

Internal Migration

Asian mobility in New Zealand

Overview of Asian migration

Historical context

People of Asian ethnicities have a long history of settlement in New Zealand. The majority of migration from Asia throughout the Nineteenth Century contributed to Chinese and Indian populations in New Zealand. Ongoing migration from Asia has become more diverse and now people from all parts of Asia, from Afghanistan in the west to Japan in the east, make up this very diverse sector of the population. The communities have settled throughout New Zealand. A significant proportion of the Asian population are New Zealand-born.

How many Asian people moved?

More than 35 percent of people of Asian ethnicities have moved within New Zealand between 2001 and 2006.

In 2006, there were 354,552 people who identified with one or more ethnicities in the Asian ethnic grouping. Of these, 346,977 people told us where they had lived five years earlier at the time of the 2001 Census.

Table 1

People of Asian ethnicities <i>By address five years ago</i> 2006 Census			
	Number of people of Asian ethnicities		
Address five years ago	Male	Female	Total
Same as usual residence	38,991	44,208	83,199
Elsewhere in New Zealand or no fixed abode	54,234	59,601	113,835
Not born five years ago	12,372	11,538	23,910
Overseas	60,057	65,976	126,033
Not stated	3,720	3,855	7,575
Total	169,374	185,178	354,552

Among the people aged five years and over who gave us this information, 35 percent had moved at least once in NZ within the previous five years, 26 percent had not moved and 39 percent had arrived or returned from overseas.

The Asian population in New Zealand is a very mobile population and the dynamics of internal migration within New Zealand is strongly affected by recent migration.

Table 2

People of Asian ethnicities <i>Percentage distribution by address five years ago</i> 1986–2006 Censuses					
Address five years ago	Census year				
	1986	1991	1996	2001	2006
	Percent of Asian population				
Same as usual residence	41.0	26.7	26.7	28.0	25.8
Elsewhere in New Zealand or no fixed abode	33.2	24.6	28.7	30.7	35.2
Overseas	25.8	48.7	44.7	41.3	39.0
Total	100	100	100	100	100
	Percent of Asian internal migrants				
Stayers	55.3	52.1	48.2	45.2	42.2
Movers within New Zealand	44.7	47.9	51.8	54.8	57.8
Total internal migrants	100	100	100	100	100

The Asian population living in New Zealand for more than five years is increasingly mobile. This population is more mobile than people of Pacific and European ethnicities, but less mobile than Māori. The overseas-born component of the population is more mobile than the younger New Zealand-born component, as preferred locations for settlement and opportunities for family formation and employment change.

Table 3

People of Asian ethnicities <i>Percentage distribution by address five years ago and birthplace</i> 1986–2006 Censuses					
Address five years ago	Census Year				
	1986	1991	1996	2001	2006
	percent born in New Zealand				
Same as usual residence	58.8	56.9	55.6	52.5	50.8
Elsewhere in New Zealand	41.2	43.1	44.4	47.5	49.2
	Percent born overseas				
Same as usual residence	51.6	48.4	44.3	45.9	39.5
Elsewhere in New Zealand	48.4	51.6	55.7	54.1	60.5
	total				
Same as usual residence	55.3	52.1	48.2	45.2	42.2
Elsewhere in New Zealand	44.7	47.9	51.8	54.8	57.8

Asian movers and non-movers

Movers

The proportion of the people who stated that they lived elsewhere in New Zealand five years earlier steadily increased over the period 1986 to 2006.

