

Embargoed until 10:45am – 04 February 2010

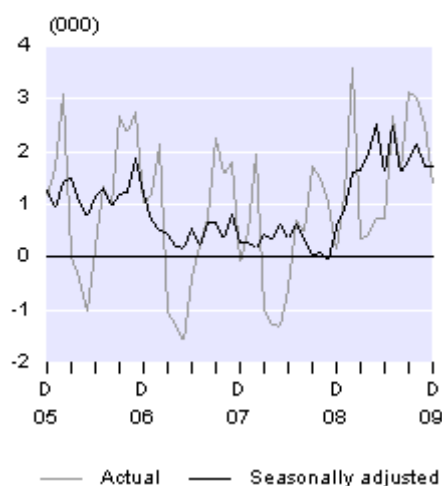
## International Travel and Migration: December 2009

### Highlights

- Visitor arrivals (341,300) were up 6 percent from December 2008 (322,200).
- There were more visitors from Australia (up 14,000) and the United States (up 2,800), but fewer visitors from China (down 2,300).
- Overseas trips by New Zealand residents (184,500) were down 1 percent from December 2008 (187,300).
- New Zealand residents departed on more trips to Australia (up 1,700) and Fiji (up 800), but fewer trips to Hong Kong (down 1,000), and India (down 800).
- Permanent and long-term arrivals exceeded departures by 1,700 on a seasonally adjusted basis.

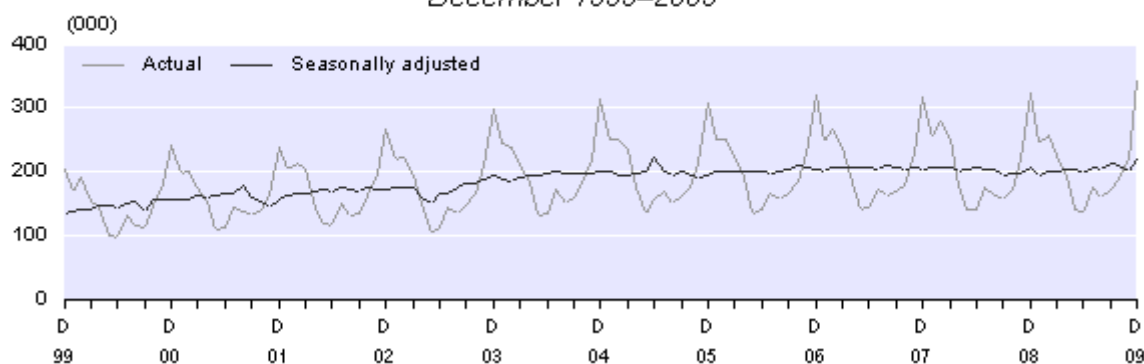
### Monthly Net PLT Migration

December 2005–09



### Monthly Visitor Arrivals

December 1999–2009



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4 February 2010  
ISSN 1179-0407

# Commentary

## Visitor arrivals

### Monthly visitor arrivals

Short-term overseas visitor arrivals to New Zealand numbered 341,300 in December 2009, the highest number of visitor arrivals ever recorded for a month. The total was up 19,100 (6 percent) from the previous high of 322,200 in December 2008. Visitor arrivals have increased in seven of the last nine months, compared with the same months of the previous year.

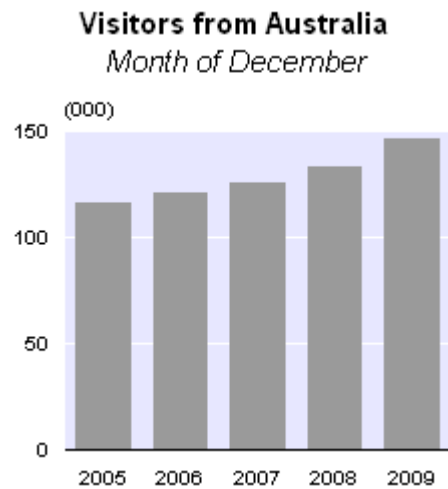
The estimated average number of visitors in New Zealand per day was 192,500 in December 2009, up 5 percent from December 2008 (182,800). The Christmas period is a popular time to visit friends and relatives. This purpose accounted for 81,700 of the visitors in New Zealand per day in December 2009, up from 77,400 in December 2008. Holiday visitors averaged 77,500 per day in December 2009, up from 72,000 the previous December.

