

## 4. The Community: Past, Present and Future

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The Ohariu Valley area is an area of some significance for Maori, and one rich in stories. The area was important both for settlement and as a transportation route between the South Island and within the Wellington area and beyond. The strategic importance of the coastline and the visibility from certain lookout points were of key importance for the safe and efficient movement of groups and individuals.

The main ambition of the early European settlers was to farm their land, but they first had to clear it of dense forest. This led to extensive sawmilling operations in Ohariu and for many years the pioneers earned their living from the sale of logs, sawn timber, and firewood. In 1916 the first dairy was established, and soon a number of farmers began delivering their own milk in to Wellington. Over time, sheep farming also assumed importance in Ohariu Valley.

Farming is still an integral part of the Ohariu Valley, and in a sense dominates the landscape with its open, pastoral hill country.

Census data helps in building a demographic picture of the present resident community of Ohariu Valley. Whilst the community is not particularly diverse demographically speaking, there is diversity in the range of values and life experiences. There is also wide occupational diversity – traditional farming is still carried out in Ohariu Valley, whilst a number of residents work outside the valley.

This plan, by encouraging sustainable management of the resources of Ohariu Valley, will help to ensure that future communities living in the area will be able to enjoy the key qualities that the present community appreciates.

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