

# Ashburton Presbytery

## Some updated figures



[Ashburton](#) is a town and district in the Canterbury region on the east coast of the South Island of New Zealand. It is the *third-largest centre* in Canterbury, after Christchurch and Timaru. The Māori name for the town/area is Hakaterere. The area around Ashburton is frequently referred to as Mid Canterbury, which is also the name of the district's representative sports teams.

Prominent residents have included the town's former Member of Parliament and Prime Minister of New Zealand, Jenny Shipley, international operatic tenor Simon O'Neill, Olympic silver medal cyclist Hayden Roulston and New Zealand television and radio personality Simon Barnett.

A common nickname for Ashburton is '**Ashvegas**', an ironic allusion to Las Vegas. This may be due to the respectability, and conservatism of the residents, *the booming nightlife of the towns pubs* (The Shed, Speights, Millies, Zeebos and Kelly's) coupled with it being the bright lights in the middle of the desert (Las Vegas) or plains (Ashburton).

Much of Ashburton's industry is oriented towards servicing the surrounding farmland, but it is also home to several unusual businesses: **Designline**, New Zealand's only bus manufacturer; **Ashford Handicrafts**, the world's largest producer of spinning wheels; **Bruce McIlroy's Rolls-Royce and Bentley** motor car restoration business and **Peter Lynn Kites**, who produce and design and export giant inflatable display kites and power kites for kite surfing.

Ashburton has a daily newspaper, the [Ashburton Guardian](#); [AshburtonOnline](#), a Mid Canterbury district website; a weekly free community newspaper, The Courier; and a radio station, Port FM-local. There is a small airport, Ashburton Aerodrome, serving the town.

## Ashburton Presbytery region at a glance

Some of the significant highs and lows for the district making up this presbytery compared with the 72 districts in mainland New Zealand are as follows: (**highest/high** in New Zealand; **lowest/low** in New Zealand). *Data is from the 2006 census, so will be increasingly out of date.*

Population general	Ashburton District
Median age in years (NZ: 35)	39
% of people 0-24 years old	31.86%
% of people 25-44 years old	26.29%
% of people 45-64 years old	25.53%
% of people 65 years old and over	16.33%
Population density (people/km <sup>2</sup> ) (NZ: 9.71)	4.42
Population growth (2001-2006)	7.57%

Work and Education	
% receiving income from wages/salary*	60.36%
% receiving income from self-employment*	21.63%
% receiving income from investments*	30.42%
% as full-time students*	5.19%
% without any educational qualification*	31.75%
% graduated from university*	6.51%

Ethnicity	
% European	82.16%
% Maori	6.07%
% Pacific Islander	1.40%
% Asian	1.33%

Family and Household	
couples with children (as % of families)	41.11%
couples without children (as % of families)	48.37%
% solo parents (as % of families with children)	20.32%
% widowed, or bereaved civil union*	5.89%
% who have never married/partnered*	17.39%
Median family income	\$54,900
Mean weekly rental for households renting	\$143
% of households with 6 or more people	2.45%
% of households with only one occupant	24.33%

Benefits	
% receiving unemployment benefit*	1.41%
% receiving sickness benefit*	1.32%
% receiving domestic purposes benefit*	2.00%
% receiving New Zealand superannuation*	20.03%

Faith	
% Christian	63.43%
% Maori Christian	0.42%
% having no religion	27.84%
% following New Age/Spiritualism	0.32%
% Hindu	0.14%
% Islam	0.09%
% Buddhist	0.30%

Notes:

- Statistics with (\*) are for the population aged 15 years and older

- "family" is defined as the total of couples with children plus couples without children plus solo parents
- Statistics in **bold** are 2<sup>nd</sup> highest/2<sup>nd</sup> lowest in New Zealand

### General Comments

- Ashburton Presbytery is principally rural, with one average-sized town (Ashburton).
- The population age profile is older than the New Zealand average, and the ethnic makeup strongly European.
- Education levels are below average.
- Couples without children are common, as are people previously married (which includes separated and bereaved people), whereas couples with children and solo parents are uncommon, as are unmarrieds.
- Numbers per household are lower than average, as are rentals.
- Family incomes are distributed more around the middle bracket (\$30,000-\$70,000) than the rest of New Zealand, with less earning over \$100,000.
- Dependence on welfare benefits is lower than average.
- Ashburton District has a slightly *above* average number of non-casino gaming machines (63/10,000 people – the New Zealand average is 53).<sup>1</sup>
- Levels of deprivation are well below average with 6% of people living in the upper three deciles of deprived meshblocks.<sup>2</sup>

