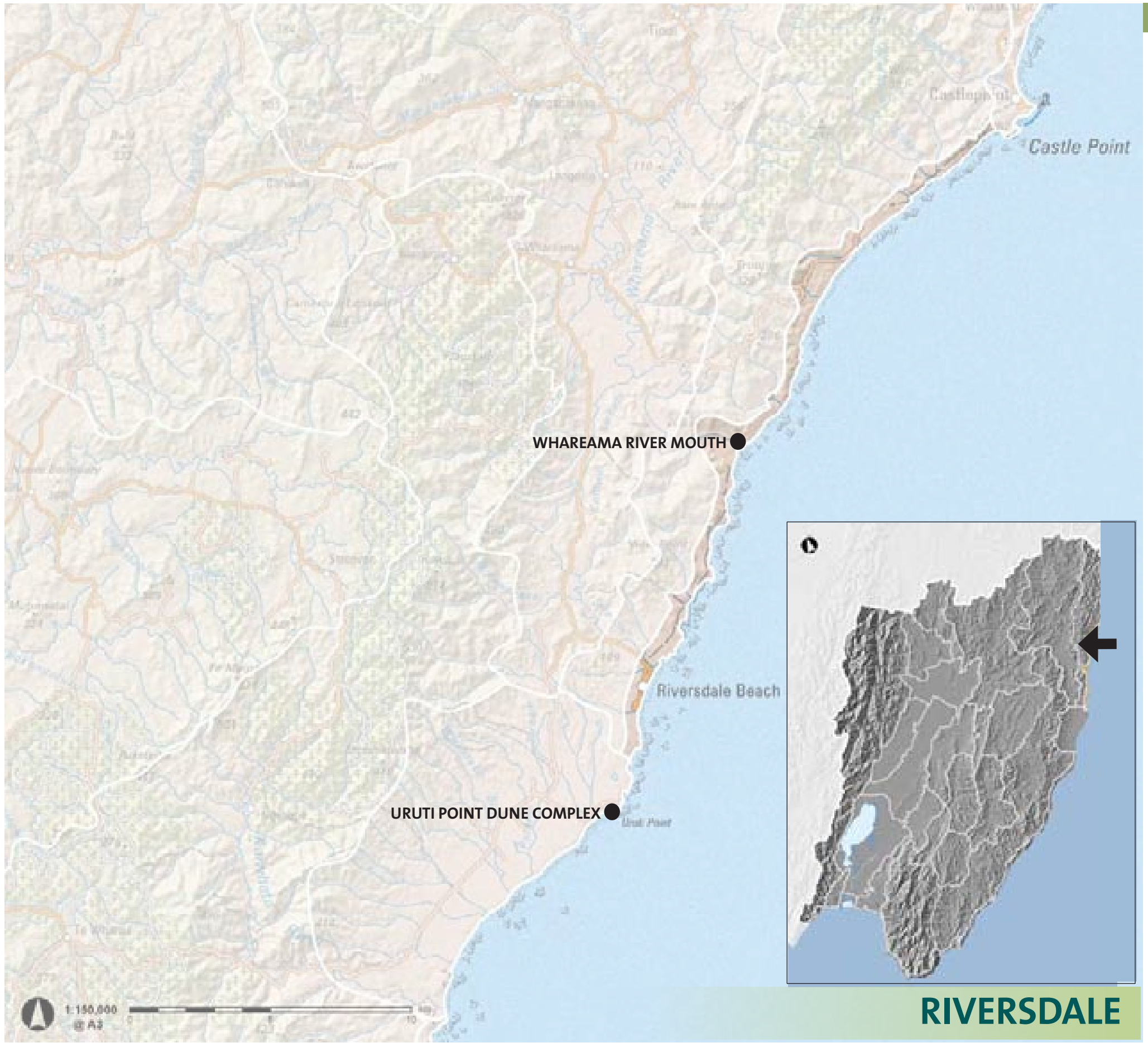
the character of Riversdale will change, in a not dissimilar way to small beach settlements in other parts of New Zealand, where large areas of new residential development have occurred outside the boundaries of the original settlement.

## KEY LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISTICS

- Drought prone
- Sandy shore, short stretches of gravels
- Much of coast is inaccessible by formed road
- Riversdale is the largest holiday settlement on the Wairarapa coast
- Coastal vegetation is diverse with a narrow ribbon of historical native vegetation near the shore, and grazing further inland.

Historically the Riversdale settlement has occurred on the coastal platform and includes extensive, mature plantings of macrocarpa, nolfolk pine and pohutukawa.





Left: Subdivision was approved in 2007 for a 127-Lot subdivision on the terraces behind the current Riversdale settlement. Middle: Stock ponds are scattered along the terraces on Castlepoint Station at Otahome. Right: The pattern created by the shelterbelts near the Whareama River contrasts with the underlying landform.





# HOMEWOOD

The Homewood character area comprises distinctive and well defined broad (4-5km) coastal plains and uplifted terraces not found elsewhere on the Wairarapa Coast. This location is the only coastal character area defined by a range of steep coastal hills (350-400m) to the west. Approximately 12km in length, the area extends from Uruti Point in the north to the Kaiwhata River (Kaihoata River) in the south.

A series of broad terraces resulting from uplift of the seabed over the past 125, 000 years extend inland from Uruti Point. Approximately 3.5 km of the Uruti Point Dunes lie within this character area and extend 600m inland at Uruti Point. Uruti Point Dune complex is classified as an ‘indigenousthreatened environment’ by the Department of Conservation. This complex is one of the largest duneland systems on the Wairarapa Coast, stretching from 3 km south to 1km north of Uruti Point. The dunes include foredunes, slacks, rear dunes, and an estuary.

The coastal edge of the character area is a combination of sand and gravel beaches, rocky outcrops, uplifted shore platforms and low wave cut cliffs. Exposed sandstone and mudstone shore platforms being eroded by the wind and waves are a special feature of Uruti Point. The erosion process has revealed the slumping and folded formation process of the soft rock, now expressed as abstract surface textures and patterns. The fossil forest at the Kaiwhata River mouth is another notable geological feature. More than 20 totara trees from forests inundated by rising sea levels more than 7000 years ago have been buried and are now being re-exposed by the sea.

This area was significant to Maori because of the abundance and variety of food from the sea, coastal streams, wetlands, and kahikatea forests. The last remaining coastal podocarp remnant forest along the entire East Coast can be found at Okautete Reserve. Nearby is the historic church Manga Moria which is the last standing example of a church of the Seven Rules of Jehovah religion. A pa and urupa are located at the mouth of the Kaihoata (Kaiwhata) River.

Homewood Road provides access to the flats from both the northern and southern ends. From the road there are wide expansive sea views across the farmed terraces.

The coastal platform east of Homewood Road gradually slopes down toward the coast and comprises flats and undulating land, stream gullies and old coastal terraces. West of Homewood Road, the gently sloping, undulating to rolling pasture foothills and slopes form the toe and lower slopes of the steep and high coastal hills, which bound the Country Hills character area. These forested hills have a significant distant presence on the Homewood character area.



Historic Maunga Moria Church at Okautete, Homewood, was opened around 1900.

The plains and terraces are predominantly grazed pasture with a distinctive pattern of mature shelterbelts, small exotic woodlots, and scattered patches of remnant native vegetation. The rounded foothills are also predominantly grazed with fingers of regenerating native vegetation and native forest extending down from the steeper and higher slopes above. In places, small areas of exotic production forest have been established on the lower slopes. The steep upper slopes to the ridge top are densely vegetated with a mixture of regenerating exotic scrub and indigenous broadleaf forest.

