

The social report monitors outcomes for the New Zealand population. This section contains background information on the size and characteristics of the population to provide a context for the indicators that follow.

People

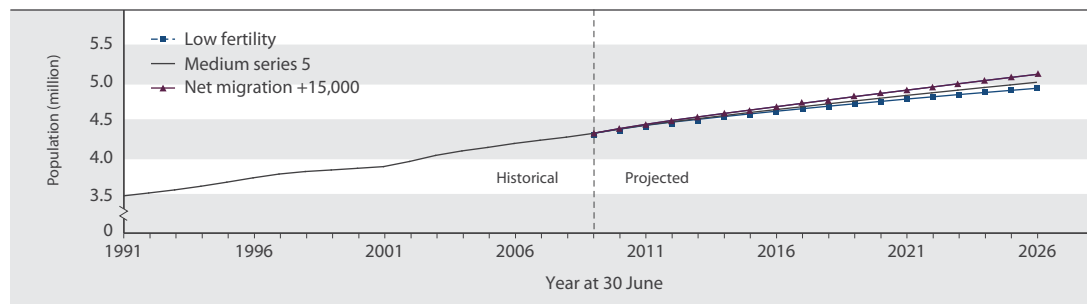
Population size and growth

New Zealand's resident population reached 4 million in 2003 and was estimated to be 4.35 million at the end of December 2009.

During 2009, the population grew by 55,600 or 1.3 percent. This was higher than the rate of growth recorded in 2008 (39,000 or 0.9 percent) and higher than the average annual increase during the decade ended December 2009 (49,600 or 1.2 percent).⁶

Under 2009-based medium population projection assumptions, the population growth rate is expected to drop from 1.3 percent in 2010 to 0.9 percent by 2013, then gradually slow to 0.7 percent a year between 2022 and 2026. Such growth rates would add around 676,100 people to the population between 2009 and 2026.⁷

Figure P1 **Estimated and projected resident population, 1991–2026**



Source: Statistics New Zealand

Note: All three projection series assume medium mortality (life expectancy at birth 85.6 years for males, 88.7 years for females by 2061). The low fertility series (total fertility rate of 1.7 births per woman by 2026) and the medium series assume a long-run annual net migration gain of 10,000 from 2013. The medium series and the high migration series assume medium fertility (total fertility rate of 1.9 births per woman by 2026).

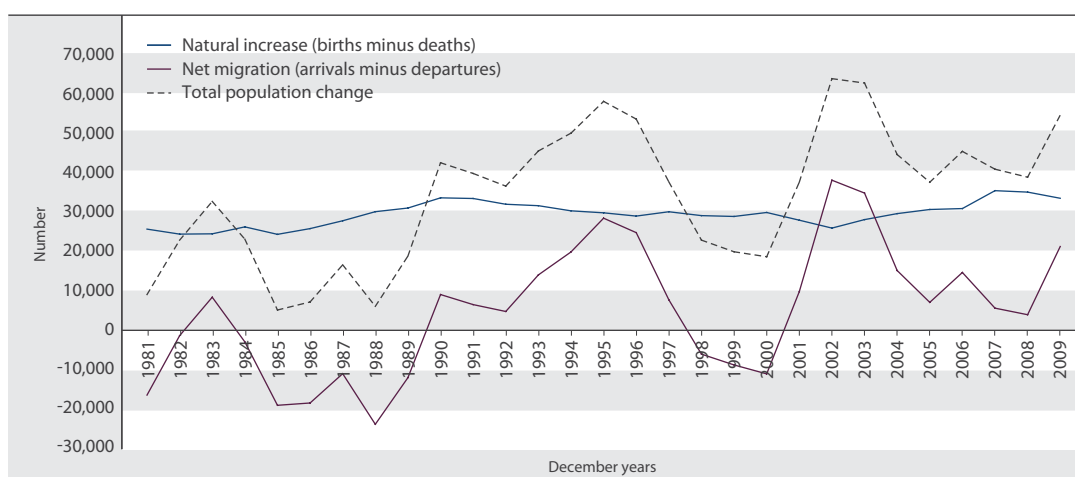
Components of population change

Changes in national population size are driven by two factors: natural increase (births minus deaths) and net external migration.

Births registered in the December 2009 year exceeded deaths registered in that year by 33,600, below the 35,200 recorded in 2008. Historically, natural increase has been the main component of population growth in New Zealand, but its contribution is set to decline gradually as the population ages and fertility remains stable. By 2026, natural increase is projected to be about 23,600 a year.

The number of people coming to live in New Zealand in 2009 exceeded those leaving the country to live elsewhere by 21,300. This was well above the net migration gain of 3,800 in 2008 and higher than the annual average of 11,900 for the December years 1990–2009. In the December 2009 year, the net gain from permanent and long-term migration accounted for 39 percent of the population growth.

