



# Hot Off The Press

LATEST STATISTICS FROM STATISTICS NEW ZEALAND

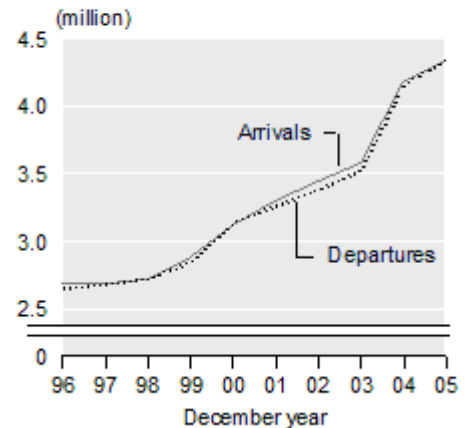
Embargoed until 10:45am – 21 February 2006

## External Migration December 2005 year

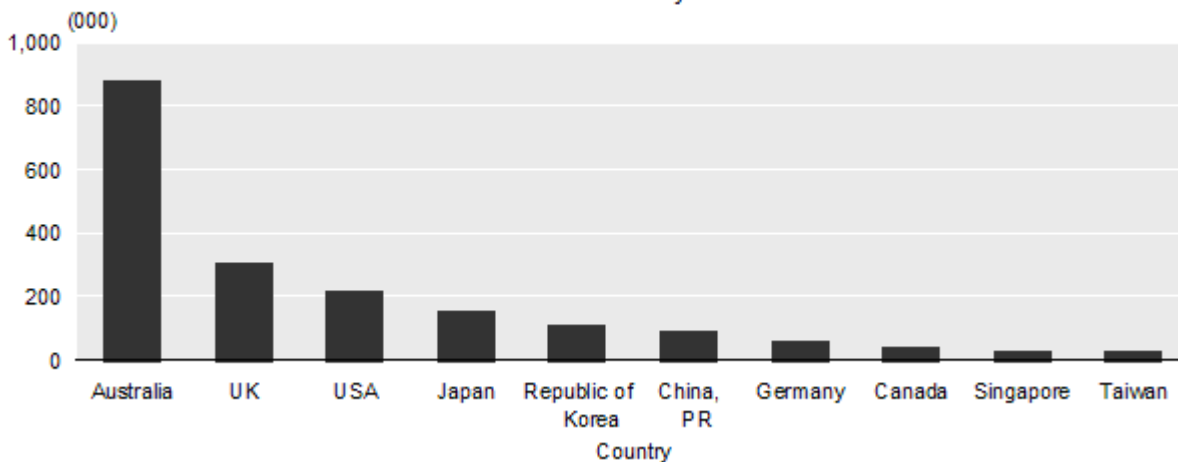
### Highlights

- In 2005, total passenger arrivals and departures numbered **8.69 million**, up 4 percent on the December 2004 year.
- **Half of all visitor arrivals were from Australia (874,700) and the United Kingdom (306,800).**
- **The top 10 source countries contributed 1.91 million visitors**, four-fifths of all visitor arrivals.
- **Australia was the main destination** for half the New Zealand resident short-term departures (1.87 million).
- **Permanent and long-term arrivals exceeded departures by 7,000** in the December 2005 year.

**Total Movements**  
1996-2005



**Visitor Arrivals from Top 10 Source Countries**  
December 2005 year



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21 February 2006  
Cat 33.901 Set 05/06 – 135

There is a companion Media Release published – [External Migration: December 2005 year](#).

# Commentary

## Total movements by class

Total passenger arrivals and departures in 2005 (each flow consisting of overseas visitors, New Zealand residents and migrants) both reached all-time highs for a December year. Arrivals numbered 4.342 million and departures 4.346 million, a total of 8.688 million movements. These totals represented increases of 4 and 5 percent, respectively, on the previous December year, down from the increases of 16 and 18 percent that were recorded for the year ended December 2004. Over the past five years, arrivals have increased by 32 percent (or 1.048 million), while departures have increased by 33 percent (or 1.086 million).

Visitor arrivals increased by 35,300 (2 percent) in the December 2005 year, to reach 2.383 million. Short-term departures by New Zealand residents numbered 1.872 million in 2005, an increase of 138,600 (8 percent) over 2004.

In 2005, permanent and long-term (PLT) arrivals decreased by 1,500 to 79,000, while PLT departures increased by 6,600, to reach 72,000, when compared with 2004.

