



# Hot Off The Press

LATEST STATISTICS FROM STATISTICS NEW ZEALAND



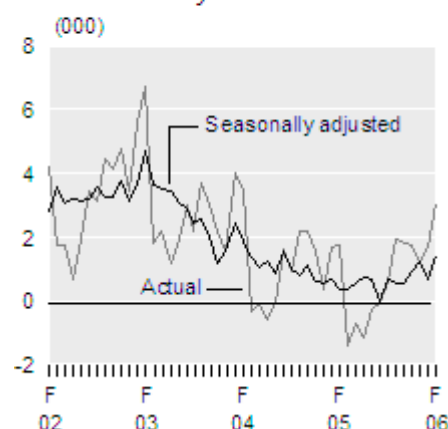
Embargoed until 10:45am – 21 March 2006

## External Migration February 2006

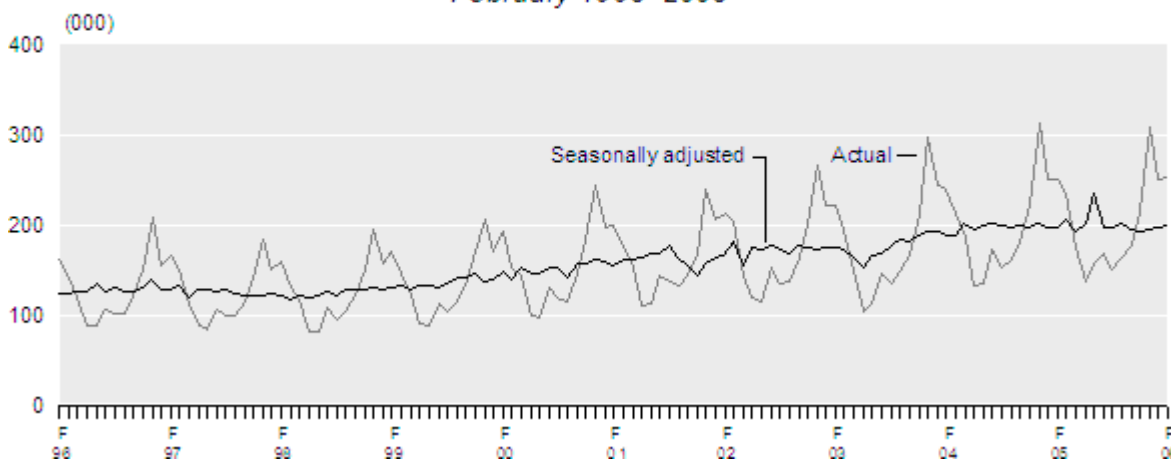
### Highlights

- **Visitor arrivals (252,400) were up 1 percent** from February 2005 (250,100).
- **There were more visitor arrivals from the United States** (up 4,000) and the **United Kingdom** (up 2,800), but **fewer visitors from Hong Kong** (down 2,600), compared with February 2005.
- **Seasonally adjusted visitor arrivals increased 1 percent** between January and February 2006.
- **Overseas trips by New Zealand residents were down 8 percent** between January and February 2006, on a seasonally adjusted basis.
- **Permanent and long-term arrivals exceeded departures by 1,400** in February 2006, on a seasonally adjusted basis.

**Monthly Net Permanent and Long-term Migration**  
February 2002–2006



**Monthly Visitor Arrivals**  
February 1996–2006



Brian Pink  
Government Statistician

21 March 2006  
Cat 33.900 Set 05/06 – 160

There is a companion Media Release published – [External Migration: February 2006](#).

