

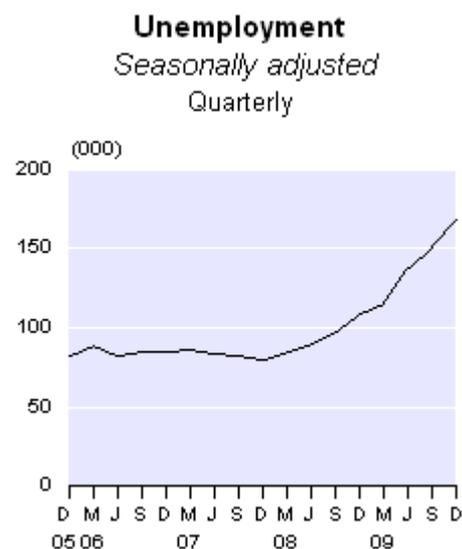
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Household Labour Force Survey: December 2009 quarter

Highlights

- Seasonally adjusted unemployment increased by 18,000 to 168,000.
- The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate increased to 7.3 percent.
- Seasonally adjusted employment decreased by 2,000 to 2,152,000.

	December 2009 quarter	Quarterly change	Annual change
Unemployment rate	7.3%	+0.8	+2.6
Unemployed	168,000	+12.2%	+54.7%
Employed	2,152,000	-0.1%	-2.4%
Not in the labour force	1,086,000	+0.3%	+4.6%
Labour force participation rate	68.1%	+0.1	-0.9



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Commentary

Labour market overview – seasonally adjusted

The December 2009 quarter Household Labour Force Survey (HLFS) showed continuing increases in unemployment and the unemployment rate, the eighth consecutive quarter these occurred. This quarter saw the number of people unemployed reach its highest level since the June 1993 quarter, and also showed the highest unemployment rate (7.3 percent) in 10 years.

In the December 2009 quarter, unemployment rose by 18,000 (12.2 percent) to reach 168,000, the highest level in 16 years. In the same period, the unemployment rate rose by 0.8 percentage points to reach 7.3 percent, the highest since the June 1999 quarter when it was also at 7.3 percent.

Employment fell by 2,000 (0.1 percent) during the December 2009 quarter, driven by a decrease in female full-time employment. Part-time employment remained unchanged, with a decrease in male part-time employment offset by an increase of the same number in female part-time employment.

The total number of actual hours worked decreased by 0.4 percent during the quarter, while total actual hours worked fell by 3.2 percent over the year to December 2009.

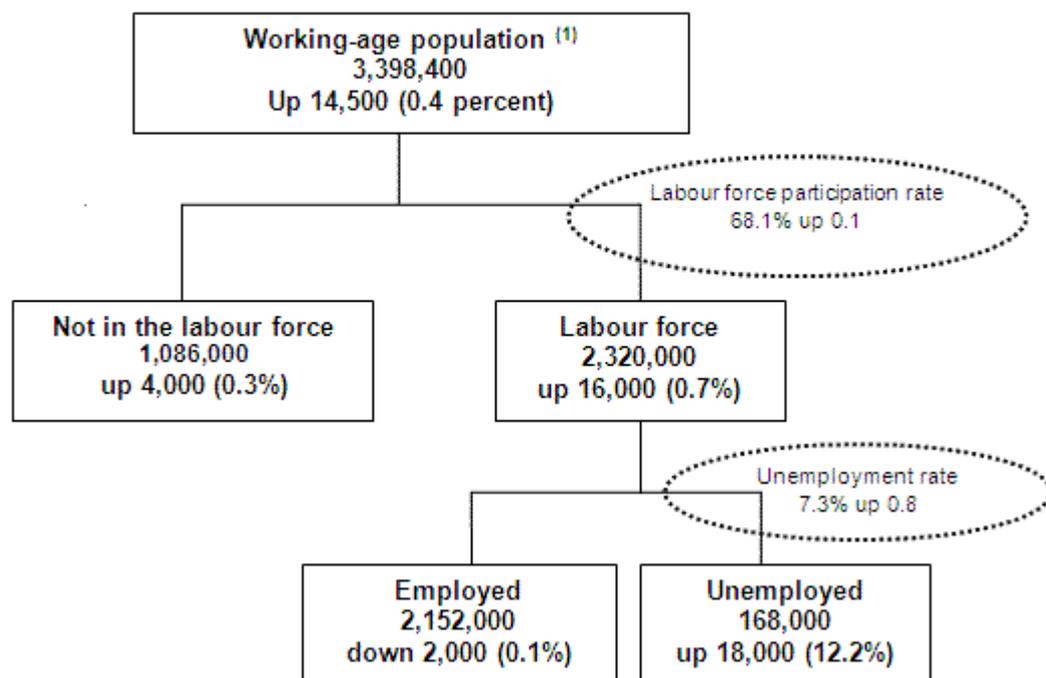
The labour force participation rate increased by 0.1 percentage points during the quarter to reach 68.1 percent, with the number of people in the labour force up by 16,000. This rise was brought about by an increase in the working-age population and the number of unemployed people.