### Monthly visitors by source country

Visitor arrivals from Australia were up 14,000 (11 percent) in December 2009, compared with December 2008. This continues large monthly increases which began in April 2009. A holiday (up 8,500 or 17 percent), visiting friends and relatives (up 5,100 or 7 percent), and business (up 1,000 or 12 percent) were the main travel purposes contributing to the increase from Australia in December 2009.

There were increases in visitors from all Australian states and territories, with the largest from New South Wales (up 5,500 or 12 percent), Queensland (up 3,900 or 10 percent), Victoria (up 2,200 or 8 percent), and Western Australia (up 1,100 or 10 percent).

The 26,400 visitor arrivals from the United States in December 2009 were a record from that country for a December month, up 2,800 (12 percent) from December 2008, and more than the previous December high of 25,900 in 2003. The increase was recorded despite 500 fewer cruise ship passenger arrivals from the United States, compared with December 2008.



December 2009 also saw increases in visitor arrivals from Singapore (up 1,200 or 22 percent), France (up 700 or 26 percent), and India (up 700 or 25 percent).

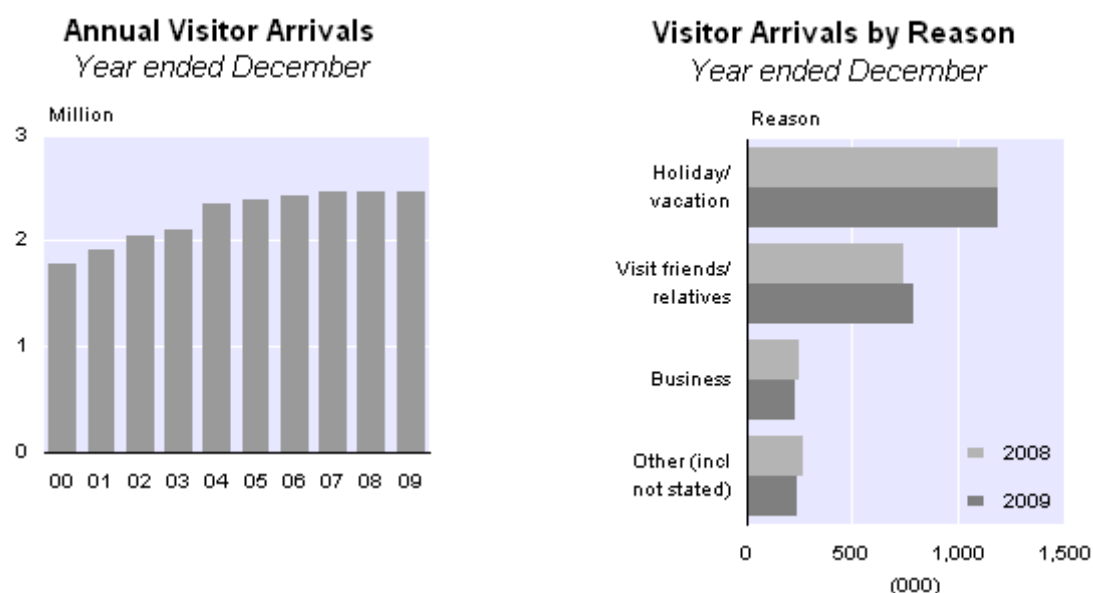
In contrast, there were fewer visitor arrivals from China (down 2,300 or 16 percent) and South Africa (down 900 or 21 percent), compared with December 2008.

