



**Resource Community Formation and Change**

**A Case Study of  
Te Anau**

**Julie Warren  
Nick Taylor  
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**TAYLOR BAINES**

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction .....	1
The tourism industry in Fiordland .....	1
Te Anau and its dependence on natural resources .....	2
Demographic features .....	3
Demographic characteristics .....	3
Social characteristics .....	4
Industry, work and occupations .....	6
The development of the tourist industry since the 1980's .....	6
The organisation of work .....	7
The role of the Department of Conservation in the tourist industry .....	8
Regional and local economies .....	8
The regional economy .....	8
The economic impact of tourism .....	8
The environmental impact of tourism .....	10
The local economy of Te Anau .....	10
Household Income .....	11
Infrastructure and agencies .....	11
Local government and infrastructure .....	11
District and regional planning .....	12
Housing .....	12
Health .....	13
Education and training .....	14
Agencies and social welfare organisations .....	14
Community .....	15
Community attitudes and values .....	15
Community leadership and organisations .....	15
Social problems .....	15
Maori population .....	16
Women, young people and the elderly .....	16
Conclusion .....	17
References .....	18

## INTRODUCTION

This paper reports the findings of a case study of Te Anau. It is one of a series of three case studies of tourism communities in New Zealand that are part of a project entitled “Resource Community Formation and Change” which has been funded by the Foundation for Research, Science and Technology.<sup>1</sup> The other case studies in this series are Methven (WP28) and Paihia (WP29). Also relevant is a case study of the nearby town on Manapouri (WP 21), conducted as an energy sector case study because of the hydro-electricity developments in the area<sup>2</sup>. Te Anau was selected as a tourism case study because of the importance of tourism to the local economy since the original development of the town, the dependence of tourism there on the natural resource base of the Fiordland National Park, the cycles of tourism evident in the past, and the availability of previous research on tourism in the area.

The case study primarily focuses on the social and economic history of Te Anau since the 1980's. The study is based on a variety of information sources including census statistics, published and unpublished documents, local residents, local tourism operators, local, regional and central government officials, representatives of key tourism organisations and other stakeholders. Two researchers spent four days in the Te Anau area collecting information from the people listed above (by way of interviews) and collecting together relevant documentation about local history, and social and economic activities and trends.

The research programme provides a stronger conceptual and empirical basis for social assessment and resource planning in New Zealand, especially in rural communities that depend directly on the primary production or processing of natural resources. The findings from the analysis of the three communities in the tourism sector will be added to those from communities based on the forestry, fishing, mining, agriculture, energy and tourism sectors, to develop an improved understanding of the processes of community formation and change in these types of communities.

## THE TOURISM INDUSTRY IN FIORDLAND

Fiordland, in the Southland region, is the name generally applied to the area including the fiords along the south western coast of the South Island. Its most notable icon is the Fiordland National Park, which was named in 1953. The Sounds National Park, which made up the bulk of the new park, was established in 1905 and extended in 1952. However, areas in Fiordland have been set aside for recreational purposes since the 1880's, in particular islands in Lakes Te Anau and Manapouri.

The Fiordland area of Southland has been a tourism destination since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, initially for visitors from the wider Southland and Otago regions. Government involvement in the fledgling tourism industry was high, with some of the earliest tourism products transferred from private to public ownership in the early 1900's. The Tourist Department first took over the operation of Glade House, at the head of the lake, in 1903. The steamer Te Uria, which was bought by Thomas Brodrick in 1888 to convey people across Lake Te Anau, was also transferred to Tourist Department operation in 1906 (Hall-Jones, 1983: 57). In the same year, a hotel built in Te Anau in 1890 to cater for tourists walking the Milford Track was also sold to the Department. It remained in government ownership (latterly in the name of the Tourist Hotel Corporation) until the 1980's. The major attraction of the area, the Fiordland National Park, was also a publicly owned resource. From the earliest days, however, there have been private operators taking advantage of this resource. For instance, in 1891, two coach operators began bringing passengers from Lumsden and Otautau and private operators have provided guided tours of the Park's major asset, the Milford Track, throughout

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<sup>1</sup> Contract TBA 801. For further information on the research project contact Taylor Baines & Associates (PO Box 8620, Christchurch or by email: n.taylor@tba.co.nz).

<sup>2</sup> The case study also adds to a number of other case studies completed in the Western Southland area, including Tuatapere, Otautau, Riverton and Ohai as part of the research programme.

its existence. The route to the Milford Sound was discovered in 1888 and, by the 1890's, two early entrepreneurs were taking groups of visitors to walk the Milford Track (*ibid.*: 62, 66). Even now, the Milford Track remains the only premier track in the country with private concessionaires managing tourist access and use.

Tourism development in the area remained centred on the National Park until the 1920's when fishers and then, in the early 1930's, some pioneering crib developers arrived. The 1921 appointment of a ranger by the Southland Acclimatisation Society is evidence of the early fishing and hunting activity in the area. Both of these activities were dependent on the introduction of exotic species: wapiti in 1908 and trout in 1923. The first two cribs (or holiday homes) were built in Te Anau in 1932 (Hall-Jones, 1983: 90-91, 98-99).

Throughout this early phase of tourism development, the local economy was dependent on other economic activities such as sealing, sheep farming and forestry (particularly beech harvesting). However, further expansion of the industry in the 1940's and 1950's, saw an increase in holiday homes and the development of further tourist facilities. Tourism began to make a significant contribution to the local economy. In 1945, Lawson Burrows opened the glow worm caves to visitors and, in the same year, placed his first passenger launch on Lake Te Anau (Hall-Jones, 1983: 100). The operation of this launch, the *Quintin Mackinnon*, was the beginning of Fiordland Travel Ltd, which is the largest operator in the region and one of the largest in the country.

Several other developments boosted population growth generally, and tourism in particular, in Te Anau and its rural hinterland. The first of these developments was the opening of the Homer Tunnel to cars and buses in 1953. After the opening of the tunnel Te Anau grew rapidly as land was subdivided, houses built, motels opened, and the number of shops increased. The second was the Manapouri power scheme, which brought an influx of permanent and semi-permanent residents (Fitzgerald, 2000). The third was the intensive programme of aerial top-dressing of the Te Anau basin. What was formerly regarded as unproductive scrub-land was converted into productive farmland (Hall-Jones, 1983: 100-101). Agricultural production, together with increasing tourism activity, still provides a stable base for the local economy.

