

# Survey of Working Life: December 2012 quarter

Embargoed until 10:45am – 26 June 2013

## Key facts

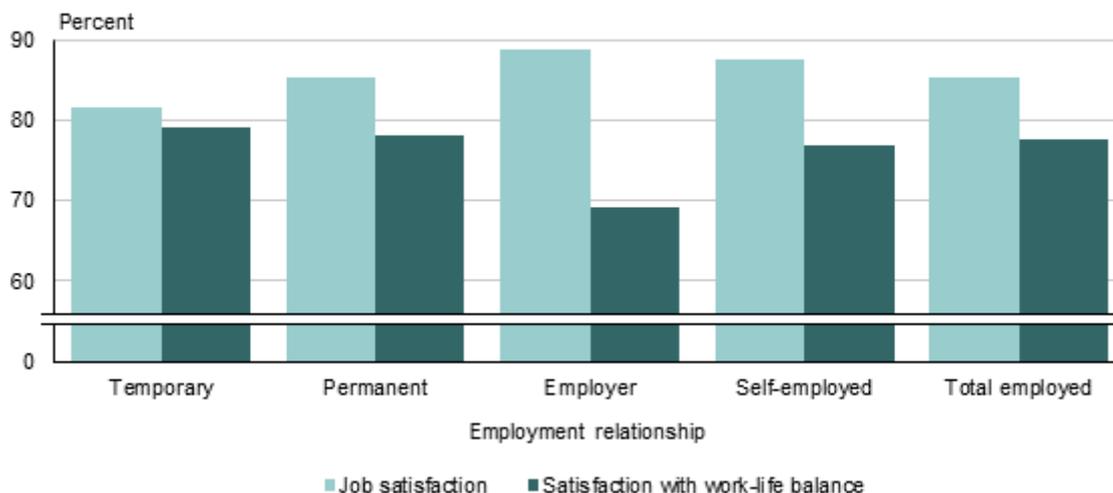
In the December 2012 quarter, for all **employed people**:

- 85 percent were either 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' in their main job
- 8 percent were 'dissatisfied' or 'very dissatisfied' with their work-life balance
- 18 percent had 'always' or 'often' felt stressed at work in the previous 12 months
- 10 percent had experienced discrimination, harassment, or bullying at work in the previous 12 months.

And for all **employees**:

- 36 percent who had started their main job in the previous 12 months had started on a 90-day trial
- 10 percent were temporary workers
- 27 percent were members of a union
- 18 percent of permanent employees thought the chance of losing their job in the next 12 months was 'medium', 'high', or 'almost certain'.

**Job satisfaction and work-life balance satisfaction**  
(Very satisfied/satisfied)  
By employment relationship, December 2012 quarter



Source: Statistics New Zealand

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## Commentary

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The Survey of Working Life (SoWL) was run as supplement to the Household Labour Force Survey in the December 2012 quarter. It collected a wide range of information about people's employment conditions, working arrangements, and quality of working life.

Topics included:

- employment relationship in main job (temporary, permanent, employer, self-employed)
- length of time in main job
- working times and hours
- work at home
- job flexibility
- employer-funded study and training
- work-related health and safety
- annual leave entitlement
- type of employment agreement (individual or collective)
- union membership
- satisfaction with main job and with work-life balance.

This release presents a selection of results from the survey.

Due to seasonality factors no direct comparisons with the March 2008 quarter SoWL data are made in this release.

