

Embargoed until 10:45am – 21 April 2008

## External Migration: March 2008

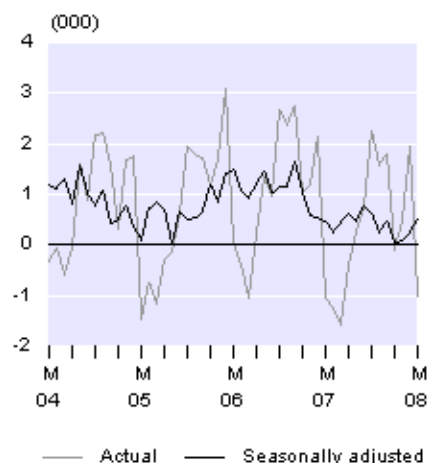
### Highlights

- Visitor arrivals (250,800) were up 5 percent from March 2007 (239,200).
- There were more visitors from Australia (up 6,700) and the United Kingdom (up 2,800), but fewer from Korea (down 3,000).
- New Zealand resident departures (134,800) were up 2 percent from March 2007 (132,400).
- There were more trips by New Zealand residents to the Cook Islands (up 700) and China (up 600), but fewer to Australia (down 800).

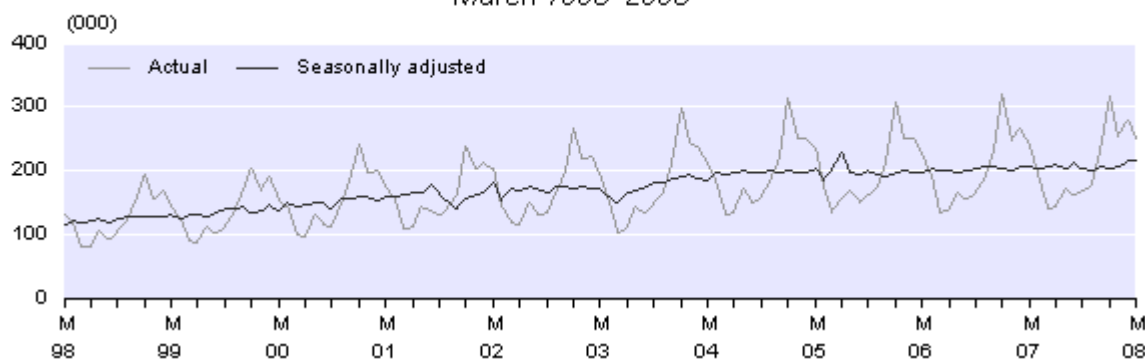
On a seasonally adjusted basis:

- Visitor arrivals were unchanged from February 2008.
- Overseas trips by New Zealand residents were down 5 percent.
- Permanent and long-term arrivals exceeded departures by 500.

**Monthly Net Permanent and Long-term Migration**  
March 2004–2008



**Monthly Visitor Arrivals**  
March 1998–2008



Geoff Bascand  
Government Statistician

21 April 2008  
ISSN 1178-0274

There is a companion Media Release published – [External Migration: March 2008](#).

# Commentary

## Name change

Statistics New Zealand is changing the name of this release from *External Migration* to *International Travel and Migration*. This is to better reflect that the release contains statistics on short-term travellers as well as permanent and long-term migrants. The change will take effect with the June 2008 data, due for release on 21 July 2008.

## Visitor arrivals

### Monthly visitor arrivals

Short-term overseas visitor arrivals to New Zealand numbered 250,800 in March 2008, an increase of 11,600 (5 percent) from March 2007.

Seasonally adjusted visitor arrivals remained steady between February and March 2008. This followed an increase of 5 percent between January and February 2008.

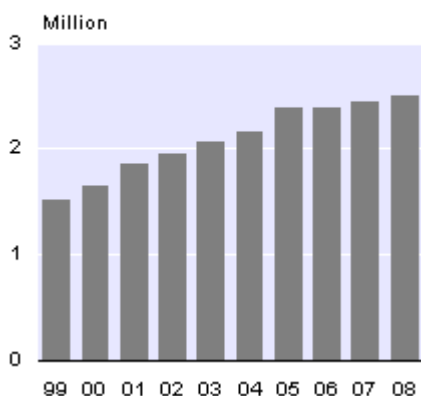
The estimated average number of visitors who were in New Zealand during March 2008 was 187,100 per day, up 6 percent from an average of 176,400 in March 2007. Estimated numbers of visitors in the country are calculated from the date of arrival and intended length of stay of sampled visitor arrivals. The average intended stay of visitors who arrived in March 2008 was 19 days, and the median (half are shorter, and half are longer, than this duration) was 10 days.