## Overseas visitor arrivals

The following three sections examine trends in overseas visitor arrivals over the past five years, highlighting country of last permanent residence, reason for travel, and intended length of stay in New Zealand.

### Visitors by source

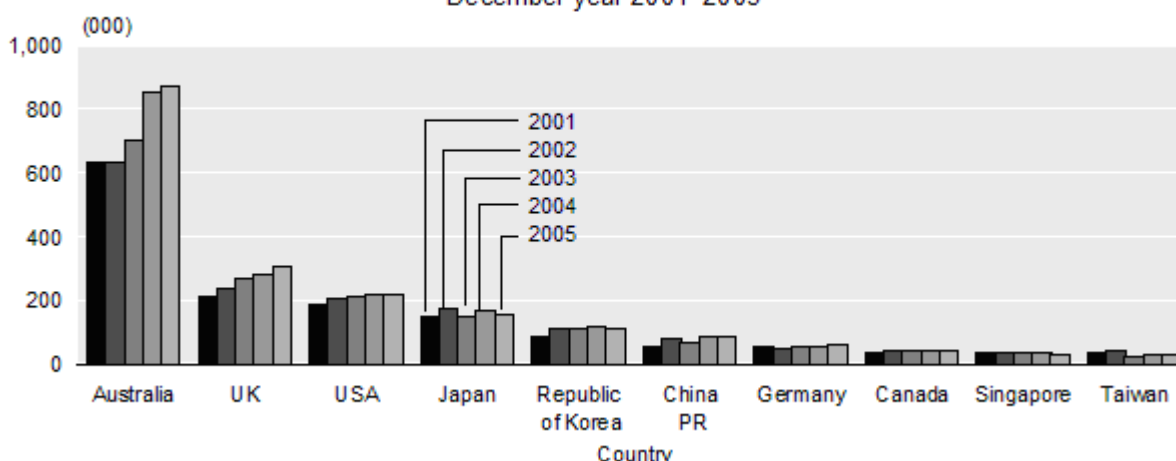
In the December 2005 year, Oceania continued to be the most important source region for overseas visitor arrivals, followed by Asia, Europe and the Americas. Two-fifths of all visitors were from Oceania (985,200), with 89 percent stating Australia as their country of last permanent residence. Asia contributed a further 22 percent (519,600), Europe also contributed 22 percent (513,300) and the Americas contributed 12 percent (276,200). Between 2001 and 2005, there were increases in visitors from Europe (up 35 percent), Oceania (up 34 percent), the Americas (up 15 percent) and Asia (up 12 percent).

Visitor arrivals from Asia in 2005 (519,600) were 5 percent lower than their pre-SARS peak of 544,500 in 2002.

In 2005, the top 10 source countries for visitor arrivals, and their rankings, were unchanged from 2004. Visitor numbers for six of the top 10 countries were up on 2004, with increases ranging from 8 percent for the United Kingdom to 2 percent for Australia. Decreases for the other four countries included a drop of 2 percent, for both the United States and Korea, and a drop of 6 percent for Japan.

Australia remained the largest contributor in 2005, with 874,700 or 37 percent of all visitors. The United Kingdom was the second largest source country, with 306,800 visitors, up 23,100 (8 percent) on 2004. Fans coming to New Zealand to follow the British and Irish Lions rugby tour in June and July 2005 were the major contributor to the increase in visitor arrivals from the United Kingdom. The United States (214,500) was the third largest contributor, followed by Japan (154,900), Korea (112,000) and China (87,800). These six countries, together with Germany (57,500), Canada (42,200), Singapore (29,700) and Taiwan (28,500), contributed 81 percent (1.909 million) of all visitors in 2005. In 2001, these 10 countries contributed 77 percent of all visitors.

