

What Makes West Auckland Great – By Lucinda Hill from Rutherford College

The world is full of many different personalities and attitudes with people coming from various backgrounds and diverse ethnic groups. West Auckland is a smaller scale representation of the bigger wider world and shows how in life there are many different sorts of people and characters. West Auckland is a real and a true depiction of how the world can be rough and challenging but also calm and easy.

In many other places around Auckland, there are some areas that are more developed and well off than others, and some that are more rudimentary and raw. West Auckland has a great mixture and blend of well off and indigent people which ultimately makes us all a powerful cohort of people who are united by differences. In West Auckland, there are elements of both the good and the bad in our everyday lives, which ultimately makes our large community such a great and diversified place. Because of the varied and assorted area we live in, the West caters for all different sorts of people and its distinct rich culture creates a strong sense of belonging as there is a place for everyone here.

The unique and pristine natural environments of the various West coast beaches and the Waitakere Ranges are exclusive and important to the local community and villages. The Waitakere Ranges is one of the biggest regional parks in Auckland and connects West Auckland with the rest of the city. The distinct black sand beaches of Muriwai, Piha, Bethells and many others are enjoyed and admired by many near and far. The vast options of recreational activities from surfing to bird watching are endless, as there is something for everyone to enjoy.

The bird life and natural ecosystems of the beaches and bushland are rare and significant to West Auckland, as there aren't many places in the world where historic and native plant and animal life can be admired and appreciated from your backyard. The lush and immaculate bush walks through thick endemic forests of ancient kauri always refresh the soul and can be a good escape to clear the mind and ground us back to reality. During covid especially, the strong impacts that the lockdowns had on our mental health were huge. Being able to go on walks in the Waitakere Ranges and around coastal boardwalks of the wider neighbourhood helped to regroup and refresh the mind during the hard times of lockdown.

West Auckland's diverse and welcoming culture of people creates a sense of togetherness and belonging within the community and the varied mixture of characters within the West are a genuine representation of the wider world. The strong bonds and relationships shared between the individuals of the neighbourhood ultimately make West Auckland such a great place to love and enjoy.