

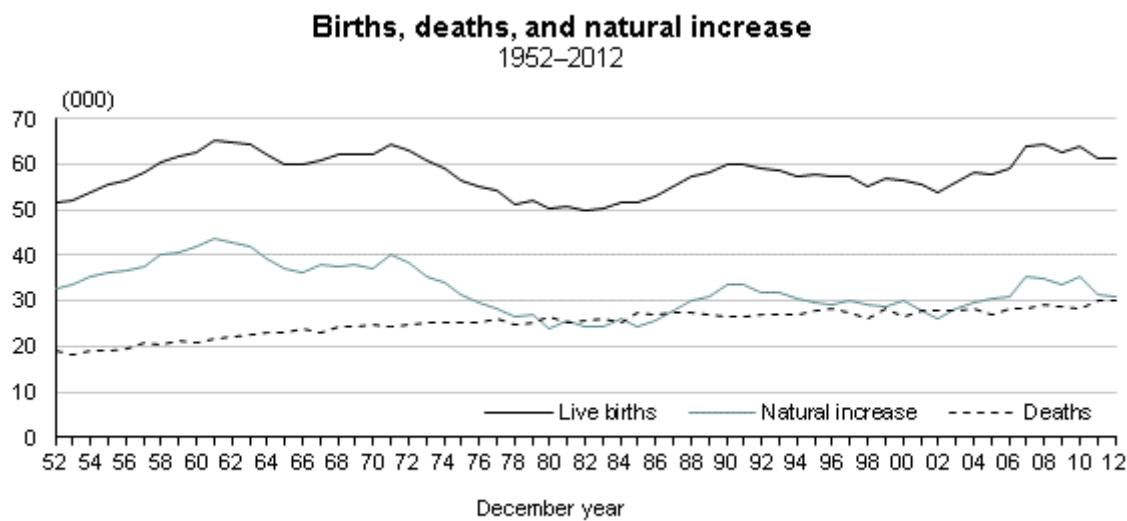
# Births and Deaths: Year ended December 2012

Embargoed until 10:45am – 19 February 2013

## Key facts

In the December 2012 year:

- 61,178 live births and 30,099 deaths were registered in New Zealand, resulting in a natural increase (live births minus deaths) of 31,079.
- There were 225 fewer births and 17 more deaths compared with 2011.
- The total fertility rate was 2.0 births per woman.
- The infant mortality rate was 4.2 deaths per 1,000 live births.



Source: Statistics New Zealand

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## Commentary

- Live births down in 2012
- Number of Auckland births stable
- Women aged 30–34 years have the highest fertility rate
- Small increase in the number of deaths
- Infant mortality rate down to 4.2 deaths per 1,000 live births
- Changes to the births and deaths release

### Live births down in 2012

There were 61,178 live births registered in New Zealand in 2012, down 225 from 2011. This is the lowest number of births since 2006, when 59,193 births were registered.

In part, annual fluctuations in births reflect changes in the size and age of the population, the age at which women have children, and the number of children they have. In turn, the number of births influences the future size and age of the population.

The highest number of births ever recorded in any December year was 65,390, in 1961. At that time, New Zealand's population was just 2.5 million, compared with 4.5 million in 2012.

### Number of Auckland births stable

There were 22,837 live births in the Auckland region during 2012, up slightly from 22,660 in 2011. The number of births in the Auckland region has been relatively stable over the last five years, accounting for an average of 37 percent of all New Zealand births. Auckland accounts for approximately 34 percent of New Zealand's population.

For babies born to mothers living in the Auckland region, just over 6 out of 10 had at least one parent born in New Zealand, compared with nearly 9 out of 10 for the rest of New Zealand.

Babies born in Auckland in 2012 were more likely to have a Pacific or Asian ethnicity compared with the rest of New Zealand, and were less likely to belong to the European or Māori ethnic groups.

Births by ethnic group (based on the child's ethnicity) 2012		
Ethnic group	Percent	
	Auckland	Rest of New Zealand
European	52	76
Māori	20	33
Pacific	28	9
Asian	26	9

**Note:** Babies may belong to more than one ethnic group. As a result percentages sum to more than 100 percent.

European and Māori babies in Auckland were more likely to also belong to at least one other ethnic group compared with the rest of New Zealand. Pacific and Asian babies born in Auckland were less likely to have multiple ethnicities than babies in these ethnic groups born elsewhere in the country.

