

# International Travel and Migration: September 2012

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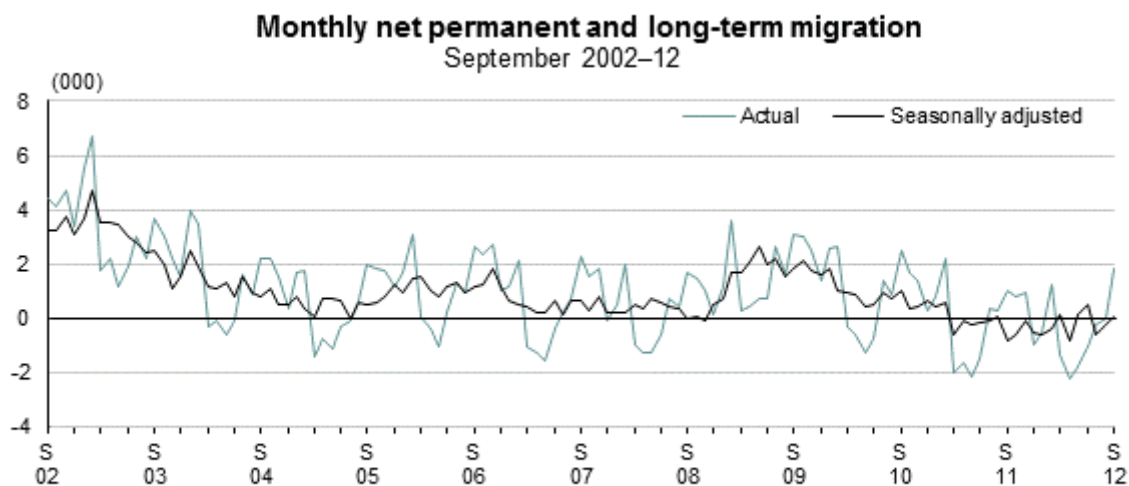
## Key facts

Because of the impact of the Rugby World Cup on travel in September 2011, we compared September 2012 figures with September 2010:

- Visitor arrivals (179,100) were up 4,900. The biggest changes were in arrivals from:
  - China (up 6,600)
  - Australia (up 3,700)
  - Japan (down 1,800).
- Overseas trips by New Zealand residents (208,000) were down 2,000. The biggest changes were in departures to:
  - the United States (up 2,500)
  - India (up 1,200)
  - Australia (down 11,600).

In September 2012:

- Seasonally adjusted figures showed a net gain of 100 migrants.



Source: Statistics New Zealand

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Government Statistician

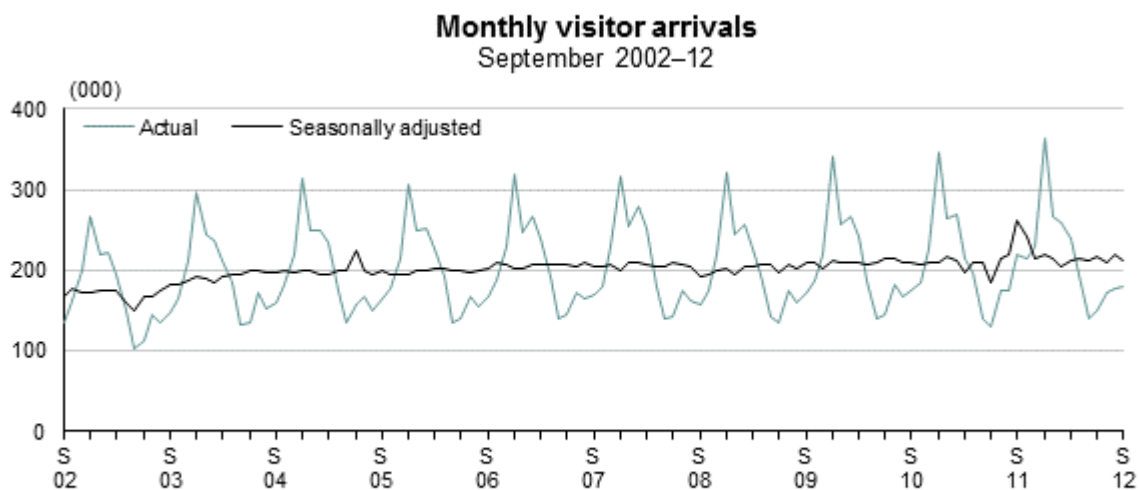
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## Commentary

