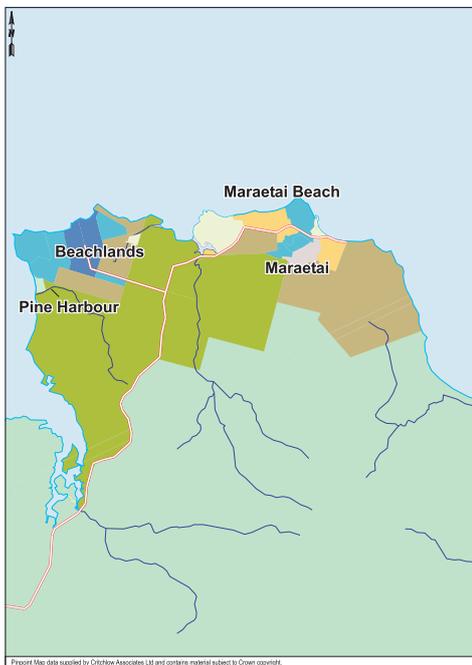


Beachlands/Maraetai ★★★★★

East



Maraetai Beach on the Pohutukawa Coast is one of Auckland's prettiest beaches. Clean, calm waters, shady trees and children playing on its grassy banks or fishing from the pier with makeshift rods and lines. Beachlands and Maraetai were once the preserve of farmers and holidaymakers. How things change. Recent years have seen farms being carved up for expensive housing and amenities being introduced to keep pace with the increasingly cosmopolitan population. For those who can afford it, these seaside hamlets are still a great way to hang on to traditional Kiwi family values, where you know the neighbours by name and the kids can safely ride their bikes to school. While it's the cliff-top properties that enjoy the jaw-dropping gulf views, everyone in this area can enjoy a beautiful, clean, safe swimming beach.



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For colour key, see page 230

Population Profile

| | |
|-----------------------|-------|
| Population | 5,280 |
| % Aged Under 15 Years | 24.72 |
| % Aged Over 65 Years | 8.69 |
| % European | 80.40 |
| % Maori | 7.33 |
| % Pacific Peoples | 2.05 |
| % Asian | 1.48 |

Who Lives There?

These two seaside hamlets are family-oriented communities, popular with lifestylers from all parts of Auckland who want access to the city without having to tolerate crowded suburbs. English immigrants seem especially drawn to the area, as if it epitomises their expectations of New Zealand; pink-white shell, uncrowded beaches and quirky little cafés and shops set amongst the mature trees. There isn't a lot of employment here, so most people commute; the number of ferry sailings to the CBD has had to increase to keep up with demand. Despite the rapid growth, this is still an area where you can expect to

pop into your neighbours for a cup of sugar and be part of a strong community network.

Typical Homes

The fibrolite baches which were the norm here 20 years ago are now a rare and quaint sight. Many have been demolished and replaced with very substantial modern homes. Until recently, the area had a fairly even selection of housing styles from every decade since the 1920s, but new subdivisions mean that large quality contemporary homes now dominate.

Amenities

Schools ★★

Beachlands and Maraetai each have a combined primary/intermediate school catering for years one to eight. Interestingly, these high decile schools are not strong on zoning, so you can choose between them. Both schools are well appointed, with strong ties to the local community. Beachlands is the larger of the two with a roll close to 400, although Maraetai is the oldest, celebrating its centennial over 25 years ago! For secondary schooling, a free school bus takes half an hour to transport teenagers to Howick College. For a full list, see page 270.

Shops ★★

Most residents take advantage of the fact that they're out of the area almost daily by doing the bulk of their shopping where there's more choice and lower prices. But if you were marooned here indefinitely, it wouldn't be so bad. All the basics are covered, including grocery, hardware, baked goods, alcohol, pharmaceuticals and DVDs.

Leisure ★★★★★

Part of the great Kiwi dream is the easy access to outdoor activities here. Beachlands and Maraetai both have great swimming beaches (hence the endless line of day trippers heading out to Maraetai every sunny summer weekend), fishing and boating.

