

# **Ashburton District Population Facts & Figures**

**February 2008**

*Disclaimer:*

*Every effort has been made to ensure the information contained in this report is accurate and up to date at the time of publishing. Care needs to be taken in interpreting the information and analysis contained in this document. Population forecasting is not an exact science and is intended to show probable trends only.*

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## Overview

The purpose of this report is to provide a brief overview of changes the Ashburton District population has experienced over the last three census cycles (1991 – 2006), and what current population projections predict for the future.

The key findings of this report are that the Ashburton District has a:

- **Growing Population** – And expected to reach a population of 33600 by 2031. Ashburton District is one of New Zealand's fastest growing rural districts. Statistics New Zealand population projections predict continued population growth in the district, with the growth in the current census cycle (2006-2011) expected to be 5.5%, or an additional 1600 residents. This will have implications for housing, transport, essential services (such as water and waste water), community services and facilities, and health services.
- **Ageing Population** – The number of people in the 'Over 65 years' age group is expected to double by 2031, with decreasing proportions of the population in the 'Working' group (aged between 15 – 64 years) and 'Children' group of the population (aged under 15 years). An ageing population will impact on both the community services and facilities required and demanded, and the ability of the declining working populations' ability to fund such community services and facilities.
- **Increasing Ethnic Diversity** – Ashburton Districts' population has historically been overwhelmingly European in ethnicity. While this is still the case the population is becoming more ethnically diverse as new residents make Ashburton District their home. Ashburton District is still *less* ethnically diverse than national averages. An implication of an increasingly diverse population is the increased need for additional support services to assist the newcomer settling-in process.

## Data Source

The statistics used in this report have been sourced from Statistics New Zealand Census data (1991 – 2006) and the latest Statistics New Zealand Population Projections released in December 2007.

The latest Population Projections provide a 25 year view of the low, medium and high growth scenarios for the district. The projections are based on assumptions made about future fertility rates, mortality and internal and external migration patterns of the population.

Given recent population growth trends in Ashburton District during the latest census cycle (2001 – 2006) Statistics New Zealand's 'high' population growth projection has been used for this report (refer to the Data Limitation discussion at the end of this report for the table of all population projections).

These 'high' population projections are consistent with population growth forecasts included in the Ashburton District Development Plan, derived from building consent, subdivision consent, school roll and real estate data.

As with all statistical information, there are limitations of the data used. Assumptions have been made about the data used for this report regarding population projections, ethnicity data and Ashburton District growth. These assumptions are explained in the Data Limitations section of the report.

