

What Makes West Auckland Great – By Theo Robbmarkham from Rutherford College

My name is Theo RobbMarkham. And I'm a Westie. A proud Westie.

I love West Auckland. There are a number of reasons why, from the people to the atmosphere to the food. But I think the easiest way to put it is, simply, that it's home. There's nothing quite like walking into your local café and being greeted by name, with the barista knowing what you want before you've even said it.

Whenever I go travelling, it's amazing to see the sights and meet the people there. But there's always that feeling you get when you're on your way back home, that you can never get anywhere else. That blissful feeling of homecoming that you get as you exit the tunnels and pull onto State Highway 16. As you are driving down the motorway, you can see all of West Auckland, with the Waitakere Ranges in the background. It is a fantastic sight.

Since I've lived in West Auckland for my entire life, I've picked up some hobbies over the years. I love to go swimming, and body surfing at Piha is a blast. I have some very fond memories of going there with my Uncle and cousins. I gained a love of squash through school, and now I play weekly at the Henderson squash club. I also started playing in a social netball team with the other prefects from school, and that has been a great experience. As well as this, I have been playing clarinet since intermediate, and now I play in the West City Youth Concert Band every week, which is a lot of fun. It's cool to hang out and play music with such a lovely group of like-minded people.

West Auckland is fantastic, and I'm definitely biased, but I don't think there is any other place I would rather live. It is where I have grown up, gone to school and where all of my friends and extended families are. I cannot think of anything I would trade that for.

I once heard someone say a phrase, and that phrase stuck with me, because I think it summarises really well all the things that West Auckland is. They said "West Auckland is a little big city", explaining how it has all the benefits that a big city has, but you're more than just one face in the crowd. People know you, and they care about you, and they make me proud to call this place home.