The (unadjusted) working-age population continued to grow during the December 2009 quarter, partly due to positive net permanent and long-term migration.

The Labour Market December 2009 Quarter

Seasonally adjusted figures

Quarterly Change



(1) The working-age population is not seasonally adjusted

Employment – seasonally adjusted

Employment decreased by 2,000 (0.1 percent), down to 2,152,000 during the December 2009 quarter. Annually, employment decreased by 2.4 percent.

Full-time employment decreased by 5,000 (0.3 percent) during the December 2009 quarter, down to 1,653,000, the lowest number since the December 2005 quarter. Part-time employment remained unchanged at 497,000. In annual terms, both full-time and part-time employment decreased, down by 44,000 (2.6 percent) and 10,000 (2.0 percent), respectively.

In the December 2009 quarter, male employment remained flat at 1,139,000. In annual terms, male employment decreased by 30,000 (2.6 percent), driven by male full-time employment, which fell by 28,000 (2.8 percent) during the year to December 2009.

Female employment decreased by 3,000 (0.3 percent) in the December 2009 quarter. Both full-time and part-time employment decreased by 2,000 (0.3 percent and 0.5 percent, respectively). Annually, female employment decreased 23,000 (2.2 percent), mostly driven by a fall of 15,000 (2.3 percent) in full-time employment. Female part-time employment also showed a decrease, falling by 8,000 (2.3 percent).

In unadjusted terms, employment for those aged 15–19 years decreased by 23,900 to 125,600 during the year to December 2009. However, employment for those aged 60–64 rose by 15,200 for the same period, up to reach 149,400.

During the year to December 2009, the number of people employed in Auckland decreased by 16,900 to 654,700. The same also occurred in Canterbury, with the number of employed falling by 12,800 to 330,300.

In annual terms, the manufacturing; retail trade and accommodation; and arts, recreation, and other services industries showed notable decreases in employment, down by 28,000, 24,100, and 12,400, respectively. On the other hand, the number of people employed in the health care and social assistance industry rose, up by 15,000 during the same period.



Unemployment – seasonally adjusted

In the December 2009 quarter, the number of people unemployed increased by 18,000 (12.2 percent) to reach 168,000, the highest number of unemployed since the June 1993 quarter. The number of unemployed males rose by 9,000 (11.2 percent) to 89,000, and the number of females unemployed was also up by 9,000 (13.4 percent) to 80,000. This is the highest number of females unemployed since the survey began.

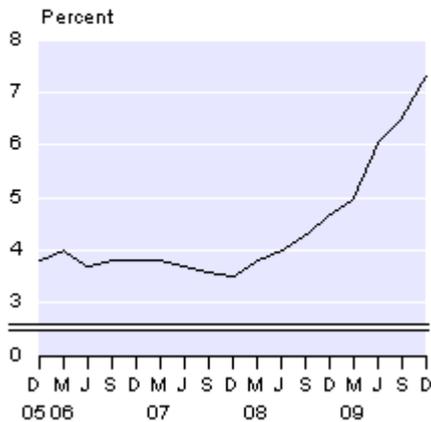
In annual terms, the number of people unemployed rose by 60,000 (54.7 percent). Male and female unemployment increased by 32,000 (57.7 percent) and 27,000 (51.5 percent), respectively.

The unemployment rate continued to increase, to reach 7.3 percent in the December 2009 quarter. This compares with 6.5 percent in the September 2009 quarter and 4.7 percent in the December 2008 quarter.