- September visitor arrivals decrease following Rugby World Cup high
- China now third largest annual visitor source
- Resident departures return to September 2010 levels
- New Zealand residents take more trips in the September 2012 year
- Net gain of 100 migrants in September
- Fewer migrants arrive and more depart in the September 2012 year

## September visitor arrivals decrease following Rugby World Cup high

Short-term overseas visitor arrivals to New Zealand numbered 179,100 in September 2012. This was down 19 percent from September 2011 (219,900), when visitor numbers were boosted by 74,400 arrivals for the Rugby World Cup. Compared with September 2010 (174,200), there was a 3 percent increase in visitor arrivals.



Source: Statistics New Zealand

## Visitor arrivals by country of residence

Because the Rugby World Cup had a great impact on visitor arrivals in September 2011, comparisons in this section are made with September 2010 figures. The biggest changes in visitors by country of residence between September 2010 and September 2012 were in arrivals from:

- China (up 6,600)
- Australia (up 3,700)
- Japan (down 1,800)
- Korea (down 1,400)
- Indonesia (down 1,300)
- the United Kingdom (down 1,100).

Visitor arrivals from China numbered 14,000 in September 2012 – the highest ever for a September month, and an 88 percent increase on the September 2010 figure (7,500). Much of

this increase occurred in the last few days of the month, which coincided with the holiday period of the Chinese Mid-Autumn Festival and National Day.

The 3,700 visitors from Japan in September 2012 were the lowest for a September month since 1985 (3,100). The highest number of visitors from Japan for a September month was 11,200 in 1997. Visitor arrivals from Japan had been recovering in July and August 2012 compared with the same months the previous year. However, it's difficult to compare September 2012 with the same month last year because of the increase in visitors from Japan for the Rugby World Cup.

Visitors from Indonesia were down from the September 2010 figure because holidays centred around the end of Ramadan fell in August this year, compared with September in 2010. When the months of August and September are combined, there was an increase of 1,200 visitors between 2010 and 2012.

Although there were increases during the Rugby World Cup period (August to October 2011), arrivals from the United Kingdom have decreased in most months since April 2007, just after the start of the global economic downturn.

### **Visitor arrivals by travel purpose**

The biggest changes in visitors by travel purpose between September 2010 and September 2012 were in arrivals for:

- visiting friends and relatives (up 8,300)
- business (up 1,100)
- holidays (down 6,000).

Australia was the main contributor to the change in arrivals visiting friends and relatives (up 6,100). New Zealand citizens (up 4,700) contributed most of this increase.

Holiday visitor arrivals from China increased (up 4,500), making up most of China's overall increase. Fewer holiday visitors from Australia (down 3,400) and the United Kingdom (down 1,800) offset the increase from China.

### **China now third largest annual visitor source**

Visitor arrivals from China (186,800) were up 51,100 from the September 2011 year. This makes it the third largest contributor of visitors to New Zealand, overtaking the United States (180,100) but still behind Australia (1.172 million) and the United Kingdom (198,400). Twenty years ago (in the September 1992 year) there were only 3,200 visitors from China, which meant it was then ranked 27th in source countries. Holidaymakers made up 71 percent of visitor arrivals from China in the September 2012 year, while 13 percent were in New Zealand to visit friends and relatives, and 8 percent arrived on business. The median length of stay of Chinese visitors was just 3.5 days, compared with 8.7 days for all visitor arrivals. The short stays are because many Chinese tourists visit both Australia and New Zealand on the same trip.

From all countries, there were 2.595 million visitor arrivals to New Zealand in the September 2012 year. This was up 2 percent from the September 2011 year (2.548 million). The 2011 September total was boosted by Rugby World Cup visitors arriving in August and September 2011. The September 2012 year figure includes Rugby World Cup visitors who arrived in October 2011. Visitor arrivals in 2011 were also affected by the Christchurch

earthquake in February and disruption to air travel in June because of ash from Chile's Puyehue-Cordon Caulle volcano.

