



# *New Zealand in Profile*



*An overview of New Zealand's  
people, economy and environment*

# 2009

## General

---

New Zealand is an island country in the south-west Pacific. The capital is Wellington; the largest city and principal port is Auckland. New Zealand is an independent nation and a member of the Commonwealth of Nations.

Comparable in size (268,680 sq km) to the United Kingdom, the Philippines and Colorado in the United States, New Zealand has a diverse multicultural population of four million people, making it one of the world's least crowded countries. New Zealand's indigenous Māori, a Polynesian people, make up around 15% of the population.

English is the everyday language of New Zealand. English, Māori and New Zealand Sign Language are recognised as official languages. One-third of New Zealanders are not affiliated with any religion. Of those who are, the largest denominations are Anglican, Catholic and Presbyterian.

## Climate

---

A temperate climate with relatively small seasonal variation makes New Zealand an ideal year-round holiday destination. The north is subtropical and the south temperate.

The seasons are opposite to those in the Northern Hemisphere. The warmest months are December, January and February, and the coldest are June, July and August.

In summer, the average maximum temperature ranges between 20°C and 30°C; in winter, between 10°C and 15°C. Extremes of temperature are unusual.

## Physical

---

New Zealand comprises the North and South Islands, and a host of smaller islands including Waiheke, Stewart/Rakiura and the Chatham Islands. Tokelau and Ross are dependencies. Extensive areas have been set aside as national parks, including Fiordland, Aoraki/Mt Cook and Tongariro.

Protected offshore islands and oceanic reserves ensure New Zealand's unique plants and wildlife are preserved, including the kiwi, a flightless bird after which both the people and the fruit are named.

The North Island has New Zealand's largest lake, Taupo (606 sq km), longest river, Waikato (425km), and most of the country's active volcanoes – Ruapehu, Ngauruhoe and Tongariro. Hot springs, geysers and mud-pools also form part of the volcanic system centred around Rotorua. In the South Island, one of the most striking physical features is the Southern Alps/Kā Tiritiri o te Moana. These, along with fiords, glaciers and lakes, and the coastal plains of Canterbury and Southland, add to the variety of the South Island's scenery. New Zealand's deepest lake (Hauroko, 462m) and deepest cave (Nettlebed, 889m) are also located in the South Island.





### (All dates common era)

- 1300 (approx)** East Polynesian people arrived. Now known as Māori, they did not identify themselves by this collective name until the arrival of European people.
- 1642** Abel Tasman first European to see New Zealand.
- 1769** James Cook arrives in New Zealand and claims it for Great Britain (the North Island 1769, the South Island 1770).
- 1835** Declaration of Independence signed by 34 Māori chiefs.
- 1840** Treaty of Waitangi signed.
- 1865** Wellington replaces Auckland as New Zealand's capital.
- 1882** First shipment of frozen meat leaves for Europe.
- 1891** Liberal Government embarks on significant social and infrastructure reforms.
- 1893** New Zealand becomes the first country to give women the vote.
- 1907** New Zealand becomes a dominion.
- 1908** New Zealand population reaches 1 million.
- 1933** New Zealand adopts own currency, the New Zealand pound.
- 1947** New Zealand Parliament adopts the Statute of Westminster (1931) and thus becomes independent from Great Britain.
- 1952** New Zealand population reaches 2 million.
- 1967** Decimalisation of currency sees the New Zealand dollar introduced.
- 1973** New Zealand population reaches 3 million.
- 1981** Highly controversial tour of New Zealand by Springbok rugby team.
- 1983** Closer Economic Relations (CER) agreement signed with Australia.
- 1985** Waitangi Tribunal given power to hear historic Māori land grievances going back to 1840.
- 1987** Māori declared as official language alongside English.
- 1987** New Zealand becomes nuclear free.
- 2003** New Zealand population reaches 4 million.