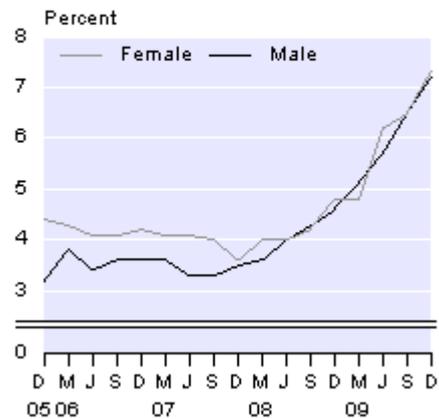
In the December 2009 quarter, the male unemployment rate increased by 0.7 percentage points to reach 7.2 percent, while the female unemployment rate increased by 0.8 percentage points, up to 7.3 percent. Annually, the female and the male unemployment rates increased, by 2.5 and 2.6 percentage points, respectively.

In unadjusted terms, the number of unemployed during the year to December 2009 increased markedly for those aged 15–19 years (up by 12,800 to reach 45,300) and those aged 20–24 years (up by 11,100 to reach 27,400).

Unemployment Rate
Seasonally adjusted
Quarterly



Unemployment Rate by Sex
Seasonally adjusted
Quarterly



Working-age population – unadjusted

The working-age population grew by 14,500 (0.4 percent) during the December 2009 quarter, and by 49,200 (1.5 percent) during the year to reach 3,398,400. Part of the quarterly increase was due to a net gain from permanent and long-term migration. (See [International Travel and Migration: December 2009](#) for more information.)

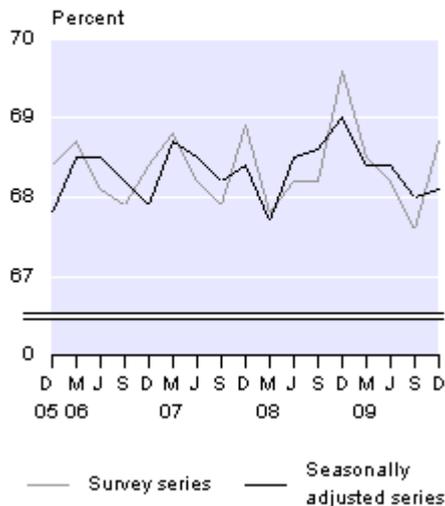
In the year to December 2009, the working-age population increased in the Auckland (by 34,200 to 1,039,000) and Otago (by 10,000 to 165,700) regions. The Waikato region showed a decrease of 4,100 people in the working-age population, down to 310,900.

Labour force participation – seasonally adjusted

The labour force participation rate increased 0.1 percentage points to reach 68.1 percent during the December 2009 quarter. On an annual basis, the labour force participation rate fell by 0.9 percentage points. The total labour force increased by 16,000 (0.7 percent) to reach 2,320,000 during the December 2009 quarter. Annually, the labour force increased by 7,000 (0.3 percent) people.

During the December 2009 quarter, the male labour force participation rate increased slightly, up by 0.1 percentage points to reach 74.3 percent, while the female participation rate showed no movement at 62.3 percent. Both the male and female participation rates decreased in the year to December 2009, falling by 1.2 and 0.6 percentage points, respectively.

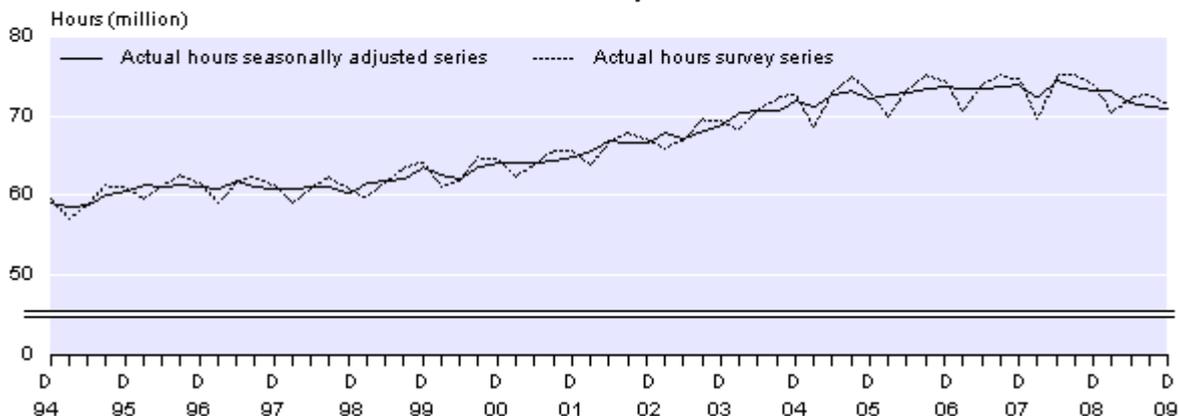
Labour Force Participation Rate Quarterly



Total hours worked – seasonally adjusted

The total number of actual hours worked per week decreased by 0.4 percent during the December 2009 quarter to reach 70,907,000 hours. The number of usual hours worked per week increased slightly during the same period, up by 0.1 percent to 78,565,000 hours. On an annual basis, both the total number of actual and usual hours worked per week decreased by 3.2 percent and 2.2 percent, respectively.