Figure P2 **Components of population change, 1982–2009**



Source: Statistics New Zealand

Notes: (1) Before 1991, estimated population change was based on the de facto population concept. From 1991 onwards, population change was based on the resident population concept. (2) Net migration refers to net permanent and long-term migration.

The increased gain from net migration in 2009 was mainly due to a decline in long-term departures to Australia, from a record net outflow of 35,400 in 2008 to 18,000 in 2009.

The main contributing countries to the net migration gain in 2009 were the United Kingdom (9,100), India (6,000), China (3,800), the Philippines (2,300), and Fiji (2,200). The United Kingdom has been New Zealand's leading net source of migrants since 2004.

Over the decade to 2009, New Zealand had a net gain of 138,800 migrants. Adults aged 25–49 years contributed more than half of this gain (54 percent), with young people aged 15–19 years (25 percent) and children aged under 15 years (19 percent) accounting for most of the remainder. Among adult migrants aged 25–49 years, the sex ratio was about equal for those arriving in New Zealand over the decade, but among those leaving the country, males slightly outnumbered females.

For long-term migrants who are New Zealand citizens, there was a net outflow of 15,500 in 2009, less than half the net outflow of the previous year (37,000). Long-term departures for this group fell from 60,600 in 2008 to 41,600 in 2009. In comparison, arrivals numbered 26,100 in 2009, higher than the 23,600 recorded in 2008 and the average of 23,500 for the period 1979–2009.

Two-thirds (67 percent) of New Zealand nationals returning home in 2009 after a long-term absence came from either Australia or the United Kingdom. These two countries were also the most popular destinations for New Zealand citizens departing for a permanent or long-term absence.

There was a net inflow of 36,700 non-New Zealand citizens in 2009, down slightly from 40,900 in 2008. The net inflow of non-New Zealand citizens more than doubled between 2000 and 2002 (from 26,600 to 54,900), then fell to 32,000 in 2005 and recovered slightly to 38,200 in 2006 and 2007. The Auckland region was the destination for more than half (52 percent) of all non-New Zealand citizens who arrived in 2009 for long-term residence, followed by Canterbury (13 percent) and the Wellington region (10 percent).

People born overseas

Overseas-born people make up an increasing proportion of the New Zealand population. At the time of the 2006 Census there were 879,500 overseas-born people living in New Zealand, making up 23 percent of the country's population compared with 19 percent in 2001 and 18 percent in 1996.

The composition of New Zealand's overseas-born population is also changing, reflecting the changes in New Zealand's immigration patterns. The United Kingdom and Ireland – historically the major sources of New Zealand's immigrants – still account for the largest share of New Zealand's overseas-born population, but at 29 percent in 2006 this was considerably lower than the 1996 figure of 38 percent. Over the same period there were also falls in the proportion of overseas-born residents who were born in Australia, the Pacific Islands and the other countries of North-West Europe.

The largest growth was in the North-East Asia category. This was mainly because of an increase in the number of people born in the People's Republic of China, from 19,500 to 78,100 between 1996 and 2006. The Southern and Central Asia category also increased markedly, reflecting a more-than-threefold increase in the Indian-born population from 12,800 to 43,300. The largest proportionate increase was in the sub-Saharan Africa group, largely the result of an almost fourfold increase in the South African born population, from 11,300 to 41,700.

Table P1 **Birthplaces of the overseas-born population, 1996 and 2006**

Birthplace	Census year			
	1996		2006	
	Number	%	Number	%
Australia	54,711	9.0	62,742	7.1
Pacific Islands	99,258	16.4	135,852	15.4
United Kingdom and Ireland	230,049	38.0	251,688	28.6
North-West Europe	39,168	6.5	44,103	5.0
Southern and Eastern Europe	16,431	2.7	23,964	2.7
North Africa and the Middle East	7,245	1.2	16,533	1.9
South-East Asia	37,332	6.2	58,266	6.6
North-East Asia	61,179	10.1	135,168	15.4
Southern and Central Asia	19,410	3.2	57,699	6.6
The Americas	22,629	3.7	34,383	3.9
Sub-Saharan Africa	17,439	2.9	59,118	6.7
Total with overseas birthplace specified	604,851	100.0	879,516	100.0

Source: Statistics New Zealand (2007c) Table 7

Significant proportions of New Zealand's immigrant population are relatively recent arrivals in the country. In 2006, almost a third (32 percent) of overseas-born residents had lived here for less than five years, while a further 17 percent had lived here for between five and nine years.