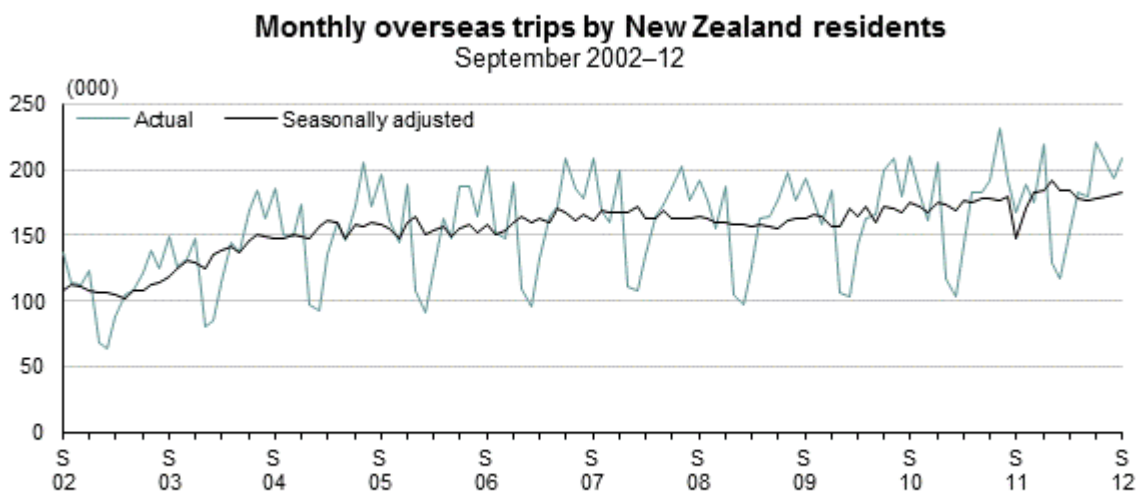
More visitors arrived from Australia (up 49,800) in the September 2012 year. Most of the increase can be attributed to New Zealand citizens, because many New Zealanders have migrated across the Tasman in recent years.

Offsetting the increases from China and Australia were decreases in visitor arrivals from countries including the United Kingdom (down 31,800), Korea (down 5,400), and the United States (down 5,200).

For more detailed data about visitor arrivals, see the Excel tables in the 'Downloads' box.

## Resident departures return to September 2010 levels

New Zealand residents departed on 208,000 overseas trips in September 2012. This is up from 167,400 departures in September 2011, when fewer people travelled because of the Rugby World Cup and later timing of school holidays. The school holidays were moved from September to October to coincide with the Rugby World Cup final. The September 2012 resident departure number is just below the 210,000 trips taken in September 2010.



## Overseas trips by country of main destination

Because the Rugby World Cup affected resident departures in September 2011, comparisons in this section are made with September 2010 figures.

The biggest changes in overseas trips by country of main destination (where the person will spend the most time when overseas) between September 2010 and September 2012 were in trips to:

- the United States (up 2,500)
- India (up 1,200)
- the Cook Islands (up 1,100)
- Australia (down 11,600).

## New Zealand residents take more trips in the September 2012 year

Trips by New Zealand residents in the September 2012 year (2.171 million) rose 5 percent from the September 2011 year (2.059 million).

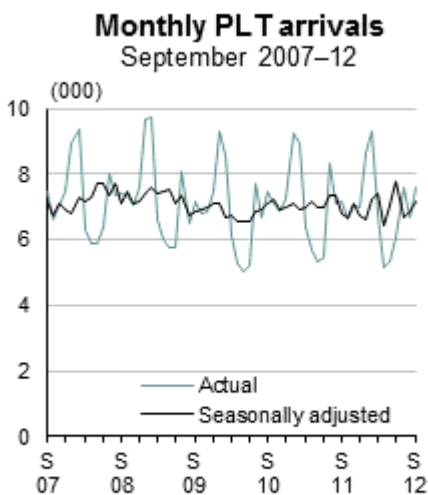
The biggest increases were in trips to Australia (up 29,400) and the United States (up 19,800). Over recent decades, changes in the number of trips to the United States have followed changes in the exchange rate.

In the September 2012 year, more trips were also made to Samoa (up 4,600), Indonesia, and the Cook Islands (each up 4,500). The biggest decrease was in departures to Malaysia (down 2,300).