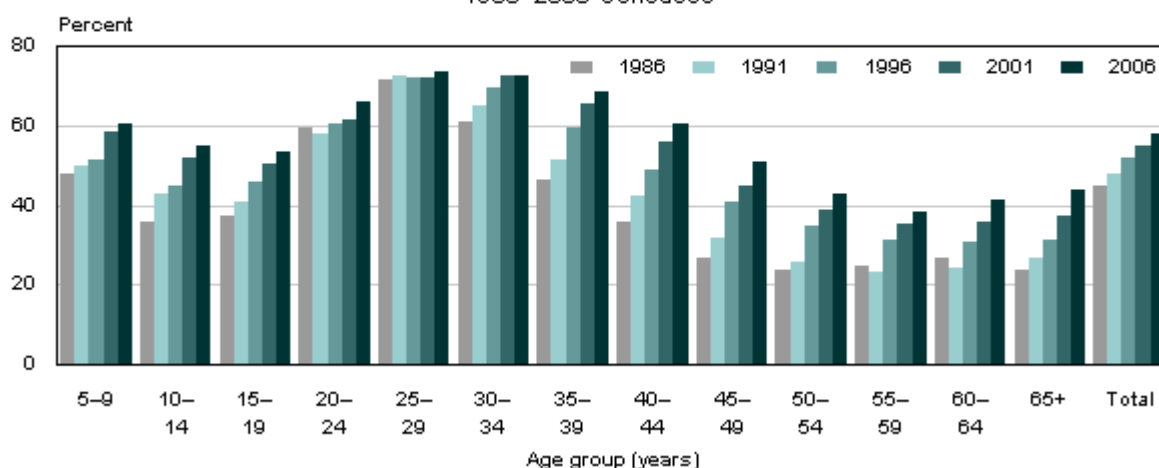
In 1986, less than 45 percent of those of Asian ethnicities stated that they had moved in the previous five years. By 2006, the proportion who had moved in the previous five years was almost 58 percent. Proportionally, the greatest increases in mobility have been in the age groups aged 35 years and over. More than half of the 45–49 year age group, for example, had moved in 2006 compared with less than 27 percent 20 years earlier in 1986.

Figure 1

Asian Ethnic Group Internal Migrant Movers

Percentage of each age group

1986–2006 Censuses



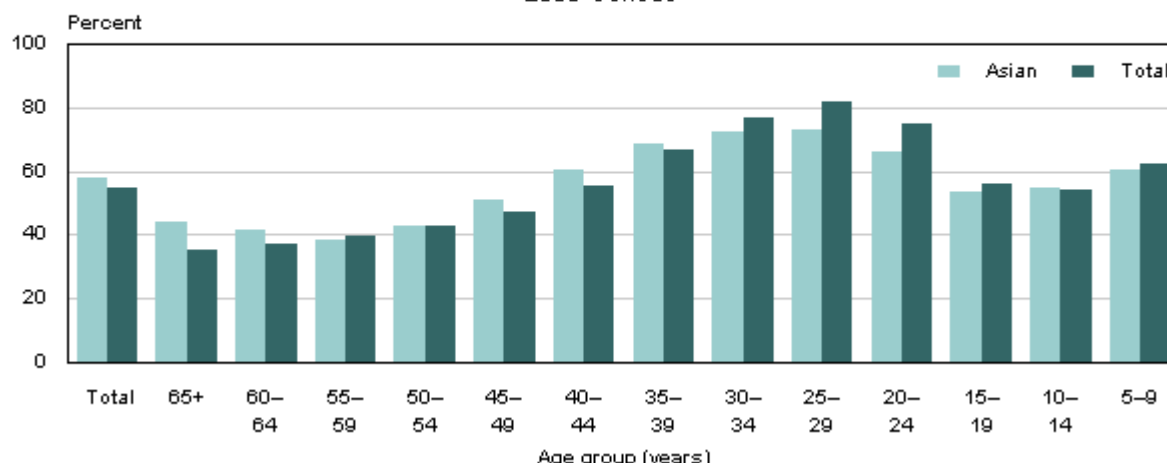
Although people of Asian ethnicities living in New Zealand were on average more mobile than the total New Zealand resident population, people aged 35 years and over were more mobile overall than average while those younger than 35 years were less mobile.

