

National Population Estimates: September 2012 quarter

Embargoed until 10:45am – 14 November 2012

Key facts

During the September 2012 year:

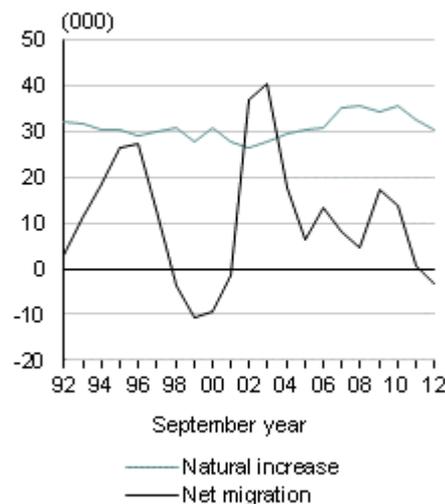
- New Zealand's population grew by 27,200 (0.6 percent).
- Natural increase was 30,400 and net migration loss was 3,300.

At 30 September 2012:

- The estimated resident population of New Zealand was 4.44 million.
- There were 2.18 million males and 2.26 million females in New Zealand.
- There were 97 males for every 100 females.
- The median ages for males and females were 35.7 and 38.2 years, respectively.

Components of annual population change

1992–2012



Estimated resident population			
Age group (years)	At 30 September 2011	At 30 September 2012 P	Percentage change 2011–12 P
All ages	4,414,100	4,441,300	0.6
Under 15	894,000	891,700	-0.3
15–39	1,500,400	1,498,400	-0.1
40–64	1,427,500	1,434,500	0.5
65+	592,300	616,700	4.1

Symbol: P provisional

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Commentary

- Natural increase drives population growth
- Median age increases 0.2 years
- Two-thirds of the population are working age
- Faster growth in the 65+ age group

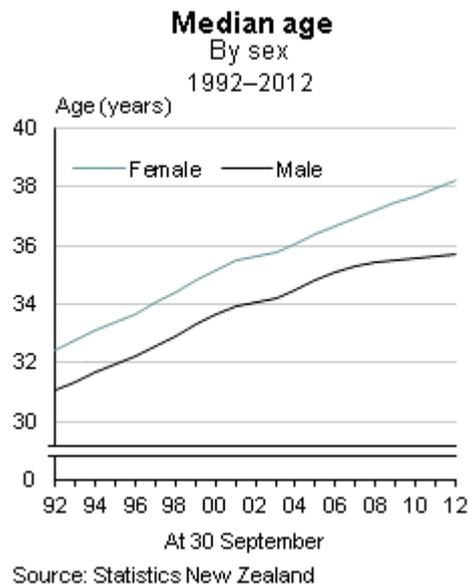
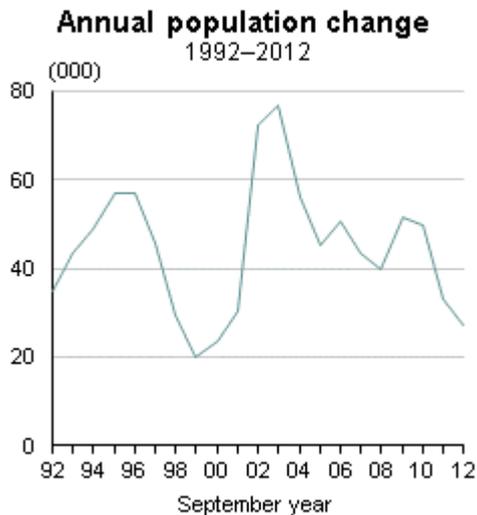
This information release contains provisional estimates of the resident population of New Zealand at 30 September 2012. National population estimates give the best available measure of the size and age-sex structure of the population usually living in New Zealand.

Natural increase drives population growth

In the September 2012 year, the estimated resident population grew by 27,200 (0.6 percent) to reach 4,441,300. This follows an increase of 33,200 (0.8 percent) in the previous September year.