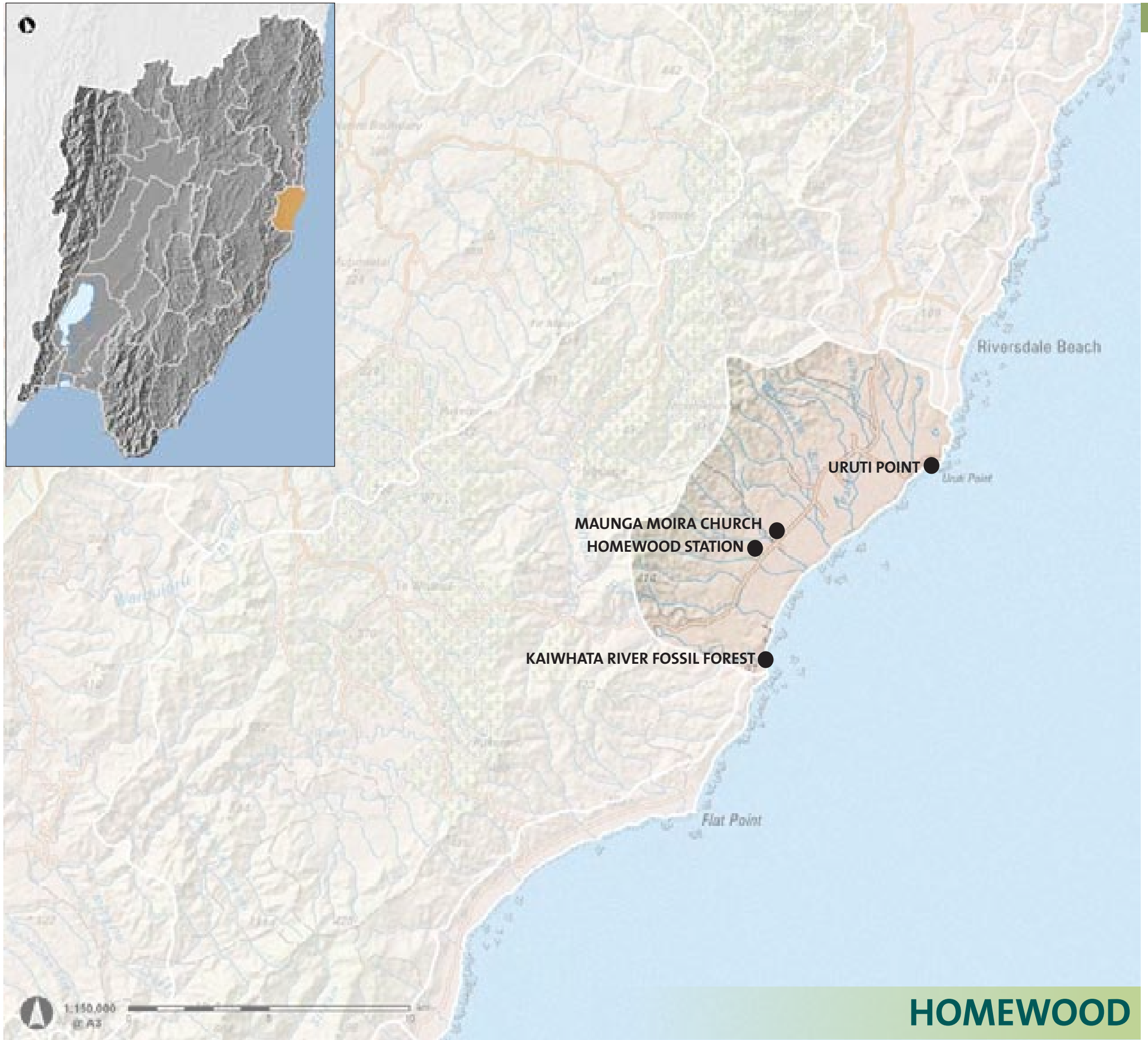
Most dwellings and farm buildings are located inland of Homewood Road with most of it occurring at the southern end of the area including the church, school and cluster of dwellings and farm buildings of Homewood Station.

**KEY LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISTICS**

- Relatively large area of flat land well defined by surrounding hills.
- Expansive views toward the sea across the gently inclining coastal terrace.
- The Uruti Point Dune complex is a significant ecological site
- A mature and long established rural landscape in a dramatic coastal location.
- Coastal features: Uruti Point Dunes, eroding shore platforms, Kaiwhata River fossil forest.

The open and flat coastal plains and terraces slope gently toward the coast.





*Left: The partially eroded uplifted seabed terraces extend inland from Uruti point. Right: Homewood coastal plains are the only broad coastal platform in the Wairarapa that lie immediately adjacent to the coast. The plains are enclosed by the forested hills 4-5 km inland.*



# FLAT POINT

The Flat Point (Te Unu Unu)/ Glenburn character area extends from north of Glenburn Station to approximately 4km north of Flat Point. The shore is characterised by a narrow sand and gravel beach. The broad coastal platform known as the ‘coastal flats’ is up to 1km wide and provokes a feeling of openness, especially when compared to the adjoining coastal character areas. A public road provides access to the length of the area, running approximately parallel with the shore.

Steep hills and coastal escarpment up to around 300m a.s.l provide a strong backdrop to the coastal flats. These hills are heavily dissected, with the toeslopes providing an abrupt transition between the flats and hills. The coastal flats topography is flat to gently undulating, with some low dune formations.

Land Type 11 is predominant along the coastal platform and expressed in the dune complexes and inter-dunal wetlands which occur intermittently along the coastal flats. The hills that form the backdrop are Land Type 8, comprised of steep hard rock with a greywacke base.

Sites of geological significance include Flat Point reef, and the Te Unu Unu Stream mouth.

This part of the Wairarapa is significant to tangata whenua because of important oral histories and the range and extent of heritage sites in the area. Two sites rate a special mention, the first is Waikekeno near Glenburn Station which is arguably one of the most impressive pa sites remaining today with its stone wall formations and pitted ridgelines. The other is Te Unu unu which was renamed Flat Point by Captain Cook in 1770.

The coastal flats comprise a mosaic of rough pasture and are grazed. At the northern end, inter-dunal wetlands areas are dominated by reeds, with coastal grasses and small scale forestry plantations on the stable inland dunes. Scattered groups of native trees such as karaka and cabbage tree remain in some gullies and near the toe of the coastal escarpment and are remnants of Maori settlement. There are mature pine shelterbelts and amenity tree planting associated with the station farmsteads.

The area is remote and is sparsely populated with a recently developed settlement at Flat Point. In 2009, Stage 2 of an 80-lot subdivision has been approved for Flat Point. Historically occupation was based around large sheep stations and proximity to freshwater streams. Land use is still characterised by extensive pastoral farming but there is increasing development pressure for holiday houses along the coastal platform, including occasional baches on the coastal side of the road.



Subdivision at Flat Point has introduced holiday houses into the farming landscape, a pattern which has occurred in many places along the Wairarapa Coast.



A lone cabbage tree is one of the few reminders of the indigenous coastal forest which preceded extensive sheep and beef farming in the area.

