External Migration: May 2008

Highlights

- Visitor arrivals (140,500) were similar to May 2007 (140,800).

- There were more visitors from China (up 700), but fewer from the United States (down 1,000) and Thailand (down 600).

- New Zealand resident departures (174,000) were up 2 percent from May 2007 (171,300).

- There were more trips by New Zealand residents to Australia, the Cook Islands (both up 900) and China (up 800).

- Permanent and long-term arrivals exceeded departures by 1,000 on a seasonally adjusted basis.

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Commentary

Name change

Statistics New Zealand is changing the name of this release from 'External Migration' to 'International Travel and Migration'. This is to better reflect that the release contains statistics on short-term travellers as well as permanent and long-term migrants. The change will take effect with the June 2008 data, due for release on 21 July 2008. References to other external migration products will be progressively renamed throughout July.

Visitor arrivals

Monthly visitor arrivals

Short-term overseas visitor arrivals to New Zealand numbered 140,500 in May 2008, a decrease of 300 (less than 1 percent) from May 2007 (140,800).

Seasonally adjusted visitor arrivals increased by 9 percent between April and May 2008. However, seasonal adjustment did not account for the leap day in February or the earlier occurrence of the Easter holidays in March. The increase has returned the series close to the January 2008 level.

While there was a slight decrease in visitor arrivals, the estimated average number of visitors in New Zealand per day was up 7 percent, from an average of 102,200 in May 2007 to 109,100 in May 2008. Estimated numbers of visitors in the country are calculated from the date of arrival and intended length of stay of sampled visitor arrivals. The average intended stay of visitors who arrived in May 2008 was 19 days, up from 17 days in May 2007, and the median (half are shorter, and half are longer, than this duration) was 7 days.

Annual visitor arrivals

During the May 2008 year, there were 2.483 million visitor arrivals, up 30,700 (1 percent) from the May 2007 year. A holiday was the main travel reason for 1.213 million visitor arrivals to New Zealand in the May 2008 year, up 3,000 (less than 1 percent) from the previous year. Another 729,300 arrived to visit friends and relatives (up 28,700 or 4 percent) and 266,300 arrived for business (down 4,800 or 2 percent).
Note: Provisional international travel statistics, including weekly and four-weekly visitor arrival data, are available on the Statistics NZ website: http://www.stats.govt.nz/tables/provisional-arrivals/default. This data is updated each week with the most recently available information on visitor arrivals from 10 major source countries.

Visitors by source country
In May 2008, there were fewer visitor arrivals from the United States (down 1,000 or 8 percent) and Thailand (down 600 or 29 percent) when compared with May 2007. There were more visitors from China (up 700 or 9 percent) and South Africa (up 500 or 41 percent).

After 12 months of decline, visitor arrivals from Korea remained unchanged in May 2008 compared with the same month of the previous year. Visitor arrivals from Japan (down 300 or 5 percent) continued to decrease, but more slowly than in past months.

In the year ended May 2008, there were more visitors from Oceania (up 55,900 or 5 percent) and the Americas (up 4,800 or 2 percent) compared with the May 2007 year. Fewer visitors arrived from Asia (down 30,000 or 6 percent) and Europe (down 5,900 or 1 percent).

Australia (up 50,400 or 6 percent) provided the largest increase in visitor arrivals in the May 2008 year. There were also increases in visitor arrivals from China (up 10,200 or 9 percent), Canada (up 5,100 or 11 percent), South Africa (up 3,300 or 17 percent) and India (up 2,100 or 10 percent).

Decreases in visitor arrivals were recorded for Korea (down 22,000 or 20 percent), Japan (down 12,500 or 10 percent), the United Kingdom (down 11,000 or 4 percent), Taiwan (down 5,500 or 20 percent) and the United States (down 5,000 or 2 percent) in the May 2008 year.

Note: Detailed visitor data will be available in the May 2008 edition of International Visitor Arrivals to New Zealand, which can be ordered through the Statistics NZ website: http://www.stats.govt.nz/products-and-services/subscriptions/iva-sub.
New Zealand resident departures

Monthly resident departures

New Zealand residents departed on 174,000 short-term overseas trips in May 2008, up 2,600 (2 percent) from the 171,300 departures in May 2007. There were more trips to Australia (up 900 or 1 percent), the Cook Islands (up 900 or 20 percent) and China (up 800 or 21 percent). Trips to Spain were down 700 (52 percent), as departures in May 2007 were boosted by the Louis Vuitton Cup yachting regatta in Valencia.