### Annual visitor arrivals

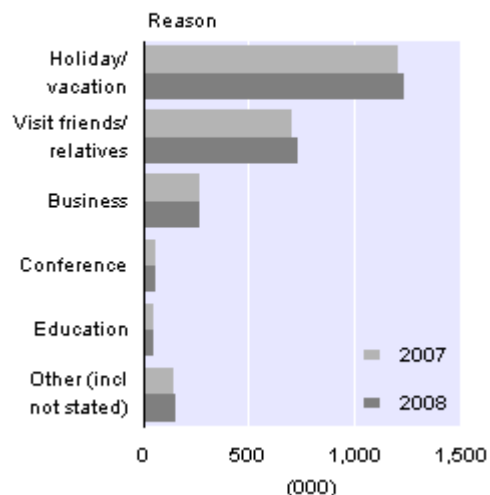
During the March 2008 year, there were 2.497 million visitor arrivals, up 51,900 (2 percent) from the March 2007 year.

A holiday was the main travel reason for 1.228 million visitor arrivals to New Zealand in the March 2008 year, up 23,100 (2 percent) from the previous year. Another 727,900 arrived to visit friends and relatives (up 27,100 or 4 percent) and 266,800 arrived for business (down 3,400 or 1 percent).

**Annual Visitor Arrivals**  
Year ended March



**Visitor Arrivals by Reason**  
Year ended March

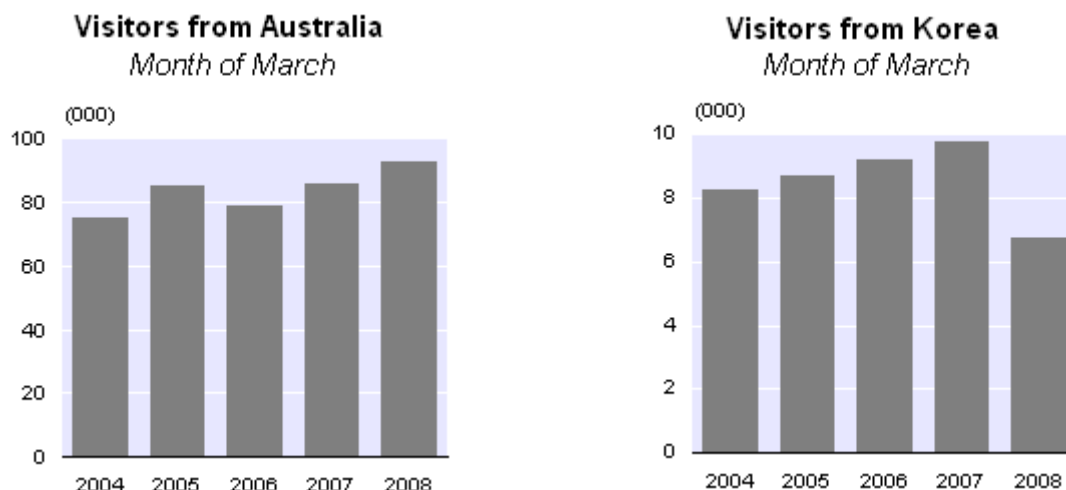


**Note:** Provisional international travel statistics, including weekly and four-weekly visitor arrival data, are available on the Statistics NZ website: <http://www.stats.govt.nz/tables/provisional-arrivals/default>. This data is updated each week with the most recently available information on visitor arrivals from 10 major source countries.

### Visitors by source country

In March 2008, increases were recorded from New Zealand's four largest source countries of visitor arrivals, compared with March 2007. This was led by 6,700 (8 percent) more arrivals from Australia, helped by the earlier timing of the Easter holidays. There were also more visitor arrivals from the United Kingdom (up 2,800 or 8 percent), China (up 1,800 or 20 percent) and the United States (1,400 or 6 percent). Cruise passengers accounted for most of the increase from the United States, and together with new air services between Vancouver and Auckland contributed to 900 (16 percent) more visitor arrivals from Canada.

There were fewer visitor arrivals from Korea (down 3,000 or 31 percent) and Japan (down 1,300 or 10 percent) in March 2008, compared with March 2007. Visitor arrivals from Japan have decreased for most months since December 2004, when compared with the same month of the previous year, while visitor arrivals from Korea have decreased each month since May 2007.