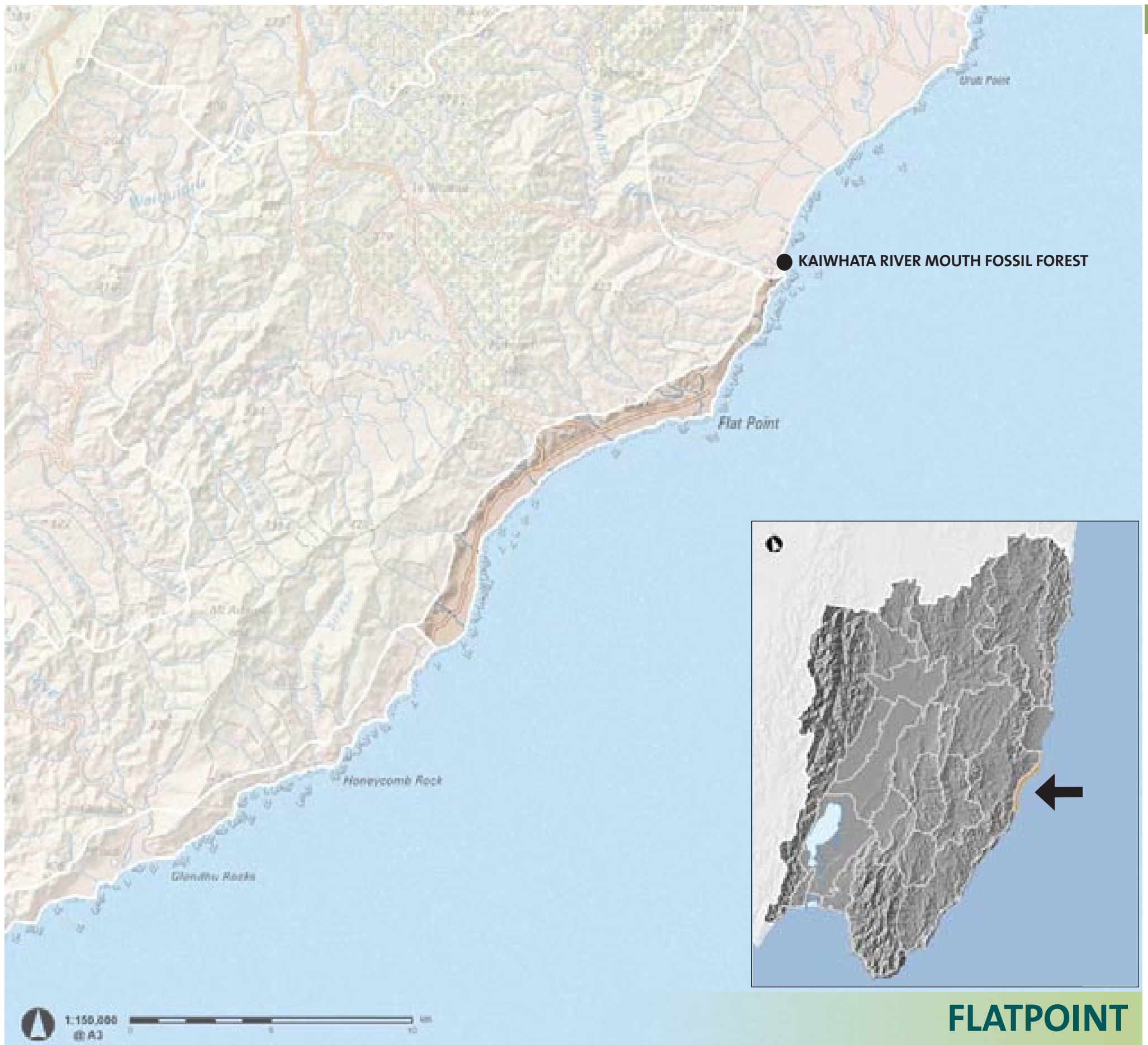
## KEY LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISTICS

- Broad coastal flats, with road access
- Long history as sheep stations
- Maori history and urupa sites
- Recent development pressure and subdivision at Flat Point

Left: A public road provides access along the length of the coast, and aside from the fences and power lines, the area feels remote, undeveloped and rugged. Right: Remnant vegetation is generally limited to small stands of kanuka in the gullies and scattered cabbage trees on the coastal platform.







A number of new holiday houses have been constructed within the new 80-lot subdivision at Flat Point.



# GLENDHU

The Honeycomb Rocks / Glendhu character area is long and narrow, running from Te Awaiti to Glenburn Station. The shoreline comprises a sandy beach, interspersed with rocky outcrops which extend well out to sea. The coastal platform is flat to undulating and is relatively narrow, and is significantly wider near the Pahaoa River mouth. The hillslopes behind the coastal platform are steep, and in the range of 250-350m asl. The toeslopes of the coastal hills are irregular and have been incised by various tributaries such as the Awhea, Rerewhakaaitu and Oterei Rivers.

Land Type 11 is predominant and expressed in the steep coastal hills, sand and gravel beaches and remnant wetlands.

The Pahaoa River estuary is a stark and distinctive landscape. The river valley is wide and expansive, providing distant views inland to the eastern hill country. A sand bar, punctuated by large jagged rocks known as the Glendhu Rock, is located at the river mouth.

Honeycomb Rock is a distinctive geological feature located approximately 5km south of Glenburn. Once an offshore stack, Honeycomb Rock has been left marooned as a result of geological uplift processes. The rock is composed of quartz-rich sandstone of the Late Cretaceous period (about 90 million years ago) and is named after the pitted weathering pattern on sheltered faces. There are a number of other significant geological features near Honeycomb Rocks, including: layers of conglomerate, volcanic dykes, and concretions. Other sites of geological and ecological value include Kairingaringa Reef and Pahaoa Scientific Reserve.

The climate is characterised by hot, dry summers. Regenerating scrub is dominant on the steep coastal hill slopes, but the flatter more fertile areas around the river mouths are grazed. The land between the shoreline and coastal hills, is characterised by hardy dune species (native and exotic) and some patches of remnant inter-dune wetlands.

Largely uninhabited compared to the character areas to the north and south, inhabited areas include the farming stations at Pahaoa and Glenburn. The station at Pahaoa was established as early as 1842. There has been no recent development in the area. A public walking track connects Pahaoa River mouth with Glenburn.

There are several identified heritage sites relating to Maori occupation located within the character area. They relate to a diverse range of heritage sites including: pa sites, middens/ovens, stone walls, burial sites,



Honeycomb Rock comprises of quartz - rich sandstone of Late Cretaceous age. It takes its name from the remarkable cell - like weathering pattern seen on its faces.