On a seasonally adjusted basis, New Zealand resident departures increased 5 percent between April and May 2008. The series had decreased by 1 percent between March and April 2008 and 5 percent between February and March 2008. Seasonal adjustment does not account for leap days or shifting holiday periods such as Easter, so seasonally adjusted figures should be used with caution.

The estimated average number of New Zealand residents who were temporarily overseas during May 2008 was 97,600 per day, up 4 percent from the average of 94,100 in May 2007. Estimates of the number of residents overseas are calculated from the date of departure and intended length of absence of sampled resident departures. The average intended absence of residents who departed in May 2008 was 22 days, and the median was 10 days.

Annual resident departures

In the May 2008 year, there were just under two million resident departures (1,999,600), up 96,000 (5 percent) from the May 2007 year. There were more resident departures to Oceania (up 37,600 or 3 percent), Asia (up 17,800 or 7 percent), Europe (up 12,900 or 8 percent), and the Americas (up 8,400 or 7 percent).

The largest increase was in resident departures to Australia (up 27,800 or 3 percent), which was the destination for about half of New Zealand residents departing on short-term trips in the May 2008 year. There were also more trips to France (up 7,700 or 64 percent), China (up 6,500 or 12 percent), the United Kingdom (up 6,200 or 7 percent), the Cook Islands (up 5,800 or 12 percent) and the United States (up 5,000 or 6 percent).
The 96,400 trips to Fiji in the year ended May 2008 were down 8,600 (8 percent) from the previous year. Fiji remains the second most popular destination for overseas trips by New Zealand residents, although closely followed by the United Kingdom (96,200).

A holiday was the main travel reason for 841,000 New Zealand residents who departed in the May 2008 year, up 37,700 (5 percent) from the previous year. Another 629,600 were departing to visit friends and relatives (up 40,200 or 7 percent) and 290,500 were departing for business purposes (up 4,100 or 1 percent).

**Note:** Provisional international travel statistics, including weekly and four-weekly resident departure data, are available on the Statistics NZ website: http://www.stats.govt.nz/tables/provisional-arrivals/default. This data is updated each week with the most recently available information on resident departures to 10 major destination countries.

**Permanent and long-term migration**

**Definition**

Permanent and long-term (PLT) arrivals include people who arrive in New Zealand intending to stay for a period of 12 months or more (or permanently), plus New Zealand residents returning after an absence of 12 months or more. Included in the former group are people with New Zealand residency, as well as students and holders of work permits. PLT departures include New Zealand residents departing for an intended period of 12 months or more (or permanently), plus overseas visitors departing New Zealand after a stay of 12 months or more.

**Monthly PLT migration**

PLT departures exceeded arrivals by 1,300 in May 2008, compared with a net PLT outflow of 1,600 in May 2007. Between December 2006 and February 2008, monthly net PLT migration had been decreasing when compared with the same month of the previous year.

On a seasonally adjusted basis, there was a net PLT inflow of 1,000 in May 2008. This is the highest figure since December 2006. The net PLT series averaged about 400 between January 2007 and April 2008.
In May 2008, there was a net outflow of 2,800 PLT migrants to Australia, up from the outflow of 2,200 in May 2007. There was also a net outflow of 300 to the United Kingdom. There were net inflows of 400 migrants from India, 300 from the Philippines and 200 from both Fiji and South Africa in May 2008.

**Annual PLT migration**

In the year ended May 2008, there were 84,800 PLT arrivals, up 2,400 (3 percent) from the May 2007 year. Over the same period, there were 79,900 PLT departures, up 8,200 (11 percent). As a result, net PLT migration was 4,900 in the May 2008 year, down from 10,700 in the May 2007 year. However, the latest figure is above the annual totals recorded for the past four months, including a low of 4,600 in the February 2008 year.

### Annual PLT migration by citizenship

A net inflow of 39,700 non-New Zealand citizens and a net outflow of 34,800 New Zealand citizens were recorded in the year ended May 2008. The majority of the net outflow of New Zealand citizens was to Australia (31,500) followed by the United Kingdom (1,000), and the United Arab Emirates and Canada (both 400).