In the year ended March 2008, there were more visitors from Oceania (up 60,700 or 6 percent) and the Americas (up 9,900 or 3 percent) compared with the March 2007 year. Fewer visitors arrived from Asia (down 22,700 or 4 percent) and Europe (down 3,400 or 1 percent).

Australia (up 56,500 or 6 percent) provided the largest increase in visitor arrivals in the March 2008 year. There were also increases in visitor arrivals from China (up 10,000 or 9 percent), Canada (up 5,200 or 11 percent), South Africa (up 2,500 or 13 percent), India (up 2,200 or 11 percent), Germany (up 2,200 or 4 percent) and Thailand (up 2,100 or 12 percent). An article examining visitor arrivals from China has recently been released on the [International travel and migration articles](#) page of the Statistics NZ website.

Decreases in visitor arrivals were recorded for Korea (down 19,800 or 18 percent), Japan (down 13,600 or 10 percent), the United Kingdom (down 9,600 or 3 percent), and Taiwan (down 4,400 or 16 percent) in the March 2008 year.

**Note:** Detailed visitor data will be available in the March 2008 edition of *International Visitor Arrivals to New Zealand*, which can be ordered through the Statistics NZ website: <http://www.stats.govt.nz/products-and-services/subscriptions/iva-sub>.

# New Zealand resident departures

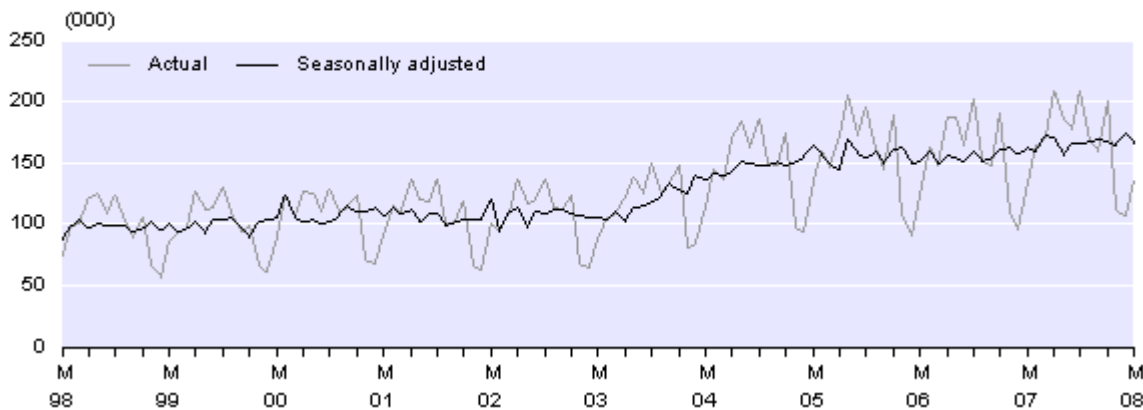
## Monthly resident departures

New Zealand residents departed on 134,800 short-term overseas trips in March 2008, up 2,400 (2 percent) from the 132,400 departures in March 2007. There were more trips to the Cook Islands (up 700 or 27 percent) and China (up 600 or 18 percent). There were fewer departures to Australia in March 2008, down 800 (1 percent) from March 2007.

On a seasonally adjusted basis, New Zealand resident departures decreased 5 percent between February and March 2008. This followed a 6 percent increase in this series between January and February 2008. The increase in February was affected by the leap day, which was not adjusted for.

The estimated average number of New Zealand residents who were temporarily overseas during March 2008 was 71,100 per day, up 6 percent from the average of 67,400 in March 2007. Estimates of the number of residents overseas are calculated from the date of departure and intended length of absence of sampled resident departures. The average intended absence of residents who departed in March 2008 was 19 days, and the median was 9 days.

**Monthly New Zealand Resident Short-term Departures**  
*March 1998–2008*



## Annual resident departures

In the March 2008 year, there were 1.996 million resident departures, up 117,100 (6 percent) from the March 2007 year. There were more resident departures to Oceania (up 55,200 or 5 percent), Asia (up 16,000 or 7 percent), Europe (up 15,500 or 10 percent) and the Americas (up 9,000 or 8 percent).