### Employment relationship

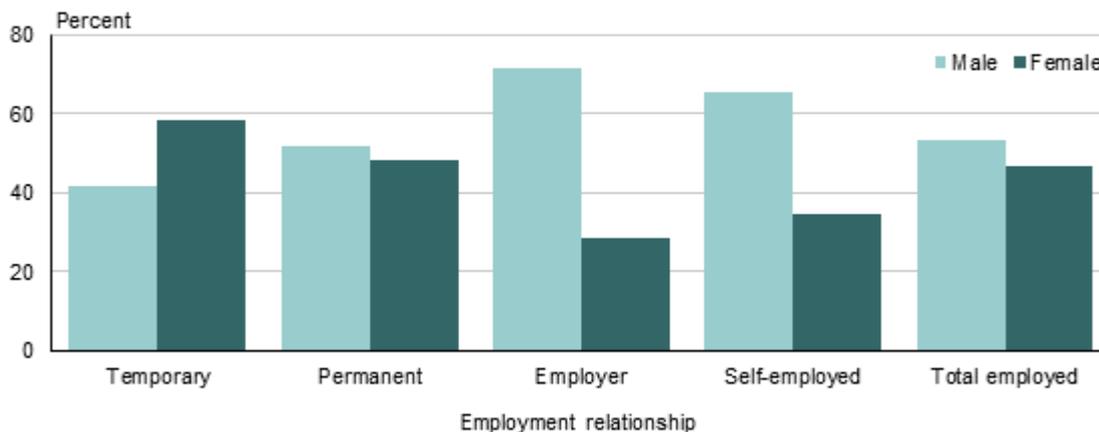
New Zealand's workforce of 2,205,100 can be broken down into different employment relationships, or categories. Employees made up the largest proportion of New Zealand's workforce, with 83.6 percent of respondents in that category. Self-employed people made up 9.9 percent of the workforce and 5.8 percent were employers.

## Workforce structure



## Employment relationship

By sex  
December 2012 quarter



Source: Statistics New Zealand

Men dominated the employer and self-employed categories, while women made up the larger proportion of temporary employees.

## New Zealand's workforce – an overview

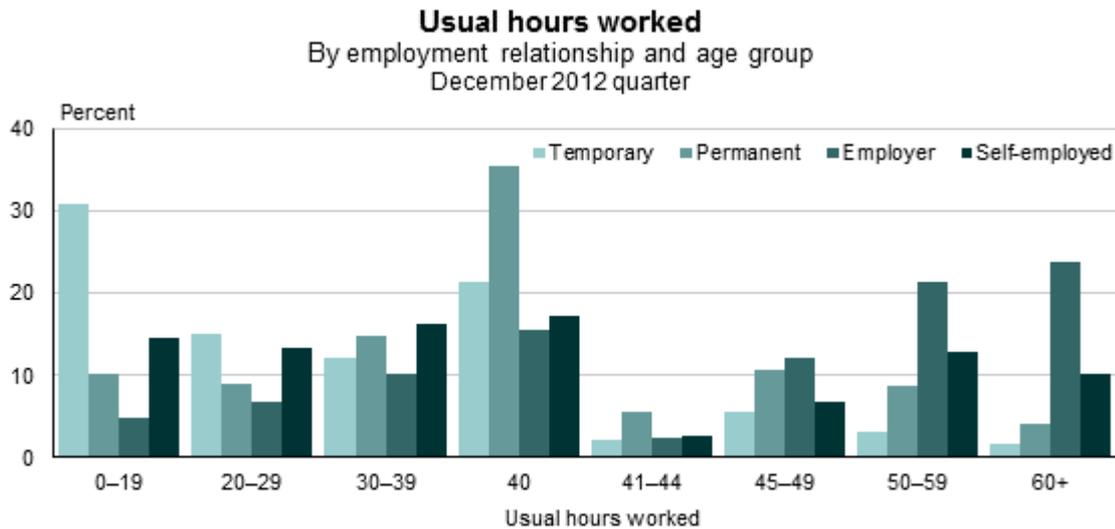
### Working hours

Standard working hours are 7am to 7pm, Monday to Friday. Those working at a standard time were:

- 6 of 10 (63.0 percent) employed people
- two-thirds (66.1 percent) of employees
- less than half of self-employed people (48.9 percent) and employers (44.4 percent).

One-quarter of all employed people (25.6 percent) usually worked long hours (45+ a week). Men (36.6 percent) were much more likely than women (13.2 percent) to work long hours.

Regarding their main job, around one-third (35.5 percent) of permanent employees usually worked a 40-hour week, which was more than double the proportions for employers (15.6 percent) and self-employed people (17.2 percent). Temporary workers were more likely to work less than 20 hours per week. Employers and self-employed people were more likely than employees to usually work 50+ hours a week.