## Population

|                  |           |
|------------------|-----------|
| 1998             | 3,815,000 |
| 2008             | 4,268,900 |
| 2018 (projected) | 4,663,000 |

### Resident population

#### Main urban area

|                                   |                  |
|-----------------------------------|------------------|
| Auckland                          | 1,313,100        |
| Hamilton                          | 197,300          |
| Tauranga                          | 116,000          |
| Napier-Hastings                   | 122,700          |
| Wellington                        | 381,900          |
| Christchurch                      | 382,200          |
| Dunedin                           | 114,900          |
| Remaining main urban areas        | 457,000          |
| <b>Total, 16 main urban areas</b> | <b>3,085,300</b> |
| Remaining areas                   | 1,183,600        |
| <b>Total resident population</b>  | <b>4,268,900</b> |

### Age group

|                |           |
|----------------|-----------|
| Under 15 years | 889,400   |
| 15–29 years    | 892,200   |
| 30–44 years    | 897,600   |
| 45–64 years    | 1,051,800 |
| 65+ years      | 537,900   |



## Government income

### Year ended March

|                                 | 2003          | 2008          |
|---------------------------------|---------------|---------------|
|                                 | \$(million)   |               |
| <b>Central government</b>       |               |               |
| Income tax                      | 25,725        | 39,574        |
| Taxes on production and imports | 14,377        | 19,049        |
| Other current taxes             | 347           | 328           |
| Investment income               | 2,216         | 4,437         |
| Other income                    | 3,865         | 5,332         |
| <b>Total</b>                    | <b>46,531</b> | <b>68,721</b> |
| <b>Local government</b>         |               |               |
| Income tax                      | 0             | 0             |
| Taxes on production and imports | 2,468         | 3,639         |
| Other current taxes             | 54            | 96            |
| Investment income               | 281           | 329           |
| Other income                    | 1,265         | 1,873         |
| <b>Total</b>                    | <b>4,067</b>  | <b>5,937</b>  |



## Household spending

### Average weekly household spending, excluding property purchases

|                                 | 2007       |            |
|---------------------------------|------------|------------|
|                                 | \$         | Percent    |
| Housing and household utilities | 224        | 23         |
| Food                            | 156        | 16         |
| Transport                       | 136        | 14         |
| Recreation and culture          | 97         | 10         |
| Household contents and services | 51         | 5          |
| Clothing and footwear           | 33         | 3          |
| Communication                   | 31         | 3          |
| Alcohol and tobacco             | 27         | 3          |
| Health                          | 23         | 2          |
| Education                       | 13         | 1          |
| All other expenditure groups    | 165        | 20         |
| <b>Total net expenditure</b>    | <b>956</b> | <b>100</b> |



## Sport and recreation

### The 10 most popular sport and recreation activities of adults (March 2007–08)

| Activity                 | Number    | Percent |
|--------------------------|-----------|---------|
| Walking                  | 2,100,278 | 64.1    |
| Gardening                | 1,414,633 | 43.2    |
| Swimming                 | 1,139,812 | 34.8    |
| Equipment-based exercise | 868,271   | 26.5    |
| Cycling                  | 745,183   | 22.7    |
| Fishing                  | 633,769   | 19.3    |
| Jogging/running          | 574,109   | 17.5    |
| Dance                    | 549,112   | 16.8    |
| Golf                     | 416,223   | 12.7    |
| Tramping                 | 306,343   | 9.4     |

Source: 2007/2008 Active New Zealand Survey, Sport & Recreation New Zealand.

## Cultural identity

### Ethnic groups as a percentage of the total 2006 Census usually resident population

| Ethnic group                              | Percent |
|---|---------|
| European                                  | 67.6    |
| Māori                                     | 14.6    |
| Asian                                     | 9.2     |
| Pacific peoples                           | 6.9     |
| Middle Eastern/Latin American/African     | 0.9     |
| Other ethnicity (including New Zealander) | 11.2    |

Note: Because people can choose to identify with more than one ethnic group, the figures do not sum to 100 percent.



## Economy

New Zealand has a mixed economy that operates on free market principles. It has sizeable goods-producing and service industries, complemented by a highly efficient primary sector.

