

# International Travel and Migration: May 2013

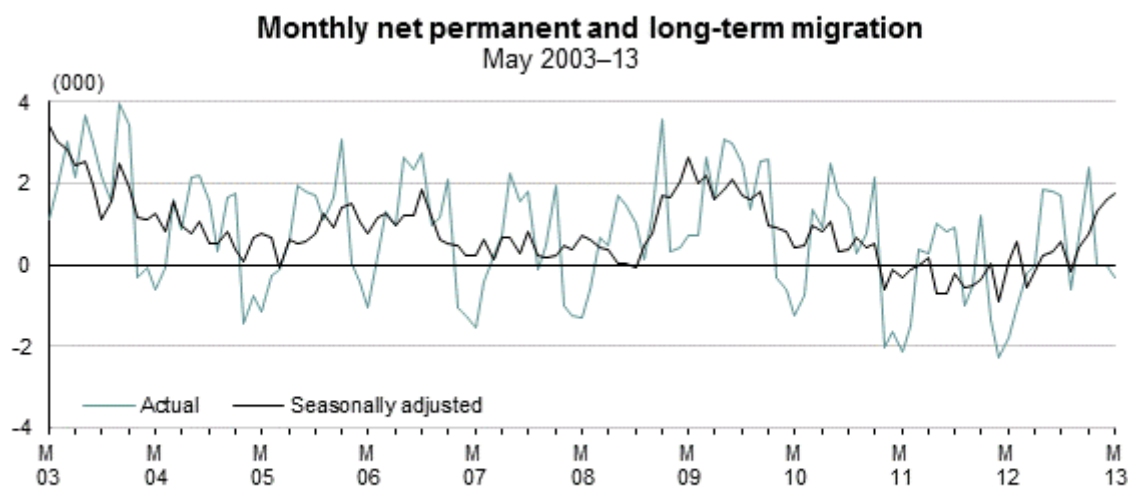
Embargoed until 10:45am – 24 June 2013

## Key facts

In May 2013 compared with May 2012:

- Visitor arrivals (153,000) were up 12,200. The biggest changes were in arrivals from:
  - Australia (up 8,000)
  - China (up 3,900).
- Overseas trips by New Zealand residents (182,400) were up 3,100. The biggest changes were in departures to:
  - the United States (up 2,700)
  - Samoa (down 1,100)
  - the United Kingdom (down 1,700)
  - Australia (down 2,200).

In May 2013, seasonally adjusted figures showed a net gain of 1,700 migrants.



Source: Statistics New Zealand

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Acting Government Statistician

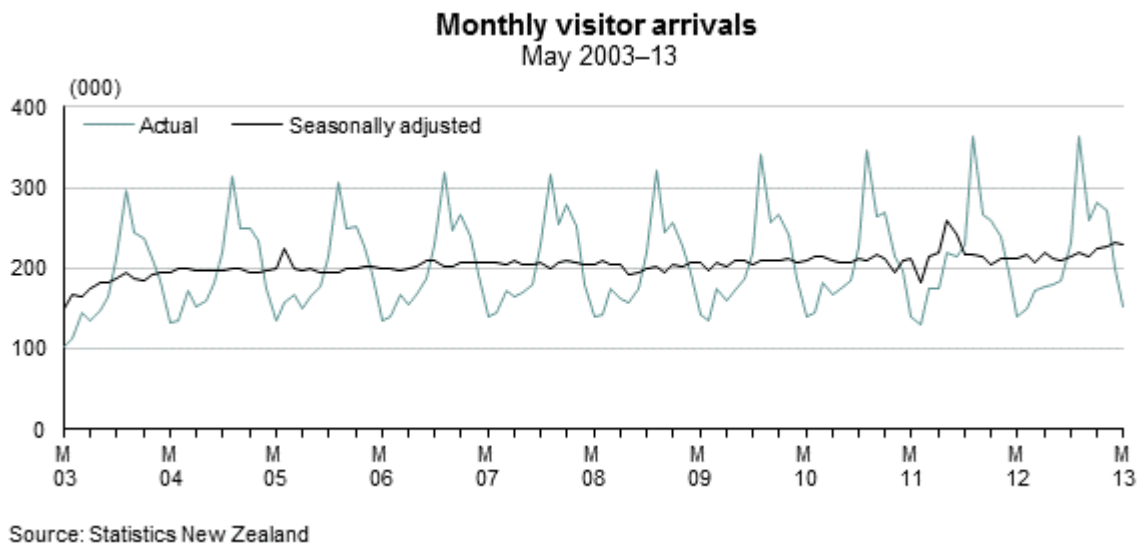
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## Commentary

- May visitor arrivals hit record high
- Annual visitor arrivals edge up from May 2012 year
- New Zealand residents take more trips in May
- More trips to the United States in the May 2013 year
- Fewer departures to Australia push up monthly net migration
- More migrants arrive and fewer depart in the May 2013 year

### May visitor arrivals hit record high

Short-term overseas visitor arrivals to New Zealand numbered 153,000 in May 2013, up 9 percent from May 2012 (140,800). The latest figure was the highest ever for a May month, easily surpassing the previous high recorded in 2009 (141,900).