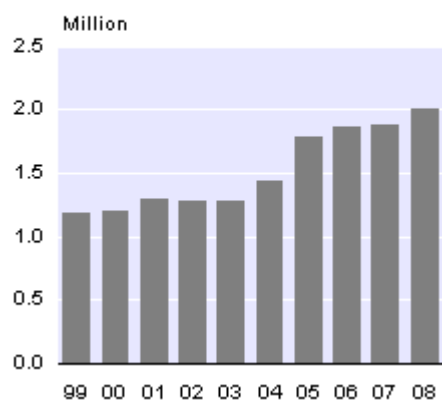
The largest increase was in resident departures to Australia (up 42,800 or 5 percent), which was the destination for about half of New Zealand residents departing on short-term trips in the March 2008 year. There were also more trips to France (up 7,700 or 66 percent), the Cook Islands (up 6,900 or 15 percent), China (up 6,800 or 13 percent) and the United States (up 6,200 or 7 percent).

While Fiji remained the second most popular destination, the 97,400 trips to Fiji in the year ended March 2008 were down 8,600 (8 percent) from the previous year.

A holiday was the main travel reason for 844,400 New Zealand residents who departed in the March 2008 year, up 53,800 (7 percent) from the previous year. Another 625,100 were departing to visit friends and relatives (up 43,800 or 8 percent) and 290,200 were departing for business purposes (up 5,300 or 2 percent).

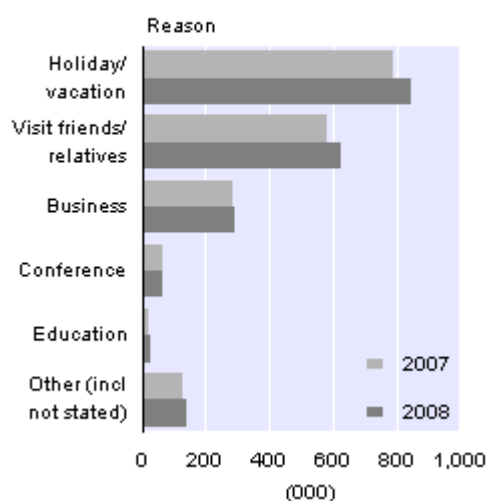
### Annual Resident Departures

Year ended March



### Resident Departures by Reason

Year ended March



**Note:** Provisional international travel statistics, including weekly and four-weekly resident departure data, are available on the Statistics NZ website: <http://www.stats.govt.nz/tables/provisional-arrivals/default>. This data is updated each week with the most recently available information on resident departures to 10 major destination countries.

## 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. PLT departures include New Zealand residents departing for an intended period of 12 months or more (or permanently), plus overseas visitors departing New Zealand after a stay of 12 months or more.

### Monthly PLT migration

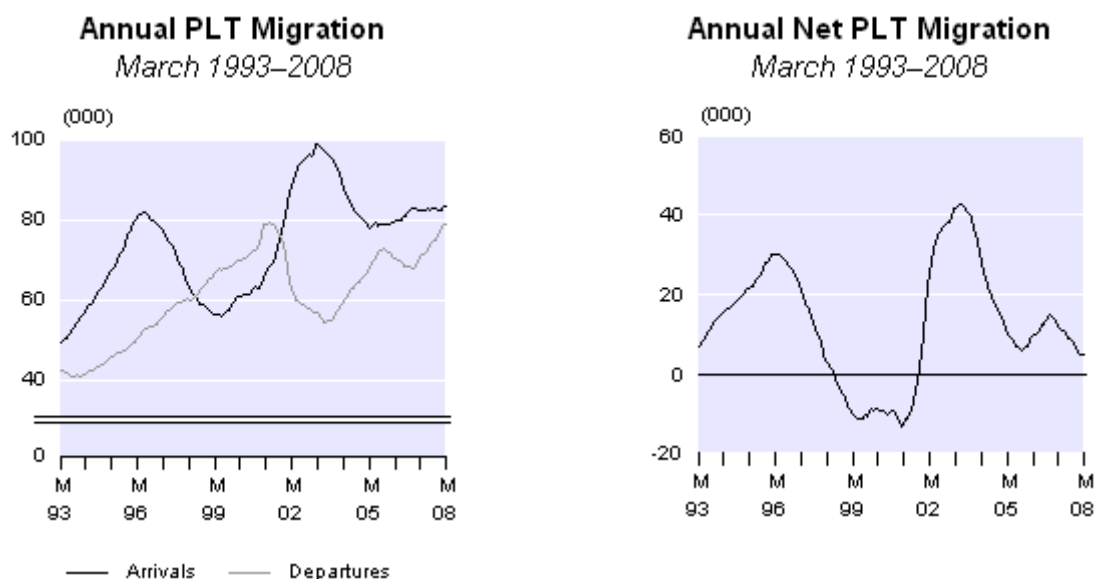
PLT departures exceeded arrivals by 1,000 in March 2008, which was unchanged from the March 2007 net migration figure. Prior to March 2008, monthly net PLT migration had been decreasing since December 2006, when compared with the same month of the previous year.