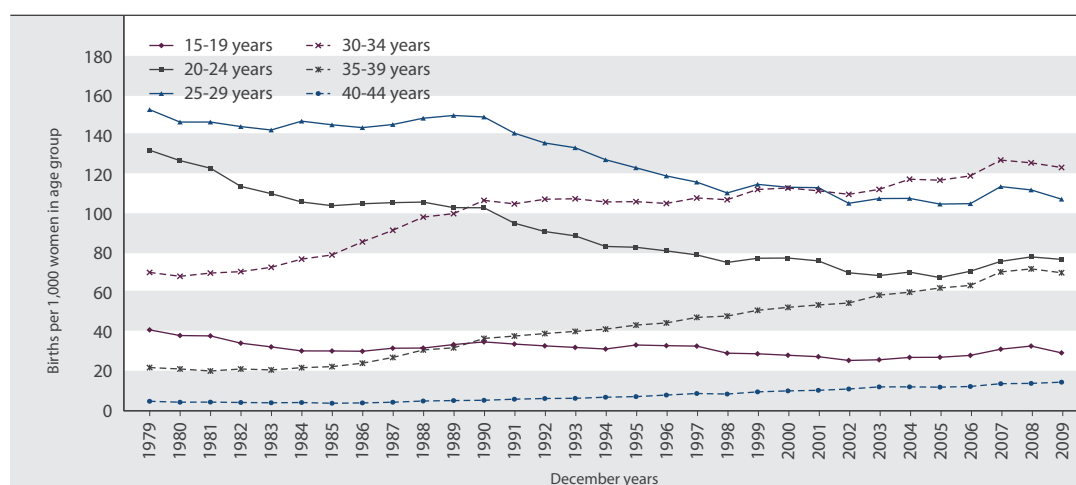
New Zealand's immigrant population is disproportionately concentrated in the Auckland region. In 2006, over half (52 percent) of the overseas-born population lived in Auckland, which was home to 32 percent of the country's total population. People born in Pacific and Asian countries had particularly high concentrations in Auckland (73 percent and 66 percent respectively). Overseas-born people were under-represented in all other regions with the exception of Wellington, which was home to 11 percent of both the overseas-born and the total populations.

Fertility

The number of live births registered in New Zealand fell from 64,300 in the December 2008 year to 62,500 in the December 2009 year. This fall ended a rising trend since 2002, when birth numbers were relatively low at 54,000.

Fertility rates increased for all age groups between 2002 and 2008 and fell for all age groups but one (the 40–44 year age group) between 2008 and 2009. At all ages below 30 years, women are less likely to give birth than their counterparts two decades ago, while women in their thirties and early forties are more likely to do so. Since 2002, women aged 30–34 years have had the highest fertility rate of all age groups.

Figure P3 Age-specific fertility rates, 1979–2009



Source: Statistics New Zealand

The median age of New Zealand women giving birth has risen from 27 years in the 1980s to around 30 years since 2002. The median age of first-time mothers was 28 years in 2009 and has been stable over the last decade. This figure is based on children of the current relationship only.

Age at childbearing varies widely by ethnicity. Māori and Pacific women giving birth tend to be younger, with a median age of 26 years and 27 years, respectively, in 2009. The median age at maternity was 30 years for Asian women and 31 years for European women.

The total fertility rate summarises the potential impact of current fertility patterns on completed family size. The total fertility rate for the December 2009 year indicates that New Zealand women averaged 2.12 births per woman. This was a decline from 2.18 births per woman in the December 2008 year but higher than the relatively low fertility year of 2002, when the total fertility rate was 1.89 births per woman. New Zealand's total fertility rate has been relatively stable over the last three decades, averaging 2.01 births per woman. During this period, the total fertility rate varied from 2.18 births per woman in 1990 and 2008 to 1.89 in 1998 and 2002.

New Zealand is one of several OECD countries that has experienced increases in fertility rates in recent years. The other countries include the United States, Ireland, Australia, England and Wales, Scotland, the Nordic countries, France and Canada. Of these, only New Zealand, the United States and Ireland reached replacement-level total fertility rates of at least 2.1 births per woman. Like New Zealand, the United States experienced a slight decline in fertility in the most recent year (from 2.12 births per woman in 2007 to 2.09 in 2008).

Table P2 Total fertility rate and teenage fertility rate, New Zealand and selected countries, latest year

Country	Year	Total fertility rate	Teenage fertility rate ⁽¹⁾
Australia	2008	1.97	17.3
Canada	2007	1.66	14.0
Denmark	2008	1.89	6.2
England and Wales	2008	1.97	26.0
Finland	2008	1.85	8.7
France	2008	2.00	7.8
Ireland	2008	2.10	17.4
Japan	2008	1.37	4.9
Netherlands	2008	1.77	3.9
New Zealand	2009	2.12	29.6
Norway	2008	1.96	9.3
Scotland	2008	1.80	26.7
Sweden	2008	1.91	6.0
Switzerland	2008	1.48	3.0
United States	2008	2.09	41.5

Source: Statistics New Zealand and national statistical organisation websites

Notes: (1) Births to females under 20 years per 1,000 females aged 15–19 years, except for the United States which includes births to 15–19 year olds only. (2) The teenage birth rate for Japan is for 2007; the rate for France is for 2005. (3) The 2008 rates for the United States and the 2008 total fertility rate for France are provisional.