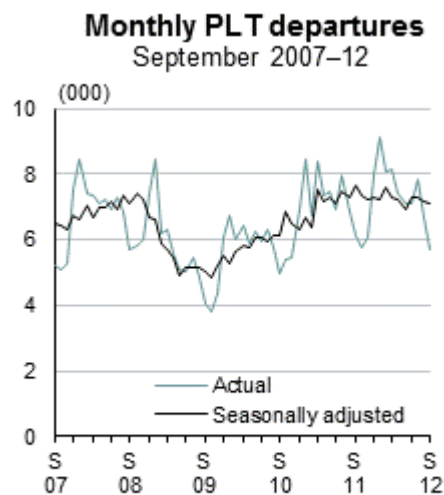
For more detailed data on overseas trips by New Zealand residents, see the Excel tables in the 'Downloads' box.

## Net gain of 100 migrants in September

Seasonally adjusted permanent and long-term (PLT) migration figures showed a net gain (more arrivals than departures) of 100 migrants in September 2012. This is the fourth time that seasonally adjusted net migration has been positive over the past seven months.



Source: Statistics New Zealand



Source: Statistics New Zealand

There was a seasonally adjusted net loss of 3,200 migrants to Australia in September 2012. The monthly net loss of migrants to Australia has remained fairly steady since March 2011, fluctuating between 3,000 and 3,700. Since the start of the series in 1996, the highest ever net loss to Australia was 4,300 in February 2001. This was just before the eligibility of New Zealand citizens to access certain welfare benefits in Australia was changed on 26 February 2001.

## Fewer migrants arrive and more depart in the September 2012 year

Unadjusted figures showed there were 83,600 PLT arrivals in the September 2012 year, a decrease of 1 percent from the September 2011 year. PLT departures numbered 86,900, up 3 percent from the previous year. This resulted in a net loss of 3,300 migrants in the September 2012 year.

There have been annual net migration losses since the October 2011 year. New Zealand has experienced many periods of net migration loss. The highest net loss since the PLT migration series started (in April 1921) was 43,600 people in the July 1979 year.

In the September 2012 year, the most common ages of arriving and departing migrants were between 15 and 34 years. In this age group, arrivals outnumbered departures by 3,000. There was also a net gain of migrants aged 60 and over (1,300). In contrast, most of the net loss of migrants occurred in ages under 15 years, and ages 35 to 59 years (each 3,800).

A net loss of 39,500 people to Australia contributed to New Zealand's net loss of migrants in the September 2012 year. This is down from the record net loss of 40,000 in the August 2012 year. The September figure resulted from 53,700 departures to Australia, offset by 14,200 arrivals from Australia. In both directions, most migrants were New Zealand citizens.

There were net gains of migrants from most other countries in the September 2012 year, led by:

- the United Kingdom (5,500)
- China (5,200)
- India (5,000)
- the Philippines (2,100)
- Germany (1,500)
- Ireland (1,200).

For more detailed data about permanent and long-term migration, see the Excel tables in the 'Downloads' box.

# Definitions

## About the international travel and migration statistics

International travel and migration statistics count passengers arriving into and departing from New Zealand. Passengers are split into one of three passenger types: overseas visitors, New Zealand-resident travellers, and permanent and long-term migrants.

Arrivals and departures of overseas visitors and New Zealand resident travellers are key indicators of tourism and travel. Permanent and long-term migration is a component of New Zealand's population change (along with births and deaths), measuring changes in the characteristics of the population as well as population size.

## More definitions

**Citizenship:** determined from the country that issued the passport the person uses when arriving or departing. A person may hold passports from more than one country.

**Country of main destination:** the country where a New Zealand-resident traveller will spend the most time while overseas. Departure cards do not ask travellers which other countries they intend to visit on the same trip.

**Country of residence:** for arrivals, this is the country where the person last lived for 12 months or more. For departures, it is the country where the person will next live for 12 months or more.

**New Zealand-resident travellers:** people who live in New Zealand and are travelling overseas for less than 12 months.

**Overseas visitors:** people who live overseas and are visiting New Zealand for less than 12 months.

**Passenger type:** each passenger is classed as an overseas visitor, a New Zealand-resident traveller, or a permanent and long-term migrant. Passenger type is not related to legal permanent residence in a country or the visa type a person holds. It is based on the time spent in and out of New Zealand. This is primarily determined from responses on the arrival and departure cards to questions about how long the person is in or away from New Zealand, and where they last lived and will next live for 12 months or more.

**Permanent and long-term arrivals:** people from overseas arriving to live in New Zealand for 12 months or more (including permanently), and New Zealanders returning after an absence of 12 months or more overseas.