Australia and the United Kingdom are traditionally the main destinations for emigrating New Zealand citizens. An article on PLT departure rates of New Zealand citizens, particularly to these countries, has recently been released on the International travel and migration articles page of the Statistics NZ website. The article investigates how PLT departures of New Zealand citizens compare over time if changes in the size and age structure of New Zealand's population are taken into account.
Compared with the May 2007 year, PLT arrivals of non-New Zealand citizens were up 2,900 and PLT arrivals of New Zealand citizens were down 400. There were 6,700 more PLT departures of New Zealand citizens and 1,500 more PLT departures of non-New Zealand citizens. Changes in non-New Zealand citizen departures are often related to changes in non-New Zealand citizen arrivals a few years earlier. Similarly, changes in New Zealand citizen arrivals are often related to changes in New Zealand citizen departures a few years earlier.

**Annual PLT Migration**
*By citizenship*
*May 1999–2008*

**Annual Net PLT Migration**
*By citizenship*
*May 1999–2008*

Annual PLT migration by country

In the year ended May 2008, there was a net inflow of 7,300 migrants from the United Kingdom, down from 9,700 the previous year. Between 1975 and 2000, New Zealand recorded a net migration outflow to the United Kingdom. There have been net inflows from the United Kingdom since, and from 2004 it has been the country making the largest positive contribution to net migration. Further information about PLT migration to and from the United Kingdom can be found in a recently released article on the International travel and migration articles page of the Statistics NZ website.

There were also net PLT inflows from India (4,300), the Philippines (3,400), Fiji (2,600), South Africa (2,300), China (2,100), and Germany (1,600) in the May 2008 year.

The net PLT outflow to Australia was 31,200 in the May 2008 year, compared with 24,500 in the May 2007 year. This is the highest annual net outflow to Australia since the peak net outflow of 31,800 in the May 2001 year. There were earlier peaks in the January 1989 year (33,700) and the December 1979 year (33,400).

The net outflow to Australia was spread across both age and occupation groups. Migrants aged 15–29 years accounted for 40 percent (12,400) of the net outflow to Australia in the May 2008 year, while the 0–14 year age group (7,200) and 30–44 year age group (7,300) both contributed 23 percent of the outflow. A further 13 percent (3,900) were aged 45–59 years, and the remaining 1 percent (400) were aged 60 years and over.
Net outflows to Australia were recorded in each broad occupation group, led by professionals (2,100), service and sales workers (2,000) and trades workers (1,900). There was also a net outflow to Australia of 12,800 people without an occupation, of which most were children or students.

Split PLT data

Statistics NZ began separately identifying permanent arrivals from long-term arrivals in July 2003 (departing migrants are also separately identified). Within the long-term group, a further distinction is made between overseas visitors coming to stay in New Zealand for 12 months or more (long-term overseas visitors) and New Zealand residents returning after an overseas stay of 12 months or more (long-term New Zealand residents).

The classification of a person as a permanent or long-term migrant depends on that person’s responses to the questions on the arrival and departure cards. Both cards require completion of one of two sections, depending on whether or not the person feels that they live or have lived in New Zealand. The choice of which section to complete is up to the individual, and the answer may result in a person being misclassified – usually as a permanent migrant instead of a long-term migrant.

Of the 5,900 PLT arrivals in May 2008, there were 2,200 permanent migrants and 2,700 long-term visitors. A further 1,000 arrivals were returning long-term New Zealand residents.

For more information on the separate identification of PLT migrants, including data quality issues, see the *External Migration: September 2003* Hot Off The Press.

INFOS EMI series redevelopment

Statistics New Zealand is currently redeveloping the INFOS External Migration (EMI) group to ensure that data remains relevant and useful to data users. Minor changes to the EMI group are likely in the coming month. Some discontinued and duplicated families will no longer be published, and the titles of most families will be modified. Series identifiers will not change.

A project is also underway to replace the EMI group with a new group called International Travel and Migration (ITM). This will allow the creation of a more appropriate naming structure for the group, and also allow new series to be added and unnecessary series removed. It is hoped that the usefulness of INFOS as a complete data source will be improved. Feedback about the redevelopment is sought from data users. Any comments, suggestions or requests for further information about the redevelopment may be directed to the contacts listed below.

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Next release ...