**Note:** Provisional international travel statistics, including weekly and four-weekly visitor arrival data, are available on the Statistics NZ website. This data is updated each week with the most recently available information on visitor arrivals from 10 major source countries.

## Annual visitor arrivals

There were 2.458 million visitor arrivals in the December 2009 year, similar to 2008 (2.459 million) and fewer than the 2.466 million visitor arrivals in 2007.

A holiday was the main travel reason for 1.185 million visitors to New Zealand in 2009, up 1,200 (less than 1 percent) from the previous year. Another 788,000 arrived to visit friends and relatives (up 45,000 or 6 percent), and 231,400 arrived for business (down 23,000 or 9 percent).



## Annual visitors by source country

There were 1.083 million visitor arrivals from Australia in 2009, up 106,500 (11 percent) from 2008. However, fewer visitors came from the United Kingdom (down 26,700 or 9 percent), Korea (down 26,100 or 33 percent), Japan (down 24,100 or 23 percent), the United States (down 14,600 or 7 percent), and China (down 10,100 or 9 percent).

Visitor arrivals from Australia have more than doubled since 1999 (523,400). In contrast, the number of visitor arrivals from Japan (78,400) in 2009 was less than half the annual high (174,800) recorded in the January 2003 year. Similarly, the number of visitor arrivals from Korea (52,900) was less than half the annual high (130,700) recorded in the April 1997 year.

## Departures of New Zealand residents

### Monthly resident departures

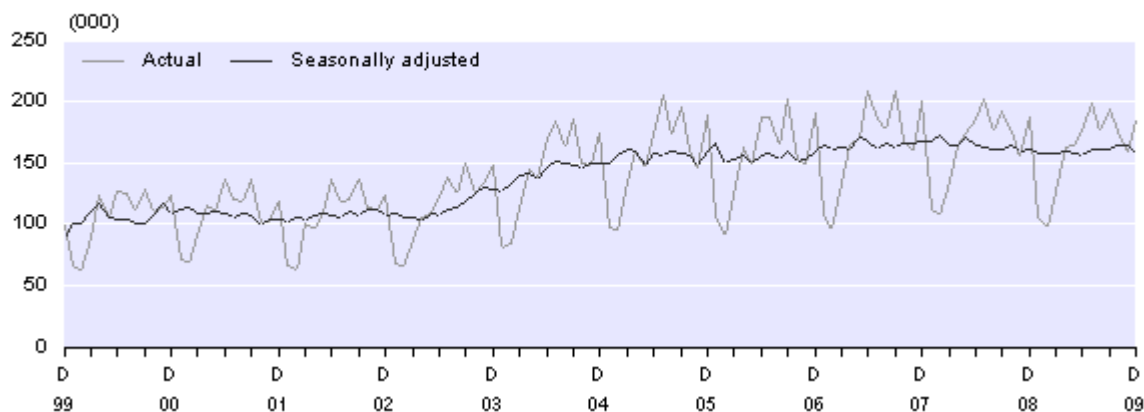
New Zealand residents departed on 184,500 short-term overseas trips in December 2009, down 2,800 (1 percent) from the 187,300 departures in December 2008. Both figures are well below the December month high of 199,700 departures by New Zealand residents in 2007.

In December 2009, New Zealand residents took more trips to Australia (up 1,700 or 2 percent) and Fiji (up 800 or 12 percent) than in December 2008. They took fewer trips to Hong Kong (down 1,000 or 36 percent) and India (down 800 or 16 percent).

The estimated average number of New Zealand residents who were temporarily overseas during December 2009 was 121,200 per day, down 2 percent from the average of 123,700 in December 2008. People who were primarily visiting friends and relatives accounted for just over half (64,300) of the December 2009 average.