New Zealand's comparatively high fertility rate reflects, in part, the higher fertility rates of Māori and Pacific women as well as the higher share of Māori and Pacific women in the female population of childbearing age. The total fertility rate for Māori women in 2009 was 2.80 births per woman, down from 2.95 in 2008. For ethnic groups other than Māori, the most recent fertility rates are for the three-year period centred on the 2006 Census. The rate for Pacific women in 2005–2007 was 2.95 births per woman. Of all live births registered in 2009, those registered to Māori women accounted for 23 percent, while those registered to Pacific women made up 12 percent.

In comparison, total fertility rates for European and Asian women in 2005–2007 were 1.92 births per woman and 1.52 births per woman, respectively. In 2009, 66 percent of all live births were registered to European women and 11 percent to Asian women. Mothers who identify with more than one ethnic group are counted once in each group reported.

Teenage fertility rates have fluctuated over the past decade. In 2009, the teenage (under 20 years) fertility rate was 29.6 births per 1,000 females aged 15–19 years, a decline from 33.1 per 1,000 in 2008. The teenage fertility rate for Māori women was 71.6 per 1,000 in 2009, down from 80.7 per 1,000 in 2008. For non-Māori women under 20 years, the rate fell from 20.3 per 1,000 in 2008 to 18.4 per 1,000 in 2009. Between 1996 and 2002, the teenage fertility rate fell from 33.3 to 25.8 births per 1,000 females aged 15–19 years, but had recovered to the 1996 level by 2008.

The birth rate for Pacific females aged 15–19 years declined from 47.4 per 1,000 in 2000–2002 to 42.5 per 1,000 in 2005–2007. Over the same period, the birth rate for Asian teens fell from 7.4 to 6.9 per 1,000 females aged 15–19 years.

New Zealand has a relatively high rate of childbearing at young ages compared with most other developed countries. At 29.6 births per 1,000 females aged 15–19 years in 2009, the New Zealand teenage birth rate is higher than the rate in England and Wales (26.0 per 1,000 in 2008), Scotland (26.7 in 2008), Ireland (17.4 in 2008), Australia (17.3 in 2008) and Canada (14.0 in 2007), but considerably lower than that of the United States (41.5 per 1,000 in 2008). Historical patterns and cultural differences in the timing of childbearing, and New Zealand's relatively high overall fertility, partly explain the differences between countries.

Distribution of the population

Over three-quarters (76 percent) of the population live in the North Island, and one-third (33 percent) lives in the Auckland region.

Population growth in the Auckland region accounted for almost half (46 percent) of New Zealand's total population growth between June 2008 and June 2009. The majority (70 percent) of the Auckland region's population growth over the year to June 2009 was attributable to natural increase.

The Māori population is heavily concentrated in the North Island (87 percent), but only 24 percent of Māori lived in the Auckland region at the 2006 Census.

The New Zealand population is highly urbanised. At the 2006 Census, 86 percent of the population was living in an urban area. This includes 72 percent living in main urban areas (population of 30,000 or more), 6 percent living in secondary urban areas (10,000–29,999) and 8 percent living in minor urban areas (1,000–9,999).

There are marked ethnic differences in urbanisation, with the vast majority of Pacific peoples, Asian and Other ethnic groups living in main urban areas and very few in rural areas.

Table P3 **Urban and rural residence (%), by ethnic group, 2006**

	European	Māori	Pacific peoples	Asian	Other	Total
Main urban area (30,000+)	69	65	92	94	91	72
Secondary urban area (10,000–29,999)	7	7	3	2	2	6
Minor urban area (1,000–9,999)	9	13	2	2	3	8
Total urban	84	84	97	98	96	86
Rural	16	16	2	2	4	14
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Statistics New Zealand, 2006 Census, unpublished data

Notes: (1) "New Zealander" is included in European. (2) Middle Eastern, Latin American and African groups are included in Other.

Ethnic composition of the population

The ethnic diversity of New Zealand's population will continue to increase, according to ethnic population projections for the period 2006–2026 released in 2010. The projections referred to here use medium assumptions about fertility, mortality and migration, and medium changes in ethnic identity over that period.⁸

While the European or Other population (which includes the category "New Zealander") will continue to grow and retain the largest share, this share is projected to fall from 77 percent in mid-2006 to 70 percent in 2026. The declining share of the European or Other population reflects a relatively low average annual growth rate of 0.4 percent.