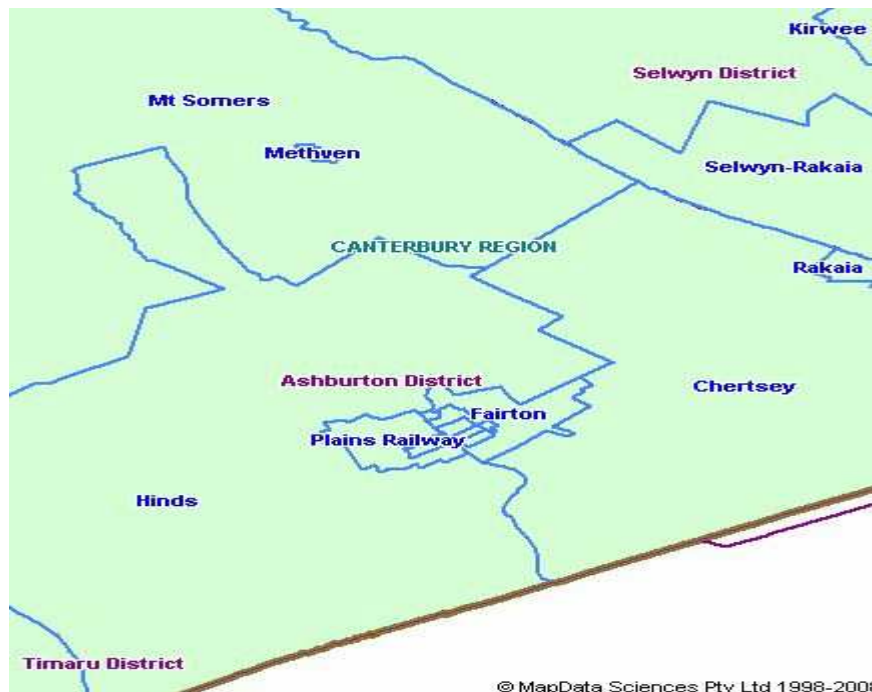
## Introduction

### Ashburton District Population – 2006 Census

Area Unit	2001 Census Usually Resident Population	2006 Census Usually Resident Population	2001 – 2006 Population Increase	
			N	%
<b>Ashburton District</b>	25443	27372	1929	7.6%
Ashburton	15570	16884	1314	8.4%
Chertsey	1920	2076	156	8.1%
Hinds	3348	3702	354	10.6%
Methven	1134	1326	192	14.5%
Mt Somers	2307	2361	54	2.3%
Rakaia	960	1068	108	11.2%

Table 1. Ashburton District Population 2001 – 2006 Census Cycle  
Source: Statistics New Zealand: Sub-national Population Counts and Projections

The population of the Ashburton District is shown in Table 1 above. Over 60% of the Ashburton District population lives in the urban area of Ashburton, with the remaining residing in rural towns or areas of the district. The census area unit of Hinds is the largest rural town / area within the district, followed by Mt Somers and Chertsey. Methven and Rakaia follow, however it is important to note that these area units are for the townships only and, unlike the area units of Hinds, Mt Somers and Chertsey, do not include the surrounding rural area.



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Map one: Ashburton District Census Area Unit Boundaries  
Source: Statistics New Zealand Web Map Boundaries

The statistics shown are counts of the 'Usually Resident Population' in each Census Area Unit within Ashburton District from Statistics New Zealand 2006 Census data. Ashburton District has 0.7% of the total New Zealand population, and is ranked 42<sup>nd</sup> in size of the 73 city and district councils in New Zealand

This report shows some key population trends have emerged in Ashburton District, and others that are likely to emerge, that will need to be recognised in future planning processes. This information is vital for organisations like Council that provide essential infrastructure and services to the community. It will also be of interest to variety of central government and community organisations and to the private sector in their own planning processes.

An analysis of the information contained in this report has highlighted the points that may have policy implications in the future of the District; these will be discussed in each section under the heading of 'What Could this Mean?'

## Population

### Population Growth

#### Ashburton District Population Growth & Projection 1996 - 2031

	<i>Estimated Resident Population</i>	<i>'High' Population Estimates (December 2007)</i>	<i>5 year Numeric Change</i>	<i>5 year Percentage Change</i>
<b>1996</b>	25700			
<b>2001</b>	26000		300	1.20%
<b>2006</b>	28000		2000	7.70%
<b>2011</b>		29600	1600	5.70%
<b>2016</b>		30800	1200	4.00%
<b>2021</b>		31800	1000	3.20%
<b>2026</b>		32800	1000	3.10%
<b>2031</b>		33600	800	2.40%

Table 2. Actual and Forecast Population Growth in Ashburton District.

Source: Statistics New Zealand: Sub-national Population Estimates, Counts and Projections

### What is this about?

Table 2 shows the changes in the estimated population of the Ashburton District since 1996 and the current population growth forecasts produced by Statistics New Zealand.

The estimated resident population is higher than the census usually resident population count (as used in Table one) because adjustments are made for residents who were missed or counted more than once by the census (net census undercount), and for residents who were temporarily overseas on census night. The estimated resident population of Ashburton District at 30 June 2006 (28,000) is used as the base (starting point) for population projections.

Population growth or decline occurs as a result of two drivers; natural population change (number of births and numbers of deaths), and through net migration gains or losses. Together these two factors give overall population growth or decline.

The population estimates (highlighted in yellow in Table 2) are sourced from the latest Population Projections released by Statistics New Zealand. The 'High' population projections have been used for this table, as these are currently considered the most realistic projection for the district. The decision to use the 'high' growth forecast is based on the rapid growth in the district over the past 5-6 years and a belief that this trend will continue in the short to medium term. These growth forecasts correlate closely with population projections contained in the Ashburton District Development Plan derived from recent building consent, subdivision consent, school roll and real estate data. (For further information regarding population forecasts, please refer to the Data Limitations at the end of this report for a copy of the table of population projections for the district).

