

4. The Community: Past, Present and Future

The Makara area has a long and rich history of pre-European Maori associations, both for settlement and as an important 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 area is on the old greenstone route and its coastal features still have significance for their navigational role from off shore.

The areas of Maori settlement, food gathering and burial sites are very similar to those eventually chosen by the European settlers.

Widespread clearance of vegetation and the establishment of sheep and dairy farming set the scene for the subsequent years of European settlement. For a long time, the Makara area supplied Wellington with all of its milk requirements. Gold mining, strategic military development and the establishment of the radio station on Quartz Hill feature in the history of the area.

Census data helps in building a demographic picture of the present resident community of Makara. 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 – some farming activities are still carried out in Makara, whilst a number of residents have other professions requiring them to work in Wellington City or elsewhere.

Makara's natural and cultural environment has been integral to the way in which each generation has viewed themselves and functioned as a community. The present generation clearly appreciates the degree to which much of the Makara area remains 'open' and free of 'development', a distinctly rural area which provides a marked contrast to the city over the hill.

It is hoped that this plan, by encouraging community involvement in the sustainable management of the resources of Makara, will help to ensure that future communities will be able to enjoy and value the environment provided by Makara as much as present residents do.
