

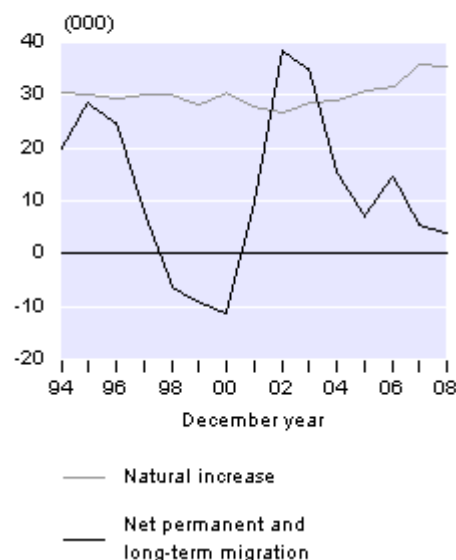
Embargoed until 10:45am – 13 February 2009

## National Population Estimates: December 2008 quarter

### Highlights

- The estimated resident population of New Zealand was 4.29 million at 31 December 2008.
- Population growth was 39,300 (0.9 percent) during the December 2008 year.
- Natural increase and net migration contributed 35,500 and 3,800, respectively, during the December 2008 year.
- The median ages for males and females were 35.5 and 37.3 years, respectively, at 31 December 2008.

Components of Annual Population Change  
1994–2008



Estimated Resident Population			
Age group	At 31 December 2007	At 31 December 2008 P	Percentage change 2007–2008 P
All ages	4,252,600	4,291,900	0.9
Under 15 years	889,100	889,900	0.1
15–64 years	2,830,700	2,857,200	0.9
65 years and over	532,800	544,900	2.3
P provisional			

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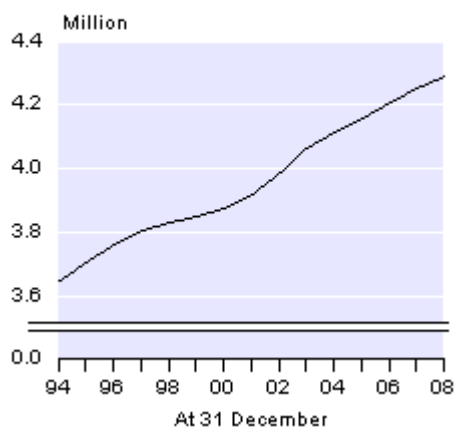
See also [National Population Estimates: December 2008 quarter – Media release](#).

## Commentary

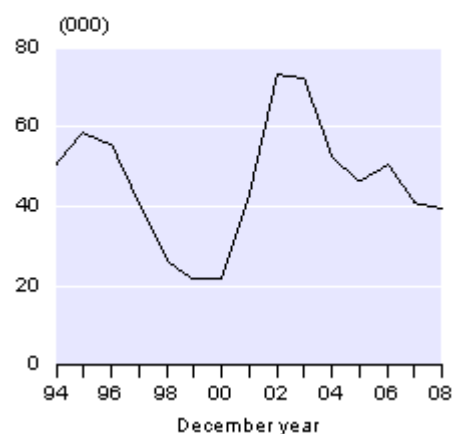
### Estimated resident population at 31 December 2008

The estimated resident population of New Zealand was 4,291,900 at 31 December 2008. The estimated resident populations for males and females were 2,104,300 and 2,187,700, respectively. At 31 December 2008, there were around 96 males for every 100 females.

**Estimated Resident Population**  
1994–2008



**Annual Population Change**  
1994–2008



### Annual population change

In the December 2008 year, the estimated resident population grew by 39,300 (0.9 percent), compared with 41,200 (1.0 percent) in the previous December year. The population growth in the December 2008 year was lower than the average annual increase of 46,300 (1.1 percent) recorded during the 10-year period ended 31 December 2008, and was the lowest growth for a December year since 2000.

The population growth for the December 2008 year resulted from a natural increase (excess of births over deaths) of 35,500 and a net permanent and long-term migration gain of 3,800. The level of net permanent and long-term migration was the lowest for a December year since 2000, while natural increase was just below the 35,700 recorded in the December 2007 year.