Total Hours Worked Each Week Quarterly



Jobless – unadjusted

The jobless are defined as those people who are either officially unemployed, available but not seeking work, or actively seeking but not available for work. Since the December 2008 quarter, the number of jobless has risen by 72,200 people, up to 275,900.

Underemployment – unadjusted

The number of underemployed people (employed people who work part-time and would prefer to work more hours) may serve as a measure of underutilised labour in the economy. Of the

501,400 people employed part-time in the December 2009 quarter, 22.9 percent (114,600) preferred to work more hours. This compares with 24.4 percent in the September 2009 quarter and 19.3 percent in the December 2008 quarter.

During the December 2009 quarter, 28.3 percent of males working part-time preferred to work more hours compared with 20.7 percent of females.

Duration of unemployment – unadjusted

On an annual basis, short-term unemployment (those unemployed for 26 weeks or less) increased by 28,500 (37.3 percent), to 104,900. During the same period, the number of long-term unemployed (those unemployed for longer than 26 weeks) more than doubled, reaching 40,500. Of the total number of unemployed people in the December 2009 quarter, 66.1 percent had been so for 26 weeks or less, while 25.5 percent had been unemployed for longer than 26 weeks.

Duration of unemployment (unadjusted)		
	December 2008 quarter (000)	December 2009 quarter (000)
Short-term unemployment 26 weeks or less	76.4	104.9
Long-term unemployment		
Over 26 weeks, but not over one year	10.0	30.3
Over one year, but not over two years	3.5	6.2
Over two years	1.3	4.0
Total long-term unemployment	14.8	40.5
Not specified	11.6	13.5
Total unemployment	102.8	158.9

Participation in formal study – unadjusted

In the December 2009 quarter, 260,000 people were participating in formal study, a 2.3 percent increase from the same quarter in 2008. Unemployed people were the most likely to be involved in formal study in the December 2009 quarter, with 12.4 percent participating. This compares with 8.7 percent of people who were not in the labour force, and 6.8 percent of those who were employed.

Ethnic group statistics – unadjusted

Ethnicity series are now published using the single/combination output method of classification. With this method, people are counted just once according to the ethnic group or combination of ethnic groups they have reported. Please refer to the technical notes of this release for more information.

In annual terms, unadjusted unemployment rates increased significantly for all ethnic groups, except for those in the 'other ethnicity' only ethnic group.

Single/combination unemployment rate (unadjusted) by ethnic group		
	December 2008 quarter (percent)	December 2009 quarter (percent)
European only	3.2	4.6
Māori only	9.8	15.4
Pacific peoples only	7.8	14.0
Asian only	6.3	9.2
MELAA only	10.7	17.1
'Other ethnicity' only	4.1	3.3
European/Māori	7.0	13.6
Two or more groups not elsewhere included	6.5	14.1