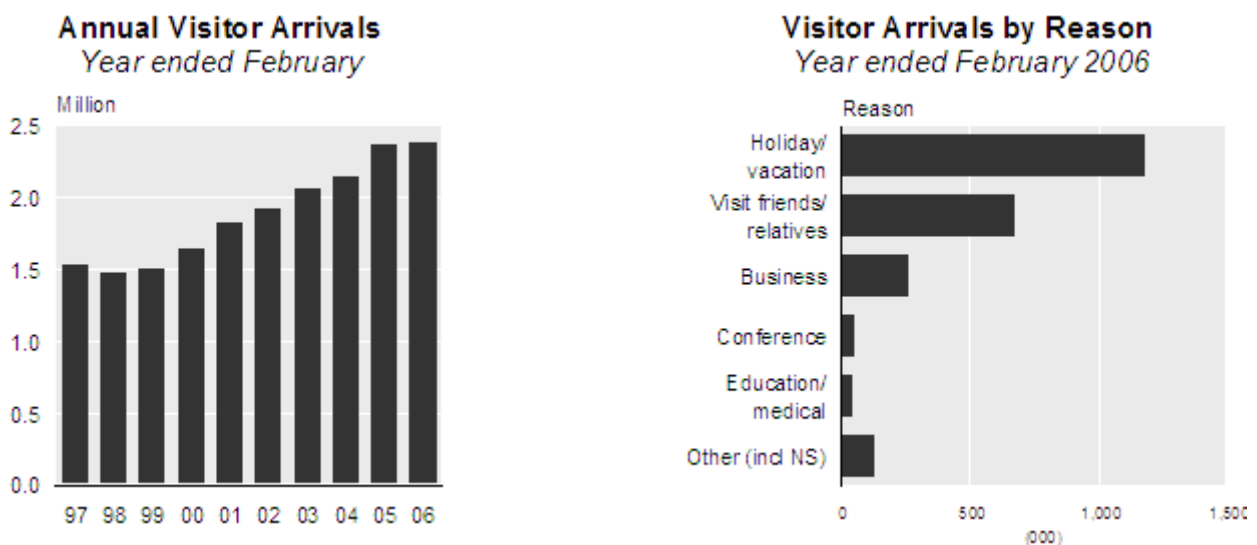
# Commentary

## Visitor arrivals

There were 252,400 short-term overseas visitor arrivals to New Zealand in February 2006, up 2,400 (1 percent) on February 2005.

The number of stay days for all visitor arrivals in February 2006 was up 12 percent on the previous February, from 5.20 million to 5.84 million days. The average length of stay was 23 days in February 2006, up on 21 days in February 2005.

Seasonally adjusted monthly visitor arrivals were up 1 percent in February 2006, following a rise of less than 1 percent a month earlier.



During the year ended February 2006, there were 2.386 million visitor arrivals, up 20,600 (1 percent) on the February 2005 year. Holidaymakers accounted for 50 percent (1,187,500) of the overseas visitors, 29 percent (679,200) came to visit friends and relatives (VFR), 11 percent (263,000) came on business, 2 percent (58,800) came for a conference, and a further 2 percent (48,500) came for education/medical reasons.

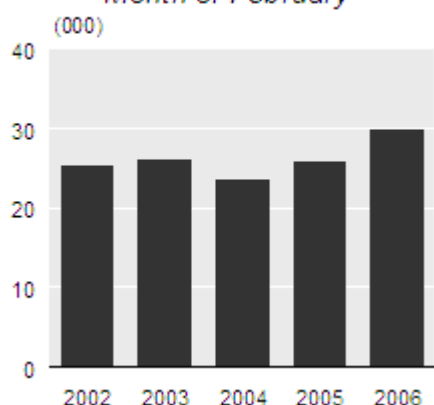
VFR arrivals in the February 2006 year were up 16,100 (2 percent) compared with the previous February year. There were also more business travellers (up 12,900 or 5 percent), and visitors attending a conference (up 3,900 or 7 percent). Visitors arriving for a holiday were down 13,200 (1 percent), and visitors arriving for education/medical reasons were down 900 (2 percent) in the year ended February 2006.

**Note:** Provisional weekly and four-weekly visitor arrivals data is available on the Statistics New Zealand website: [www.stats.govt.nz](http://www.stats.govt.nz). This data is updated each week with the most recently available information on visitor arrivals from the 10 major source countries.