### **Gross domestic product by industry in 1995/96 prices**

|                            | 2003        | 2008    |
|----------------------------|-------------|---------|
|                            | \$(million) |         |
| Primary industries         | 8,572       | 9,614   |
| Goods-producing industries | 25,991      | 27,895  |
| Service industries         | 77,013      | 93,158  |
| Gross domestic product     | 115,829     | 135,475 |

### Percent

|  |      |      |
|--|------|------|
| Primary industries contribution to GDP | 7.40 | 7.10 |
|--|------|------|

**Note:** Figures are for the year ended 31 March. Percentage changes are calculated on unrounded numbers.

## Education

Formal education normally begins at age five, though many children enjoy subsidised pre-school education. The schooling system is divided into primary, secondary and tertiary sectors.

### **Formal enrolments**

#### New Zealand students

##### Sector

|           | 2002    | 2007    |
|-----------|---------|---------|
| Primary   | 488,424 | 480,609 |
| Secondary | 259,660 | 279,297 |
| Tertiary  | 378,720 | 443,801 |

#### International students

|          |        |        |
|----------|--------|--------|
| Tertiary | 40,825 | 39,942 |
|----------|--------|--------|

**Source:** Ministry of Education



## Businesses

New Zealand businesses are typically small: 97% employ fewer than 20 people.

| Number of employees | Number of businesses |         | Total employees |         |
|---------------------|----------------------|---------|-----------------|---------|
|                     | 2003                 | 2008    | 2003            | 2008    |
| 0                   | 253,219              | 319,463 | 0               | 0       |
| 1–5                 | 90,783               | 100,459 | 209,810         | 233,170 |
| 6–9                 | 19,021               | 20,526  | 137,240         | 147,930 |
| 10–19               | 14,888               | 16,771  | 198,940         | 224,220 |
| 20–49               | 8,275                | 9,104   | 245,400         | 268,710 |
| 50–99               | 2,273                | 2,579   | 155,280         | 176,800 |
| 100+                | 1,813                | 2,199   | 775,020         | 918,240 |



## Imports

Oil is New Zealand's largest import, while manufactured products such as mechanical and electrical machinery, vehicles and textiles make up almost three-quarters of all imports.

|   | 2003               | 2008          |
|---|--------------------|---------------|
| <b>Main import commodities</b>                    | <b>\$(million)</b> |               |
| Petroleum and products                            | 3,071              | 7,079         |
| Mechanical machinery and equipment                | 4,333              | 5,885         |
| Vehicles, parts and accessories                   | 4,985              | 5,328         |
| Electrical machinery and equipment <sup>(1)</sup> | 2,701              | 3,777         |
| Textiles and textile articles                     | 1,641              | 1,895         |
| Plastics and plastic articles <sup>(1)</sup>      | 1,279              | 1,593         |
| Iron and steel and articles <sup>(1)</sup>        | 981                | 1,524         |
| Optical, medical and measuring equipment          | 967                | 1,194         |
| <b>Total – all commodities</b>                    | <b>32,161</b>      | <b>44,507</b> |

### Main countries of origin

|                              |               |               |
|------------------------------|---------------|---------------|
| Australia                    | 7,278         | 8,673         |
| China, People's Republic of  | 2,687         | 5,824         |
| United States of America     | 4,067         | 4,128         |
| Japan                        | 3,876         | 4,046         |
| Singapore                    | 610           | 2,254         |
| <b>Total – all countries</b> | <b>32,161</b> | <b>44,507</b> |

(1) Values exclude confidential data.

## International travel

New Zealand lies around 1,600km from Australia's eastern coast (a three-hour flight) and 9,000–12,000km from all Pacific Rim destinations (10- to 16-hour flight). Auckland has the busiest of the several airports servicing international travellers. Peak travel months are December to February.

|                           | 2003             | 2008 |
|---------------------------|------------------|------|
| <b>Short-term travel</b>  | <b>(million)</b> |      |
| Overseas visitor arrivals | 2.1              | 2.5  |
| NZ resident departures    | 1.3              | 2.0  |

New Zealand's top 10 visitor source countries for 2008 were the five listed below, followed by the Republic of Korea, Germany, Canada, Singapore and the Netherlands.

| <b>Top five visitor source countries</b>   | 2003              | 2008 |
|--|-------------------|------|
| <b>Country of last permanent residence</b> | <b>(thousand)</b> |      |
| Australia                                  | 655               | 968  |
| United Kingdom                             | 250               | 291  |
| United States of America                   | 208               | 216  |
| China, People's Republic of                | 71                | 124  |
| Japan                                      | 163               | 115  |





## Exports

Primary products make up about two-thirds of New Zealand's exports. Australia, the United States and Japan are the most common destinations for New Zealand exports, and have been since the mid-1980s.