On a seasonally adjusted basis, there was a net PLT inflow of 500 in March 2008. The net PLT series averaged about 500 between January and November 2007, but had fallen lower for the December 2007 to February 2008 months.

In March 2008, there was a net outflow of 3,100 PLT migrants to Australia, up from the outflow of 2,800 in March 2007. There was a net inflow of 300 migrants from both India and the Philippines and 200 from both South Africa and Fiji.

### Annual PLT migration

In the year ended March 2008, there were 83,500 PLT arrivals, up 1,000 (1 percent) from the March 2007 year. Over the same period, there were 78,800 PLT departures, up 8,400 (12 percent). As a result, net PLT migration was 4,700 in the March 2008 year, down from 12,100 in the March 2007 year.

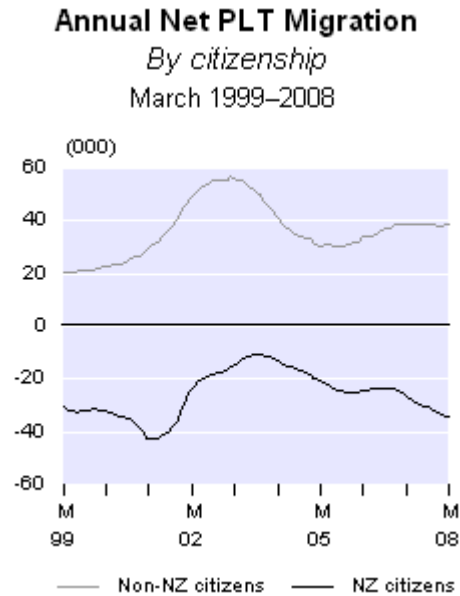
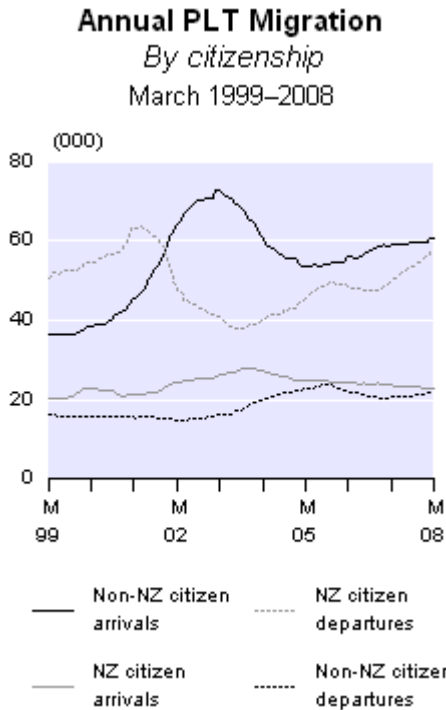


The net PLT migration gain of 4,700 in the year ended March 2008 is below the annual average of 11,800 recorded for the December years from 1990–2007. Net PLT migration varied substantially within this 18-year period. The net gain peaked at 30,200 in the April 1996 year and again at 42,500 in the May 2003 year. Net outflows were generally experienced during 1998–2001, with the highest being a net loss of 13,200 people recorded in the February 2001 year.

### Annual PLT migration by citizenship

A net inflow of 38,900 non-New Zealand citizens and a net outflow of 34,200 New Zealand citizens were recorded in the year ended March 2008. The majority of the net outflow of New Zealand citizens was to Australia (30,300), followed by the United Kingdom (1,400), and the United Arab Emirates and Canada (both 400).

Compared with the March 2007 year, PLT arrivals of non-New Zealand citizens were up 1,800 and PLT arrivals of New Zealand citizens were down 800. There were 7,200 more PLT departures of New Zealand citizens and 1,200 more PLT departures of non-New Zealand citizens. Changes in non-New Zealand citizen departures are often related to changes in non-New Zealand citizen arrivals a few years earlier. Similarly, changes in New Zealand citizen arrivals are often related to changes in New Zealand citizen departures a few years earlier.