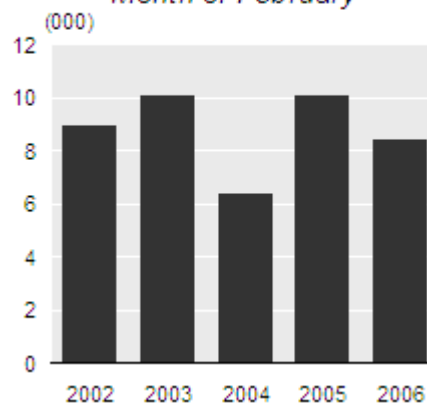
## Visitors by source country

In February 2006, there were more visitor arrivals from the United States (up 4,000 or 15 percent), the United Kingdom (up 2,800 or 6 percent), Australia (up 1,300 or 2 percent) and French Polynesia (up 800 or 76 percent), compared with February 2005. There were fewer visitors from Hong Kong (down 2,600 or 59 percent), China (down 1,600 or 16 percent), Korea (down 1,400 or 13 percent), Taiwan (down 1,000 or 29 percent) and Singapore (down 700 or 29 percent). The change in the timing of the Chinese/Lunar New Year, from February in 2005 to January in 2006, was a likely contributor to the decrease in visitor numbers from some of these countries.

**Visitors from the United States**  
*Month of February*



**Visitors from China**  
*Month of February*



In the year ended February 2006, there were more visitors from Europe (up 6 percent), Oceania (up 2 percent) and the Americas (up 1 percent), compared with the February 2005 year. There were fewer visitors from Asia (down 3 percent). Two countries – the United Kingdom (up 22,700 or 8 percent) and Australia (up 11,900 or 1 percent) – were the major contributors to the annual increase in total visitor numbers. Other countries with increased visitor arrivals included Ireland (up 3,700 or 21 percent), Fiji (up 3,000 or 17 percent) and China (up 2,600 or 3 percent). There were fewer visitors from Japan (down 11,400 or 7 percent), Korea (down 5,300 or 5 percent), Singapore (down 3,100 or 9 percent) and Hong Kong (down 1,500 or 6 percent).

**Note:** Detailed visitor data is available in the February 2006 edition of the Statistics New Zealand publication *International Visitor Arrivals to New Zealand*, which can be ordered via the Statistics New Zealand website: [www.stats.govt.nz](http://www.stats.govt.nz).

## New Zealand resident departures

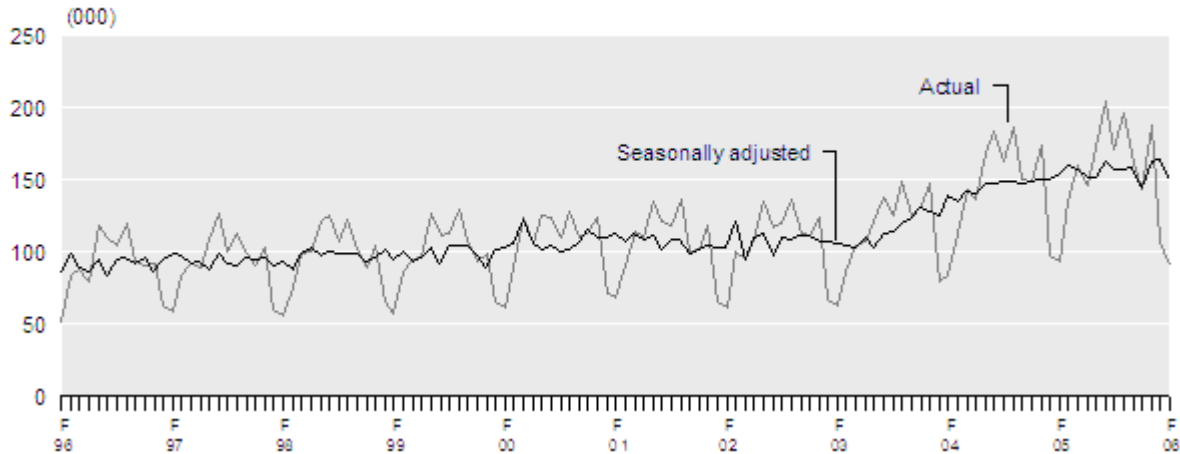
New Zealand residents departed on 91,100 short-term overseas trips in February 2006, a decrease of 2,400 (3 percent) from February 2005.