### Main export commodities

|                                    | 2003          | 2008          |
|------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|
|                                    | \$(million)   |               |
| Milk powder, butter and cheese     | 4,679         | 8,758         |
| Meat and edible offal              | 4,111         | 4,681         |
| Crude oil                          | 478           | 2,541         |
| Logs, wood and wood articles       | 2,386         | 1,999         |
| Mechanical machinery and equipment | 1,356         | 1,906         |
| Aluminium and aluminium articles   | 980           | 1,459         |
| Fruit                              | 1,032         | 1,376         |
| Fish, crustaceans and molluscs     | 1,215         | 1,126         |
| <b>Total – all commodities</b>     | <b>29,291</b> | <b>40,028</b> |

### Main destinations

|                              |               |               |
|------------------------------|---------------|---------------|
| Australia                    | 6,050         | 9,172         |
| United States of America     | 4,366         | 4,017         |
| Japan                        | 3,354         | 3,359         |
| China, People's Republic of  | 1,457         | 2,091         |
| United Kingdom               | 1,361         | 1,633         |
| <b>Total – all countries</b> | <b>29,291</b> | <b>40,028</b> |

## Demography

### Components of population change in the five years to 2008

|                         |                  |  |
|-------------------------|------------------|--|
| <b>Natural increase</b> | <b>+ 158,800</b> |  |
| Live births             | + 299,900        |  |
| Deaths                  | - 141,000        |  |
| <b>Net migration</b>    | <b>+ 56,100</b>  |  |
| Arrivals                | + 411,400        |  |
| Departures              | - 355,300        |  |

## Labour force

New Zealand has a comprehensive range of labour laws. Pay-as-you-earn (PAYE) tax on wage and salary earners is the single largest source of tax revenue.

### People in civilian employment

|               | 2003         | 2008         |
|---------------|--------------|--------------|
|               | (thousand)   |              |
| <b>Sector</b> |              |              |
| Services      | 1,339        | 1,540        |
| Industry      | 433          | 464          |
| Primary       | 159          | 149          |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>1,932</b> | <b>2,164</b> |



## Energy

Electricity is mainly generated by hydroelectric power stations supplemented by geothermal stations, gas, coal and oil-fired thermal stations, biomass plants and wind farms. There are no nuclear power plants.

Renewable resources have contributed an average of 68 percent of the total electricity generated over the last five years.

| Production and generation           | 2003      | 2008      |
|-------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Crude petroleum production (tonnes) | 1,033,087 | 2,814,855 |
| Gas production (terajoules)         | 218,561   | 179,256   |
| Total electricity generation (GWh)  | 36,967    | 39,521    |
| Hydro and wind generation (GWh)     | 23,876    | 21,762    |
| Thermal generation (GWh)            | 13,093    | 17,759    |

## Earnings from wages and salaries

|                         | 2003   | 2008   |
|-------------------------|--------|--------|
|                         | \$     |        |
| Average hourly earnings | 17.86  | 22.35  |
| Average weekly earnings | 655.05 | 826.95 |
| Median hourly earnings  | 15.00  | 18.75  |
| Median weekly earnings  | 586.50 | 729.00 |