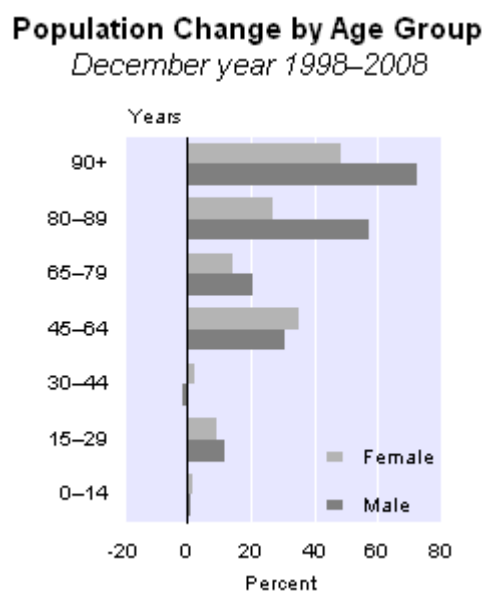
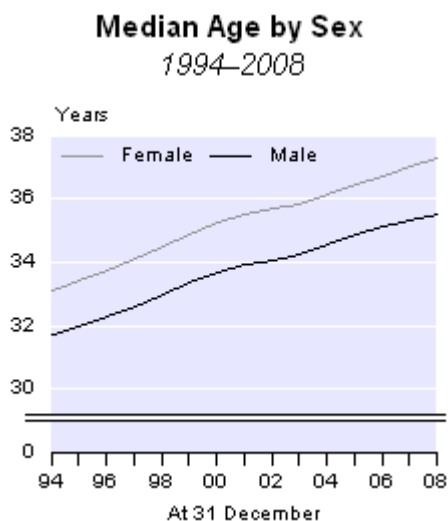
### Quarterly population change

During the December 2008 quarter, New Zealand's estimated resident population grew by 12,100 (0.3 percent). This growth resulted from a natural increase of 9,400 and a net permanent and long-term migration gain of 2,700. By comparison, in the December 2007 quarter, net migration (3,300) was higher while natural increase (9,400) was unchanged, resulting in a quarterly population growth of 12,700 (0.3 percent).

## Median age

New Zealand, along with other OECD countries, has an ageing population because of low fertility and low mortality. At 31 December 2008, half of the New Zealand population was over the age of 36.4 years, compared with a median age of 33.8 years a decade earlier.

The median age for males is now 35.5 years, while for females it is 37.3 years. Over the past decade, the median age has increased 2.5 years for males and 2.8 years for females. The lower median age for males reflects their lower life expectancy of 78.0 years, compared with 82.2 years for females (Complete period life tables 2005–07).



## Changes in age composition

The age composition of New Zealand's population has changed over the past decade. Between the 1998 and 2004 December years, the number of children (aged 0–14 years) increased 14,500 (1.7 percent) to reach a high of 891,500. The number of children then fell to 888,000 at 31 December 2006, before increasing to 889,900 at 31 December 2008. The overall population increase for children for the decade ended December 2008 was 12,900 (1.5 percent). At 31 December 2008, children accounted for 20.7 percent of the New Zealand population, compared with 22.9 percent at 31 December 1998.

At 31 December 2008, the population aged 15–64 years reached 2,857,200, an increase of 26,500 (0.9 percent) compared with the December 2007 figure. In the 10 years ended December 2008, this age group increased by 349,800 (14.0 percent). However, growth rates for age groups within this broad category varied, with the population aged 45–64 years recording a larger percentage increase (32.8 percent) than the 15–29-year age group (10.4 percent) and the 30–44-year age group (0.3 percent).

During the December 2008 year, the population aged 65 years and over (65+) increased by 12,100 (2.3 percent). Between the 1998 and 2008 December years, their number increased by 100,000 (22.5 percent) to reach 544,900. The proportion of the population aged 65+ increased to 12.7 percent at 31 December 2008, up from 11.6 percent 10 years earlier.

Among age groups within the 65+ category, the population growth rate was consistently higher for males than for females between the 1998 and 2008 December years. Males and females aged 90 years and over had the largest growth rate during this decade, up 72.5 percent and 48.6 percent, respectively. This was followed by increases in the 80–89-year age group of 57.2 percent for males and 27.2 percent for females. The higher growth of males at older ages is because male longevity has increased more than female longevity.

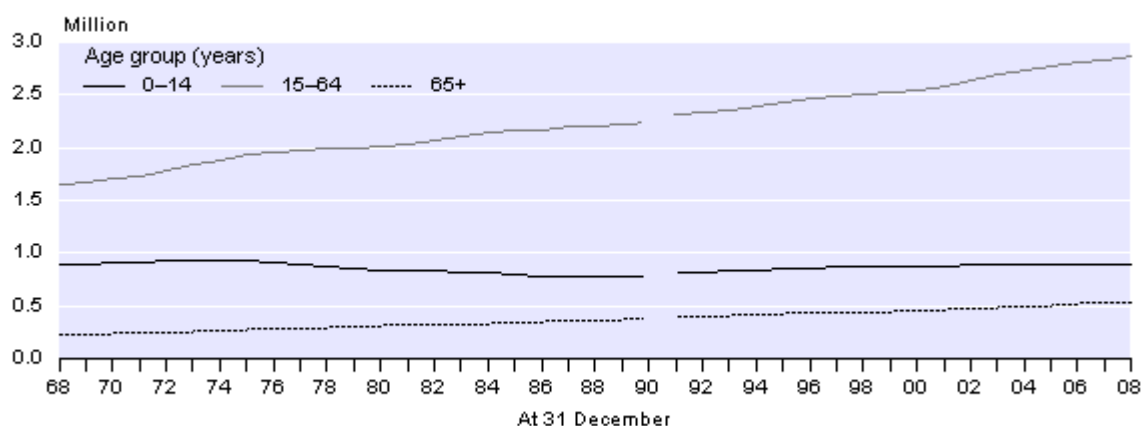
## Population trends by broad age groups, 1968–2008