### Religious Affiliation

- Ashburton District has the highest proportion of Christians of all of the New Zealand territorial authorities, and very low percentages of followers of non-Christian faiths.
- The Presbyterian denomination dominates, with proportions (of the total population) over twice the national average.
- Presbyterian statistics over the period 2000-2006 show a very marked decline in worship attendance although the 2006 data suggest a halt to this trend
- Congregations have an older age profile when compared with the surrounding presbytery population.

<sup>1</sup> Kylie Mason. Ministry of Health. 2006. *Problem Gambling Geography of New Zealand 2005*. Wellington: Ministry of Health.

<sup>2</sup> NZDep2001 Index of Deprivation: A meshblock is the smallest area used for census data, typically contains around 110 people (a city block). The figure is for those living in decile 8-10 meshblocks.



Ashburton Domain

# Selected Statistics for Ashburton Presbytery region

Note: The same statistic for all of New Zealand is given in square brackets e.g. [NZ: 20%]

## Population

At the 2006 Census:

- The census population count for Ashburton Presbytery region was 27,372, a change of 7.57% since 2001 [NZ: change = 7.8%].

## Numbers of people counted

	Ashburton	New Zealand
<b>Males</b>	13,761	1,965,648
<b>Females</b>	13,608	2,062,323
<b>Total</b>	27,372	4,027,971

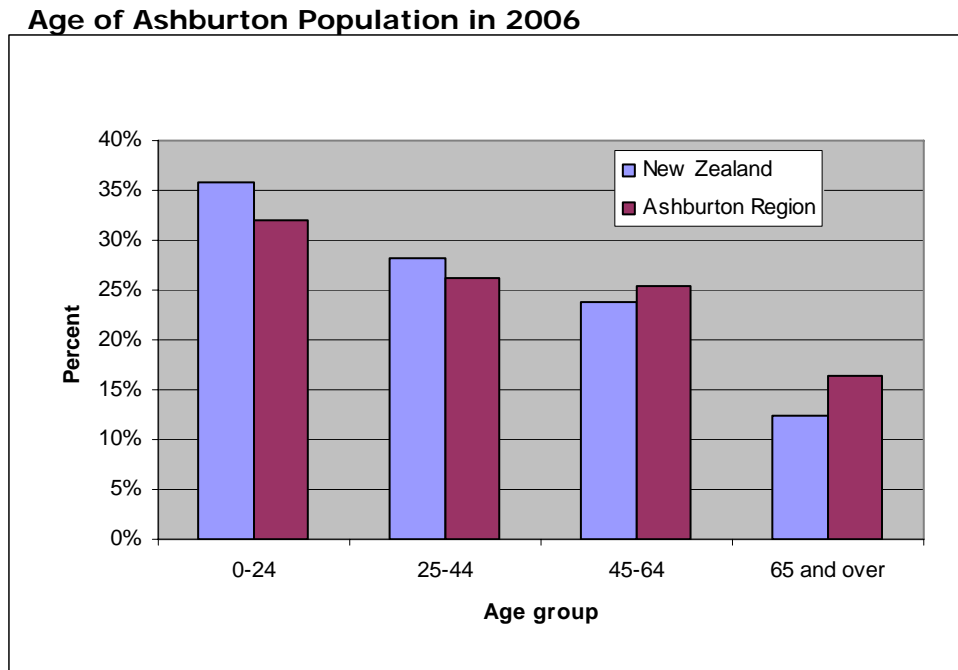
Ashburton District is one of New Zealand's fastest growing rural districts. Statistics New Zealand population projections predict continued population growth in the district, with the growth in the current census cycle (2006-2011) expected to be 5.5%, or an additional 1600 residents. (From the [Ashburton District Population Facts & Figures 2008](#))

- 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.

## Age profile

At the 2006 Census:

- 20.8% of people in Ashburton Presbytery region were **under 15** years old [NZ: 21.5%].
- 16.3% of people in Ashburton Presbytery region were **over 65** years old [NZ: 12.3%].