In February 2006, New Zealand residents went on more trips to Thailand (up 600 or 70 percent), Fiji (up 400 or 12 percent) and the Cook Islands (up 400 or 41 percent) than in the previous February. There were fewer trips to Australia (down 2,500 or 5 percent), Malaysia (down 500 or 40 percent) and the United States (down 400 or 10 percent).

On a seasonally adjusted basis, New Zealand resident departures fell 8 percent between January and February 2006. This follows a rise of 1 percent between December 2005 and January 2006.

The number of intended days away for resident departures in February 2006 was down 8 percent to 1.63 million days, compared with the previous February. The average intended length of absence was 18 days in February 2006, down from 19 days in February 2005.

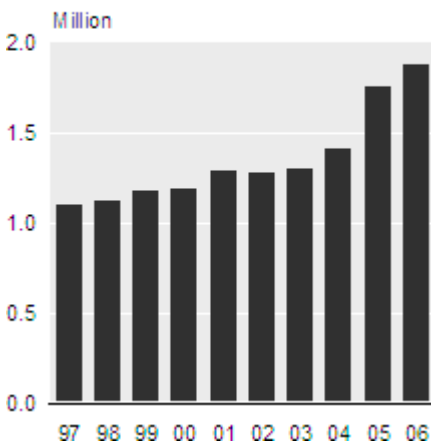
**Monthly New Zealand Resident Short-term Departures**  
February 1996–2006



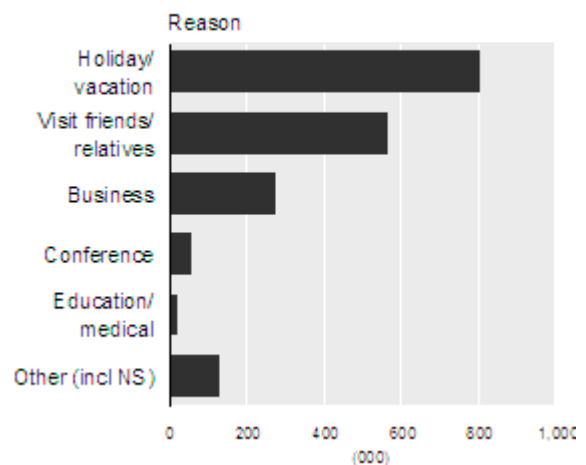
In the year ended February 2006, resident departures totalled 1.879 million, up 119,800 (7 percent) on the previous February year (1.760 million). There were more trips to Australia (up 52,200 or 6 percent), the Cook Islands (up 10,600 or 32 percent), the United States (up 8,900 or 11 percent), the United Kingdom (up 6,900 or 9 percent), Fiji (up 6,400 or 6 percent), Samoa (up 4,700 or 22 percent) and Thailand (up 4,300 or 19 percent).

Holidaymakers accounted for 43 percent (808,100) of the departures during the February 2006 year. A further 30 percent (567,700) left to visit friends and relatives, 15 percent (279,000) went on business, 3 percent (61,100) attended a conference, and 1 percent (25,200) went for education/medical reasons.

**Annual Resident Departures**  
Year ended February



**Resident Departures by Reason**  
Year ended February 2006



**Note:** Provisional weekly and four-weekly resident departures data is available on the Statistics New Zealand website: [www.stats.govt.nz](http://www.stats.govt.nz). This data is updated each week with the most recently available information on resident departures to the 10 major destinations.

## Permanent and long-term migration

### Definition

Permanent and long-term (PLT) arrivals include people who arrive in New Zealand intending to stay for a period of 12 months or more (or permanently), plus New Zealand residents returning after an absence of 12 months or more. Included in the former group are people with New Zealand residency, as well as students and holders of work permits. Permanent and long-term departures include New Zealand residents departing for an intended period of 12 months or more (or permanently), plus overseas visitors departing from New Zealand after a stay of 12 months or more.