Figure 2

Asian Ethnic Group and Total New Zealand Internal Migrant Movers

Percentage of each age group

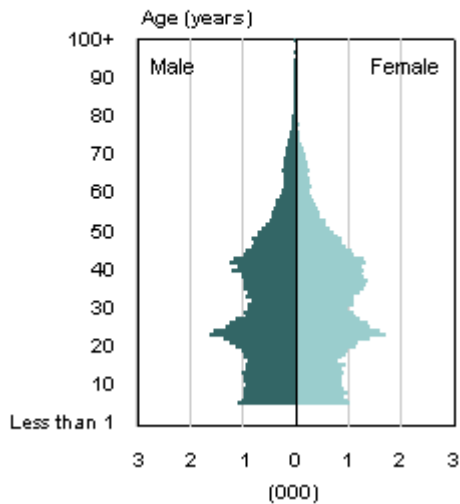
2006 Census



Age and sex of movers

Almost 58 percent of people of Asian ethnicities who had lived in New Zealand for more than five years had moved at least once in that time. These movers tended to be among the young adults who were completing education and moving into employment. Many of the people in the older age groups who moved were parents moving with their children, as well as families who had relatively recently migrated and were relocating within New Zealand.

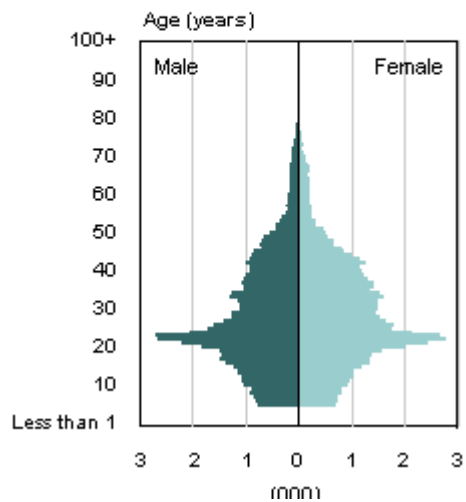
Figure 3
Age-sex Pyramid of
Asian Ethnic Group Movers
2006 Census population



Age and sex of movers from overseas

People of Asian ethnicities who were overseas five years ago include people who are new migrants as well as people returning to New Zealand. The dominant feature of this group is the large proportion who are in their late teens and early twenties and are predominantly tertiary students, most of whom are Chinese and Korean. Alongside this feature of student arrivals is the inflows of families and of skilled migrants throughout the other age groups.

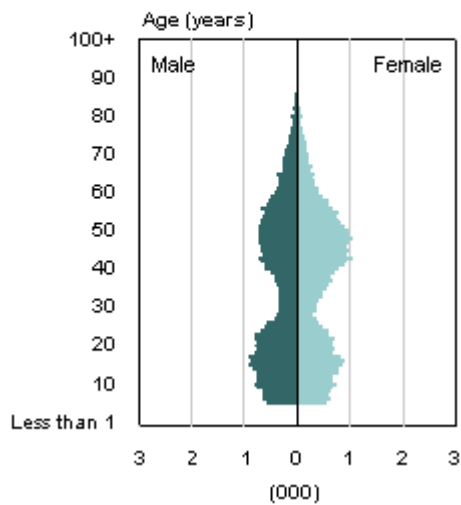
Figure 4
Age-sex Pyramid of
Asian Ethnic Group Who Were
Overseas Five Years Ago
2006 Census population



Age and sex of non-movers

People of Asian ethnicities who did not move between 2001 and 2006 tended to be parents families with children in secondary education. The adult non-movers were concentrated in the middle adult years with relatively many fewer non-movers in their late twenties and early thirties. Associated with these adult non-movers were younger teenage children in secondary education ages. One of the striking features of Asian non-movers is the larger number of adult women, many of whom are partnered to people who were not of Asian ethnicities.

Figure 5
Age-sex Pyramid of
Asian Ethnic Group Non-movers
2006 Census population



Diversity in the Asian population

The Asian population in New Zealand is very diverse, with settlers from all areas within Asia and from other countries with large Asian diasporas, together with a growing locally born population. There are two well established groups with a long history of settlement: people of Indian ethnicities (23 percent born in New Zealand) and people of Chinese ethnicities (22 percent born in New Zealand). While it is often convenient to refer to these groups as 'Chinese ethnic group' and 'Indian ethnic group', readers need to be aware that this is quite misleading because, in both cases, these labels subsume a very diverse group of ethnicities. These include people born in New Zealand, as well as people born in a number of Asian, European and Pacific countries.