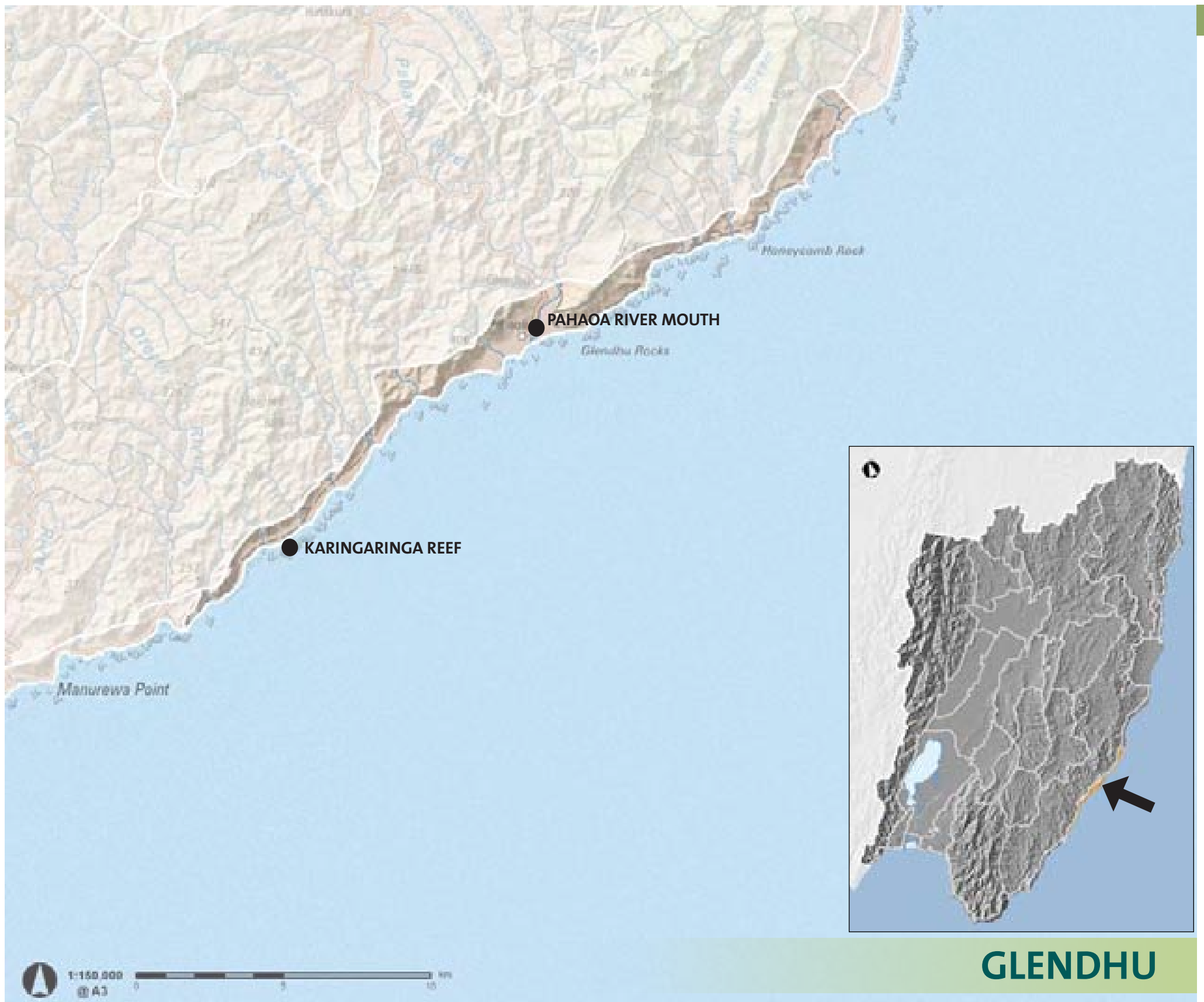
karaka groves and terraces. The greatest concentrations of heritage sites occur around the Okoropunga Stream mouth, the Pahaoa River mouth and the rocky reefs. The Pukaroro Maori reserve at the northern end of Te Awaiti station is arguably the largest most significant and well preserved historic Maori site in the entire Wellington region.

### KEY LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISTICS

- Steep hills form backdrop to coastal platform
- The openness of the Pahaoa River Estuary
- Stark and raw landscape – few trees
- Remote and isolated, only two inhabited areas accessible by public road
- Long farming history – many of the steeper coastal hills are regenerating with indigenous vegetation
- A number of geological features – Honeycomb Rock, Glendhu Rocks, Kairingaringa Reef
- Pukaroro Maori reserve

The distinctive rock formations at Glendhu comprise of alternating layers of hard white limestone and mudstone.





Left: There is a long history of farming in the area. Whilst steeper parts of the coastal hills support young exotic scrub and native regeneration, while the flats around Pahaoa River mouth are still grazed. Right: Farm buildings are typically set within mature amenity and shelter plantings.





# TORA

The Tora<sup>1</sup> character area lies between the Oterei River (Te Awaiti Station) in the north and Te Kaukau (Te Kakau) Point in the south. The topography along this part of the coast consists of narrow, flat, 200-500m wide uplifted marine benches, which are abruptly defined by steep to very steep coastal escarpments and hill slopes rising up to 250-350m high. The coastal platforms between Manurewa Point and Te Kaukau (Kakau) Point are an identified geological feature known as the Pukemuri Stream Marine Benches.

The predominantly rocky shore is interspersed with small gravel and sand beaches. The Oterei River mouth marks the end of the coastal road in the north and the Tora Road provides the only access inland via the Awhea River Valley to Tukurumuri and beyond.

The flat coastal platforms support rough grazed pasture. The steep escarpments and slopes are predominantly pasture with one large area of regenerating coastal forest on the slopes behind the Tora Station farmstead (RAP 47 Tora Coastal Bush and Tora Bush Scenic Reserve). Regenerating native scrub and remnant native trees are scattered along the slopes of the character area including karaka groves near the Oterei River. A 2.0 ha area at Manurewa Point is fenced as a reserve.

Parts of the narrow coastal platform has a relatively dense rural residential settlement pattern compared to many other parts of the Wairarapa coast. The coastal platform north of the Awhea River has recently seen an increase in residential development with approximately 40 residential lots currently consented and established. While dwellings have been built on some of the new lots, many of the lots are still unsold and/or yet to be developed. All the residential lots are on the inland side of the road. The recent subdivision has started to change the character along this stretch of coastline but this will become much more apparent once dwellings have been built on all of the allotments that have been consented. Recent subdivision south of the Awhea River has been small scale and incremental.

There are several identified heritage sites relating to Maori occupation such as middens, terraces, stone walls, pa sites and dendroglyphs. Erosion seems to have affected some of the heritage sites along the coastal platform in this area with several being buried well under the surface. Identified European heritage sites include a WWII observation post and the 1926 wreck of the Opu.



Distinctive headland and rocky shore, Te Awaiti station.



A rare, and now protected, remnant of coastal native forest remains on the slopes behind the Tora Station settlement.

