

3. HOROKIWI: PAST AND PRESENT

Horokiwi has a rich and significant history of pre-European occupation, early European land purchase and settlement, colonial timber milling, dairying and farming, and most recently, rural lifestyle and farm development.

The area was an integral part of the culturally important Korokoro Valley, Maori Point and Belmont Districts settled by Ngati Toa and Te Atiawa. Registered Maori cultural heritage sites include: the Korokoro - Takapu track through upper Horokiwi; urupa; pa sites; cultivation plots.

The Horokiwi District (often confused with Horokiri to the north), was called Rauotekapuae and served as a critical cross-country link between Petone/Wellington and Pauatahanui, enabling, for example, the escape of Te Tangihaeata from Governor Grey's army in 1846. This route was then developed as a military road in the lead-up to the Battle Hill engagement later that year. Small quarry excavations can still be seen alongside the road.

Land at Horokiwi was given or sold to European settlers from 1839. Among those who were apportioned and/or inhabited country acres in the district were prominent Wellington families: Halswell, Osborne, Stewart, Ebdon, Valentine, Campion, Heath, Earp, Ormsby, Calvert, Gilling, Luscombe, Tollemache. When Wakefield's land transactions were reviewed by Colonel McCleverty in 1847, a native reserve was declared at Horokiwi and awarded to the local hapu.

In the early years of European settlement, the bush-clad hills of Horokiwi were milled to provide logs, timber and firewood to the growing Wellington and Hutt Valley settlements. Conversion to pasture resulted in the development of a vigorous dairy industry servicing Wellington; tracks and artifacts are found on farms today. The land was later used as grazing for stock held for slaughter at the Petone Gear Meat Processing Plant; Horokiwi was also the site of the plant's offal pits. From 1885, as light to medium industry grew in Petone, a significant block of Horokiwi around the present Hillcroft Road was designated Water Reserve. The community of Horokiwi was further defined with the establishment of the Horokiwi School, one of the earliest in the Wellington region, and later, a box making factory down Lincolnshire Road. Workers' accommodation, building foundations, a water tower, and other evidence of nineteenth and twentieth-century settlement remain visible reminders of Horokiwi's past.

Today, Horokiwi comprises over seventy-four households surrounded by the rolling farmland of the District on one side and Belmont Regional Part on the other. Residents engage in a diverse range of activities, both on and off "the hill". The strong landscape, rugged climate, central location, and significant Maori and European history link the community as it plans its future.