## International comparisons with our top five visitor source countries

|  | Unit                         | Most common date | New Zealand | Australia | United Kingdom | United States | China, PR | Japan   |
|--|------------------------------|------------------|-------------|-----------|----------------|---------------|-----------|---------|
| Total population (estimated)                             | millions                     | 2008             | 4.27        | 21.01     | 60.94          | 303.82        | 1,338.04  | 127.29  |
| Annual rate of change of population                      | %                            | 2007–08          | 1.0         | 1.2       | 0.3            | 0.9           | 0.6       | -0.1    |
| Male life expectancy at birth                            | years of life                | 2006             | 78.0        | 79.0      | 77.2           | 75.2          | 71.4      | 79.0    |
| Female life expectancy at birth                          | years of life                | 2006             | 82.2        | 83.7      | 81.5           | 80.4          | 75.2      | 85.8    |
| % of population aged 65+ years                           | %                            | 2008             | 12.6        | 13.3      | 16.0           | 12.7          | 8.0       | 21.6    |
| % of population aged under 15 years                      | %                            | 2008             | 20.8        | 18.8      | 16.9           | 20.1          | 20.1      | 13.7    |
| CPI change (annual)                                      | %                            | 2008             | 4.0         | 4.5       | 3.4            | 4.4           | 7.1       | 1.4     |
| Exchange rate (average) <sup>(1)</sup>                   | national currency units/US\$ | 2007             | 1.40        | 1.22      | 0.54           | 1.00          | 7.53      | 120.97  |
| GDP (annual) <sup>(1)</sup>                              | US\$ billion                 | 2007             | 126.4       | 926.3     | 2,804.4        | 13,807.6      | 3,280.2   | 4,381.6 |
| GDP per capita <sup>(1)</sup>                            | US\$                         | 2007             | 29,800      | 43,800    | 46,100         | 45,700        | 2,500     | 34,300  |
| Exports of goods and services                            | % of GDP                     | 2007             | 28.4        | 20.0      | 25.9           | 11.0          | ...       | 17.7    |
| Unemployment as % of labour force                        | %                            | 2007             | 3.6         | 4.4       | 5.3            | 4.6           | 4.4       | 3.9     |
| Employment as % of working-age population <sup>(2)</sup> | %                            | 2006             | 75.4        | 72.9      | 72.3           | 71.8          | 73.8      | 70.7    |

(1) New Zealand data is for the year ended March.

(2) Defined by OECD as aged 14–64 years.

**Symbol:** ... not available **Sources:** www.stats.govt.nz; www.oecd.org; www.imf.org; www.abs.gov.au; www.cia.gov

## Agricultural production

|   | 2002                       | 2007          |
|---|----------------------------|---------------|
| <b>Land use</b>                         | <b>Hectares (thousand)</b> |               |
| Grazing, arable, fodder and fallow land | 11,989                     | 11,354        |
| Planted production forest               | 1,828                      | 1,708         |
| Horticultural land                      | 109                        | 133           |
| Other land                              | 1,664                      | 1,506         |
| <b>Total land under farming</b>         | <b>15,590</b>              | <b>14,701</b> |
| <b>Horticultural: area planted</b>      |                            |               |
| Kiwifruit                               | 11.8                       | 13.2          |
| Wine grapes                             | 17.3                       | 29.6          |
| <b>Grazing: stock numbers</b>           | <b>(million)</b>           |               |
| Sheep                                   | 39.6                       | 38.5          |
| Dairy cattle                            | 5.2                        | 5.3           |
| Beef cattle                             | 4.5                        | 4.4           |
| Deer                                    | 1.6                        | 1.4           |



[www.stats.govt.nz](http://www.stats.govt.nz)

### Contact us

Statistics New Zealand  
Information Centre  
P O Box 2922  
Wellington 6140

**Email:** [info@stats.govt.nz](mailto:info@stats.govt.nz)

**Ph:** 0508 525 525 toll-free

**Ph:** +64 4 931 4600

### Thanks...

...to all New Zealanders  
for supplying information  
that is used to produce  
official statistics.

### Sponsors



MINISTRY OF  
**FOREIGN AFFAIRS & TRADE**  
MANATŪ AORERE

Department of Labour  
TE TARI MAHI



The information in this brochure is compiled by Statistics New Zealand.  
All figures are as at 30 June unless otherwise specified. Due to rounding,  
figures may not sum to stated totals.

[newzealand.govt.nz](http://newzealand.govt.nz)