

## Internal Migration

# Pacific mobility in New Zealand

## Overview of Pacific migration

### Historical context

People of Pacific ethnicities have a long history of settlement in New Zealand, and ongoing migration from the Pacific, which started several centuries earlier with the first flows from Polynesia. Several waves of migration occurred from various parts of the Pacific throughout the last century and a half, with significant periods of immigration during the 1960s and 1970s. Pacific people in New Zealand are now a diverse group with ancestral links to many parts of the Pacific. The communities have settled throughout New Zealand but prefer to live in particular areas, such as South Auckland. The majority are New Zealand-born.

### How many Pacific people moved?

More than 47 percent of people of Pacific ethnicities have moved within New Zealand between 2001 and 2006.

In 2006, there were 266,000 people who identified with one or more ethnicities in the Pacific ethnic grouping. Of these, 255,000 people told us where they had lived 5 years earlier at the time of the 2001 Census.

**Table 1**

<b>People of Pacific ethnicities</b> <i>By address five years ago</i> 2006 Census			
	Number of people of Pacific ethnicities		
	Male	Female	Total
Same as usual residence	46,461	50,283	96,744
Elsewhere in New Zealand or no fixed abode	50,790	52,541	103,332
Not born five years ago	17,916	16,932	34,848
Overseas	9,657	9,615	19,272
Not stated	6,186	5,589	11,775
<b>Total</b>	<b>131,010</b>	<b>134,964</b>	<b>265,974</b>

Among the people aged five years and over who gave us this information, 47 percent had moved at least once in NZ within the previous five years, 44 percent had not moved and 9 percent had arrived or returned from overseas.

People of Pacific ethnicities are increasingly mobile, though remain less mobile than either their Māori or Asian counterparts.

**Table 2**

<b>People of Pacific ethnicities</b> <i>Percentage distribution by address five years ago</i> 1986–2006 Censuses					
	Census year				
Address five years ago	1986	1991	1996	2001	2006
	<b>Percent of Pacific population</b>				
Same as usual residence	52.7	47.0	48.4	43.4	44.1
Elsewhere in New Zealand	34.6	40.8	43.1	45.7	47.1
Overseas	12.7	12.2	8.6	10.9	8.8
Total	100	100	100	100	100
	<b>Percent of Pacific internal migrants</b>				
Stayers	60.3	53.6	52.9	46.1	48.4
Movers within New Zealand	39.7	46.6	47.1	53.9	51.6
Total internal migrants	100	100	100	100	100

