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Decrease in arrivals pushes net migration down

Permanent and long-term (PLT) arrivals outnumbered departures by 2,600 in February 2010, down from 3,600 in February 2009, Statistics New Zealand said today. This decrease in the net migration gain was mainly due to 1,200 fewer arrivals of non-New Zealand citizens, which included fewer arrivals on work and student permits (each down 400). At the same time, there were 400 more departures of non-New Zealand citizens. However, departures of New Zealand citizens continued to decrease, down 600 compared with February 2009. This decrease included 400 fewer PLT departures to Australia.

The annual net migration gain was 21,600 in the February 2010 year, up from 6,200 in the February 2009 year, but down from the 22,600 recorded in the January 2010 year. The January year figure was the highest net migration gain since the May 2004 year (24,000).

Net inflows of migrants in the February 2010 year were from the United Kingdom (8,600), India (5,700), China (3,600), and the Philippines (2,100). A net outflow of 15,400 people to Australia was recorded; well down from 34,400 in the February 2009 year and the lowest annual net outflow to Australia since the December 2004 year (14,700).

Visitor arrivals numbered 267,900 in February 2010, up 11,300 (4 percent) from February 2009. Most of the increase was from China (up 4,900 or 41 percent), Taiwan (up 2,300 or 188 percent), and Hong Kong (up 1,700 or 111 percent). This increase was largely due to Chinese New Year falling in February in 2010, but January in 2009. This holiday period is a popular time for people from these countries to travel.

In the February 2010 year, there were 2.482 million visitor arrivals, 57,200 (2 percent) more than in the February 2009 year (2.425 million) and similar to the year ended February 2008 (2.485 million). Visitors from Australia were up 119,300 (12 percent) for the year, but this was partly offset by large decreases in visitors from Japan, Korea, the United Kingdom, and China.

New Zealand residents departed on 104,000 short-term overseas trips in February 2010, up 7,300 (8 percent) from February 2009 but below the 107,900 trips in February 2008. For the February 2010 year, short-term departures of New Zealand residents numbered 1.927 million, down 22,500 (1 percent) from the previous year. This decrease included 13,200 (8 percent) fewer trips to Europe.

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