## **TE ANAU AND ITS DEPENDENCE ON NATURAL RESOURCES**

The town of Te Anau hosts the headquarters of the Fiordland National Park, situated on the south-eastern shoreline of Lake Te Anau and on the eastern boundary of the Park. It is located on State Highway 94, 20 kilometres north-east of Manapouri and 80 kilometres north-west of Lumsden. The town is the main service centre for the Te Anau basin and is one of the main tourist resorts of the Fiordland and southern lakes district, with a relatively wide range of amenities and services. A recent study of visitors to holiday destinations in New Zealand (Kearsley *et al.*, 1998: 16) observes that they had a multidimensional image of Te Anau characterised by the lake, mountains, the glow worm caves, scenic beauty, weather and its proximity to Milford Sound. Surprisingly, neither the domestic nor the international visitors interviewed mentioned the town's proximity to the great walking tracks of Fiordland as being a feature of its image.

Permanent European settlement in the Te Anau/Manapouri area began in the 1850's, although the first European settler in the area where the township is now located did not arrive until the 1880's. Richard Henry was an explorer and naturalist, who built himself a cottage at the south end of the lake in 1883. The oldest run in the area (Manapouri Station) was taken up in 1857, followed by the Te Anau Station in 1858, and Te Anau Downs in 1860. Settlement in the area was still sparse in 1890, when the Te Anau township comprised one large inn, two small steamers, one four-horse coach, and about half a dozen other buildings. The settlement remained much the same until 1923, when a hatchery and a house for the ranger were built on the outskirts. The first holiday cottages were built at Te Anau in 1932, although it was not until after the Second World War that there was significant building development (Hall-Jones, 1983: 8-9, 20 & 24).

The township and its hinterland have always been heavily dependent on natural-resource industries such as fishing, forestry and farming, despite the early emergence of tourism in the 1890's. Sealing was the first resource-based industry in Fiordland. This was followed by an extensive grazing industry in Western Southland, which evolved into intensive livestock farming. One of the earliest industries in the south-eastern part of Fiordland was the harvesting of Southland Beech. However, the amount of beech harvested in the Tuatapere district has reduced substantially since the 1970's (Kerr *et al.*, 1990: 11-12, 32).

In the last thirty or so years there has been extensive agricultural development in the Te Anau-Manapouri area. The Crown's large scale land development scheme, undertaken since the 1960's, attracted over a hundred new settlers and their families to the district. Fiordland was also instrumental in the development of the deer farming industry in New Zealand. Feral deer were initially hunted for the venison export trade, and later were captured for breeding (Kerr *et al.*, 1990: 12, 26).

The fishing industry in the region has grown substantially over recent decades with the upgrading of wharf facilities at Milford and Doubtful Sounds. Rock lobster (crayfish) is the main species harvested, and a substantial part of the fleet which operates in the region is based at Riverton, Bluff or Stewart Island. Around fifty to sixty crews fish around the Fiordland coast, a third of which operate out of Te Anau. Some 4,500 tonnes of fish are caught in the southern fishery of which Fiordland is part (Kerr *et al.*, 1990: 12, 34).

The contribution of natural resource based industries to the economy and population growth of Te Anau has been supplemented by secondary industries. One of the largest contributors has been the construction of the Manapouri hydro-electric power scheme and the transmission lines to the aluminium smelter at Bluff. The major part of the construction occurred between 1963 and 1971, with a peak workforce of 1800 workers (Kerr *et al.*, 1990: 12). Although a special construction settlement was created just North of Manapouri village, there were spin-offs for Te Anau. Current up-grading of the power scheme, to improve its efficiency, has again brought some workers to the area, but their number is comparatively small. There are also some construction and manufacturing activities in Te Anau, as well as financial and retail activities.

The dependence of Te Anau on traditional, natural resource based industries started to diminish after the rural downturn of the mid to late 1980's, which coincided with a downturn in tourism as well. The cyclical nature of fishing, forestry and farming, and the declines in their resource base, obliged local communities to consider diversifying into other economic activities including a greater range of tourism activities, and new agricultural and farming activities such as deer farming. These were of course still mainly natural-resource based.

Tourism has been viewed by the Te Anau community as one of the best options for alternative development of resources on a sustainable basis. A managed approach to tourism development in Fiordland was accepted and advanced in a study by the Centre for Resource Management in 1990 (Kerr *et al.*, 1990). The authors of this study concluded that it was evident that the people of Te Anau wished to participate in an approach to development that contained a vision of where the community was going socially, economically and environmentally. Since that time local government has been restructured and the Resource Management Act has passed into law. However, there has been no clear, locally organised approach to development based on sustainable use of the natural resource base.

## **DEMOGRAPHIC FEATURES**

### **Demographic characteristics**

In 1996 the total usually resident population of Te Anau was 1,782, up from 1,385 in 1976 - a 29 per cent increase over twenty years. The 1980's was a period of population decline for the town following the downturn in tourism and the rest of the rural sector, although since then the number of residents has grown rapidly (see Table 1).

*Table 1: Te Anau - changes in the usually resident population 1976-1996*

Census Year	Te Anau		New Zealand	
	No. of Persons	% change in pop.	No. of Persons	% change in pop
1976	1,385	-	3,098,900	-
1981	1,560	12.6	3,143,307	1.4
1986	1,482	-5	3,263,283	3.8
1991	1,500	1.2	3,373,929	3.4
1996	1,782	18.8	3,618,302	7.2

Source: New Zealand Census 1976-1996

As shown in Table 2, the age distribution of the population of Te Anau was markedly different from the national population. Te Anau had relatively few children and people of retirement age in 1996. Moreover, this age distribution was radically different from that of the town's population fifteen years earlier. Prior to the rural downturn and the latter phases of tourism development in 1981, Te Anau had a higher proportion of young children and far fewer people of retirement age compared with New Zealand as a whole. Te Anau's lower dependency ratio of 1996 (0.41 compared with 0.53 for the New Zealand population) is due to the lower proportions of young children and older, retirement age people in proportion to the rest of the population.