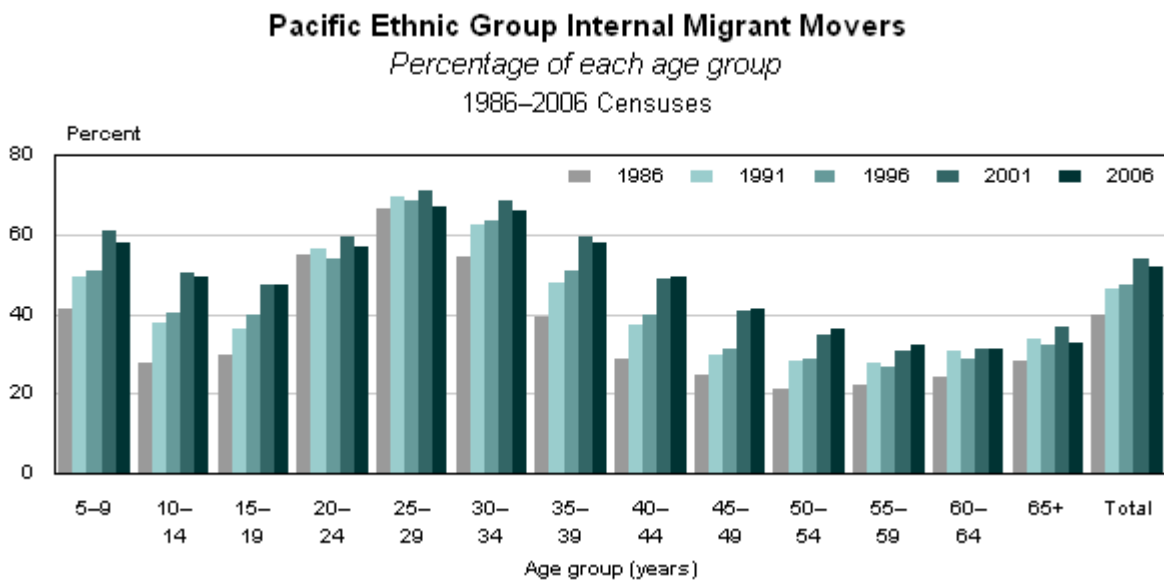
# Pacific movers and non-movers

## 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.

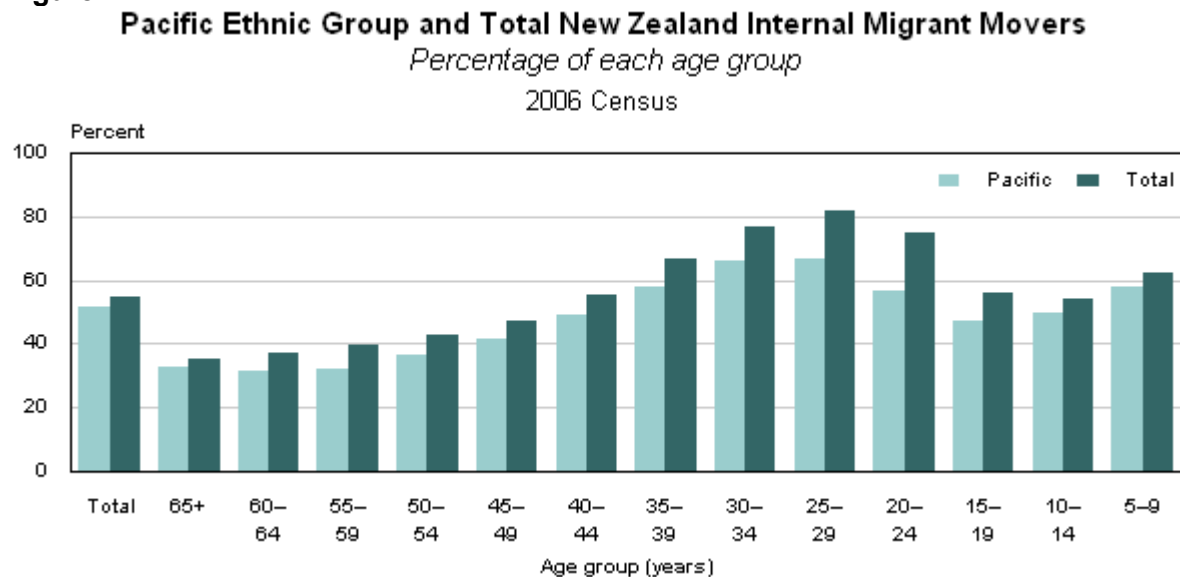
In 1986, less than 40 percent of Pacific people stated that they had moved in the previous five years. By 2006, over half had moved in the previous five years. Proportionally, the greatest increases in mobility have been in the age groups aged 35 years and over. Almost half of the 40–45 year age group, for example, had moved in 2006 compared with less than 30 percent 20 years earlier in 1986.

**Figure 1**



Pacific people have a lower proportion of movers in all age groups than the total New Zealand population. This is particularly striking among young adult age groups.

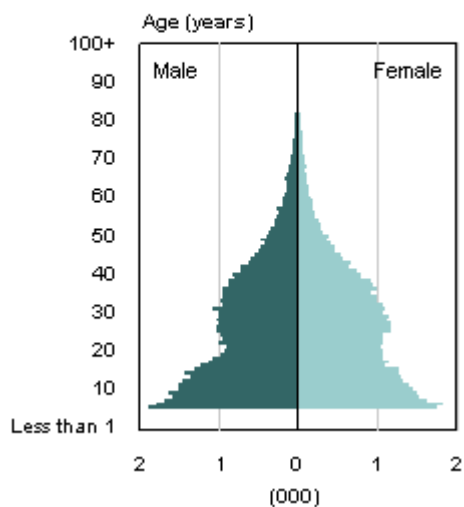
**Figure 2**



## Age and sex of movers

The age-sex profile of the Pacific movers has two features of note. The first is that the age-sex profile of the Pacific and the Māori populations is very similar, albeit the Pacific is a younger population. Yet the age-sex profiles differ in that it is less common for Pacific people in their twenties to move. This is shown by the 'waist' in the age-sex pyramid of the movers (figure 3) which is not seen in the age-sex pyramid for Māori movers (figure 4). In part this is related to the geographic distribution of the Pacific populations in New Zealand. The second feature is that there are more women than men among the adult movers.