Source: Statistics New Zealand

## Job tenure

People who worked for themselves had the longest job tenures:

- 8 of 10 (78.4 percent) employers had been in their main job five years or more
- 6 of 10 (61.6 percent) self-employed people had been in their main job five years or more
- 4 of 10 (43.9 percent) employees had been in their main job five years or more
- but 2 of every 10 (19.8 percent) employees had been in their job less than a year.

## Work stress

Work stress was a problem for people who had ‘always’ or ‘often’ felt stressed at work in the last 12 months. This was:

- 1 in 5 (18.2 percent) of all employed people
- 3 of 10 (27.7 percent) employers
- 2 of 10 (18.0 percent) employees
- just 14.5 percent of self-employed people.

Just over 1 of 10 (11.3 percent) employees had experienced discrimination, harassment, or bullying at work in the previous 12 months. This was double the proportion for employers (4.1 percent) and the self-employed (5.8 percent).

## Job satisfaction

Nearly 9 of 10 (85.4 percent) employed people were either ‘satisfied’ or ‘very satisfied’ in their main job. Only 1 of 20 (4.7 percent) were either ‘dissatisfied’ or ‘very dissatisfied’.

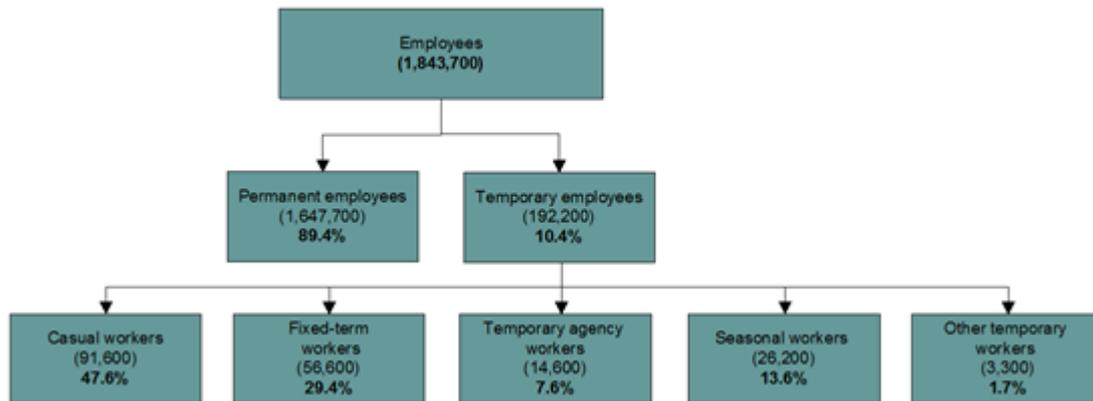
Levels were lower for work-life balance satisfaction:

- 8 of 10 (77.6 percent) employed people were either satisfied or very satisfied
- 1 of 10 (8.4 percent) were either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with their work-life balance.

## Characteristics of employees

Ninety percent of New Zealand's 1,843,700 employees were in permanent jobs, with 10 percent being temporary workers. Temporary employees can be broken down into four categories: casual workers, fixed-term workers, temporary agency workers, and seasonal workers.

Employee structure



## Employment type

The temporary employee group (192,200 people) was made up of:

- 47.6 percent who were casual workers
- 29.4 percent of fixed-term workers
- 13.6 percent of seasonal workers
- 7.6 percent of temporary agency workers.

SoWL found some notable differences between permanent and temporary employees, or between different types of temporary workers.

- Temporary workers were more likely to be female and to be younger than permanent workers.
- Women were just under half of all employees in permanent jobs, but 6 in 10 of those in temporary jobs.
- Women were the majority of fixed-term and casual workers, while men were the majority of seasonal and temporary agency workers.

## Age

All types of temporary workers had a younger profile than permanent employees. For temporary workers aged under 35 years:

- 6 of 10 were casual (60.4 percent) or temporary agency workers (61.5 percent)
- around half were fixed-term (49.7 percent) and seasonal workers (50.0 percent).

