

TARANAKI

like no other

# YOUR GUIDE TO LIVING IN TARANAKI



A NEW ZEALAND REGION  
LIKE NO OTHER

# WHY TARANAKI?

**Ask anyone around here and they'll tell you - you couldn't ask for a better place to build a life. Taranaki is humming.**

**We're welcoming and friendly with a strong sense of pride, community, and whānau.**

**If you're seeking that great and easy lifestyle, with abundant opportunities to live, learn, create, work and play - you'll find it here.**

**No matter your age, background or beliefs, Taranaki is where you can create a real future for yourself, and your family.**

Not only is there plenty to do in the weekends, before and after work, there's the time to do it. Short commutes to work, either by car or using the network of buses, scenic walking and riding routes, means there's plenty of time to enjoy Taranaki's great lifestyle. There might even be time for a lunchtime surf or a chance to catch the kids' school events.

In Taranaki, it's easy to achieve an enviable lifestyle without having to compromise on your career. Taranaki is a dynamic and globally acclaimed region for employment. The region is home to strong energy and dairy sectors, robust engineering and primary production and is on the journey to being a low-emissions economy by 2050. The region is also supported by rapidly growing tourism and events sectors as potential visitors are increasingly becoming aware of this slice of paradise.

Taranaki is a place of entrepreneurs. Thanks to a robust economy and population that's big enough to sustain new business, many new arrivals make the most of the opportunity to start the venture they have been dreaming of. With the use of modern technology, it's also possible to live in Taranaki while working throughout New Zealand or the world.

What's more, Taranaki has the highest median wage growth in New Zealand. Couple that with our affordable housing

and you not only have time to enjoy a great work-life balance, you may even be able to afford to take up some new hobbies.

So where is Taranaki? It is the 'bump' on the west coast of New Zealand's North Island. Located halfway between the main centres of Auckland and Wellington, the region is characterised by the 2518m Mount Taranaki, in Te Papakura o Taranaki (Egmont National Park).

Taranaki is home to 127,300 people, most of whom live in the coastal city of New Plymouth. The region is split into three districts, each with its own council: New Plymouth to the north with a population of 87,700, Stratford in central Taranaki with a population of 10,150 and South Taranaki, which includes the main centre of Hāwera, with a population of 29,600. The Taranaki Regional Council covers the entire region, providing services and information on the environment, resource consents, public transport and civil defence.

If you choose to make New Plymouth your home, no matter what suburb you live in, you will be just minutes away from the city centre. It's likely to take you no more than 10 minutes to commute to work each day.

Hāwera, Stratford, Inglewood, Waitara, Ōakura, Ōpunake, Urenui and many of the other towns throughout Taranaki provide an inviting alternative to city living. In these smaller communities you will find homes on spacious sections and lifestyle blocks with sea and/or mountain views.

The biggest challenge will be trying to fit in everything you'd like to do!

**Taranaki.** *Opportunity and Lifestyle Like No Other.*

Let us give you a little taste of Taranaki and share with you the story of our region and what it's like to live here, through the eyes of people who have discovered our unique lifestyle for themselves. You'll see that no matter what your stage in life, Taranaki offers something for everyone. Learn about:

- finding your next career move
- starting a business or moving a business to Taranaki
- bringing the family to Taranaki
- settling in and making connections with locals.

### Employment numbers

# 62,533



### Forecast Job Openings

# 6,851

### Roles in high demand:

-  Professional Services and Management
-  Technicians and Trades
-  Manual support workers: farm, factory, construction, domestic help
-  Administrative workers

### Regional strengths:

-  New energy expertise and technology
-  Food & fibre, production, regenerative agriculture, progressive farming

### Growth Industries:

-  Manufacturing
-  Healthcare
-  Education and training
-  Professional services

### Live the Taranaki lifestyle:

-  Most liveable city award (2021 – New Plymouth)
-  Surf on your lunchbreak – 5min drive from CBD to closest surf beach
-  10min average commute
-  2,205 average sunshine hours annually. The sunniest region in New Zealand in 2021 and 2022.
-  Vibrant world-class events all year round.



### House prices

| Region          | Average price    |
|-----------------|------------------|
| National Median | \$780,000        |
| Bay of Plenty   | \$790,000        |
| Hawke's Bay     | \$660,000        |
| <b>Taranaki</b> | <b>\$534,000</b> |
| Wellington      | \$795,000        |
| Waikato         | \$740,000        |
| Canterbury      | \$650,000        |
| Nelson          | \$745,000        |
| Auckland        | \$995,000        |

Source: REINZ Monthly Property Report, May 2023

To find out more visit, [taranaki.co.nz](http://taranaki.co.nz)





# FINDING A JOB

Taranaki is a great place to find your next job opportunity. If you're looking for a career move coupled with a better lifestyle, there are some great opportunities in our region. This section tells the stories of people who have moved here from other countries or other parts of Aotearoa/New Zealand and their journey to being a part of a region like no other.





# CREATING A VIBRANT NEW LIFESTYLE

JIMI HUNT, NEW PLYMOUTH

**Creative Director, Jimi Hunt and his partner, needed a change of pace from their demanding Auckland lifestyles. Moving to Taranaki meant they could enjoy a more relaxed work-life balance while staying connected to a vibrant arts scene. Years on, and they have never looked back.**

Jimi's previous role was the Creative Director for Newshub, which encompassed all of NZ's current affairs shows under the Three/Discovery NZ channel. Spearheading top-down art direction for show rebrands, set design and digital output while running a team of talented designers.

It was a very demanding role, often dealing with national and global news events and longform news documentaries.

With a good 20 years of experience up his sleeve, Jimi and his partner wanted a change of pace and to be able to spend more time with friends and family. They decided that we were either going to move to Hawke's Bay or Taranaki. New Plymouth seemed like a more viable option with its linkages to big industry and a growing creative scene.

"Most of all, I found the people to be very friendly and the overall vibe very welcoming and progressive, which is something you can sometimes question as a gay couple moving to a provincial region. I have only had positive interactions and have felt very welcomed. People are genuinely interested in you and your story," Jimi says.

Jimi's new commute is seven minutes, much shorter than the previous 50 minutes on a good day in Auckland.

"I researched several creative agencies in New Plymouth but only approached one, Smokeylemon. I loved their work and saw where I could potentially add value with my somewhat specialised skill set."

Jimi's role with Smokeylemon is Creative Director, where he provides expert art direction and design for a wide range of clients.

"We have some great clients. I love the energy, inspiration, and passion they have for their products and services. It's a privilege to be working with them.

We have recently managed to obtain our first international client based in Papua New Guinea, and have expanded our reach with my television background to offer animation, film and editing services, which really helps bring the full circle of capabilities in-house, coupled with a dynamic and creative marketing team.

I really enjoy working across all our departments, helping knit together large projects, with a crew of true professionals. I haven't questioned the move to Taranaki once and I'm extremely happy that we did!

Jimi's partner still works for an Auckland-based company remotely, and travels back to Auckland once a fortnight to work with his team in the office.

"The drive to the airport is about 10 minutes, so day trips are easily done, and we get the big-city time when we need it.

"But I have to say, the change of pace and work-life balance here in Taranaki far outweighs the daily grind of a motorway commute and the over-inflated price of housing and life in general in Auckland. We love it here!"

**"We're near the beach in a beautiful house with sea views - something we could have never even imagined or afforded in Auckland."**

# ONTO A GOOD THING

## ALICIA AND LAINE CAMERON

**Horse lovers Alicia and Laine Cameron were keen to trade their long and expensive commutes in Auckland for a more relaxed rural life in Taranaki. But first, they decided to ponder the finer details of their move with a six-month trip around Europe.**

"We sold our townhouse in Wainui and went travelling while we decided where to move to exactly. I'd lived in Stratford and commuted to Hāwera when Laine and I first met and thought a lifestyle block in New Plymouth might suit us better this time," says Alicia.

Fate had other plans though and more than 20 people tagged them on a Facebook post for a property for sale five minutes from Stratford while they were busy seeing the sites of Europe.

"Our friends were right. The property was perfect for us, it even had a horse arena!"

When you can sell an Auckland townhouse and buy a 4-acre farm in Taranaki, you know you are onto a good thing.

"Our friends can't believe what we've got for our money!"

And six years of a daily two- to three-hour commute is also a thing of the past.