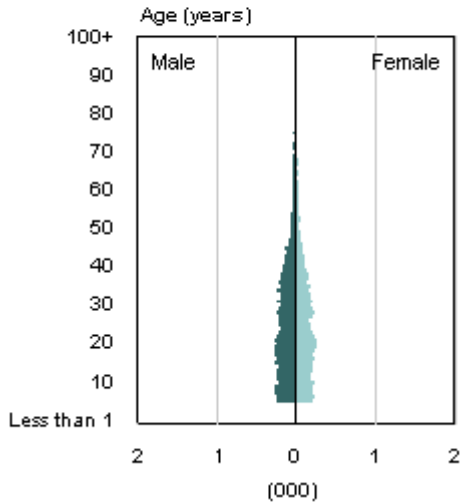
**Figure 3**  
**Age-sex Pyramid of**  
**Pacific Ethnic Group Movers**  
*2006 Census population*



## Age and sex of movers from overseas

Less than 9 percent of the Pacific population in New Zealand in 2006 had been overseas five years earlier. The age-sex pyramid below is drawn to the same scale as the pyramids of movers and non-movers so that the relative contribution of inflows from overseas can be shown. These inflows occur across all ages, in contrast to, for example, the Asian inflows, which are strongly concentrated in young adult and student ages. Key factors in explaining age profile of Pacific inflows are the history of settlement from the Pacific and the maturing migration relationship between New Zealand and the Pacific countries.

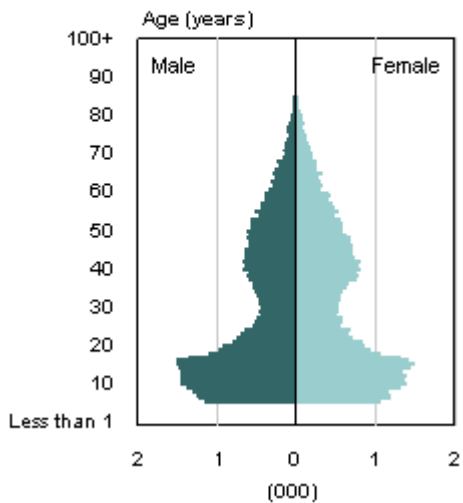
**Figure 4**  
**Age-sex Pyramid of**  
**Pacific Ethnic Group Who Were**  
**Overseas Five Years Ago**  
*2006 Census population*



**Age and sex of non-movers**

People of Pacific ethnicities who did not move between 2001 and 2006 tended to be parents in 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. Young adults among the Pacific population are less likely to have moved than people of other ethnicities for a number of social and economic reasons.

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



## Diversity in the Pacific population

The Pacific grouping of ethnicities includes people of several distinct ethnicities. They have different migration histories and different characteristics, such as settlement patterns, age structures and rates of intermarriage. These affect mobility either directly or indirectly.

The three largest Pacific populations in New Zealand are people of Samoan, Tongan and Cook Island Maori ethnicities. In each case the majority were born in New Zealand: 60 percent for Samoan, 56 percent for Tongan and 73 percent for Cook Island Maori.

At the time of the 2006 Census, half of the the Tongan and Samoan people who were in New Zealand five years ago had moved. Cook Island Maori were slightly more mobile with 54 percent who were movers.

**Table 3**

<b>People of Samoan, Tongan and Cook Island Maori ethnicities</b>									
<i>By address five years ago</i>									
2006 Census									
	Samoan			Tongan			Cook Island		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Number of people									
Same as usual residence	23,469	25,308	48,777	8,691	9,147	17,838	9,969	10,875	20,841
Elsewhere in New Zealand	24,447	25,281	49,728	9,258	9,159	18,417	11,904	12,291	24,195
Not born	9,057	8,562	17,619	4,071	3,801	7,869	4,272	3,972	8,244
Overseas	4,542	4,659	9,201	2,115	2,304	4,149	1,065	1,047	2,112
No fixed abode or not stated	3,012	2,763	5,775	1,188	1,014	2,205	1,401	1,215	2,616
<b>Total</b>	<b>64,530</b>	<b>66,573</b>	<b>131,103</b>	<b>25,323</b>	<b>25,155</b>	<b>50,478</b>	<b>28,608</b>	<b>29,403</b>	<b>58,011</b>