Fewer than 4 of 10 people aged under 35 years were permanent employees (35.9 percent).

## **Ethnicity**

Comparisons by ethnicity showed that temporary workers were:

- 13.0 percent of Māori workers
- 10.7 percent of Pacific workers
- 8.9 percent of Asian workers
- 8.2 percent of European workers.

## **Earnings**

Permanent workers had higher earnings than temporary employees. Their median gross weekly earnings were \$901, compared with \$487 for temporary workers.

Median gross hourly earnings were also higher for permanent employees than temporary workers (\$22.88 and \$17.00, respectively).

## **Job trials**

Those who started their main job on a 90-day trial were:

- 1 of 5 (19.5 percent) of all employees
- just over one-third (35.9 percent) of employees who had started their main job in the previous 12 months.

## **Union membership, employment agreements, and safety at work**

### **Union membership**

Just over one-quarter (27.2 percent) of all employees belonged to a union. Union membership was higher for permanent than temporary workers (27.8 percent and 22.4 percent). Casual workers had the lowest membership (14.8 percent).

### **Employment agreements**

Individual agreements were more common for employees than collective agreements, with:

- 6 of 10 employees (59.7 percent) being covered by individual agreements
- just over 2 in 10 (23.9 percent) being on collective agreements.

The remainder were either unaware of an agreement or did not know what type they were on.

People in permanent jobs were more likely than temporary workers to have employment agreements, with:

- more than 8 of 10 (85.4 percent) permanent employees being on either individual or collective agreements
- 7 of 10 (69.1 percent) temporary employees being on an agreement.

Among temporary employees, fixed-term and agency workers were the most likely to have employment agreements and casual workers the least likely.

Nearly all (94.7 percent) employees on either an individual or collective agreement had a written agreement.

## **Safety at work**

Most employees (86.7 percent) thought their employer managed health and safety risks either 'well' or 'very well'. The proportions were similar for permanent (86.9 percent) and temporary workers (84.9 percent).

The majority (84.3 percent) agreed they had reasonable opportunities to take part in improving workplace health and safety. Permanent workers (85.7 percent) were more likely to say they felt they could contribute than temporary employees (72.4 percent).

## **Where our employees work**

### **Industry**

Temporary employees were most likely to be employed in:

- education and training (17.2 percent)
- retail trade, and accommodation and food services (16.7 percent)
- manufacturing and utility services (14.3 percent).

Permanent employees were much less likely to be employed in education and training (9.5 percent) but much more likely to work in healthcare and social assistance (12.6 percent).

Some industries used temporary labour more than others – particularly the primary sector. SoWL showed:

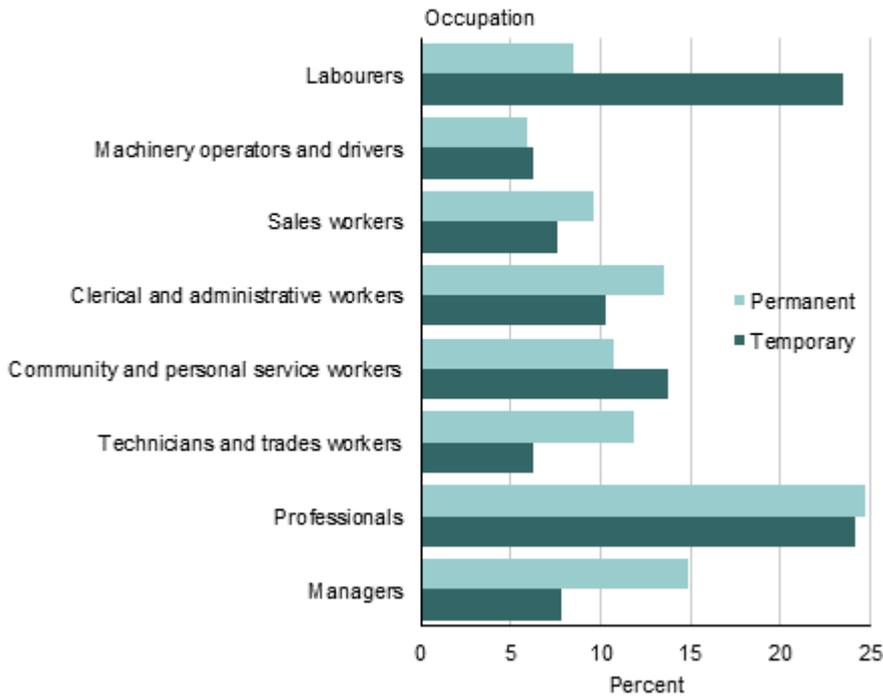
- 1 of 5 employees (20.6 percent) in agriculture, forestry, fishing, and mining were temporary workers
- just under 1 of 5 employees (17.5 percent) in education and training were temporary.