### Key Points

- The population in the Ashburton District has grown 8.9% in the 10 years since 1996, strongly at odds with previous population predictions from Statistics New Zealand which forecast low or no growth over this period.
- The District's population increased by 7.7% during the last census period (2001-2006), and is projected to continue to grow over 20%, from the current population, over the next 25 years.
- The main cause of population growth during the 2001 – 2006 census cycle has been the arrival of international migrants to the district, accounting for 62% of population growth in this period (N = 1194). Natural population increase (more births than deaths) and internal migration have accounted for the remaining growth.
- From 2001 – 06 the population growth in the Ashburton District make it one of the fastest growing districts in the country not directly linked to the urban growth of a nearby city and is among the fastest growing districts with a local economy focused on agriculture.

Ashburton District's current high rates of population growth are being driven primarily by strong growth in the local economy attracting new residents to live and work in the district. The growth in the local economy is due mainly to changing land use (primarily to dairying) and growth in value-added manufacturing (meat, seed and vegetable processing and light industrial manufacturing).

### What Could this Mean?

#### Impacts of a Growing Population

- **Housing** – The District's population is forecast to increase by 1600 over the 5 years 2006-2011. Using an average household size of 3 people per house this could necessitate a need for up to 530 new dwellings over this period. The majority of new housing is likely to be in the Ashburton urban area but strong growth is also likely in Rakaia and Methven and on rural properties. Housing growth in the District's villages is constrained by limited core infrastructure such as water and waste water.
- **Transport** – The District has a high number of vehicles per household, the 2006 census highlighted that 60% of the districts households have access to two or more vehicles. The forecasted population growth could mean an extra 1050 cars on the District's roads over the next 5 years.



- **Essential Services** – Provision of additional new core infrastructure in Ashburton Methven and Rakaia is unlikely to be problematic. However, as mentioned above, housing growth in the District's villages is constrained by limited core infrastructure such as water and waste water. Decisions will need to be made about where growth will be able to occur.
  
- **Community Services and Facilities** – A growing population will create additional demand for community sporting, recreational and cultural facilities and services. Community organisations are already feeling the strain of a growing population demanding services of them and Council is looking at ways to improve central government service provision in the District.
  
- **Health Services** – Health services in the Ashburton District will be pressured in the future by an ageing population, and by a growing young population (children aged under 10 years) in the near-future with an increased birth-rate expected for the next ten to fifteen years.

## Population

### Population Growth – Ashburton District Area Unit level

#### Ashburton District Area Unit Population Growth 1991 - 2006

		Resident Population)	5 year Numeric Change	5 Year percentage change	Total Growth 1991 - 2006
<b>Rakaia</b>	1991	762			<b>35.75%</b>
	1996	882	120	15.70%	
	2001	960	78	8.80%	
	2006	1068	108	11.25%	
<b>Methven</b>	1991	975			<b>32.50%</b>
	1996	1074	99	10.10%	
	2001	1134	60	5.50%	
	2006	1326	192	16.90%	
<b>Chertsey</b>	1991	1755			<b>17.27%</b>
	1996	1854	99	5.60%	
	2001	1920	66	3.55%	
	2006	2076	156	8.12%	
<b>Ashburton</b>	1991	15174			<b>11.26%</b>
	1996	15594	420	2.8%	
	2001	15570	-24	-0.1%	
	2006	16884	1314	8.4%	
<b>Hinds</b>	1991	3363			<b>10.13%</b>
	1996	3291	-72	-2.10%	
	2001	3348	57	1.73%	
	2006	3702	354	10.50%	
<b>Mt Somers</b>	1991	2316			<b>1.95%</b>
	1996	2292	-24	-1.00%	
	2001	2307	15	0.65%	
	2006	2361	54	2.30%	
<b>Ashburton District</b>	1991	24702			<b>10.50%</b>
	1996	25179	477	1.90%	
	2001	25443	264	1.00%	
	2006	27372	1929	7.60%	

Table 3. Population Growth at the Census Area Unit Level.

Sourced: Statistics New Zealand: Sub-national Population – Census Usually Resident population

#### What is this about?

Table 3 shows population changes at an area unit level over the past three census cycles. This shows that population increases have been strongest over the most recent census period.

Percentage growth over the last 15 years has been strongest in the Rakaia and Methven census area units. The Ashburton urban population has grown strongly in the latest census period after 10 years of low or no growth. The rural areas have grown strongly in the last census period also, particularly in the parts of the District with irrigable land.

