

# New Zealand in Profile



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

2010

### **Natural environment**

New Zealand is an island country in the south-west Pacific, comparable in size (268,680 sq km) to the United Kingdom and the Philippines. New Zealand comprises the North Island and South Island, and a host of smaller islands. Extensive areas are set aside as national parks. Generally, New Zealand has a temperate climate, although the far north may experience subtropical weather during summer, and the inland alpine areas of the South Island can get very cold in winter. Although average annual temperatures are not extreme, from 16°C in the north to 10°C in the south, be prepared for the unexpected when engaged in outdoor activities. On any day, the weather can change suddenly with a cold front or rain setting in. The North Island is mainly rolling hill country, much of which is farmed. The South Island is divided by the Southern Alps, which run most of its length and rise to over 3,000m. Nowhere in New Zealand is more than 130km from the sea.

### **Government**

The capital is Wellington, and the largest city and main port is Auckland. New Zealand is a parliamentary democracy and a member of the Commonwealth.

### **Language and religion**

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.

### **Population**

New Zealand has a diverse multicultural population of over 4 million people, making it one of the world's least crowded countries. New Zealand's indigenous Māori, a Polynesian people, make up around 15 percent of the population.

### **History**

New Zealand as a nation state began in 1840. In that year the country became a British colony when more than 500 Māori chiefs and representatives of Queen Victoria signed the Treaty of Waitangi. The treaty is the country's founding document. The Māori name for New Zealand is Aotearoa ('land of the long white cloud'). The name New Zealand was given after the Dutch explorer Abel Tasman made the first recorded European visit in 1642.

### **Economy**

While New Zealand has about 0.1 percent of the world's population, its economy produces about 0.3 percent of the world's material output. Compared with the rest of the world, it is one of the richer economies. New Zealanders are generally well educated, healthy, and have a comfortable standard of living. In 2008, the four largest categories of goods exported made up 44 percent of New Zealand's total exports by volume. These were dairy products; meat and meat products; wood and paper products; and metal products, machinery, and equipment.

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## History

(All dates common era)

- 1300** East Polynesian people arrive. Now known as Māori, they did not identify themselves by this collective name until the arrival of European people.  
(approx)
- 1642** Abel Tasman is 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** Tour of New Zealand by South Africa's Springbok rugby team divides New Zealand society.
- 1983** Closer Economic Relations agreement signed with Australia.
- 1985** Waitangi Tribunal given power to hear historic Māori land grievances going back to 1840.
- 1987** Māori declared an official language alongside English.
- 1987** New Zealand becomes nuclear free.
- 1999** Helen Clark is New Zealand's first elected woman prime minister.
- 2003** New Zealand population reaches 4 million.
- 2004** Parliament passes the Foreshore and Seabed Act, asserting Crown ownership and setting up a system to recognise Māori customary rights.
- 2005** New Zealand Government gives \$68 million in aid and sends 113 defence personnel to support the Asian tsunami relief effort.
- 2006** Māori Queen Te Arikiniui Dame Te Atairangikaahu dies.
- 2008** Sir Edmund Hillary, mountaineer, dies.
- 2009** Parliament passes the Auckland 'super city' bill.

## Population

1999	3,835,100
2009	4,315,800
2019 (projected)	4,744,600
<b>Resident population (2009)</b>	
<b>Main urban area</b>	
Auckland	1,333,300
Hamilton	200,200
Tauranga	118,200
Napier-Hastings	123,200
Wellington	386,000
Christchurch	386,100
Dunedin	115,700
Remaining main urban areas	459,800
<b>Total, 16 main urban areas</b>	<b>3,122,500</b>
Remaining areas	1,193,300
<b>Total resident population</b>	<b>4,315,800</b>
<b>Age group</b>	
Under 15 years	891,200
15–29 years	908,100
30–44 years	888,500
45–64 years	1,075,300
65+ years	552,600

Note: Figures are at 30 June.

## Demography

### Components of population change in the five years to 30 June 2009

<b>Natural increase</b>		<b>+ 163,100</b>
Live births	+ 305,000	
Deaths	- 141,800	
<b>Net migration</b>		<b>+ 46,600</b>
Arrivals	+ 415,400	
Departures	- 368,800	

## Earnings from wages and salaries

	June quarter	
	2009	2004
		\$
Average hourly earnings	22.96	18.17
Median hourly earnings	19.47	15.34
Average weekly earnings	843	675
Median weekly earnings	760	603



## 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 during summer, from December to February.

### Short-term travel

	2009	2004
Overseas visitor arrivals (million)	2.4	2.3
NZ-resident departures	1.9	1.5

New Zealand's top 10 visitor source countries for 2009 were the five listed below, followed by Germany, the Republic of Korea, Canada, Singapore, and Fiji.



