

Labour market strengthens

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The labour market continues to grow and unemployment has fallen to 6.0 percent, Statistics New Zealand said today. There were 24,000 more people employed in the December 2013 quarter, following an additional 28,000 in the September quarter.

Over the December 2013 year, the number of people employed rose 3.0 percent in the Household Labour Force Survey (HLFS). Demand for workers from established businesses rose 1.9 percent in the Quarterly Employment Survey (QES).

"We're seeing strength across the labour market, particularly in the industries that provide services," industry and labour statistics manager Diane Ramsay said. "The unemployment rate has been falling and employment rising for the last 18 months, with both now at levels last seen in early 2009."

Annual wage inflation, as measured by the labour cost index (LCI) salary and ordinary time wage rates, remained steady at 1.6 percent in the December 2013 quarter. Average ordinary time hourly earnings, as measured by the QES, rose 2.9 percent over the year – up from 2.6 percent in the September quarter.

In the December 2013 quarter:

	December 2013 quarter	Quarterly change	Annual change
	(000)	(Percent)	
Employed	2,297	+1.1	+3.0
Unemployed	147	-1.3	-8.9
Filled jobs	1,754	+0.4	+1.9
	(Percent)	(Percentage points)	
Employment rate	64.7	+0.3	+1.1
Unemployment rate	6.0	-0.2	-0.8
Labour force participation rate	68.9	+0.3	+0.7
	(Level)	(Percent)	
Average ordinary time hourly earnings	(\$)28.03	+0.2	+2.9
Wage inflation (salary and ordinary time) (LCI)	1083	+0.5	+1.6

Our labour market indicators include the HLFS, QES, and LCI. The HLFS is a broad measure of labour market activity by individuals, while the QES measures demand by established firms for paid work and hourly earnings. The LCI is a measure of wage inflation. Results from all three surveys are based on representative samples from across New Zealand. [Explaining labour market statistics](#) has more information on these indicators.

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