









































### **1.4.1.3 Uneven population growth across the district**

- (a) The spatial distribution of growth is expected to be very uneven over the next twenty years, with higher rates of population and dwelling growth in the northern urban towns of Pokeno, Tuakau, and Te Kauwhata, and in the south, in Tamahere and the 'Hamilton periphery' area. By comparison, the central area of the district is projected to remain fairly static. People are drawn to the greater economic opportunities, connectivity, and access to services of urban areas, and particularly to larger urban areas. Another trend is the depopulation of the more remote rural areas that is expected to continue with ageing of the population. This trend could be accentuated with the Waikato Expressway by passing the central Waikato towns of Huntly and Ngaruawahia.

### **1.4.2 Economic growth**

- (a) The New Zealand economy has grown by 2.5 % per annum over the last decade, but expanded by 2.7% over the year to March 2017—its fastest pace of growth since 2008 (Infometrics 2014).<sup>1</sup> The Waikato Region contributes about 9% to New Zealand's gross domestic product (GDP) and has grown by 2.1% p.a. over the last decade (Waikato Economic Development Strategy 2013). Of New Zealand's regions, Waikato makes the fourth-largest contribution to the New Zealand economy behind Auckland, Canterbury, and Wellington respectively. Economic growth in Waikato district has averaged 0.8% p.a. over the past decade. The economic growth can be largely attributed to primary industry, which as of 2014 accounts for more than a third of the district's GDP (Waikato District Annual Economic Profile, Infometrics 2014).

#### **1.4.2.1 Economic sectors**

- (a) Pastoral farming has been the mainstay of the economy for over 100 years. The combined Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing sector accounts for 29% of employment (2016) and 35% of business units, ahead of construction and manufacturing (both 11% of employment), population-based services of education (8%), trades (6%), and health (5%).
- (b) The structure of the economy is consistent with Waikato district's size and resource base, and its location relative to two much larger urban economies—Hamilton City in the south and Auckland to the north. These larger urban economies Auckland and Hamilton<sup>2</sup> have long been the destination for much of Waikato's primary production—to be processed together with that from other rural economies in the Waikato region—and the large service centres from which the Waikato community draws many of its retail goods and the household services. Only those services for which proximity to the resident population is important—school education and health services—have a moderate presence in Waikato itself.
- (c) This pattern is also consistent with the geography of the district. The relatively sparse population supported by the hill country in the west, and the natural orientation to towns outside the district for farming areas in the north (Pukekohe) and east (Morrinsville), together with the presence of the larger urban economies, has meant that Waikato has only six towns of substantial size, and these have predominantly farm and population-servicing roles.

#### **1.4.2.2 Advantages**

- (a) From an economic perspective the district has a number of strategic advantages, including:
- (i) good 'locational efficiency' in relation to distance from and accessibility to the proposed Ruakura hub;
  - (ii) main north-south transport corridor (road and rail); and
  - (iii) the ports of Auckland and Tauranga.









































