

Ethnic populations projected to grow

Embargoed until 10:45am – 21 May 2015

An increasing proportion of New Zealanders will identify with Māori, Asian, and Pacific ethnicities according to new ethnic population projections released by Statistics New Zealand.

The proportion identifying as Māori is projected to grow from 16 percent in 2013 to 17 percent in the mid-2020s, and to nearly 20 percent in 2038. Those identifying with an Asian ethnicity will grow from 12 percent in 2013 to 17 percent in the mid-2020s, and to 21 percent in 2038. And those identifying with a Pacific ethnicity will grow from 8 percent in 2013 to 9 percent in the mid-2020s, and to 11 percent in 2038.

The number of people identifying with a European ethnicity or New Zealander is projected to increase, but at a relatively slow rate. As a result, the proportion identifying with these ethnicities is projected to drop from 75 percent in 2013 to 70 percent in the mid-2020s, and to 66 percent in 2038.

Another 1 percent of the population currently identify with Middle Eastern, Latin American, or African ethnicities.

"There is considerable overlap of these ethnic populations," population statistics manager Vina Cullum said. "People can and do identify with multiple ethnicities, especially people aged under 30 years."

The different projected growth rates reflect a combination of different patterns of fertility, migration, age structure, and ethnic identification.

"Ethnic projections are of more than just academic interest," Vina Cullum said. "They inform New Zealanders about our changing demographic picture. They help ethnic communities understand their own changing populations. And they assist planning in areas such as education and health where different ethnic populations can have different needs."

Statistics NZ will release projections of ethnic populations for regional council and territorial authority areas on 30 September 2015.

Ends

For media enquiries contact: Kim Dunstan, Christchurch, 03 964 8700, info@stats.govt.nz
Authorised by Liz MacPherson, Government Statistician, 21 May 2015