**Table 4**

<b>People of Samoan, Tongan and Cook Island Maori ethnicities</b> <i>Non-movers and internal migrant movers by address five years ago</i> 2006 Census									
	Samoan			Tongan			Cook Island		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
	Percent non-movers and movers								
Non-movers	49.0	50.0	49.5	48.4	50.0	49.2	45.6	46.9	46.3
Movers within New Zealand	51.0	50.0	50.5	51.6	50.0	50.8	54.4	53.1	53.7
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

The Niuean population in New Zealand is over 14 times the size of the population of Niue and 74 percent of the group were born in New Zealand. It is a highly integrated community with high levels of inter-ethnic partnering. Only 22 percent of couples in New Zealand with at least one person of Niuean ethnicity have both partners who are Niuean. Moreover, 60 percent of Niueans also identify with other ethnicities. Consequently, their mobility pattern is very similar to the national pattern and different from most other Pacific groups. While almost half of those in New Zealand five years ago had moved within New Zealand, just over half had not moved.

Conversely, Fijians are a more recent migrant community. Only 44 percent were born in New Zealand and 19 percent of the group were overseas five years ago. Fijians continue to be highly mobile with nearly 59 percent of those in New Zealand five years ago having moved.

**Table 5**

<b>People of Niuean, Fijian and other Pacific ethnicities</b> <i>By address five years ago</i> 2006 Census									
	Niuean			Fijian			Other Pacific		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
	Number of people								
Same as usual residence	4,263	4,662	8,925	1,329	1,440	2,769	921	1,107	2,028
Elsewhere in New Zealand	4,257	4,410	8,664	1,902	2,034	3,936	1,353	1,812	3,165
Not born	1,599	1,611	3,210	531	552	1,080	570	558	1,128
Overseas	288	300	588	954	846	1,800	750	783	1,533
No fixed abode or not stated	564	522	1,089	138	138	276	120	141	261
Total	10,971	11,505	22,476	4,854	5,007	9,861	3,717	4,401	8,118

**Table 6**

<b>People of Niuean, Fijian and other Pacific ethnicities</b>									
<i>Non-movers and internal migrant movers by address five years ago</i>									
2006 Census									
	Niuean			Fijian			Other Pacific		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
	percent of non-movers and movers								
Non-movers	50.0	51.4	50.7	41.1	41.5	41.3	40.5	37.9	39.1
Movers within New Zealand	50.0	48.6	49.3	58.9	58.5	58.7	59.5	62.1	60.9
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

