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## Unemployment continues to rise

Revised 20 March 2009 – See Erratum in Hot Off The Press

In seasonally adjusted terms, the labour market showed further signs of weakening as the unemployment rate continued to increase, Statistics New Zealand said today. The December 2008 quarter saw the number of people unemployed rise by 10,000 and the unemployment rate increase to 4.6 percent. The unemployment rate increased steadily throughout 2008.

Over the December 2008 quarter, the unemployment rate increased by 0.4 percentage points to 4.6 percent. The female unemployment rate increased by 0.6 percentage points to 4.7 percent, while the male unemployment rate increased by 0.2 percentage points to 4.4 percent. The number of people unemployed rose by 10.8 percent, to reach 105,000 in the latest quarter, the highest level since the September 2002 quarter.

The number of people employed increased by 21,000 (0.9 percent) over the December 2008 quarter, mostly driven by a rise in male part-time employment. In the past year, employment growth has been concentrated in service-based industries, particularly education, and transport, storage and communications, while the number of people employed has fallen in the agriculture, construction and manufacturing industries.

Despite the rise in employment, total actual hours worked per week fell by 0.5 percent over the December 2008 quarter.

Also in the latest quarter, the labour force participation rate increased by 0.6 percentage points to 69.3 percent. Both male and female labour force participation rates increased over the December 2008 quarter, rising to 75.8 percent and 63.2 percent, respectively.

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5 February 2009

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See also the Hot Off The Press information release [Household Labour Force Survey: December 2008 quarter](#).

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