

Internal Migration

Migration and age

Commentary

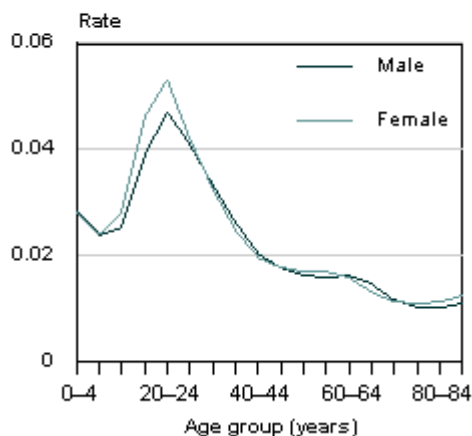
Migration between New Zealand regions occurs most often among people in their late teens and twenties. Migration into some regions, such as Bay of Plenty, is also common among people at the retirement ages.

National pattern

Inter-regional migration occurs most often among young people, as can be seen in figure 1. People in their late teens and twenties move for education and employment, and to leave home, form partnerships, and start families. Migration rates are also high for children under five years old. This reflects migration with parents, who are typically in the age groups with high mobility. Both these patterns are long-standing in New Zealand, and are found in other countries.

Figure 1
Inter-regional Migration Rates

By age group
2001–06



Migration rates sometimes rise again between ages 55 and 64. As people age their priorities change. High wages, job opportunities and education become less important, while climate, natural environment and high quality services and facilities remain important or become more so. For example, a retiree might leave Wellington for Tauranga, where there are fewer job opportunities but a more relaxed pace of life and warmer climate. In the oldest ages (80 years and over), the rate of migration again increases slightly, because of people's declining health or the death of their spouse. People in this group typically migrate to be near family, or to go into residential care.

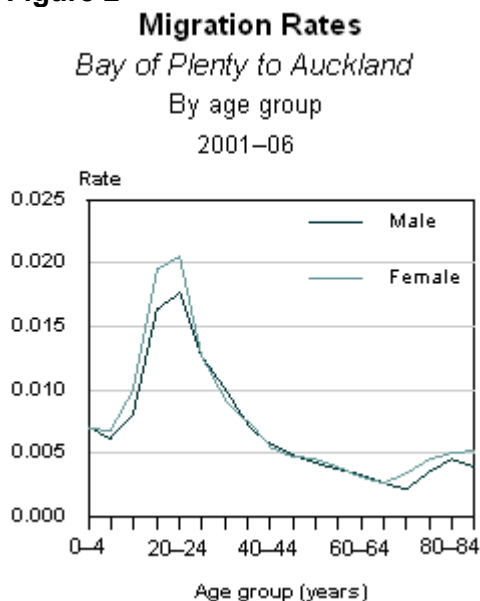
Migration patterns differ slightly by gender. Young women have higher migration rates than young men. In New Zealand, and in many other countries, women often begin retirement migration earlier than men, because couples tend to retire together, and women tend to be younger than their partners.

Regional examples

Bay of Plenty and Auckland

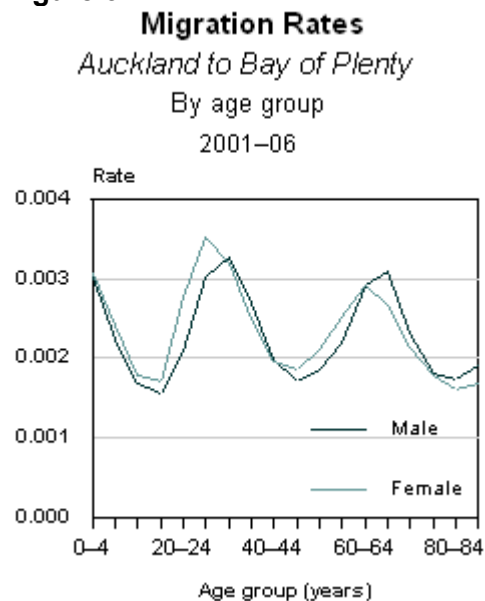
Data on migration between Bay of Plenty region and Auckland region, shown in figure 2, illustrate how different migration flows can have very different age profiles.