*Table 2: Age-sex structure of the population of Te Anau 1981 and 1996*

	Te Anau		New Zealand	
	1981	1996	1981	1996
% 0 - 14 years	30.1	20.6	26.9	23.0
% 15 - 64 years	65.9	71.0	63.1	65.4
% 65 years & over	4.0	8.4	10.0	11.6
Total Number of Persons	1,583	1,776	1,777,464	1,840,839

Source: New Zealand Census 1981 & 1996

The age-sex distribution of 1996 may, to some extent, be explained by the dominance of tourism activities that attracted single, young transient workers. Before that time, when the economy was more dependent on other natural resource industries such as farming, forestry and fishing, the age distribution suggests that there were more families. The availability of jobs in the peak tourism season (which covers census night) may also have contributed to the lower dependency ratio. Probably the most important demographic change over 15 years was the doubling in proportion of people aged over 65 years, although it was still less than the national average in 1996.

### **Social characteristics**

The distribution of family types in Te Anau in 1996 was consistent with the skewed age distribution, and fewer children (see Table 3). Compared with the total population, Te Anau had considerably smaller proportions of one and two parent families (52 per cent cf. 63 per cent for NZ). Instead, most families were of the 'couples only' type (48 per cent cf. 37 per cent for NZ).

*Table 3: Family Types in Te Anau 1996*

Family Type	% of families	
	Te Anau	New Zealand
One parent family	12.1	17.7
Two parent family	39.6	44.9
Couple only	48.3	37.3
Total number of families	447	949,497

Source: New Zealand Census 1996

The educational qualifications of Te Anau residents in 1996 differed little from the population as a whole, with fewer people with tertiary qualifications, and a correspondingly higher proportion of people with secondary qualifications (see Table 4). A smaller proportion had no qualifications. The lower level of university and other tertiary qualifications is consistent with other rural communities and reflect the dominance of the tourism sector, which is typified by low-skilled jobs.

*Table 4 : Highest educational qualifications held by the residents of Te Anau - 1996*

Highest educational qualification	% of residents	
	Te Anau	New Zealand
University & other tertiary	22.4	25.8
Secondary	28.4	26.5
No qualifications	30.7	32.2

Source: New Zealand Census 1996

Just over a third of Te Anau's residents indicated that they were living at their current address five years before the 1996 census (see Table 5). Given that 44 percent of New Zealanders as a whole were residing at the same address five years before, Te Anau residents are much more mobile, probably reflecting the growth in tourism. Around 71 percent had lived in the same region five years previously, and around one in five had arrived from another region or overseas.

*Table 5: Place of residence of Usually Resident Population of Te Anau - five years before 1996*

Place of residence	Te Anau Per cent of Population
Same usual address	34.1
Same territorial authority	30.1
Same regional council, different territorial authority	6.5
Different regional council, same Island	8.1
Different regional council, different Island	4.7
Not specified - New Zealand	9.6
Overseas	6.9
Total number of Persons	1,662

Source: New Zealand Census 1996



## **INDUSTRY, WORK AND OCCUPATIONS**

### **The development of the tourist industry since the 1980's**

Te Anau's tourism growth since the 1980's can be largely explained by two sets of circumstances. The first was the rural downturn, which required the town to actively seek ways to diversify the economy. The second was the struggle that Queenstown was experiencing coping with tourist demand. As one writer described it, "when Queenstown was splitting at the seams, Te Anau opened its arms and hotel doors and joyfully accepted the spill-over" (Brett, 1997: 60). Fiordland Travel still provided the core of tourism activity in the area, although many of its tours started and finished in Queenstown, mostly as a transport provider for people travelling to and on Milford Sound. And most of the local accommodation remained centred on the former government-owned hotel and the string of hotels along the lakefront.

The significantly expanded tourism infrastructure of the 1980's reflects the growth of the industry. By the mid 1980's there were seven hotels, 12 motels, two guest houses, a caravan park, and a motor camp. This expanded range of facilities boosted available accommodation to around 1,700 beds and 170 caravan sites. The motor camp alone had capacity for some 3,000 visitors (John Bamford Associates, 1984: 113). This windfall did not last. By the late 1980's there was a surplus of accommodation and a fall-off in over night stays by tour-bus travellers. Occupancy rates and turnover fell and accommodation businesses faced severe financial problems (KPMG Peat Marwick, 1988).

Operators in Te Anau had struggled for some time to convince Queenstown-based tour operators to overnight in Te Anau on the way to Milford Sound, rather than persisting with the 12 hour Queenstown-Milford-Queenstown day trek. For a while the shortage of accommodation in Queenstown in the mid 1990's looked as if it might be Te Anau's salvation, as tour operators began to include overnight stays in Te Anau. However, many of the overnight stays disappeared when accommodation capacity in Queenstown was expanded. Bus tours returned to their 12 hour, one day treks to Milford, and Te Anau was once again bypassed. Even the shopping stops that buses made in Te Anau were unsustainable. Retailers in Te Anau reported that foreign guides with coach tours were asking for commissions for bringing tourists into Te Anau shops. When the retailers refused to pay these commissions the coach tours began to bypass their businesses or visit Asian-owned retail outlets and restaurants in the town (Brett, 1997: 60). While the boom lasted, the continual pressure to keep prices down suppressed the profitability of local businesses dependent on the industry.

Tourism development includes the expansion and consolidation of existing operators and products and the introduction of new products. Fiordland Travel, as an example of the former, has expanded and consolidated its land and water based transport and tour products and developed new products, such as those capitalising on tourist interest in nature based activities.

The current phase of tourism development may indicate a maturing of the local industry. A new group of smaller tourism operators has emerged over the last ten years, mostly providing products that could be generally described as eco-tourism. These new providers include some longer term Te Anau residents who are looking for ways to diversify their farming, fishing and retail activities, and newcomers who have recognised the potential of the Te Anau area and/or have been attracted to the life style. While a few of the earlier operators have gone out of business, often because their profit margins were unsustainable, the overall number of operators continues to increase steadily. The new range of tourism products includes a variety of guided activities - kayaking, wilderness walks, fishing, deep sea diving and sailing. There is also an increasing trend for operators to market these newer products, as well as more established ones such as accommodation, on the internet through web sites and e-mail.

These new enterprises have had a significant impact on employment and population growth in the town (Warren and Taylor, 1994: 65). Together with the larger operators, these small eco-tourism ventures provide

jobs for their owner-operators, albeit often part-time and seasonal. They also support work in cafes, restaurants and hotels, and other related tourist activities.