The Asian, Pacific and Māori ethnic groups are growing faster and will increase their share of the New Zealand population. For Māori, the increase in population share will be small: from 15 percent in 2006 to 16 percent in 2026. The share of Pacific peoples is projected to increase from 7 percent of the population in 2006 to 10 percent in 2026. The Asian population is projected to have the largest relative growth, averaging 3.4 percent a year. Their share of the population will increase from 10 percent in 2006 to 16 percent in 2026. While people of all other ethnicities make up less than 1 percent of the population, since 1991 they have grown in number faster than any of the major ethnic groups.

For the Māori and Pacific ethnic groups, the projected increase in population share is mainly driven by their relatively high rates of birth and natural increase, although ethnic intermarriage also makes an important contribution. The increase in the Asian population share is largely driven by levels of net migration (a net inflow of about 250,000 migrants over the 20-year period, under medium projection assumptions). The slow growth of the European or Other population is an outcome of lower fertility and an older age structure than the other major ethnic groups, as well as of a net migration outflow of around 40,000 over the 20-year projection period.⁹

Table P4

Ethnic share (%) of New Zealand population, by age group, 2006, 2016 and 2026

Year / Age group (years)	European or Other (including "New Zealander")	Māori	Asian	Pacific peoples	Middle Eastern, Latin American, African
2006 (estimate at 30 June)					
0–17	72	24	10	12	1.2
18–24	67	18	17	9	1.3
25–44	74	14	12	7	1.2
45–64	82	10	7	4	0.6
65+	91	5	4	2	0.2
Total	77	15	10	7	0.9
2016 (projected)					
0–17	69	26	13	15	..
18–24	66	19	16	11	..
25–44	67	15	18	8	..
45–64	77	11	10	5	..
65+	87	6	6	3	..
Total	73	16	13	8	..
2026 (projected)					
0–17	66	27	17	17	..
18–24	64	21	18	13	..
25–44	63	15	20	9	..
45–64	72	12	14	6	..
65+	82	7	9	3	..
Total	70	16	16	10	..

Source: Statistics New Zealand

Notes: (1) People who identify with more than one ethnicity are included in each ethnic population they identify with. (2) The symbol .. means not available. (3) See Appendix 2 for projection assumptions.

Ethnic diversity varies by age: among those aged under 18 years at 30 June 2006, people with a European or Other ethnicity made up 72 percent, Māori 24 percent, Pacific peoples 12 percent, Asian peoples 10 percent, and people of all other ethnicities 1 percent. Among those aged 65 years and over, people with a European or Other ethnicity made up 91 percent, Māori 5 percent, Asian peoples 4 percent, Pacific peoples 2 percent and people of other ethnicities 0.2 percent. The 18–24 years age group, which includes people who come to New Zealand to study, had the greatest ethnic diversity, with only 67 percent of European or Other ethnicity.

The number of people who identify with more than one ethnic group is increasing. At the 2006 Census, 91 percent of the population identified with only one ethnic group, down from 96 percent in 1991. Younger people are far more likely to identify with more than one ethnic group than older people. In 2006, 18 percent of children aged under 15 years were reported as belonging to two or more ethnic groups, compared with 3 percent of people aged 65 years and over. Birth registration data for the December 2009 year shows that 25 percent of babies belonged to more than one ethnic group, compared with 13 percent of mothers. Belonging to multiple ethnic groups is most common among Māori: two-thirds of Māori children born in 2009 belonged to more than one ethnic group, compared with one-half of Pacific babies, and one-third of European and Asian babies.¹⁰

The figures for the ethnic distribution used in this section are based on the number of people identifying with each ethnicity. Because people can identify with more than one ethnicity, the total number of ethnic responses may be greater than the number of people. Elsewhere in the report, the approach to measuring ethnicity varies with the data source used.