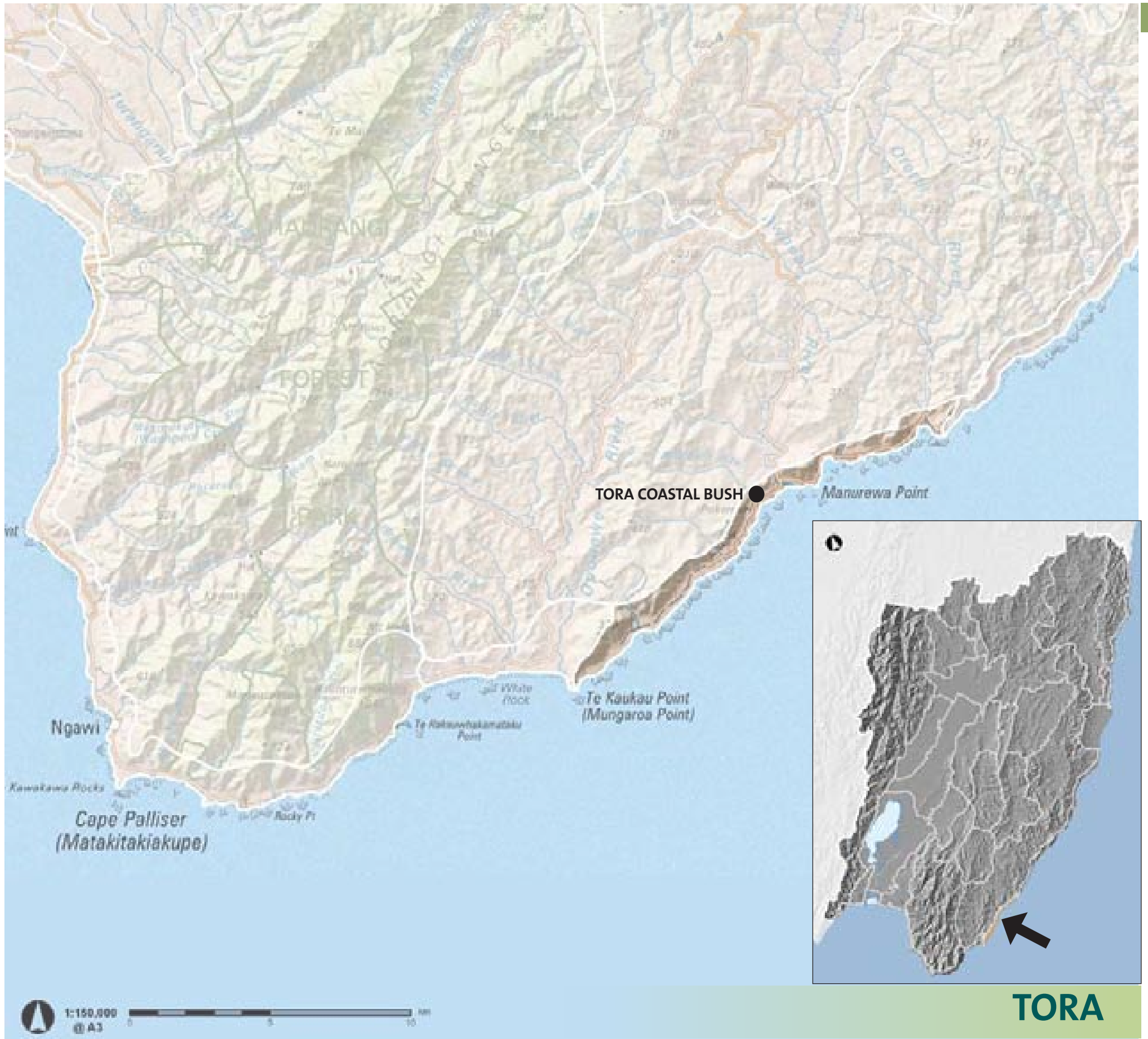
## KEY LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISTICS

- Changing landscape character from a former ‘wild’ and sparsely settled coast to one where residential occupation is evident and relatively prominent in locations
- Narrow coastal platform enclosed by steep escarpments
- Coastal habitat remnant (SNs14 in WCDP)

1 This name is probably meant to be ‘Te Oro’.

View south from Tora Station to Te Kaukau Point. The coastal hill, Pukemuri, rises directly from the coastal platform to 364m asl.





Left: Te Awaiti Station was one of the first stations settled along the Wairarapa Coast; located in a relatively sheltered embayment at the mouth of the Otari River. Right: Residential subdivision and development along the coast north of the Awhea River is changing the wild and often uninhabited character of the coastal edge.



# WHITE ROCK

The White Rock character area includes the shoreline, coastal platform and lower coastal hills of the White Rock embayment south of Te Kaukau (Te Kakau) Point, together with the coastal terraces and mouth of the Opouawe River. The southern extent is marked by the Aorangi Ranges character area.

The character area includes two notable white limestone coastal features; Te Kaukau Point and White Rock Reef. The rocky shore platform and formations at Te Kaukau Point are uplifted layered limestone, sandstone and mudstone sediments. The White Rock Reef is the exposed end of a tilted limestone sheet that extends about 700m offshore.

The Opouawe River carries rough gravels from its Aorangi Range catchment and has built up broad gravel terraces and flood plains inland of its mouth. A second, smaller, river (Whawhanui River) discharges to the sea near the White Rock Reef.

Rough grazed pasture covers the narrow coastal platform, river terraces and low hills. Mature exotic trees are established around the White Rock station farmstead and shelter belts are on the river terrace. Small pockets of regenerating native scrub occur in some gullies, otherwise there is no substantial native vegetation.

The prominent forested Aorangi Ranges enclose the White Rock bay to the south and are a stark contrast to the small scale and relatively bare hills and platform of the coastal edge. To the north, the Te Kaukau Point landform is a prominent feature of this part of the coast and encloses the bay. The relative enclosure of the White Rock bay seems more sheltered than most other parts of the exposed Wairarapa Coast.

The character area is an isolated and well defined coastal road end with the White Rock station farmstead buildings and stockyards the only residential occupation. White Rock station was one of the early sheep stations established in the Wairarapa. White Rock Road accesses the coast from Tuturumuri via the Opouawe River valley, and changes name to Ngapotiki Road at the Whawhanui River bridge. The Ngapotiki Road end provides walking access to the Ngapotiki Fan 2.5km to the south.

Several heritage sites relating to Maori occupation are located along the coast, including pa, horticulture structures, rock walls, ovens and middens. The area was renown for storage of kumara and the number and characteristics of the rua kumara (pits) in this area are significant.



The White Rock reef extends 700m offshore.

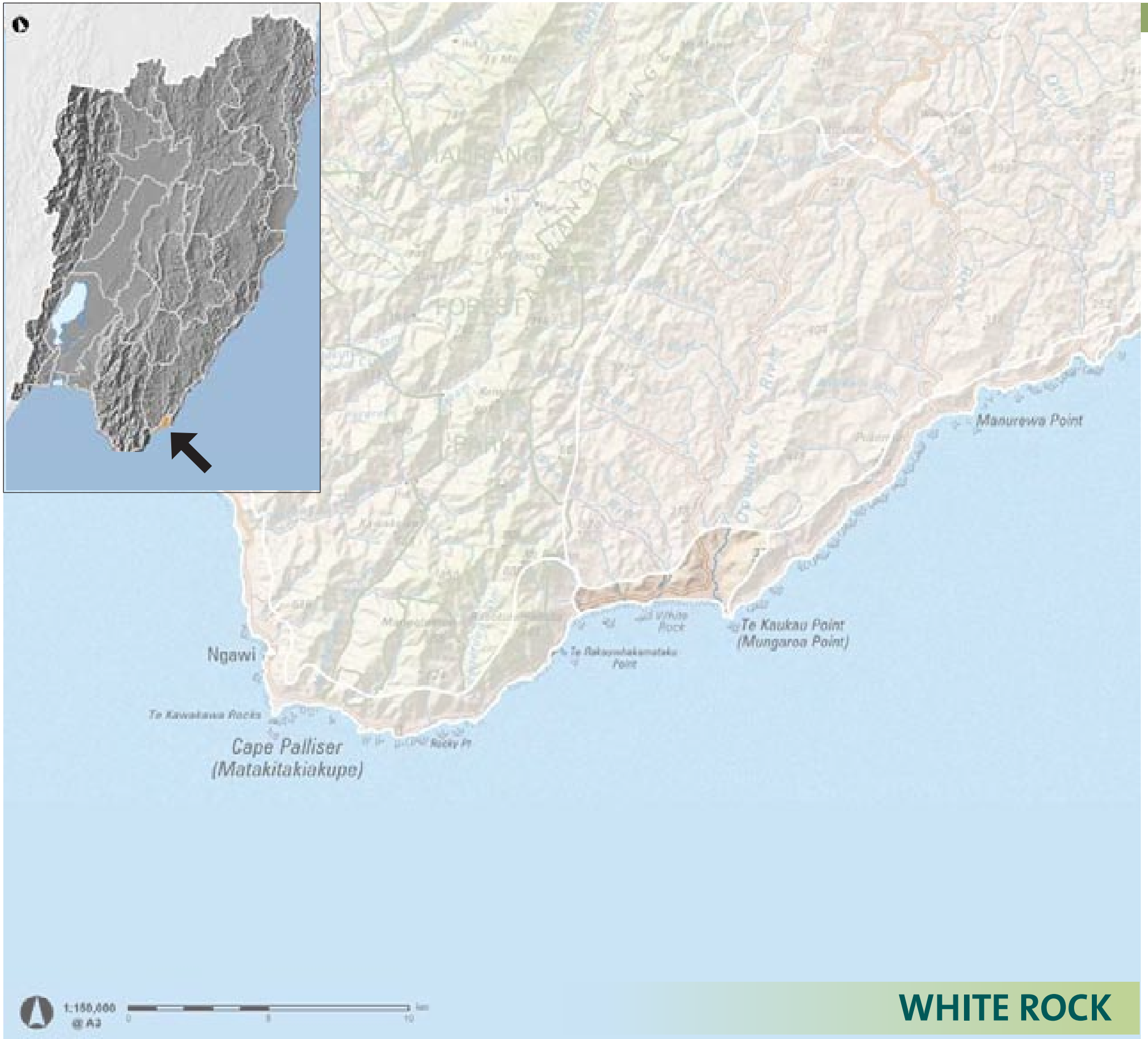
**KEY LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISTICS**