The influence of people of Chinese ethnicities on the overall Asian patterns is seen in the age-sex pyramids of the Chinese movers and non-movers, as well as among the arrivals from overseas. Although Chinese settlement in New Zealand has a very long history, there has also been significant recent migration, which can be seen in the patterns of settlement from overseas and resettlement within New Zealand.

Figure 6
Age-sex Pyramid of
Chinese Ethnic Group Movers
2006 Census population

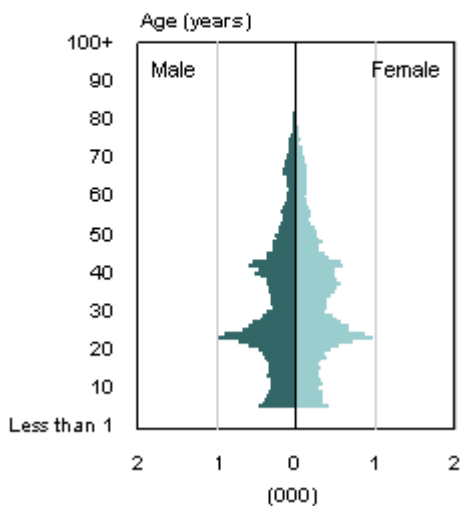


Figure 7
Age-sex Pyramid of
Chinese Ethnic Group Non-movers
2006 Census population

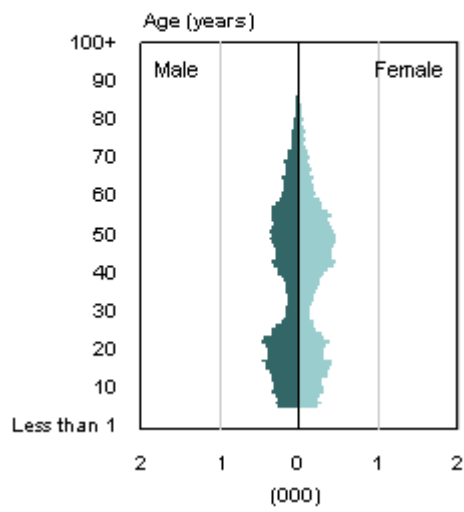
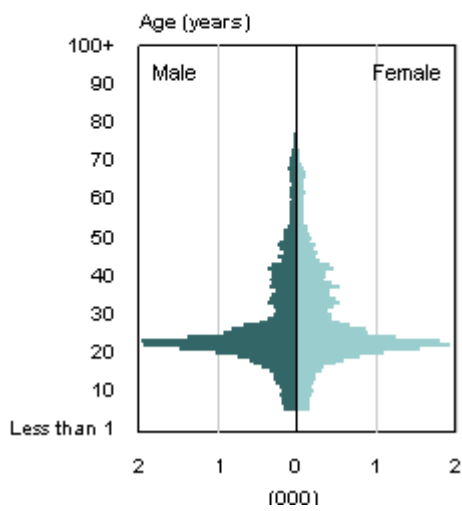


Figure 8
Age-sex Pyramid of
Chinese Ethnic Group Who Were
Overseas Five Years Ago
2006 Census population



The patterns for movers and non-movers of Indian ethnicities reflect quite different migration histories from the Chinese. Student migration is less of a feature for Indian ethnicities, and family migration is more strongly featured with the adult male profile of movers being slightly older than the females and the children moving with the families. Those overseas five years ago tend to be in the middle working age groups, reflecting the levels of skilled migration. A significant number of Indian migrants originated in Fiji.

Figure 9
Age-sex Pyramid of
Indian Ethnic Group Movers
2006 Census population

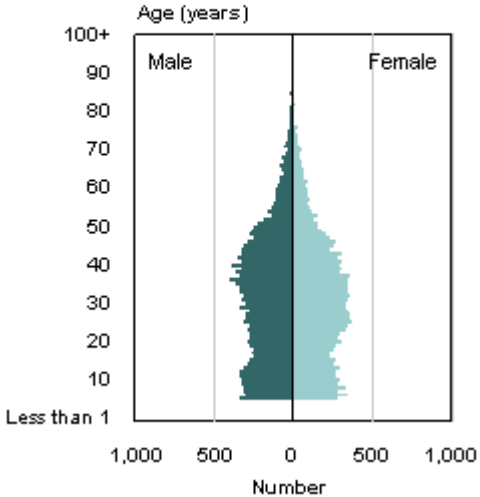


Figure 10
Age-sex Pyramid of
Indian Ethnic Group Non-movers
2006 Census population