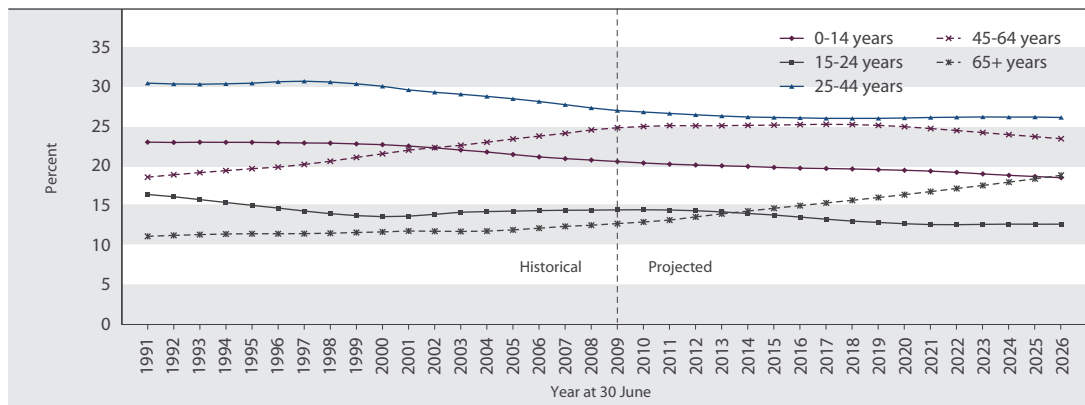
Age and sex structure of the population

Just over half of the New Zealand population is female (51 percent in 2009). Although there are more males than females born and males outnumber females among children and youth, the sex ratio changes in adulthood. For example, in the year to December 2009 there were more females than males in every age group from 25–29 years onwards. The sex ratio dropped from 105 males for every 100 females at ages 15–24 years, to 93 males per 100 females at ages 25–49 years. This reversal reflects higher mortality among males, particularly at ages 20–29 years, and sex differences in net migration at the peak migrant ages of 25–49 years. At older ages, the difference reflects higher male mortality rates.

The New Zealand population is ageing: the median age of the total population was 37 years in 2009, and it is expected to rise to 39 years in 2026.¹¹

The proportion of the population under 15 years of age has declined from 23 percent in 1991 to 21 percent in 2009 and it is expected to fall to 19 percent by 2026. The population aged 65 years and over has increased from 11 percent of the total population in 1991 to 13 percent in 2009. It is expected to reach 19 percent in 2026, the same share of the population as children.

Figure P4 **Age distribution of the population, 1991–2026**



Source: Statistics New Zealand

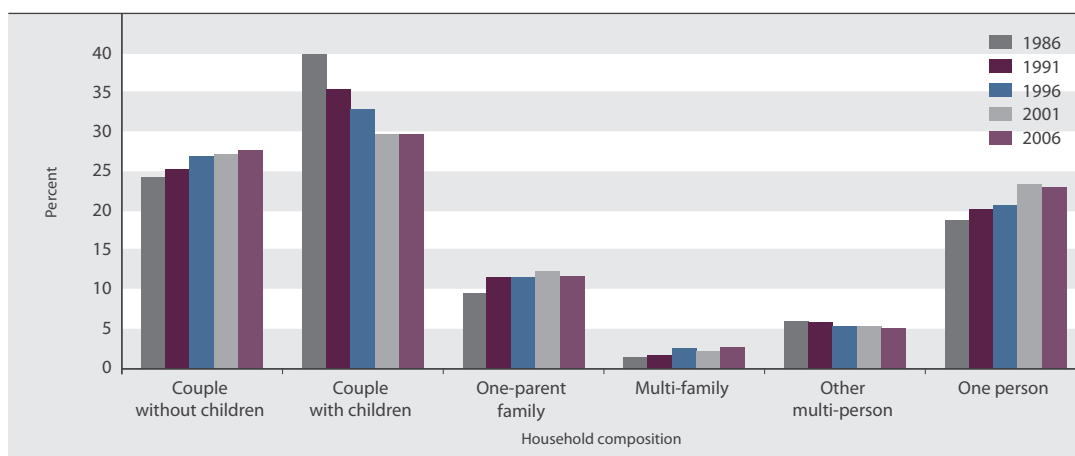
Age structure varies by ethnic group. At 30 June 2006, the European or Other population was the oldest, with a median age of 38 years, followed by the Asian population (28 years), the Māori population (23 years) and Pacific peoples (22 years). By 2026, half of all Māori are projected to be older than 25 years and half of all Pacific peoples will be older than 23 years. Over the same period, the median age of the Asian population is expected to rise to 35 years, while for the European or Other population it will rise to 42 years.¹²

Household composition

A household may contain a single person living alone, or two or more people who usually live together and share facilities, either as families (couples, parents with children) or as groups of individuals flatting together. There were 1.45 million households in New Zealand at the 2006 Census, an increase of 8 percent over the number recorded in 2001 and 34 percent higher than the number in 1986.

Twenty-eight percent of households contained couples without children in 2006, 30 percent contained two-parent families with children, 12 percent were one-parent family households, 3 percent contained more than one family, 5 percent comprised a group of individuals and 23 percent were one-person households.

Figure P5 **Distribution of households, by household composition, 1986–2006**



Source: Statistics New Zealand

Couple-only and one-person households are the fastest growing household types and are projected to increase the most over the next 15 years. Population ageing is the major factor behind both of these changes. But declining fertility and the closing gap between male and female life expectancy are also contributing to the rising number of couples without children. Delayed marriage, divorce and changing lifestyle preferences are other factors contributing to the growing number of one-person households.

Parents with dependent children living in other households

Many parents who have separated from their spouse or partner have children living in another household. Because family statistics are household based, these parent-child relationships are not counted.

