

Title: **Te Awarua-o-Porirua Whaitua - History & Archaeology**

Purpose: Inform the Committee of the Whaitua history and archaeology

Author: Reina Solomon & Keith Calder

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Contact Te Awarua o Porirua Whaitua Committee

PO Box 11646, Wellington 6142

poriruawhaitua@gw.govt.nz

T 0800 496 734

F 04 385 6960

Te Awarua-o-Porirua Catchment - History & Archaeology

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1. Introduction

Porirua Harbour and catchment have undergone significant cultural, social, economic and environmental changes in the 150 years since 1840. This paper seeks to outline some of the key physical changes in the harbour and catchment and associated land uses.

2. Pre-European

Porirua has always been an area favoured for occupation and settlement. There are more archaeological sites recorded in the Porirua area than any other place in New Zealand. Most of these sites are relics of this long history of occupation. Two sites at Taupō/Plimmerton and Paremata are recorded sites where Moa bones were known to be located in the past. The site at Paremata where the bones remain in situ is potentially the most significant archaeological site in the region. Many archaeological sites at Porirua, and particularly sites located around the harbour, are known to have layers of historic evidence which show successive pre-European and post-European eras of settlement. All of Porirua's archaeological sites give a valuable insight into historic land catchment uses over time.

Archaeologists have been recording the location of archaeological sites in Porirua since the late 1950s, when the New Zealand Archaeological Association's Site Recording Scheme was first started. Before that, there are many written observations about evidence of Māori settlements, particularly observations made by Elsdon Best and Leslie Adkin. These observations are invaluable for providing information about archaeological sites that are no longer visible to the eye due to weathering or degradation. There are many archaeological sites in Porirua that remain undetected, or that have not been officially recorded. Sites are particularly dense in number near the coast and the harbour margins, which emphasises the reliance of pre-European settlement on the resources of the harbour and coastal area. These sites also vary widely in age which indicates that they have been sites favoured by successive waves of settlement, a trend which continues today.

The earliest dated site in Porirua is at Paremata; it is also one of very few in the wider Wellington region known from this time. It contains the remains of moa, the large flightless bird, and other birds that are now extinct. Other sites related to a former Māori way of life include pa sites, settlements and cultivations. There are numerous defensible or palisaded pā at strategic locations which could be defended by the naturally steep terrain, ditches, banks and/or wooden palisades. Pā built by Ngāti Toa in the 19th century included palisaded pā as well as numerous domestic settlements which tended to be located on flat land by the coast, often within reasonable distance of the pā for defence if needed. There are also many sites that remained undefended which were associated with seasonal living and gardening, with artificial terraces cut from the hills and pits, or cellars, made to store kumara crops grown in nearby gardens. Groves of karaka trees in the small valleys around the coast are also associated with former Māori occupation.

Ngāti Toa in particular have always been coastal dwellers, and these settlements were located almost exclusively in or near the coastal marine area. The area at Whitireia Park shown in appendix 1 has numerous and varied archaeological sites associated with Ngāti Toa, as well as earlier settlements associated with Ngai Tara or Ngāti Ira.

Additional Ngāti Toa and early Māori settlements at Mana Island, Plimmerton and Paremata are also recorded through archaeological evidence. The whaling and trade industries are also a significant feature of Porirua's historic landscape. Numerous shore based whaling stations were situated on the coast and at offshore islands in the 1830s and 1840s. These early trades were established under the authority of Ngāti Toa, and this was a strategic development by Ngāti Toa to gain access to foreign goods and trade agreements. Korohiwa station, near Round Point is one of the few remaining places in the district where visible remains of this era can be seen.

Numerous significant historical events which continue to influence the present have occurred in Porirua. There are several sites that relate to the New Zealand wars, and military campaigns involving some of New Zealand's most famous historical figures including Te Rauparaha, Te Rangihaeata, and Governor Grey. Sites associated with this period of conflict include the Ngāti Toa domain at Paremata, Battle Hill at Horokiri, and Matai-taua pā where the historic St Albans Church is now located. The stone barracks at Paremata are one of only two surviving standing structures in New Zealand dating from this period.