During this new era of tourism development, employment opportunities have at times exceeded the supply of workers, mainly in the accommodation and entertainment sectors. During the high season, many of the full-time workers came to the town from other parts of New Zealand and overseas countries. And school students obtain part-time work and holidays jobs in the industry, thus having the opportunity to increase their skills, develop their initiative, and earn money. Yet despite the expansion of tourism in the area, Te Anau residents are still ambivalent about the long term viability of the industry. Although the tourism activity generates employment for school leavers, for instance, parents tend to value the industry for its short-term jobs rather than for its long-term “career” opportunities.

As well as creating work, this latest phase of tourism development has also attracted newcomers to the Te Anau area. These new residents have enabled the range of commercial operations, such as shops and restaurants, and social services, such as education and health care, to increase. The experience of restaurant owners in the mid 1990's illustrates the economic importance of the new residents. While the restaurant owners expected their main source of income to be backpackers and other independent travellers, in fact people working in the tourism industry are their main customers. Often these people have been newcomers to the town.

Some of the operators in the area talked about another phase of tourism growth in the area, which they described as being outside of the mainstream and not necessarily beneficial to the community. Much of this tourism is based on “off track” use, where tourists seek wilderness experiences through the use of old obscure tracks and camping in the bush. Some local operators talked of a “sub-culture” among international tourists who pass on information about alternative tracks to other overseas visitors.

### **The organisation of work**

Tourism related work in Te Anau is shaped by the seasonal nature of tourism, the isolation of some of the activity destinations, the type of experiences offered, and the specialised skills and personal qualities required of employees.

The seasonality of tourism means that the numbers of jobs decrease over the off-peak months. For example, the largest employer in the area, Fiordland Travel, reduces its workforce by between 40 and 50 percent during the quieter months (i.e. from 170 in the peak season to 90 to 100 during winter). Other employers, especially the smaller operators, let peak season staff go, but also change the nature of the work for those who remain employed. During the off-peak season, these workers (who are usually owner/operators) often use the time for maintenance tasks, and for planning and implementing marketing activities. Some of the smaller accommodation providers, however, cease any tourism related work, and make the most of the respite for a rest or to pursue other work or business activity.

Seasonality also affects the recruitment of staff. In the Te Anau area, the season tends to extend from October/November to April/May, with signs that the shoulder seasons are extending and increasing in importance. When the demand for skills and numbers is high, tourism operators report they often have to recruit from outside the area. To some extent, this is not a problem as there is a group of fairly transient, but skilled, tourism workers who move around the country as the seasonal demands of the industry dictate. As reported in the Paihia case study (Warren and Taylor, 2000), at the end of the summer season in the Bay of Islands, workers move south for the winter season in Queenstown. However, Te Anau operators still experience staff shortages. Sometimes, there is a general lack of people with specific skills such as marketing, boating and diving. And on other occasions the off seasons of other tourism destinations do not coincide with local need, especially when the shoulder seasons of both destinations coincide.

Different sorts of tourism products require various ways of organising work and recovering costs. For instance, the extended hours of many tourism activities can become a logistical nightmare for operators and generate extra costs. The example of a guided diving trip in one of the Sounds illustrates the problem. The whole experience requires a driver (who has to wait around for a few hours in the Sounds area, before making the return trip), a diver and a skilled person to wait in the boat (for safety protection) while the tourists dive. The needed mix of skills and tasks mean that the diver has a 13-14 hour working day, and the others have to be paid for a lot of down time which is difficult to pass on to tourists.

Many of the nature based tourist products require workers with specialised and, often, relatively rare skills. For instance, operators often look to recruit multi-skilled people with particular expertise, such as those required to skipper boats, dive, kayak or guide people in rugged terrain, as well as other specialist skills (like commercial driving) and more general skills and qualities required to host and entertain clients.

### **The role of the Department of Conservation in the tourist industry**

Given the importance of the Fiordland National Park to local tourism activity, the Department of Conservation (DOC) plays a central role in the industry. However, during recent years, DOC has reduced the number staff working in the area and its expenditure on track maintenance.

The National Park contains three premier tracks with high international profiles. The most notable is the Milford Track, but increasing visitor numbers to the Kepler and Routeburn Tracks reflect their growing popularity. The Milford Track is unique in that its use is managed by private concessionaires. Access to the other tracks, as with other national park tracks in New Zealand, is managed by the Department.

A number of the local operators also require DOC concessions because they operate their businesses in the Park. Therefore DOC has an ongoing relationship with a number of tourism operators, both because they are collecting fees on a regular basis and because there are conditions associated with each concession that require some level of monitoring. To some extent, the nature of the relationships and the frequency with which operators meet with or contact DOC depends upon the actions of the operators themselves. For instance, they may initiate meeting with the department to seek advice on their interpretation for guiding.

DOC also provides a visitors centre at Te Anau, which is located at the far end of town, away from the VIN centre in the Fiordland Travel building in the centre of town. The visitor centre provides information and interpretation about the local natural and physical environment and about specific amenities such as tracks. Hut passes are also sold there.

## **REGIONAL AND LOCAL ECONOMIES**

### **The regional economy**

Southland, New Zealand's southern-most region, has Invercargill as its main centre and the Port of Bluff as its main trading port. Bluff has one of the country's largest fishing fleets. Other industries of note in the wider region include the Tiwai Point Aluminum Smelter, forestry, sheep and cattle farming and horticulture.

### **The economic impact of tourism**

Tourism has become the dominant economic activity in Te Anau and a major economic sector for Western Southland. However, measuring its impact has always been difficult, given that it cannot be defined by a specific range of products that can be unambiguously identified with a well-defined industry. Instead, tourism products cut across standard industry definitions. The development of the Tourism Satellite Account by Statistics New Zealand provides a first step towards developing an alternative measurement system. This new measurement system is not used for this study. Instead, the focus of the discussion of economic impacts

is on the industry areas that comprise most of the tourism activity - the wholesale/retail/hospitality and transport/communications sectors.

The expansion of tourism in Te Anau has created more jobs, with a correspondingly lower unemployment rate, a shift in the industry areas in which jobs are located and some change in the characteristics of the workers who fill these jobs. One of the most noticeable changes in the Te Anau economy is the availability of work and the increased involvement of people in paid work. Compared with the population as a whole, in 1996 a far greater proportion of Te Anau people of working age participated in the work force (75 per cent cf. 59 per cent for NZ). Participation levels may have been even higher during the peak of the season. Census night, when the information was collected, occurred near the end of the peak tourism season, when visitor numbers would have already begun to recede.

