National Population Estimates: September 2011 quarter
Embargoed until 10:45am – 14 November 2011

Key facts

During the September 2011 year:

- Population growth was 33,500 (0.8 percent).
- Natural increase and net migration contributed 32,800 and 800, respectively.

At 30 September 2011:

- The estimated resident population of New Zealand was 4.41 million.
- The population comprised 2.17 million males and 2.24 million females.
- The median ages for males and females were 35.6 and 37.9 years, respectively.
- There were 97 males for every 100 females.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age group (years)</th>
<th>At 30 September 2010</th>
<th>At 30 September 2011 P</th>
<th>Percentage change 2010–11 P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All ages</td>
<td>4,380,900</td>
<td>4,414,400</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 15</td>
<td>895,100</td>
<td>894,200</td>
<td>-0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15–39</td>
<td>1,499,900</td>
<td>1,500,400</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40–64</td>
<td>1,412,300</td>
<td>1,427,500</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65+</td>
<td>573,600</td>
<td>592,400</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Symbol: P provisional

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Commentary

- Population growth driven by natural increase
- Half the population is younger, and half older, than 36.8 years.
- The population aged 15–39 years remains the largest group.
- Fewer children, more older people

This information release contains provisional estimates of the resident population of New Zealand at 30 September 2011. National population estimates give the best available measure of the size and age-sex structure of the population usually living in New Zealand.

Population growth driven by natural increase

In the September 2011 year, the estimated resident population grew by 33,500 (0.8 percent), to reach 4,414,400. This compares with an increase of 49,600 (1.1 percent) the previous year. The growth was due to a natural increase (excess of births over deaths) of 32,800 and a net international migration gain of 800. Natural increase has fallen by 2,900 since the September 2010 year, while the level of net international migration has fallen by 13,100.

A decade ago New Zealand’s estimated resident population was 3,895,400. Over the last 10 years the population has grown by 519,100, which is equivalent to half the population of the South Island. This is an average annual growth rate of 1.3 percent. Latest national population projections (series 5) indicate that a decade from now the population of New Zealand will be 4,818,100.
Half the population is younger, and half older, than 36.8 years

New Zealand has an ageing population because of a shift to sustained low fertility and low mortality rates. Latest national population projections (series 5) indicate that the median age of the New Zealand population will be 43.5 years in 2061. At 30 September 2011, the median age of New Zealand's population was 36.8 years, compared with 34.7 years a decade earlier.

The median age for males is now 35.6 years, while for females it is 37.9 years. The lower age for males largely reflects their lower life expectancy of 78.8 years, compared with 82.7 years for females.

The population aged 15–39 years remains the largest group

The age composition of New Zealand's population has changed over the last decade. At 30 September 2011:

- **Children (aged 0–14 years)** accounted for 20 percent (894,200) of the New Zealand population, down from 23 percent at 30 September 2001.
- **The younger working-age population (aged 15–39 years)** remained the largest population group at 1,500,400, accounting for 34 percent of the total population, down from 36 percent a decade earlier.
- **The older working-age population (aged 40–64 years)** remained a large proportion of the population, increasing from 30 percent to 32 percent in the decade ended 30 September 2011, to reach 1,427,500.
- **The population aged 65 years and over (65+)** accounted for 13 percent (592,400) of New Zealand's population, up from 12 percent 10 years earlier.
**Fewer children, more older people**

During the year ending 30 September 2011 the number of children (aged 0–14 years) decreased by 0.1 percent, from 895,100 to 894,200. This decline was driven by a 3,800 increase in children leaving New Zealand for 12 months or more (including permanently), compared with the September 2010 year.

Net migration for children was a gain of 1,100 during the September 2010 year. However, during 2011 there was a net migration loss of 2,700 children. For the other broad age groups; 15–39 years, 40–64 years, and 65+, the net migration for the year ending September 2011 was 5,400, -2,700, and 700, respectively.

In contrast, the number of older people in New Zealand continues to rise. Within the 65+ age group, the number aged 80 years and over (80+) has increased significantly over the last year. At 30 September 2011 the 80+ population was 156,300, compared with 151,800 the previous year.

Over the last decade the proportion of the population aged 80+ has increased from 2.9 percent to 3.5 percent. The size and growth rate of this age group varied significantly by sex. The average annual growth rate for males for the decade was 4.9 percent, compared with 2.4 percent for females.

