

# Welcome to Te Papa Atawhai Stewart Island/Rakiura

## General information about Rakiura

### Rakiura overview

Rakiura (Land of the Glowing Skies) is located at 47° South and is approximately 1,746 km<sup>2</sup> of pristine natural beauty. In 2002, 85% of the Island became Rakiura National Park. 6% of the island is owned and governed by the Rakiura Māori Lands Trust.

The only settlement on Rakiura is Oban or Halfmoon Bay, home to approximately 400 permanent residents. There is only 26km of tar sealed and gravel road combined. The Rakiura National Park Visitor Centre (DOC Office) is located on Main Road.

Even with a small permanent population, the Island accommodates approximately 30,000 visitors per year who come to enjoy the natural environment and all it has to offer. The main tourist season is from November to April but with mild, calm winters it is ideal to visit all year round.

There is one of almost everything you need: a Four-square store, pub, gymnasium, swimming pool (located at Halfmoon Bay school and operational after school hours from Dec-April depending on the temperature), bowling green, golf course, medical clinic, post office, small community library, museum/heritage centre, petrol station, resource recovery centre (which is great to get second-hand items from), plant nursery, variety of retail shops and eateries. There are approximately 40 volunteer organisations on the island that contribute to making it a vibrant and self-sustaining community.

The main employers are within the seafood, aquaculture, tourism, and conservation industries. Rakiura 'locals'

enjoy a relaxed lifestyle supporting and being involved with volunteer community projects. We are surrounded by outstanding natural beauty with easy access to lush rainforests, golden beaches, walking tracks, fishing, hunting, diving, kayaking, bird watching, world class kai moana, and much more!

We have no mustelids (ferrets, stoats or weasels), which makes Rakiura one of the few places in Aotearoa where iconic ground birds such as kiwi are prevalent.

The Island is home to many rare Aotearoa native birds who thrive in pest-controlled areas such as Ulva Island/Te Wharawhara, Ackers Point, Mamaku Point, and Halfmoon Bay. Sightings of tui, kereru, kaka, kakariki, kiwi, and weka are common. Feeding the birds is prohibited.

The Stewart Island website is a great resource for what is available here:  
[www.stewartisland.co.nz](http://www.stewartisland.co.nz).

### Weather

We are often asked about the weather and just how cold it is on Rakiura. We have milder winters than the mainland (South Island) and although winter can be cold, we probably only see a handful of decent frosts. We usually only get one or two (small) snowfalls per year.

Rainfall is the same as Auckland but is spread more evenly. We experience some rain here on more than 250 days of the year.



Because of our latitude we have strong winds particularly during the equinoxes. At latitude 47 degrees it is considered the roaring forties.

By the shortest day sunrise is at ~8.20am, sunset is at ~4.45pm. With the longer twilights in summer (sunset is at ~10pm on the longest day) the days can be long and beautiful.

### Medical services on Rakiura

Ring 111 for an emergency. The Stewart Island Health Centre on Argyle Street operates a drop-in clinic from 10:00am-12:30pm daily, seven days a week. Telephone 03 219 1098 for appointments outside these times or to speak with the Nurse. Consultations with the district nurses at this centre are generally free of charge, however charges may apply for prescriptions or if a doctor needs to be consulted. Visiting doctors come for a day every few months so be sure to keep an eye on the community noticeboard or on the Rakiura Health Facebook pages for these dates. Prescription supplies are available through the clinic and some basic pharmacy items are available from the Four-Square.

Medivacs from the Island do occur when the Nurse deems it necessary. These occur via fixed wing plane or helicopter and have paramedics on board.

### Community Activities

The Stewart Island Community Centre on Ayr Street has a gym, squash court, and badminton, basketball, and netball courts. A membership fee is payable to access these facilities. The office at the Community Centre is manned once per week.

The Halfmoon Bay School swimming pool is available for community use outside of school hours over the months Dec-Apr (temperature permitting). To obtain a key for this, payment needs to be sorted before the end of the school year through the school office.

The Island has a range of other recreation activities, clubs and services available. These include: a library, golf club, garden club, yoga, Lions, Fire Brigade, Search and Rescue group, etc. Further details may be found on the Stewart

Island Promotions Association website  
[www.stewartisland.co.nz](http://www.stewartisland.co.nz)

### Travel to and from Rakiura

Stewart Island Flights operate at least three flights to and from Invercargill daily and may offer a discount to DOC staff. Be sure to tell them you are a DOC staff member or volunteer when you make the booking. Phone 03 218 9129 or book online [www.stewartislandflights.com](http://www.stewartislandflights.com).