"We had long days and expensive fuel bills in Auckland. Now I even pop home at lunchtime if I need to."

Alicia has had some great career opportunities since moving to Taranaki, working at first in local government and now at Powerco's head office in New Plymouth.

Husband Laine relocated his blacksmith farrier business and has been very busy from the get go.

"It's a unique business, but he has contacts through doing his apprenticeship here and fortunately he's been flat out. But now his day finishes at a normal time, not 9 PM with all the commuting he had to do in Auckland,"

While Alicia sometimes misses the variety a big city offers, she's found small towns have lots of free community events.

"There's plenty to do in Stratford and new cafés and cool places are opening all the time."

Alicia and Laine have also found it easy to meet friends.

"It doesn't take long to make friends through your work and other friends and we meet heaps of people through horse riding."

And now they have time to hang out with friends and indulge their interests.

"It's so much easier to work to live, not live to work down here."



Alicia and Laine Cameron

# THRIVING CAREER

## ERVI MITCHELL

**Ervi Mitchell grew up in the Philippines and has called Taranaki home since 2020. She actually thought she'd end up in Australia, but after initially getting stuck in New Zealand through the Covid pandemic she has no plans to leave.**

Together with her Kiwi-born husband, Ervi lives in Hāwera and works as a Project Engineer for South Taranaki District Council. She studied and trained as an engineer in the Philippines, and after overcoming a visa technicality that restricted what work she could do in New Zealand, she was rapt to get her council job in 2021.

"The support from the District Council has been great, including supporting me with relocation costs," she says.

Ervi also loves the social clubs that the Council has set up for staff. "It's a great way to meet people and hang out outside of work."

Things have had a funny way of working out, but it's all come together. Ervi's in the process of applying for a permanent resident visa, something that was never her intention when she first arrived.

"New Zealand is a very beautiful country," she says. "My husband is a Kiwi so his family is here, the work culture here is really great and there's a lot of encouragement to have a work-life balance. I'm not closing any doors on anything, but for now, this is my home."

Ervi's a big believer that small towns have great career development opportunities, contrary to what some others may think.

"The fact that fewer people are available means you have a wider-reaching role which creates career growth," she says.

While her career has developed, being in South Taranaki has also been great for the lifestyle she and her husband share. She enjoys spending time with a surprisingly large expat Filipino community, and is often found walking or biking on the many trails in the area.

"I've been going up around Mount Taranaki, which has been pretty good. The Pouakai Tarns is my favourite local walk, and there are a lot to choose from. There are lots of different smaller communities to find and become involved with too, and New Plymouth is only an hour away with everything you need."

Going from the Philippines to Hāwera may not be a common path, but it shows how people from all walks of life can benefit from what Taranaki has to offer. Ervi encourages anyone in a similar position to go for it; "for your career and for your lifestyle", she says.





# TIPS FOR JOB HUNTERS

We asked **Brendon Jull**, from the **Taranaki Branch of Human Resources New Zealand**, for some tips for people searching for a job in Taranaki.

## FINDING A ROLE

- Visit [taranaki.co.nz/live-work-and-learn/work-here/jobs/](http://taranaki.co.nz/live-work-and-learn/work-here/jobs/) to see Taranaki job vacancies.
- Other good places to look are Seek, Trade Me Jobs, LinkedIn, recruitment agency websites, industry organisations, associations and trade groups, social networks, and of course if you are interested in a particular organisation check out their website.
- Contacting workplaces directly can help you find out more about an organisation, job, or industry, and sometimes they may have a vacancy coming up.
- Use your networks, New Zealand is a small place and one of the best ways of getting a job is through people, so ask around.
- If you are new to the region, join industry organisations, clubs, and networking groups to make local connections.
- Create your own job - contracting is an appealing way of working for both the individual and the organisation. Or you may have a small business idea brewing.

## CV PREPARATION

- Check your CV – make sure it is up-to-date and well presented. This is your first impression, so make it a good one.



- Talking of first impressions, employers might Google you – check your Facebook page – check your online footprint and consider changing your settings so the right people see the right information.
- Tailor your letter of application and CV to each job – the recruiter should know within a few seconds of looking at your resume that you have the right skills.
- Often the skills you bring from other industries or roles are ‘transferable’ to the new role – give examples of how these skills may transfer over.
- Make yourself an obvious fit. Where appropriate, match the words and phrases that are used in the job description with your own skills and experience highlighted in your CV.
- Visit [careers.govt.nz](http://careers.govt.nz) for more tips on creating your CV.

## INTERVIEW PREPARATION

- Read the job description in advance of an interview and think ahead to the questions you may be asked and examples of how you have demonstrated the skills in prior roles.
- Consider the questions you would like to know about the company or the role. Remember this is an investment in your future – it is as important that the organisation is a good fit for you as you are for it.
- After an interview, ask what the next steps are and how long it should be before you hear if you have been successful in progressing to the next stage. It helps to know what the process will be so you can manage any other applications you may have open at the same time.



# BUSINESS AND ENTERPRISE

New Zealanders are known for being entrepreneurial. It is a business-friendly country and there's lots of support available. Taranaki is a dynamic place to do business, being small enough to make great connections and large enough for a small enterprise to be viable. Not to mention our future focused infrastructure including a new airport, planned highway upgrades and great online connectivity, making it possible to work remotely. We've picked a few examples of people from a range of places and at different stages in life to tell the story of the thriving business and enterprise sector in Taranaki.



# RUNNING TO HIS OWN SCHEDULE

## AJINKA JAGDALE

### **Ajinkya (AJ) Jagdale's first day in New Zealand wasn't as easy as it is for many new arrivals.**

When the then 18-year old landed at Auckland Airport from Mumbai, India, en route for Taranaki to study a degree in hotel management at Pacific International Hotel Management School (PIHMS), AJ discovered his luggage hadn't made the trip.

"I had an hour and a half to track it down, then run to get my connecting flight to New Plymouth," he says. The day went from bad to worse as AJ dislocated his shoulder shortly after arriving. His new teachers had to take him to the hospital for his first night in the country.

Fortunately, AJ's fortunes have well and truly turned around; since that day in 2005 he has built a successful business and a life for himself in Taranaki, starting by learning the many intricacies of hotel management.

"My mum placed huge importance on making visitors to our home feel welcome, and my dad taught us the value of working hard," AJ says.

The Jagdale family was focused on education and his parents sacrificed a lot for him to attend a good boarding school in India. The school had international students from all over the world which helped open AJ's eyes to other cultures and made him curious about travelling and studying abroad.



*Back Beach, New Plymouth / Ngāmotu*

**“This is the perfect place to run a business and still have a great lifestyle,” he says, while acknowledging that meeting his wife Kate, a Taranaki local, was also a factor in the decision to stay.**

It's perhaps unsurprising that when AJ met the team from PIHMS at a study fair in India, he made the decision to come to Taranaki to study at the specialist hotel and hospitality private training academy, where students live on site in accommodation run just like a hotel.

“To be honest I knew very little about New Zealand before I came here – just a bit about the cricket team,” he says. But after getting a part-time job in one of New Plymouth's burgeoning up-market bars, AJ quickly built a wide network of friends and business contacts.

“The owner Mark Louis was a great mentor, welcoming me back whenever I returned from an industry placement, part of the learning process at PIHMS. He became a friend, a mentor, and now a business partner.”

AJ and Mark have teamed up to create a string of successful restaurants and bars which are highly popular with Taranaki locals and visitors alike. But it's the life beyond the often tough hours of the hospitality sector that have kept AJ in Taranaki.

“There's just so much to do here; arts, culture, sports and lots of business opportunities. There's nowhere else I'd rather be!”

During their days off, AJ and his family like to visit the beach walk the dog and catch up with friends. And It's been easy to keep in touch with family back in India, even with the demands of owning a business he manages to get back to India to visit family and friends once a year.



AJ's advice to people considering moving to Taranaki for study or work is, “get to know kiwi culture, find out how they do things and respect that, but at the same time make sure you retain your identity. People will understand what is like to be somewhere new and will help your through any challenges that you face.”