### Analysis

PLT arrivals exceeded departures by 3,100 in February 2006, compared with an excess of 1,800 arrivals in February 2005. The higher net PLT inflow in February 2006 resulted from 800 more PLT arrivals, and 600 fewer PLT departures. Non-New Zealand citizen arrivals increased by 800, while New Zealand citizen and non-New Zealand citizen departures both decreased by 300 in February 2006.

Annual net PLT migration increased by 1,300 between January 2006 (7,000) and February 2006 (8,300). This follows no change between December 2005 and January 2006 and increases between October 2005 and December 2005. Previously, declining annual net PLT gains were recorded each month from June 2003 until October 2005.

In February 2006, there were net inflows from the United Kingdom (700), China (700), India (400), Malaysia (400) and Fiji (300), and a net outflow to Australia (1,900).

The seasonally adjusted series recorded a net PLT inflow of 1,400 in February 2006, compared with a net inflow of 600 a month earlier.

### Permanent and Long-term Migration By country of citizenship

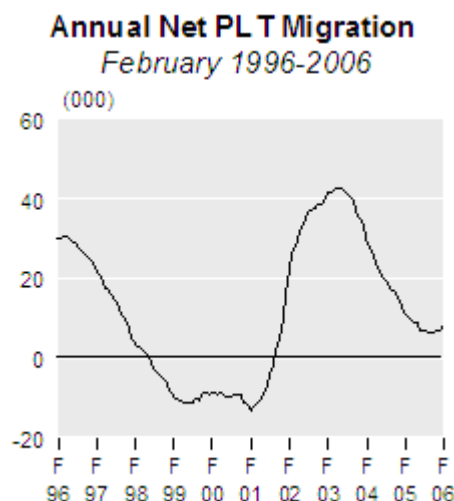
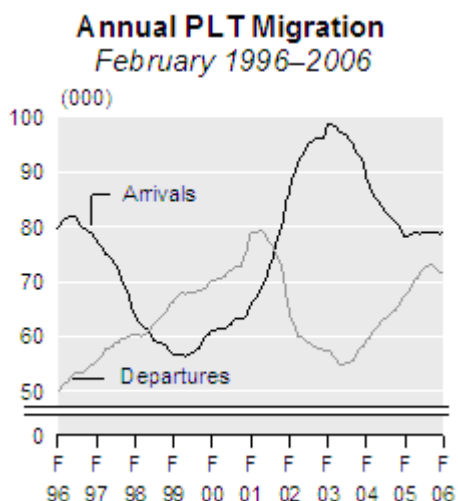
Country of citizenship	Month of February			Year ended February			Change from 2005 (%)	
	2004	2005	2006	2004	2005	2006	Month	Year
<b>New Zealand</b>								
Arrivals	2,000	2,000	2,000	27,500	24,700	24,300	-2	-2
Departures	4,000	4,500	4,200	39,500	44,600	48,800	-6	9
Net	-2,000	-2,500	-2,300	-11,900	-19,800	-24,500	-10	24
<b>Non-New Zealand</b>								
Arrivals	7,100	6,100	6,900	61,600	53,500	55,200	13	3
Departures	1,700	1,800	1,600	19,600	22,500	22,400	-14	-1
Net	5,400	4,300	5,300	42,000	31,000	32,800	25	6
<b>Total</b>								
Arrivals	9,100	8,100	8,900	89,100	78,200	79,400	9	2
Departures	5,700	6,400	5,800	59,000	67,100	71,100	-9	6
Net	3,400	1,800	3,100	30,100	11,100	8,300	75	-26

**Note:** All figures in this table are independently rounded.

In the year ended February 2006, there were 79,400 PLT arrivals, up 1,200 (2 percent) on the February 2005 year. Over the same period, PLT departures increased by 4,000 (6 percent) to reach 71,100. The overall result was a net migration gain of 8,300 in the February 2006 year, which is 26 percent lower than the net inflow of 11,100 people in the previous February year. Compared with the February 2005 year, non-New Zealand citizen arrivals were up 1,700 and non-New Zealand citizen departures were down 200. There were 500 fewer New Zealand citizen arrivals and 4,200 more New Zealand citizen departures.