**Note:** Census Area Unit population projections are not available until mid 2008. They will be added when available.

### Key Points

- From 1991 – 2006 the Rakaia population proportionally grew the most in the Ashburton District, followed closely by Methven.
- From 1991 – 1996 the Ashburton population was relatively static. From 2001 – 2006 the Ashburton population grew 8.4%, one of the highest rates of growth for a large rural town in New Zealand.
- The area unit of Hinds has experienced exceptional growth (10.13%) over the 15 year period. From 1991 – 1996 the Hinds population declined -2.1%, remarkably in the 2001 – 2006 census cycle the population grew by 10.5%.
- Chertsey has grown by 17.27% from 1991 – 2006, with a total population in 2006 of 2076.
- While the area of Mt Somers has not experienced the same levels of growth other areas in the district have over the 15 year period measured, it has experienced gradual growth (1.95% 1991 – 2006).

### What Could this Mean?

#### ***Where is the population growth likely to be?***

- With Ashburton accounting for over half of the District population it can be expected that over half of the population growth will be in and around the Ashburton urban area. With the expected building consent numbers totalling over 500 in the next 5 years, 300 of these can be expected to be built in the greater Ashburton urban area.
- Rakaia and Methven are likely to be the proportionally fastest growing area units in the district, given the high population increase over the last census cycle.
- Council has a District Development Plan that indicates where land might best be rezoned to accommodate future growth. A similar plan for the District's villages is currently being developed.

**Population**  
**Population Age Groups**

**Ashburton District Population Ages 1996 - 2031**

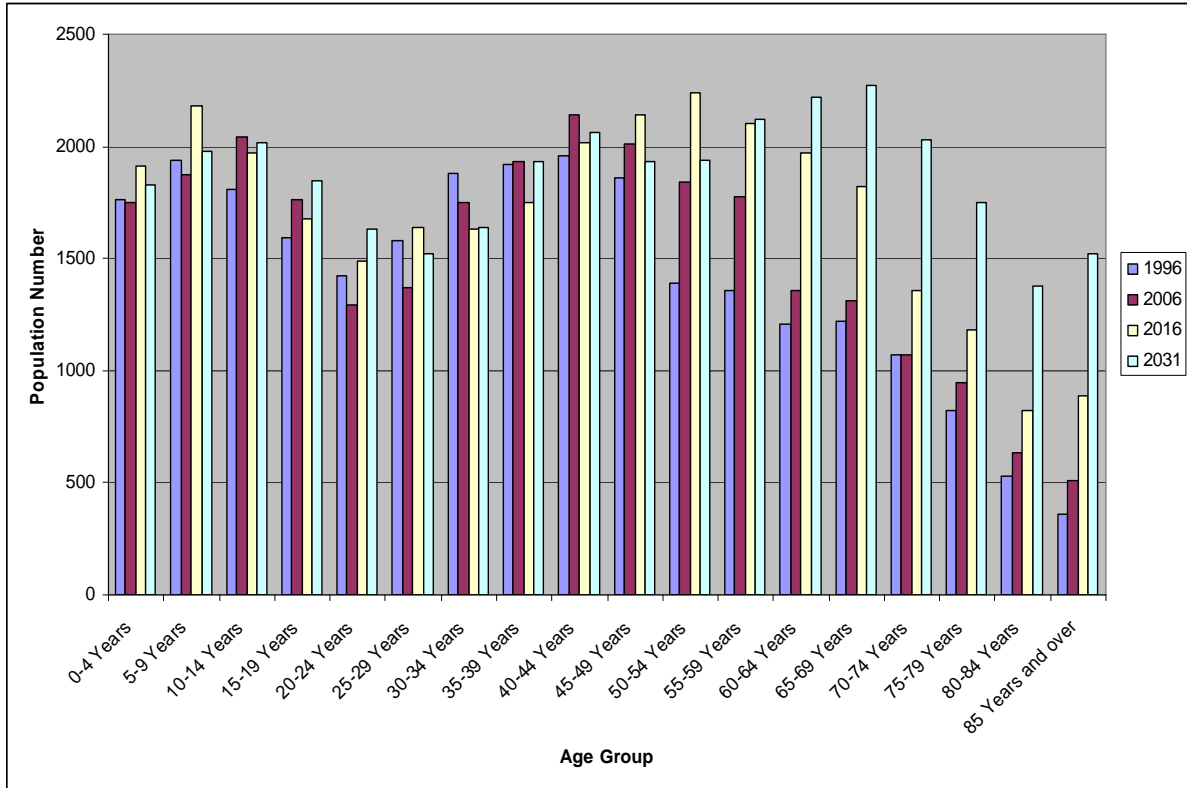


Table 4. Age Group Population Numbers and Forecasts for Ashburton District  
Source: Statistics New Zealand – Sub-national Population Counts and Projections

**What is this about?**

Table 4 shows the resident population counts for 5 year age groupings in 1996 and 2006, with population projections for 2016 and 2031 included also. The forecast figures are based on the 2007 Population Projections released by Statistics New Zealand.