More detail about labour market participation is provided in Table 6. Te Anau had higher proportions of people working for wages and salaries, and people self-employed or employers of others, than the country as a whole. The town's unemployment rate was much lower than that at the national level.

*Table 6: Employment status of the residents of Te Anau 1996*

	<b>Wages &amp; Salary %</b>	<b>Self Employed/Employer of others %</b>	<b>Unemployed %</b>	<b>Full-time %</b>	<b>Part-time %</b>
Te Anau	54.3	16.5	1.3	58.8	16.1
New Zealand (TLA)	43.5	11	4.9	45	13.6

Source: New Zealand Census 1996

As Table 7 reveals, the tourism sector provided most of the employment in the Te Anau area. Significantly more people who were residents of Te Anau or worked there were employed in wholesale/retail/hospitality and transport/communications sectors. Just under two-thirds of all the people with jobs located in Te Anau were employed in these sectors, while 57 percent of workers resident in the town were employed in them. Over the country as a whole, only 28 per cent of the workforce were employed in these sectors. Employment levels were correspondingly lower in the manufacturing, financial/business and the community/social/personal sectors.

*Table 7: Sectoral distribution of the workforce of Te Anau - 1996*

<b>Sector</b>	<b>Residents of Te Anau</b>	<b>Persons who work in Te Anau</b>	<b>NZ Workforce</b>
Agriculture, forestry & fishing	8.8	4.4	9.2
Mining	0.3	-	0.3
Manufacturing	2.8	2.2	14.3
Electricity/gas/water supply	1.1	-	0.5
Construction	6.0	4.1	5.8
Wholesale/retail/hospitality	46.5	56.3	22.3
Transport/communications	10.5	7.2	5.3
Financial/business	5.7	6.0	13.1
Community/social/personal	15.0	17.2	23
Total number of persons	1,059	951	1,630,812

Source: New Zealand Census 1996

## **The environmental impact of tourism**

There are several environmental issues associated with the tourism industry that are currently of concern to members of the local community and the Southland District Council (SDC). They include the overcrowding of tracks in the National Park, the traffic generated by visitors on the road to Milford Sound, the effects of a recent residential subdivision on the nutrient levels in Lake Te Anau, the competition between fishers and tourist operators over the use of wharf facilities at Milford Sound, and the impact of visiting cruise ships on the Fiordland coastal environment.

The overcrowding of tracks is not unique to Fiordland National Park. It is an issue that requires careful management for tourism development to remain sustainable. Growing visitor numbers are also putting pressure on the roading infrastructure. There is a need to relieve traffic congestion at Milford by spreading the peak volumes around 1 pm to the 11 am to 3 pm period when there is excess capacity on the roads. Moreover, scenic stops along the Milford route are becoming overcrowded by visitors with negative effects in terms of litter etc.

The recent opening of a rural subdivision at Te Anau of two to four hectare blocks is using septic tanks for effluent disposal. This form of residential development is related to the district's growing popularity as a tourism destination. But it is recognised by the Southland Regional Council that in future there must be some limitation of this type of development to keep nutrient levels in the lake under control.

Cruise ships visiting the Fiordland Sounds may disembark over a thousand visitors at a time into the National Park. Not only do these visitors have a physical impact on the coastal area, but the wake from the cruise ships and any discharges of waste and ballast water into coastal waters may also have damaging effects on the marine environment and local fisheries. At present there are few controls on the operations of these cruise ships, unlike areas such as the sub antarctic islands where ship and passenger numbers are restricted.

Some tourism operators compete with commercial fishers for the use of wharf facilities at Milford. Thus there is a need to develop controls to minimise the impacts of the tourism industry on local fisheries.

## **The local economy of Te Anau**

Te Anau had a range of commercial amenities during the early 1980's including banks, garages, a supermarket, dairies, a butcher, stock and station agents, clothing shops, a pharmacy, hairdressers, restaurants and fast food outlets, wine shops, sports goods suppliers, an electrical appliance dealer, a garden shop and several craft and souvenir shops. Many of the retailers relied on summer time trade to remain viable, especially as more of the local population travel to Invercargill for major purchases (John Bamford Associates, 1984: 136).

Nowadays there are two supermarkets in Te Anau, and a range of other shops, although local people buy some items from retailers in Invercargill. Most residents of Manapouri usually buy their supplies from either Te Anau or Invercargill shops.

The industrial settlement on the outskirts of the township is one indication of the growth in light commercial activities in Te Anau. Local trades and light industrial activity includes builders, joiners, engineering firms, electrical installation and repair firms and mechanical and vehicle repair workshops.

There are over 16 fishing crews based in Te Anau whose vessels are moored at Milford and Doubtful Sounds. Many of the boats catch rock lobster which is processed by the Fiordland Lobster Company's factory at Te Anau. The factory has one of the biggest holding facilities in the country, mainly handling live rock lobster. It employs two or three permanent staff, and seasonal full-time workers between August and February. The packing of the rock lobster is mainly undertaken by women.

The tail race project at Manapouri Tailrace has had few flow-on effects for the Te Anau economy. Most workers come from outside the district, and when they are rostered off duty employees usually leave their camp at West Arm and return to their homes. Some men from Turangi who came to work on the tail race tunnel brought their families, and their partners are looking for work in the district.

## Household Income

In 1996, a lower proportion of Te Anau households were in the lower income brackets, compared with the country as a whole (see Table 8). This may be explained by referring to employment and age distribution statistics. First, there were fewer residents on fixed incomes (income support) given the lower proportion of residents belonging the older age groups, the higher proportion participating in the work force and the low level of unemployment.

*Table 8: Distribution of Household Incomes in Te Anau - 1996*

Household income range	% of households	
	Te Anau	New Zealand
\$20,000 & under	18.3	22.9
\$20,001 - \$50,000	39.6	32.9
\$50,001 & over	23.2	27.1

Source: New Zealand Census 1996

Income support statistics in Te Anau also reflect the employment and age distribution statistics. In 1996, proportionally fewer of those aged 15 years and over received one or more forms of income support (24 per cent cf. 35 per cent for NZ). The main forms of income support they received were national superannuation (44 per cent of total benefits cf. 40 per cent for NZ), the unemployment benefit (19 per cent of total benefits cf. 20 per cent for NZ), domestic purposes benefit (10 per cent of benefits cf. 9 per cent for NZ) and accident compensation (9 per cent of total benefits cf. 6 per cent for NZ).

