

International Travel and Migration: November 2015

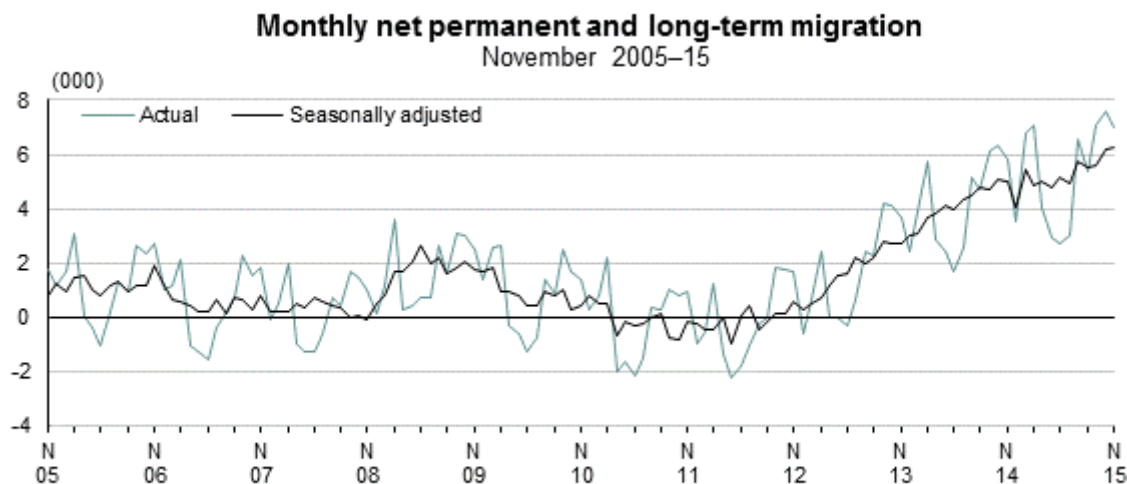
Embargoed until 10:45am – 21 December 2015

Key facts

In November 2015 compared with November 2014:

- Visitor arrivals (300,500) were up 30,100. The biggest changes were in arrivals from:
 - China (up 9,600)
 - Australia (up 7,400)
 - the United States (up 2,300)
 - Korea (up 1,400)
 - Taiwan (up 1,400).
- Overseas trips by New Zealand residents (182,400) were up 4,600. The biggest changes were in departures to:
 - Australia (up 2,600)
 - Fiji (up 1,400).

In November 2015, seasonally adjusted figures showed a record net gain of 6,300 migrants.



Source: Statistics New Zealand

See the [commentary](#) and [tables](#) for more information, including annual results.

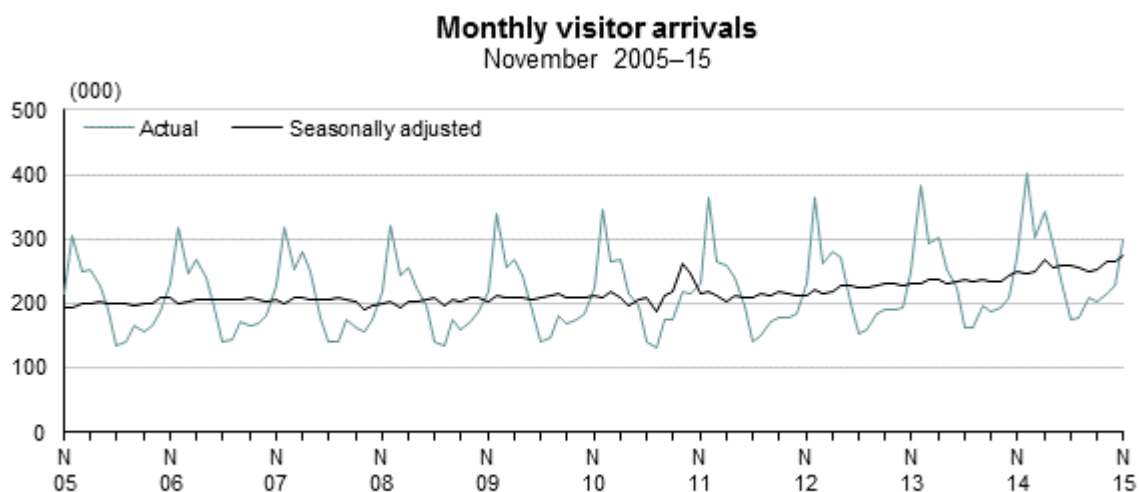
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Commentary

- [Holiday travellers from China drive increase in visitor arrivals in November](#)
- [Annual visitor arrivals reach a record-breaking 3.09 million](#)
- [New Zealand residents head for Australia and Fiji in November](#)
- [Highest annual New Zealand resident departures](#)
- [Migration continues to break records in November 2015](#)
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Holiday travellers from China drive increase in visitor arrivals in November

Overseas visitor arrivals to New Zealand numbered 300,500 in November 2015, up 30,100 (11 percent) from November 2014. Holiday visitors from China (up 9,500) were one of the main drivers of this increase.