## FROM STUDY TO EMPLOYMENT

Taranaki offers excellent pathways from being a student to employment. The region has two large tertiary providers, WITT Te Pūkenga – New Zealand Institute of Skills and Technology and Pacific International Hotel Management School (PIHMS). These providers have strengths in project management, hotel management, cookery, nursing, engineering and energy and a range of trades training. Many courses offer internships with Taranaki employers, which can be a great first step to employment. For more information visit [taranaki.co.nz/live-work-and-learn/learn-here/](http://taranaki.co.nz/live-work-and-learn/learn-here/).

For those seeking university study in Taranaki, Massey University offers New Zealand's most extensive distance education online. In 2017, the university was ranked in Quacquarelli Symonds World University Rankings in the top 300 universities in the world for student employability. Other universities offer online learning in some subjects so for more information visit [universitiesnz.ac.nz](http://universitiesnz.ac.nz).

If you are moving from overseas to study in Taranaki, we recommend contacting Immigration New Zealand and Education New Zealand for a student visa and immigration and education agent details.



# LOCAL CONNECTIONS BILLOW BAKERY

## ROSIE SARGISSON AND JEFFREY FONG

**Rosie Sargisson and Jeffrey Fong had never run a bakery before they opened their own in New Plymouth. But five years on, Billow has become a local institution, known for its artisan bread, coffee, toasties and sweet treats.**

Nestled in a trendy wee alley off the main street of New Plymouth and housed in shipping containers, Billow is a setting and destination befitting their brand and ethos.

"We love the relationship people have with their food suppliers in Europe and by having a bricks and mortar bakery, or in our case ex-shipping containers, we are able to connect with more customers, more often, than just selling at weekend markets allowed," says Rosie.

The sourdough bread dream first took seed in Europe after the pair left their sales and strategy roles with Fonterra in Singapore to indulge in their mutual love of trail running and to see the world, while working out the next career move.

"We were over working for big corporates," Rosie says. "The pull of New Zealand was strong but the 'what's next' question took a bit of brainstorming. When the bread idea struck, we both knew New Plymouth would be perfect – it has a culture of people willing to support new local things that excite them."

"It's been pretty neat to feel part of something," Jeff reflects. "There's a great informal hospo network – it's a small enough town to be really well connected and it's big enough to have plenty going on. We see a lot of tourists and we really feel the impact of events, which could be more diluted in a larger city."

Since opening Billow, Rosie and Jeff have had a daughter, Emi, and designed and built their own home. They've had a lot on their plate during that time, but say it's been surprisingly manageable.

"Not having a big commute really helps," Rosie says. "We can, to some extent, manage our work hours, so we find we can actually spend a lot of time together as a family. There's also a really strong new parent community here. We've met a lot of other families in a similar situation who we can relate to, and because it's a small place you can see them all the time."

"One thing we've noticed is people love living here and they make you love it too – it's a very optimistic place and people's enthusiasm is addictive," Jeff adds.

Rosie's also started taking Te Reo lessons once a week to reconnect with her Māori culture.

"I always grew up knowing I whakapapa Māori but never knew anything about what being Māori was. Especially when Emi was born I wanted her to not have an awkwardness about that – I wanted her to have that side in her life and know what it means."

Outside of work and other commitments, Rosie and Jeff like to get outside as much as possible. They joke that the pace of their trail running has slowed to more of a walk these days, but still enjoy a lot of what the region has to offer.

"The amenities around Taranaki are great for kids," Jeff says. "We spend a lot of time at the beach, you can get into the bush and spend a night in a hut on a whim."



“One thing we’ve noticed is people love living here and they make you love it too. It’s a very optimistic place and people’s enthusiasm is addictive.”

“We completely changed our lives moving here. We’ve gone from a huge city to a smaller city with a really strong community spirit, and traded working for large companies for running a small business. This community spirit has been a huge help – people are incredibly friendly here, and willing to give people a chance.”

### TIPS FOR STARTING A BUSINESS

- Look at the market before jumping in – talk to people, most are very willing to talk if you ask.
- Make sure you are not re-inventing the wheel and conversely make sure there’s a market for your idea.
- Make sure whatever you set up is really ‘you’, don’t get influenced by others or a new fad coming along – have a clear sense of purpose and stick to it.



“It’s great to have the ocean five minutes away and the bush trails so close.”





# A BRIGHTER FUTURE

## THE DARBYSHIRES

**When Tim Darbyshire first moved to Taranaki, he stayed in his tech job for a long time because he didn't think he'd find another one as good. Now, he realises there's plenty of opportunity within the local tech space - and actually, there are some real advantages to being in a smaller region.**

Tim's a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) Functional Consultant at TSB, but before that he had roles with New Plymouth-based online legal solutions provider Firmsy and Auckland-based project management software ProWorkflow.

He says the tech sector and entrepreneurship within Taranaki is still growing, but that means everyone tends to know each other.

Tim says successful Taranaki tech businesses like Jobhop, Yonder and International Volunteer HQ are proof that startups can grow and thrive in a smaller region.

**“Everybody wants to help everybody in Taranaki,” he says. “There’s a really supportive scene.”**

On top of that, he sees huge opportunities to work in technology roles all over Taranaki.

“There’s a huge desire for so many tech people right now. If you want to get into a tech role, you only need basic skills. You’ll be well looked after and well supported, and that’s quite cool!”

And once you’re in, you’re in. Being part of the local tech ecosystem where people know each other means having a network of people, great access to new opportunities, upskilling and regular events among people that aren’t strangers for long.

Many tech people also work remotely for other companies from Taranaki - Tim met someone just the other day who was a developer for a startup in the United States.

Tim says going from eight years of working in startups to now being in a large organisation like TSB has been a great way to change things up. His work is varied, focusing on delivering great customer outcomes, meeting compliance, and improving TSB’s operational efficiency.

“It’s quite a fast-moving development environment where senior management are open and willing to engage and support projects,” he says. “If you need to work with that person, that person becomes available for you and vice versa. You get to collaborate with a lot of other people.”

Six years after he moved to Taranaki, Tim and his wife now have four kids, and they've recently upgraded to a bigger house with enough space for them all. Some of the playgrounds they spend time in are the result of TSB's owner, Toi Foundation, investing bank profits back into the community, which Tim says makes him feel good about where he works.

He's played in a social football team ever since he arrived in New Plymouth, and he's often with his family at their local bike park. Tim recently discovered two indoor playgrounds, which he says is perfect for catering for kids of all ages.

It's a lifestyle that he says people who work in tech are perfectly placed to enjoy.

"If you work in tech, you can work for the company of your dreams from anywhere - they don't care where you are. Taranaki has cheaper living, way better lifestyle, way nicer people, with great opportunities...it's great."



## TIPS FOR STARTUP ENTERPRISES

We asked Jennifer Patterson, General Manager of Economic Development at Te Puna Umanga/ Venture Taranaki about support and tips for people starting-up or operating a business or other enterprise in Taranaki.

### DO YOUR HOMEWORK

Whatever your idea or proposition, do your homework. Spend the time developing your idea, testing and validating your markets. Does your idea solve a problem or meet a need? Who else is already doing what you want to do? What makes your idea different or better? Think carefully about your customers and your business model. Be flexible, be prepared to listen and adapt as you develop your plan.

### SEEK HELP AND GET SUPPORT

Find good people who will help support you and your aspirations. There's a wealth of business support on offer in Taranaki including private sector support through professional services firms and banks, coworking spaces and chambers of commerce, and, of course, Venture Taranaki, your regional development agency.

Venture Taranaki delivers a wide range of services to help grow economic activity within the region. These range across the enterprise lifecycle, from idea and inception through to growth, investment and export. Venture Taranaki enterprise support services include business startup clinics, enterprise advisory, mentoring support, co-

venture  
TARANAKI  
Te Puna Umanga



funding support for building business management capability, innovation and research and development activity and investment clinics. Each year, Venture Taranaki runs PowerUp, which is a range of programmes and resources designed to help new businesses get up and running.

There's also a wide range of additional connections and resources through our website, including regional intelligence information, sector support and development activity and much more. Take a look at [venture.org.nz](http://venture.org.nz).

### NETWORK AND GET INVOLVED

Whether you choose to join the Taranaki Chamber of Commerce, a co-working space, one of the business associations around the maunga, or a network specific to your chosen sector, networking and connecting is key to developing the relationships you'll need in business and will also help build your profile. Living in Taranaki gives you the gift of time, so spend time getting involved in your community. A mentor or a sounding board is also an invaluable asset to many enterprises. Whether it's a formal or informal arrangement, an independent voice is always useful.