### Visitor arrivals by country of residence

The biggest changes in visitors by country of residence between May 2012 and May 2013 were in arrivals from:

- Australia (up 8,000)
- China (up 3,900).

Arrivals increased from most Australian states, led by New South Wales (up 3,600), Queensland, and Victoria (each up 1,500).

Visitor arrivals from China have doubled in the past two years, from 8,600 in May 2011 to 16,800 in May 2013. Twenty years ago, in May 1993, visitors from China numbered only 300.

## **Visitor arrivals by travel purpose**

The biggest changes in visitors by travel purpose between May 2012 and May 2013 were in arrivals for:

- visiting friends and relatives (up 4,000)
- holidays (up 3,200)
- conferences and conventions (up 2,000).

Most of the increase from China was from holiday visitors (up 3,200). In contrast, the increase from Australia was spread between people visiting friends and relatives (up 2,900), conferences and conventions (up 2,100), and holidays (up 1,900).

## **Annual visitor arrivals edge up from May 2012 year**

There were 2.628 million visitor arrivals to New Zealand in the May 2013 year. This is up less than 1 percent from the May 2012 year, but that year was boosted by visitor arrivals for the Rugby World Cup. The 2013 figure was up 4 percent compared with the May 2011 year.

Visitor numbers from China and Australia increased compared with the May 2012 year, up 48,200 and 20,000, respectively.

There were fewer visitors from the United Kingdom (down 25,700), France (down 12,000), and South Africa (down 10,100), as the Rugby World Cup boosted visitors from these countries in the May 2012 year. Visitors from the United Kingdom have generally declined since 2007, near the beginning of the global financial crisis.

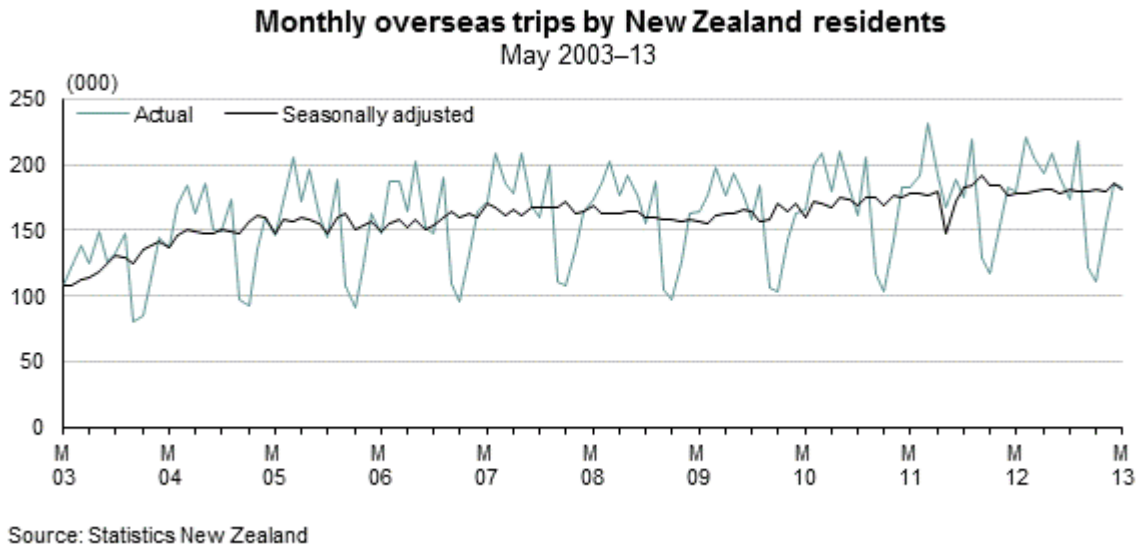
Visitor numbers from Malaysia also decreased (down 12,600), after direct flights between Kuala Lumpur and Christchurch were discontinued at the end of May 2012.

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

## **New Zealand residents take more trips in May**

New Zealand residents departed on 182,400 overseas trips in May 2013, up 2 percent from May 2012 (179,300). The latest figure was a new high for a May month, surpassing the 181,800 departures in May 2011.

In recent years, May departure numbers have been influenced by cruises from New Zealand. New Zealanders departing the country by cruise ship numbered 3,400 in May 2013, compared with none in May last year. In May 2011, 5,100 residents departed by cruise ship.



### Overseas trips by country of main destination

The biggest changes in overseas trips by country of main destination (where the person will spend the most time) between May 2012 and May 2013 were in trips to:

- the United States (up 2,700)
- Samoa (down 1,100)
- the United Kingdom (down 1,700)
- Australia (down 2,200).