# Where are Pacific people moving to?

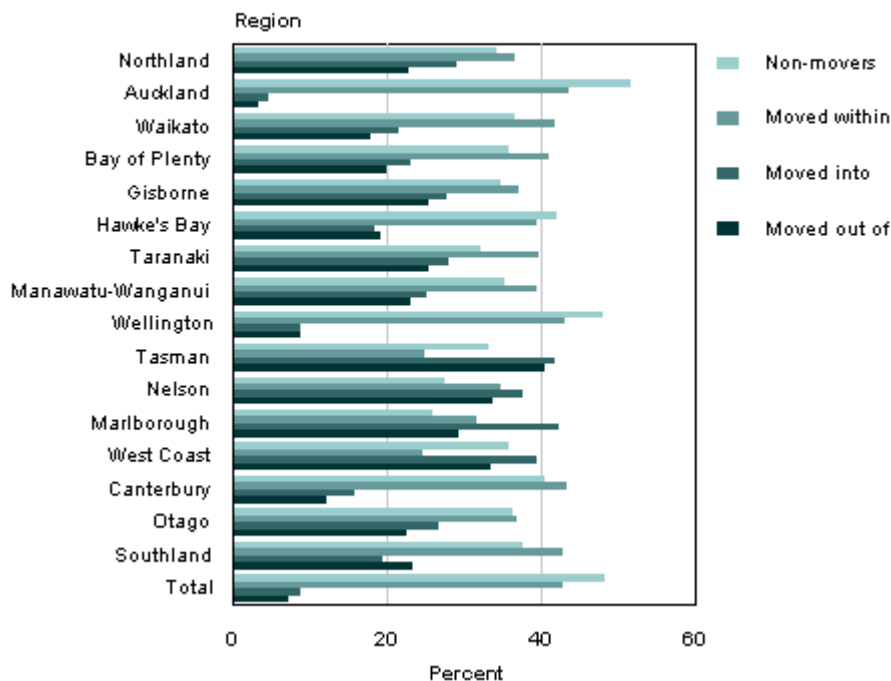
## Regional migration

Between 2001 and 2006, 48 percent of the Pacific population who had been living in New Zealand in 2001 had not moved and a further 43 percent moved within the same region council area. Inter-regional movers accounted for 9 percent of the Pacific population.

Auckland region dominated because of the portion of the Pacific population living in that region (67 percent). Between 2001 and 2006, 52 percent of the Pacific population in Auckland who had been in New Zealand in 2001 had not moved and a further 44 percent moved within the region. Although the exchange of Pacific people between Auckland and other regions was largest for Auckland, Auckland lost only 3 percent of this population to other regions. Movers into Auckland region contributed five percent of the region's Pacific population aged 5 years and older who had not been overseas in 2001.

Figure 6

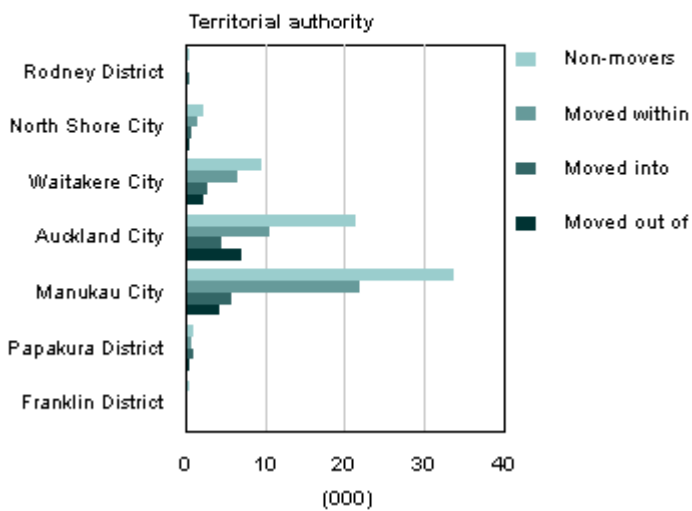
**Pacific Ethnic Group Inter-regional Migration**  
2006 Census



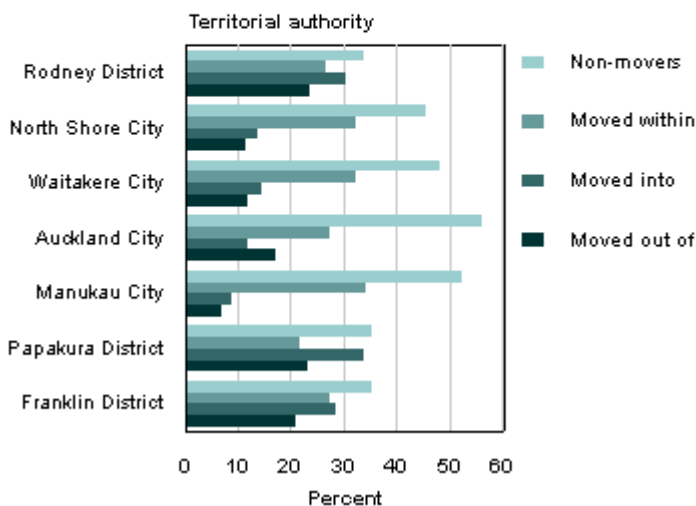
## Mobility within Auckland region

Mobility within Auckland region has contributed strongly to the level and nature of internal migration among people of Pacific ethnicities. Manukau and Auckland Cities had the highest proportion of non-movers among their Pacific populations. Manukau City is home to the majority of the Auckland Pacific population and is the preferred location for many, as shown by the low proportion of people who chose to move out of the territorial authority (TA) and the large proportion of movers who chose to remain in the TA. Manukau City also drew substantial numbers of internal migrants from other TAs within Auckland. Auckland City had the highest proportion of Pacific non-movers and was the only TA in the region to lose more to other TAs in the region than it gained.