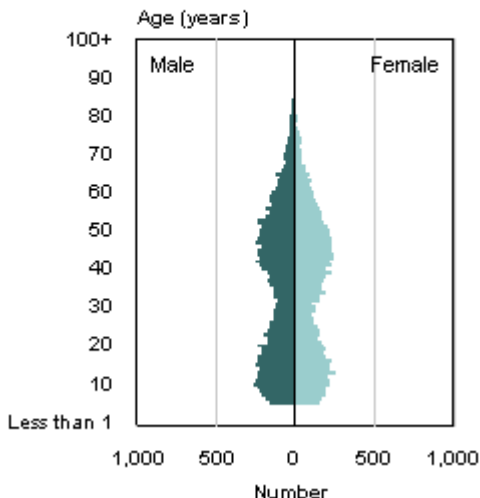
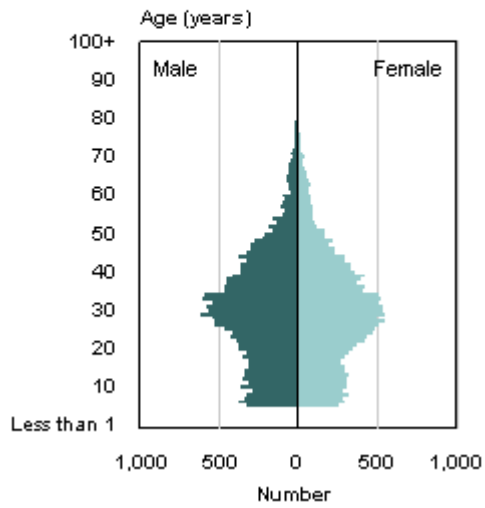


Figure 11
Age-sex Pyramid of
Indian Ethnic Group Overseas
Five Years Ago
2006 Census population



Where are Asian people moving to?

Regional migration

Between 2001 and 2006, 42 percent of the Asian population who had been living in New Zealand in 2001 had not moved and a further 48 percent moved within the same region council area. Inter-regional movers accounted for 10 percent of the region's Asian population aged five years and older who had not been overseas in 2001.

Auckland region dominated because of the portion of the Asian population living in that region (66 percent). Between 2001 and 2006, 41 percent of the Asian population in Auckland who were living in New Zealand in 2001 had not moved and 53 percent had moved within the region. Although the exchange of people between Auckland and other regions was largest, Auckland lost only 3 percent of this population to other regions, while other regions contributed 6 percent of the Asian population.