For more detailed data see the Excel tables in the 'Downloads' box.
Definitions

About national population estimates

National population estimates give the best available measure of the size and age-sex structure of the population usually living in New Zealand. Estimates are based on the latest census data and on births, deaths, and migration since the census.

National population estimates are published quarterly and subnational population estimates are published annually.

More definitions

Census usually resident population count: a count of all people who usually live in New Zealand and are present in New Zealand on a given census night. This count excludes visitors from overseas, and residents temporarily overseas on census night. The population counts published from the census are not comparable with the estimated resident population.

Estimated de facto population: the estimated de facto population of New Zealand includes all people present in New Zealand and counted by the census (census night population count). This estimate includes visitors from overseas who are counted on census night, but excludes New Zealand residents who are temporarily overseas.

Estimated resident population: an estimate of all people who usually live in New Zealand on a given date. Visitors from overseas are excluded.

International migration: migration into or out of New Zealand. International migration statistics are based on 'permanent and long-term' migration statistics, which are primarily determined by passengers' responses on arrival and departure cards about how long the person is in or away from New Zealand, and where they last lived or will live for the next 12 months or more.

- International migrant arrivals: people from overseas arriving to live in New Zealand for 12 months or more (including permanently), and New Zealanders returning after an absence of 12 months or more. (Referred to as permanent and long-term arrivals in international migration statistics.)

- International migrant departures: New Zealanders departing for an absence of 12 months or more (including permanently), and people from overseas departing after a stay of 12 months or more in New Zealand. (Referred to as permanent and long-term departures in international migration statistics.)

- Net migration: the difference between the number of people who have moved to, and departed from, New Zealand. At the national level this is the equivalent to international migrant arrivals minus international migrant departures.

Median age: half the population is younger, and half older, than this age.

Natural increase or decrease: natural increase is an excess of births over deaths. Natural decrease is an excess of deaths over births.
Related links

Upcoming releases

The National Population Estimates: December 2011 quarter will be released on 15 February 2012.

The Release calendar lists all our upcoming information releases by date of release.

Past releases

See National population estimates – information releases for links to past releases.

Related information

World Population Prospects: The 2010 Revision: world population estimates and projections, used in the accompanying media release, from the Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat.

Māori population estimates: the estimated Māori population of New Zealand by age and sex.

Population clock: Statistics NZ's online population clock gives a real-time approximation of the estimated resident population of New Zealand.

Subnational population estimates – information releases: Resident population estimates for territorial authority areas (ie cities and districts), and regions in New Zealand.

Base populations for estimates and projections (from Table Builder).

New Zealand abridged life table, 2008–10: abridged period life tables for the total New Zealand male and female populations provide an indication of the trends in life expectancy in the years between the construction of complete period life tables.

National population projections (2009 base–2061): national projections provide a summary of the projected population of New Zealand, based on different combinations of fertility, mortality, and migration assumptions.
Data quality

Period-specific information
This section contains information about data that has changed since the last release

- Estimates of 'mean year ended' population available in Infoshare

General information
This section contains information that does not change between releases.

- Base population
- Accuracy of the data
- Provisional and final estimates
- Population clock
- 2006-base population estimates extended
- 2013-base population estimates
- Rounding
- More information

Period-specific information

Estimates of 'mean year ended' population available in Infoshare

This release no longer contains estimates of the resident population for the mean year ended. These estimates can be found in Infoshare, which is a free, online database to access time series data. Infoshare contains estimates of the resident population for the mean year ended, from September 1991 to the current quarter. To access the data, select the following categories from the Infoshare homepage:

Subject category: Population

General information

Base population

The estimated resident population at 30 June 2006 forms the base population for deriving post-censal population estimates.

The estimated resident population of New Zealand at 30 June 2006 is the 2006 census usually resident count from the 2006 Census (held on 7 March 2006), updated for:

- residents missed or counted more than once by the census (net census undercount)
- residents temporarily overseas on census night
- births, deaths, and net migration between census night and 30 June 2006
- reconciliation with demographic estimates at ages 0–4 years.

Quarterly national population estimates from September 2006 onwards were derived by updating the estimated resident population at 30 June 2006 for births, deaths, and net migration during the following period.
Accuracy of the data

Official national population estimates give the best available measure of how many people usually live in New Zealand. However, uncertainty is inherent in the estimation process. Statistics NZ produces national population estimates using a component methodology, where the components of population change (births, deaths and international migration) are used to update a base population. There is some uncertainty associated with component data, particularly the estimate of international migration. Generally speaking, the uncertainty associated with population estimates increases as the estimates move further away from the base (starting point). Uncertainty also increases as population estimates are broken down by age and sex.