Note: MELAA = Middle Eastern/Latin American/African

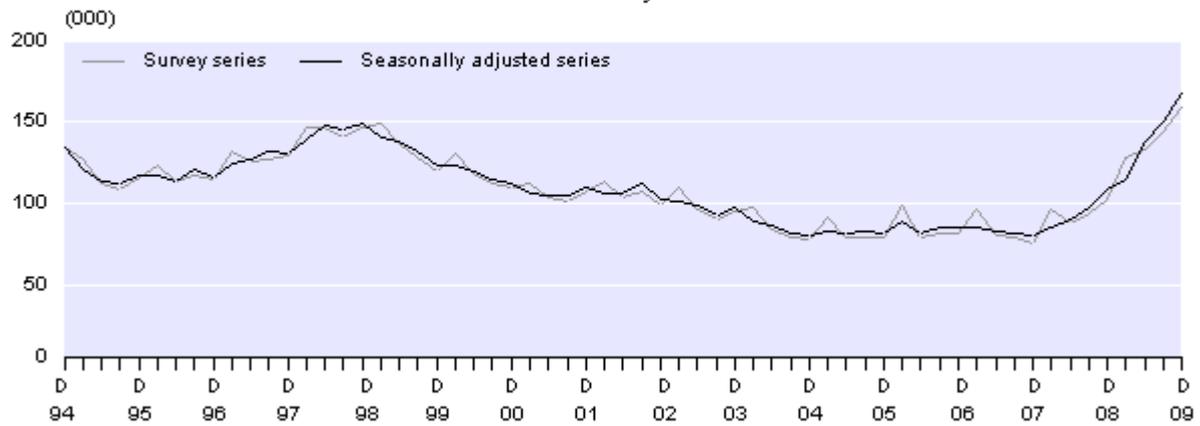
The unemployment rate for all people who identified with the Māori ethnic group (including those who also identified with other groups) was 14.8 percent for the December 2009 quarter. This figure is known as the total response Māori unemployment rate. There has been an increase of 6.2 percentage points since the December 2008 quarter, when the total response Māori unemployment rate was 8.6 percent.

Longer time series

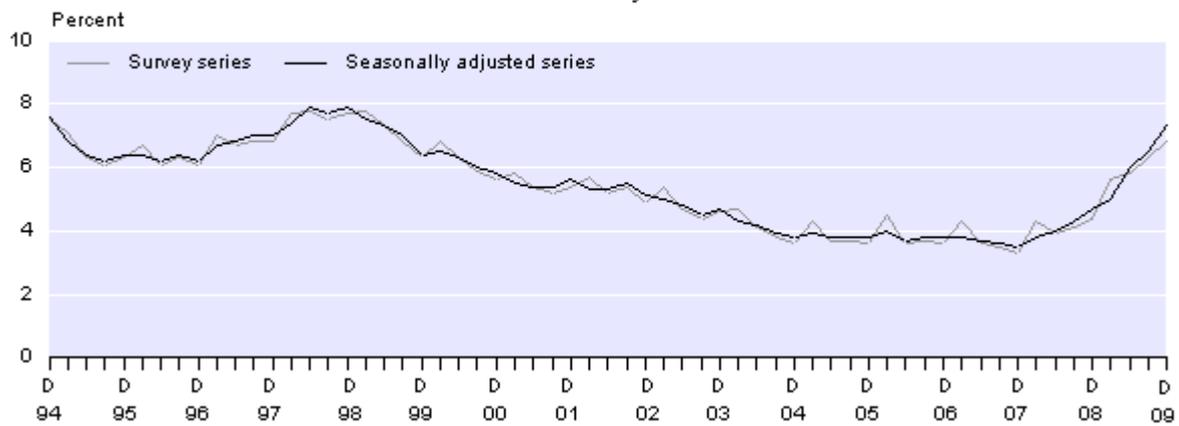
The following graphs show the HLFs series for the number of people employed, the labour force participation rate, and the unemployment rate over a 15-year period. A complete time series from March 1986 onwards is available on request.



Unemployment Quarterly



Unemployment Rate Quarterly



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Next release ...

*Household Labour Force Survey: March 2010 quarter will be released on
6 May 2010.*

Technical notes

Background to the survey

The Household Labour Force Survey (HLFS) commenced in October 1985, and the first results published were for the March 1986 quarter. The survey provides a regular, timely, and comprehensive portrayal of New Zealand's labour force. Each quarter, a range of statistics relating to employment, unemployment, and people not in the labour force is published.

In this release

This release contains seasonally adjusted, trend, and survey statistics for the December 2009 quarter. These statistics are averages for the three-month period and do not apply to any specific point in time. Data sourced from the seasonally adjusted series and trend series are identified as such in the table or section headings. All other data, whether in the commentary or in tables, are sourced from the original survey series and are unadjusted.

Figures presented in this release are rounded. Because each table contains rounded figures, there may be some small inconsistencies between the totals and individual cells. Unrounded figures have been used in the calculation of unemployment rates and labour force participation rates. Cells with estimates of less than 1,000 have been suppressed and appear as 'S' in the tables. These estimates are subject to sampling errors too great for most practical purposes.

Seasonal adjustment

Seasonal adjustment aims to eliminate the impact of regular seasonal events on a time series. In the case of the labour market, there are cyclical events that occur at around the same time each year that affect labour supply and demand. For example, in summertime there is a large pool of student labour that is both available for, and actively seeking, work. There is also increased demand for labour in the retail sector and in many primary production industries.

