

Harnessing the hinterland: understanding the role of rural and small town New Zealand as a powerhouse of our economy, and how they are contributing to rebuilding community

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Research Foci:

- A-Understanding the socio-economic trends in rural districts and small town New Zealand:
- B-Understanding the implications of these trends
- C-Understanding local response to these trends
- D-Understanding policy and research implications

The Literature

A literature review is also underway, drawing insights from international and NZ literature about:

A) International:

- Demographic trends – growing & shrinking towns & rural areas
- Economic & social restructuring – processes & local response
- Themes – post production, multi-functionalism, EEG

B) New Zealand:

- History of rural and small town change & implications for Māori
- Neoliberalism & regional development
- Māori
- Local development trends and responses
- Policy

Field Research

- In progress (study started in April 2018)
- Will build on established rural / small town research base.
- Three study regions:
 - - Taranaki, West Coast, Southland/Clutha
- Establishing links with Māori and local institutions / stake-holders
- Co-construction of knowledge
- Will both assess current / past development interventions and seek to contribute to new thinking.

Preliminary Findings:

- Desktop phase:
- - key themes in the literature identified
- - rethink of rural discourse and change
- - statistical overview – pop & eco change in study areas
- Field research:
- Started work in Taranaki
- On-going work in Clutha / West Coast
- Establishing links with Māori organizations