Trips to Samoa returned to their 2011 level, following an increase last year. In May 2012, departures to Samoa were higher towards the end of the month, coinciding with the country celebrating 50 years of independence.

### More trips to the United States in the May 2013 year

Trips by New Zealand residents in the May 2013 year (2.163 million) were up 2 percent from the May 2012 year (2.125 million).

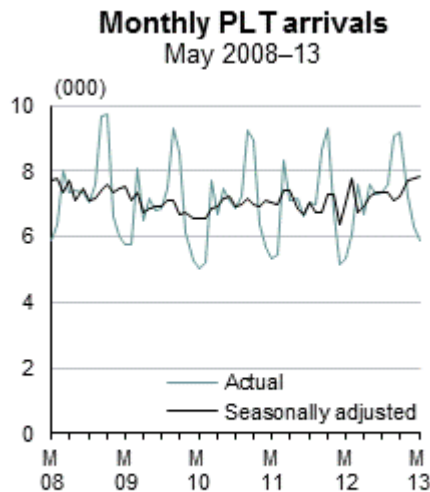
The biggest increase was in trips to the United States (up 15,200). Over recent decades, changes in the number of trips to the United States have followed changes in the exchange rate.

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

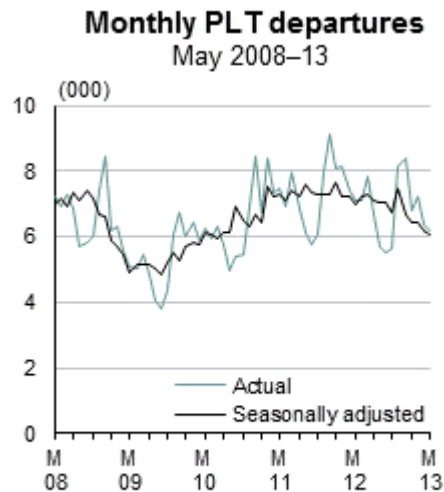
### Fewer departures to Australia push up monthly net migration

Seasonally adjusted permanent and long-term (PLT) migration figures showed a net gain (more arrivals than departures) of 1,700 migrants in May 2013, the highest net gain since January 2010 (1,800). The increase in net migration over the last five months was mainly due to fewer New Zealand citizen departures to Australia. There has also been an increase in arrivals during this period.

The seasonally adjusted net loss of 1,900 migrants to Australia in May 2013 was the smallest net loss since July 2010 (1,600). The latest net loss to Australia was well down on the recent high of 3,600 recorded in September 2011.



Source: Statistics New Zealand



Source: Statistics New Zealand

## More migrants arrive and fewer depart in the May 2013 year

Unadjusted figures showed there were 87,800 PLT arrivals in the May 2013 year, up 5 percent from the May 2012 year (83,800). PLT departures numbered 81,500, down 7 percent from the previous year (87,400). This resulted in a net migration gain of 6,200 in the May 2013 year, compared with a net loss of 3,700 in the May 2012 year.

Auckland, Canterbury, and Otago were the only regions that had net gains of international migrants. The Canterbury region's net gain of 2,600 migrants in the May 2013 year compared with a net loss of 2,500 in the May 2012 year, following the Christchurch earthquake in February 2011.

The net loss of 32,900 people to Australia in the May 2013 year was down from a net loss of 39,600 in the May 2012 year. The smaller net loss resulted from 49,300 departures to Australia (down 4,000), offset by 16,500 arrivals from Australia (up 2,700). In both directions, most migrants were New Zealand citizens.

There were net gains of migrants from most other countries in the May 2013 year, led by:

- the United Kingdom (6,300)
- China (5,400)
- India (5,100)
- the Philippines (2,000)
- Germany (1,900).

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: June 2013* will be released on 19 July 2013.

[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

## Period-specific information

This section has information that has changed since the last release.

- [Changes to arrival and departure information](#)

## General information

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](#)

## Period-specific information

### Changes to arrival and departure information

Statistics NZ, the New Zealand Customs Service, and Immigration New Zealand are changing the information collected from international passengers. Details of these changes are contained in [New Zealand arrival and departure information: Final report on consultation](#).

Resulting changes to the statistics include:

- country of birth will no longer be available for overseas visitors and New Zealand-resident travellers from July 2013, but will remain available for permanent and long-term migrants
- overseas port of embarkation/disembarkation will be discontinued from July 2013, and replaced by statistics on the closest overseas port of the passenger's flight
- the country of **next** permanent residence of overseas visitor departures will be replaced with the country of **last** permanent residence, copied from the passenger's arrival record.

Changes to Infoshare series containing the affected data will be noted on the Infoshare [changes by date](#) web page.

## General 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 New Zealand 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

See more [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

## Access more data on Infoshare

Infoshare allows you to organise data in the way that best meets your needs. You can view the resulting tables onscreen or download them.

### Use Infoshare

For this release, select the following categories from the Infoshare homepage:

Subject category: **Tourism**

Group: **International Travel and Migration**