In addition to preserving this well-known and recorded history, the many archaeological sites located in Porirua provide a small window through which we can observe and learn about everyday life, and the environment of the past. Middens and ovens are the remains of food preparation and eating. There are numerous shell middens recorded around the harbour and coastline that can sometimes be seen in road cuttings or at the back of beaches. Shellfish were a particularly significant part of the diet for Māori in this area, and Porirua Harbour was famous throughout New Zealand for this delicacy. This was an important resource for subsistence diet, trade, and the hosting of visitors. Early Māori settlers and later Ngāti Toa were particularly reliant on the food provided by the harbour until the 1940s when outbreaks of typhoid occurred at Takapūwāhia as a result of eating shellfish contaminated by pollutants.

In 2000, an investigation of a shell midden on the edge of the Pauatahanui Inlet was carried out, in advance of the site being destroyed by an upgrade of State Highway 58. The excavation involved digging carefully through the archaeological material, taking photographs and making drawings and notes about what was found. Samples of the midden containing animal bones, shellfish and charcoal were also collected. These samples were then cleaned, identified and analysed mainly at the Archaeozoology Laboratory at Te Papa. Samples were also sent for radiocarbon dating and charcoal identification.

The results of the investigation showed that people had been living at the site on the edge of the inlet between AD 1450 and 1650. They gathered shellfish and fished for flounder in the inlet, and occasionally ventured further afield, perhaps around the harbour entrance for other shellfish and fish such as snapper and blue cod. They snared forest birds such as the tui, kokako and pigeon, and kiore (Pacific rat). By the time the site was occupied, the forest had already been cleared and was starting to regenerate to scrub dominated by kanuka.

The cockles found at the site were also studied in some detail. Measurements of the archaeological sample compared to modern measurements show there has been a decrease in the size of the cockles in the inlet over time. The most likely cause is thought to be a significant environmental change; this could have arisen from a number of factors such as a period of lower water temperature, increased sedimentation from land runoff during forest clearance, lower salinity from an increase in rainfall, or a reduction in the overall depth of water in the inlet. Information from the archaeological investigation has provided a longer scale view of the changes to the cockle beds over time that can be used to assist with conservation efforts for the inlet. For further archaeology sites of interest in Porirua (See appendix 1)

Archaeological sites located around Te Awarua-o-Porirua Harbour also record the arrival and early settlement of non-Māori to Porirua. Mana Island has the remains of the second lighthouse built in the Wellington region, also with archaeological evidence of the keeper's house and gardens. Mana Island was also the location of one of the first farms in New Zealand, and there is a ditch and bank fence enclosure likely to be associated with this early farm. There are sites in Porirua City that relate to nationally significant military campaigns, such as the New Zealand Wars and World War II. During 1840 - 1848 over half of the military structures built in New Zealand were in Wellington, the Hutt Valley and Porirua. Sites relating to WWII include pillboxes for machine gun operations, a road block and the camps at Judgeford and Motukaraka Point.

It is likely that a vast number of archaeological sites around the catchment have not been investigated by archaeologists, or remain undiscovered. As developments in the catchment intensify, more and more sites will be discovered which need to be carefully looked after in order to preserve this past and help us learn more about it. They are also a memorial of the landscape, of the people, and the events that occurred here in the past.

3. European land use and development (See appendices 2, 3, 4 & 5)

Around 80% of the Porirua district is rural, with other land uses generally being residential, commercial, industrial, institutional and recreational. 25 % the catchment is in the Wellington City district.

Porirua is a young city largely shaped by development in the last 50 years, particularly the period of rapid growth in the 1950s and 1960s. Significant stages in Porirua's history and development are summarised as follows:

1850 - Pre-European tall, impenetrable native forest intact throughout whole catchment

1855 - Native forest all felled, burnt off and replaced with pastoral farming

1885 - Opening of the main trunk railway line in

1895 - Opening of Porirua Hospital

1950 – Commenced development of State Highway 1 through Porirua

1949-60s - State housing development in eastern Porirua and Titahi Bay (and Tawa)