Omana Regional Park, between the two hamlets, has beach, bush and farm. Neighbouring Te Puru Park has sports fields. Nearby Whitford

Forest has tracks for mountain biking, walking and horse riding.

Te Puru Community Centre, a testament to dogged community fundraising, offers a fitness centre, function rooms for hire and a clubroom for sports teams.

The nearby Formosa Golf Resort boasts an international Bob Charles-designed, PGA standard, golf course; it was the venue for the New Zealand Open in 1998. The resort also has a luxury 50-suite hotel, clubhouse with bar, restaurant and pro shop, as well as conference facilities and a sports complex offering squash, indoor tennis, heated indoor swimming pool, a gymnasium, spa, sauna and steam rooms.

As for dining out, the focus is on takeaways rather than silver service here – reflecting the family-oriented culture rather than any down-at-heel demographic. And let's face it, if you don't feel like catching the ferry into the CBD, then a picnic on the beach is probably just the ticket.

Real Estate

Trends

Not so long ago, the gruff, laid-back locals of Beachlands and Maraetai would have laughed themselves silly if you'd shown them sketches of the palaces that would soon be changing the look of their unpretentious seaside neighbourhoods.

When they'd finished laughing, you could tell them today's prices – and they'd probably choke. Pine Harbour's little subdivision within Beachlands is returning prices of \$1.5million+. Nowadays, anything under \$400,000 to \$450,000 is likely to be described as "entry-level".

Subdivisions include one between Shelly Beach Rd and Bell Rd in Beachlands and two in Maraetai; Te Puru Heights and Omana Heights. Te Puru has homes for sale from \$650,000+. Omana Heights' top prices are \$900,000+.

Many of the new residents are immigrants, often from the UK, or Kiwis returning home from overseas to raise families, and wanting the space, sun and sand they've spent many a grey London winter reminiscing about.

Best Streets

There's really no unfortunate street in Maraetai. In Beachlands, the clifftop streets are still the favourites: Hawke Cres, Ealing Cres and First View Ave. A good address doesn't automatically guarantee top dollar – it's still very dependent on the quality, age and style of the residence.

Local Hero: Pine Harbour Marina



Arriving at Beachlands by ferry you have the bonus of a tour of the rather splendid Pine Harbour Marina, home to 600 beautiful boats. The marina has a full complement of on-site tradespeople, 24-hour security, a 24-hour fuel service, and a complete haul-out and hardstand facility, with a boatlifter capable of handling 28m boats up to 44 tonnes. All of this doesn't come cheap: to buy a maritime parking space for your humble nine-metre yacht will cost \$25,000+ a year plus operating fees. For a 20-metre yacht the website says POA: if you need to ask, you probably can't afford it.

Smart Buy

As the new taupe subdivisions of the southern and eastern suburbs develop and morph, areas like Beachlands and Maraetai start to look increasingly special. The neighbourhood isn't just close to the pink-shell beach of Maraetai and safe swimming; it's now got the added benefits of access to the retail facilities of Botany and the motorway system into the city.

At a Glance...

House Prices

Basic bach without a view

Bedrooms 
Price \$525,000 - \$600,000

Bach with a sea view

Bedrooms 
Price \$870,000 - \$1,050,000

New executive house

Bedrooms 
Price \$950,000 - \$1,100,000

Section in a new subdivision

Price \$350,000+

Average Rents

Flat

Bedrooms 
Price \$400/wk

House

Bedrooms 
Price \$500/wk (4 bd \$575+)

Travel Times

From Beachlands:

CBD peak 60 min
off peak 40 min
by ferry 35 min

| | |
|--------------------|--------|
| Southern motorway | 20 min |
| Airport | 30 min |
| Manukau City shops | 20 min |
| Botany Town Centre | 20 min |

There are 11 return ferry trips between Pine Harbour Marina and Auckland's CBD on weekdays. There are services to Rakino and Waiheke islands at weekends. From Beachlands, you can stroll to the ferry along the clifftop reserve or along the beach. For timetables and ticket prices, visit www.pineharbour.co.nz or phone 09 536 4725. Buses run to and from Maraetai and Beachlands and Auckland on weekdays.