Finally, choose a line of work you care about. Running a business takes a huge amount of time and energy. Know what you're trying to achieve, ensure you're committed and of course, believe in yourself.



# LIVE LOCAL, WORK REMOTE

## MIN ENGELS AND ALEX CHRISTENSEN

**Min Engels and Alex Christensen liked their jobs with Shakti Mats in Christchurch, but wanted to move to the North Island to be closer to friends and family. They approached their boss about working remotely, and were pleasantly surprised by how open he was to the idea.**

"No one else there works remotely, so we didn't know how it was going to go down," Alex says. "But he said if we made a remote work plan and figured out a system of how it was going to look then it would be ok."

It was actually fairly straightforward. The plan was quickly signed off, and they started to look for where they might live.

Taranaki wasn't their first option – Alex is from Wellington and Min's from Napier – but once they thought about it, it ticked all the boxes.

The allure of Surf Highway 45, the 105 kilometre coastal route around Taranaki with dozens of surf breaks and beaches was a major drawcard for Alex, who is an avid surfer.

**"We had a checklist of things we wanted and being close to the beach was a massive point for us," Alex says.**



"Everywhere else we looked it was so expensive, but in Taranaki it was like, 'Woah, it's actually really affordable.'"

"We'd only been to New Plymouth a few times before we moved here, but we'd loved it every time," Min recalls. "We even bought our house sight unseen – a friend of ours found it and liked it, so we just put an offer in. It was a leap of faith, but it's worked out."

Two years on, living and working together in New Plymouth has gone as smoothly as they could have hoped. They initially started working from popular co-working space Manifold, but moved into a home office when they got a dog.

"We love working from home," Min says. "You get so much more done, you can just get into your own bubble, move your breaks around based on your work flow...if you're in the zone, you can just go with it."

Being part of the Manifold community has helped them to meet people in a similar situation, and Alex says Venture Taranaki has been great at linking them up with people who can support them, including a work mentor. These kinds of things have been big, unexpected bonuses that have made shifting to remote work seamless.

With work taken care of, Min says the best thing about the move has been the lifestyle and flexibility they have.

"New Plymouth is just the right size. It's big enough to have good food, drink and social options and small enough to make it easy to get around. We're at the beach every day and we can go to the gym easily or go walking in the bush during the week. "It's also easy to get around so we can pop into town for appointments when we need to during the workday."



# TAKING THE FAMILY TO THE LIFESTYLE

The first question people looking to move to a new country or a new region ask themselves is – what can the family do? We've asked some families across the region what they love about their new home.





# FINDING THE GOOD LIFE

KAREN, NEW PLYMOUTH



**“I feel really settled now. we’ve got great friends, a nice house, the boys are safe and living the life we dreamt for them.”**

**While the idea of living in Italy sounds like La Dolce Vita to many of us, to Karen and her husband Gianluca the good life was fast becoming the stressed life and the couple wanted more for themselves and their three sons.**

“We wanted a safe environment, a lifestyle where the boys could have space, be close to nature and have plenty of opportunity to find happiness,” says Karen.

The couple are medical professionals who owned their own clinic, worked long hours and felt the continual pressure of keeping up in what was becoming an overcrowded country.

“It felt like money and status were becoming more important than lifestyle and happiness.”

Karen and Gianluca quickly found out that deciding to immigrate was easy, making it happen was a different story.

“We did an enormous amount of research and planning, involving the boys in the process as we went as we knew if they weren’t happy it wasn’t going to work.”

Once they settled on New Zealand as the destination, the study and preparation began in earnest, starting with rugby. The boys joined the local rugby club – an hour’s commute from the family’s home near Milan – and started learning about New Zealand.



"They probably know more about New Zealand than some of their friends as we studied it so much before we came!"

New Plymouth wasn't on the itinerary of Karen and Gianluca's 2012 reconnaissance trip to check out hospitals and schools in a variety of small cities up and down New Zealand.

"We made a lot of connections with other Italians living abroad, met immigration agents and recruitment people and tried to improve our English. However, it wasn't until I passed the IELTS exam and finalised my application to the Midwifery Council that I began applying for jobs and one in New Plymouth caught my eye."

Before taking the application any further, the whole family sat together after dinner one night, Googled New Plymouth and liked what they saw.

"We found the 'Like No Other' site [Venture Taranaki's tourism site] and loved the photos. The mountain reminded us of the Dolomites, the seaside location appealed as we love sailing and the tramping opportunities looked amazing. Even the weather was a good thing. I like four seasons."

After two years of careful planning it seemed reckless making a decision to move to a city based on a few photos and gut instinct. But a day after her phone interview with staff from Taranaki Base Hospital, Karen signed a contract agreeing to join the Midwifery team in October 2014.

Gianluca, a doctor, joined the hospital's Obstetrics and Gynaecology team around a year later after tying up loose ends in Italy and, like Karen, getting his English up to the

required level for the English language test for high-skilled migrants.

There were no tests for the boys however. Instead, they were immersed in the English language once they arrived. Gregorio, the youngest of the three is now questioned about his Italian heritage.

"People don't believe Gregorio was born in Italy as his English is so flawless."

Moving country isn't for the faint hearted, but Karen feels the challenges have been worth it.

"While there was a settling in phase with lots of ups and downs, not once did any of us want to go back to Italy."

"We've adapted to people turning up with food for shared meals, leaving doors unlocked and I even cope with the boys wearing bare feet or gumboots everywhere!"

Buying a house, which took place in 2017, was a defining moment.

"I feel really settled now. We've got great friends, a nice house, the boys are safe and living the life we dreamt for them."

Karen is now looking to future goals, including being an apprentice falconer, further study and completing her novel about starting a new life in New Zealand, all the while she minds her four beehives, a flock of heritage chickens, a cow and tends her enviable vege garden.

Sounds like the good life, doesn't it?





## A PLACE FOR THE KIDS

### ASHLEE AND CODY SPICER

**Moving cities two weeks before having a baby wasn't part of Ashlee and Cody Spicer's plan, but now they're glad they did. They're raising their two sons near the beach, with friends and family close by and a lifestyle that wouldn't have been possible if they'd stayed in a big city.**

After living and working in London and Auckland, Ashlee and Cody had their eye on settling in New Plymouth, where Ashlee grew up. They weren't in a rush - there were two boxes they wanted to tick first. As fate would have it, the stars aligned right before their second son arrived.

"I wasn't sure I'd find a job that would allow me to progress my career," Cody says. "I had a commercial manager role in Auckland, and when I was offered the CFO role with Formsteel they offered to pay relocation costs to move to their New Plymouth office."

With that box ticked, the next challenge was finding a house. Moving to Taranaki was largely about having a family friendly lifestyle, and ideally that meant being close to the beach.

"We had plans to move at some stage, maybe a few months after we'd had our son Alfie," Ashlee says. "Then we found this house in Fitzroy, right by the beach and the school, and we just went for it."

As it turned out, they had just enough time to move and get settled before Alfie arrived, joining older brother Jude (2). The timing couldn't have been any better.

"We get out and do plenty as a family," Cody says. "In Auckland, it would take 30 minutes to get anywhere, which means 30 minutes getting home again. If you're doing something for a couple of hours, that can pretty much be your whole day. Here, you can fit three things into a day - the beach is our backyard, we can get to the zoo, go for a walk...it's so easy."

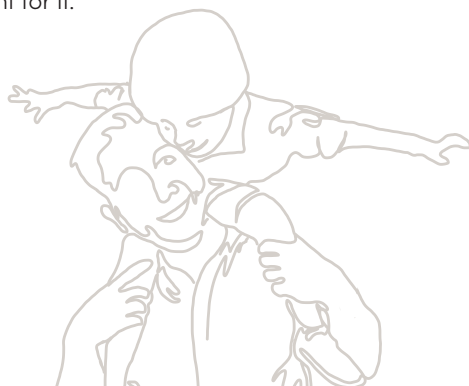
"So much of it is free too," Ashlee adds. "We have places like Puke Ariki library and museum and the Len Lye Centre - I just discovered their activity room the other day, which is amazing for kids."

Cody's work schedule is much better for enabling family time during the week too, with his old two hour commute now replaced by a five minute bike ride.

It's easier to see friends, including when they just bump into people at the beach.

"I always wanted to have our children grow up here," Ashlee says.