1950s - Reclamation of land in the harbour from local earthworks

1960s - Establishment of Porirua City Centre

1965 - City status granted



'Porirua Bay' 1920-25
William George Baker

1971 - Development of Whitby (Brown's Bay sediment pond collapse - 1978)

1984-85 - Mana Marina built (1984-85)

1975 - Building new factories (e.g. Todd Motors) with further earthworks and harbour reclamation

1990s - North City Shopping Centre and the Mega Centre retail developments

2003 - Commenced development in Aotea block

2015 - Te Rūnanga O Toa Rangatira Treaty of Waitangi settlement



Old Titahi Bay Road looking towards the south and Rangituhi/Colonial Knob
(Date to be established)

Residential housing in Porirua is mainly conventional detached 3-4 bedroom dwellings, with very little medium and no high density development. Since a surge in growth in Aotea between 2004 and 2010, the rate of development has returned to a moderate level of around 100-150 new homes per year. This rate of growth is expected to continue with the ongoing expansion of newer suburbs such as Aotea, Whitby, and the Northern Growth Area between Camborne and Pukerua Bay. In the Wellington City area, significant development has occurred in the Newlands, Granada, Churton Park and eastern Tawa area. Future growth will include 100% of Wellington City's greenfield development in the Stebbings Valley and Lincolnshire Farm areas.

Modern Porirua was developed as a satellite city for Wellington. Much of Porirua's infrastructure was constructed in the 1950s and 1960s to service the government housing development areas. Since the 1970s, most development has occurred through private urban subdivision, with supporting infrastructure required as a condition of subdivision consent.

Figure 1 - Summary of Key land use changes between 1941 and 2000

35% reduction in grassland	(83% to 54%)
Increase in exotic forest	(0.5% to 18%)
Increase in urbanisation	(0.2% to 4%)
Increase in indigenous forest	(4% to 6%)
Increase in "bush"	(16% to 23%)

4. Population trends

Porirua's population has been increasing very gradually over the last 10 years, slightly below the average regional and national growth rates. Growth rates are expected to continue in a similar way over the next 30 years (2016-2046). Porirua City Council's growth model assumes an average of 1% growth in households (approximately 200 new homes) per year.

Porirua's population is generally younger than the national average, but it is anticipated that it will gradually 'age' over time to follow the trend in other populations in New Zealand and the Western world, with the proportion of people aged over 65 years increasing and those aged under 15 years decreasing. Despite this, the proportion of younger people in Porirua is expected to remain greater than the national average even after 30 years. The population is also likely to become more ethnically diverse and the number of people with access and disability challenges to increase – in part related to the increase in the older age groups.

5. Conclusion

The Porirua Whaitua has a rich history of human occupation.

Successive Māori occupation reflected the abundant natural resources of the area, particularly kaimoana from the harbour. Later, Ngāti Toa Rangatira settled the area and recognised its strategic proximity to Cook Strait.

150 years of European settlement since 1840 have had the most significant impact on the catchment and harbour. Near total removal of pristine indigenous forest and replacement with pasture, followed by successive waves of settlement and development – road, rail, housing, and industry through to a current population of nearly 100,000 – have all changed the landscape and the configuration and health of the harbour.