### **Occupation**

Professional occupations were the most common for both temporary (24.1 percent) and permanent workers (24.7 percent). Another one-quarter of temporary workers (23.4 percent) were employed as labourers – much higher than the 1 of 10 permanent workers (8.3 percent) employed in labouring jobs.

Temporary workers were much less likely than permanent workers to work as managers, or as technicians and trades workers.

**Type of employee**  
By occupation  
December 2012 quarter



Source: Statistics New Zealand

## Flexibility at work

### Hours

SoWL asked about job flexibility and the amount of notice given of a work schedule.

Around half (48.0 percent) of employed people had flexible hours (starting and finishing work at different times each day if wanted). The proportions were similar across types of employees – around 4 of 10. Employers (77.8 percent) and self-employed people (81.5 percent) were more likely to have flexible hours than employees.

Employees usually working 35+ hours a week were asked if their employer would let them reduce to 30 hours if they wanted. One-third said they would or probably would be able to, although this was more common for women than men. There was little difference between permanent and temporary workers, although casual workers were the most likely to be able to reduce their hours (47.0 percent).

### Leave

Most employees, both male and female, thought their employer would let them take a few days unpaid leave if they needed to. This was around 9 of 10 permanent employees (89.6 percent) and 8 of 10 temporary employees (82.4 percent).

## Shifts

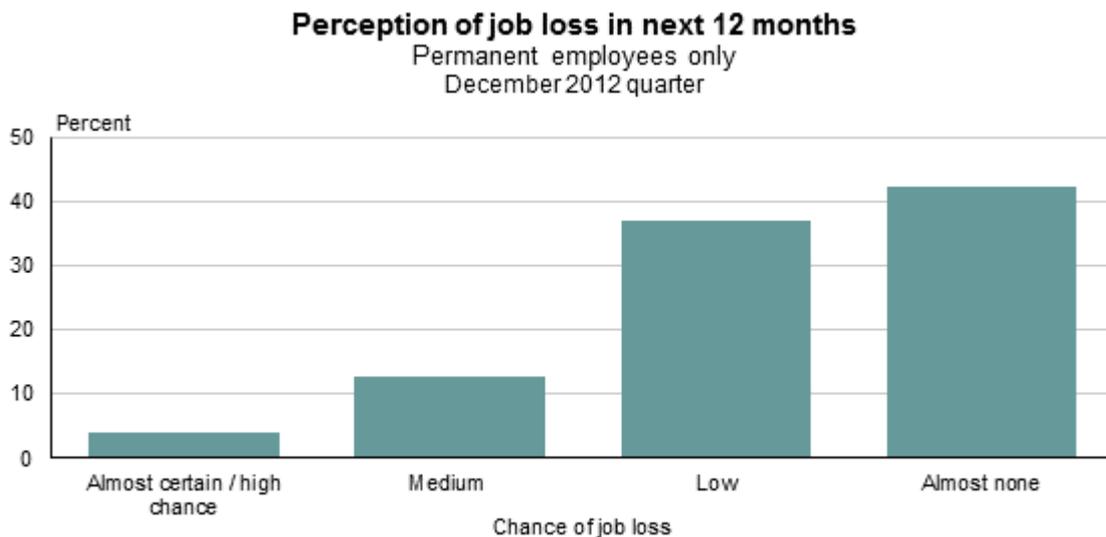
Of employees who worked shifts that changed daily or weekly, casual workers were the most likely to say their hours could change weekly to suit their employer's need. This was 8 of 10 (80.9 percent) casual workers, compared with around one-third (34.2 percent) of fixed-term and temporary agency workers.

