

Population Growth

What this is about...

New Zealand has one of the most highly urbanised populations in the world.¹ In 1996, over one third (39%) of New Zealand's population lived in the six largest cities (approximately 1,444,000 people).

Tracking population growth in our major cities ensures that funding, services and facilities are provided to meet the needs of fast growing communities.

This indicator highlights the fast pace of growth in cities, especially in the Auckland Region.

What did we find ?

- Between 1991 and 1996 population growth in New Zealand averaged around 7.2%, with increased immigration being a key contributor.
- During this period, the rate of population growth in the four largest cities within the Auckland Region was double that for the rest of New Zealand. This trend has continued, with growth in the Auckland Region for the twelve months to June 2000 estimated to be three times higher than the average national growth.
- For the six largest cities, the average annual population growth between 1991 and 1996 was around 2.2% – spurred not only by immigration but from natural population increases and internal migration flows.²
- Approximately 135,000 new people moved into New Zealand's six largest cities between 1991 and 1996.
- Whilst the Auckland Region received more overseas immigrants than internal migrants (people moving from within New Zealand), the opposite was true in both Wellington and Canterbury Regions where internal migration was a more dominant force.

PERCENTAGE POPULATION GROWTH, BY CITY (1991 TO 1996)



Data Source: Statistics New Zealand

Although population growth has generally slowed since the last Census, it is estimated that a further 134,451 people have made New Zealand's six largest cities their home since 1996.³ Two thirds of the nation's population growth has taken place in the six cities, with the rest of New Zealand growing by around 4% in the 1996 to 2000 period.

1 Professor Richard Bedford. 1997. Population Change and Urban Expansion and Infrastructure. Paper presented to the NZ Population Conference.

2 Fertility rates in Manukau, Auckland and Waitakere Cities are relatively high. This reflects the population age structure and higher proportions of Maori and Pacific Islands people (populations that tend to have higher fertility rates).

3 Calculated from Statistics New Zealand estimates for 30 June 2000.

POPULATION COUNTS, BY CITY (1996 TO 2000)

	1996 (Number)	2000 (June estimate)
Auckland	345,768	386,100
Manukau	254,278	286,700
North Shore	172,164	189,700
Waitakere	155,565	174,100
Wellington	157,646	167,400
Christchurch	309,028	324,900

Data Source: Statistics New Zealand

It is estimated that 90% of New Zealand's total population growth in the next twenty years will take place in the North Island, with the four cities of Auckland accounting for more than half of the growth. Manukau is expected to become New Zealand's second largest city by around 2013 (currently Christchurch).⁴

POPULATION PROJECTIONS TO 2021, BY CITY

Year	Auckland	Manukau	North Shore	Waitakere	Wellington	Christchurch
2001	391,000	290,900	192,000	176,400	169,100	327,000
2006	416,500	314,500	205,200	190,200	173,900	336,500
2011	441,500	336,000	218,000	203,300	178,000	344,500
2016	466,500	357,500	230,400	216,400	182,000	352,000
2021	492,000	380,000	242,600	229,800	185,900	358,500

Data Source: Statistics New Zealand (median projections, based on 1996 baseline)