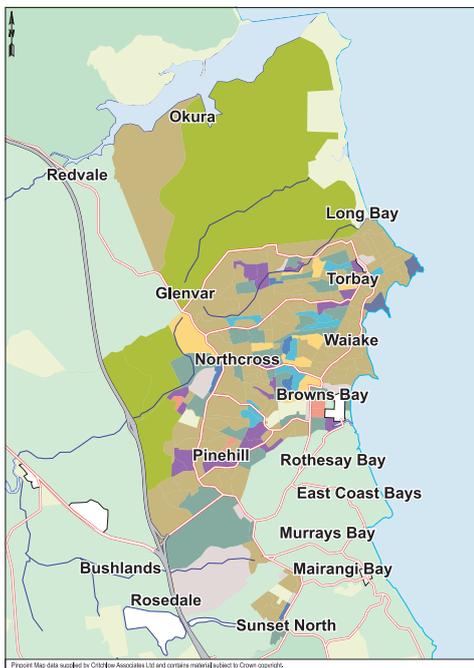


including Browns Bay, Waiake, Torbay, Pinehill, Long Bay, Northcross and Okura



Rural countryside still surrounds the beautiful northern East Coast Bays, although with development gathering pace from all directions, this might not be the case for much longer. What will remain is the coastal scenery and lifestyle. Beach after white sand beach, headland after picturesque craggy headland, pohutukawa after blooming pohutukawa... This is a family-oriented area; often those who grew up here will return when they become parents themselves, because of the unbeatable lifestyle and surroundings. The schools are highly regarded and house prices are reasonable because it's a longer commute to the CBD. Okura is probably best known for the huge and peaceful bush reserve of the same name: that's on the northern bank of the Okura River, while on the southern bank there are luxury lifestyle properties tucked in amongst rolling hills and native bush.



For colour key, see page 230

**Population Profile**

Population	33,660
% Aged Under 15 Years	20.44
% Aged Over 65 Years	12.14
% European	72.39
% Maori	3.89
% Pacific Peoples	1.41
% Asian	15.36

**Who Lives There?**

A couple of local events say it all: in March, there's the African street festival dubbed From Cairo to Cape Town and the Best of British Day is held in June. South Africans and Brits happily decamp here from their home countries for the schooling, the kinship and holiday-style living.

There's a wide cross-section of ages – including retirees attracted to the area – but it's a strong young family area (as evidenced by the budding gymnasts who whirl about the boat-shaped playground by the beach). Those concerned about schooling will settle for any style of house in the desired zone. Browns Bay rivals Albany as the second-most significant town centre in

North Shore (Takapuna being the undisputed top dog) and appeals to those working in the Albany basin.

### Typical Homes

Sea views are the big focus of all the homes built anywhere along the bays. The large numbers of 1970s architecturally-designed family homes give the area a sense of individuality that is lacking in some parts of Torbay/Glenvar, where streets were defined by the housing development company of the day. Pinehill has big new homes popular with Asian buyers.

Browns Bay's village now includes several apartment developments that have brought 300 more permanent residents into the thriving retail centre. At the other extreme are the lifestyle blocks of Okura at the northern edge of the area for those preferring wide, open spaces.

### Amenities

#### Schools ★★★★★

The predominantly decile 10 neighbourhood is well served with at least six primary schools. Northcross Intermediate is the main intermediate for the northern bays.

The local high school, Long Bay College is nationally known for its creative arts and technology teaching. It's much smaller than the huge Rangitoto College further down the bays, but that appeals to many parents keen for their children to get what they see as more personalised schooling. Some homes at the southern end of the upper bays are in-zone for

Rangitoto College, but it pays to check with the school for the latest boundary changes. Local private schools include Corelli School in Browns Bay which specialises in the arts, including music, dance and drama. For a full list, see page 270.

#### Shops ★★★

Browns Bay's shopping village is the retail hub of the East Coast Bays. With the beach just 100m away, it's a casual beachside shopping strip that has everything – and everyone – covered, whether you're a tweenager, a surfer beach bum or a lady who lunches. There are two supermarkets, Whitcoulls, Farmers, banks, boutique shops and cafés. On Sundays, there's a market. Nostalgic Brits mill around Brampton's British store buying Walker's Crisps and Vimto (an English purple fruit drink) in bulk.

Torbay has a small shopping centre and several restaurants and takeaway bars. For Okura and Long Bay residents, the nearest shops are Torbay, Albany and Northcross. From Browns Bay, Albany is only a quick drive along Oteha Valley Rd.

#### Leisure ★★★★★

All the beaches are beauties, but Waiake Beach is the best. Its 1ha beachfront reserve has an impressive block of Phoenix palms and Norfolk Island pines, as well as being home to Torbay Sailing Club.

The popular Long Bay Regional Park has a 1km long golden beach, with a restaurant and playground and is within the Long Bay-Okura Marine Reserve. The Browns Bay beach has a



reserve, playground and well-patronised boat club. A service lane between the shops is being smartened up with a pedestrian boardwalk, and there's a new park between the shops and the sea.

Tides at Torbay is a popular local restaurant. Browns Bay has a great selection of eateries including Sp'getti and Speakers Corner Ale House. Long Bay beach restaurant has simple, honest food in a beachside setting

## Real Estate

### Trends

For many years the Upper Bays lacked the lustrous appeal of those bays closer to Takapuna, but the tide is turning as premium clifftop properties fetch premium prices. Clifftop Torbay ranges from \$1.5million for an average home to \$2.5million for a premium home. In Rock Isle Rd Waiake, homes range from \$2million to \$3.5million.

In the heart of Browns Bay, zoning changes will free up light industrial properties for "mixed use" which will translate into more apartments in the retail strip. Established apartments are beginning to on-sell now for significant capital gain. Beachfront Lane is popular with retirees, priced from \$850,000-\$900,000. Entry into Torbay starts at \$350,000 for a two-bedroom home in Torbay or \$400,000-\$450,000 for a three-bedroom edition.

Gulf View Estate in Northcross is the biggest new development in the area, combining blocks of one-, two- and three-bedroom apartments with villas and houses along the slope of a ridge. On the northern fringe, a high-profile public battle has been waged to prevent Long Bay succumbing to urban sprawl. Plans are already drawn up for an ensemble village with different types of housing, to be sandwiched between Glenvar and Vaughans Rds.

### Best Streets

All the coastal top-spots, including Beechwood Rd, Sharon Rd in Browns Bay and Cliff Rd and Gilbert Pl in Torbay.

### At a Glance...

#### House Prices

##### Beach/reserve front apartment

Bedrooms   
Price \$600,000 - \$800,000

##### House

Bedrooms   
Price \$800,000 - \$1,100,000

Bedrooms   
Price \$900,000 - \$1,500,000+

##### House on Torbay clifftop

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

##### Clifftop mansion

Price \$4,000,000 - \$6,000,000+

#### Average Rents

##### Apartment

Bedrooms   
Price \$420/wk

##### Flat

Bedrooms   
Price \$400/wk

##### House

Bedrooms   
Price \$550/wk

Bedrooms   
Price \$670/wk

#### Travel Times

CBD peak 45 - 50 min  
off peak 25 - 30 min

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Airport 50 min

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Northern Motorway 10 min

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Milford mall 15 min

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Albany Mega Centre 10 - 15 min

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Massey University in Albany 15 min

Bus services run to Takapuna and to Auckland's CBD. There's a new park-and-ride bus station at nearby Oteha Valley Rd, as part of the Northern Busways project.