Population growth in September 2012 was due to a natural increase (more births than deaths) of 30,400, offset by a net international migration loss of 3,300. Compared with the previous September year, both natural increase and net international migration have fallen (by 2,000 and 4,100, respectively).

Five years ago, New Zealand's estimated resident population was 4.2 million. Since then the population has grown by about 0.2 million, which is approximately equivalent to the population of Wellington City. Our population is expected to continue growing. Latest national population projections (median projection) indicate that by 2036 there will be 5.4 million people in New Zealand.



Median age increases 0.2 years

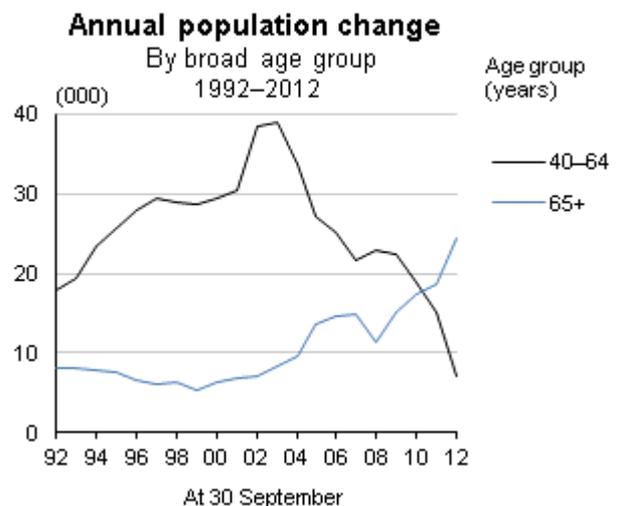
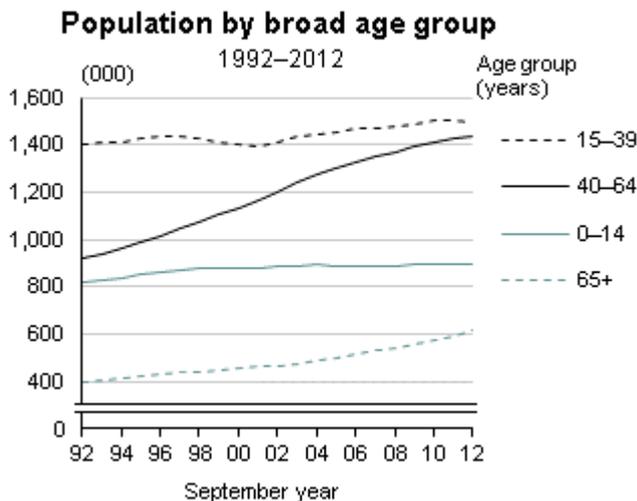
At 30 September 2012, half of New Zealand's population was over 37.0 years, compared with 36.8 years for the September 2011 year. New Zealand's population is ageing, due to sustained low fertility and low mortality rates. Latest [national population projections](#) (median projection) indicate that by 2061 the median age of the New Zealand population could exceed 44.0 years.

Over the last two decades, the median age has increased more for females (up 5.8 years) than for males (up 4.6 years). The median age is now 38.2 years for females and 35.7 years for males. The lower median age for males largely reflects their lower life expectancy. On average, males can expect to live 79.1 years, compared with 82.8 years for females (see [New Zealand abridged period life table, 2009–11](#)).

Two-thirds of the population are working age

The age structure of New Zealand's population has changed over the last decade. At 30 September 2012:

- **Children (aged 0–14 years)** accounted for 20 percent (891,700) of the population, down from 22 percent in 2002.
- **The younger working-age population (aged 15–39 years)** remained the largest population group, accounting for 34 percent (1,498,400) of the population, down from 36 percent in 2002.
- **The older working-age population (aged 40–64 years)** made up 32 percent (1,434,500) of the population, up from 30 percent in 2002.
- **The population aged 65 years and over (aged 65+)** accounted for 14 percent (616,700) of the population, up from 12 percent in 2002.