Seasonal adjustment makes data for adjacent quarters more comparable by smoothing out the effect on the times series of any regular seasonal events. This ensures that the underlying movements in the time series are more visible. Each quarter, the seasonal adjustment process is applied to the latest and all previous quarters. This means that seasonally adjusted estimates for any of the previously published quarters may change slightly.

Each series is adjusted separately. For this reason, the sum of the seasonally adjusted estimates for employment, unemployment, and people not in the labour force will usually not add up to the working-age population estimates.

All seasonally adjusted and trend series are produced using the X-12-ARIMA Version 0.2.10 package developed by the U.S. Census Bureau.

Trend series

For any series, the survey estimate can be broken down into three components: trend, seasonal and irregular. Trend series have had both the seasonal and irregular components removed, and reveal the underlying direction of movement in a series. Revisions to the trend series can be particularly large, especially if any estimates were considered to be outliers, but turn out to be part of the underlying trend. Typically, only the last two or three estimates will be subject to substantial revisions.

Survey scope

The target population for the HLFS is the civilian, usually resident, non-institutionalised population aged 15 years and over. This means that the statistics in this release do not cover long-term residents of homes for older people; hospitals and psychiatric institutions; inmates of penal institutions; members of the permanent armed forces; members of the non-New Zealand armed forces; overseas diplomats; overseas visitors who expect to be resident in New Zealand for less than 12 months; and those aged under 15 years

Reliability of survey estimates

The HLFS sample contains about 15,000 private households and about 30,000 individuals each quarter. Households are sampled on a statistically representative basis from rural and urban areas throughout New Zealand, and information is obtained for each member of the household.

Each quarter, one-eighth of the households in the sample are rotated out and replaced by a new set of households. Therefore, the overlap between two adjacent quarters can be as high as seven-eighths. This overlap improves the reliability of quarterly estimates of change.

Two types of error are possible in estimates based on a sample survey: sampling error and non-sampling error.

Sampling error can be measured, and quantifies the variability that occurs by chance because a sample rather than an entire population is surveyed. A non-sampling error is very difficult to measure, and if present can lead to biased estimates. Statistics New Zealand endeavours to minimise the impact of these errors through the application of best survey practices and monitoring of known indicators (eg non-response).

Sampling errors are calculated for each cell in the published tables and for estimates of change between adjacent quarters. For example, the estimated total number of people employed in the December 2009 quarter is 2,175,000 before seasonal adjustment. This estimate is subject to a sampling error of plus or minus 21,700, or 1.0 percent (measured at the 95 percent confidence level). This means that there is a 95 percent chance that the true number of employed people lies between 2,153,300 and 2,196,700.

Smaller estimates, such as the number of people unemployed, are subject to larger relative sampling errors than larger estimates. For example, the estimated total number of people unemployed in the December 2009 quarter is 158,900 before seasonal adjustment. This estimate is subject to a sampling error of plus or minus 9,700 or 6.1 percent (measured at the 95 percent confidence level). This means that there is a 95 percent chance that the true number of unemployed people lies between 149,200 and 168,600.

Estimates of change are also subject to sampling error. For example, the survey estimate of change in total employment from the September 2009 quarter to the December 2009 quarter is an increase of 31,600. This estimate is subject to a sampling error of plus or minus 18,600 (at the 95 percent confidence level). Therefore, the true value of the increase in surveyed employment from the September 2009 quarter to the December 2009 quarter has a 95 percent chance of lying between 13,000 and 50,200.

A change in an estimate, either from one adjacent quarter to the next, or between quarters a year apart, is said to be statistically significant if it is larger than the associated sampling error. Therefore, the example quoted above does represent a significant movement.

In general, the sampling errors associated with subnational estimates (eg breakdowns by regional council area or ethnic group) are larger than those associated with national estimates.

Response rates

The target response rate for the HLFS is 90 percent. The response rate is calculated by determining the number of eligible households who responded to the survey, as a proportion of the estimated number of total eligible households in the sample. The following table shows the HLFS response rates for the last five quarters.

HLFS Response Rates	
Quarter	Response rate (%)
Dec 2008	88.4
Mar 2009	89.2
Jun 2009	85.4
Sep 2009	87.9
Dec 2009	86.4

Definitions of labour force category

The labour force category to which a person is assigned depends on their actual activity during a survey reference week. The following definitions, which conform closely to the international standard definitions specified by the International Labour Organization, are used for the HLFS:

Working-age population: The usually resident, non-institutionalised, civilian population of New Zealand aged 15 years and over.