Figure 12

Asian Ethnic Group Inter-regional Migration
2006 Census

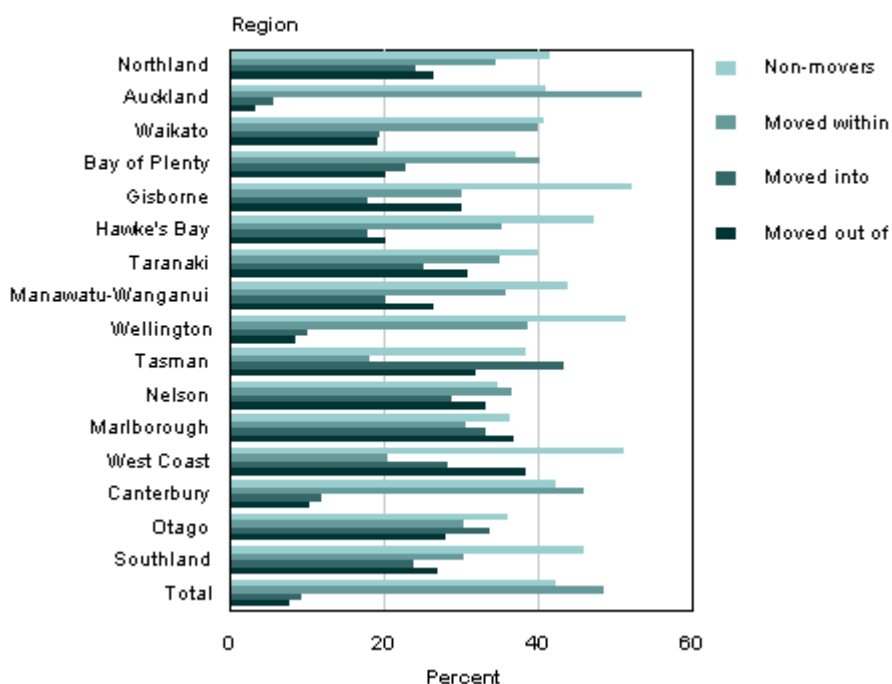


Figure 13
Movement of Asian Ethnic Group
Between Territorial Authorities
Within Auckland Region
2006 Census

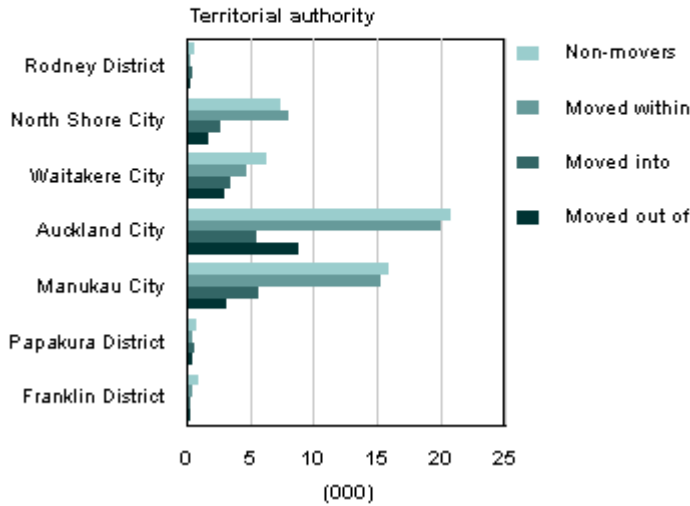
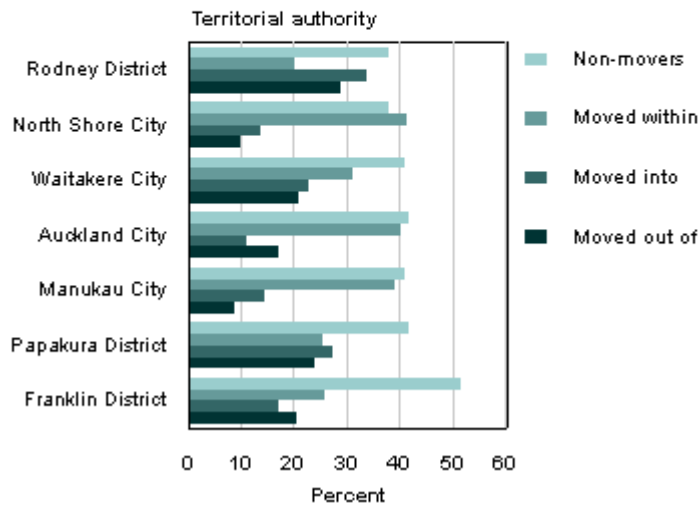


Figure 14
Movement of Asian Ethnic Group
Between Territorial Authorities
Within Auckland Region
Percentage of usually resident Asian population
2006 Census



Urban-rural exchange of people

The vast majority (92 percent) of Asian internal migrants who moved between 2001 and 2006 moved within or between main urban areas. The remaining 8 percent involved the exchange of people between the various urban and rural area types. The main urban areas gained more internal migrants than they lost to other area types. The majority of the net gain to main urban areas was from population moving between main urban and minor urban areas. This contrasts with small net losses to other area types. However, in general the size of the outflows is very similar to the size of the inflows.