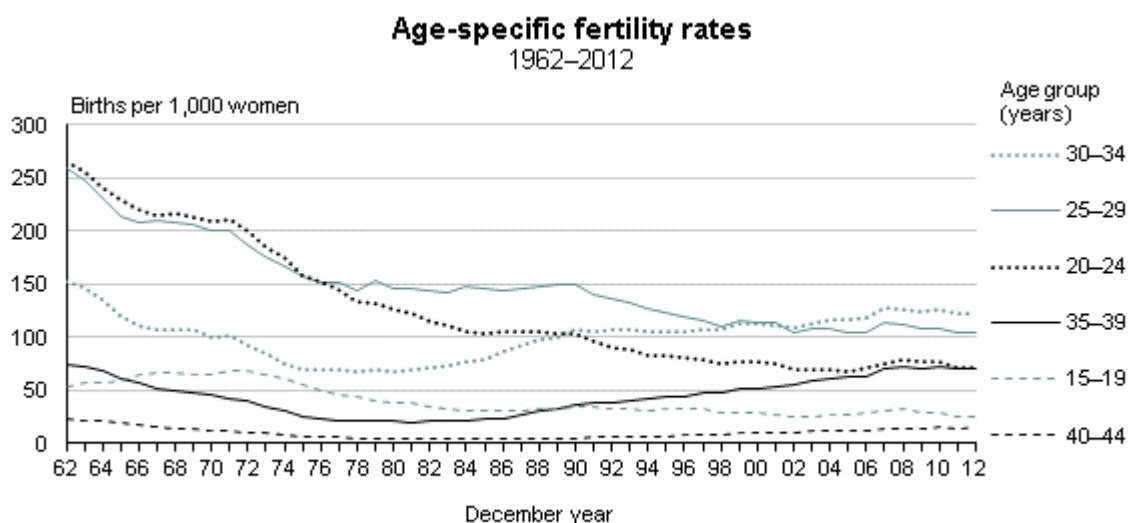
## Women aged 30–34 years have the highest fertility rate

Age-specific fertility rates measure the number of live births 1,000 women in a particular age-group have in a given period (usually a year).

In 2012, women aged 30–34 years had the highest fertility rate (122 births per 1,000 women aged 30–34 years). The next highest fertility rates were as follows:

- 25–29 years – 105
- 20–24 years – 71
- 35–39 years – 71.

Compared with the high fertility seen in the early 1960s, women in all age groups now have fewer babies. In 1962, women aged 20–24 had the highest fertility rate (265 per 1,000), followed by those aged 25–29 years (259 per 1,000) and 30–34 years (152 per 1,000).



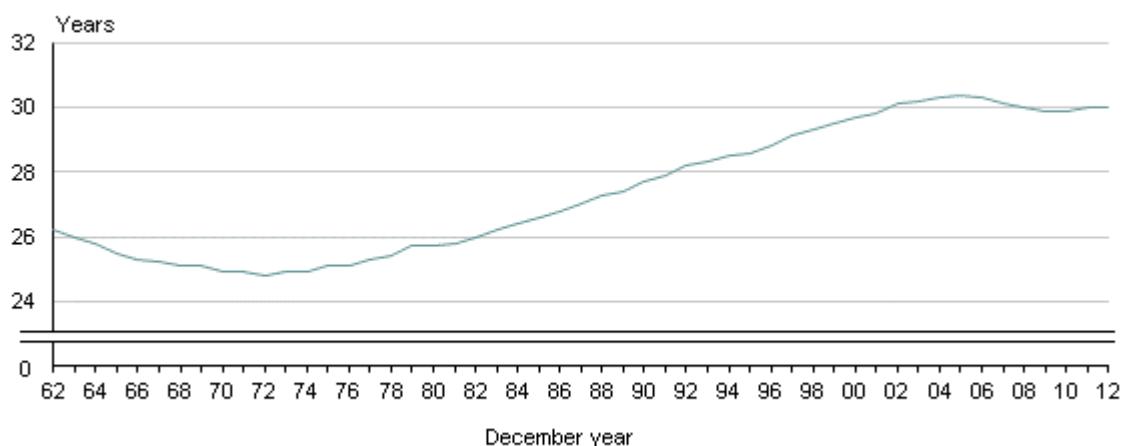
Source: Statistics New Zealand

## Median age of mother

The median age (half are younger and half older than this age) of New Zealand women giving birth is now 30 years, compared with 26 years in the early 1960s. The median age dropped to just under 25 years in the early 1970s.