*International Travel and Migration: June 2008* will be released on 21 July 2008.
Technical notes

Nature of data

The statistics in this release are based on final external migration counts. They relate to the number of movements of travellers, rather than to the number of travellers – that is, the multiple movements of individual people during a given reference period are each counted separately.

Data for country groupings

As of December 2000, the country groupings used in this release are consistent with the New Zealand Standard Classification of Countries 1999 (NZSCC 1999). Prior to this date, country groupings were based on earlier versions of the NZSCC.

New Zealand resident short-term departures

The commentaries relating to New Zealand resident short-term departures are based on the data for the country of main destination – that is, the country where each departing person intended to spend most of his or her time while away from New Zealand.

Changes in traveller category

In the preparation of external migration statistics, the classification of each passenger is primarily determined by the passenger’s response, on the arrival or departure card, to the question on intended or actual length of stay/absence. If the person's intention changes during the trip, then they may also change their traveller category. For example, if a person comes to New Zealand with the declared intention of settling permanently, but in fact returns overseas after a few months, then that person is classified as a permanent and long-term (PLT) migrant on arrival, but is later classified as a short-term visitor on departure. This is known as category jumping. Data users should recognise the limitations inherent in the information supplied by travellers.

Sampling accuracy

The statistics for short-term passenger movements by country (ie arrivals by country of last permanent residence and departures by country of main destination) are derived from a systematic random sample taken each month from arrival and departure cards, and are therefore subject to sampling errors. However, total counts for short-term arrivals and departures of overseas visitors and New Zealand residents are actual counts, which are not subject to sampling errors. Figures for PLT arrivals and departures are also actual counts and have no sampling errors.

INFOS database

All data in the Hot Off The Press tables are available through the INFOS database. Where feasible, the series identifiers are shown (see tables 1–5 and the footnotes for table 11). The series in tables 1, 2 and 3 are available back to January 1950, and the seasonally adjusted series in tables 4 and 5 are available back to January 1982. The seasonally adjusted migration series were all revised when new seasonal adjustment procedures were introduced in August 1998. Likewise, the seasonally adjusted figures from January 1996 onwards are now updated monthly.
Seasonally adjusted series

The purpose of seasonally adjusting a time series is to measure and remove the varying seasonal components in the series (for example, there are more visitor arrivals during the New Zealand summer, due to the warmer weather and longer daylight hours). This makes the data for adjacent months more comparable. The X-12-ARIMA computer program is used to produce the seasonally adjusted estimates of key external migration series. In addition, the seasonally adjusted figures are subject to revision each month. The size of these revisions is expected to be minimal, with the largest revisions occurring in the months immediately prior to the current month.

The change to a four-term school year in 1996 resulted in changes to the seasonal patterns of the New Zealand resident arrivals and departures series. As a result, the seasonal adjustment for the two series was unsatisfactory. To overcome this, a two-stage procedure was introduced in August 1998. The series prior to 1996 were seasonally adjusted separately and the values fixed, while the series from January 1996 onwards are now seasonally adjusted each month and revised if appropriate. Further information on the seasonally adjusted external migration series, including information on the revision procedures, can be obtained from the Statistical Methods Business Unit, Statistics New Zealand, Christchurch, phone 03 964 8700, fax 03 964 8791.

Processing system

The current external migration processing system, which incorporates scanning and image recognition technology, was first used to process the June 2004 arrival and departure cards. Classing (as overseas visitors, New Zealand residents or PLT migrants) and capture of the information required for the sample are done automatically for the majority of the cards. Operator intervention is only required for approximately one-tenth of the cards. The system is used only for the production of statistics.

Users should be aware of the changes to the processing system when comparing data for June 2004 onwards with data for earlier periods.

More information

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

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Timing

Timed statistical releases are delivered using postal and electronic services provided by third parties. Delivery of these releases may be delayed by circumstances outside the control of Statistics NZ. Statistics NZ accepts no responsibility for any such delays.
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.

6. Overseas visitor arrivals, by country of last permanent residence
7. New Zealand resident short-term departures, by country of main destination
8. Permanent and long-term arrivals, by country of last permanent residence
9. Permanent and long-term departures, by country of next permanent residence
10. Net permanent and long-term migration, by country of last/next permanent residence
11. Permanent and long-term migration, by country of citizenship