**"It's a close knit community and it's just such an epic place for kids and families. I just feel like they can be proud of being from Taranaki."**



# TOP TARANAKI HIGHLIGHTS



Bowl of Brooklands

Weekends are for enjoying family time, and Ashlee and Cody have shared some of their favourite activities.

## REGIONAL EVENTS

"We've been surprised by how many amazing events happen here year-round. The Festival of Lights, and WOMAD are definitely family-favourites!"

## EXPLORING THE GREAT OUTDOORS

Weekends tend to involve getting out in nature and exploring the many tracks and trails. They say it's hard to beat Lake Mangamahoe, a popular walking and mountain bike area with beautiful scenic views of Mount Taranaki.



Lake Mangamahoe

## FREE FAMILY ACTIVITIES

"Brooklands Zoo is a highlight, you can often find us there on the weekend. It's free to enter, and the kids are entertained for hours with so many animals to see, an epic playground, and right on the edge of Pukekura Park too."



Brooklands Zoo

Puke Ariki museum and library is their favourite indoor spot to visit on rainy days.

## SURF HIGHWAY 45

"The beach is a huge part of our lifestyle and Taranaki has so much coastline to explore. Fitzroy beach is our local, but we love following Surf Highway 45 out to spots like Back Beach and Ōpunake too."





# IT'S ALL THE LITTLE THINGS

## ERIN, MYLES, IZZY & ALEX WEBB, SOUTH TARANAKI

**A house with neighbours just metres away on all sides is a stark contrast to a villa surrounded by trees and set amidst lush green fields, but the latter is a dream home for the Webb family, and just one of the many factors that make their new life in South Taranaki so amazing.**

The family – mum and dad Erin and Myles, and kids Izzy and Alex – knew they wanted more than a cheap house in the suburbs of Hamilton, and neighbours watching every move. An experienced teacher, Myles was looking for a deputy principal position anywhere around the country, and the family bravely agreed to go wherever the job was.

When a suitable job came up at Auroa School in South Taranaki, a rural school with around 200 pupils, the Webbs leapt at the opportunity, despite neither Erin nor Myles ever having been to South Taranaki before.

“It was a risk,” Myles says, “but both the school and the community have been an amazing fit.”

The family moved into the school house, a fantastic way to meet the community, Erin says.

“It’s such a contrast to our former lives. I’d take baking over the fence for the staff, and the kids would just climb over the fence after school. It’s completely private with tons of room to live and play.”

All this space has given Izzy and Alex some new pastimes they would never have discovered in Hamilton.

“Things like feeding eels, watching the maize harvest. It really is all the little things that make the difference,” says Erin.

“Here we can lead a life that’s in touch with nature. We’ve discovered that we really love living in a rural community.”

When they first arrived in 2014, Erin and the children joined the local playcentre to meet local families, and the kids have since gone on to attend Auroa School, where both children made more new friends.

“We’ve ended up with an amazing network – neighbours who will just drop off a load of firewood and stack it up for winter or have given us the location of secret swimming spots around the area.”

“If spending quality time as a family is part of your parenting philosophy, then living in the country is a great option,” says Myles. “You do need to travel for certain things, but the time you have with family more than makes up for it.”

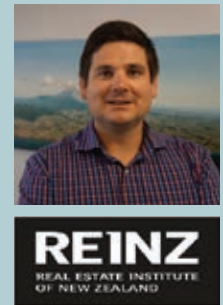
The community spirit has been incredibly supportive when it comes to overcoming one of the reservations the family had to moving to the country. Alex has the neuro-muscular condition Duchenne’s Muscular Dystrophy, which requires specialist medical and physical therapy support, necessitating regular trips to New Plymouth.

“This does require a little more planning than we had to do in Hamilton, but everything Alex needs is right here in Taranaki. Just down the road in Hāwera is a branch of Riding for the Disabled, and the municipal swimming pool offers great swimming therapy sessions.”

The family’s journey in understanding Alex’s condition prompted Erin to write a book explaining it to those afflicted by it. A copy of this has been crowd-funded for everyone in New Zealand with the condition.

# FINDING A HOME – INSIDERS' TIPS

Taranaki has a vibrant property market with a vast range of housing options for all types of families. No matter what your budget and whether you're renting or buying, there's an option for your family. We asked Real Estate Institute of New Zealand's Taranaki Ambassador, Daniel McDonald for his top house hunting tips.



## BUYING A HOME

- Visit as many properties as possible to get an idea of the market.
- Have a licensed building inspector go through the property either before making an offer or make a building inspector's report a condition of the sale being finalised. This protects the buyer from any unforeseen building issues.
- Don't be afraid to ask the salesperson questions. It is the salesperson's job to respond and answer your questions. If there are known issues related to the property they are legally required to disclose them.
- Always get a Land Information Memorandum from your local district council. This will tell you everything the council knows about the property and can be used to check that all works are permitted. Each council has slightly different land management rules and bylaws.
- In New Zealand, an agent must present all offers to the vendor in writing. Once your offer has been accepted and your conditions of sale have been met you cannot be "gazumped" by another buyer offering a better price or conditions of sale.
- Always engage a solicitor to act on your behalf and review the contract, land titles and other legal documentation related to the sale.

A great website is: [settled.govt.nz](http://settled.govt.nz)

## RENTING A HOME

- Rentals can either be rented privately or through a property management company.
- Do your research look on line and, in the newspapers, to get a feel for prices.
- It is illegal to charge a letting fee. However, its likely to that you will be asked for a bond (usually around four weeks rent). The bond must be lodged with the tenancy tribunal.
- At certain times of the year, the rental market can be in high demand. Make sure you have good references from previous landlords. Proof of employment and credit information can be useful too.
- Make sure the property is safe to live in. Record any obvious defects or issues.
- It is the tenant's responsibility to get power, gas, and other utilities connected, factor this into your budgets.
- If you have pets, make sure the landlord or property manager is aware of that as not all landlords what pets in the home.

For more information about tenancy in New Zealand see: [tenancy.govt.nz](http://tenancy.govt.nz)





# TIPS FOR MOVING YOUR FAMILY

## Venture Taranaki’s Talent Advisor Sean Markham offers the following tips on bringing your family to Taranaki:

Wanting the best for your children or future family is often the reason behind moving to a new country, and you couldn’t find a better place to build a life. Taranaki is a region where your career, family, and lifestyle can flourish.

### HEALTHCARE

Taranaki Base Hospital is the main regional hospital in New Plymouth. It has new patient wards, and the rest of the facility underwent a major rebuild in 2022 to create a new renal ward, while a brand-new cancer care centre is expected to be complete in 2025.

There is a smaller South Taranaki hospital in Hāwera, plus a private hospital in New Plymouth for patients with medical insurance. The region is well serviced by general practitioners, dentists, midwives, and pharmacies. In larger centres there is access to after-hours healthcare services.

Families moving to the region will need to contact general practitioners in their area to enrol.

### RECREATION AND COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

There are a huge range of activities suitable for the whole family, Taranaki is known for its family-friendly beaches, spectacular gardens and outdoor walking trails, museums and galleries, and plenty of playgrounds, sports clubs and community groups to join.

- A great way to find out what’s available to do in your community is to contact your local district council, they manage local recreation facilities, libraries, parks and gardens: [southtaranaki.com](http://southtaranaki.com), [stratford.govt.nz](http://stratford.govt.nz), [npdc.govt.nz](http://npdc.govt.nz)

- Free community newspapers are delivered to letterboxes throughout the region and feature upcoming events. Alternatively the Taranaki Daily News is available in print and online.
- In New Plymouth, Live Magazine and Mood Magazine are free lifestyle magazines with stories and information about the community.
- Sport Taranaki list information about sports events and clubs in Taranaki; [sporttaranaki.org.nz](http://sporttaranaki.org.nz)



### FINDING A DAYCARE, PRECHOOLS AND SCHOOLS

There are more than 90 primary and secondary schools for children in Taranaki, and over 100 options for early-childhood education for children under five-years old, including playgroups and kindergartens.