Although there has been a significant increase in the median age since the 1970s, it has stayed relatively stable over the past decade at around 30 years. While there has been a small drop since 2005, this does not necessarily indicate a reversal of the trend towards older childbearing, but partly reflects changes in age structure within the childbearing age group.

### Median age of mother 1962–2012



Source: Statistics New Zealand

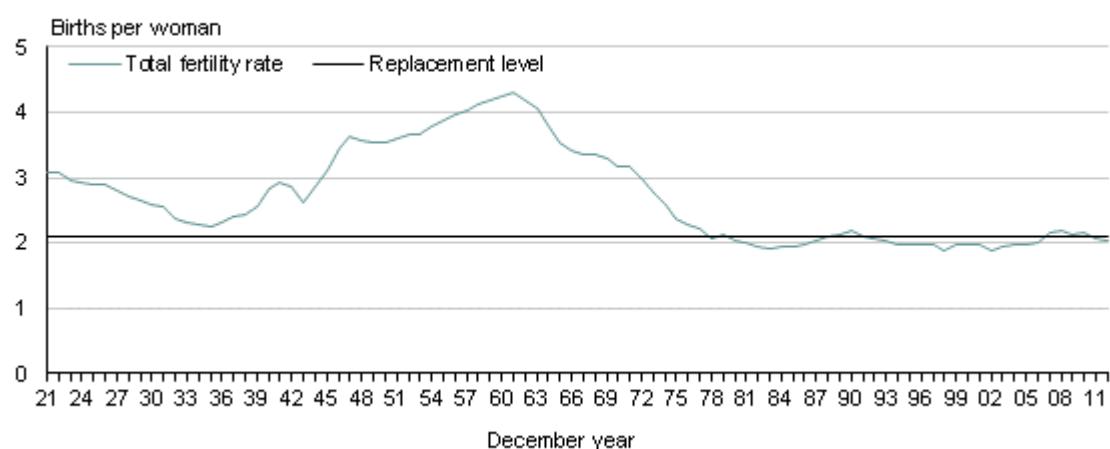
### Total fertility rate lower

The total fertility rate summarises the age-specific fertility rates into a single-number indicator of fertility. It indicates, on average, the number of babies a woman would have in her lifetime if the age-specific fertility rates in a given period stayed the same throughout her life.

The total fertility rate for 2012 was 2.05 births per woman – down from 2.06 births in 2011. Annual fluctuations in the total fertility rate do not necessarily indicate changes in family size, but rather changes in the timing of births.

New Zealand's total fertility rate has been relatively stable over the last three decades, averaging 2.02 births per woman. During this period, the total fertility rate varied from 1.89 births per woman (in 1998 and 2002) to 2.18 (in 1990 and 2008). In contrast, fertility rates increased dramatically from the mid-1940s, peaking at 4.31 births per woman in 1961. New Zealand then experienced decreasing fertility over the following two decades.

### Total fertility rate 1921–2012



Source: Statistics New Zealand

## **Small increase in the number of deaths**

The number of deaths registered during 2012 was 30,099, up very slightly from 30,082 in 2011. The increase in the number of deaths is not unexpected. The number of deaths is gradually increasing due to population growth in the older age groups, although this is partly offset by longer life expectancy.

Fifty years ago, in 1962, deaths numbered 22,081. The number of deaths increased over the following 10 years, to 24,801 in 1972. Deaths averaged 26,512 per year during the 1980s, 27,196 during the 1990s, and 28,093 during the 2000s. Our population projections (median projection) indicate that the number of deaths will continue to increase, passing 40,000 in 2033 and 50,000 in 2046.

Compared with 20 years ago, death rates dropped for all ages. Overall, deaths are increasingly concentrated in the older age groups. The median age at death in 2012 was 78 years for males and 83 years for females, compared with 72 years and 79 years, respectively, in 1992. The standardised death rate (see the 'Definitions' section) decreased from 3.82 in 2011 to 3.69 in 2012. This slight decrease suggests that when death numbers are adjusted for changes in the size, age, and sex of the population, a smaller proportion of people died in 2012 than in 2011.

## **Regional deaths**

Regional figures are based on the usual residence of the deceased, not the place of death. We do not compile statistics on place of death.

During 2012, the Auckland region had the highest number of deaths (7,665). This was similar to 2011 (7,692). Although the Auckland region is home to approximately one-third of New Zealand's population, it only accounted for around one-quarter of New Zealand's deaths. This is due to the region's relatively young age structure. The median age of the Auckland region's population is 34 years, compared with 37 years for the national population.