**Visitor Arrivals from Top 10 Source Countries**  
December year 2001–2005

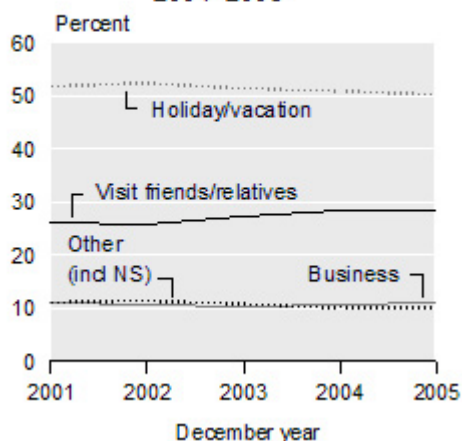


### Visitors by reason for travel

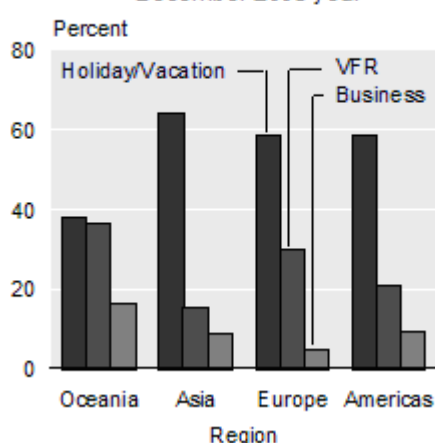
Half of all visitors to New Zealand in the December 2005 year came for a holiday (1,192,000). This was up 1,600 or less than 1 percent on the previous year. A further 673,600 came to visit friends and relatives (VFR) (up 13,600 or 2 percent) and 259,200 came on business (up 10,400 or 4 percent).

The share of visitors coming for a holiday has dropped slightly over the last five years, from 52 percent in 2001 to 50 percent in 2005. In contrast, the proportion of VFR arrivals grew from 26 percent in 2001 and 2002 to 28 percent in 2005. The proportion of visitors coming for business was 11 percent in both 2001 and 2005.

**Visitor Arrivals by Reason for Travel**  
2001–2005



**Visitor Arrivals by Reason for Travel**  
December 2005 year



A holiday was the main reason given by visitors from all regions, followed by VFR and then business. Sixty-four percent of all visitors from Asia in 2005 came for a holiday, compared with 59 percent from both the Americas and Europe, and 38 percent from Oceania. While 42 percent of all visitors came from Oceania in 2005, a much higher proportion (61 percent) of all business visitors to New Zealand came from this region, predominantly from Australia.

### Visitors by length of stay

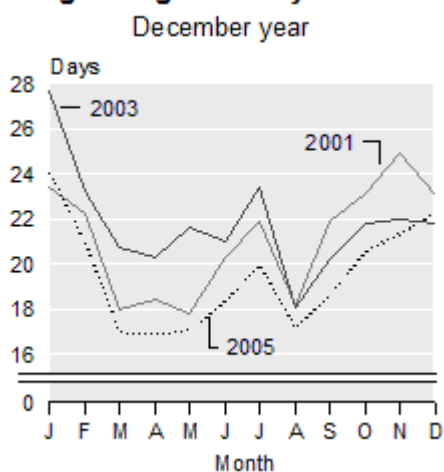
The average intended length of stay in New Zealand in 2005 was 20 days, the same as in 2004 but down from 22 days in 2003 and 2002. Fifty-four percent of all visitors stayed for 10 days or less, with the majority of these staying for less than one week. A further 23 percent stayed between 11 and 20 days, 11 percent stayed between 21 and 30 days, and the remaining 13 percent stayed for 31 days or more.

On a monthly basis, the average length of stay in 2005 varied by seven days, with visitors arriving in January staying for the longest time (24 days), and visitors arriving in March, April, May and August staying the shortest time (17 days). The average length of stay for each of the last five months in 2005 was higher than the equivalent month in 2004.

In 2005, visitors coming mainly for education/medical reasons had the longest average intended length of stay at 88 days, three days longer than in 2004. Sixty-eight percent of these visitors were younger than 25 years. Conference visitors (seven days) and business visitors (12 days) stayed for the shortest time.

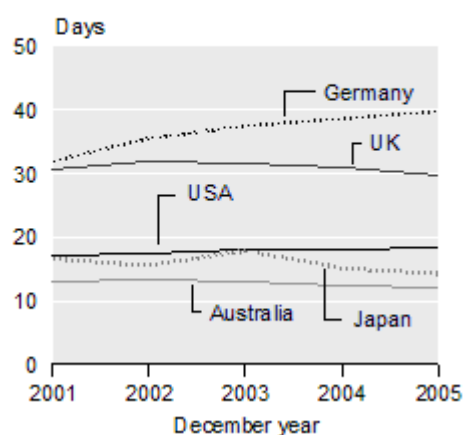
The average length of stay for holiday visitors reached an average of 18 days in 2002 and 2003, before dropping to 17 days in 2004 and 2005. For those visiting friends and relatives, the average length of stay rose from 25 days in 2001 to 26 days in 2002, before falling back to 25 days in 2003, and then to 23 days in 2004 and 2005.

