



*Mount Taranaki, and the Kaitake and Pouakai ranges are undeniably significant landscapes.*

## Significant landscapes

A striking feature from any viewing point, Mount Taranaki dominates the landscape in the region. Alongside the region's hillcountry landscapes, coastal and marine features, and rivers and lakes, the mountain is a significant and valued part of Taranaki's identity.

Natural landscapes have considerable character and appeal—many having cultural significance for Māori. Landscape incorporates not only natural and physical features but also includes social and cultural factors. Various studies, surveys and public consultations conducted in the region show that many of Taranaki's natural features and landscapes are highly valued for their scenic, visual or aesthetic appeal. They also have social, cultural and historical associations.

While the RMA states that protecting the region's outstanding natural features and landscapes from inappropriate use and development is a matter of national importance, people value things differently based on their social and cultural perception. There is no universally accepted definition of what makes a natural feature or landscape outstanding. Landscape architects and other experts in the field have developed some recognised techniques to assess and evaluate landscapes and features of value. Councils in Taranaki use these techniques to identify outstanding landscapes and natural features within their boundaries in order to preserve their value.

## New Plymouth district

The New Plymouth District Council identifies Mount Taranaki and the Kaitake and Pouakai ranges within Egmont National Park as outstanding landscapes within the New Plymouth district.

They also identify the coastal terrace between Mōhakatino and Whitecliffs; Whitecliffs and its associated conservation forest; Ngāmotu and Paritūtū; and eight river mouths—Mōhakatino, Tongaporutu, Mimi, Urenui, Onaero, Waiongana, Tapuae and Stony (Hangatahua)—as regionally significant landscapes.

## What's the story?

In the New Plymouth district no significant landscapes identified are currently under threat from any development activities.

In 2006, NPDC identified that new development and scattered buildings had begun to affect the landscape up to the bush line of Mount Taranaki and the northern slopes of the Pouakai and Kaitake ranges. The area was noted as showing signs of becoming a 'threshold area'—in transition from being of rural character to something else. As a result, NPDC initiated a district plan change aimed at regulating the scale, location, density and land use of subdivision in the rural environment.

In response, there was a significant spike in rural subdivision applications in 2010/2011 before the plan change was due to come into effect, but many of these subdivisions have not subsequently been built on. After the plan change, rural subdivisions reduced dramatically.



*In the Stratford district, a range of mountain views are considered significant.*

## Stratford district

Mount Taranaki and the Egmont National Park also dominate the landscape in the Stratford district. Of particular significance are views of Mount Taranaki from State Highway 3, Pembroke Road, Monmouth Road, Opunake Road, Manaia Road north of Opunake Road, and Sangster's Hill. Also included are views from the Strathmore, Pohokura, Whangamōmona and Tahora Saddles along State Highway 43. The eastern hill country also has significant scenic natural features and landscapes, particularly views of the hill country along State Highway 43 (the Forgotten World Highway).

## What's the story?

In the Stratford district, there have been no developments within the district that have significantly impacted overall landscape qualities in the past six years.



*State Highway 43, also known as the Forgotten World Highway, runs 158 kilometres from Stratford to Taumarunui.*



## South Taranaki district

Mount Taranaki is visible from many parts of the South Taranaki district and is regarded as a significant landscape feature. The South Taranaki District Council identifies a further 35 significant natural areas within its boundaries including:

- ▷ Egmont National Park, noted for its significant indigenous forest and associated habitat
- ▷ the volcanic ring plain surrounding the mountain, including the distinctive lahar mounds in the northern part of the district
- ▷ the coastal strip that runs the entire length of the western and southern boundaries of the district and includes dunelands and uplifted marine terraces
- ▷ the rivers flowing from the mountain in a distinctive radial pattern
- ▷ the rugged eastern hill country comprising strongly rolling to steeply dissected hills.

### What's the story?

Since 2008, interest in coastal subdivision has reduced in the South Taranaki district. This can be attributed to district plan controls introduced in 2005 and unfavourable economic conditions over the past five years.

An increase in landfarming has impacted coastal dune systems. Currently, this impact is very localised rather than district-wide. Otherwise, there has been little change in pressure on significant landscapes in the South Taranaki district in the past six years. As part of its district plan review, STDC is undertaking a landscape assessment of the district to help enhance natural landscapes and protect them from adverse environmental effects of future activities.



*Coastal areas in the South Taranaki district are highly valued landscapes.*

### Find out more

- 🔗 *Grand makeover nears end (Taranaki Daily News, February 2015) [tinyurl.com/TRC7f](https://tinyurl.com/TRC7f)*
- Heritage New Zealand website [tinyurl.com/TRC7d](https://tinyurl.com/TRC7d)*
- New Plymouth District Plan [tinyurl.com/TRC7a](https://tinyurl.com/TRC7a)*
- South Taranaki District Plan [tinyurl.com/TRC7c](https://tinyurl.com/TRC7c)*
- Stratford District Plan [tinyurl.com/TRC7b](https://tinyurl.com/TRC7b)*
- White Hart Hotel (Architecture Now, October 2012) [tinyurl.com/TRC7e](https://tinyurl.com/TRC7e)*