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. (From the [Ashburton District Population Facts & Figures 2008](#))

## (aged under 15 years). Employment

At the 2006 Census:

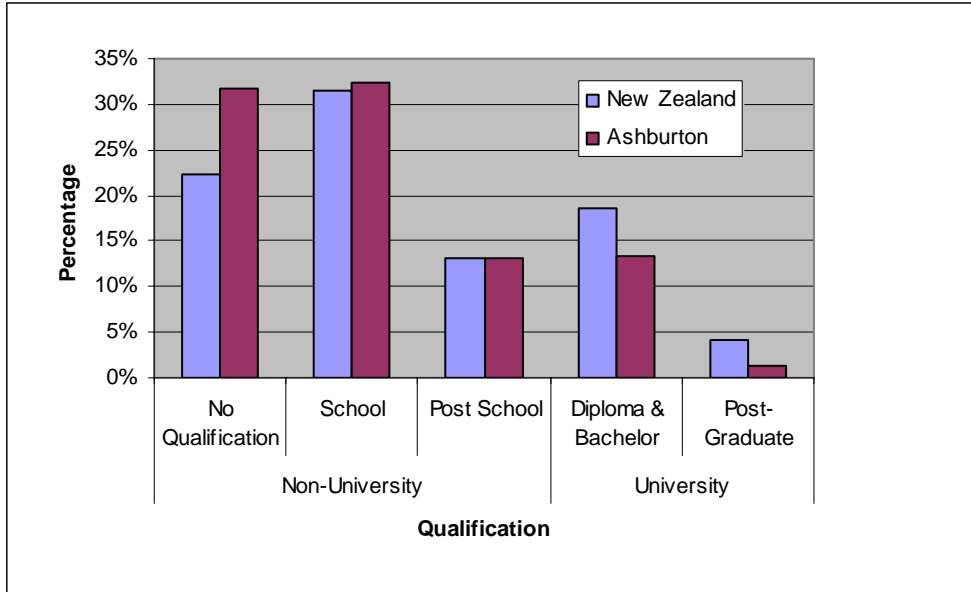
- The **unemployment rate** in Ashburton Presbytery region was 2.2% [NZ: 5.4%].
- The most popular occupational group in Ashburton Presbytery region was Managers at 21.8% [NZ: professionals (18.9%)].

## Education

At the 2006 Census:

- 27.8% of people aged 15 years and over in Ashburton Presbytery region had a **post-school qualification** [NZ: 35.8%].

### Highest Qualification in Ashburton and NZ

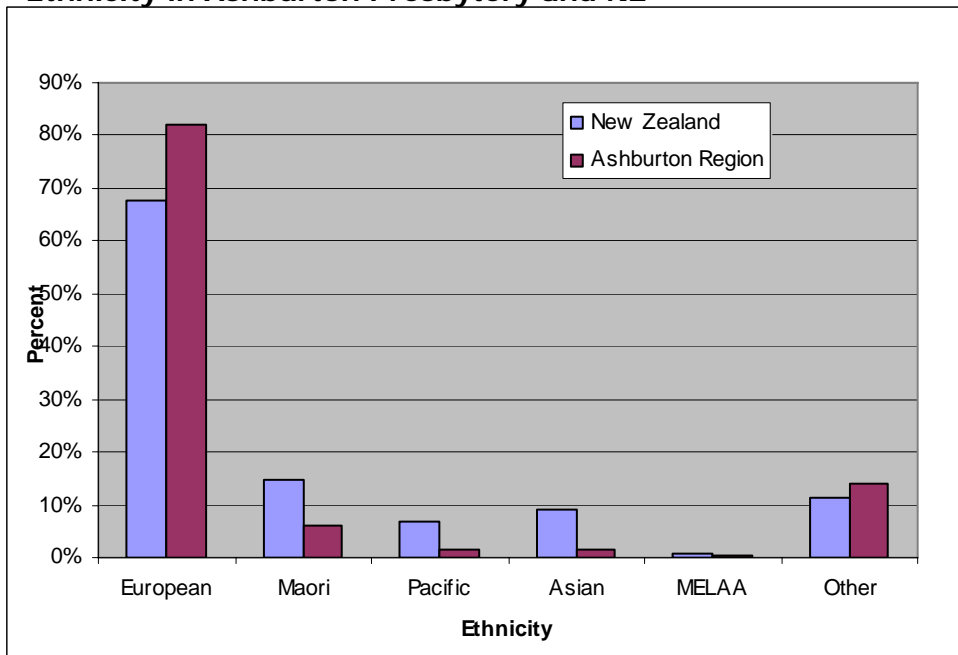


### Ethnic groups

At the 2006 Census:

