

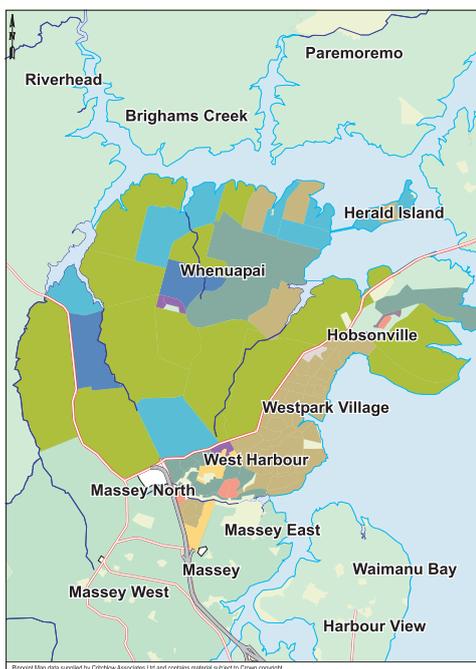
## West Harbour/Hobsonville ★★★★★

*West*

including Whenuapai and Herald Island



With West Harbour's marina and elegant homes as focal points, plentiful sea views, and the countryside still close at hand, it's no wonder this area has become so popular with homebuyers. And with the ambitious development of the 400 hectares of land in Hobsonville (the site of the former Air Force base) in the next few years, it's about to become popular with a whole lot more! Whenuapai is one of Auckland's best kept secrets. It has lovely old and new homes on large properties, often hidden away behind mature trees and acres of lawn. Herald Island was once the preserve of hippies; today the rustic shacks have given way to contemporary luxurious homes and there are more BMWs driving over the causeway than Combi vans. The island may be practically on the mainland, but it retains the feel of an off-the-beaten-track community.



For colour key, see page 230

### Population Profile

Population	17,091
% Aged Under 15 Years	24.19
% Aged Over 65 Years	7.14
% European	60.08
% Maori	10.29
% Pacific Peoples	8.37
% Asian	15.52

### Who Lives There?

This is lifestyle territory and the suburbia of the upwardly mobile. Buyers upgrade from other parts of Auckland, particularly from other less affluent western suburbs. They'll come with their water toys, mountain bikes and horse riding gear to enjoy the wealth of recreational treats on offer.

Boaties love it naturally, with the good water access and West Harbour marina. It's popular with young families although the lack of a local secondary school dulls the attraction for those with teenage kids.

The suburbs are a healthy mix of ages and ethnicities. Asian buyers like the modern

low-maintenance homes and retired rural landowners like the culture shock buffer it gives compared to inner city living.

### Typical Homes

There's a great contrast between the duplex dwellings and wire fences that define housing once owned by the air force and the elegant brick-and-tile executive residences of West Harbour's finest enclaves.

Just a stone's throw from old airbase land, Scott Road has some stunning water's-edge properties. Whenuapai has hidden million dollar homes with views across the upper reaches of the Waitemata Harbour.

The traditional Kiwi baches of Herald Island have rapidly made way for new houses. For an area only developed comparatively recently, West Harbour has already become noted for its stylish and lovingly-tended homes and gardens.

## Amenities

### Schools ★★

Schooling is one of the biggest issues here – there's no local secondary school. Ex-airforce land has been purchased for a state secondary, is due to open in 2014. In the meantime, older children can choose to go west by bus to secondary schools in Te

Atatu and Henderson as well as the private Sunderland Primary School and College in Waitakere City. Or they can go north to schools in Takapuna and Kristin School in Albany. Younger children are well catered for with at least five well-respected primary schools. For a full list, see page 270.

### Shops ★★

Westgate is the retail centre of choice. Local shops in Hobsonville and West Harbour cater for every service from veterinary, beauty therapy, flowers or takeaways. Whenuapai has its local shops, including a butchery, a dairy and a grocery store.

At the 600-berth Westpark marina, a full range of marine-related services include engineering, boat building and painting, chandlery and sail making.

### Leisure ★★★★★

Stroll through Westpark Marina for boating eye-candy or take the coastal walkway from the marina and enjoy the beautiful water views. Throughout West Harbour there are playgrounds and green restful spaces, including the Luckens Reserve that meanders down to the water opposite the Mariner View School.

At the Hobsonville end of Upper Harbour Dr, there's a vintage car display at the Monterey Park Motor Museum. Sports facilities include



the Hobsonville Bowling Club and the Belvedere Tennis Club. There is a good choice of restaurants and cafés in the area.