The population age groups provides information necessary to ensure appropriate community services, such as healthcare, schools and accommodation are planned for and provided.

**Key Points**

- The current median age (half of the population is older, and half is younger, than this age) in Ashburton District is 38.8 years, higher than the national median age of 35.9 years. In the previous census (2001) the median age was 39.5 years for Ashburton District with the national median being 34.8. This indicates that population growth within the District over the past 5 years has been primarily through younger new residents. The District median age is showing some convergence with the New Zealand median age, though it remains to be seen whether this trend continues given the large increase in older population forecast in the graph above.

- The aging population trend is set to continue throughout New Zealand as the 'Baby-Boom' generation moves into retirement and, as indicated in the population age group projections, Ashburton District looks set to follow this trend.
- The number of people aged over 65 years in Ashburton District is expected to double by 2031. (Currently 4470, forecast to increase to 8950 over the next 25 years).
- The proportion of District residents in the working population (aged between 15 – 64 years) is expected to fall from 63% in 2006 to 56% in 2031. The actual numbers within this group are, however, expected to remain about the same.
- In 2006, there were 5664 children (20.7% of the total population) under the age of 15 in the Ashburton District; this proportion is expected to decrease to 17.3% of the total population (5830) by 2031. However, the actual number of children in the district is expected to remain constant over the next twenty-five years.

### What Could this Mean?

#### Impacts of an Ageing Population

- **Community Services and Facilities** – An ageing population will have different social needs to the rest of the population in a range of areas such as housing, recreation and social services. Leisure is more likely to be passive for the aging population and based around improving and maintaining good health and wellbeing. Examples of facilities an ageing population may value in the community include public gardens and green space, art galleries and museums, and physical recreation facilities appropriate for their use.
- **Health Services** – Health services in the Ashburton District will be pressured in the future by an ageing population, and by a growing young population (children aged under 10 years) in the near-future with an increased birth-rate expected for the next ten to fifteen years. While older residents can be expected to be fitter and healthier than in the past there will still be increased demand for health services as the number in the 60+ age group doubles.
- **Housing** – With an increase in the 60+ age group there will be a need for housing suitable for older people. This includes both independent housing and managed units and rest homes. The housing stock overall will need to increase.

**Population  
Ethnicity**

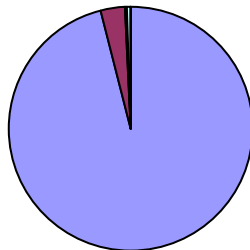
**Ashburton District Ethnicity 1991 & 2006**

	1991		1996		2001		2006	
	NZ	Ashburton District	NZ	Ashburton District	NZ	Ashburton District	NZ	Ashburton District
European	82.4%	96.9%	79.5%	95.2%	76.8%	95.5%	64.8%	81.2%
Māori	12.9%	3.2%	14.5%	4.6%	14.1%	4.6%	14.0%	6.0%
Pacific Island	4.9%	0.2%	5.6%	0.4%	6.2%	0.5%	6.6%	1.4%
Asian	2.9%	0.5%	4.8%	0.7%	6.4%	0.7%	9.5%	1.3%
Middle Eastern / Latin American / African	0.2%	0.03%	0.4%	0.1%	0.6%	0.1%	0.9%	0.4%
Other Ethnicity (2006 includes New Zealander)	0.01%	0%	0.01%	0.01%	0.02%	0%	10.7%	13.7%

Table 5. Ashburton District Ethnicity Groupings  
Sourced: Statistics New Zealand: Sub-national Population – Culture and Identity

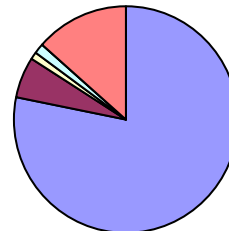
**Ashburton District Ethnic Groups 1991 - 2006**

Ashburton District Population - Ethnicity  
1991



- European
- Maori
- Pacific Peoples
- Asian
- Middle Eastern/Latin American/African
- Other Ethnicity (excluding New Zealander)

Ashburton District Population - Ethnicity  
2006



- European
- Maori
- Pacific Peoples
- Asian
- Middle Eastern/Latin American/African
- Other Ethnicity (including New Zealander)

Graph 1 & 2 Ashburton District Population - Ethnicity  
Sourced: Statistics New Zealand: Sub-national Population – Culture and Identity

**What is this about?**

This graph and table show the proportion of Ashburton District’s population who identified with each ethnic group from in 1991 and in 2006.