Figure 15

Asian Ethnic Group Internal Migrants: Inflows and Outflows

By area type and birthplace
2006 Census

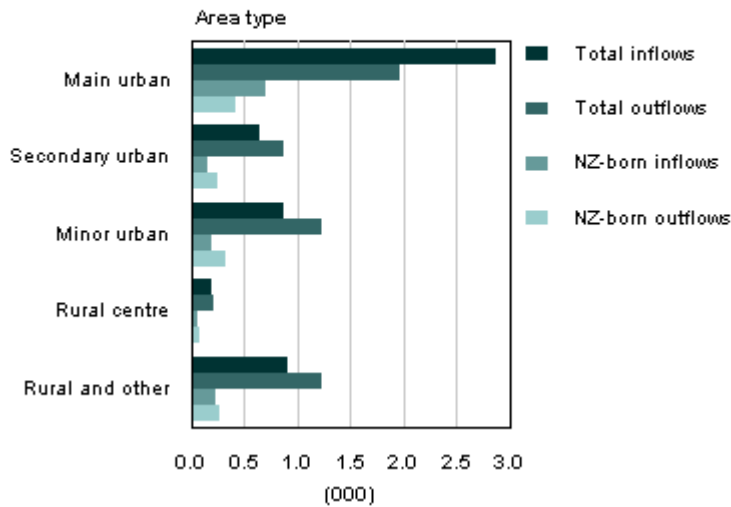
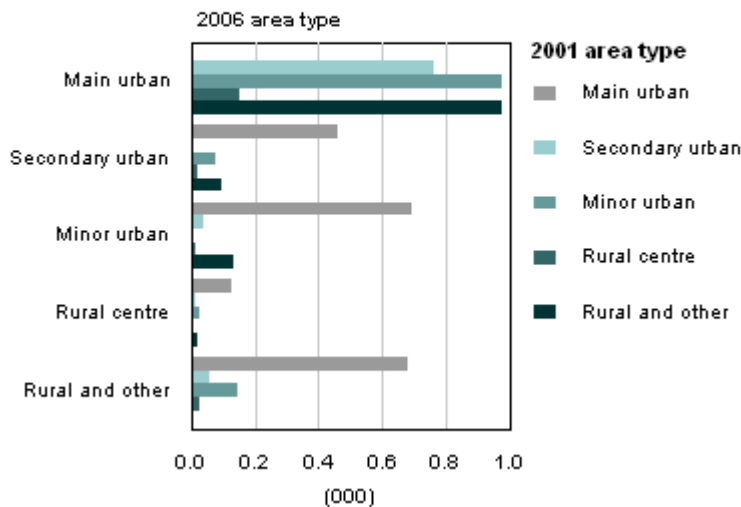


Figure 16

Asian Ethnic Group Internal Migrants 2006 Area Type

By 2001 source area type
2006 Census



Gains from overseas

International migration has a significant relationship with internal migration. People who migrate or return to New Zealand tend to settle initially in the major centres – primarily in Auckland but also in significant numbers in Christchurch and Hamilton. Many subsequently move, contributing to internal migration patterns. Similarly, other people may choose to move to another country rather than to another part of New Zealand.

Asian people are highly urbanised and new migrants and people returning from overseas tend to settle in main urban areas. While the vast majority live in main urban areas, it is noteworthy that, in 2006, people who had been overseas five years earlier also made up 39 percent of the main urban area Asian population in main urban areas. In minor urban areas a similar percentage (37 percent) of the resident Asian population had been overseas five years ago, whereas less than 30 percent of the Asian population in other area types had been overseas five years ago.