Report prepared by

Keith Calder & Reina Solomon
20 May 2015

Report approved by

Alastair Smill
20 May 2015

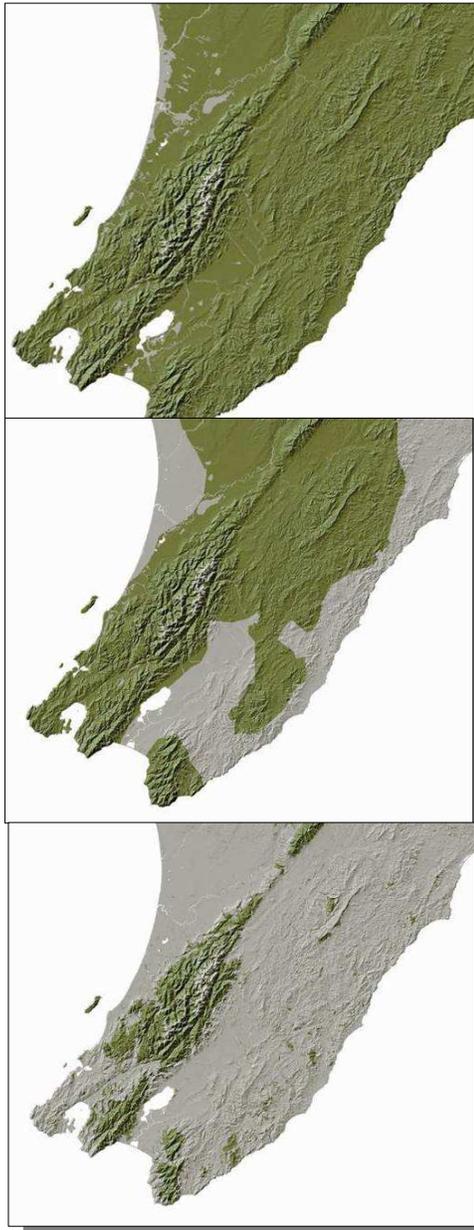
6. Appendices

Appendix 1: Whitireia Park Archaeological Sites



Figure 1. Whitireia Park showing the location of recorded sites. Numbers are New Zealand Archaeological Association site numbers. Numbers are in two series corresponding to map sheets R26 and R27. The position of the line between these sheets is shown. Aerial photograph used as a base is RN 322/8 (Crown copyright) taken on 17 March 1942.