## INFRASTRUCTURE AND AGENCIES

### Local government and infrastructure

Fiordland was a separate administrative county until 1982 when it came under the jurisdiction of the Wallace County Council which had its headquarters at Otautau some 120 kilometres to the south (John Bamford Associates, 1984: 118). In 1989 the Southland County Council amalgamated with the Wallace County Council, the Stewart Island Borough Council and the Winton Borough Council, to form the Southland District Council which is based in Invercargill. The residents of Te Anau are represented by a community board and elect representatives to the Southland District Council. Women have had strong representation to local government positions, including the current Mayor of the Southland District Council.

Te Anau has a reticulated water supply. Water is drawn from bores at the lake's edge, treated and then reticulated to over 700 household and commercial consumers. The supply is usually sufficient to meet demand during the holiday season. Sewage from the town is pumped to two treatment ponds on the northern side of the town. From there the treated effluent is discharged into the Upukerora River (John Bamford Associates, 1984: 123). A nearby rural residential subdivision depends on septic tanks to dispose of sewage.

Community amenities include a public hall, part of which serves as a public library, a hall/gymnasium at Fiordland College, two sport grounds, a public garden, a covered swimming pool, a golf course and a boat harbour (John Bamford Associates, 1984: 125). There is a proposal to build a new community centre, which could also act as a conference venue.

## **District and regional planning**

One of the most positively perceived recent initiatives of the Southland District Council has been its facilitation of a concept plan for Te Anau and Manapouri. This 15-20 year plan has been driven by a Concept Plan Committee, with Community Board support. The development process was a consultative one, arising from a series of workshops, focus groups and individual interviews with a wide range of local commercial interests. People viewed this plan as having the potential to enhance business confidence, foster entrepreneurship, and provide a basis for more cohesive local economic development, including tourism development. The plan was cited as already acting as a catalyst for developing new tourism products. One example was the development of a new product that combined existing accommodation and walking activities to produce a new package. Some projects are already underway including the Te Anau Museum, the Wildlife Centre, and a landscape plan for the lake end of the main street.

There are difficulties in realising the full potential of the Concept Plan to encourage a more co-ordinated approach to local economic development however. The problems the Council had in developing a Fiordland logo demonstrates the challenges any participatory process confronts in getting agreement on particular issues. In the end, the search for a logo that everyone agreed with (for instance, 'Walking on the edge') was abandoned in favour of promotion and development around a more generic theme. That theme is based around the experiencing of Fiordland.

A co-ordinated approach to economic development in Fiordland is not the only challenge. There are also problems in establishing a more co-ordinated regional approach to tourism development. The focus of the Southern Lakes Strategy tends to be Queenstown, Wanaka and Alexandra based, and Te Anau tends to be overlooked.

Another positively perceived initiative of the Regional Council is the Topo Climate work, which has recently received government endorsement. Local spin-offs from this work have included the growth of a local bulb industry and the local production of peony roses (for overseas distribution) and Meadowfoam, which is an alternative oil for makeup base. There is already evidence of new job creation from these new ventures.

Local government involvement in promotional activities has expanded in the last year or two, particularly with increased funding of the CEO of the Regional Tourism Organisation. Local marketing initiatives, however, are still funded by local operators, individually and collectively.

## **Housing**

Property values in Te Anau boomed during 1993-1994, but have since declined. At that time the price of a good quality three bedroom house in the town was \$190,000. By the end of 1999, however, this type of house was selling for \$165,000, while cribs were valued at \$60,000. Many cribs were selling below government valuation as their prices had become inflated during a housing boom in 1993-1994 when some cribs sold at prices as high as \$120,000 to \$130,000. The last subdivision in the town began three years ago, with sections of 800 square metres selling for between \$25,000 to \$32,000 each.

There is a heavy demand for good rental properties in Te Anau, particularly during the November to April tourist season. Most construction workers on the tail race project reside at the camp at West Arm, although the construction company rents about 20 houses in Te Anau for its executives. Some people have rented their houses out and used their income from this source to purchase another home. The private rental for a two bedroom house at the end of 1999 was \$110 per week, whereas the rental for a three bedroom house was \$150 per week. These rentals are considerably higher than found in other rural towns (cf. \$90-100 per week for a three bedroom house in Riverton) in Southland, and are beyond the budgets of low income families.

Dwelling tenure also reflects the place that tourism occupies in the local economy. The higher incidence of rented accommodation in Te Anau, and the correspondingly lower incidence of owner-occupied houses is

consistent with a tourism dominated workforce (see Table 9). Jobs in the tourism industry are typically of a less permanent nature. For instance, they are usually part-time and seasonal. Te Anau is no exception. The lower proportion of owned houses, especially those owned without a mortgage may reflect the lower proportion of retirement aged people in the centre. Typically, older people are more likely to own their dwellings.

*Table 9: Tenure of Dwellings in Te Anau - 1996*

Form of Tenure	% of dwellings	
	Te Anau	New Zealand
Provided rent free	5.3	3.7
Rented	28.9	22.9
Owned with a mortgage	29.8	35.2
Owned without a mortgage	28.0	31.1
Total number of dwellings	675	1,276,332

Source: New Zealand Census 1996

Compared with rural centres overall, there was almost twice the proportion of unoccupied dwellings in Te Anau (see Table 10). The unoccupied dwellings were probably holiday homes, the first of which were built in the 1930's. With subsequent subdivisions in the 1940's and since, further crib/bach development has occurred and continues - for instance with the recent subdivision of land acquired by Ngai Tahu through their settlement.

*Table 10: Unoccupied Private Dwellings in Te Anau - 1996*

	Number of Occupied Private Dwellings	Number of Unoccupied Private Dwellings	Total Private Dwellings	Unoccupied Dwellings as per cent of Total Private Dwellings
Te Anau	675	339	1,014	33.4
All Rural Centres	29,349	6,275	35,624	17.6

Source: New Zealand Census 1996

## Health

Te Anau has a Health Centre which is owned by a medical trust and is managed by a committee that has representatives from the community. Its catchment area is south to Monowai, Centre Hill and Hollyford. The Health Centre has three full-time doctors, a part-time doctor, and four part-time practice nurses. The high volume of visitors to the district means that residents have the services of a larger number of doctors than they could otherwise expect. Tourists are between 20-25 per cent of the Health Centre's patients in the summer, and about 10 per cent in the winter. Two physiotherapists, and several visiting, private, specialists also use the Health centre to provide services to local residents.