Labour force: Members of the working-age population who during their survey reference week were classified as 'employed' or 'unemployed'.

Employed: All persons in the working-age population who during the reference week worked for one hour or more for pay or profit in the context of an employee/employer relationship or self-employment; or worked without pay for one hour or more in work which contributed directly to the operation of a farm, business or professional practice owned or operated by a relative; or had a job but were not at work due to: own illness or injury, personal or family responsibilities, bad weather or mechanical breakdown, direct involvement in an industrial dispute, or leave or holiday.

Unemployed: All persons in the working-age population who during the reference week were without a paid job, available for work and had either actively sought work in the past four weeks ending with the reference week, or had a new job to start within the next four weeks.

Not in the labour force: Any person in the working-age population who is neither employed nor unemployed. For example, this residual category includes persons who:

- are retired
- have personal or family responsibilities such as unpaid housework and childcare
- attend educational institutions
- are permanently unable to work due to physical or mental disabilities
- were temporarily unavailable for work in the survey reference week
- are not actively seeking work.

Unemployment rate: The number of unemployed persons expressed as a percentage of the labour force.

Labour force participation rate: The total labour force expressed as a percentage of the working-age population.

This definition of labour force participation includes all those aged 15 years and over in the numerator (the total labour force) and the denominator (the working-age population). This definition is the most appropriate for the New Zealand labour market, as New Zealand does not have a compulsory retirement age, and many workers stay in the labour force beyond the age of 65. Using this definition also means that the measure will reflect changes in labour market demographics, in particular the increasing number of employees working beyond 65 years.

Several alternative definitions of labour force participation rate are in use by other organisations; they differ in regard to age of the working-age population and the inclusion of military personnel. A common definition is to restrict the labour force and working-age population to the 15- to 64-year age group, particularly in countries with a compulsory retirement age. Generally, this definition leads to a higher figure. Using this definition for the New Zealand HLFS in the December 2009 quarter gives a surveyed figure of 78.3 percent.

Industry statistics

Since September 2009 quarter, the industry statistics are based on ANZSIC 2006 (ANZSIC06), the latest edition of the Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification. The 1996 version of ANZSIC (ANZSIC96), used in industry outputs in previous releases, has been updated to the 2006 edition. Note that industry outputs defined using ANZSIC06 are not comparable with those based on ANZSIC96.

The release of ANZSIC06 followed a review that involved consultation with government agencies responsible for policy formulation and administration, non-government analysts of industry structure and performance, and industry experts. The changes to ANZSIC ensure the classification is current and relevant, reflecting changes in the structure and composition of industry since the previous edition, and recognises changing user requirements for industry data.

In the HLFS, data has been collected using both ANZSIC06 and ANZSIC96 from the March 2009 quarter, and will continue to be collected using both classifications until December 2011. A back-cast series for 'total people employed by industry and sex' has been created for ANZSIC06. The series has been created at the 1-digit divisional level and has been back-cast from the December 2008 quarter to the March 2003 quarter.

With the introduction of ANZSIC06, Statistics New Zealand also developed the New Zealand Standard Industrial Output Categories (NZSIOC) which will assist in the standardisation of outputs. HLFS industry statistics are published at NZSIOC level one. Under NZSIOC level one, industries are published at the 1-digit divisional level, apart from three categories which are combined ANZSIC06 divisions. The category titled 'retail trade and accommodation' is the combined 'retail trade' and 'accommodation and food services' divisions. The 'professional, scientific, technical, administrative, and support services' category is the combined 'professional, scientific, and technical services' division and the 'administrative and support services' division. The 'arts and recreation services' division has been combined with the 'other services' division to form the 'arts, recreation, and other services' category.

More information can be found at [Implementing ANZSIC06 in the Household Labour Force Survey](#).

Occupation statistics

Since September 2009 quarter, ANZSCO is the basis of occupation data in the HLFS. ANZSCO is a harmonised classification which has been developed by Statistics New Zealand, the Australian Bureau of Statistics, and the Australian Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, for use in both Australia and New Zealand. Occupation data was previously based on the New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations 1999 (NZSCO99). The occupation data is available on [Infoshare](#).