- o 82.1% of people in Ashburton Presbytery region said they belong to the European ethnic group [NZ: 67.6%].

### Ethnicity in Ashburton Presbytery and NZ



MELAA = Middle East, Latin American and African

- There is a slow but steady increase in diversity in the area.
- 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. (From the [Ashburton District Population Facts & Figures 2008](#)).

## Families

At the 2006 Census:

- There were 7,896 families in Ashburton Presbytery region.

## Family type

	Ashburton	New Zealand
Couples with child(ren)	41.2%	42.0%
Couples without children	48.3%	39.9%
1 parent with child(ren)	10.5%	18.1%

*There is a high percentage of couples without children.*

## Marital Status

	Ashburton	New Zealand
Never married	24.8%	31.4%
Married (not civil union)	55.2%	44.8%
Previously married/partnered	15.7%	16.0%

*'Previously married/partnered' includes separated, divorced and bereaved.*

## Households

At the 2006 Census, in Ashburton Presbytery region there were 10,815 households:

- **Mean number of household members:** 2.5 [NZ: 2.7]
- **access to a telephone:** 91.6% of households [NZ: 91.7%].
- **access to the internet:** 54.4% of households [NZ: 60.5%].
- **access to a motor vehicle:** 94.7% of households [NZ: 92.2%].
- **mean weekly rent** for rented permanent private dwellings: \$143 [NZ: \$225]
- **ownership of dwelling** with or without a mortgage, 71.8% [NZ: 66.9%].

*It's likely the number of Internet users has changed considerably in the interim period.*

*Cellphone usage is the same as the average in NZ at 74.2%*

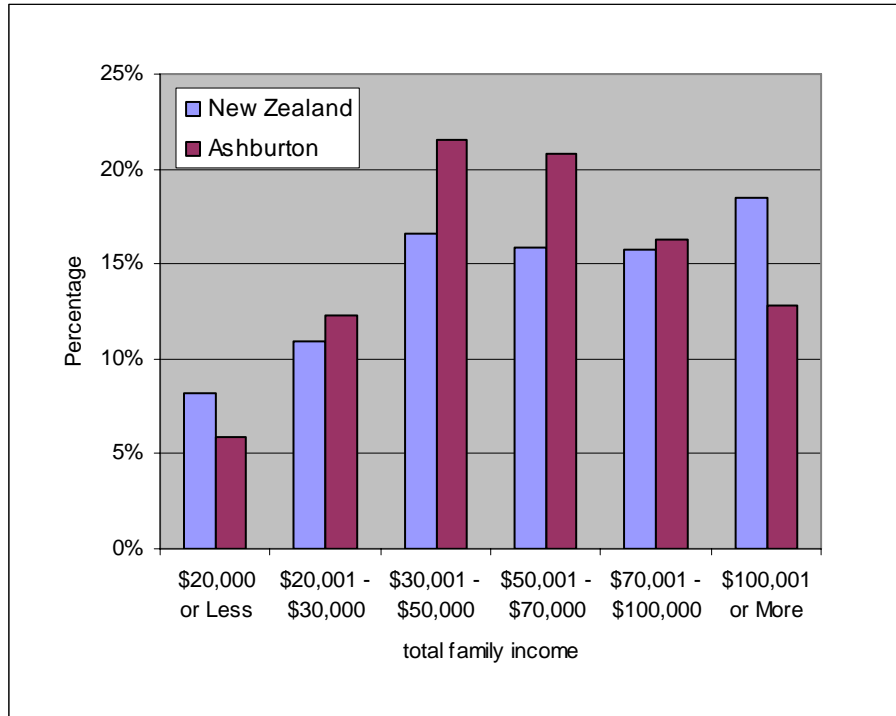
*Fax Machine usage is higher at 32.6% (NZ 26%) possibly reflecting the higher usage of fax machines (until recently, at least) in rural areas.*