- Te Kaukau (Kakau) Point
- White Rock reef
- Aorangi Range backdrop
- Isolated sheltered coastal embayment

The Aorangi Range is an imposing backdrop at the southern end of the bay.







Left: The limestone rock formation midway along the beach is the landward end of the White Rock reef and can provide a relatively sheltered boat launching site in some conditions. Right: A sand/gravel beach extends the whole length of the character area. With the strong physical enclosure at either end (Te Kaukau Point in the north and the Aorangi Ranges in the south) the bay feels quite sheltered compared to the generally exposed Wairarapa coast.



# CAPE PALLISER

The Cape Palliser character area comprises a ribbon of coast between Ngapotiki and Te Kopi. It includes the sea, shore, coastal platform and immediate area of coastal influence.

Cape Palliser forms the southernmost point of the North Island and is characterised by a narrow, rocky shoreline and coastal platform, steep gravel beaches, and a very steep coastal escarpment and scree slopes. The area features a number of prominent and often dramatic landforms, including: The Sails of Kupe (Nga Ra a Kupe), Te Humenga Point, Ngapotiki Fan and Whatarangi Bluff.

The predominant land type is hard rock coastal fringe (Land Type 12) is predominant and expressed in the hard greywacke and pillow lava which in places extends into the sea. Around Whatarangi, the Land Type is a combination of types 3 and 8, which are expressed as steep to very steep coastal terraces, marine bench and beach ridge complexes.

Cape Palliser, The Sails of Kupe and Ngapotiki Fan are identified as outstanding natural features in the Wairarapa Combined District Plan. Sites of geological interest, as identified in the Wairarapa Coastal Strategy include: Ngawi Point (Te Kawakawa or Black Rocks), Cod Rocks, and Rocky Point (Matakitaki a Kupe).

Due to the tough coastal conditions, including strong salt laden winds, vegetation is relatively sparse and limited to hardy native coastal shrubland.

The fur seal colony at Cape Palliser is the only one in the North Island where breeding is well-established. The Cape Palliser area also contains breeding sites of variable oystercatcher, banded dotterel and red-billed gull.

Several place names are attributed to Kupe, the Polynesian explorer who first discovered Aotearoa New Zealand. Kupe spent some time in the area apparently having been attracted by an abundant fish.

This area is arguably one of the most significant historical areas along the Wairarapa coastline. The area contains some of the earliest Maori occupation sites recorded in New Zealand as evidenced by stone walls associated with growing kumara and prolific heritage sites scattered around the coast and inland. As well as kumara, Maori cultivated other plants including the karaka tree and several stands of these trees still remain.

Road access along the coast is precarious, though it is sealed to just north of Ngawi, the road is constantly being eroded by the sea. The coastal settlement of Whatarangi is relatively recent, consisting of residential housing built during the 1960s and 70s. There is also a small settlement at Mangatoetoe, adjacent to The Sails of Kupe.

As well as early Maori stone walls, there is a stone wall at Waitutuma



*Kupe’s Sail is an unusual geological feature, comprised of a huge slab of sandstone full of fossilised barnacles, shells, and other marine organisms.*

Stream of European origin having been built by Barton of White Rock Station .

The Cape Palliser lighthouse, which was installed in 1897, is a popular destination, as is Ngawi, which has no harbour, so fishing boats are launched by bulldozers from the beach. The bulldozers and boats line the road edge and are a popular and often photographed feature. Settlement is mostly long-established baches, however, there have been small coastal subdivisions recently approved near Te Humenga Point, together with protection of important ecological habitat around the Point itself.

KEY LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISTICS

- Important breeding sites – fur seal, variable oystercatcher, banded dotterel and red-billed gull.
- Rugged, strong coastal influence, steep escarpment, narrow coastal platform.
- Isolated, with sparsely populated fishing villages, eg. Ngawi, Whatarangi
- Series of striking landforms such as The Sails of Kupe, Whatarangi Bluff, Cape Palliser, Te Humenga Point, Ngapotiki Fan
- Heritage values – concentrated along coast and inland beside rivers, early Maori settlement, Cape Palliser Lighthouse, Matakitaki a Kupe Historic Area

*The fishing settlement of Ngawi is nestled at the foot of the steep coastal escarpment. Te Humenga Point in the middle ground*





Left: Erected in 1897, the Cape Palliser lighthouse provides a panoramic view from the top, up 252 steps. Right: Although somewhat modified by road construction, the Whātārangi Bluff demonstrates the erosive power of rainwater on soft sandstone.





# WHANGAIMOANA

The Whangaimoana character area includes the elevated coastal terraces from Lake Onoke around to just west of the Putangirua Pinnacles. The raised coastal terrace has a near vertical face, with deeply incised gullies. The shore is sandy and at high tide, reaches the base of the escarpment. Land Type 12 is predominant and expressed in the hard greywacke rock, the steep coastal escarpment, scree slopes and uplifted shore cut platforms.

A number of streams converge and descend from the terrace to the sea at Whangaimoana. The stream mouth is typically impeded by drifting sand, forming a rush-filled backwater.

The climate is characterised by exposure to strong, cold, salt-laden south-westerly winds. The exposed scree slopes of the escarpment are bare, but the majority of the escarpment is covered in well adapted low-growing native vegetation. Patches of regenerating native vegetation are present in the incised gullies which provide a more sheltered microclimate. The terrace above the escarpment is grazed to the seaward edge.

The area includes the small bach settlement of Whangaimoana. 'Whangaimoana' was one of the earliest sheep stations established in the Wairarapa, established in 1843 by Purvis Russell. The original homestead, built in 1876, still stands and is a local landmark.

A heritage site relating to Maori occupation is recorded near the Lake Ferry settlement. It is thought to pre date 1770, although the nature of the site is unclassified. Pre and post climatic changes, believed to have occurred in the 16th century saw Maori live in this area so that they could be near the richness of Lake Onoke, the coast and valleys near to the coast.