### Monthly New Zealand-resident Short-term Departures

*December 1999–2009*



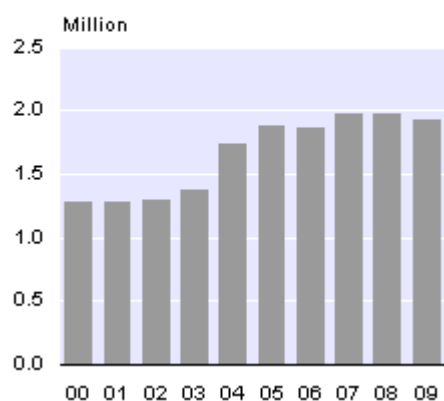
### Annual resident departures

Short-term departures of New Zealand residents in the December 2009 year numbered 1.918 million, down 48,800 (2 percent) from 2008.

Trips to Australia (944,300), the most popular destination, were down 5,300 (less than 1 percent) from the previous year. There were also fewer trips to Fiji (down 7,100 or 7 percent), the United Kingdom (down 5,700 or 6 percent), the United States (down 5,300 or 6 percent), and New Caledonia (down 3,700 or 34 percent). However, there were more trips to Samoa (up 3,700 or 10 percent).

A holiday was the main travel reason for 772,000 New Zealand residents who departed in 2009, down 48,100 (6 percent) from the previous year. Another 669,100 departed to visit friends and relatives (up 38,300 or 6 percent). Departures for business purposes (256,200) were down 25,000 (9 percent) from 2008.

**Annual Resident Departures**  
Year ended December



**Resident Departures by Reason**  
Year ended December



**Note:** Provisional international travel statistics, including weekly and four-weekly resident departure data, are available on the Statistics NZ website. 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. The former group may include 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 arrivals exceeded departures by 1,400 in December 2009, compared with 100 in December 2008. There were 1,400 (18 percent) fewer PLT departures, including 1,300 fewer departures to Australia. Since February 2009, PLT departures have fallen by at least 1,000 each month compared with the same month of the previous year.

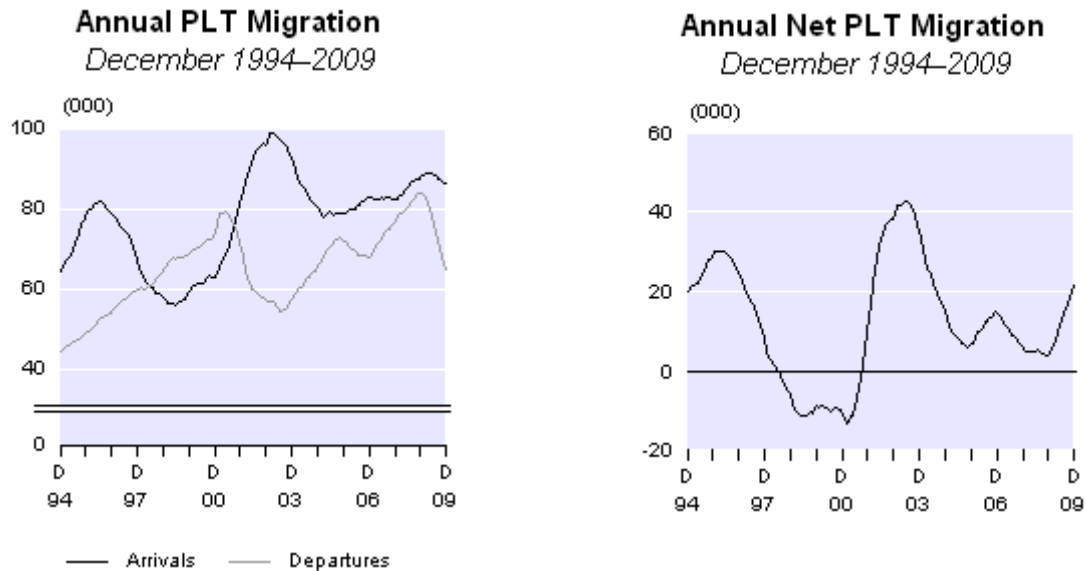
PLT arrivals were down 100 from December 2008, although there were 200 more PLT arrivals of New Zealand citizens.