## Income

At the 2006 Census:

- The median family income in Ashburton Presbytery region was: \$54,900 [NZ: \$59,000]
- The median personal income was \$24,400 (equal to the NZ average)
- *Note in the graph on the next page that there is a considerably higher range of income from \$30,000 upwards.*

## Family Income in Ashburton and NZ



## Benefits and Allowances

The percentages of people 15 years of age and over in Ashburton Presbytery region receiving the following government benefits and allowances are:

### Benefits and Allowances

	Ashburton region	New Zealand
Unemployment Benefit	1.38%	3.11%
Sickness Benefit	1.29%	2.38%
Domestic Purposes Benefit	1.98%	3.14%
Student Allowance	0.46%	2.17%

*Benefits in general tend to be lower than the NZ average.*

## Religion

### Religious Affiliation (2006 Census)

	Christian	Māori Christian	*New Age Religions	Judaism	Islam	Hindu	Buddhist	Other Religions	No Religion
New Zealand	58.03%	1.88%	0.57%	0.20%	1.03%	1.84%	1.50%	0.70%	37.13%
Ashburton	69.85%	0.42%	0.30%	0.08%	0.10%	0.16%	0.31%	0.12%	30.68%

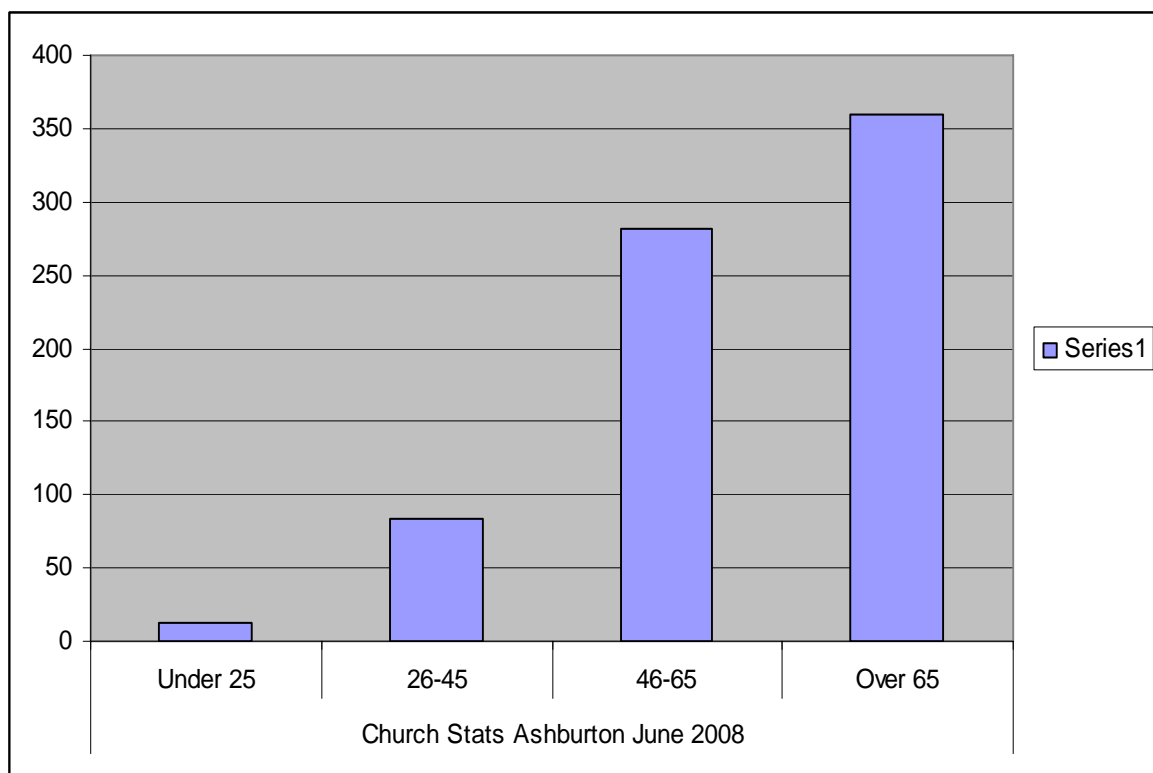
\* includes Spiritualism

## Church Stats for Ashburton Presbytery :

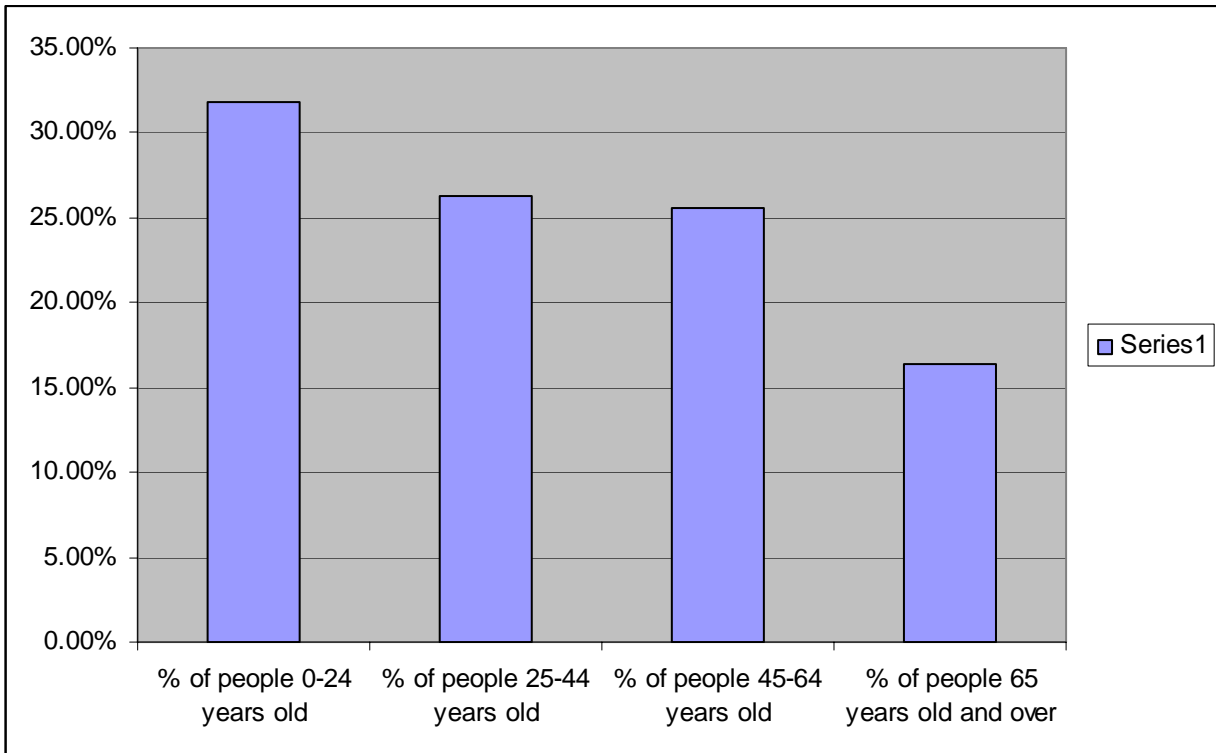
### Average numbers attending:

#### **Note yet again:**

1. *This is a picture of only one month in the year. It's consequently not indicative of the whole year average.*
2. *If so few people under 25 are church-involved, does that mean greater time and energy needs to be focused on the older groups, 46 and upwards?*
3. *Compare the numbers to the population age ranges (slightly distorted by being a year out in three of the groups, and being percentages rather than numbers) in the graph on the next page:*