**Average Length of Stay for Visitors**



**Average Length of Stay for Visitors**

By country of last permanent residence  
2001-2005



Of the top 10 source countries, visitors from Germany (40 days) tended to stay the longest in 2005, while visitors from the United Kingdom (30 days) and Canada (28 days) also stayed significantly longer than the average for all visitors (20 days). Visitors from Australia and Singapore (both 12 days) had the shortest average length of stay, followed by Japan (14 days). The average length of stay for visitors from China decreased from 42 days in 2002, to 35 days in 2003 and 18 days in 2005.

## **New Zealand resident departures**

The following three sections present a brief analysis of the trends over the past five years in New Zealand resident short-term departures, highlighting country of main destination, reason for travel, and length of absence from New Zealand.

### **Resident departures by main destination**

In the December 2005 year, Oceania was the main destination for New Zealand travellers, followed by Asia, Europe and the Americas. Sixty-two percent of New Zealand resident departures went to countries in Oceania (1,161,300), with 81 percent of these stating Australia as their main destination. A further 12 percent stated their destination as Asia (231,500), 8 percent stated Europe (149,700) and 6 percent stated the Americas (115,900). All the major regions recorded increases in 2005 compared with 2004. Over the past five years, there were increases in departures to Oceania (up 43 percent), Asia (up 42 percent), Europe (up 46 percent) and the Americas (up 38 percent).

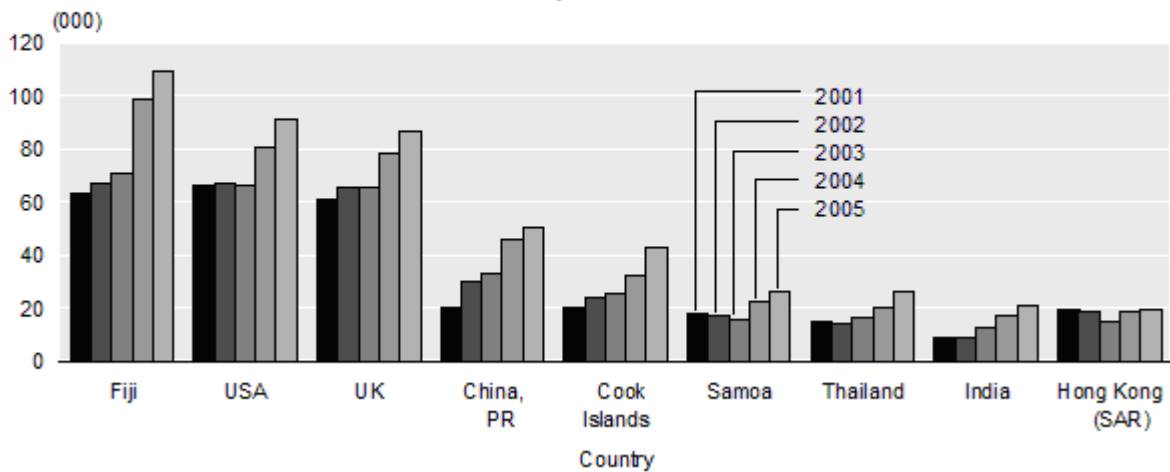
Australia remained the most popular main destination country for New Zealand residents departing short-term, accounting for 50 percent (941,200) of all departures in 2005. Since 2001, departures to Australia have increased by 265,100 (39 percent), with the largest annual increase (169,800) occurring between 2003 and 2004. The next three most popular destinations in 2005 were Fiji (109,000), the United States (90,800) and the United Kingdom (86,400). Fiji accounted for close to 6 percent of New Zealand travellers in 2005, compared with 5 percent for both the United States and the United Kingdom. Between 2001 and 2005, departures to Fiji increased by 45,900 (73 percent), while departures to the United States increased by 24,900 (38 percent).

In 2005, departures to China increased by 10 percent to 50,400. This was two and a half times the 2001 level (19,900), and represents an average annual rate of increase of 26 percent. Sixty-eight percent of those visiting China in 2005 were born there, compared with 72 percent in 2004 and 78 percent in 2003. Fewer than 45,000 people departed to each of the next five largest destinations – the Cook Islands (42,500), Thailand (25,900), Samoa (25,900), India (20,900), and Hong Kong (19,200).