Figure 2



The age profile of migrants going from Bay of Plenty to Auckland is similar to the national average shown in figure 1, and is dominated by people in their late teens and twenties. Pull factors for young people include higher wages, and universities and other education providers. The migration rate falls sharply among older age groups, and remains low.

Figure 3



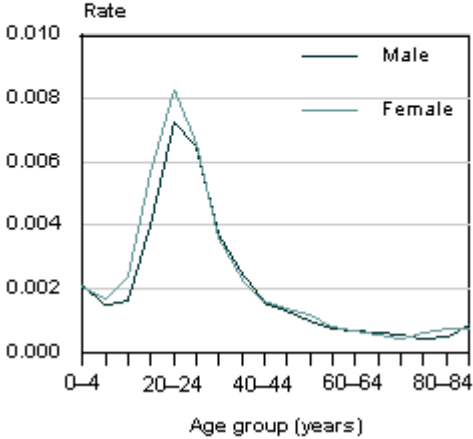
The age profile of migrants going from Auckland region to Bay of Plenty region is conspicuously different. There are peaks in the youngest age groups and around age 30, caused by children and their parents moving out of Auckland. There are also large peaks in the retirement ages, with the women's peak occurring at slightly younger ages than the men's.

The average age of people moving to Auckland from Bay of Plenty is 34 years, while the average age of people moving in the opposite direction is 43 years.

Wellington and Canterbury

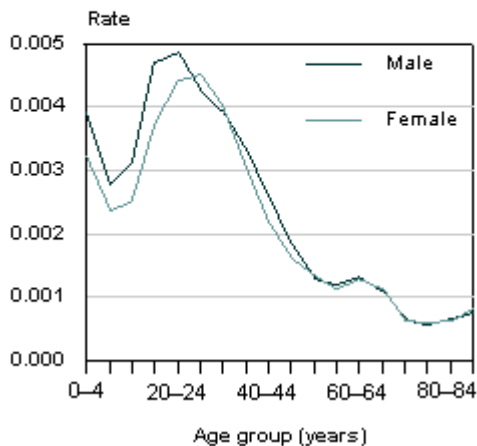
Migration from Canterbury region to Wellington region shows the same sharp peak in the late teens and early twenties as migration from Bay of Plenty to Auckland, reflecting movements by young job seekers.

Figure 4
Migration Rates
Canterbury to Wellington
By age group
2001-06



Migration from Wellington to Canterbury, like migration from Auckland to Bay of Plenty, has peaks at early childhood, parenthood, and retirement ages. However, the Wellington-Canterbury peaks are less pronounced. Presumably this is because the difference between the job markets and environments of Wellington and Canterbury is smaller.

Figure 5
Migration Rates
Wellington to Canterbury
 By age group
 2001–06



Information sources

2006 Census of Population and Dwellings

Technical notes

The inter-regional migration rates show the number of movements between regions, per person, per year, for each sex and five-year age group.

The rates were calculated using standard methods described in Rogers (1995). The starting point was raw data on inter-regional migration flows, obtained from the 2006 Census questions on usual residence and usual residence five years earlier. These flows were adjusted to take account of inter-censal deaths, estimated using the 2004–2006 life tables for New Zealand. Further calculations yielded annualized rates for standard five-year age groups.

People who lived overseas in 2001 were excluded from the calculations. In the absence of data on region of birth, migration rates for children aged 0–4 years were calculated from the migration patterns of their mothers, and are necessarily approximate. Eight percent of respondents aged five and over did not answer the question on residence five years earlier or did not give sufficient detail to identify a region in New Zealand. These respondents were assumed to have the same migration patterns as other people of the same age, sex, and current residence.

Different vertical scales are used for each region in the second and third figures, because the emphasis is on the age-pattern, rather than the size, of the flows. The page on long-term trends in inter-regional migration discusses the size of the flows.

Glossary

Please refer to [Glossary](#).

References

Neville, R J Warwick and O'Neill, C James. (1979). *The Population of New Zealand: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, Longman Paul, Auckland.

Rogers, Andrei. (1995). *Multiregional Demography: Principles, Methods and Extensions*, Wiley, Chichester.

Sjaastad, L A (1962). "The costs and returns of human migration." *Journal of Political Economy* 70(5): 80-93.

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.