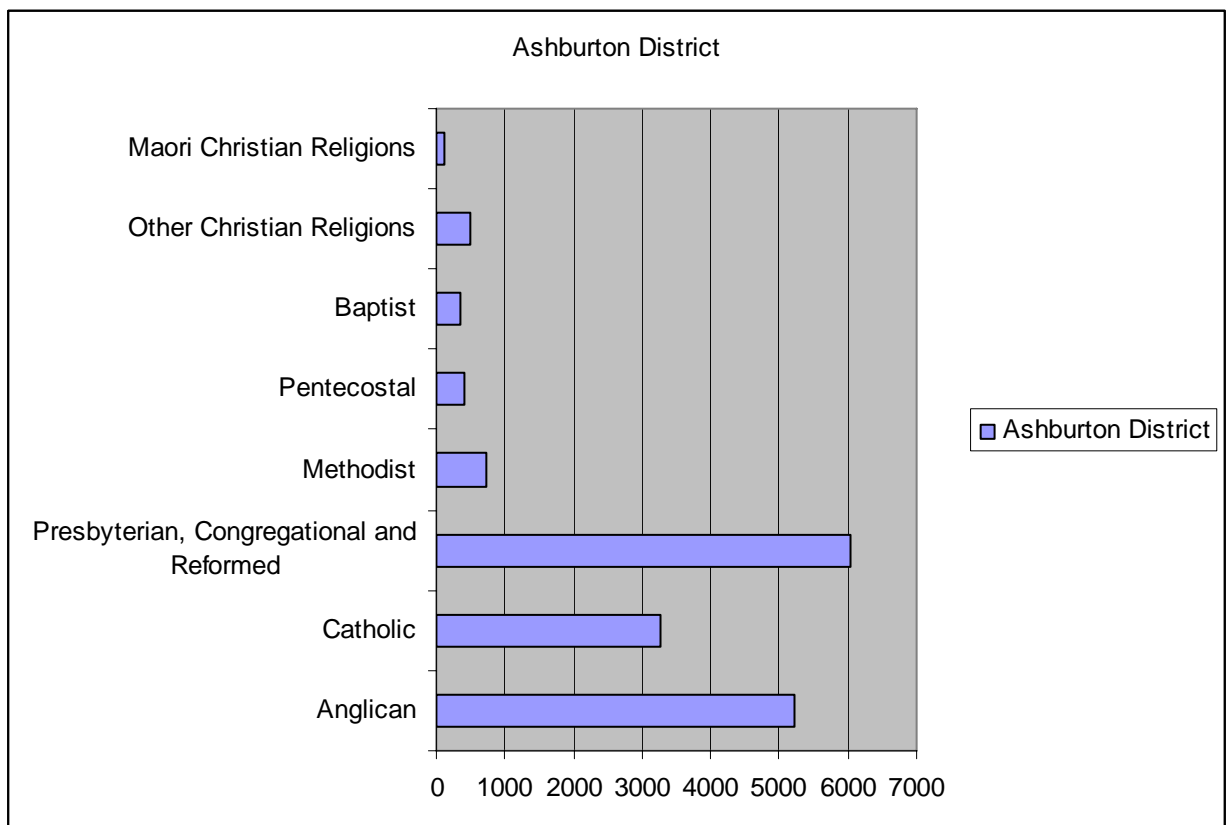


*Comparison of population ages in 2006:*



**Cropping in Ashburton District (from the [Ashburton District Council](#) website)**

**Specific Christian Denomination Affiliation in Ashburton Presbytery region:**



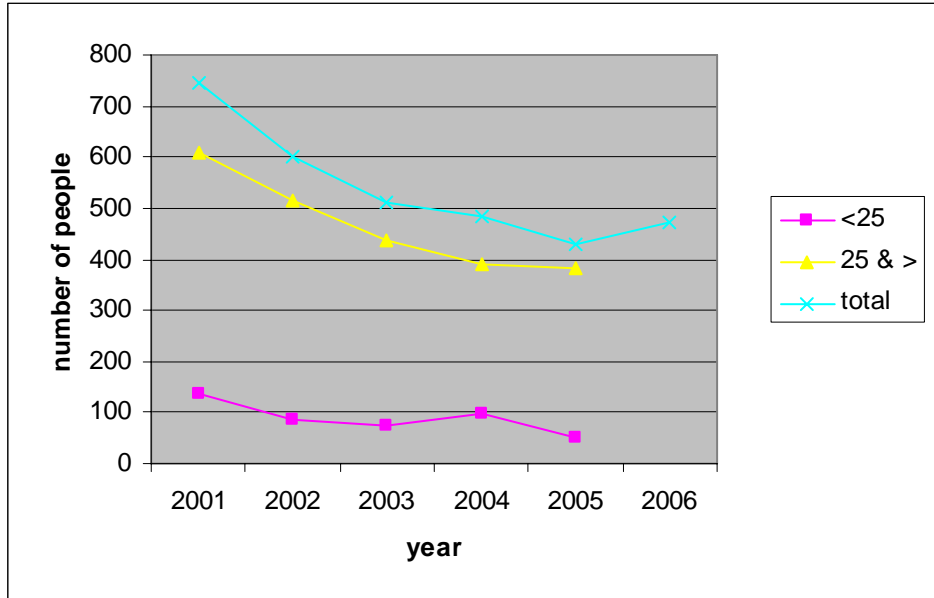
“**Other Christian**” includes Church of Christ, Lutheran, Adventists, Orthodox, Evangelical non-denominational, Reformed, Uniting/Union, Salvation Army, smaller groups and Christians who did not define their denomination further