## KEY LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISTICS

- Dramatic coastal escarpment and deeply incised gullies
- Flat terrace with abrupt transition between grazing and coastal vegetation
- Sparsely settled, heritage values associated with original



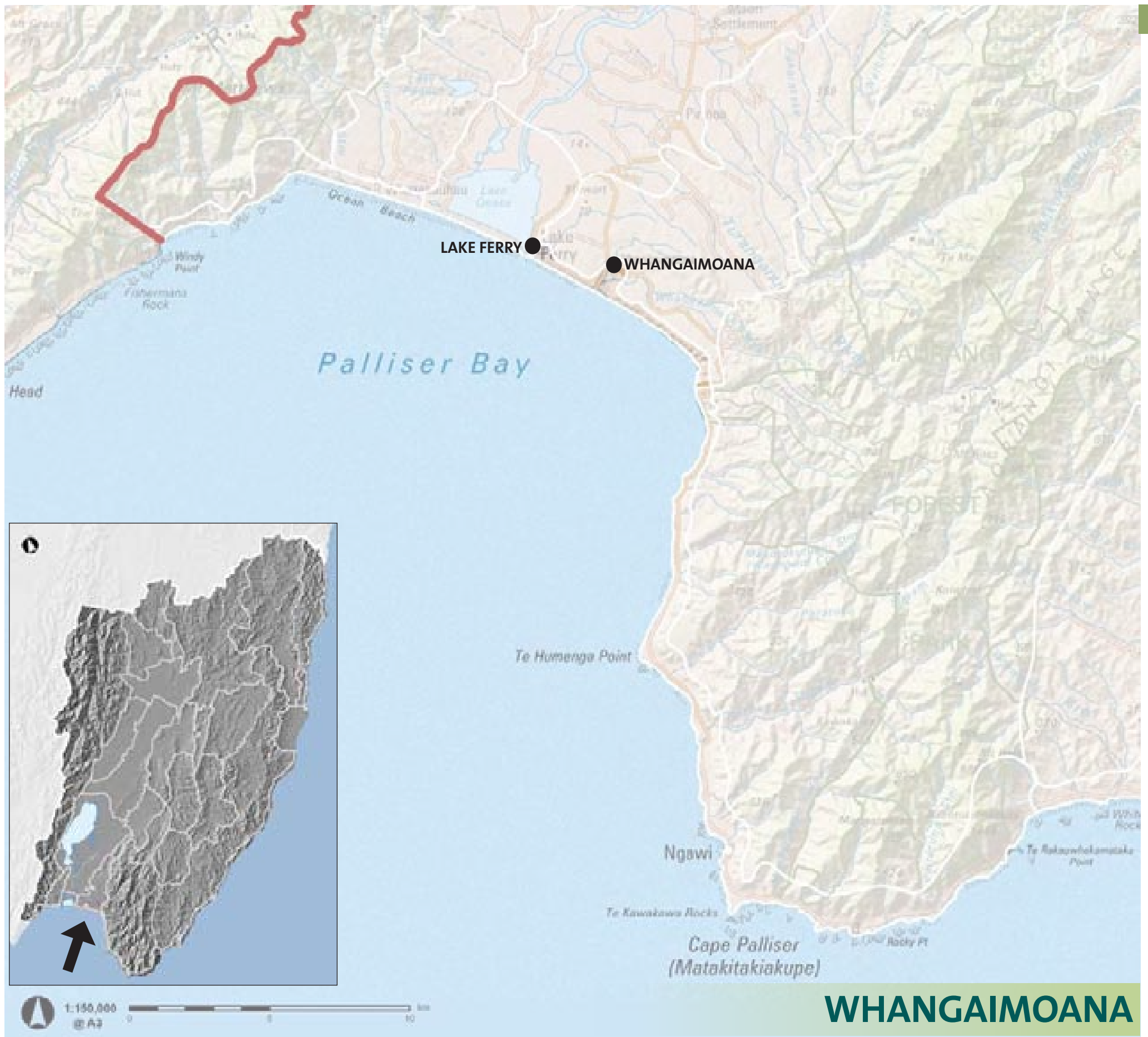
*The coastal escarpment has resulted in an abrupt transition between the Lake Ferry township near the edge of the terrace and coastal vegetation on the escarpment.*



*The raised coastal terrace has a near vertical face, with deeply incised gullies which provide a more sheltered microclimate for regeneration to occur.*

*The hard greywacke rocky outcrops and scree slopes associated with Land type 12 are evident along the length of the escarpment.*





Left: The small settlement at Whangaimoana comprises around 50 properties, most of which are holiday houses. Right: The dominant land cover is pasture, with a few mature pine shelterbelts scattered across the terrace. Lake Onoke in the middle ground and the Rimutaka Ranges define the western boundary of the Wairarapa.



# ONOKE

The Lake Onoke ‘spit’ is a mixed sand and gravel barrier beach that has formed by concurrent processes of marine sedimentation and tectonic uplift. In the process it has impounded an embayment to form a shallow coastal lake. The Onoke character area encompasses Lake Onoke, its immediate margins and the raised shingle bar which forms the coastal edge. The area is strongly influenced by coastal processes, such as strong, southerly, salt laden winds, wave action, storm surges and tidal influences. The shingle bar is often inundated at high tide, and is a popular spot for fishing.

Onoke forms part of the southern coastal fringe Land Type 3, which is characterised by an undulating and highly mobile marine bench, ridge complexes and the gravel barrier bar. There are limitations on land use imposed by flooding, and the historical difficulties surrounding access to the land.

Lake Onoke is a brackish lake and forms part of the wider ecological corridor between Lake Wairarapa and the coast, collectively these two lakes are referred to by Maori as Wairarapa Moana. The wider area is considered to be of national and international importance for indigenous plant and animal communities and has also been identified as being of national importance to fisheries. The diverse habitats within the wetlands attract a wide range of wetland birds, including some international migratory birds.

The lake edge, which is regularly inundated by water, supports a submerged “turf” community of small native plants. Much of the open lake water is devoid of aquatic vegetation, thought to be caused by its high turbidity. The land surrounding the lake is in pasture, with various shelterbelts, and amenity planting, especially in the environs of Lake Ferry.

Lake Ferry is a small settlement between the shores of Lake Onoke and Palliser Bay, supporting fishing and tourism activities. It comprises mostly baches and holiday homes on small residential size allotments, but land holdings are much larger beyond the settlement. The primary landuses of the wider area are extensive sheep and beef farming.

There is a rich history of Maori occupation in the area and heritage sites are present although some have been adversely affected by intensive farming and the altered water levels such as at Okorewa and Kiriwai. (see notes). In particular, Maori have traditionally been attracted to the lake due to two annual migrations. The first from a Maori calendar perspective was the inward migration of juvenile fish during Gregorian spring and the second was the outward migration of mature tuna during late summer and autumn.

Lake Onoke was historically significant as part of the former coastal route which enabled trade with Wellington (Te Whanganui o Tara). Goods



Settlement around Lake Ferry dates back hundreds of years. Archaeological research suggests that there were people living here from the 12th century until about 1600. Lake Ferry settlement is nestled at the base of the uplifted marine terraces.

would be transported up Lake Onoke and then up the Ruamahanga River. Lake Onoke was susceptible to flooding, and the bar could be crossed by foot when it was closed, but while open, the lake itself had to be crossed and drownings were common. Local Maori set up a ferry service, which was later formalised by the appointment of a ferryman and a regular service. Lake Ferry hotel was established in 1879.

The idea of artificially opening Onoke Spit to control the water level and prevent the flooding of thousands of acres of land in the southern plains has been a highly contentious issue since settlement by European pastoralists. Maori generally did not want the lake level controlled, especially during the tuna migratory period, given the potential disruption to mahinga kai (food gathering) sites. However, by the early 1900s, large teams of horses were used to scoop out a channel in the spit, and extensive stop-banking had been constructed. This was later superseded by the ‘Lower Wairarapa Valley Development Scheme’ which involved construction of the Ruamahanga bypass around Lake Wairarapa.