Appendix 2: Long Term Changes in Vegetation Cover over Lower North Island

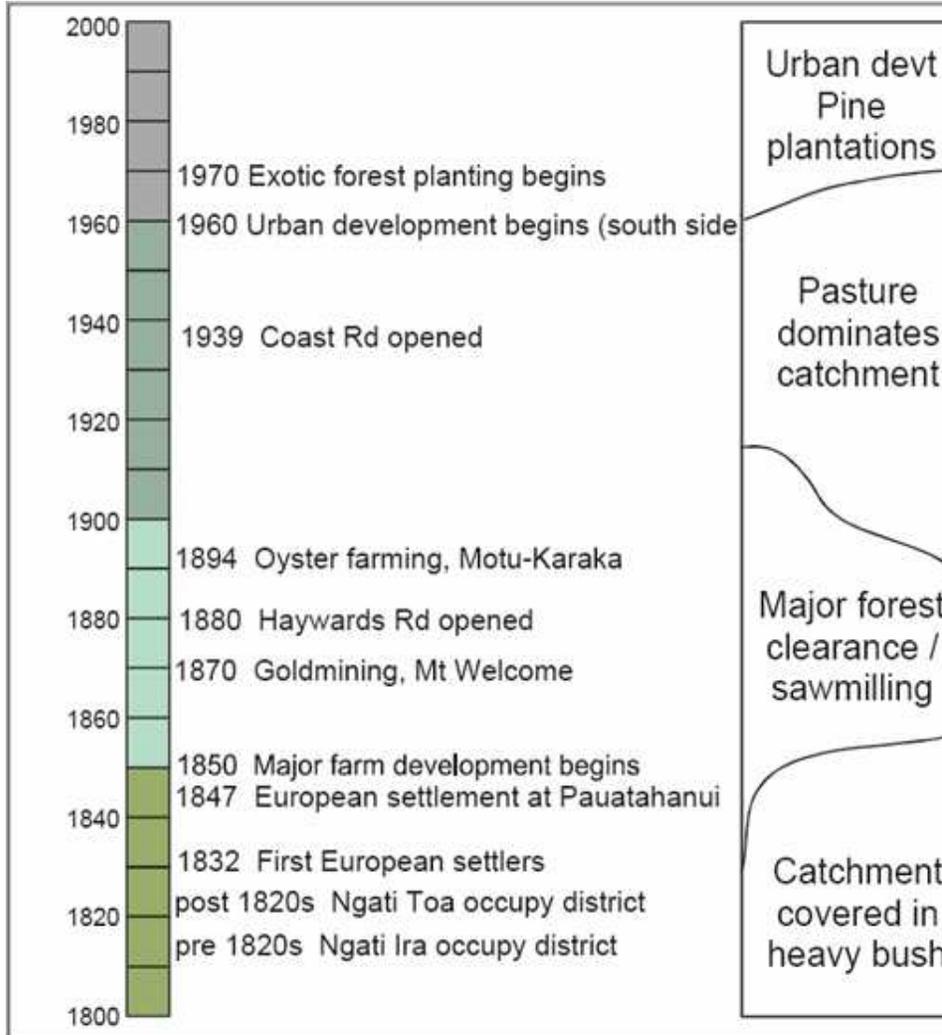


Pre-human cover

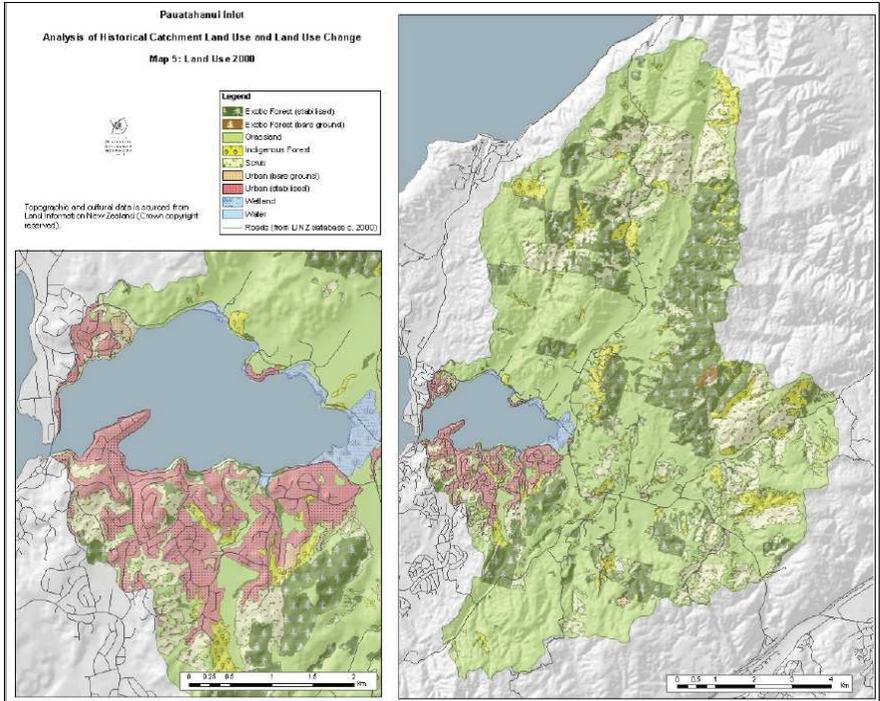
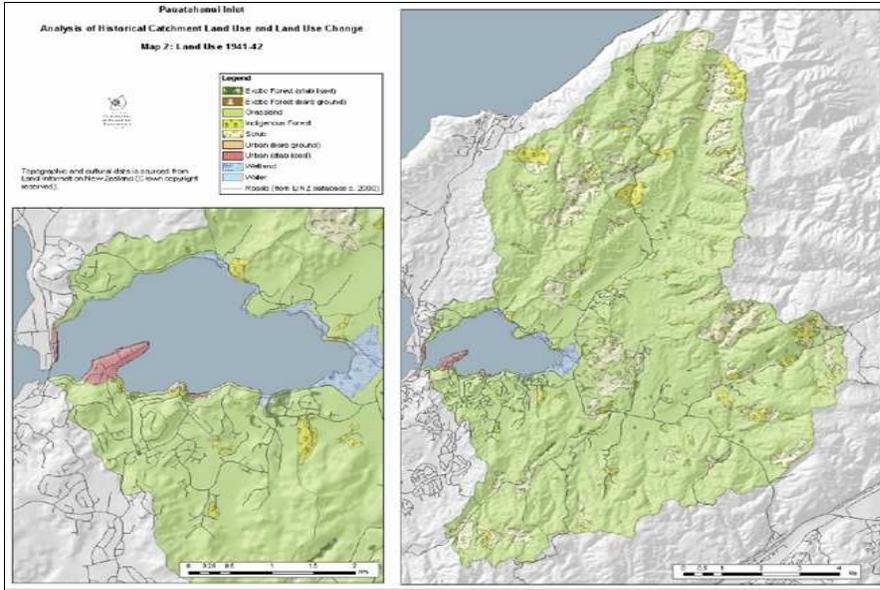
1840