Canterbury had the next highest number of deaths in 2012 (4,360), down from 4,474 in 2011. The 2011 figure for Canterbury includes fatalities that occurred as both a direct and indirect result of the 22 February 2011 earthquake. However, deaths in 2012 were still higher than in 2010 (4,270).

## **Infant mortality rate down to 4.2 deaths per 1,000 live births**

During 2012, the number of infant deaths (under one year of age) registered in New Zealand was 256. In 2012, the infant mortality rate (infant deaths per 1,000 live births) was 4.2 per 1,000, down from 4.7 in 2011, and 5.6 a decade ago.

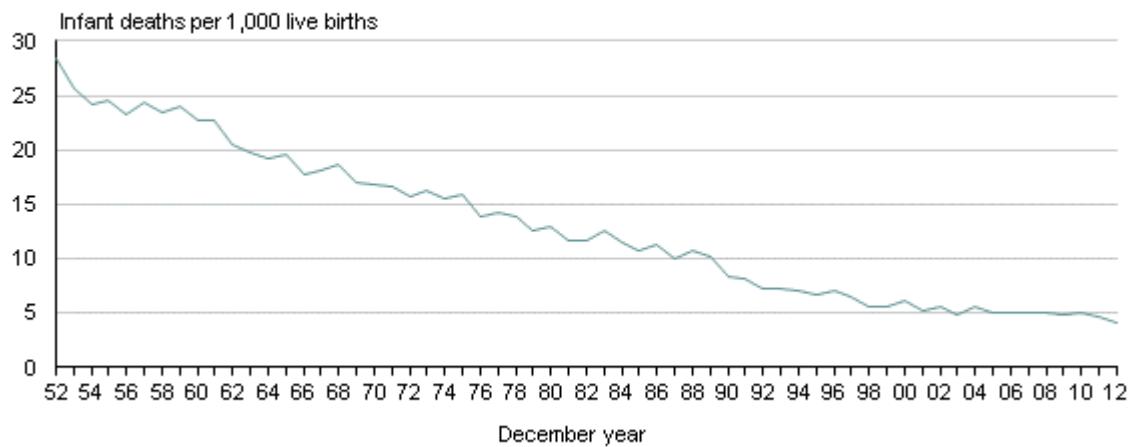
The drop in infant mortality between 2011 and 2012 was due to fewer Māori infants dying (down from 123 to 82).

The Māori neonatal mortality rate (infants under four weeks of age) was 2.2 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2012, down from 3.2 in 2011. The Māori post-neonatal mortality rate (infants aged four weeks and over) also dropped. In 2012 there were 2.5 post-neonatal deaths per 1,000 live births, down from 3.8 in 2011.

Because of the relatively small numbers, annual fluctuations in infant deaths should be treated with caution. Long-term trends indicate that while the infant mortality rate has dropped over the

last decade, the decline has been slower than in previous decades. The rate declined from 28.4 (in 1952), to 15.6 (in 1972), and to 7.2 (in 1992).

**Infant mortality rate**  
1952–2012



Source: Statistics New Zealand

## Changes to the births and deaths release

This is the first annual Births and Deaths information release. Data for the year ended March, June, and September will continue to be released on Infoshare, but information releases and media releases will no longer be published in those quarters.

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

# Definitions

## About births and deaths

Statistics on births and deaths record the number of births and deaths registered in New Zealand each year. The births and deaths information release also includes a range of birth and death rates. These numbers and rates provide information about the structure of New Zealand's population and how it changes over time.

## More definitions

**Age-specific death rates:** deaths per 1,000 mean estimated population in each age group.

**Age-specific fertility rates:** measure the number of live births 1,000 women in a particular age group have in a given period (usually a year). They are calculated by dividing the number of live births to women in a particular age group by the estimated number of women in that age group and then multiplying by 1,000. Five-year age groups are commonly used to provide a summary of patterns in fertility, independent of the size, sex, and age structure of the population.

**Deaths:** deaths registered in New Zealand by date of registration.

**Estimated de facto population:** an estimate of all people present in a given area at a given date. The estimated de facto population of New Zealand includes all people present in New Zealand. Visitors from overseas are included, but New Zealand residents who are temporarily overseas are excluded.

**Estimated resident population:** an estimate of all people who usually live in a given area at a given date. The estimated resident population of New Zealand includes all residents present in New Zealand. Visitors from overseas are excluded, and New Zealand residents who are temporarily overseas are included.