**Figure 7**  
**Movement of Pacific Ethnic Group**  
**Between Territorial Authorities**  
**Within Auckland Region**  
*2006 Census*



**Figure 8**  
**Movement of Pacific Ethnic Group**  
**Between Territorial Authorities**  
**Within Auckland Region**  
*Percentage of usually resident Pacific population*  
*2006 Census*

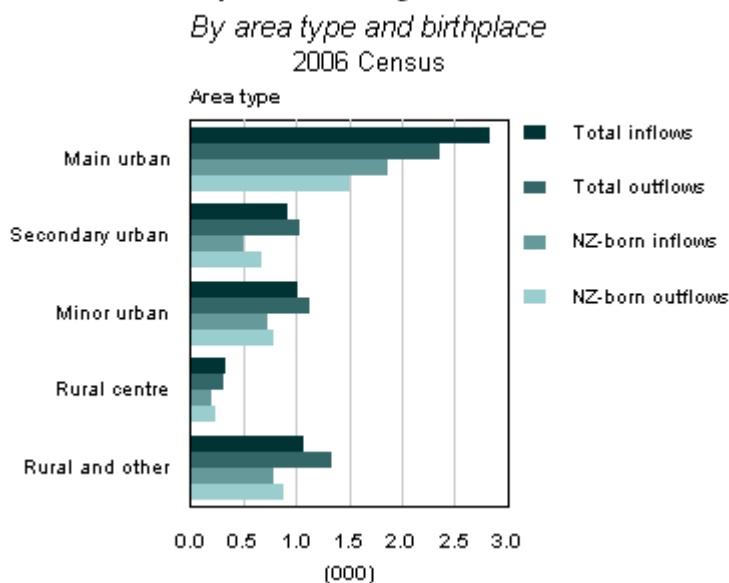


## Urban-rural exchange of people

The vast majority (87 percent) of Pacific internal migrants who moved between 2001 and 2006 moved within or between main urban areas. The remaining 13 percent, approximately a third of whom are of both Māori and Pacific ethnicities, 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.

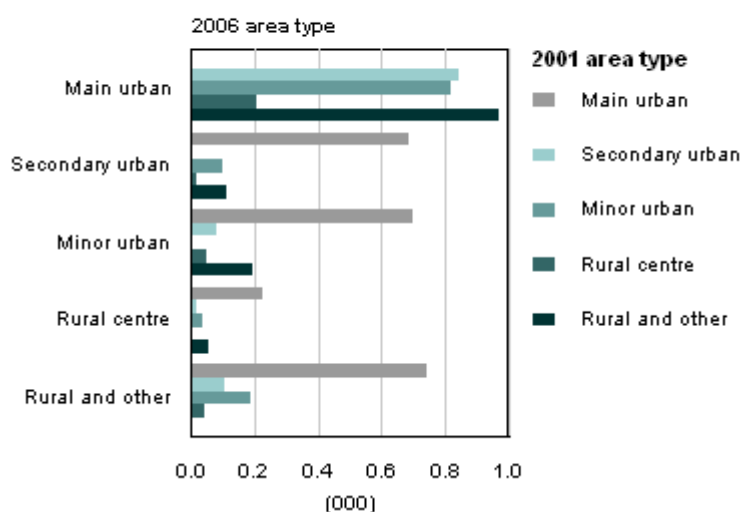
**Figure 9**

### Pacific Ethnic Group Internal Migrants: Inflows and Outflows



Main urban areas exchanged people of Pacific ethnicities with all other area types, resulting in an overall net gain to the main urban areas. The significance of the exchange of people between area types becomes clear when we consider the source of internal migrants for each area type. Pacific movers into main urban areas came from minor urban and rural areas, which is also the case for Māori movers. However, unlike Māori, secondary urban areas contributed a similar number of Pacific people to main urban areas. Outflows from main urban areas also differed from Māori in that Pacific movers contributed almost equal numbers to secondary urban, minor urban and rural areas.

**Figure 10**  
**Pacific 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.

Pacific people are highly urbanised and new migrants and people returning from overseas tend to settle in main urban areas. This explains the higher proportion of the Pacific population in main urban areas which had been overseas five years ago in 2006, compared with other area types.

