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RURAL POPULATION GROWTH AND INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE :
THAMES-COROMANDEL DISTRICT

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requirements for the Degree of Master of Philosophy
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ABSTRACT

Rural population growth has emerged in the 1970s as an important trend in many developed countries, including New Zealand. Increasing emphasis is also currently being accorded to the consideration of institutions and institutional factors in geographical research.

This thesis develops the themes of population growth and institutions in rural areas and isolates institutional response as a relevant component in the overall growth process. Analysis of rural population growth in the study area of Thames-Coromandel provides the background context to the investigation of response by health, education and statutory planning institutions. The analysis itself reveals the dominance of inward migration in the growth process, the nucleated nature of much of the growth, and major explanations relating to retirement and recreation development together with agricultural intensification and alternative lifestyle and craft industry development.

Institutional response by the Hamilton Education Board and Thames Hospital Board is shown to be embedded in a complex web of constraints and determinants. However a definite expansion of services and facilities is clearly evident in the context of the demonstrated growth. Conversely the statutory planning response by the Thames-Coromandel District Council has tended to display a general lack of adequacy to date in the proper management of growth and development in the study area.

Overall, the study provides both theoretical and practical insights into population growth and institutional response in rural areas and presents a basis for further research in this contemporary field of geographical study.

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