- In the 2006 census, 6051 (6,696 in 2001) people in Ashburton Presbytery region identified themselves as being Presbyterian.
- Presbyterian statistics record an average June worship attendance of 737 (830 in 2007) people in 2008 in the whole of Ashburton Presbytery.



*St David's Union Church*

**Average Worship Attendance in Ashburton Presbytery (June 2000-2006)**



Statistics for 2000 are not included as they appear to have errors (total attendance in 2000 is 436). Age categories changed for 2006 so only the total is given



St James' Presbyterian Church

## Churches in the Ashburton Presbytery:

St Andrew's Presbyterian

[St David's Union](#) (with Methodist)

St James' Presbyterian

St Paul's Presbyterian

Hinds Co-operating Parish

Mayfield Presbyterian

Methven St John's Presbyterian

Rakaia Presbyterian

*Note that only one of these churches has any Internet presence - the Union/Methodist – and that's mainly just an address on the NZ Methodist site.*

*Other churches in the town/area:*

*Methodist Church in Baring St*

*New Life Church (and New Life Christian Bookstore)*

*Salvation Army*

*Holy Name (Catholic) Church*

*Victory Baptist Church*

*Anglican Churches (Ashburton & Methven)*

*Ashburton Berfam Bible Fellowship*

*Catholic Church, Rakaia Gorge Rd*

*Revival Centres International*

## [Ashburton's quality of life 'tops'](#) by Sue Newman (Ashburton Guardian)

*Italics: National Mission*

Ashburton is punching well above its weight in the quality of life it offers the people who live here.

A recent district wide survey provided a snapshot of life in the district and findings show residents rate the district as a great place to live.

Council policy advisor Toni Spittle said the state of the community report looked at social, economic, cultural and environmental issues and compared Ashburton's results with the rest of the country.

"The results speak for themselves. Our district has thrived over the past five years, having experienced rapid growth since 2001. We are now *one of the fastest growing districts in New Zealand* and it's pleasing to see we are achieving so well in such a range of areas."

Key factors in the report: Towns have more open spaces than many in New Zealand.

We have *nearly twice the national participation rate in workplace training and apprenticeships.*

Our *preschool participation rates are significantly higher* than the national average.

Since 2005 we have had more residential building consents issued per 1000 people than New Zealand as a whole.

We continue to be an affordable place to live for people renting with lower rent to income ratios than the rest of Canterbury.

We also have a *higher home ownership rate* than New Zealand as a whole.

Seven community outcomes are used as yardsticks to measure resident satisfaction.

In most the report shows a high level of achievement and satisfaction.

But, while the report is rich in positives and accolades, there are a few areas where significant work is required to bring the score card up to an acceptable level.

While *the district continues to lag behind New Zealand in its median annual personal earnings*, this has grown significantly over the past 10 years and at \$36,320 we are still below the national average of \$38,040, we are now above Timaru District.

The *district's median household income still lags behind Canterbury*, but the gap, at \$46,100 (in 2006) is closing.

We are still below the district target to be greater than Canterbury's median.

*Internet services continued to be an area where people rated the district poorly*, with many parts of the district still not able to access cabled broadband.

Nationally about 65% of the population has access to the internet but *in the Ashburton district, this drops to just over 50%*.

While the district has a great record at pre school level, it does not score so well when it comes to keeping students in school or in students gaining higher qualifications. In *both areas we lag behind the national average.*

The Presbytery Profile has been updated from the one prepared in 2007

by Mike Crowl, Sept 2009.