Nine of the top 10 destinations for New Zealand travellers in 2005 were the same as in 2004. India, previously outside the top 10, replaced Japan in ninth position, shifting Japan out of the top 10 for the first time since 2000. However, there were no changes in position for the remaining countries in the top 10. Residents departing to the top 10 destinations totalled 1.412 million in 2005, or 76 percent of all resident departures. This is higher than the total resident departures just two years earlier in 2003 (1.374 million).

## New Zealand Resident Departures by Country of Main Destination

(Excluding Australia)  
December year 2001–2005



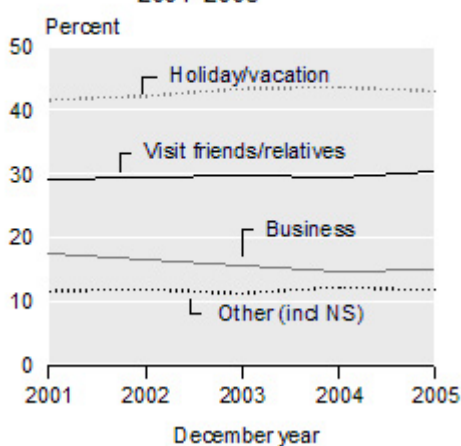
### Resident departures by reason for travel

More than two-fifths of New Zealand residents departing for a short trip overseas in the December 2005 year went on holiday (804,600), an increase of 6 percent compared with 2004. A further 565,700 left to visit friends and relatives (VFR) and 276,500 went on business.

Over the past five years, the proportion of New Zealand residents departing for a holiday rose from 42 percent of departures in 2001 to 44 percent in 2004, before dropping to 43 percent in 2005. The proportion of VFR departures has increased slightly, from 29 percent in 2001 to 30 percent in 2005. In 2001, business departures accounted for 18 percent of all departures, but this fell to 15 percent in 2005. The number of business travellers dropped by 11,800 between 2001 and 2003, before recovering to 276,500 in 2005. This was 22 percent above the number of business travellers in 2001. Over the same period, holidaymakers and VFR travellers each increased by over half.

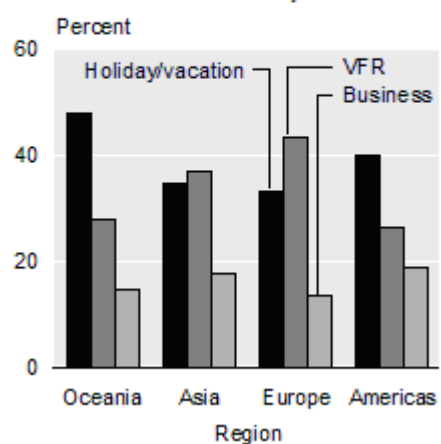
### New Zealand Resident Departures

By reason for travel  
2001–2005



### New Zealand Resident Departures

By reason for travel  
December 2005 year



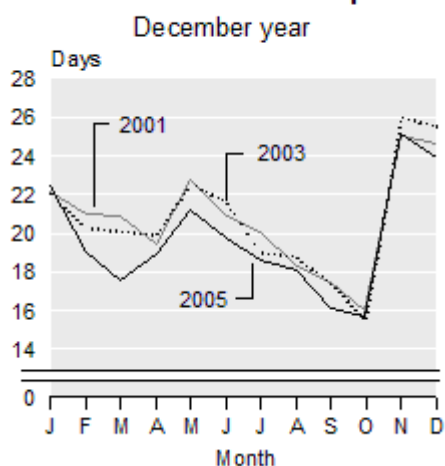
In 2005, a holiday was the most popular reason given by New Zealanders travelling to Oceania and the Americas, with 48 percent of departures to Oceania and 40 percent of departures to the Americas stating this reason. Of the departures to Europe, 43 percent went to visit friends and relatives, 33 percent went for a holiday and 13 percent went on business. Departures to Asia consisted of 37 percent VFR, 35 percent going for a holiday and 17 percent travelling on business. Compared with 2001, departures of holidaymakers, VFR and business travellers were higher for all major regions.