Source: Statistics New Zealand

Visitor arrivals by country of residence

The biggest changes in visitors by country of residence between November 2014 and 2015 were in arrivals from:

- China (up 9,600 to 36,700)
- Australia (up 7,400 to 110,000)
- the United States (up 2,300 to 26,800).

Visitors arriving from China were the highest-ever for a November month, twice as high as November 2013, and up 35 percent from November 2014. Most visitors were from Beijing (4,400), Shanghai (4,400), and Guangdong (4,200).

Most visitors arriving from Australia came from New South Wales (40,000), Queensland (27,600), and Victoria (25,800).

Visitor arrivals by travel purpose

The biggest changes in visitors by travel purpose between November 2014 and 2015 were in arrivals for:

- holidays (up 24,400 to 163,400)
- conferences and conventions (up 2,400 to 8,900)
- business (up 2,200 to 30,100).

More holiday arrivals from China (up 9,500) and Australia (up 3,200) were mainly responsible for the increase in holiday visitors. Most visitors from China were holidaymakers (80 percent), compared with 37 percent from Australia.

The increase in conference and convention visitors was driven by arrivals from Australia, the United States, and the United Kingdom.

Annual visitor arrivals reach a record-breaking 3.09 million

Visitor arrivals to New Zealand numbered 3.09 million in the November 2015 year, the highest-ever annual total. This was 9 percent higher than in the November 2014 year.

The biggest changes in visitors by country of residence between the years ended November 2014 and 2015 were in arrivals from:

- China (up 87,400 to 344,900)
- Australia (up 71,300 to 1.32 million)
- the United States (up 21,100 to 240,000).

Australia, China, the United States, and the United Kingdom (200,100) were New Zealand's biggest visitor sources, contributing over two-thirds of all arrivals in the November 2015 year.

Holidays (1.53 million arrivals) were the most common reason for visiting New Zealand in the November year. Visiting friends and relatives (941,100) was the second most common reason, led by arrivals from Australia, with 40 percent travelling here to visit friends and relatives.

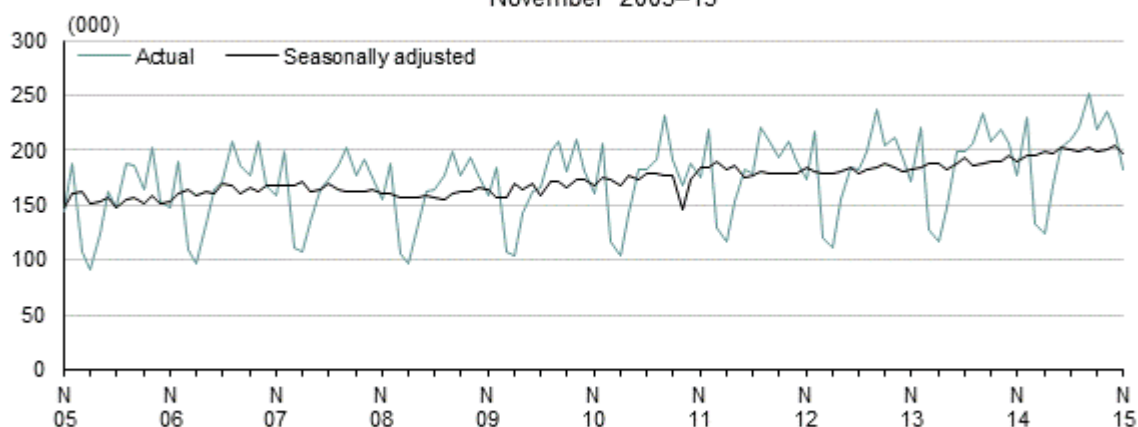
For more detailed data about visitor arrivals, see the Excel tables in the 'Downloads' box.

New Zealand residents head for Australia and Fiji in November

New Zealand-resident travellers departed on 182,400 overseas trips in November 2015, up 4,600 (3 percent) from November 2014. Departures to Australia and Fiji were the highest-ever for a November month.