Table 4

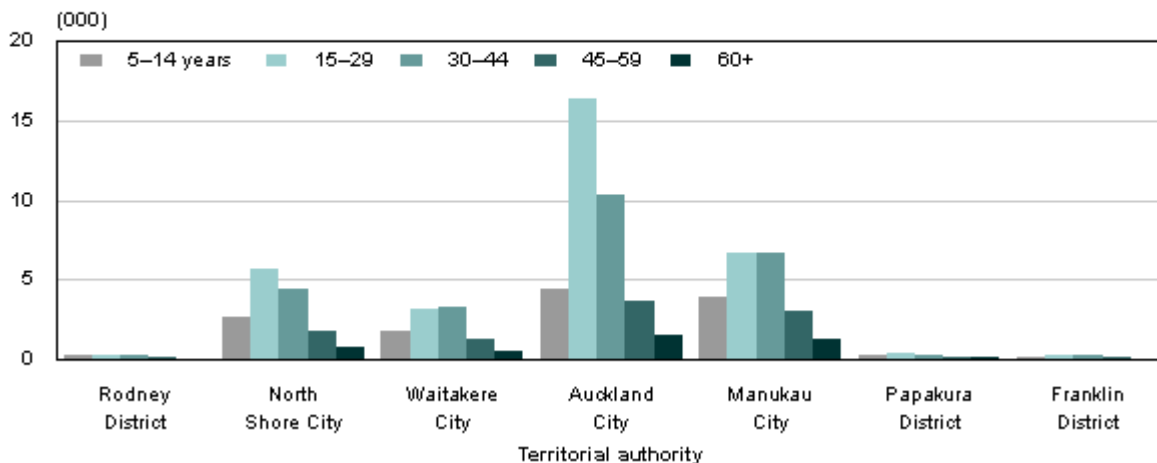
People of Asian ethnicities aged five years and over <i>By urban-rural area type and percent overseas five years ago</i> 2006 Census					
	Main urban	Secondary urban	Minor urban	Rural centre	Rural and other
Resident Asian population (1)	305,784	5,193	6,351	897	4,842
Percent overseas five years ago	39.4	29.7	37.4	29.0	26.3
(1) Excludes people who did not state their address five years ago					

Auckland is the key point of entry for the majority of people arriving in or returning to New Zealand. Auckland, in 2006, accounted for 68 percent of people of Asian ethnicities who had been living overseas five years ago. Canterbury region was the next most popular region with nearly 10 percent of this group living in that region.

The age distribution of those who were overseas five years ago who were living in the Auckland territorial authorities shows quite distinct location preferences. Auckland City attracted more people of Asian ethnicities in all age groups than other areas, but the 15–29 year age group dominated because of the large overseas student population living in Auckland City. The relationship between the 5–14 years ago group and the 30–49 years age group suggests that family migration was significant for Manukau, North Shore and Waitakere Cities.

Figure 17

Asian Ethnic Group Who Were Overseas Five Years Ago
By territorial authority and age group in Auckland region
 2006 Census



Information sources

1986, 1991, 1996, 2001 and 2006 Censuses of Population and Dwellings.

Glossary

Please refer to [Glossary](#).

Further information

This page is part of a web-based analytical report by Statistics New Zealand.

The report includes more than 10 topics. To see the other topics, go to the [Internal Migration report](#) introduction page.

Tables

The following tables can 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. Internal migrant status, people of Asian ethnicities and New Zealand total population, by sex, five-year age groups and single year of age, census usual resident population, 2006
2. Internal migrant status, people of Asian ethnicities, by sex, birthplace and age group, census usual resident population, 2006
3. Diversity and internal migrant status, people of Asian ethnicities, by sex and combinations of ethnic groupings, census usual resident population, 2006
4. Internal migrant status, people of Chinese ethnicities, by sex, five-year age groups and single year of age, census usual resident population, 2006
5. Internal migrant status, people of Indian ethnicities, by sex, five-year age groups and single year of age, census usual resident population, 2006
6. Asian internal migrant movers, by age group, Census usual resident populations, 1986-2006
7. Asian and total internal migrant movers as percentage of each age group, census usual resident population, 2006
8. Inter-regional migration, people of Asian ethnicities, census usual resident population, 2006
9. Mobility between territorial authorities within Auckland region, people of Asian ethnicities, census usual resident population, 2006
10. Inflows and outflows by area type and birthplace, people of Asian ethnicities, census usual resident population, 2006
11. Internal migrants, urban-rural source area type, by current urban-rural area type, people of Asian ethnicities, census usual resident population, 2006
12. People of Asian ethnicities living in Auckland region and overseas five years ago, by territorial authority of usual residence, census usual resident population, 2006