Occupation data has also been collected using both NZSCO99 and ANZSCO from the March 2009 quarter, and will continue to be collected using both classifications until December 2011. A back-cast series for 'total people employed by occupation and sex' has been created for ANZSCO. The series has been created at the 1-digit divisional level and has been back-cast from the December 2008 quarter to the March 2003 quarter.

More information can be found at [Implementing ANZSCO in the Household Labour Force Survey](#).

Formal study statistics

To be participating in formal study, an individual must be working towards a qualification that takes three or more months of full-time study to complete. Full-time study is defined as 20 or more hours per week.

Māori benchmarks

Prior to April 2009, the Māori working-age population was not benchmarked to population estimates. This, along with other sample design restrictions, caused a high degree of volatility in Māori statistics of the HLFS. Movements in the working-age population estimates of certain ethnic groups such as Māori may reflect this volatility, rather than a real change in the estimated ethnic demographic.

Including Māori benchmarks in the working-age population mitigates the known undercount of Māori in the HLFS and also results in smoother time series for Māori. However, introducing the Māori population benchmarks does not necessarily translate to improved estimates for non-Māori ethnic groups.

Ethnic statistics

In the September 2008 quarter, the HLFS started publishing ethnicity data using the single/combination output method. This created a complete break in the ethnicity series, as the prioritisation of ethnic groups was no longer produced. Using the single/combination ethnicity output, people are counted just once according to the ethnic group or combination of ethnic groups they have reported. This means that the total number of responses equals the total number of people who stated an ethnicity.

In the December 2007 quarter, the HLFS began collecting ethnicity data using the 2005 New Zealand standard classification of ethnicity. The new single/combination ethnicity tables contain five quarters worth of data using the 2005 classification. The 2005 classification of ethnicity enables the HLFS to collect and output more detailed ethnicity data, especially for the Asian ethnic group, which was not previously collected.

Using the total response ethnicity output, people who reported more than one ethnic group are counted once in each group reported. This means that the total number of responses for all ethnic groups can be greater than the total number of people who stated their ethnicities. The table below shows total response for the September 2009 and December 2009 quarters of the Household Labour Force Survey.

Total Response HLFS Ethnicity Data for Working-age Population⁽¹⁾		
Ethnic group	September 2009 quarter	December 2009 quarter
European	2,545,800	2,553,100
Māori	424,400	426,500
Pacific peoples	188,500	190,100
Asian	358,100	365,300
MELAA ⁽²⁾	30,800	28,700
Other	57,200	57,400

(1) The sum of ethnic groups will not add up to the total working-age population as the total response method of grouping ethnicity data counts each response given by an individual.
(2) MELAA = Middle Eastern/Latin American/African.

To read about the 2005 New Zealand standard classification of ethnicity please go to the Statistics NZ website, www.stats.govt.nz.

Household statistics

A household's labour force status is derived by looking at the labour force status of members in the household aged between 18 and 64 years. For example, if a couple is living by themselves and one is aged 64 and the other is aged 65, this couple will be assigned to the 'All employed' or 'None employed' category, depending on the labour force status of the 64-year-old. Households that have no members between the ages of 18 and 64 years have been excluded from this analysis.

The household categories incorporate the concept of dependent children rather than just children. A child is a person of any age who usually resides with at least one parent (natural, step, adopted, or foster) and who does not usually reside with a partner or child(ren) of his or her own. Statistics NZ defines a dependent child as a child aged under 18 years and not in full-time employment.

More information

For more information, follow the link from the technical notes of this release on the Statistics NZ website.

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Tables

The following tables are printed with this Hot Off The Press and can also be downloaded from the Statistics New Zealand website in Excel format. 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. People employed, unemployed, and not in labour force, by sex, seasonally adjusted series
2. People employed, unemployed, and not in labour force, by sex, trend series
3. People employed, unemployed, and not in labour force, by sex
4. Total people employed, unemployed, and not in labour force, by age group
5. Total people employed, unemployed, and not in labour force, by ethnic group
6. Total people employed, unemployed, and not in labour force, by regional council area
7. People employed, by industry and sex
8. The jobless: those without a job and wanting a job, by sex
9. Total actual hours worked
10. Household composition, by household labour force status
11. Underemployment, by sex
12. People employed, unemployed, not in the labour force, and total actual hours worked, seasonally adjusted series
13. Standardised unemployment rates in OECD countries, latest available
14. Total people employed, unemployed, and not in labour force, by sex and formal study status