

Catchment description

The Taumarunui catchment is in the northern part of the Ruapehu District. The catchment comprises the township of Taumarunui and smaller settlements in the surrounding rural area. Taumarunui lies at the confluence of the Whanganui and Ongarue Rivers and is the largest town in the District, with a population of 4,700. The area is a border between a number of iwi including Whanganui, Ngāti Maniapoto, Ngāti Hāua and Ngāti Tūwharetoa.

Across the Ruapehu District, Census 2018 data shows population growth of 3.9% since 2013, an additional 465 residents. This is in stark contrast to the decrease of 1,728 residents (-12.7%) between the 2006 and 2013 Census. Within Taumarunui itself, between 2013 and 2018 there were fewer 0 – 14 year olds, yet growth in the number of people aged 15 years and over.

Taumarunui is the main service centre for the surrounding sheep, cattle and deer farms, and forestry plantations. Social indicators identify it as a low socio-economic and deprived area, and it was one of the pilot communities to be part of the Social Sector Trials initiative. A recent government investment in the town aims to improve housing conditions and wraparound social services to help whānau into home ownership. There has also been an increased emphasis on tourism in the surrounding area including Forgotten Highway Adventures, Rail Trail and Tongariro National Park.

What's influencing the education system in this catchment:



Changing population profile

- Current Statistics NZ population projections forecast long-term population decline out to 2043, with significantly fewer school-aged children in the Taumarunui catchment by this time. Assuming that current demographic trends continue, we are planning education provision in this catchment to reflect this. Changing population profiles makes it difficult to forecast how the population will change in the future. We will continue to monitor local school rolls and population change in the catchment.



Recent roll growth funding

- Four of the seven schools across the catchment have recently received funding for additional roll growth teaching spaces. While some of these classrooms have been constructed, site assessment and delivery options are being considered for the remaining schools to ensure the use of space on the site is optimised.



Leadership and governance

- School leadership and governance is reasonably stable across this catchment. Recruitment of leadership and teaching staff is an ongoing challenge for boards and school leaders with a very high frequency of first-time principals. While the Kāhui Ako does not include all schools within the catchment, the early childhood sector is strongly engaged and the Kāhui Ako is engaging now with the four iwi, supported by Ministry staff.



Investment in school property

- Some Taumarunui schools are experiencing falling rolls resulting in the need to maintain surplus building stock with less maintenance funding. Some of the rural primary schools have small rolls and ageing building stock.
- A significant long term property plan is currently being developed at Taumarunui High School to address a set of building condition, functionality, and scale issues. The rationalisation of existing infrastructure and providing inviting learning environments are the key drivers for what is anticipated to be a significant investment at this school over the coming ten years.



Māori learners/ākonga

- Census 2018 data shows that the proportion of tamariki aged between 0 – 14 years that identify as Māori is 74%. In 2021, there were 76 ākonga engaged in Māori medium immersion education. One school is transitioning from an English medium school to a Māori medium kura. While there is no formal pathway to wharekura from kura, both kura are seeking to retain their secondary students. There are strong hapū relationships with the kura, and leadership and governance has improved recently.



Historical schooling review

- Engagement with the community in 2015 about opportunities for potential changes to the schooling network did not result in a clear long-term education plan, largely due to minimal appetite for collective and collaborative community exploration. Two schools have since closed voluntarily and were supported through the process by Ministry staff.



Secondary-tertiary pathways

- Taumarunui High School runs a successful Trades Academy offering 70 places to students seeking Tertiary Trades qualifications in building, farming, hairdressing, hospitality, and tourism. In 2013, 53% of Trades Academy students were transitioning into other training. In 2019, this had increased to 82%.
- A number of tertiary training opportunities are brokered into the Taumarunui area by Te Awanui a Rua Charitable Trust and currently a select number of programmes are available from UCOL, Te Wānanga o Aotearoa, Toi Ohomai, and Land Based Training. The Ruapehu Skills and Talent Working Group is also proactively working to connect up local employment opportunities, particularly in growth sectors, with schools and other education providers.



Learning Support

- Significant learning and behavioural support services are located in Taumarunui. Taumarunui Primary and Taumarunui High School both provide additional learning support to students with high needs. A marae-based Early Intervention programme has been successful in providing support for children with additional needs, and their whānau.

Here's what is already underway to help us manage education provision in this catchment:



- We're discussing enrolment schemes with local schools as necessary, to better manage roll growth and reduce the risk of overcrowding.