- Options for daycare and preschools are varied and able to suit different needs, including traditional centre-based care, home-based care options where trained educators take small groups of children, and nanny or au pair services. Playcentre or Playgroups, where parents and children go along together, are a great way to meet other parents if you are new to Taranaki. Early childhood services have 20 hours free childcare for over 3-year olds. This is extending to over 2-year olds in 2024.
- Most New Plymouth primary schools have enrolment zones and children living in those zones get priority for school places. It’s important to work out which primary school you want your family to attend, before committing to long term accommodation.
- The size of primary schools varies from one-teacher schools to schools with over 400 pupils. Secondary school options include both single sex and co-ed schools. Both levels offer state and state-integrated schools, which tend to have links to churches.



# CONNECTING WITH THE COMMUNITY

A positive experience of moving to a new community is about the connections that you make. It can be difficult to know where to go to meet people and this section has some great advice about connecting with the community and making yourself at home. It talks about understanding the working culture, finding a home, and what to do and where to eat in the region.



# CHOOSING HAPPINESS

MAHA ALFAYYAD



**Keen to support her husband's desire to further his career and training in animal production, Maha was willing to move to New Zealand from Jordan with the pair's young son and give living in New Zealand a two-year trial. Little did she know, 13 years would pass, three more boys would be added to the family and they would all eventually call Taranaki home.**

"My husband discovered that experience was more important than a PhD and he was fortunate to keep getting opportunities to step up to new positions in the poultry industry," says Maha

While there were plenty of opportunities for Maha's husband to advance his career, she found her qualification wasn't recognised here and she would have to undertake further study to work as a lawyer in New Zealand.

"Initially I wasn't sure whether it would be worth the study if we were going to end up moving again. It was hard to make the transition from having a successful career to being a full-time housewife," she admits.

Maha's husband's first job in New Zealand saw the pair and their eldest son based in Matamata. They then moved to Tokoroa before finally settling in Taranaki nine years ago.

**"I like it that people accept different cultures and give back to the community, I feel I share the same values as many locals."**

"Taranaki is not too big and not too small. I like it that people accept different cultures and give back to the community. I feel I share the same values as many locals."

Like others new to a country, Maha took a practical approach to improving her English, making connections and improving her chances of work – joining groups, studying, attending Toastmasters, running small catering enterprises and working as a volunteer, but has found attitude is the key to feeling at home.

"I realised feeling at home was a choice and once I stopped feeling like I was betraying Jordan by enjoying New Zealand, I was free to feel at home here. Fitting in was all in my head."

She also found volunteering her time not only helped make connections and polish her English but made her feel good. Maha volunteers at Migrant Connections Taranaki and has also given her time to Victim Support and the Cancer Society.

"Giving makes you feel good and I want to contribute to make Taranaki a better place, not just for me and my kids but for everyone."

After a series of self-employment and entry-level jobs, Maha has turned her exploring mindset and emotional and cultural intelligence into a business coaching career.

"I studied for a diploma in management and business and a diploma of professional coaching and combined that with my interest in psychology and motivation to become a business coach."

Maha now has coaching clients in both New Zealand and Jordan where she helps people reach their potential, assists organisations to add diversity to their workforce – people are more than a list of skills on a CV – and helps them get the best out of their people.

Maha's coaching experience gives her a unique insight into the emotional and mental challenges of moving to a new culture. Her advice to new migrants is:

1. Be aware of your own emotions, values and what you want to be.
2. Work on belonging mentally to a place – what makes you feel like you belong and what is stopping you from feeling like you belong?
3. Ask for help – it's normal to find change hard.
4. As a migrant, you may have different experiences and values, but acceptance of differences and tolerances is helpful.

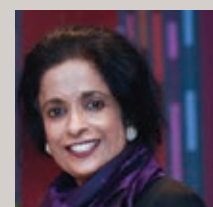


# SETTLING IN – TIPS FOR NEW ARRIVALS

Migrant Connections Taranaki (MCT) in New Plymouth is a point of contact for migrants and their families who choose to make Taranaki their home. MCT is a community-based initiative, that assists migrants to get accustomed to the shift in culture, overcome challenges in a new country and integrate into the local community.

Visit the Migrant Connections office for all information, or [migrantconnections.org.nz](http://migrantconnections.org.nz)  
For an appointment - Phone: 06 759 0828 Email: [mctnz@xtra.co.nz](mailto:mctnz@xtra.co.nz)

We asked Geetha Kutty, Manager at MCT, for her tips on settling in.



## SIGN UP

- Sport and hobbies are a good way to meet local people and get a taste of Kiwi culture.
- Consider voluntary work to meet people and be active in the community, [volunteeringnewplymouth.org.nz](http://volunteeringnewplymouth.org.nz)
- Join your local Toastmasters Club where you'll get the opportunity to practice speaking English, a lot! [toastmasters-clubfinder.org.nz](http://toastmasters-clubfinder.org.nz)
- Join Neighbourly to find out what's happening in your area and to meet your neighbours [neighbourly.co.nz](http://neighbourly.co.nz)
- For parents of young children, Plunket has courses and groups you can join to share information about parenting and meet other people with young families [plunket.org.nz](http://plunket.org.nz)
- If you have school age children get involved with school events.

## FIND SUPPORT GROUPS AND NETWORKS

- Go along to the Migrant Women's Meet at 11am-12.30pm, Puke Ariki every Tuesday to meet people in a similar situation. Phone 06-759 6060
- Migrant Connections Taranaki is a point of contact for TransNational for translating documents in 24 foreign languages. [transnational-ltd.co.nz](http://transnational-ltd.co.nz)
- English Language Partners offer a variety of courses for people who want to learn English – some courses are free, some are subsidised. 06-759 1118
- Take part in the 'Making yourself at home', radio programme at Access Radio Taranaki or listen to other people's stories, [accessradiotaranaki.com/shows/making-yourself-at-home](http://accessradiotaranaki.com/shows/making-yourself-at-home)
- For young professionals, the Taranaki Young Professionals is a great networking group [typ.co.nz](http://typ.co.nz)
- Local councils have helpful resources check out their websites, give them a call or drop into their offices.
- Get involved with the Taranaki Multi-ethnic Council, who run regular community events and festivals. Email: [multiethnictaranaki@gmail.com](mailto:multiethnictaranaki@gmail.com)



# NAVIGATING THE KIWI WORKING CULTURE

**One of the most common challenges for new arrivals is learning about workplace culture. We asked a group of migrants to share their experience and advice.**

Hungarian Mihaly Hazag came to New Plymouth from Budapest in December 2017 with his family: wife, Ildiko, and three children. Mihaly has built a career in the Information Technology industry. They settled in Taranaki after he found a job at TSB. The family have made many friends here and now have residency.

Venezuelans Ronelba and Rafael Moreno came to New Plymouth in September 2012 with their two boys. Both Ronelba and Rafael have over 20 years of experience in the energy sector, working as engineers. The family moved to New Zealand for job opportunities and love it here. Their kids are true kiwis, the family recently received New Zealand citizenship and are thrilled to be now Taranaki locals.

Natacha and Mark Dunn, and their children, left the UK in 2010 and moved to New Zealand, seeking a change in lifestyle. A job opportunity for Mark in the manufacturing sector led them to Taranaki and they haven't looked back. Natacha found a role with a local innovative manufacturing business, before moving into a role helping enterprises in the region grow. They enjoy the huge range of activities Taranaki has to offer.

## HOW DOES WORKING IN NZ DIFFER FROM OTHER COUNTRIES YOU HAVE WORKED IN?

The culture is non-deferential and accepting of entrepreneurial thinking, people who have worked in the UK or Australia will find some cultural similarities. New Zealand's regulatory structure makes it easy for small business to thrive and Taranaki's size makes business networking easy.

**Ronelba** – I love the entrepreneurship Kiwi mentality; everybody has or thinks about having a side hustle. Small Businesses support a significant percentage of the Kiwi economy, and they are supported by an impressive business ecosystem. Having the chance to have a business doing what you love is fantastic since not everybody is born to work for a company or be behind a desk all day; I wish I had that opportunity in my culture. Oh wait, I have that opportunity now!

**Natacha** – Working in NZ is a lot more informal and often offers a flatter structure which makes it easier to get involved and grow your skills.

## WHAT ARE NEW ZEALANDERS LIKE TO WORK WITH?

New Zealanders can take some time to get to know, especially outside of work. Once colleagues get to know your skills, they are likely to give you opportunities to showcase your skills.