Real NZ operates at least two ferries daily throughout the year between Bluff and Rakiura, with extra ferries over the summer months. The company also operates a shuttle bus service between Invercargill and Bluff. Discounted fares may be available for DOC Rakiura staff. Be sure to tell them you are a DOC staff member or volunteer when you make the booking. Phone 03 212 7660. For bookings visit the webpage <https://www.realnz.com/en/experiences/ferry-services/stewart-island-ferry-services/>.

### Banking

There are is no bank on the island, although the Four-Square has an ATM based inside the shop which is accessible during opening hours. Most operators accept Eftpos and credit card payments. Your pay will be direct credited to your bank account; look at getting a chequing account set up with your bank prior to arriving on the island.

### Groceries and household goods

The Four-Square supermarket has a wide range of grocery (including wine and beer) and hardware items. If you have a specific need for an item not stocked on the shelves, talk with the staff as they sometimes are able to order in items directly for residents.

Grocery orders can also be ordered from Countdown in Invercargill. Make sure you arrange your delivery address as C/- Stewart Island Experience Ferry, Marine Parade, Foreshore, Bluff rather than listing a Stewart Island address. If you list a Stewart Island address you will be restricted on what items you can get whereas if listing Bluff then all chilled, produce and frozen items are

able to be ordered. These are dropped directly to the ferry and come across on the last ferry.

Occasionally second-hand furniture is advertised for sale on the island on the community notice board (beside the Four Square) or on the local Stewart Island Buy, Sell and Exchange Facebook page. The Resource Recovery Centre at the Transfer Station (Horseshoe Bay) also sells household goods very cheaply, although quality is variable - contact 03 219 1081. Those items gathered during your stay will need to be removed from DOC accommodation at the end of your tenancy.

Pete Ross Auto (03 219 1266) is the only petrol station and carries heavy freight items once on the Island (i.e. from the freight ferry to your home if needed). Petrol and diesel costs are significantly higher than the mainland. There is only 26 km of roads all with a 50km/hr speed limit, and most people live within 5 km of the township.

We get power from a diesel generator located on Hicks Road. Our power costs are as follows: there is a monthly 'uniform charge' of \$90.00 per month and then a very high unit rate on top of that. Please consider minimising your electricity use on the Island. Most DOC accommodation houses have electricity included in tenancy agreements but please be considerate with your use of power.

Just a warning - fuel (including wood, coal, and gas) and electricity are very expensive here. The sale of firewood is often advertised on the community noticeboard. Coal can be purchased at the Four-Square and LPG gas bottles are filled at the garage (Pete Ross Auto).

It's important to note that all water for DOC accommodation (and generally most places on the island) is rainwater, collected in tanks off roofs and can run dry with excessive use. Please be prepared to conserve water.

## Mail

Mail is delivered Monday to Friday mornings to the Island. It is collected from the DOC mailbox and placed in your personal pigeonhole. Alternatively, you can

arrange with the post office to collect personal parcels from behind the counter at the post office. If you are here long term, we encourage you to apply for a PO box.

## Recycling

There is a recycling centre on the Island. Opening hours: 9:30am to 4:30pm Monday, Wednesday-Friday and 8:00am to 12:00pm Saturday. They have a second chance centre for various goods. Each DOC house and the Visitor Centre has a poster on what is recyclable and both rubbish and recyclables are collected early on Tuesday mornings. Rubbish is required to be placed in a Southland District Council-issued rubbish bag (issued in packs twice a year).

## Internet and phone coverage

Mobile coverage is now available for Telecom, Skinny and Vodafone around the township. There is limited cell phone coverage or internet once you leave the township and head into the bush.

There is a free-Wi-Fi zone around the Community Centre. Internet and landline phone set up is not provided at Te Papa Atawhai accommodation. If you require these, you will need to set it up yourself.

## DOC accommodation on Rakiura

Te Papa Atawhai has a range of accommodation options, depending on where existing permanent and temporary staff are accommodated.

Most DOC accommodation is a room in a shared house. Some rooms are set up as 'bunkrooms'. Please be aware that you may be asked to share your room with another staff member.

Please bring your own bedding e.g. duvet, sheets or sleeping bag. Mattresses are provided.

Please note, there are no pets allowed in DOC accommodation.

## Finally

We encourage you to make yourselves part of our Rakiura community. There are always things happening so keep an eye on the local community noticeboard (beside the Four-Square or by the Post Office) or on the Facebook pages:

- Stewart Island Buy Sell and Exchange
- Stewart Island News
- Stewart Island Community Board
- Rakiura Health

We hope you love Rakiura as much as we do and feel free to ask any of the staff questions you might want to know.

***Mauri tū, mauri ora – An active soul is a healthy soul.***