Present

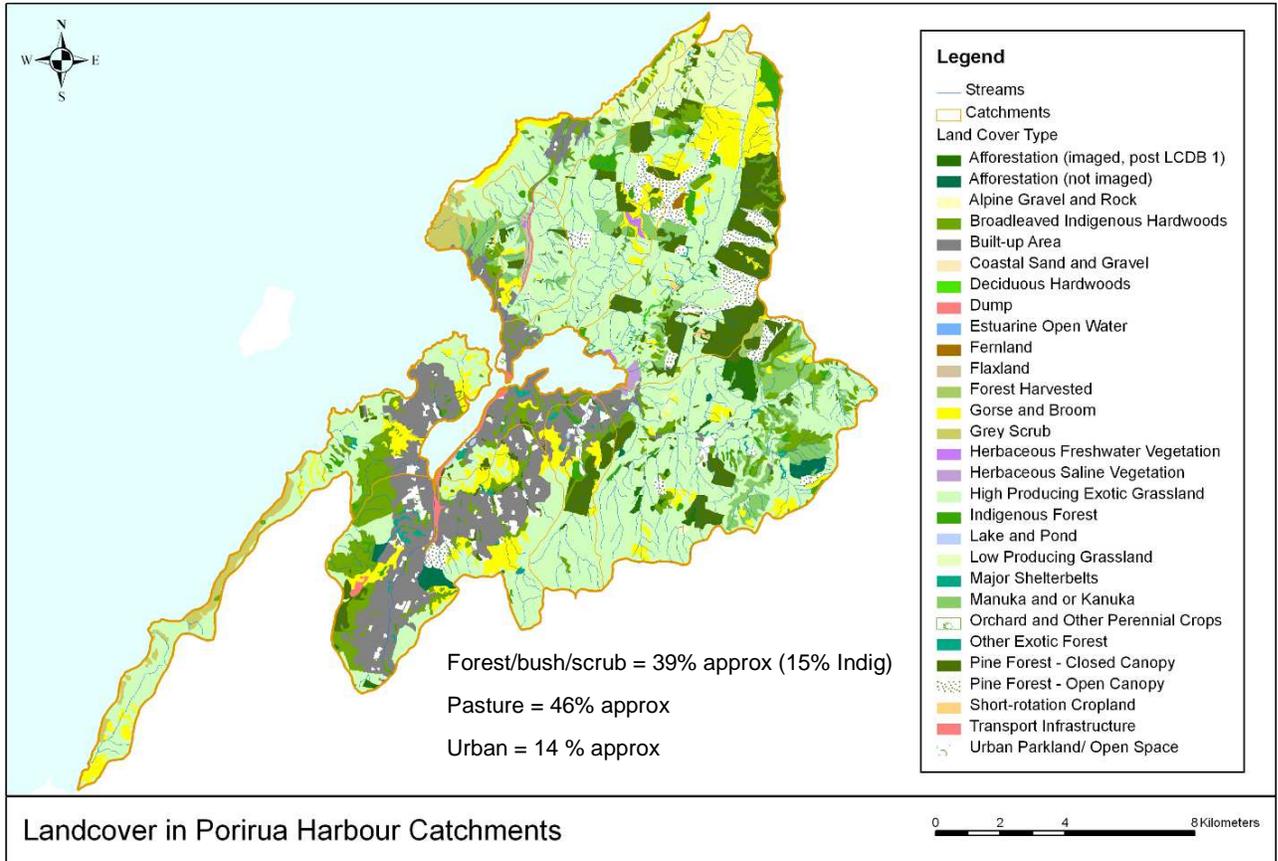
Appendix 3: Land Use Changes in Porirua District



Appendix 4: Land Use Changes in Pauatahanui Inlet 1941 to 2000



Appendix 5: Present Land Cover for Porirua City District



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Topographic and Cadastral data is copyright LINZ