**Mark** – I think it's easier to develop positive working relationships in smaller businesses rather than large corporates and luckily most companies are smaller. I'd recommend working in a New Zealand-owned company or Australian-owned company, as they tend to be a better fit with the workforce culture. Compared to working in the UK, you can move around a lot more instead of being stuck in one role.

**Natacha** – Kiwis are welcoming, forward-thinking and value entrepreneurship. If you're willing to give things a go, are passionate and don't take yourself too seriously then you'll fit right in.

## WHAT ABOUT NEW ZEALANDERS' FAMOUS LACK OF DIRECTNESS?

Compared to other workplace cultures, New Zealanders' communication style can come across as indirect.

**Mihaly** – If you are direct with people at the start they might switch off. Build a relationship first and you can have a franker discussion in the office.

## WHAT'S WORK-LIFE BALANCE LIKE?

For everyone in the group, work-life balance was the most attractive thing about being in Taranaki.

**Ronelba and Rafael** – Where we come from, there is no work-life balance. Adapting to the slower pace was challenging at the beginning, which opened the door to new experiences, such as learning about growing your veggie garden while studying organic horticulture at WITT Te Pūkenga and learning Te Reo Maori in Te Wananga Aotearoa, which has been amazing.

**Natacha** – We have really found the work-life balance we were looking for, both as professionals and as a family in Taranaki. You can enjoy a rewarding career as well as making the most of what's right on your doorstep from mountain to sea (via the amazing food scene) which makes for a fantastic lifestyle.

## AS A PERSON FROM ANOTHER CULTURE, HOW HAVE YOU BEEN TREATED?

Everyone felt that they had been made to feel welcome.

**Mihaly** – In the time I've been here nobody has said "why did you come here – go home?" Nobody's said learn this language properly. We got residency in August, and we went back to Hungary for a holiday in October. When we returned to NZ, at immigration in Auckland, the officer handed back our Hungarian passports with the visa in it and said "welcome home". My wife was in tears because it was so touching.

**Ronelba** – Coming from a politically unstable country (Venezuela), having the option to feel safe and have a quality of life for our family means a lot to us. We appreciate being here in New Zealand. Kiwis are welcoming and supportive, and settling in New Zealand was easy for us. We came for a fixed term, and we decided to stay. Our kids are Venezuelan-kiwis now, and we are thrilled we stayed.

## WHAT PREPARATION SHOULD SOMEONE DO BEFORE ARRIVING HERE?

Learn about the rights of workers in the workplace. There are laws to ensure that you get a fair deal.

For families of young children learn about options for daycare and if you are working full time, you will need to factor in the cost of after-school care and care during school holidays (2 weeks every quarter and 6 weeks over summer).

Open a bank account before leaving home, it will save you time.

Come with an open mind and be prepared to be flexible and open to new opportunities.

**Natacha** – Just have an open mind, be flexible and prepared to push yourself out of your comfort zone a little, and maybe get familiar with some Kiwi slang to impress the locals.

## TELL US A FUNNY STORY ABOUT SOMETHING THAT HAPPENED WHEN YOU WERE NEW TO NZ?

**Mark** – My issue was my accent. At my first job I gave what I thought was a great presentation about all the changes I wanted to make and got no reaction or response. I was shocked and wondered if I'd done something offensive. Later my colleagues said that nobody could understand me.



# WHAT TO DO

## A YOUNG PERSON'S GUIDE TO TARANAKI

Families looking to move cities or countries often worry about how their children will settle into a new place. We decided to go straight to the experts and have asked a few young people who have made the move to Taranaki with their families what they enjoy doing.

### OUT AND ABOUT IN NORTH TARANAKI

James and Luca Dunn were born in the United Kingdom and they moved to New Zealand in 2010 with French Mum, Natacha, and Welsh Dad, Mark. Both boys already consider themselves true locals. We asked them what they love best about living in Taranaki.

"If we put the boys in charge of making a promotional video about the region, it would focus on the region's recreation assets and feature Mount Taranaki, waterfalls, New Plymouth's iconic Pukekura Park and people out biking and walking," says mum Natacha.

Both boys are sports mad and suggest:

- Trying your hand at one of the region's many golf courses or a round of mini-putt at Hillsborough Museum, Mini Putt, and Luge
- Joining the New Plymouth surf rider's club
- Giving Ultimate Frisbee at Merrilands Domain a go

They also can't wait for the brand-new super playground and community space, 'Destination Play' that is coming soon to New Plymouth's Kāwaroa Park, right beside the sea.

True to their French heritage, James and Luca know where to find great food. They recommend:

- Indian restaurant Flame on New Plymouth's Devon Street
- Ms White's Pizza at the West End Precinct
- Petit Paris in the heart of New Plymouth for French pastries
- Gamma Rays at the Liardet Street Projects – for the best burger in New Zealand!

The boys love their schools and say they have made great friends. They point out that in New Zealand it's warm and relaxed enough to not have to wear shoes all the time.

They think that it would be amazing for their uncle and cousins to move here. We agree and maybe it's time your family joined them!





## EXPLORING SOUTH TARANAKI

Izzy and Alex Webb of Kapuni, near Hāwera, are keen explorers of South Taranaki and are eager to share their favourite things to see and do. Alex has a neuro-muscular condition that sometimes requires him to use a wheelchair, but this hasn't stopped the duo exploring the best of South Taranaki. Some of their favourites are:

- Hollard Gardens in Kaponga, which has many paths that can be explored, even when Alex needs his wheelchair. The playground and games shed is great, and there are even umbrellas for you to use if it rains.
- Ōpunake and Ohawe Beaches are great for a swim on a hot summer afternoon. For furry members of the family, Ohawe is dog-friendly too.
- King Edward Park in Hāwera is just beautiful and is flat for easy access. Izzy loves the playground.
- Eltham's Rotokare Reserve is a predator-free sanctuary teeming with native bird life.
- Outdoor movies in Eltham are popular, free and great family fun.
- Wilkies Pools, a ten-minute walk from the Dawsons Falls Visitors' Centre in Te Papakura o Taranaki (Egmont National Park), is wheelchair-accessible right up to the viewing platform at the pools.
- The Powerco Aquatic Centre in Hāwera is a hit with Izzy as well, even if the hydro-slide is a bit fast for her!

## LOTS TO DO IN STRATFORD

Teenager Aimee Hare moved to Stratford from Waimate in Mid-Canterbury with her family 10 years ago. While initially she was nervous about moving and making new friends she need not have worried as now you struggle to find her at home.

During winter she's busy playing age-group representative rugby for Taranaki and in summer she's out enjoying the different beaches dotted along the coast and walks on and around Mount Taranaki.

Aimee has one word to describe Taranaki – "fun".

"The scenery here is amazing – you must visit the mountain. The Wind Wand and Coastal Walkway are stunning too," she says.

For lazy hot summer days in Stratford, the beautiful Pātea River in the middle of town has swimming holes she loves, and the town's indoor aquatic centre is perfect for splashing with friends.

Aimee also likes riding motorbikes and she and Dad Andrew have found a great local motocross circuit. She can't wait for the new Stratford Park to be complete too, with exciting motorsports and event showgrounds.

**To find out more of the activities on offer around Taranaki see:**  
[taranaki.co.nz/visit](http://taranaki.co.nz/visit)



## WHERE TO EAT

Foodies will love Taranaki and its thriving cafe, bar and restaurant scene. No matter where you are in the region you are never too far away from a great dining experience.



**We asked local food and wine connoisseur Rachel Church to give us her thoughts on what she loves about the food scene in Taranaki.**

**Originally from Long Island New York, Rachel moved to**

**New Plymouth via stints in San Francisco and London with local partner Rodney Hosking. In 2013 they created Hosking House, providing boutique accommodation and began recommending our local restaurants, cafés and bars to their guests. Rachel's previous career in events, passion for our food scene and love of our region inspired her to create the local event "Festival" in 2018, a feast around Taranaki that takes place seasonally.**

**[festival.co.nz](http://festival.co.nz)**

### **WHAT ARE YOUR TOP TIPS FOR AFTER 5PM ENTERTAINMENT?**

**Mix it up: Re-think your favourite restaurants ...**

Instead of saving places for only special occasions, think of visiting them more regularly for drinks, platters, appetizers or even a date night dessert. What about drinks at the bar at Itch Wine Bar? Think platters on the patio at Table at The Nice Hotel or The Good Home ... appetizers and drinks overlooking the water at Salt, Arborio, Okurukuru, or Manou's, a dessert at Social Kitchen, The Hour Glass or Fork n Knife. Enjoy live music at places like Mike's Brewery or Peggy Gordon's

### **Try something new:**

We often stick to the same places, and lots of time order the same thing. Pick a new spot –have you tried the meatballs at Polpetta? Tacos at Frederic's? Flambe at the Orangery at The Plymouth International? Pizza at Black Sands or any of the amazing places in the Liardet Street Projects? If not, you're missing out.