### Top five visitor source countries

#### Country of last permanent residence

	2009	2004
Australia	1,008	782
United Kingdom	262	278
United States of America	197	213
China, People's Republic of	108	74
Japan	88	161

Note: All data refers to June years.

## Government income

### Central government

	Year ended March 2009	Year ended March 2004
Income tax	38,617	28,024
Taxes on production and imports	19,259	15,269
Other current taxes	325	366
Investment income	3,741	2,099
Other income	5,539	3,955
<b>Total</b>	<b>67,481</b>	<b>49,711</b>

### Local government

	2009	2004
Income tax	0	0
Taxes on production and imports	3,908	2,663
Other current taxes	95	62
Investment income	332	303
Other income	2,035	1,414
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,370</b>	<b>4,442</b>

## 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)	million	2009	4.32	21.26	61.11	307.21	1,338.61	127.08
Annual rate of change of population	%	2009	1.1	1.2	0.3	1.0	0.7	-0.2
Male life expectancy at birth	years of life	2008	78.2 <sup>(1)</sup>	79.3	76.5	75.7	71.6	78.8
Female life expectancy at birth	years of life	2008	82.2 <sup>(1)</sup>	84.1	81.6	80.7	75.5	85.6
% of population aged 65+ years	%	2009	12.8	13.5	16.2	12.8	8.1	22.2
% of population aged under 15 years	%	2009	20.7	18.6	16.7	20.2	19.8	13.5
CPI change (annual)	%	2009	1.9	1.5	2.1	1.2	1.5	1.0
Exchange rate (average) <sup>(2)</sup>	national currency unit/US\$	2008	1.40	1.18	0.55	1.00	7.70	116.52
GDP (annual) <sup>(3)</sup>	US\$ billion	2008	127	1,011	2,674	14,265	4,402	4,924
GDP per capita (rounded) <sup>(2)</sup>	US\$	2008	29,900	47,400	43,800	46,900	3,300	38,600
Exports of goods and services	% of GDP	2008	31.2	23.7	28.9	13.0	...	17.4
Unemployment as % of labour force	%	2008	4.2	4.2	5.6	5.8	4.2 <sup>(4)</sup>	4.0
Employment as % of working-age population <sup>(4)</sup>	%	2007	75.4	72.9	72.3	71.8	73.6	70.7



(1) Data from 2006–08 abridged life table. (2) New Zealand data is for the year ended March. All other data is for the year ended June. (3) Urban areas only.

(4) Defined by OECD as aged 15–64 years.

Symbol: ... not available. Sources: www.stats.govt.nz; www.cia.gov; www.imf.org; http://stats.oecd.org; www.stat.govt.nz; www.imf.org; http://laboursta.io.org

## Agricultural production



	2008	2003
<b>Land use</b>	<b>Hectares (thousand)</b>	
Grazing, arable, fodder, and fallow land	11,277	11,738
Planted production forest	1,610	1,829
Horticultural land	134	120
Other land	1,534	1,748
<b>Total land under farming</b>	<b>14,555</b>	<b>15,436</b>
<b>Grazing: stock numbers</b>	<b>(million)</b>	
Sheep	34.1	39.6
Dairy cattle	5.6	5.1
Beef cattle	4.1	4.6
Deer	1.2	1.7

## Household spending

Average weekly household spending, excluding property purchases

	2006/07	
	\$	Percent
Housing and household utilities	223.90	23.4
Food	155.60	16.3
Transport	136.00	14.2
Recreation and culture	96.70	10.1
Household contents and services	50.60	5.3
Clothing and footwear	32.80	3.4
Communication	31.20	3.3
Alcohol and tobacco	26.50	2.8
Health	22.60	2.4
Education	12.60	1.3
All other expenditure groups	167.60	17.5
<b>Total net expenditure</b>	<b>956.10</b>	<b>100</b>

## 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.

	2009	2004
<b>People in civilian employment</b>	<b>(thousand)</b>	
<b>Sector</b>		
Services	1,553	1,390
Industry	468	460
Primary	140	145
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,166</b>	<b>1,996</b>



## Social well-being

Most New Zealanders (86%) surveyed in 2008 reported they were satisfied or very satisfied with their life overall. The majority (88%) reported excellent, very good, or good general health. Over 90% agreed or strongly agreed that it is good that people in New Zealand can have different values and ways of living.