The 2008 New Zealand General Social Survey showed around 240,000 respondents or their partners had children under 18 years who did not live in the same household as them. Of these people with children living in other households, the largest group (around 80,000 or 33 percent), had a partner and dependent children living in their own household. A further 29 percent lived with a partner but had no dependent children in the household, while 27 percent had neither a partner nor dependent children in the same household. The remaining 11 percent of people with children under 18 years living elsewhere comprised sole parents with dependent children living with them.

Families with dependent children

In 2006, there were 515,800 families with dependent children (aged under 18 years and not in full-time employment) living within New Zealand households. They made up 80 percent of the 641,500 families with children of any age.¹³

The number of families with dependent children increased by 8 percent in the five years to 2006, the largest increase since the census count of families began in 1976. The number of two-parent families with dependent children grew faster than the number of one-parent families (9 percent, compared with 3 percent). As a result, the proportion of families with dependent children headed by one parent fell slightly, from 29 percent in 2001 to 28 percent in 2006. By 2031, one-parent families with dependent children are projected to account for 34 percent of all families with dependent children, according to the 2006-based mid-range family projection released in 2010.

Table P5 **Families with dependent children, by family type, 1976–2006**

	1976	1981	1986	1991	1996	2001	2006
	Number						
Two-parent family	398,772	380,886	363,489	339,681	346,086	339,159	370,809
One-parent family	46,296	62,280	82,632	110,055	126,585	140,178	145,032
Mother only	39,153	52,938	71,388	92,028	107,394	117,018	120,996
Father only	7,143	9,342	11,244	18,024	19,191	23,163	24,036
Total families	445,068	443,166	446,121	449,736	472,671	479,337	515,841
	Percentage distribution						
Two-parent family	89.6	85.9	81.5	75.5	73.2	70.8	71.9
One-parent family	10.4	14.1	18.5	24.5	26.8	29.2	28.1
Mother only	8.8	11.9	16.0	20.5	22.7	24.4	23.5
Father only	1.6	2.1	2.5	4.0	4.1	4.8	4.7
Total families	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Statistics New Zealand, published and unpublished census data

Note: The census definition of child dependency has changed over time. From 1996, a dependent child is a person in a family aged less than 18 years who is not in full-time employment. For earlier years, a dependent child is a person in a family under 16 years or aged 16–18 years and still at school.

New Zealand and the United States have the highest proportion of families with children under 18 years headed by sole parents (both 28 percent in 2006).¹⁴ In the same year, the share of one-parent families was 25 percent in the United Kingdom, 22 percent in Australia and Canada, and 21 percent in Ireland.

In the mid-2000s, parents living with dependent children had an older age profile than their counterparts in the mid-1980s. In 2006, the median age of all parents living with dependent children was 41 years for fathers and 38 years for mothers, up from 38 years and 35 years, respectively, in 1986. Sole mothers tend to be younger than partnered mothers, with a median age of 37 years in 2006, compared to 39 years for mothers in two-parent families. Conversely, sole fathers tend to be a little older than partnered fathers, with a median age of 42 years in 2006, compared to 41 years for fathers in two-parent families. In same-sex couples, the median age of parents with dependent children was the same for both female couples and male couples (37 years in 1996 and 2001, 39 years in 2006).

Table P6 **Median age (in years) of parents living with dependent children, by family type, 1986–2006**

Family type	1986	1991	1996	2001	2006
Two-parent family					
Father	38	39	39	40	41
Mother	35	36	37	38	39
One-parent family					
Father	40	39	39	41	42
Mother	34	33	34	36	37
Total families					
Father	38	39	39	40	41
Mother	35	36	36	38	38

Source: Statistics New Zealand, unpublished census data

Note: The data for two-parent families refers to parents in opposite-sex couples only.

Housing tenure

Most New Zealand householders own their own homes but they are less likely to do so than in the past. The proportion of households owning their dwellings either with or without a mortgage fell from 74 percent in 1991, to 71 percent in 1996 and to 68 percent in 2001. There was a further small decline to 67 percent in 2006.¹⁵

Information on home ownership by individuals is available from a different measure: tenure holder. In 2006, just over half (53 percent) of the population aged 15 years and over owned or partly owned the dwelling they lived in, a small decline from 55 percent in 2001. Home ownership generally increases with age and in both 2001 and 2006 it was highest among people aged 55–74 years (80 percent and 79 percent, respectively). The decline in home ownership between 2001 and 2006 was most marked among those aged between 25–54 years. Over that period, the proportion of the population who owned or partly owned their own homes fell from 38 percent to 34 percent for 25–34 year olds, from 65 percent to 61 percent for 35–44 year olds, and from 76 percent to 72 percent for 45–54 year olds. The only age group to experience a significant increase in home ownership was the 85 years and over age group (from 55 percent in 2001 to 59 percent in 2006).