The number of children (aged 0–14 years) has decreased slightly over the last four decades, from 896,000 at 31 December 1968 to 889,900 at 31 December 2008. However, during this period their number has fluctuated, with a peak of 937,300 reached in 1974, before falling to a low of 775,900 at 31 December 1988. The child population then increased to 891,500 in 2004, and has been steady at just under 890,000 since that time.

The population aged 15–64 years has increased steadily since 1968. At 31 December 2008 there were 2,857,200 people in this age group, an increase of 73.8 percent on the 1968 population (1,644,000).

Over the last four decades, the growth rate was highest in the 65+ age group. The population aged 65+ more than doubled during this period, from 232,900 to 544,900. The increasing population at older ages is partly due to continuing gains in longevity.

**Population by Broad Age Group**  
1968–2008



**Note:** The break in series between 1990 and 1991 denotes a change from the de facto population concept to the estimated resident population concept.

## Population Clock

Statistics NZ's online Population Clock gives a real-time approximation of the estimated resident population of New Zealand. The Population Clock uses the latest quarterly estimated resident population, and estimates for the expected number of births, deaths and net migration during the following quarter. The settings for each component (births, deaths and net migration) are derived by converting the quarterly estimated totals into a 'per minute' figure, making allowance for the number of days per quarter. The Population Clock can be viewed on the Statistics NZ website, [www.stats.govt.nz](http://www.stats.govt.nz).

## **Different population concepts**

Users of population statistics need to be aware that there are three main population measures produced by Statistics NZ: the census night population count, the census usually resident population count and the estimated resident population. The population counts published from the census are not comparable with the estimated resident population. The estimated resident population includes adjustments for net census undercount and for New Zealand residents temporarily overseas on census night. For more information see the technical notes of this release.

## **Final figures**

The population estimates for the December 2008 year quoted above, and contained in the appended tables, are provisional. Processing of final statistics will be completed in May 2009. In addition, population estimates after 30 June 2006 are likely to be revised following results from the next Census of Population and Dwellings.

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### ***Next release ...***

*National Population Estimates: March 2009 quarter* will be released on 15 May 2009.

## **Technical notes**

### **Population measures**

There are three population measures commonly produced by Statistics New Zealand: census night population count, census usually resident population count and estimated resident population.

The census night population count of New Zealand is a count of all people present in New Zealand on a given census night. This count includes visitors from overseas who are counted on census night, but excludes residents who are temporarily overseas on census night. The census usually resident population count of New Zealand is a count of all people who usually live in New Zealand and are present in New Zealand on a given census night. This count excludes visitors from overseas and residents who are temporarily overseas on census night.

The estimated resident population of New Zealand is an estimate of all people who usually live in New Zealand at a given date. This estimate includes all residents present in New Zealand and counted by the census (census usually resident population count), residents who are temporarily overseas (who are not included in the census), and an adjustment for residents missed or counted more than once by the census (net census undercount). Visitors from overseas are excluded.

The population counts published from the census are not comparable with the estimated resident population.

### **Base population**

The estimated resident population at 30 June 2006 forms the base population for deriving the estimated resident population at a given date following the 2006 Census. This base population is also used in the revision of intercensal population estimates for the five-year period between the 2001 and 2006 Censuses.

The estimated resident population of New Zealand at 30 June 2006 is based on the census usually resident population count from the 2006 Census (held on 7 March 2006), updated for: net census undercount (as measured by the 2006 Post-enumeration Survey); the number of residents temporarily overseas on census night; births, deaths and net permanent and long-term (PLT) migration between 7 March 2006 and 30 June 2006; and reconciliation with demographic estimates at ages 0–4 years.

### **Resident population estimates**

Quarterly estimates from September 2006 onwards were derived by updating the estimated resident population at 30 June 2006 for births, deaths, and net PLT migration during the ensuing period.

## **Derived figures**

Derived figures (for example, percentage annual increase) are calculated using data of greater precision than published.

## **Median age**

Half the population is younger, and half older, than this age.

## **Final figures**

Final figures for the estimated resident population at 31 December 2008 will be available in May 2009. In addition, population estimates after 30 June 2006 are likely to be revised following results from the next Census of Population and Dwellings.

## **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 NZ 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. Estimated resident population and population change
2. Estimated resident population, by broad age groups
3. Estimated resident population, by five-year age groups