**Table 7**

<b>People of Pacific ethnicities</b>					
<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 Pacific population	202,236	6,312	5,280	1,119	4,401
Percent overseas five years ago	8.9	7.8	7.8	5.1	6.5

Auckland is the key point of entry for the majority of people arriving in or returning to New Zealand. Auckland region, in 2006, accounted for 68 percent of people of Pacific ethnicities who had been living overseas five years ago. Wellington region was the next most popular region with 12 percent of this group living in that region.

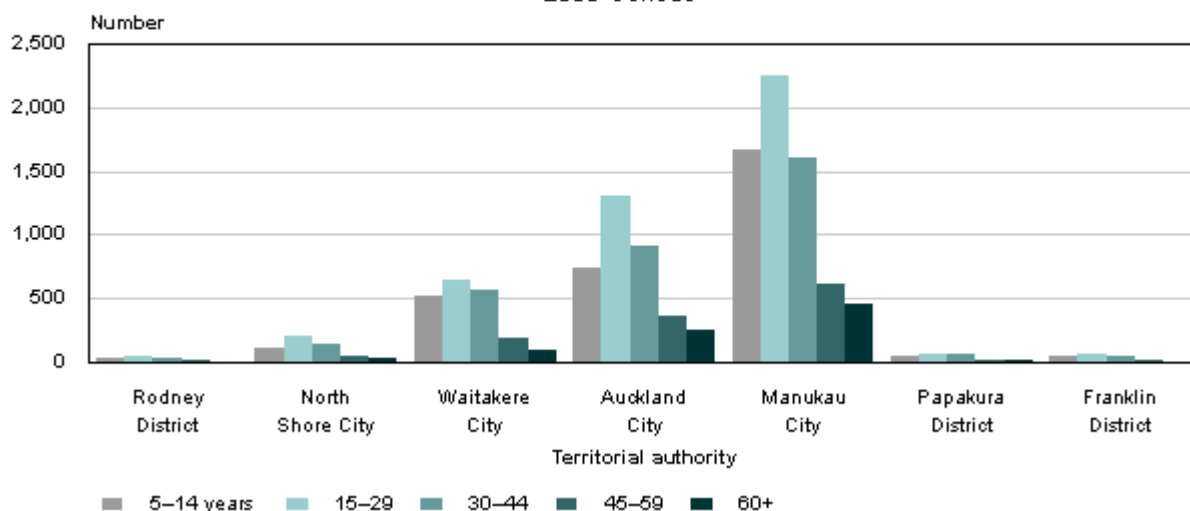
The age distribution of those who were overseas five years ago who were living in the Auckland territorial authorities shows quite distinct location preferences. Manukau City attracted more people of Pacific ethnicities in all age groups than other areas. The relationship between the 5–14 years ago group and the 30–49 years age group suggests that family migration was very important in Manukau and Waitakere Cities, with a bias towards student and young working adults in Auckland City.

**Figure 11**

**Pacific 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

## Downloadable 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 Pacific 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 Pacific ethnicities, by sex, birthplace and age group, census usual resident population 2006
3. Diversity and internal migrant status, people of Pacific ethnicities, by sex and combinations of ethnic groupings, census usual resident population 2006
4. Internal migrant status, people of Samoan ethnicity, by sex, five-year age groups and single year of age, census usual resident population 2006
5. Internal migrant status, people of Tongan ethnicity, by sex, five-year age groups and single year of age, census usual resident population 2006
6. Internal migrant status, people of Cook Island Maori ethnicity, by sex, five-year age groups and single year of age, census usual resident population 2006
7. Internal migrant status, people of Niuean ethnicity, by sex, five-year age groups and single year of age, census usual resident population 2006
8. Internal migrant status, people of Fijian ethnicity, by sex, five-year age groups and single year of age, census usual resident population 2006
9. Pacific internal migrant movers, by age group, census usual resident populations 1986–2006
10. Pacific and total internal migrant movers as percentage of each age group, Census usual resident population 2006
11. Inter-regional migration, people of Pacific ethnicities, Census 2006
12. Mobility between territorial authorities within Auckland region, people of Pacific ethnicities, census usual resident population 2006
13. Inflows and outflows by area type and birthplace, people of Pacific ethnicities, census usual resident population 2006
14. Internal migrants, urban-rural source area type, by current urban-rural area type, people of Pacific ethnicities, census usual resident population 2006
15. People of Pacific ethnicities living in Auckland region and overseas five years ago, by territorial authority of usual residence, census usual resident population 2006