### **WHAT ARE YOUR TOP TIPS FOR DAYTIME DINING/ SOCIALISING?**

#### **Celebrate the New Zealand café culture:**

Right around the mountain we have some amazing cafés – the Bach at Breakwater, Café Windsor in Inglewood, Festoon in Ōakura and Someday Café in Hāwera to name a few. Here in New Plymouth the choices are also amazing and plentiful: Elixir, Ozone, Public Catering Co, Emmalou, Chaos ... I could go on and on ...

#### **Gather a mix of friends and family for a long lunch:**

What about a Sunday session at Shining Peak, or in the courtyard at Ms White, Snug Lounge and Public Catering Co? A lazy long lunch on the weekend with friends at Monica's, Juliana's, Okurukuru or Arborio? Enjoy the coastal drive and experience at The Ōkato.

### **FAVOURITE COCKTAIL, WHAT IS IT AND WHERE WOULD YOU HAVE IT?**

**So many local options:** Juno Gin a goddess of gin, or a lovely glass of wine from Known Unknown are always a good option. I also enjoy a good Guinness at Peggy Gordon's, a rosé on the deck at Table, or a craft beer at Three Sisters Brewery, Mike's, or Shining Peak.





### HAS PORK BELLY HAD ITS DAY, WHAT'S NEXT?

The classics will always be in style. But next I think we'll continue to see the growth in popularity of international menus such as those from Laughing Buddha, Arranged Marriage, Sushi Ninja, India Today, Siam, Café Turkey, and Viet Nom Nom.

### WHAT ARE THE TRENDS IN DINING/ENTERTAINING?

**The experience:** Dining is not just the food on the plate but the entire experience, and restaurateurs are the leaders in creating the complete experience for their guests. The décor, well trained staff, the mood ... they have always been important but even more so now. Our local restaurants transport you and give you an experience that goes beyond the food. Most of them host events like wine and beer tastings, degustation's, and long lunches.

#### Food as nourishment:

People are becoming aware that good health and selfcare can start simply with the food we put in our bodies. We don't have to go full vegan to reap the benefits (but you can if you enjoy the beautiful Lemonwood Eatery in Ōkato or Wild Pear Kitchen in New Plymouth). Our cafés and restaurants feature a fabulous mix of healthy food, combined with flavour and enjoyment. Just think of places like Café Green Door!

### WHAT DO YOU SEE HAPPENING OVERSEAS THAT'S HAPPENING HERE?

#### Food provenance – knowing where your food comes from:

Knowing where your food comes from is a huge global movement. It's a basic interest that we've become desensitised to in our modern world and that people are coming back to. We see it here with local producers and purveyors like Roebuck Farms, Egmont Seafoods, Green Meadows Beef, Egmont Honey, Peihana Farm, Billow Bread, Baked by Blanche, Coastal Market Garden, Bratwurst Bros, Little Liberty Creamery, NZ Quinoa. More and more our local restaurants are buying local Taranaki ingredients and showcasing them on their menus. Think of Shining Peak, Meat & Liquor, Toret, and Table at the Nice Hotel.



### CONVERSELY WHAT'S UNIQUE TO NZ/TARANAKI DINING OUT/ENTERTAINING?

The fact that we have so many high-calibre establishments in our small region. Guests to our region are discovering that we are not just made up of the beauty of our mountain and sea, our amazing arts scene or lively events – but you dine extremely well in Taranaki too. This creates a true Lifestyle Capital!

### HOW DO YOU RATE THE QUALITY OF THE TARANAKI RESTAURANT AND CAFÉ SCENE?

**A+:** It's one of the main reasons we decided to live here, why guests to the region are blown away by our offerings, why I created Festival Taranaki and why we have an experience like the Tastes and Tales trails – events that celebrate Taranaki's food and beverage producers restaurants, bars and cafés. I am passionate about the food scene here and what our farmers, restaurateurs and café owners are creating!

### WHAT'S A GREAT TAKEAWAY OPTION?

Anything from the Liardet Street Projects, Arizona for midweek lunch at the office or on the coastal walkway, a kebab or salad from Café Turquoise, Sushi from Sushi Ninja or Takasago and a Chinese feast from Laughing Buddha are my top picks ... oh and classic fish & chips from Catch & Co at Port Taranaki.

### WHERE WOULD YOU RECOMMEND GOING ON A BUDGET?

We have a great pub culture – and they serve great food at great prices. Check out the dining room at Peggy Gordon's Celtic Bistro, or further afield at the Midhurst and Toko pubs! Specials are also a great way to dine on a budget – tacos Tuesdays at KahaKai Poke Bowl are a hit.

### CAN YOU THINK OF A GREAT DINING OUT EXPERIENCE SOMEWHERE AROUND THE MOUNTAIN THAT PEOPLE MAY NOT KNOW ABOUT?

Someday Café in Hāwera, run by the stylish and talented Tricia Tasker. Modern, warm atmosphere, great coffee and fabulous food. A hidden gem that also opens occasionally for dinner – be in the know to find out when!

Or around the coast at Toret Cucina, Black Sands, The Ōkato or The Vault.

# USEFUL RESOURCES

Web resources change all the time, but here's a list of some useful resources.

## GENERAL TARANAKI INFORMATION

To find out about visitor information, local events, business development support, and statistics about Taranaki visit: [taranaki.co.nz](http://taranaki.co.nz).

This site is regularly updated with tools and tips for living and working in the region.

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT

There are three district councils in Taranaki and a regional council. District councils are responsible for rubbish collection, water reticulation, local roading, animal control, public libraries, parks and open spaces and community events.

The regional council is primarily concerned with environmental management. Local councils are great sources of information about what's happening in their local area.

South Taranaki District covers Hāwera, Eltham, Pātea, Ōpunake and the surrounding farm areas. [southtaranaki.com](http://southtaranaki.com)

Stratford District covers Stratford and the surrounding farming districts – [stratford.govt.nz](http://stratford.govt.nz)

New Plymouth District covers New Plymouth, Inglewood, Waitara, Ōakura, Ōkato and the surrounding farm areas and villages – [npdc.govt.nz](http://npdc.govt.nz)

Taranaki Regional Council – [trc.govt.nz](http://trc.govt.nz)

## SUPPORT FOR MOVING TO NEW ZEALAND

Immigration New Zealand has some great online resources. They include checklists for pre-departure, and links to immigration assistance.

[live-work.immigration.govt.nz/move-to-new-zealand/visas-for-new-zealand](http://live-work.immigration.govt.nz/move-to-new-zealand/visas-for-new-zealand)

## BANKING AND FINANCE

Almost all banks in New Zealand offer the option to open a bank account in your home country prior to moving here. This is recommended. The New Zealand Now site has excellent material on the tax system: [live-work.immigration.govt.nz/live-in-new-zealand/money-tax](http://live-work.immigration.govt.nz/live-in-new-zealand/money-tax)

## CHOOSING A SCHOOL

Education Counts is an excellent resource for learning about New Zealand's education system. It includes tips for choosing a school or early childhood centre. [educationcounts.govt.nz](http://educationcounts.govt.nz)

There are also Taranaki kindergarten and Playcentre websites.

In Taranaki a range of state and religious school options are available.

## FINDING A HOME

Most real estate companies can help with finding rental properties and purchasing a home. Websites such as [realestate.co.nz](http://realestate.co.nz) and Trade Me have extensive listings for real estate agents across Taranaki. Local newspapers will also have listings.

## GETTING AROUND

We drive on the left-hand side of the road. Car dealers import good quality near-new cars, so purchasing a car when you arrive can be a really good option.

There are regional bus transport networks and city transport in New Plymouth. [trc.govt.nz/buses](http://trc.govt.nz/buses)

New Plymouth Airport has direct connections to Auckland, Wellington, and Christchurch.



*Len Lye Centre, New Plymouth*



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