Monthly overseas trips by New Zealand residents

November 2005–15



Source: Statistics New Zealand

Overseas trips by country of main destination

The biggest changes in overseas trips by country of main destination (where the person will spend most time) between November 2014 and 2015 were in trips to:

- Australia (up 2,600 to 92,500)
- Fiji (up 1,400 to 9,900)
- India (up 1,000 to 7,300)
- the United States (down 1,100 to 9,700).

Visiting friends and relatives was the reason for 39 percent of the trips to Australia in November 2015, while 35 percent were for holidays, and 18 percent for business trips.

Highest annual New Zealand resident departures

New Zealand residents departed on 2.39 million overseas trips in the November 2015 year, the highest-ever annual total. This was up 129,900 (6 percent) from the November 2014 year.

The biggest changes in New Zealand resident departures by country of main destination between the years ended November 2014 and 2015 were in departures for:

- Australia (up 49,200 to 1.14 million)
- Fiji (up 17,500 to 145,700)
- the United States (up 13,000 to 175,600)
- China (up 7,500 to 84,100)
- the United Kingdom (up 7,400 to 109,600).

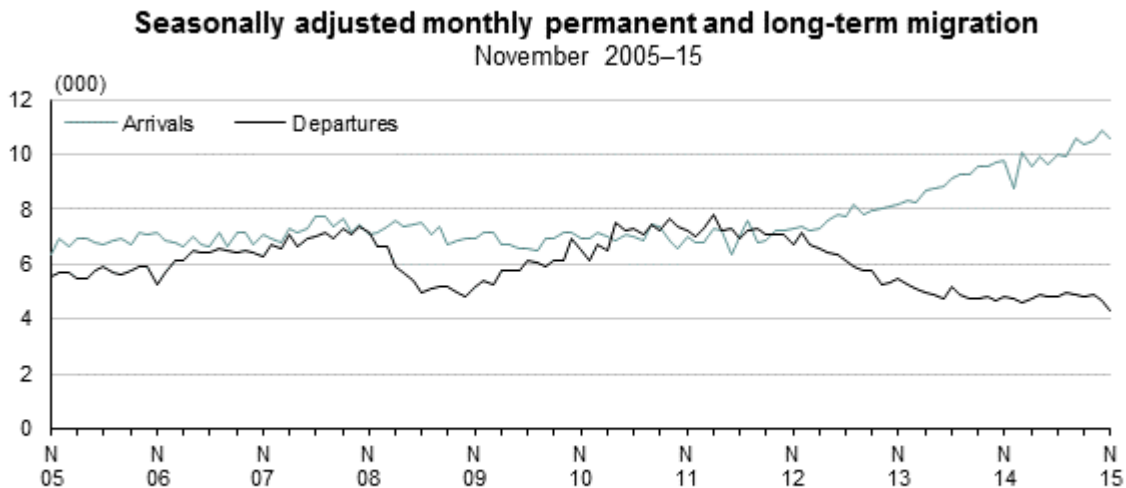
Almost half of all trips by New Zealand residents were to Australia in the November 2015 year.

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

Migration continues to break records in November 2015

Seasonally adjusted permanent and long-term (PLT) migration figures showed a record net gain (more arrivals than departures) of 6,300 migrants in November 2015. Net migration has been regularly breaking records since August 2014 (4,800), when it surpassed the previous highest net gain of 4,700 in February 2003.

November 2015 had a seasonally adjusted net gain of 200 migrants from Australia, the eighth month in a row to show a net gain. Before April 2015, the last net gain in migrants from Australia had been over 20 years ago (in June 1991).



Source: Statistics New Zealand

Annual net gain of migrants breaks record for 16th month in a row

Unadjusted figures showed a record net gain of 63,700 migrants in the November 2015 year. The annual gain in migrants has set new records for the last 16 months. Before the August 2014 year (43,500), the highest annual net gain in migrants was 42,500 in the May 2003 year.

Both more arrivals and fewer departures drove the increased net gain of migrants in the November 2015 year. Migrant arrivals (120,900) continued to reach a new high, up 11 percent from the November 2014 year. Migrant departures (57,200) were down 3 percent.

PLT migration by country of residence

The increase in migrant arrivals between the two November years was led by:

- India (up 3,300 to 14,500)
- Australia (up 2,100 to 25,100)
- the Philippines (up 1,500 to 5,300)
- China (up 1,300 to 10,900).

The increase in arrivals from Australia was for both New Zealand citizens and non-New Zealand citizens.

The fall in migrant departures was due to fewer New Zealand citizens leaving for Australia. Departures of New Zealand citizens to Australia fell 12 percent in the November 2015 year (down to 21,300). This is less than half the record 48,800 departures in the December 2012 year.