**Permanent and long-term departures:** New Zealanders departing for an absence of 12 months or more (including permanently), and people from overseas who are departing after a stay of 12 months or more in New Zealand.

**Travel purpose:** the main purpose for the visit to New Zealand or trip overseas. Categories are holiday, visiting friends and relatives, business, conferences and conventions, education, and other.

## **Related links**

### **Upcoming releases**

*International Travel and Migration: October 2012* will be released on 22 November 2012.

[Subscribe to information releases](#), including this one, by completing the online subscription form.

The [release calendar](#) lists all our upcoming information releases by date of release.

### **Past releases**

[International Travel and Migration](#) has links to past releases.

## **Related information**

### **Information about international travel**

[International Visitor Arrivals to New Zealand](#) contains detailed tables about the number and characteristics of visitor arrivals. It is released two working days after each International Travel and Migration information release.

[Provisional international travel statistics](#) provide the latest weekly and four-weekly figures for visitor arrivals and New Zealand-resident traveller departures, including figures for 10 major source and destination countries. These are released weekly, usually at 3pm on a Friday.

[International travel and migration articles](#) are occasional publications that provide analyses of selected topics.

Statistics NZ's [Tourism](#) web page lists tourism-related data sources, such as the Accommodation Survey and the Tourism Satellite Account.

[Tourism research and data](#) from the Ministry of Business, Innovation, and Employment includes results from the International Visitor Survey, Domestic Travel Survey, and tourism forecasts.

[Tourism New Zealand](#) provides guides to New Zealand's key tourism markets, which include the outlook for future months.

### **Information about international migration**

[International travel and migration articles](#) are occasional publications that provide analyses of selected topics.

Statistics NZ's [Migration](#) web page lists migration-related data sources, such as the Longitudinal Immigration Survey.

[Labour and Immigration Research Centre](#), part of the Ministry of Business, Innovation, and Employment, publishes research reports and information about the immigration research programme.



Immigration New Zealand statistics include application and approval numbers for the main immigration visa types.

## Data quality

This section has information that does not generally change between releases.

- [Data source](#)
- [Accuracy of the data](#)
- [Interpreting the data](#)
- [Timing of published data](#)
- [Confidentiality](#)
- [More information](#)

### Data source

International travel and migration statistics are based on electronic arrival and departure records for each international passenger, supplied to Statistics NZ by the New Zealand Customs Service. These electronic records include flight and passport details, such as date of travel, date of birth, sex, and country of citizenship.

The New Zealand Customs Service also supplies Statistics NZ with arrival and departure cards completed by passengers. Additional detail such as country of residence and travel purpose is captured from these cards and added to the information from electronic records.

Arrival and departure cards are owned by Immigration New Zealand, and are used to administer numerous New Zealand laws in addition to the production of statistics. Statistics NZ captures information from the cards only for statistical purposes, and passes the cards to Immigration NZ after data capture is complete.

See the [arrival card](#) (PDF, 84kb). See the [departure card](#). These are for reference only.

### Accuracy of the data

#### Data collection

Statistics NZ scans every arrival and departure card, and uses image recognition technology to automatically recognise and code responses. Processing staff then manually capture any required information not captured automatically – as not every response can be clearly recognised by automated software.

The imaging system automatically determines all of the information required for around 9 in every 10 cards, meaning about 1 million records are completed manually each year.

Some response fields are required from every card. These include passport number and birth date, which are used to match each card with the corresponding electronic record containing flight and passport details. Some fields are only required for certain passenger types, or for a sample of passengers.

### Changes in recorded passenger intentions

All arrivals and departures are processed so they can be allocated to one of three passenger types: overseas visitors, New Zealand-resident travellers, and permanent and long-term migrants.

A person may change their intentions after their arrival or departure, which may mean the recorded passenger type becomes incorrect. Statistics NZ does not revise published statistics to adjust for such changes.

## Sampling

Some fields are only collected for a sample of passengers. Data from the sample is used to estimate the characteristics of the full population. This still provides a good picture of the characteristics of travellers, while greatly decreasing the time and cost of capturing the data.

All figures for permanent and long-term migrants are actual counts (not derived from a sample). Arrival and departure totals for overseas visitors and New Zealand-resident travellers are also actual counts. More detailed data for overseas visitors and New Zealand-resident travellers, such as figures by country or travel purpose, are derived from a sample.