Measure	Percentage of population
<b>Overall life satisfaction</b>	
Very satisfied/satisfied	85.8
<b>Self-assessed general health status</b>	
Excellent/very good/good	87.5
<b>Social contact</b>	
Had face-to-face contact with family (over 4-week period)	83.7
Never felt isolated from surrounding people	66.8
Undertook voluntary work <sup>(1)</sup>	32.6
Undertook unpaid work <sup>(2)</sup>	64.6
<b>Safety and security</b>	
Very safe/safe walking alone in neighbourhood at night	52.4
Can access support in a time of crisis	96.4
Household has stored emergency water	40.7
<b>Environment</b>	
Household recycles all/most items	73.9
Household minimises energy use all/most of the time	53.9



(1) Worked for a group or organisation.  
(2) Worked for someone living in another household.

## Businesses

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

Number of employees	Number of businesses		Total employees	
	2009	2004	2009	2004
0	327,836	278,062	0	0
1–5	99,563	93,502	229,510	216,420
6–9	19,984	19,562	144,670	141,240
10–19	15,895	15,428	213,340	206,030
20–49	8,603	8,693	254,430	256,850
50–99	2,534	2,402	173,060	164,470
100+	2,143	1,866	904,270	806,500

## Imports

Petroleum and petroleum products are New Zealand's largest imports, followed by mechanical and electrical machinery and equipment. Imports from the top three countries of origin, Australia, China, and the United States, contribute over 40% of all imports.

	2009	2004
<b>Main import commodities</b>	<b>\$(million)</b>	
Petroleum and products	7,258	3,026
Mechanical machinery and equipment	5,771	4,529
Electrical machinery and equipment <sup>(1)</sup>	4,327	3,116
Vehicles, parts, and accessories	3,958	5,347
Textiles and textile articles	2,044	1,599
Plastics and plastic articles	1,670	1,230
Iron and steel and articles <sup>(1)</sup>	1,600	1,062
Optical, medical, and measuring equipment	1,404	1,034
<b>Total – all commodities</b>	<b>46,139</b>	<b>33,378</b>
<b>Main countries of origin</b>		
Australia	8,106	7,364
China, People's Republic of	6,658	3,066
United States	4,646	3,930
Japan	3,621	3,849
Germany	1,983	1,736
<b>Total – all countries</b>	<b>46,139</b>	<b>33,378</b>



(1) Values exclude confidential data.

## 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.

<b>Gross domestic product by industry in 1995/96 prices</b>	2009	2004
	<b>\$(million)</b>	
Primary industries	9,529	9,128
Goods-producing industries	26,543	27,175
Service industries	93,843	79,787
Gross domestic product	134,028	120,813
	<b>Percent</b>	
Primary industries' contribution to GDP	7.11	7.56

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

## Exports

Milk powder, butter, and cheese are New Zealand's largest exports, followed by meat and edible offal, and logs, wood, and wood articles. Australia is the largest market for exports, with twice the value of exports as to the United States – New Zealand's second largest market.

	2009	2004
	\$(million)	
<b>Main export commodities</b>		
Milk powder, butter, and cheese	8,970	5,115
Meat and edible offal	5,526	4,479
Logs, wood, and wood articles	2,330	2,071
Crude oil	1,964	318
Mechanical machinery and equipment	1,842	1,470
Fruit	1,611	1,254
Fish, crustaceans, and molluscs	1,302	1,111
Aluminium and aluminium articles	1,102	1,008
<b>Total – all commodities</b>	<b>43,028</b>	<b>29,864</b>
<b>Main destinations</b>		
Australia	9,717	6,332
United States	4,808	4,297
Japan	3,373	3,283
China, People's Republic of	3,359	1,617
United Kingdom	1,757	1,449
<b>Total – all countries</b>	<b>43,028</b>	<b>29,864</b>

## Services and investment

Trade in services makes up 20% of New Zealand's total exports and imports. Services relating to tourism are the second-biggest export earner behind dairy products.

	Year ended June 2009	2004
	\$(million)	
Exports of services	12,422	11,930
Transportation	2,539	2,275
Travel	7,002	7,391
Other	2,880	2,265
Imports of services	13,398	10,316
Transportation	4,207	3,613
Travel	4,106	3,075
Other	5,085	3,629
	\$(million)	
Income from New Zealand investment abroad	2,368	2,382
Income from foreign investment in New Zealand	13,394	10,048
	Percent	
Current account balance as a % of GDP	-5.9	-4.8
Exports of goods and services as a % of GDP	31.2	29.4
Net international liabilities as a % of GDP	95.2	75.0





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