On a seasonally adjusted basis, PLT arrivals exceeded PLT departures by 1,700 in December 2009, unchanged from November 2009, and similar to the average of 1,900 experienced since February 2009.

In December 2009, there were net inflows of migrants from the United Kingdom (1,300), India, Samoa, and China (each 200). There was a net outflow of 1,100 PLT migrants to Australia, the lowest for a December month since 2003, and a decrease from the net outflows of 2,600 in December 2008 and 2,500 in December 2007. There was also a net outflow of 300 migrants to Korea in December 2009.

## Annual PLT migration

Net migration was 21,300 in the December 2009 year, compared with 3,800 in 2008. The increase in net migration was due to fewer departures. The 65,200 PLT departures in 2009 were down 18,500 (22 percent) from 2008. Over the same period, there were 86,400 PLT arrivals, down 1,100 (1 percent). The latest annual net migration total is the highest since the June 2004 year (22,000).



The net PLT migration gain of 21,300 in 2009 was higher than the annual average of 11,900 for the December years 1990–2009. Net PLT migration varied substantially within this 20-year period. The net gain peaked at 30,200 in the April 1996 year and again at 42,500 in the May 2003 year. Net outflows were experienced during most of 1998–2001, with the largest being a net loss of 13,200 people in the February 2001 year.

## Annual PLT migration by country

In 2009, there were net PLT inflows from the United Kingdom (9,100), India (6,000), China (3,800), the Philippines (2,300), and Fiji (each 2,200).

The net PLT outflow to Australia was 18,000 in 2009, down from a record net outflow of 35,400 in 2008. The latest net outflow resulted from 32,800 PLT departures to Australia, partly offset by 14,800 PLT arrivals from Australia. Almost 9 in every 10 PLT departures to Australia were New Zealand citizens (28,600). Of the PLT arrivals from Australia, two-thirds were New Zealand citizens (10,000), similar to levels observed over the past decade.

## Annual PLT migration by citizenship

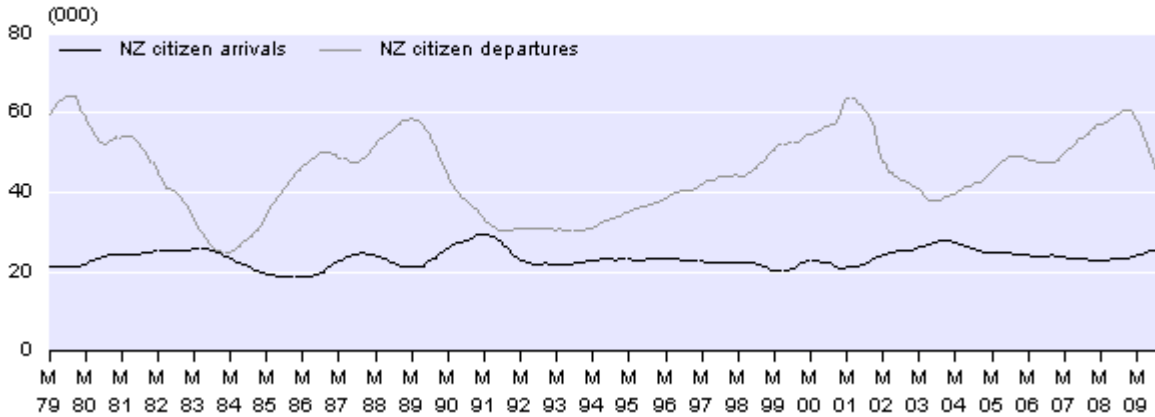
A net inflow of 36,700 non-New Zealand citizens and a net outflow of 15,500 New Zealand citizens were recorded in 2009.

PLT arrivals of New Zealand citizens numbered 26,100 in 2009, above the average of 23,500 recorded for the 1979–2009 December years, but below peaks in the March 1991 year (29,600) and the October 2003 year (27,800). Arrivals of New Zealand citizens tend to show relatively little variation year-to-year, and the variation that does occur often follows trends in departures of New Zealand citizens a few years earlier.