## Real Estate

### Trends

The opening of the motorway extension (and the 10 minute commute to Albany) has brought new buyers from the North Shore into West Harbour and encouraged locals here to look at Albany and Greenhithe as alternatives. A recent luxury house with great sea views sold for \$2.23million but that was unusual; normally you can spend \$800,000 for a near-new house and get a sea view.

Don't expect to get a quality home in the upmarket end of West Harbour for under \$600,000. Homes at the North-Western motorway end start from \$300,000s. Herald Island's properties range from \$400,000 inland to \$1million plus on the water. The old Hobsonville airbase is earmarked for up to 3000 new homes. Industry is meant to at least partially support the new community in the form of a cluster of boatbuilding interests, with Waitakere City Council (which is spearheading this part of the plan) estimating between 1200 and 1800 new jobs.

### Best Streets

Courtneys, Seacrest Drive and Mansion Court in West Harbour shine. Hobsonville has its Scott Road, and Whenuapai boasts Pohutukawa Road and Totara Road.

## Smart Buy

Good value for money, plentiful recreational pursuits (even it that only means wine-tasting or bulk retail shopping), harbour views and attractive new houses. With the Hobsonville Point development, expressways and secondary schools in the offing, this has to be a go-ahead area.

### At a Glance...

#### House Prices

##### Basic entry level house

Bedrooms   
Price \$600,000 - \$700,000

##### Away from motorway

Price \$700,000 - \$850,000

##### Newer house

Bedrooms   
Price \$850,000 - \$1,000,000

##### Executive-style house with sea views

Bedrooms   
Price \$1,200,000 - \$1,800,000

##### Lifestyle block with older house

Price \$1,500,000+

##### Lifestyle block on the water with new house

Price \$2,500,000 - \$4,000,000

#### Average Rents

##### House

Bedrooms   
Price \$390/wk  
Bedrooms   
Price \$460/wk  
Bedrooms   
Price \$600/wk

#### Travel Times

From West Harbour:

CBD peak 60+ min  
off peak 25 min

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Takapuna 30 min

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Westgate/north-western motorway 5 min

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Glenfield Mall 20 min

Commuters have a choice of three routes to Auckland city – via the North Shore, down the north-western motorway, or on the new commuter ferry service. Buses run to the city, New Lynn and Takapuna. The second Greenhithe bridge is now finished and locals look with anticipation towards the proposed Upper Harbour Expressway, linking Albany to Westgate.



In 1924 the government-of-the-day chose Hobsonville, in north-west Auckland, to be the hub of the Royal New Zealand Air Force's operations. It was an error of judgment.

Within 10 years it became painfully apparent that the runway was simply too short to accommodate the aircraft of the future. The cost to extend the site was prohibitive, so Whenuapai became the favoured aviation option while Hobsonville evolved into a base for sea planes, and a more humble repair and equipment facility.

By 2001 the NZ Defence Force had started to relocate all of its operations elsewhere and people started asking, "What on earth's going to happen to Hobsonville?"

Auckland's burgeoning population meant that utilising the site for residential housing was always a reasonably predictable outcome. What wasn't expected was the scale and vision of the project planned under the direction of Hobsonville Land Company, a wholly owned subsidiary of Housing New Zealand.

You see the new Hobsonville isn't just about housing people, it's about creating something unique in New Zealand; a sustainable urban development and a community for people from all sectors of society.

Sure, there are houses – lots of them – but rather than manufacture a development aimed at a particular social group (and the parochial attitudes that that can encourage), Hobsonville has been deliberately planned to provide a mix of housing and ownership options appealing to a variety of people and encouraging diversity and interaction. Of the 3,000 homes, 85% will be privately owned; the other 15% will be managed by Housing New Zealand. The privately owned homes will also be varied and include 500 "affordable" homes.

Getting people to genuinely feel part of a community requires them to interact and develop a sense of belonging; in life, leisure, work and education. That's why the master plan includes schools, shops, transport, recreation and employment facilities; all fitting sensitively within the natural cliff top and foreshore landscape. The project has clear and firm directives concerning environmental, economic, social and cultural issues. Sustainability is not negotiable, it's mandatory.

This is a benchmark undertaking for New Zealand and it will take 10-15 years to complete in its entirety. First impressions suggest it is something worth waiting for.

[www.hobsonvillepoint.co.nz](http://www.hobsonvillepoint.co.nz)