In the year ended February 2006, there was a net PLT inflow of 10,000 from the United Kingdom, up 13 percent on the February 2005 year figure (8,900). There were also increased net inflows from Fiji (2,400), Germany (1,400), Samoa (1,200) and South Africa (1,200). In contrast, there were reduced net inflows from India (2,000), Japan (1,700) and China (1,100), down from net inflows of 2,200, 2,000 and 1,600, respectively, in the previous year. Overall, net PLT inflow from Asia has reduced, from 19,100 in the February 2004 year, to 7,800 in the February 2005 year, and then further to 7,200 in the February 2006 year.

There was a net outflow to Australia of 21,100 in the February 2006 year, an increase of 4,800 (29 percent) compared with the previous February year, and a net outflow of 600 to Korea.



Over the past decade, annual PLT arrivals reached an initial peak in July 1996 (82,000) and then dropped over the next three years, reaching a low of 56,300 in June 1999. Arrivals then increased to an all-time high of 98,700 in the year ended February 2003. Annual PLT arrivals then dropped steadily to a low of 78,100 in March 2005, before increasing to 79,100 in June 2005. There have been small fluctuations in annual arrival numbers since then, with a February 2006 level of 79,400. Over the same period, annual PLT departures rose steadily to a peak of 79,300 in May 2001, before falling to 54,700 in July 2003. Annual PLT departures subsequently increased to 73,000 in October 2005, before decreasing to 71,100 in February 2006.

As a result of the changes in annual PLT arrivals and departures, annual net PLT migration has fluctuated significantly. After reaching 30,200 in April 1996, there were reducing net inflows and then net outflows between 1998 and 2001. Following the net loss of 13,200 in the February 2001 year, there was a change in the direction of the net flow during 2001. This was followed by a rapid increase to a peak of 42,500 in the May 2003 year. The annual net PLT migration then dropped to a low of 6,000 in October 2005, before increasing to 8,300 in February 2006.

### **Split PLT data**

Statistics New Zealand began separately identifying permanent arrivals from long-term arrivals in July 2003 (departing migrants are also separately identified). Within the long-term group, a further distinction is made between overseas visitors coming to stay in New Zealand for 12 months or more (long-term overseas visitors) and New Zealand residents returning after an overseas stay of 12 months or more (long-term New Zealand residents).

The classification of a person as a permanent or long-term migrant depends on that person's responses to the questions on the arrival and departure cards. Both cards require completion of one of two sections, depending on whether or not the person feels that they live or have lived in New Zealand. The choice of which section to complete is up to the individual, and the answer may result in a person being misclassified – usually as a permanent migrant instead of a long-term migrant.

Of the 8,900 PLT arrivals in February 2006, there were 2,400 permanent migrants, and 5,100 long-term visitors. A further 1,400 arrivals were classed as returning long-term New Zealand residents. For more information on the separate identification of permanent and long-term migrants, including data quality issues, see the *External Migration: September 2003* Hot Off The Press.

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Email: [demography@stats.govt.nz](mailto:demography@stats.govt.nz)

## **Technical notes**

### **Nature of data**

The statistics in this release are based on final external migration counts for the month of February 2006. They relate to the number of movements of travellers, rather than to the number of travellers – that is, the multiple movements of individual people during a given reference period are each counted separately.

### **Data for country groupings**

As of December 2000, the country groupings used in this release are consistent with the New Zealand Standard Classification of Countries 1999 (NZSCC 1999). Prior to this date, country groupings were based on the NZSCC 1995. The following changes have resulted:

1. The Americas region (which includes Northern America, Central America, the Caribbean and South America) replaces Northern America. As a result, countries in Central and South America and the Caribbean are no longer included in the 'Other' category in Tables 6–10.
2. Minor revisions to some other regions.

### **New Zealand resident short-term departures**

The commentaries relating to New Zealand resident short-term departures are based on the data for the country of main destination – that is, the country where each departing person intended to spend most of his or her time while away from New Zealand.