**Live births:** live births registered in New Zealand by date of registration.

**Standardised death rates:** the overall death rate that would have prevailed in a standard population if it had experienced the age-specific (usually age-and-sex-specific) death rates of the population or area being studied. In this information release, the age and sex distribution of the mean estimated population for the year ended 31 December 1961 is used to derive standardised death rates.

[Glossary of Common Terms](#) has more definitions.

## **Related links**

### **Upcoming releases**

*Births and Deaths: Year ended March 2013 – tables* will be released on 16 May 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**

Births and Deaths has links to past releases.

### **Related information**

Births has links to reports and articles and information about birth statistics and birth rates.

Deaths has links to reports and articles and information about death statistics and death rates.

# Data quality

This section contains information about data that does not change between releases.

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

## Data source

Under the provisions of the Births, Deaths, Marriages, and Relationships Registration Act 1995, every birth and death occurring in New Zealand must be registered with Births, Deaths and Marriages (a division of the Department of Internal Affairs).

Statistics NZ receives a monthly electronic file of registered births and deaths from Births, Deaths and Marriages. Statistics NZ is responsible for processing and publishing statistics derived from the birth and death registrations.

## Accuracy of the data

### **Births**

Births data from 1991 are based on births registered in New Zealand to mothers resident in New Zealand by date of registration. Before 1991, births data are based on births registered in New Zealand to mothers resident in New Zealand and mothers visiting from overseas by date of registration. Births data exclude late registrations under section 16 of the Births, Deaths, Marriages, and Relationships Registration Act 1995. Section 16 births are those that were not registered in the ordinary way at the time the birth occurred.

[Late birth registrations](#) has more information about the history and characteristics of late registrations.

### **Children of this relationship**

The birth registration form asks whether there are any other children of this relationship. However, it is possible that children from previous relationships are included. This question does not produce an accurate measure of all live births to a woman (which is needed for accurate measures of birth parity). For privacy reasons, it is deemed unacceptable to ask women about children outside their current relationship.

### **Deaths**

Deaths data from 1991 onwards are based on deaths registered in New Zealand of New Zealand residents by date of registration. Before 1991, deaths data are based on deaths registered in New Zealand of New Zealand residents and people visiting from overseas by date of registration.

### **Demographic rates**

Demographic rates from 1991 onwards are calculated using the mean estimated resident population. Rates before 1991 are calculated using the mean estimated de facto population.

Demographic rates based on the mean estimated resident population are provisional for the reference period of this information release because the population estimates used to calculate the rates are provisional. Publication of final rates in Infoshare will coincide with the publication of

the next quarterly data release. The difference between provisional and final rates is generally small (less than plus or minus 1 per 100,000).

Age-specific fertility rates, median age of mother, and total fertility rates before 1981 are based on December years.

### **Replacement level fertility**

Replacement level fertility is the average number of children a woman needs to have to produce one daughter who survives to childbearing age. Replacement level fertility is also described as the total fertility rate required for the population to replace itself in the long term, without migration.

The internationally accepted replacement level is 2.1 births per woman. Replacement level fertility allows for child mortality (children who die before reaching reproductive age) and the birth of more boys than girls. On average, throughout the world, 105 boys are born for every 100 girls. The actual replacement level will vary slightly from country to country, depending on child mortality rates. In countries with high child mortality, the total fertility rate will need to be higher than 2.1 births per woman to achieve replacement level.

### **Timing of published data**

Statistics NZ aims to publish Births and Deaths within seven weeks of the end of the reference period.

Our information releases are delivered electronically by third parties. Delivery may be delayed by circumstances outside our control. Statistics NZ accepts no responsibility for any such delays.

### **Confidentiality**

In order to comply with Statistics NZ's confidentiality protocols, some categories are collapsed or aggregated in tables and datasets.

### **More information**

See [Information about Births](#) or [Information about Deaths](#) for more technical information.

### **Liability**

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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. Births, deaths, and selected rates, 1996–2012
2. Live births by regional council areas, 1999–2012
3. Deaths by regional council areas, 1999–2012
4. Age-specific fertility rates, 1996–2012
5. Live births by mother's age, 1996–2012
6. Deaths by age and sex, year ended December 2012
7. Age-specific death rates, 1999–2012

## 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 homepage:

Subject category: **Population**

Groups: **Births, birth rates, deaths, and death rates**