**Note:** People can identify or belong to more than one ethnic group. People who do identify with more than one ethnic group have been included in each group; therefore, the projections may not add up to 100 per cent.

**Note 2:** In the 2006 census, Statistics New Zealand included the ethnic category of 'New Zealander', for the first time. This ethnic category has been included in the 'Other Ethnicity' category by Statistics New Zealand. The majority of respondents in the 'New Zealander' ethnicity category are likely to be of New Zealand European descent, (please refer to the data limitations at the end of the report for further details).

### Key Points

- In 2006, the European ethnic group made up 81.2% of Ashburton District's population. Nationally, the 2006 national percentage for people belonging to the European ethnic group was 64.8%.
- Maori, Pacific Island, Asian and Middle East/Africa/Latin America ethnic groups all increased from 1991 to 2006 in the Ashburton District.
- Population projections predict all ethnic groups to increase in numbers in New Zealand over the next 15 years, but proportionately the European ethnic group is expected to decrease in comparison to others. Current population projections based on ethnicity are not available from Statistics New Zealand, however, it could be expected Ashburton District will follow a similar trend.

### What Could this Mean?

- **Continued Internal Migration** – The proportion of Maori and Pacific Island residents in Ashburton District has increased steadily over the past 15 years due to internal migration from other parts of New Zealand and through natural population increase.
- **Continued International Migration** – If the numbers of international migrants continues additional support services to assist the newcomer settling-in process may be required. Various ethnic groups are likely to develop their own social infrastructure within the District and this may require community and Council support to enable this to happen. This process may include some changing uses of community facilities such as churches and halls.
- **Community Service Provision** – Many community and social services in New Zealand are provided to specific cultural requirements. This probably hasn't occurred in Ashburton District to the same extent as other parts of New Zealand but increasing demand may mean this becomes a preferred option in this District.

## Data Limitations

### Population Projections

Statistics New Zealand caution users of their population projections as they are "...based on assumptions made about future fertility, mortality and migration patterns of the population. The projections do not take into account non-demographic factors (eg war, catastrophes) which may invalidate the projections. They should be used as guidelines rather than exact forecasts" (Statistics New Zealand, Ashburton District Quarterly Review, June 2007).

<b>Ashburton Population Projections 2006 (base) - 2031</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2026</b>	<b>2031</b>
Actual population	25446	28000					
Low Population Projection Series		28000	28500	28700	28700	28600	28300
Medium Population Projection Series		28000	29000	29700	30300	30700	30900
High Population Projection Series		28000	29600	30800	31800	32800	33600

Sourced: Statistics New Zealand: 2007 Population Projections

### Ethnicity Data

"The main changes in ethnicity data from the 2006 Census include a decrease in the European grouping and an increase in the Asian and Other Ethnicity groupings. These changes were not due to a different collection format as the 2006 Census employed the same ethnicity question as that used in 2001. A heightened New Zealander response increased the total population proportion of the Other Ethnicity grouping and diminished the proportion of the European grouping. Increases in the level of New Zealander response have been evident over the past three censuses. The level in 2006 was higher than the trend would have indicated; demonstrating the more fluid nature of self-identification of ethnic identity and the influence that context and public debate has on the pattern of response" (Statistics New Zealand, Guidelines for using ethnicity data, Census 2006).

### Ashburton District Growth

The rapid growth of Ashburton District has been compared with growth of other similar districts in New Zealand, according to Statistics New Zealand Census data. This comparison was based on the influence of two factors on a districts growth.

The first of which was the proximity to the district of a major city or town, which may influence the level of growth in the given district (for example Christchurch City's proximity to Selwyn and Waimakariri District's).

The second factor used to identify Districts similar to Ashburton District was the driving force of local economic growth in the area. As Ashburton District is currently experiencing strong growth in the local economy from agriculture and manufacturing means, it was important to compare district in New Zealand who had a similar type of economy based on agriculture and light manufacturing.