

# LANDSCAPE AND LANDFORM FEATURES

## What the Act says

The Waitakere Ranges Heritage Area Act 2008 identifies the following features relating to landscape and landform in the Waitakere Ranges and foothills:

- Different classes of natural landforms and landscapes that contrast and connect with each other, and collectively give the area its distinctive character;
- The dramatic landform of the Ranges and foothills which is the visual backdrop to Auckland City, forming its western skyline;
- The quietness and darkness of the Ranges;
- The eastern foothills which act as a buffer, and provide a transition, between metropolitan Auckland and the forested ranges and coast; and
- The way natural and rural landscapes are dominant over built development. This is seen in:
  - The distinctive harmony, pleasantness, and coherence of buildings located in regenerating, and increasingly dominant, forest settings; and
  - The rural character of the foothills and their intricate pattern of farmland, orchards, vineyards, uncultivated areas, indigenous vegetation, and dispersed low-density development with few urban-scale activities.

## Landscapes and landforms in the Oratia / Waiaatarua Area

Landscape and landform information for the Oratia / Waiaatarua area is found on the [landscape heritage features map](#) along with a [description of the map](#). Based on the report *Waitakere Ranges Landscape Study: Stage 1* (Melean Absolum Ltd, 2004) the area can be divided into areas which include:

- Core Ranges: Relatively steep with steep gullies and extensive and dominant native vegetation. The landform beneath this vegetation is also a key feature.
- Upper foothills: Similar characteristics to the Core Ranges but development is more extensive. The middle catchment has rolling ridgelines and valleys. Grazing and horticultural land uses in the past saw extensive clearance, particularly of the flatter ridge tops. The area includes broad expanses of native forest with some residential development and moderate to steep slopes. The landscape is strongly influenced by native vegetation with horticultural crops and grazing in some areas.
- Lower foothills: Generally lower and more undulating topography with fewer patches of remnant native vegetation. Generally east facing with horticultural activity dominating the character including vineyards, shelterbelts and orchards. The area is also increasingly characterised by countryside-living style development.

The Waitakere Ranges Landscape Study also identifies the following landscape threats in the area.

- In upper catchment:
  - Inappropriate residential development
  - Suburban details being established eg: kerb and channel and street lighting.
- In lower catchment:
  - Inappropriate residential development – prominent/striking colour or design
  - Small lot sizes leading to inadequate separation between developments and loss of rural character
  - Extensive vegetation removal/earthworks
  - Removal of shelterbelts and orchards