PLT departures of New Zealand citizens have shown much more annual variation than arrivals of New Zealand citizens. The highest number of departures of New Zealand citizens was 64,300 in the October 1979 year, but by the January 1984 year, this had decreased to a low of 24,400. There were 41,600 PLT departures of New Zealand citizens in 2009, down from 60,600 the previous December year.

### Annual PLT Migration of New Zealand Citizens

March 1979 year onwards

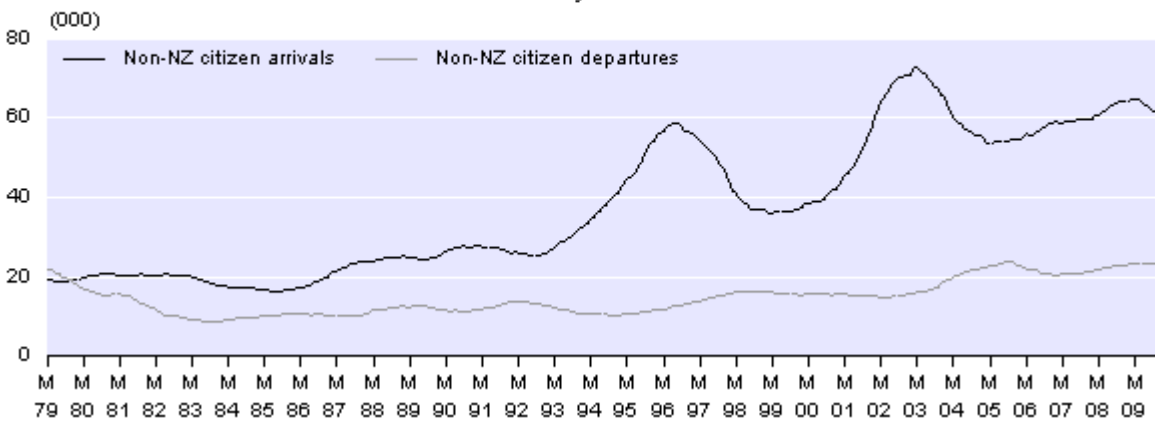


PLT arrivals of non-New Zealand citizens were less than 30,000 a year between 1979 and 1992, then doubled to reach a peak of 58,800 in the July 1996 year. Another peak of 72,800 was reached in the February 2003 year. The changes in arrivals of non-New Zealand citizens reflect changes in arrivals of temporary workers (including working holidaymakers) and overseas students staying for 12 months or more, as well as arrivals for residence. At 60,300, arrivals in 2009 were down by 3,600 from 2008.

PLT departures of non-New Zealand citizens have generally been increasing since 1984, corresponding with the general increase in arrivals of non-New Zealand citizens. There were 23,600 PLT departures of non-New Zealand citizens in 2009, up 600 from 2008.

### Annual PLT Migration of Non-New Zealand Citizens

March 1979 year onwards



### Annual PLT migration by permit type

In 2009, 30,000 PLT arrivals were Australian or New Zealand citizens who did not require a permit to remain in New Zealand. Of the 56,400 PLT arrivals who did require a permit, 21,900 arrived on work permits, 15,700 arrived on student permits, 13,800 arrived on residence permits, and 4,500 arrived on visitor permits. Compared with 2008, there were more PLT arrivals on

student permits (up 400), but fewer arrivals on work permits (down 2,100), visitor permits (down 800), and residence permits (down 700). The majority of residence approvals in recent years have been granted onshore, to people who arrived on other permit types.

## Recent international travel and migration articles

Statistics NZ has recently released a number of articles on international travel and migration topics. These can be accessed on the [International travel and migration articles](#) page on the Statistics NZ website. The most recent releases are:

December 2009	<a href="#">Business Travel to and from New Zealand: 1989–2009</a> examines changes in the number and characteristics of people travelling to and from New Zealand for business over the past two decades.
October 2009	<a href="#">Rates of Travel to New Zealand by Country of Residence: 2009</a> examines the rates of travel to New Zealand when adjusted for the population of each source country.
May 2009	<a href="#">Visitors from the Republic of Korea, 1989–2008</a> examines the large fluctuations in the number of visitors from Korea, and the characteristics of these visitors.