For people with changing work patterns, about one-third of permanent employees (34.6 percent) and a slightly smaller proportion of temporary employees (28.2 percent) said they always knew what days and times they would be working. Temporary workers tended to have less notice – around 3 of 10 (33.0 percent) knew less than a week in advance, compared with 1 of 10 (8.3 percent) permanent employees.

## Job security

Permanent workers were asked about the chance of losing their job for a reason beyond their control in the next 12 months. Perceptions of job security were high:

- 8 of 10 (79.3 percent) thought they had a 'low chance', or 'almost no chance' of job loss
- 1 of 20 (4.6 percent) thought they had an 'almost certain', or 'high chance' of losing their job.



Source: Statistics New Zealand

## Motivations for temporary work

People in temporary jobs have different motivations for taking that type of employment. Some have difficulty in finding permanent jobs while others prefer temporary work. SoWL data showed that preference for temporary work was stronger among casual and seasonal workers than other types of temporary workers.

## Reasons

The most common reasons people gave for doing temporary work were:

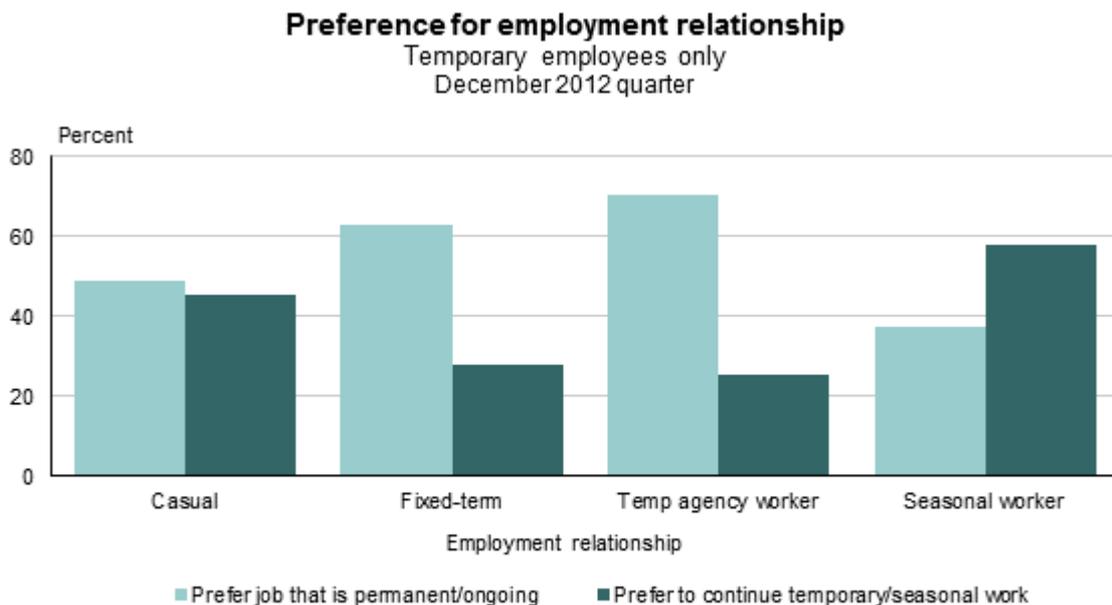
- general employment or industry conditions, suggesting a lack of opportunities for permanent employment (almost half cited this reason)
- one-quarter mentioned education, health, or financial reasons
- family or lifestyle reasons.

Employment and industry conditions were the most-common reason cited by all types of temporary workers, but especially temporary agency and fixed-term workers. Casual workers were the least likely to mention this reason, and the most likely to give either education, health, or financial reasons; or family or lifestyle reasons.

### Preference for permanent work

Most temporary workers would prefer an ongoing or permanent job in the next 12 months.