The Te Anau district also has the services of public health nurses and a Plunket nurse. A para-medic, who looks after the occupational related injuries of the construction workers, is based at West Arm. People who require hospitalisation must travel to Invercargill.

The Health Centre also acts as a casualty clearing station for the emergency services in the district. There are volunteer ambulance and fire services in the town. The latter has an "*emergency respond tender*", and a helicopter link with local knowledge of the national park.



Health needs identified as still lacking include substance abuse services, inadequate mental health care, midwifery, facilities for the elderly and a mortuary. Particular needs are created by visitors who do not speak English, and facilities for trauma care with potential accidents of tourist vehicles, particularly in isolated areas (Brown, 1999).

## **Education and training**

Te Anau has a secondary school and a primary school. Fiordland College was established in 1974 (John Bamford Associates, 1984: 134). It is a form one to seven school with 270 pupils and 20 teachers in 1999. The roll has remained fairly stable over the last few years (265-275 pupils), although there was some increase when the tail race project began at Manapouri. Fiordland College has a large catchment area including Mararoa, Milford, and Manapouri. About half the school's pupils come to school by bus, and some of them travel for more than an hour. There is a high turnover in the school roll which is partly due to the mobility of workers who are employed in the tourist industry.

The primary school at Te Anau provides education up to year six level. Its catchment area includes Milford, Manapouri, and Kakap Road. The roll in 1999 was 240, and had dropped from its peak of 260 around 1984 when 50 children were from families associated with the Manapouri power scheme (John Bamford Associates, 1984: 135). Nowadays the school has 11 teachers and teachers' aides, and there are about 20 families with children at the school that depend on the tail-race project for their income. The demographic composition of the pupils is relatively cosmopolitan due to the type of skills required by people working in construction and tourist activities. Like the College, the primary school experiences a drop in its rolls at the end of May with the departure of seasonal workers in the tourism industry, and a boost in late September when they return to the town.

There are few training courses available for either school leavers or long-term unemployed people at Te Anau. Those young people from the town who want further education either go to Otago University, a College of Education or a Polytechnic. Some outside organisations such as Frontline Training from Invercargill and Wanaka Enterprises have run courses at the Fiordland Employment Centre. Frontline Training has conducted hospitality, retailing and computer courses, while Wanaka Enterprises has provided training for business people. Some employers in the district also undertake in-house training for their staff.

## **Agencies and social welfare organisations**

DOC's relationship with the tourism industry has been discussed in an earlier section. Landcorp is another government agency that has a strong presence in the Te Anau district. In a previous incarnation it was responsible for a scheme in the 1960's that opened up land in the area to agriculture and attracted new settlers. The last ballot for this scheme was held in 1981. Landcorp still owns thousands of acres of land in the district, some of which Ngai Tahu had an option to purchase under their settlement.

Apart from DOC and Landcorp the presence of government agencies at Te Anau is very limited. The police station is responsible for Manapouri and Milford as well as Te Anau. It is staffed by three officers, a receptionist, and a part-time person who is responsible for firearms licences. Formerly, the station had two officers, but ten years ago it was increased to three because of the rising crime rate and population growth in the district.

For the past four years the Work and Income NZ (WINZ) and its predecessors have visited the town for a half day every month. Two officers meet people by appointment, and assess their welfare entitlements and job prospects. WINZ has few long-term unemployed clients in the Te Anau area as many of them obtain part-time work. Unemployment during the off season is not confined to any particular social group. When they visit Te Anau the WINZ officers are based at the office of the Fiordland Employment Centre (FEC). Other agencies that also use this office as a base include the Probation Service, CYF, Victim Support, Workbridge, the Community Law Centre, and the Budget Advisory Service.

The Fiordland Employment Centre matches job applicants with positions. It is operated by volunteers and a paid coordinator funded by Taskforce Green. Retail jobs are filled directly "*from the street*" as people walk in looking for employment, while farmers contact the FEC to find labourers, and shearing contractors to employ cooks. The number of job vacancies notified to the FEC every month may vary widely, with six being advised in September 1998 and 66 in September 1999.

Another community based welfare agency is the Fiordland Community Organisation (FCO), which employs a full-time coordinator to work in the district. The coordinator's salary is funded by grants from the Lotteries Commission and other government sources. The FCO provides information; referrals to services and agencies; assistance to meet recreational, education, welfare needs; funding; resources; support; and training. These services are open to families, individuals, groups, and organisations. Employment and tourism issues are referred to other agencies.

## COMMUNITY

### Community attitudes and values

Community attitudes to tourism development are varied. In general, there is an acceptance by those outside of the industry that tourism is a central part of the economy. A tourist operator, however, considered that some people within the community resent the prosperity of major enterprises such as Fiordland Travel. Another informant noted that the major tourism developers are quiet operators who don't contribute much to the community, explaining that there are a lot of "*die hard, do-it-yourself people here and in business*" who are "*relatively greedy*". Other informants described the community as "*sophisticated*", as welcoming of outsiders and a place where a lot of people came "*to make the industry tick*", as "*a young place*" which lacks support for the elderly, or as a "*social town*" where people "*fit in*". Comparisons were also made between the work ethic of Te Anau's residents with the "*party town*" atmosphere of Queenstown. People commented that they do not want Te Anau to develop tourism along the same lines as Queenstown.

There are social divisions within the community between farmers and tourist operators who have contrasting views of how local resources should be managed, and between permanent residents and seasonal workers who have varying degrees of attachment to the community. Some tourist operators who have arrived in Te Anau during the last ten years are anxious to conserve the physical environment in the state they found it, whereas some longer term residents have a frontier approach to development. The latter category was described by one of our informants as "*cowboys*" with a "*pioneer mentality [who] - do it anyway, then ask*".

### Community leadership and organisations

Te Anau has a range of community organisations, sports teams, churches and interest groups, including volunteer ambulance and fire brigade, scouting activities and a yacht club. There are fewer sports clubs than formerly as people are more heavily involved with other activities particularly during the summer (tourist) season. It is also more difficult to find people willing to join committees, although this is a common experience in rural communities. Many of the workers in the district are itinerant, and thus are less likely to become involved in community activities than longer term residents. Although some wives of management staff at the tail race project have been prepared to participate in community organisations.