## Occupation data

From October 2009, Statistics NZ has adopted the Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO) for classifying the occupations of permanent and long-term migrants. A discussion of the reasons for, and implications of, the changes is on the [Statistics NZ website](#). As a result, there are new occupation tables on Infoshare, with details given on the [Infoshare data changes by date](#) webpage.

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### Next release ...

*International Travel and Migration: January 2010* will be released on 1 March 2010.

## Technical notes

### Nature of data

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

### Free online database

A large number of international travel and migration tables are available through Statistics NZ's Infoshare database ([www.stats.govt.nz/infoshare](http://www.stats.govt.nz/infoshare)), a free online tool that provides access to a range of time-series data. The international travel and migration subject can be found under **Tourism** on the **Browse** page of the database.

### Changes in passenger type

Passenger type (overseas visitor, New Zealand-resident traveller, or permanent and long-term (PLT) migrant) is based on the time spent in and out of New Zealand, determined from past arrivals and departures of a person, and responses to questions on the arrival or departure card. Responses to the questions, and therefore the passenger type allocated, may be based on intentions. If a person's intentions change later during the trip, this passenger type may no longer be correct. For example, a person may come to New Zealand with the declared intention of settling permanently (PLT migrant), but in fact may return overseas after a few months (overseas visitor). Data users should recognise the limitations inherent in the information supplied by travellers.

### Permit type

The determination of passenger type by Statistics NZ is independent of the permit type a person holds.

With the exception of New Zealand citizens, Australian citizens, and a small number of other people exempt under the Immigration Act 1987, everyone entering New Zealand is required to obtain a permit to remain in New Zealand. People already in New Zealand can apply for a permit renewal or a new permit of a different type. However, Statistics NZ only holds data on the permit type that an individual was given on arrival.

### Sampling accuracy

The statistics for short-term passenger movements by country (that is, overseas visitor arrivals by country of last permanent residence, and New Zealand-resident 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 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.

## **New Zealand-resident short-term departures**

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

## **Seasonally adjusted and trend 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 periods more comparable.

The seasonal adjustment process for international travel and migration statistics uses Statistics NZ's standard seasonal adjustment package, X-12-ARIMA, with enhancements which allow the specification and adjustment of additional calendar effects. These include the number and type of trading days in the month (as more people generally arrive and depart on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday), and holiday periods, which have important effects on travel but in different months each year (eg Easter can be in March or April).

Both monthly and quarterly seasonally adjusted series are available. The quarterly series are adjusted independently of the adjustments made to the monthly series. Hence, quarterly figures may not equal the sum of monthly seasonally adjusted figures.

Seasonally adjusted and trend data back to January 1996 are subject to revision each period. The size of these revisions is expected to be minimal, with the largest revisions occurring in the periods immediately before the current month or quarter. Data before January 1996 is not revised. This cut-off is used because of the change to a four-term school year in 1996, which resulted in changes to the seasonal patterns of the New Zealand-resident arrivals and departures series.

## **Processing system**

The international travel and migration processing system incorporates scanning and image recognition technology. All arrival and departure cards are processed, but for around 9 in 10 cards the required information is captured automatically and no operator intervention is needed.

## **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.

1. International travel and migration, by direction and passenger type, actual counts
2. International travel and migration, by direction and passenger type, seasonally adjusted and trend series
3. Short-term overseas visitor arrivals, by country of last permanent residence
4. Short-term New Zealand-resident traveller departures, by country of main destination
5. Permanent and long-term arrivals, by country of last permanent residence
6. Permanent and long-term departures, by country of next permanent residence
7. Net permanent and long-term migration, by country of last/next permanent residence
8. Permanent and long-term migration, by country of citizenship