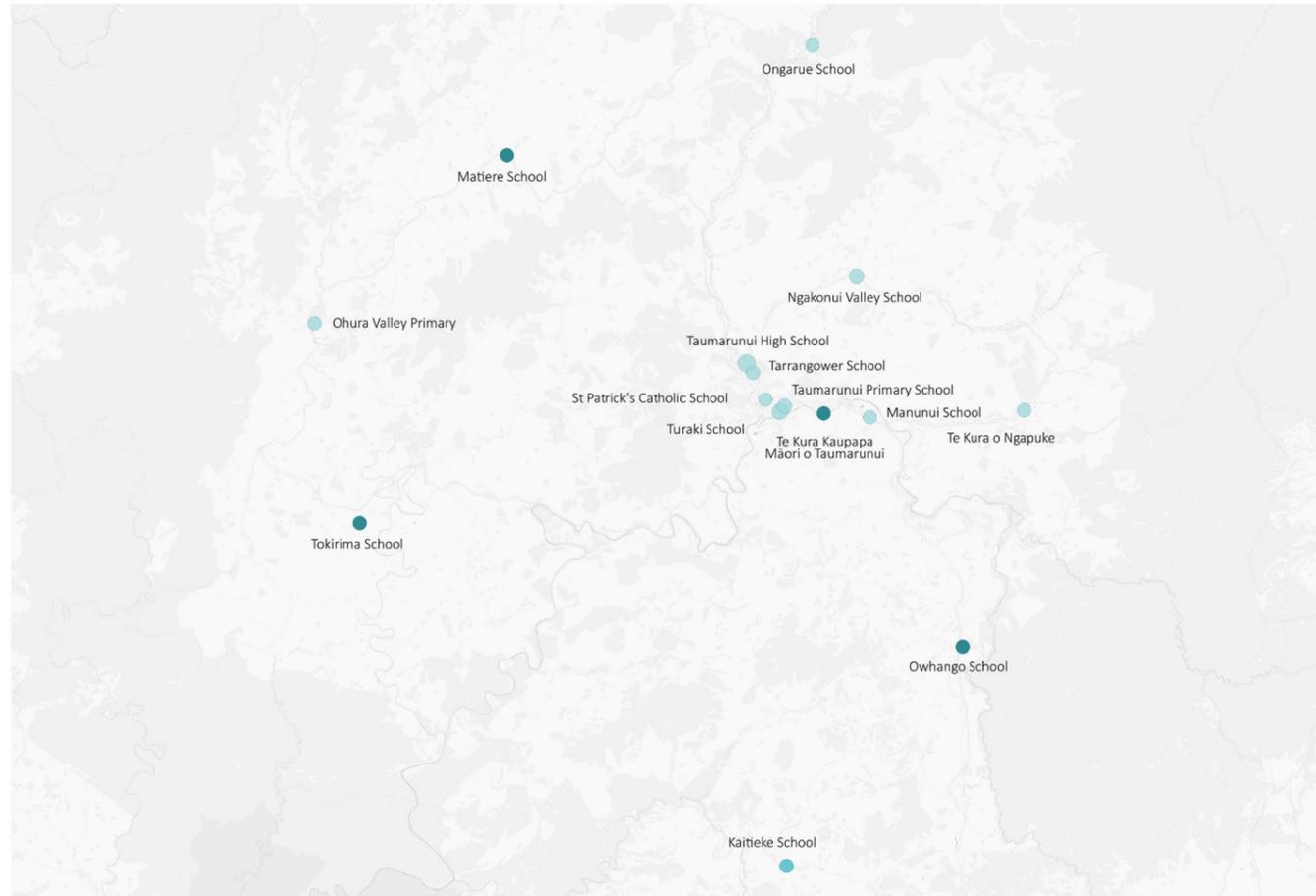
- Taumarunui has well-established early childhood sector, which has a strong English medium voice in the Kāhui Ako with a well-supported transition into school.
- New kōhanga reo to be built on Taumarunui Primary School (\$1.5M).



- A review of school transport provision is currently underway. It is anticipated that changes will be made to provide more efficient and targeted services to enable children to access their closest school. As part of this process, we will consider the impact of transport review on future enrolment schemes, school rolls, and consequent impact on investment decision making. The location of the bus route interchange in town is also being considered. This is significant as a large number of students travel via bus past their nearest school. Overall, there are high levels of student movement within the community, from school to school.



- This Kāhui Ako has recently been allocated one Learning Support Coordinator as part of the first tranche of appointments.



The **Taumarunui Catchment Plan** will meet the needs of New Zealand’s changing schooling network, benefiting an estimated **1,200 learners/ākonga** each year over the next decade to 2030. There are 15 schools/kura in this catchment.

July 2021	Primary	Composite	Secondary	Specialist	Total
Number of schools	14	0	1	0	15
Total funded roll	910	0	298	0	1,208
MME Level 1 & 2	67	0	9	0	76
ORS-funded roll	20	0	9	0	29
Māori roll	609	0	206	0	815
Pacific roll	1	0	1	0	2

Map key:

% roll change over 10-year period

- Opened in last 10 years
- High growth
- Moderate growth
- Low growth
- Stable/decline

Note: Roll growth at schools indicated on this map is based on a percentage change in roll numbers over a 10-year period, and may indicate higher (or lower) roll growth than absolute numbers suggest.

Potential responses to shaping a stronger education system across the Taumarunui catchment:



Wider network review

- Consider the structure of education provision in the catchment and support the community to lead the conversation about potential change, with the aim to inform future decision making about investment across the catchment and providing the community with clarity about long-term planning.



Redevelopment

- The planned investment in Taumarunui High School provides an opportunity for broader and future-focussed discussion with the community about what education could look like, ensuring equitable access to education for all learners/ākonga in Taumarunui.
- We will consider how transitional support and vocational training could be provided or enabled through the redevelopment, building on the strength of the existing Trades Academy.
- We will consider how the provision of learning support space can best be provided.

- We will consider the implications on the High School of strengthening the Māori medium pathway in the catchment, including the opportunity to do this as a community collective response.



Strengthening the Māori medium pathway

- We are developing a regional plan for Māori medium education provision in the Waikato. The goal is to provide for a connected pathway across the rohe for all ākonga.
- Engagement with iwi, communities, whānau and the education sector will inform the demand and opportunities for expanding provision of immersion pathways, and the associated property implications.



Relationships with external agencies

- We will continue to maintain and strengthen relationships with iwi, Council, tertiary sector, employers, early childhood education providers and other government agencies to align our work in Taumarunui.



Educational support mechanisms

- We will continue to assist schools through a collective lens to strengthen governance, leadership and teaching capability, to improve opportunities, engagement and student outcomes.