International migration estimates

International migration statistics are based on electronic arrival and departure records supplied to Statistics NZ for each international passenger. All arrivals and departures are processed so they can be allocated to one of three passenger types: overseas visitors, New Zealand-resident travellers, and permanent and long-term migrants. The net number of permanent and long-term migrations provide the estimate of international migration used in deriving the national population estimates. Uncertainty arises due to changes in passenger intentions; a person may change their intentions after their arrival or departure, which may mean the recorded passenger type becomes incorrect. Statistics NZ does not revise published statistics to adjust for such changes. As a result, the uncertainty associated with population estimates increases as the time period between the reference date of the base population and the date of the estimate increases.

Birth and death estimates

There is also some uncertainty associated with birth and death data. Birth and death registrations are used to estimate the number of births and deaths that occurred during each quarter. Not all births and deaths that occur in a quarter are registered by the end of the quarter, and this delay in registration is taken into account when estimating birth and death occurrences in the current quarter.

Determining data accuracy

It is not possible to ascertain the accuracy of current national population estimates as no independent or authoritative measure of the resident population exists. The periodic Census of Population and Dwellings remains the cornerstone of population statistics in New Zealand. Following the 2013 Census it will be possible to derive updated estimates of the population, to assess the accuracy of estimates since 2006, and to revise estimates where necessary.

Provisional and final estimates

Provisional and final estimates are produced for the resident population each quarter. Provisional estimates are produced for the information and media releases. This is the first public release of population estimates for a quarter and they are released within six weeks of the end of the reference quarter. The final estimates are derived when an extra quarter of detailed vitals data is available, about five months after the end of the reference quarter. Changes between the provisional and final estimates are most apparent at the younger and older age groups, due to delayed registrations of births and deaths.
**Birth estimates**

The final estimation for births that occurred in a quarter is less accurate, as births are not registered as closely to their occurrence as are deaths (around 5 percent of births are not registered either in the quarter of occurrence or in the subsequent quarter). The final estimation for quarterly births has a 95 percent confidence interval of ±500 (or about 3.5 percent, based on an average of 14,000 births per quarter).

**Death estimates**

The estimate of deaths that occurred in the reference quarter is taken as those deaths that were registered either in the reference quarter or in the subsequent quarter, and that occurred in the reference quarter. The provisional estimation for quarterly deaths has a 95 percent confidence interval of ±250 (or about 3.5 percent, based on an average of 7,000 deaths per quarter). This final estimation for deaths is very accurate as very few deaths are registered later than one quarter after their occurrence (about 1 death in a 1,000 is not).

In addition, all population estimates after 30 June 2006 will be revised following results from the 2013 Census of Population and Dwellings.

**Population clock**

Statistics NZ's online population clock gives a real-time approximation of the estimated resident population of New Zealand. The population clock uses the latest quarterly estimated resident population, and estimates of the expected number of births, deaths, and net migration for the coming quarter. The settings for each component (births, deaths, and net migration) are derived by converting the quarterly estimated totals into a 'per minute' figure, making allowance for the number of days per quarter.

**2006-base population estimates extended**


**2013-base population estimates**

The 2013 Census of Population and Dwellings will take place on Tuesday, 5 March 2013. The 2013 Census website (www.census.govt.nz) provides information about the census.

Population estimates based on the 2013 Census will be released from August 2014.

**Rounding**

All figures in this release were rounded independently. Estimates of the total population, natural increase, net migration, and broad age groups are rounded to the nearest 100. National population estimates of five-year age groups are rounded to the nearest 10.

All derived figures in this release were calculated using data of greater precision than that published.
More information

Information about the population estimates contains detailed information about the methods used to derive population estimates.

Liability

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Tables

The following tables are included in this release. They are available in Excel format from the 'Downloads' box of National Population Estimates: September 2011 quarter on the Statistics NZ website.

If you do not have access to Excel, you may use the Excel file viewer to view, print, and export the contents of the file.

1. Estimated resident population and population change
2. Estimated resident population by broad age group
3. Estimated resident population by five-year age group

Access more data on Infoshare

Use Infoshare, a free, online database to access time-series data specific to your needs. To access annual and quarterly national population estimates by single-year of age, five-year age groups, and selected age groups, select the following categories from the Infoshare homepage:

Subject category: Population
Group: Demography Population Estimates
Group: Demography Age Estimates