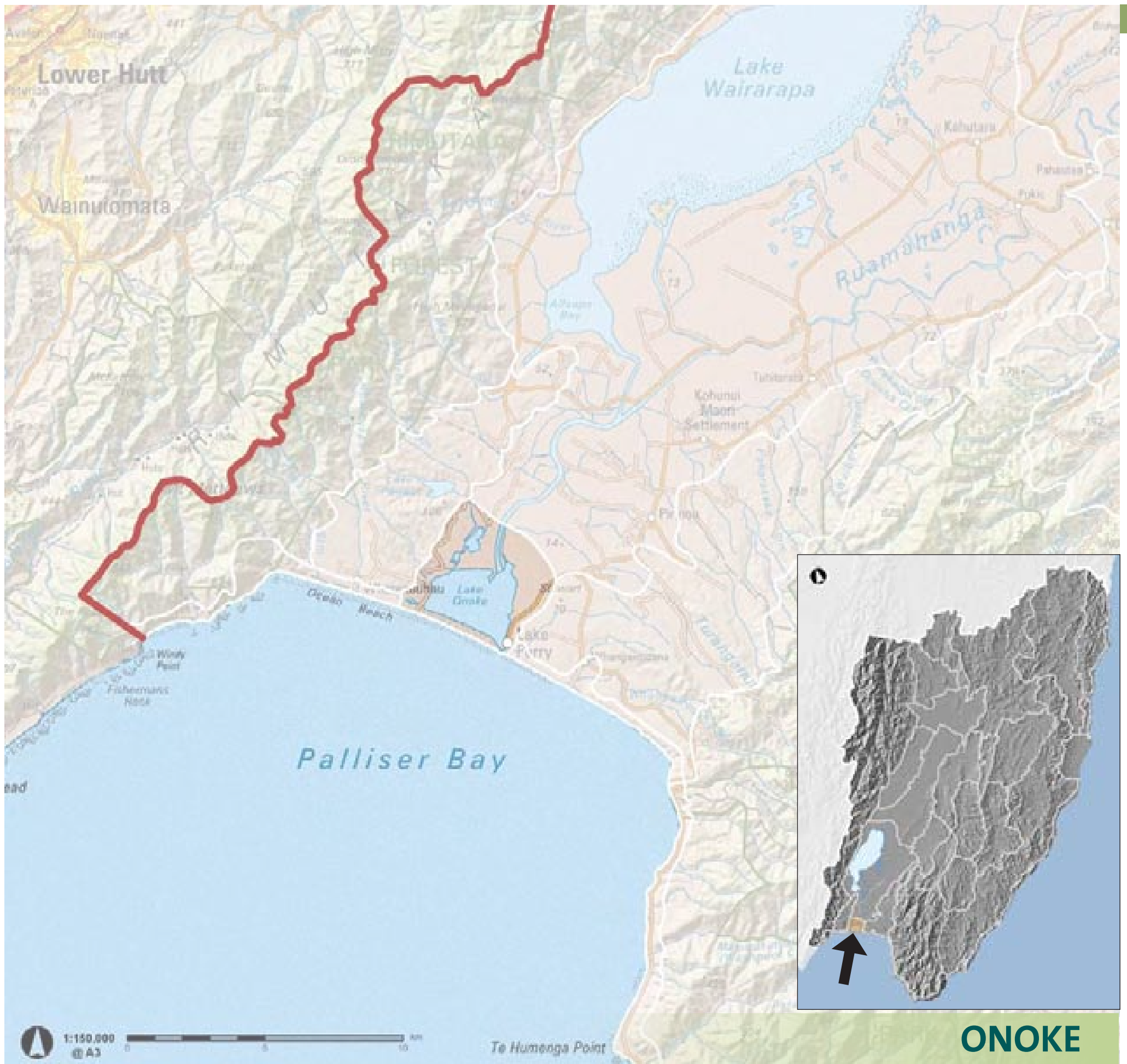
## KEY LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISTICS

- Flooding constraints
- Rugged landscape with a strong coastal influence
- The spit is an important geological feature
- Ecological significance of the lake as a corridor between Lake Wairarapa and the axial ranges
- Historic use of the Ferry
- Lake Ferry settlement, fishing, tourism and farming
- Tuna heke, annual migration of tuna

Left: The Lake Onoke channel to the sea, near Lake Ferry settlement is a popular fishing destination. Right: Periodically, the outlet from Lake Onoke is closed off and needs to be reopened.







Left: Due to the vulnerability of the lake margins to flooding, the dominant land use continues to be sheep and beef grazing.  
 Right: Ruamahanga channel diversion cuts a swathe through the low lying and very open landscape.



# OCEAN BEACH

The Ocean Beach character area includes the coastal strip from Onoke, west towards the South Wairarapa district boundary and includes the row of long-established baches at Ocean Beach. The shoreline is a mixed sand and gravel beach, which is uncommon in New Zealand. The shore platform is relatively narrow, with the steep slopes of Mount Mathews (941m), the highest peak in the Rimutaka Ranges, forming a dramatic backdrop to the coastal platform. At Wharekauhau, these steep toe slopes become near vertical escarpments, which have been raised by tectonic activity to form an elevated coastal terrace.

Land Type 12 is predominant and expressed in the hard greywacke rock, rocky bluffs, shingle toeslopes, and steep scree slopes of the Rimutaka. Various tributaries, such as the Wharekauhau and Wharepapa Streams, transport gravels and other sediments from the Rimutaka out to sea. At Thrust Creek and Mukamuka Stream, the West Wairarapa Fault has lifted and exposed ancient gravel deposits, crushed greywacke and basaltic volcanic rock.

The area is rugged, and subjected to strong coastal wind and high rainfall. Regenerating native forest on the slopes of the Rimutaka descends onto the coastal platform and in some places extends right to the sandy shore. The Ocean Beach cliffs include a mosaic of unusual vegetation sequences with flaxland and scrubland, with shrub and sedges in seepages. Vegetation around the baches is rough grass, and scrub.

The Wairarapa coastal highway began at Turakirae point and is so named because of the absence of forest after uplift activity, that allowed for relatively comfortable walking along the coastal margins. This was an important transportation route between Whanganui A Tara and Ahuriri. Papakainga were found at Mukamuka and Wharepapa.

KEY LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISTICS

- Steep scree and forested slopes of the Rimutaka Range abruptly descend to meet coastal platform
- Terrace escarpment below Wharekauhau
- Historical baches at Ocean Beach
- Rivers dissecting/ fragmenting terrace
- Sites of geological interest include Thrust Creek, and the Mukamuka Stream



The hard, greywacke bluffs and scree slopes (Land Type 12) are characteristic of the area and are accentuated by the contrast with the surrounding native coastal vegetation. The baches are a distinctive feature at Ocean Beach.

Left: Gravels brought down by the Wharekauhau Stream form a fan on the beach between the terrace and foothills of the Rimutaka Ranges. Native forest regeneration is gradually creeping down the ranges and provides a backdrop to the Ocean Beach baches. Right: Buildings associated with Wharekauhau Lodge can be seen on the terrace above Ocean Beach.





The rocky scree slopes of the terrace escarpment, together with the harsh coastal conditions makes it difficult for all but the hardiest coastal vegetation to survive. The terrace is grazed right up to the seaward edge.





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