### Social problems

Te Anau has shared many of the problems that have faced other rural communities in New Zealand with the restructuring of the economy during the 1980's. Kerr and his colleagues (Kerr *et al.*, 1990: 22), for instance, noted ten years ago that there was a lack of permanent jobs in the district for young people, and that there had been an increase in the use of alcohol. They also highlighted the predicament of people receiving welfare payments: "There are some local beneficiaries, including a few who have moved into town and rent local

housing. These are not seen as permanent settlers. Consequently they can sometimes feel isolated and lonely, especially those women with young children who have no support systems.”

The seasonal nature of tourism activities, the geographical isolation of the district, and the presence of an itinerant workforce are significant factors contributing to the social problems experienced by the community at Te Anau. Incomes derived from seasonal work cause budgeting difficulties for some families, while other families where both parents are employed do not always ensure that their children are adequately supervised. Lack of parental supervision was held responsible for a growing incidence in the town of alcohol abuse by teenagers. Ready employment opportunities and income were other factors cited for use of alcohol by youth. Alcohol is also a factor in marital problems, as well as occupations where partners have to work away from home, or have two or three separate jobs, tax relationships within the family. A community worker observed that currently there are 12 to 15 families in the district that are having their relationships “*rearranged*” each year.

Like other parts of rural New Zealand alcohol and drug abuse is a major issue. One of our informants commented that there are “*some big earners here and vices creep in when money is available*”. The local agencies that deal with these forms of abuse are reported to be overloaded. Visitors to Te Anau bring in “*dope*”, and there are local drug activities with gang connections which have coincided with the planting of forests in the district.

The crime rate in the Te Anau district has risen since the 1980's due to the growth and greater mobility of the population. Traffic offences are the source of a lot of complaints to local police, and although there are relatively few, drug offenders create a lot of work for them. Noisy parties and disorderly behaviour are other issues that police regularly have to address.

### **Maori population**

People identifying themselves as Maori comprised seven per cent of Te Anau's population in 1996 (cf. 15 per cent for NZ). The number of Maori in the district has grown during the last decade. They have taken jobs as tunnellers on the tail race project at Manapouri and as forestry workers. Some of these newcomers have gang affiliations, and others have a transient lifestyle. There is no marae or community centre for Maori in the Te Anau district.

Ngai Tahu have developed a subdivision in the town and hold options over the remaining farms owned by Landcorp as part of the settlement of their claim under the Treaty of Waitangi. These properties are leased by local farmers who have had their contracts ‘rolled over’ for another year. Other land formerly owned by Landcorp has been sold off in parcels. Local agricultural contractors are only obtaining essential work from leaseholders, and Landcorp has suspended development work on its properties as it awaits the outcome of the settlement process with Ngai Tahu. The uncertainty associated with Ngai Tahu's involvement in the development of residential and rural land has generated some concern in the Te Anau community. It was also pointed out that the wider community has not always seen the potential advantages of capital and investment by Ngai Tahu in the town.

### **Women, young people and the elderly**

Women have access to a wide range of jobs in the tourist industry at Te Anau. Sometimes both parents in a family are employed in the industry, and, as has already been discussed, this may place strain on family relationships and leave children unsupervised. Working mothers with young children can use the town's childcare centre during their hours of employment. However, those women who remain at home, either by choice or by circumstance, may feel isolated from the rest of community. Newcomers to Te Anau are particularly vulnerable in this regard.

Unlike other parts of rural New Zealand unemployment is not a major issue for the young people of Te Anau. Many teenagers still at secondary school have part-time jobs, and there is plenty of seasonal work, particularly in the tourist industry, for school leavers. Seasonal work, however, can pose difficulties for those young people as they are unable to manage their time and money well, and may lapse into petty crime or alcohol/drug abuse. Young people from other parts of the country come to Te Anau for the tourist season to earn higher incomes and enjoy the lifestyle. Local youth are sometimes drawn into the lifestyle of these newcomers: a lifestyle that is based on short-term relationships, and with little commitment to the community. Te Anau, like other rural towns of its size, has plenty of activities for young people who enjoy the outdoors, but lacks the wide variety of leisure pursuits of an urban environment. One informant observed that the youth of the town want a place to 'hang out' and this issue is currently being addressed by the community.

Elderly people, as noted earlier, comprised only eight per cent of Te Anau's population in 1996, although their number is growing. There is some pensioner housing in the town, but it is insufficient to meet the needs of senior citizens who are a much higher proportion of the population than they were twenty years ago (four per cent - 1981). When elderly people become less able to care for themselves, moreover, there is neither the facilities nor the support network to enable them to remain in Te Anau. Another issue for unemployed older people who are yet to reach retirement age is the difficulty of obtaining a job in tourism as it tends to be a young person's industry.

## CONCLUSION

Te Anau is a community with a solid economic base in tourism. It is the base for management of the Fiordland National Park and several major walking tracks. In addition to tourism, farming, fishing, forestry and hydroelectricity generation are important components of the economy. The economy has, however, experienced a number of resource-based cycles, including some distinct booms and busts in the tourism sector. Overall the community has struggled to develop a sustainable approach to tourism development.

Despite the vicissitudes of tourism, however, there is good provision of medical, educational and other community services in Te Anau. Hospital services, and most government services and agencies are centralised in Invercargill, which means Te Anau is also relatively isolated. There are a number of retail facilities such as super markets and a chemist, plus craft shops and cafes, although there is also evidence of retail leakage to Invercargill. There is a strong demand for labour, at least on a part time and seasonal basis. As this research programme has found for other communities with their economies based on tourism, Te Anau has more economic strength and vitality of infrastructure and services than rural communities of similar size.

Furthermore, there has been an evident strengthening of leadership and strategic thinking since the economic downturn of the mid 1980's, and despite transient, seasonal workers and the existence of typical community factions. Unlike communities that have lost key people from out migration, Te Anau has retained and developed leaders. The community has also attracted innovative people and entrepreneurs into the area, although there is not always a positive response to outsider investors. The main street has been redeveloped and new community facilities built. There is still considerable work needed to develop a strategic vision for a robust economy and lively community, and to continue with the necessary development of infrastructure and services for a growing population and increasing numbers of visitors.

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