Faster growth in the 65+ age group

The population aged 65+ has been rising at an increasing rate over the past decade, while growth has slowed in the population aged 40–64 over the same period. The population aged 65+ is now growing faster than those aged 40–64.

In the last 10 years, the population aged 40–64 has increased by 232,700, and the 65+ age group by 147,900. In the last two years, these groups have increased by 22,200 and 43,100, respectively.

The 0–14 and 15–39 age groups have increased by 6,700 and 86,400, respectively, in the last decade. The 0–14 age group has declined by 1,200 in the last year, after a loss of 2,300 for the year ending 30 September 2010. The 15–39 age group had a loss of 2,000 in the last year, after a small growth of only 540 in the previous year.

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 of the resident population 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 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. These are primarily determined by passengers' responses on arrival and departure cards about how long they will be 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 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

National Population Estimates: December 2012 quarter – tables will be released on 15 February 2013.

[Subscribe to information releases](#), including this one, by completing the online subscription form.

[The release calendar](#) lists all our upcoming information releases by date of release.

Past releases

[National population estimates](#) has links to past releases.

Related information

[Māori population estimates](#) provide estimates of New Zealand's Māori population, by age and sex.

[Our population clock](#) gives a real-time approximation of the estimated resident population of New Zealand.

[Subnational population estimates](#) provide estimates for the population of territorial authority areas (ie cities and districts), and regions in New Zealand.

[Base populations for estimates and projections](#) are available from [Table Builder](#).

[New Zealand abridged period life tables, 2009–11](#) provide an indication of the trends in male and female life expectancy in the years between the construction of complete period life tables.

[National population projections \(2011 base–2061\)](#) 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 that has changed since the last release.

- [National Population Estimates releases become annual](#)

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

National Population Estimates releases become annual

This will be the last quarterly National Population Estimates full information release. As of 2013, National Population Estimates will become an annual information release. It will be published in mid-August each year, for the year ended June.

National population estimates data for March, September, and December will be available in Infoshare, but information releases and media releases will not be produced for those quarters.

National Population Estimates – date and type of releases for 2012 and 2013		
Period covered	Date of release	Type of release
September 2012 quarter	November 2012	Full
Year ended December 2012	February 2013	Table update only
Year ended March 2013	May 2013	Table update only
Year ended June 2013	August 2013	Full
Year ended September 2013	November 2013	Table update only

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, estimates are uncertain. 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 when estimating 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 migrants provides 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 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 the number of births and deaths in the current quarter.

Determining data accuracy

It is not possible to verify the accuracy of current national population estimates, as no other 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 published in quarterly table updates and an annual information and media release

in mid-August. Estimates are released within six weeks of the end of the reference quarter. Final estimates are derived when an extra quarter of detailed births and deaths 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

Final estimates of births in a quarter are less accurate, as deaths are usually registered more quickly than births. Around 5 percent of births are not registered either in the quarter when the baby was born or in the subsequent quarter.

Death estimates

The final estimate of deaths in a quarter is taken as those deaths that occurred in the reference quarter, either registered in the reference quarter or in the subsequent quarter. Final estimates of deaths are very accurate as very few deaths (about 1 death in every 1,000) are registered later than one quarter after they occurred.

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

Statistics NZ planned to produce 2006-base post-censal estimates until mid-2012. Because the 2011 Census of Population and Dwellings was cancelled, 2006-base post-censal estimates will now be produced until mid-2014.

2013-base population estimates

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

Population estimates based on the 2013 Census will be released from August 2014. In addition, all population estimates after 30 June 2006 will be revised based on results from the 2013 Census.

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

See [Information about the population estimates](#) for more detailed information on the methods used to calculate the estimates.

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Tables

The following tables are available in Excel format from the 'Downloads' box. If you have problems viewing the files, see [opening files and PDFs](#).

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](#) to access time-series data specific to your needs. For 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: **Population Estimates**

The time series can be downloaded in Excel or comma delimited format. More information [about Infoshare](#) can be found on our website.