Home ownership varies widely by ethnic group. In 2006, Pacific people were the least likely to own the dwelling they lived in (22 percent of Pacific people aged 15 years and over). They were followed by people in the combined Middle Eastern, Latin American and African category (24 percent), Māori (30 percent) and Asian people (37 percent). Europeans and people in the Other ethnic group category (almost all of whom identified themselves as “New Zealander”), had higher than average levels of home ownership (58 percent and 65 percent, respectively).

Official languages

New Zealand has three official languages: English, Māori (from 1987) and New Zealand Sign Language (from April 2006). The 2006 Census recorded that 96 percent of people could speak English, 4 percent of people could speak Māori, and 0.6 percent could converse in New Zealand Sign Language.¹⁶

In 2006, eight out of 10 people (79 percent) spoke English as their only language while a further 17 percent spoke English along with at least one other language. Of the 4 percent of New Zealanders who could not speak English, almost half (49 percent) were children under the age of five, most of whom would still be learning to speak. Of the 2 percent of people who spoke at least one language but not English, most (80 percent) were born overseas. People born in Asian countries (17 percent) and people born in Pacific countries (12 percent) had the highest proportions who spoke at least one language but not English.

The number of people able to converse in New Zealand Sign Language was 24,000 in 2006, a decline from 27,300 in 2001. This fall of 12 percent followed an increase of 3 percent between the 1996 and 2001 censuses. In 2006, 9 percent or 2,200 of those people who were able to converse in New Zealand Sign Language indicated it was their only language. A further 89 percent were also able to converse in English, 26 percent in Māori and 25 percent in other languages (either alone or in combination).

New Zealanders experiencing disability

In 2006, an estimated 660,300 New Zealanders reported a disability, representing 17 percent of the total population.¹⁷

Disability increases with age. In 2006, the prevalence of disability ranged from 10 percent of children (0–14 years) to 45 percent of people aged 65 years and over.

For children with disabilities, conditions or health problems that existed at birth and disease or illness were the most common causes. Disease or illness, accidents or injuries and ageing were the most common causes of disability for adults.¹⁸

Table P7 **Number and prevalence (%) of people experiencing disabilities (total population residing in households and residential facilities), by age group and sex, 2006**

Age group (years)	Males		Females		Total	
	Number	Rate (%)	Number	Rate (%)	Number	Rate (%)
0–14	53,500	12	36,500	9	90,000	10
15–44	73,800	9	67,600	8	141,500	9
45–64	104,700	21	103,800	19	208,500	20
65+	95,600	43	124,700	46	220,300	45
Total	327,700	17	332,600	16	660,300	17

Source: Statistics New Zealand, 2006 Disability Survey

The total disability rate for Māori (17 percent) was higher than the disability rate for Pacific peoples (11 percent) but lower than the disability rate for Europeans (18 percent). The Asian population had the lowest disability rate (5 percent). Because the Māori and Pacific populations have a younger age structure than the European population, disability rates should be compared by age group. In every age group, Māori had a higher disability rate than other ethnic groups.

Many New Zealanders experiencing disability face barriers to full participation in society. For example, the 2006 Disability Survey found that 38 percent of disabled adults aged 25–64 years had no educational qualification, compared to 18 percent of non-disabled adults of that age. Sixty percent of 15–64 year olds with a disability were employed in 2006, compared to 80 percent of non-disabled 15–64 year olds. Thirty-nine percent of disabled adults aged 15–64 years had an annual personal income of less than \$15,000, compared to 28 percent of non-disabled 15–64 year olds. Disabled adults were less likely than those without disabilities to have the support of a partner or spouse. Two-thirds (66 percent) of disabled adults aged 25–64 years were partnered, compared to three-quarters (76 percent) of non-disabled people of the same age.¹⁹

Gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people

There is little population information based on sexual orientation or gender identity in New Zealand. Reliable data on the size of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender populations in relation to the total population is not available.

Some information about same-sex couples who share a residence has been collected in censuses since 1996. The 2006 Census recorded just over 12,300 adults living with a partner of the same sex, making up 0.7 percent of all adults living in couples. This is an increase from the 10,100 recorded in the 2001 Census when they made up 0.6 percent of all couples and the 6,500 recorded in the 1996 Census when they made up 0.4 percent of all couples. However, it is difficult to know whether the change in numbers represents a real increase in the number of same-sex couples living together, or a greater willingness on their part to report living arrangements and partnership status, or both. It is important to note that these statistics refer only to same-sex partners who live together. They do not measure sexual orientation or reflect the proportion of gay, lesbian and bisexual people in the population.

Some information on sexual orientation is available from the national youth health and wellbeing survey conducted in 2007. The 9,000 secondary school students in the survey were aged between 13 and 18 years. Most students (92 percent) reported being exclusively attracted to the opposite sex, while 4 percent reported being attracted to the same sex or both sexes. The remaining 4 percent were attracted to neither sex or were not sure of their sexual orientation. These proportions did not change markedly between the 2001 and 2007 surveys.²⁰