### Annual PLT migration by country

In the year ended March 2008, there was a net inflow of 6,900 migrants from the United Kingdom, down from 10,200 the previous year. There were also net PLT inflows from India (4,200), the Philippines (3,300), Fiji (2,500), South Africa (2,100), China (1,900), and Germany (1,600). China was the leading net source of PLT migrants for the years ended March 1996 to January 2004. Since then, the United Kingdom has been the biggest positive contributor to net migration.

The net PLT outflow to Australia was 29,900 in the March 2008 year, compared with 23,300 in the March 2007 year. This is the highest annual net outflow to Australia since the July 2001 year (30,000). The net outflow to Australia peaked at 31,800 in the May 2001 year, with earlier peaks in the January 1989 year (33,700) and the December 1979 year (33,400).

The net outflow to Australia was spread across both age and occupation groups. Migrants aged 15–29 years accounted for 40 percent (11,900) of the net outflow to Australia in the March 2008 year, while another 23 percent (6,900) were aged 0–14 years, 23 percent (7,000) were aged 30–44 years, 12 percent (3,700) were aged 45–59 years, and 2 percent (500) were aged 60 years and over.

Net outflows to Australia were recorded in each broad occupation group, led by professionals (2,100), service and sales workers (1,800) and trades workers (1,700). There was also a net outflow to Australia of 12,300 people without an occupation, of which most were children or students.

## Split PLT data

Statistics NZ 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 6,300 PLT arrivals in March 2008, there were 2,200 permanent migrants and 3,000 long-term visitors. A further 1,100 arrivals were returning long-term New Zealand residents.

For more information on the separate identification of PLT migrants, including data quality issues, see the [\*External Migration: September 2003\*](#) Hot Off The Press.

## Tourism and Migration 2007

[\*Tourism and Migration 2007\*](#) is an annual update of a number of tables contained in the [\*Tourism and Migration 2000\*](#) reference report. The update contains detailed statistics on a December year basis up to 2007 on a range of topics, including overseas visitors, overseas trips by New Zealand residents, permanent and long-term migration, immigration permits, New Zealand's migrant population, and internal migration.

For technical information contact:  
Ian Richards or Nick Thomson  
Christchurch 03 964 8700

**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. 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 earlier versions of the NZSCC.

### **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 traveller category**

In the preparation of external 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 during the trip, then they may also change their traveller 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 and long-term (PLT) migrant on arrival, but is later classified as a short-term visitor on departure. This is known as 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 PLT arrivals and departures are also actual counts and have no sampling errors.

## **INFOS database**

All data in the Hot Off The Press tables are available through the INFOS database. Where feasible, the series identifiers are shown (see tables 1–5 and the footnotes for table 11). The series in tables 1, 2 and 3 are available back to January 1950, 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 in the series (for example, there are more visitor arrivals during the New Zealand summer, due to the warmer weather and longer daylight hours). This makes the data for adjacent months more comparable. The X-12-ARIMA computer program is used to produce the seasonally adjusted estimates of key external migration series. 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 external migration series, including information on the revision procedures, can be obtained from the Statistical Methods Business Unit, Statistics New Zealand, Christchurch, phone 03 964 8700, fax 03 964 8791.

## **Processing system**

The current external migration processing system, which incorporates scanning and image recognition technology, was first used to process the June 2004 arrival and departure cards. Classing (as overseas visitors, New Zealand residents or PLT migrants) and capture of the information required for the sample are done automatically for the majority of the cards. Operator intervention is only required for approximately one-tenth of the cards. The system is used only for the production of statistics.

Users should 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 NZ website.

## Copyright

Information obtained from Statistics NZ may be freely used, reproduced, or quoted unless otherwise specified. In all cases Statistics NZ must be acknowledged as the source.

## Liability

While care has been used in processing, analysing and extracting information, Statistics NZ gives no warranty that the information supplied is free from error. Statistics NZ shall not be liable for any loss suffered through the use, directly or indirectly, of any information, product or service.

## 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.

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

*External Migration: April 2008* will be released on 20 May 2008.

Statistics New Zealand: The first source of independent information for your key decisions.

## 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.

### List of tables

1. Arrivals by class, March 1998–2008
2. Departures by class, March 1998–2008
3. Net migration, March 1998–2008
4. Arrivals, seasonally adjusted, March 2007–2008
5. Departures, seasonally adjusted, March 2007–2008
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
11. Permanent and long-term migration, by country of citizenship