### **Changes in migrant category**

In the preparation of migration statistics, the classification of each passenger is primarily determined by the passenger's response, on the arrival or departure card, to the question on intended or actual length of stay/absence. If the person's intention changes later during the trip, then they may also change their migrant category. For example, if a person comes to New Zealand with the declared intention of settling permanently, but in fact returns overseas after a few months, then that person is classified as a permanent/long-term migrant on arrival, but is later classified as a short-term visitor on departure. This is known as migration category jumping. Data users should recognise the limitations inherent in the information supplied by travellers.

### **Sampling accuracy**

The statistics for short-term passenger movements by country (ie arrivals by country of last permanent residence and departures by country of main destination) are derived from a systematic random sample taken each month from arrival and departure cards, and are therefore subject to sampling errors. However, total counts for short-term arrivals and departures of overseas visitors and New Zealand residents are actual counts, which are not subject to sampling errors. Figures for permanent and long-term arrivals and departures are also actual counts and have no sampling errors.

## **INFOS database**

All series in Tables 1–5 are available through the INFOS database, using the series identifiers shown. The series in Tables 1, 2 and 3 are available back to January 1960 and the seasonally adjusted series in Tables 4 and 5 are available back to January 1982. The seasonally adjusted migration series were all revised when new seasonal adjustment procedures were introduced in August 1998. Likewise, the seasonally adjusted figures, from January 1996 onwards, are now updated monthly.

## **Seasonally adjusted series**

The purpose of seasonally adjusting a time series is to measure and remove the varying seasonal components (caused by regular events such as holidays) in the series. This makes the data for adjacent months more comparable. The X-12-ARIMA computer program is now used to produce the seasonally adjusted estimates of migration. In addition, the seasonally adjusted figures are subject to revision each month. The size of these revisions is expected to be minimal, with the largest revisions occurring in the months immediately prior to the current month.

The change to a four-term school year in 1996 resulted in changes to the seasonal patterns of the New Zealand resident arrivals and departures series. As a result, the seasonal adjustment for the two series was unsatisfactory. To overcome this, a two-stage procedure was introduced in August 1998. The series prior to 1996 were seasonally adjusted separately and the values fixed, while the series from January 1996 onwards are now seasonally adjusted each month and revised if appropriate. Further information on the seasonally adjusted migration series, including information on the revision procedures, can be obtained from the Statistical Methods Division, Statistics New Zealand, Christchurch, phone 03 964 8700, fax 03 964 8791.

## **New migration processing system**

To capture survey information more efficiently, Statistics New Zealand is developing new processing systems which incorporate scanning and image recognition technology. A new migration processing system using this technology was first used to process the arrival and departure cards for June 2004. A key difference between the new and previous systems is that there is now no need to manually enter the passport number for each traveller. In addition, classing (as overseas visitors, New Zealand residents, or permanent and long-term (PLT) migrants) and capture of the information required for the migration sample are done automatically for the majority of the cards. Those cards that cannot be classed (or are classed as PLT) and those with fields that cannot be recognised are manually processed using the card image. It is expected that operator intervention should only be required for approximately one-fifth of the cards. The new system, designed to capture the same information as previously captured, is used only for the production of statistics.

It is expected that data captured using the new system will be largely consistent with previous data. Users need to be aware of the changes to the processing system when comparing data for June 2004 onwards with data for earlier periods.

## **More information**

For more information, follow the [link](#) from the Technical notes of this release on the Statistics New Zealand 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 New Zealand. Statistics New Zealand accepts no responsibility for any such delays.

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

*External Migration: March 2006* will be released on 21 April 2006.

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## Tables

The following tables can be downloaded from the Statistics New Zealand website in Excel 97 format. If you do not have access to Excel 97 or higher, you may use the Excel file viewer to view, print and export the contents of the file.

### List of tables

1. Arrivals by class, February 1996–2006
2. Departures by class, February 1996–2006
3. Net migration, February 1996–2006
4. Arrivals, seasonally adjusted, February 2005–2006
5. Departures, seasonally adjusted, February 2005–2006
6. Overseas visitor arrivals, by country of last permanent residence
7. New Zealand resident short-term departures, by country of main destination
8. Permanent and long-term arrivals, by country of last permanent residence
9. Permanent and long-term departures, by country of next permanent residence
10. Net permanent and long-term migration, by country of last/next permanent residence