The net gain of 400 migrants from Australia in the November 2015 year was the second month in a row with an annual net gain of migrants. Before this, there had not been an annual net gain of migrants from Australia since the November 1991 year.

New Zealand recorded net gains of migrants from most other countries in the November 2015 year, led by:

- India (13,300)
- China (8,800)
- the Philippines (5,000)
- the United Kingdom (3,700).

PLT migrant arrivals by visa type

The biggest changes in migrant arrivals by visa type between the November 2014 and 2015 years were:

- student visas (up 5,100 to 27,800)
- work visas (up 4,100 to 37,200)
- New Zealand and Australian citizens (up 1,900 to 35,600).

Most of the students were from India (10,900), China (5,300), and the Philippines (2,100). The median age of a migrant arriving from India on a student visa was 23 years, compared with 19 years from China, and 25 years from the Philippines.

The biggest sources of migrants arriving on work visas in the November 2015 year were the United Kingdom, France, Australia, and Germany. Arrivals on work visas include working holidaymakers.

Another 13,900 migrants arrived on residence visas. Most migrants gain New Zealand residence after, rather than before, arrival. Many arrive on temporary visas (eg work, student) and transfer to a residence visa after spending time in New Zealand.

PLT migration by New Zealand region

All regions had a net gain of international migrants in the November 2015 year, led by Auckland (29,700), and Canterbury (6,800). The next-biggest net gains of migrants were in Waikato, Wellington, Bay of Plenty, and Otago.

Just over half of all migrants who stated an address on their arrival card were moving to the Auckland region. Of those who stated an address on their departure card, 42 percent were migrating from the Auckland region. In comparison, the Auckland region is home to 34 percent of New Zealand's population (at 30 June 2015).

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. Migration affects the composition 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: the country where the person last lived or will next live for 12 months or more.

Migrant: see [Permanent and long-term arrivals and departures](#).

New Zealand region: the area in New Zealand containing the residential or contact address stated on a passenger's arrival or departure card. Regional council areas are approximated by grouping territorial authority (city and district council) areas. Where a territorial authority area is split across regional council areas, it is fully included in the region that most of its population lives in.

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 are living for 12 months or more.

Permanent and long-term arrivals (migrant 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 (migrant departures): New Zealanders departing for an absence of 12 months or more (including permanently), and migrants leaving 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.

Visa type: the type of immigration visa held or granted on arrival in New Zealand. People may change their visa type later while still in New Zealand.

Related links

Next release

International Travel and Migration: December 2015 will be released on 1 February 2016.

[Subscribe to information releases](#), including this one, by completing the online subscription form. You can also subscribe to receive International Visitor Arrivals to New Zealand, and our weekly provisional international travel statistics.

[The release calendar](#) lists all 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 2pm 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.

[Cruise New Zealand data](#) has figures on cruise ship visits and cruise passengers. This includes passengers considered to be 'in transit' by the Immigration Act 2009, who are not included in international travel and migration statistics.

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

General information

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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. Statistics NZ captures additional detail such as country of residence and travel purpose from these cards, and adds it to the information from electronic records.

Immigration New Zealand owns the arrival and departure cards, which are used to administer numerous New Zealand laws in addition to producing statistics. Statistics NZ only captures information from the cards for statistical purposes, and passes the cards to Immigration New Zealand after it has captured the data.

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 automated software cannot clearly recognise every response.

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

Statistics NZ processes all arrivals and departures and allocates them 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 for such changes, but advises that the published figures remain a good indicator of trends in permanent and long-term migration.

The [Alternative methods for measuring permanent and long-term migration](#) article has more detail about the effect of intention 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.

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-13ARIMA-SEATS, with enhancements that allow Statistics NZ to specify and adjust 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 2pm 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

[International travel and migration](#) in DataInfo+ has more information. [DataInfo+](#) is the main source of information about our statistical activities and data.

Statistics in this release have been produced in accordance with the [Official Statistics System principles and protocols for producers of Tier 1 statistics](#) for quality. They conform to the Statistics NZ Methodological Standard for Reporting of Data Quality.

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

See the following Excel tables in the 'Downloads' box on this page. 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. Overseas visitor arrivals, by country of last permanent residence
4. Overseas visitor arrivals, by travel purpose and country of last permanent residence
5. 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
11. Permanent and long-term migration, by New Zealand region
12. Permanent and long-term arrivals, by visa type and country of last permanent residence

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**

Next release

International Travel and Migration: December 2015 will be released on 1 February 2016.