### Resident departures by length of absence

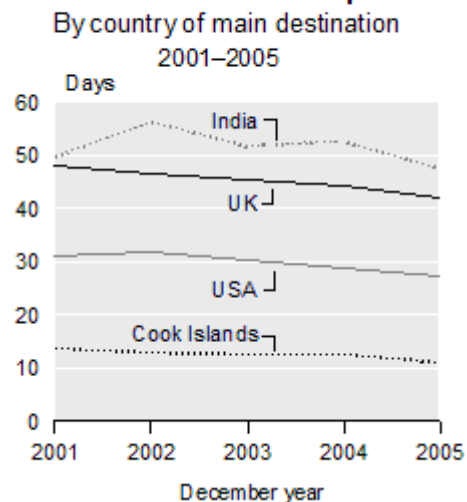
On average, New Zealand residents leaving the country for a short trip in 2005 were away for 20 days, one day less than in 2001. In 2005, 53 percent of them stayed away for 10 days or less, with 49 percent of those staying away for less than one week. A further 23 percent were absent for 11 to 20 days, 10 percent for 21 to 30 days, and the remaining 15 percent for more than 30 days. Average length of absence in 2005 varied on a monthly basis by nine days, with those departing in November staying away for the longest time (25 days), and those departing in September and October staying away for the shortest time (16 days).

In 2005, of the main reasons for travelling, residents departing for education/medical purposes had the longest average length of absence (40 days), followed by residents departing to visit friends and relatives (24 days). In contrast, those going for a holiday (17 days) or on business (15 days) were away for less than the average for all resident departures (20 days). The average length of absence for both education/medical and VFR departures has fallen by two days since 2001, but has increased by one day for travellers departing for business reasons.

**Average Length of Absence of New Zealand Resident Departures**



**Average Length of Absence of New Zealand Resident Departures**



Longer lengths of absence in 2005 were associated with visits to India (48 days), China (45 days) and its special administrative region of Hong Kong (26 days), and two major long-haul destinations, the United Kingdom (42 days) and the United States (27 days). The shortest average lengths of stay were for trips to New Zealand's nearest neighbours – Fiji (11 days), the Cook Islands (11 days) and Australia (12 days). Over the past five years, the average length of stay has dropped for departures to Hong Kong (down nine days), the United Kingdom (down six days), the United States (down four days) and China (down four days), but increased for trips to Samoa (up one day).

## Permanent and long-term migration

The following two sections present a brief analysis of past trends in New Zealand's permanent and long-term (PLT) migration by citizenship and occupation.

### Permanent and long-term migration by citizenship

Over the past 10 years, December-year net PLT migration dropped between 1996 and 2000, then rose in 2001 and 2002, before falling again between 2003 and 2005. There were net gains in 1996 and 1997 (total net gain of 32,400), net losses between 1998 and 2000 (total net loss of 26,600), and a net gain of 104,900 between 2001 and 2005, resulting in a net gain of 110,700 migrants in the past decade.

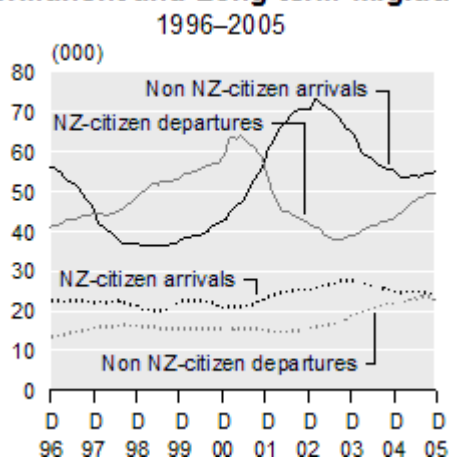
Analysis of the permanent and long-term arrivals and departures by citizenship shows that, of the four flows involved, two had the most impact on the changes in net migration totals. These were departures of New Zealand citizens and arrivals of non-New Zealand citizens. Arrivals of New Zealand citizens and departures of non-New Zealand citizens have not varied as significantly over the past 10 years.

New Zealand citizen departures (which include overseas-born New Zealanders) increased significantly between 1996 (40,700) and 2000 (58,700), before dropping over the next three years to 38,900 in 2003, then increasing again in 2004 and 2005. Departures in 2005 (49,200) were 16 percent lower than in 2000. Combined with the smaller, and generally more stable, arrivals of New Zealand citizens, these changes resulted in a steady and continual increase in the net outflow of New Zealand citizens between 1996 and 2000 (from 17,900 to 37,900). Increases in New Zealand citizen arrivals contributed to the declining net outflows between 2001 and 2003 (from 32,600 to 11,200). The net outflow increased again in 2004 and 2005, but the 2005 level (25,000) was still 34 percent less than in the December 2000 year.

