

MANAWATU FACT SHEET

Perfect for Your Contact Centre

ABOUT MANAWATU

The Manawatu Region is located in central New Zealand. Manawatu's hub, Palmerston North City, is the home of Massey University and a number of world class scientific research institutes. It has a diverse and educated population with a lower than average cost of living.

Palmerston North is conveniently located between Auckland and Wellington and Taranaki and Hawke's Bay, with 170,000 people living within a 45-minute drive of the city and one million people within three hours.

Employees living within the region enjoy an excellent work-life balance with abundant outdoor recreational activities and a temperate climate.



KEY ATTRIBUTES OF MANAWATU'S CAPABILITY

Low Operating Cost

Manawatu has some of the lowest operating costs in New Zealand due to low housing and office rental costs, stable workforce and central location.

- Low average salaries with the annual wage of a contact centre employees ranging from NZ\$34,320 (entry) to NZ\$44,720 (upper), compared with the national average of NZ\$38,392 - NZ\$49,344 ¹.
- Low staff turnover and long tenure, with 9% of workers staying in a job for 10 years or more ², enabling low on-going recruitment and training costs.
- Significantly lower office rentals than other parts of New Zealand and over 300% lower than Australia. Average net office rental of NZ\$220 (\$/m² pa), compared with NZ\$625 in Auckland ³ and NZ\$735 (\$/m² pa) in Sydney, Australia.

- Low house prices enables a high quality of life for employees, the median house price in May 2014 was NZ\$218,000, compared with NZ\$625,000 in Auckland and NZ\$430,000 nationally ⁴.

Availability of Labour

- A diverse and educated workforce with 17% of Palmerston North's population having a degree qualification or higher and almost 2% holding a doctorate degree (compared with 1% nationally).
- High quality workforce, with over 1,000 people currently employed in roles related to contact centres. The Manawatu Contact Centre Cluster, operating for 15 years, develops best practices, training initiatives, provides a collaborative base and organises annual awards for best practice and performance.
- Casual and part-time work is in demand due to the large student population (15,177) and partners of the Air Force and Army Defence Force's employees located in the region.

Business Infrastructure

- Over 30 national and international contact centres currently operate from this region.
- These organisations span a diverse range of industries including automotive (Toyota), insurance (FMG Insurance), online apparel (EziBuy), Local Government (New Zealand Transport Agency, Palmerston North City Council), outbound and New Zealand emergency support services (One4All).
- Strong IT infrastructure and broadband connectivity exists with the national Internet cable backbone running through Palmerston North City and the international cable connecting to Australia and the US.
- Existing commercial buildings and office space is available in the city as well as ample land for development, including a large-scale greenfield industrial subdivision known as the North East Industrial Park.

Location

- New Zealand Time Zone is 12 hours ahead of Coordinated Universal Time (UTC) (UTC+12:00) a convenient time zone for European markets, to operate off-peak without time penalty.
- The 24-hour Palmerston North airport offers 16 flights per day to Auckland and Wellington (1 hour flight), connecting with international flights to the rest of the world including Australia (Auckland to Sydney, 3 hours); United States (LA, 13 hours); United Kingdom (London, 24 hours), and China (Shanghai, 12 hours).

Conclusion

Manawatu offers an attractive location for international firms to establish or relocate contact centre operations. Take advantage of the low operating costs, low employment and living costs, availability of labour – including a highly educated population, and convenient time zone for international markets.

¹ Annual National Employers Wage and Salary Survey 2013

² Statistics NZ

³ Mid-point price based on highest grade of office space and may include new build rates, sourced from Colliers International 2013

⁴ Real Estate Institute of New Zealand

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