

# Helensville ★★★★★

West

including Parakai, Kaukapakapa and South Head



Set in the rolling rural heartland of the Kaipara Harbour, Helensville is now catching the eye of canny lifestyle block lovers and gentleman farmers that can't afford Kumeu and Huapai. Long considered conservative and isolated, the town used to suffer from bypass status, but the growing number of city dwellers that are seeking the simple pleasures of the country are changing all that. Despite its aquatic park, Parakai has always been the poor cousin of more salubrious Helensville, but that appears to be changing somewhat, with a smart new subdivision and a new block of shops. The general area has become very popular with Aucklanders in recent years; it's definitely away from town and can provide your family with a small-town lifestyle, but is still (just) within commuting distance. Kaukapakapa is still rural and its township serves the needs of a large agrarian community.



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For colour key, see page 230

## Population Profile

Population	8,214
% Aged Under 15 Years	23.78
% Aged Over 65 Years	9.75
% European	73.78
% Maori	14.24
% Pacific Peoples	3.54
% Asian	1.90

## Who Lives There?

Lifestylers, artists, self-confessed eccentrics, families and elderly people come together happily in a community that expresses the best of what small-town New Zealand is all about. The children of born-and-bred locals generally stay and raise their own families.

Immigrants are arriving too, especially to South Head with its attractive land prices. Newcomers to Helensville and Parakai, from West Auckland and the North Shore, will happily get into their cars (or onto the train) for the commute to Auckland, when not long ago they'd balk at urban motorways and traffic lights. Such

is the attraction these days of a home in the countryside.

### Typical Homes

Helensville is best known for its villas whether they're in-town originals or relocated villas from Auckland's inner city suburbs. Auckland buyers widen their eyes in delight at the modest price tags, considering what a similar home might cost in Mt Eden or Devonport.

Other homes include weatherboard houses of all shapes, sizes, styles and conditions. There are smart brick-and-tile houses in Amberly Heights close to Kaipara College.

Parakai's older housing stock includes basic family homes on typical quarter acre sections. The new brick-and-tile homes in the River Valley estate behind Palm Springs pools are bringing a modern look to the township.

South Head is largely lifestyle blocks. Kaukapakapa is a mix of lifestyle blocks and large farms.

### Amenities

#### Schools ★★

There are at least seven primary schools in the neighbourhood, and like many other semirural parts of Auckland the majority include intermediate years. Helensville Primary School is one of the largest with a roll close to 400. Kaipara College is the local secondary school. Relatively small by Auckland standards, but according to a recent ERO report, that size contributes to providing a supportive learning environment. The report also indicates high quality teaching and above average NCEA qualifications. For a full list, see page 270.

#### Shops ★★

The arrival of a Countdown supermarket several years ago is credited with revitalizing the shopping centre and the town itself. As well as the usual furnishing, gifts, craft, appliance and chemist shops, there are a number of antique and collectables shops including the Global Village and River Cottage. Parakai's shops include a grocery store.

#### Leisure ★★★

Parakai is famous for its thermal pool complexes. Development plans are afoot for Aquatic Park to create a camping/caravan park, a hotel and a therapeutic spa. Woodhill Forest has trails for motorbikes, mountain bikes and horses. It's popular for orienteering and tramping. Helensville is the home of the Pioneer Museum. Boating is popular along the Kaipara River. The Helensville Showgrounds hosts an annual A&P show. Helensville Historic Society's held its first Heritage Day last November and intends it to be an annual event.

The area's numerous eateries include the Ginger Crunch Café at Helensville railway station and Porcini's Café & Gourmet. Kaukapakapa has its own hotel and restaurant. There's Black Pete's Bar & Grill in Parakai, the Shelly Beach Store and the MacNut macadamia farm at South Head.

Remote South Head is home to the new 247ha South Kaipara Head Regional park next to Lake Ototoa with a beautiful swimming beach. For golfers, there's the charming Helensville Golf Club and South Head Golf Club which has impressive views of the Kaipara harbour – try and keep to the fairways though, the Kaipara Harbour is a popular breeding ground for great white sharks.

### Real Estate

#### Trends

Demand is strong throughout the region, often exceeding the number of listings.

People are discovering the benefits of living in Helensville; and its vicinity; they're realizing it's not quite the remote outpost they thought it was. Only 30-40 minutes to the CBD and the same to Orewa and its beautiful beaches.

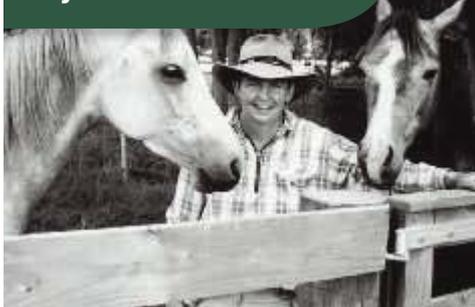
Investors, retirees and first-time buyers are all attracted to the area. Professional, Grey Lynntypes wanting a villa in the country are snapping up the railway cottages for renovation. Renovated villas sell from \$400,000 to \$550,000. The high \$200,000s to \$350,000 will buy a two-bedroom cottage or a unit. A lovely villa that

sold for \$1,300,000 in 2008 still holds the record price tag here. Parakai's new Chic Gardens estate offers three and four-bedroom brick-and-tile double-garaged homes for \$350,000+. Parakai's retail development is now complete with six new shops and six apartments above, adding a smart element to the township.

## Best Streets

Rimmer Rd in Helensville for its lifestyle blocks; Garfield St in town for its quaint villas. Fordyce Rd in Parakai.

## Why I Live There



## Entertainer Jools Topp

Jools Topp is one half of the hilarious Topp Twins. While twin sister Lynda is something of a townie, Jools is anything but. "I never have been and I never will." Jools' patch is 6.8ha of rolling pasture on the outskirts of Helensville which is also home to her horses, cows, chooks, dogs and cats. It's close enough to Auckland for her gigs and the airport is just over an hour away. "It can take that long to get from Ponsonby to Newmarket!"

She loves Helensville for its sense of openness and the riverside location. She doesn't worry about the possibility of some day waking up to acres of brick-and-tile sprawl. "You can't stop progress, but I think Helensville will still be a small town with all its old charm for a long time yet. Most people living here have realised that there's sense in slowing down a bit. They're getting away from the idea that life is only about rushing around making money."

## At a Glance...

### House Prices

#### Helensville

##### Cottage

Bedrooms   
Price \$400,000 - \$520,000

##### Villa do-up

Bedrooms   
Price \$450,000 - \$560,000

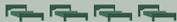
##### Renovated

Price \$650,000 - \$800,000

##### On lifestyle block

Price \$900,000 - \$1,200,000

##### New house

Bedrooms   
Price \$675,000 - \$800,000

#### Parakai

##### Basic house

Bedrooms   
Price \$340,000 - \$450,000

Bedrooms   
Price \$450,000 - \$600,000

### Average Rents

#### Cottage

Bedrooms   
Price \$320/wk

#### House

Bedrooms   
Price \$400/wk

Bedrooms   
Price \$500/wk

### Travel Times

From Helensville:	
CBD	peak 45 min off-peak 30 min
Parakai	5 min
Kumeu/Huapai	12 min
Muriwai	20min
Helensville to Britomart train	90 mins