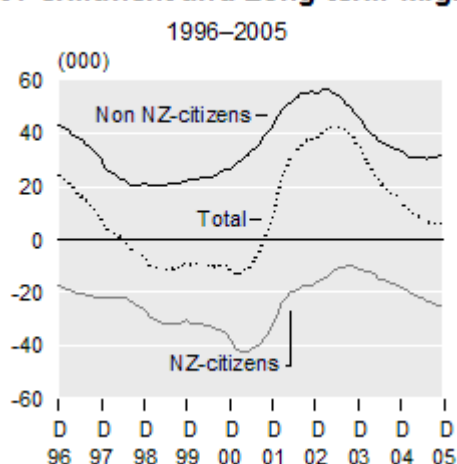
In the case of non-New Zealand citizen arrivals, which are directly influenced by changes in government immigration policies, numbers decreased from 56,200 in 1996 to 36,900 in 1998. They then increased over the next four years to 70,500 in 2002, before dropping to 54,800 in 2005. Some fluctuations resulted from changes in the numbers of overseas-born students coming to study in New Zealand. Between 1996 and 1997, non-New Zealand citizen departures increased from 13,500 to 15,700, and then remained at a similar level for the next five years, before increasing to 22,800 in 2005. As a result, the net inflow of non-New Zealand citizens decreased from 42,700 in 1996 to 20,700 in 1998, and then more than doubled between 2000 (26,600) and 2002 (54,900), before falling to 32,000 in 2005.

In the December 2005 year, there were 6,600 more PLT departures compared with the previous year. The main reason for this was an increase of 6,000 New Zealand citizen departures compared with 2004.

## Permanent and Long-term Migration



## Net Permanent and Long-term Migration



Almost 70 percent of New Zealand nationals returning home in 2005 after a long-term absence came from either the United Kingdom or Australia (8,200 and 8,100, respectively). These two countries were also the most popular destinations for New Zealand citizens departing for a permanent or long-term absence (8,700 and 30,600, respectively). As a result, there were net outflows of New Zealand citizens to Australia (22,500) and the United Kingdom (400). The net outflow of New Zealand citizens to Australia was up by 5,800 (35 percent) from 16,700 in 2004. Countries contributing to the net inflow of 32,000 non-New Zealand citizens included the United Kingdom (10,000), Fiji (2,500), India (2,000), Japan (1,700), Germany (1,400), South Africa (1,200) and China (1,200).

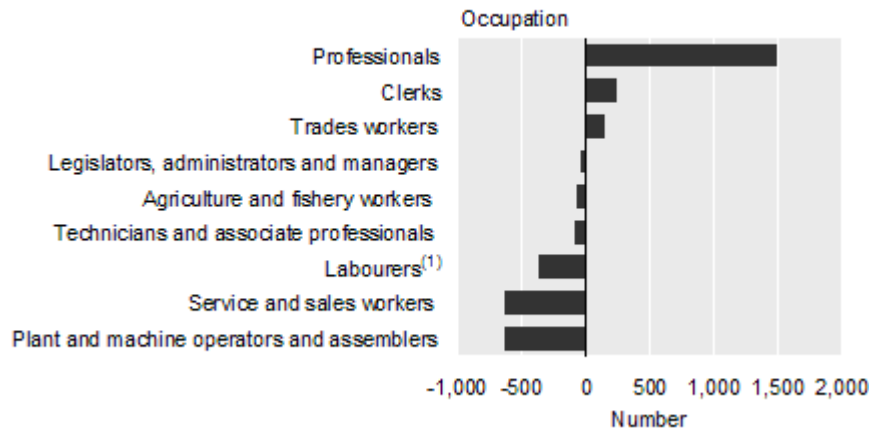
## Permanent and long-term migration by occupation

During 2001–2005, 48 percent of immigrants and 41 percent of emigrants were not in the workforce (eg family members and students). In addition, 8 percent of immigrants and 6 percent of emigrants did not specify a valid occupation. A further 11 percent of both immigrants and emigrants stated an occupation (eg designer) which was not detailed enough to be coded to a specific occupation classification. This tends to limit the potential value of occupation-based analysis.