The sample ratios currently used are:

- Overseas visitor arrivals: 1 in 16
- Overseas visitor departures: 1 in 26
- New Zealand-resident traveller arrivals: 1 in 26
- New Zealand-resident traveller departures: 1 in 20.

Figures derived from a sample may contain sample error (a difference from the actual figure). Small numbers are more likely to contain a large sample error as a percentage of the actual figure, and should be used with caution.

Information about international travel and migration has tables showing the sample errors for selected cell sizes.

## Seasonally adjusted and trend 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 periods more comparable.

The seasonal adjustment process for international travel and migration statistics uses Statistics NZ's standard seasonal adjustment package, X-12-ARIMA, with enhancements that allow the specification and adjustment of additional calendar effects. These include the number and type of trading days in the month (as more people generally arrive and depart on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday), and holiday periods, which have important effects on travel but can occur in different months each year (eg Easter can be in March or April).

Both monthly and quarterly seasonally adjusted series are available. The quarterly series are adjusted independently of the adjustments made to the monthly series. Hence, quarterly figures may not equal the sum of monthly seasonally adjusted figures.

Seasonally adjusted and trend data back to January 1996 is subject to revision each period. The size of these revisions is expected to be minimal, with the largest revisions occurring in the periods immediately before the current month or quarter. Data before January 1996 is not revised. This cut-off is used because of the change to a four-term school year in 1996, which resulted in changes to the seasonal patterns of the New Zealand-resident traveller series.

## Interpreting the data

### Passenger counts

The statistics in this release relate to the number of passenger movements to and from New Zealand, rather than to the number of people – that is, the multiple movements of individual people during a given reference period are each counted separately. For example, a New Zealand resident making five business trips overseas within a year would be counted as five arrivals and five departures.

### Timing of published data

**Final international travel and migration statistics:** released approximately three weeks after the end of the reference month. This delay is longer for December and January data due to the peak travel period coinciding with the Christmas and New Year holidays.

**New Zealand and overseas port data:** becomes available two working days after the international travel and migration release.

**Provisional international travel statistics:** normally released at 3pm every Friday on the [Provisional international travel statistics](#) web page. These show the latest weekly and four-weekly figures for visitor arrivals and New Zealand-resident traveller departures, including figures for 10 major source and destination countries. No further data is available until the monthly release of final statistics.

### Confidentiality

Statistics NZ releases statistics derived from arriving and departing passenger records. It does not release the records of individual passengers.

### More information

[Information about international travel and migration.](#)

### Liability

While all care and diligence has been used in processing, analysing, and extracting data and information in this publication, Statistics NZ gives no warranty it is error-free and will not be liable for any loss or damage suffered by the use directly, or indirectly, of the information in this publication.

### Timing

Our information releases are delivered electronically by third parties. Delivery may be delayed by circumstances outside our control. Statistics NZ does not accept responsibility for any such delay.

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## Tables

The following tables are available in Excel format from the 'Downloads' box. If you have problems viewing the files, see [Opening files and PDFs](#).

1. International travel and migration, by direction and passenger type, actual counts
2. International travel and migration, by direction and passenger type, seasonally adjusted and trend series
3. Short-term overseas visitor arrivals, by country of last permanent residence
4. Short-term overseas visitor arrivals, by travel purpose and country of last permanent residence
5. Short-term New Zealand-resident traveller departures, by country of main destination
6. Permanent and long-term arrivals, by country of last permanent residence
7. Permanent and long-term departures, by country of next permanent residence
8. Net permanent and long-term migration, by country of last/next permanent residence
9. Permanent and long-term migration, by citizenship, actual counts
10. Permanent and long-term migration, by citizenship, seasonally adjusted series

## Quarterly data

Please note that quarterly data has not been included in these information release tables. This has allowed data for the September 2010 month to be included, which is more comparable with September 2012 since the September 2011 data was affected by the Rugby World Cup.

If you would like the tables with quarterly data rather than September 2010 figures, please email [demography@stats.govt.nz](mailto:demography@stats.govt.nz).

## Access more data on Infoshare

Use [Infoshare](#) to access time-series data specific to your needs. For this release, select the following categories from the Infoshare home page:

Subject category: **Tourism**

Group: **International Travel and Migration**