In the December 2005 year, there was a net inflow of 1,200 migrants who stated an occupation, compared with 4,000 in 2004 and 10,000 in 2003. Professionals recorded the largest net inflow – 1,500 in 2005, compared with 1,800 in 2004. There were also net inflows of clerks (200) and trades workers (200). The remaining major occupational groups experienced net losses, including managers (less than 100), agriculture workers (100), technicians (100), elementary occupations (400), service and sales workers (600) and plant and machine operators (600).

## Net Permanent and Long-term Migration by Occupation

December 2005 year



(1) Includes labourers and related elementary service workers.

During the five years ended December 2005, there was a net inflow of 17,700 from all occupations. There were net gains from professionals (6,500), clerks (2,700), managers (1,000), trades workers (700) and technicians (500). All other major occupation categories experienced net losses, including agriculture workers (400), elementary occupations (1,200), plant and machine operators (1,700) and service and sales workers (2,100). Within the professionals category there were net inflows of health professionals (1,200), business and legal professionals (1,200), tertiary teachers (900), computing professionals (900), architects and engineers (900), nurses (700) and school teachers (300). Over the same period, there was a net inflow of 71,300 migrants who were not in the workforce, and a net inflow of 15,900 migrants who did not specify an occupation.

## Tourism and Migration 2004

*Tourism and Migration 2004*, the annual update of a number of the tables contained in the *Tourism and Migration 2000* reference report, was released in June 2005. The update contains statistics on a December year basis up to 2004 on a range of topics, but does not include commentary or analysis. Updated tables include overseas visitors, overseas trips by New Zealanders, tourist expenditure, permanent and long-term migration, and immigration permits. The *Tourism and Migration 2004* report is on the Statistics New Zealand website: [www.stats.govt.nz](http://www.stats.govt.nz).

## External migration feature articles

Over the past seven years, Statistics New Zealand has included a feature article in many of the monthly migration Hot Off The Press releases. The articles highlight the different types of analysis made possible by the wide range of information that is collected by the migration processing system. The articles can be found in the commentary component of each month's Hot Off The Press. A complete list of the articles, for 1999 to 2004, with links, is on the Statistics New Zealand website: [www.stats.govt.nz](http://www.stats.govt.nz).

The June 2005 migration Hot Off The Press contained an article on the [British and Irish Lions Rugby Tour](#).

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## **Technical notes**

### **Nature of data**

The statistics in this release are based on final external migration counts for the December 2005 year. 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 the NZSCC 1995. The following changes have resulted:

1. The Americas region (which includes Northern America, Central America, the Caribbean and South America) replaces Northern America. As a result, countries in Central and South America and the Caribbean are no longer included in the 'Other' category in Tables 2–7.
2. Minor revisions to some other regions.

### **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 migrant category**

In the preparation of 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 later during the trip, then they may also change their migrant 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/long-term migrant on arrival, but is later classified as a short-term visitor on departure. This is known as migration 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 permanent and long-term arrivals and departures are also actual counts and have no sampling errors.

## **New migration processing system**

To capture survey information more efficiently, Statistics New Zealand is developing new processing systems which incorporate scanning and image recognition technology. A new migration processing system using this technology was first used to process the arrival and departure cards for June 2004. A key difference between the new and previous systems is that there is now no need to manually enter the passport number for each traveller. In addition, classing (as overseas visitors, New Zealand residents, or permanent and long-term (PLT) migrants) and capture of the information required for the migration sample are done automatically for the majority of the cards. Those cards that cannot be classed (or are classed as PLT) and those that have fields that cannot be recognised are manually processed using the card image. It is expected that operator intervention should only be required for approximately one-quarter of the cards. The new system, designed to capture the same information as previously captured, is used only for the production of statistics.

It is expected that data captured using the new system will be largely consistent with previous data. Users need to 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 New Zealand 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 New Zealand. Statistics New Zealand accepts no responsibility for any such delays.

### **Next release ...**

*External Migration: January 2006* will be released on 2 March 2006.

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## Tables

The following tables can be downloaded from the Statistics New Zealand website in Excel 97 format. If you do not have access to Excel 97 or higher, you may use the [Excel file viewer](#) to view, print and export the contents of the file.

### List of tables

1. Arrivals, departures, net migration by class, December year 2001–2005
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4. Average length of stay for overseas visitor arrivals, by region/country of last permanent residence, 2001–2005
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8. Permanent and long-term migration, by country of citizenship, 1996–2005
9. Net permanent and long-term migration, by occupation, 2001–2005