- Temporary agency workers preferred ongoing work (70.3 percent).
- Fixed-term workers also preferred ongoing jobs (62.7 percent).
- Around half of casual workers wanted ongoing work (48.8 percent).
- Fewer than 4 of 10 seasonal workers said they would prefer ongoing or permanent jobs (37.0 percent).



Source: Statistics New Zealand

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

## Definitions

### About the Survey of Working Life

The Survey of Working Life (SoWL) is the official statistical dataset that investigates people's employment arrangements, employment conditions, and job satisfaction. The data is used to better understand the reasons for and implications of these employment patterns.

The survey does not collect information on voluntary work or unpaid work around the house.

The 2012 SoWL was a supplement to the Household Labour Force Survey (HLFS) in the December 2012 quarter.

### More definitions

**Employment relationship:** groups individuals into one of the following categories based on the respondent's main job:

- employee (temporary or permanent)
- self-employed and not employing others
- employer of others
- unpaid family worker.

**Employed:** all people in the working-age population who, during the reference week, worked for one hour or more for:

- pay or profit in the context of an employee/employer relationship or self-employment or
- worked without pay for one hour or more in work which contributed directly to the operation of a farm, business or professional practice owned or operated by a relative or
- had a job but were not at work due to own illness or injury, personal or family responsibilities, bad weather or mechanical breakdown, direct involvement in an industrial dispute, or leave or holiday.

**Employee:** a person who receives remuneration for his or her work in the form of wages, salary, commission, tips, or piece rates. These will usually, but not necessarily, involve a formal employment contract between the employee and their employer. An employee has certain rights under employment legislation which are not usually available to the self-employed. These include access to personal grievance and dispute procedures, paid statutory holidays and annual holiday pay, and employment protection while taking parental leave. This category includes permanent employees, casual employees, temporary agency employees, fixed-term employees, and temporary seasonal employees.

**Employer:** a self-employed person who hires one or more employees.

**Self-employed:** A person who operates their own economic enterprise or engages independently in a profession or trade (including partnerships).

**Unpaid family worker:** a person who works without pay in work that contributes directly to the operation of a farm, business, or professional practice owned or operated by a relative.

**Permanent employee:** an employee who is guaranteed continuing work. They can stay in their job until they decide to leave or their employer makes them redundant.

**Temporary employee:** an employee whose job only lasts for a limited time or until the completion of a project. Temporary employee is a prioritised classification. As all types of temporary employment are not mutually exclusive, people with multiple responses to the temporary employee questions were assigned to a single group using the following priority order:

1. casual worker
2. temporary agency worker
3. fixed-term worker
4. seasonal worker (employment relationship not further defined)
5. other temporary worker.

For example, an individual could be working on a fixed-term contract and also respond that they were a temporary agency worker. This individual would be classified as a temporary agency worker.

Individuals who said they were permanent employees but also stated their job was seasonal were reclassified as temporary employees.

**Seasonal worker:** a temporary worker whose job is only available at certain times of the year.

**Temporary agency worker:** a temporary worker who is paid by, or through, a temporary employment agency and placed by this agency to perform work at the premises of a third party customer enterprise; that is, someone other than the business enterprise that pays their wage or salary.

**Casual worker:** a temporary worker who only works when their employer asks them to, on an as-needed basis, whose work is typically done in short episodes. A casual worker may be asked to work a shift of a few days; or less often, for several weeks at a time. Casual workers do not have any guarantee of regular ongoing work.

**Fixed-term worker:** a temporary employee who is hired until a fixed date or until a project is completed. This includes replacement workers who are employees contracted to temporarily replace another employee who is absent on leave.

**Part-time worker:** usually works less than 30 hours per week in all jobs as identified by HLFS questions on usual hours worked.

**Full-time worker:** usually works 30 hours or more per week in all jobs as identified by HLFS questions on usual hours worked.

**Main job:** the job in which most hours are worked, as defined by the HLFS.

**Other job(s):** any job(s) in which the respondent works fewer, or no more, hours than the main job, as defined by the HLFS.

**Standard working time:** between 7am and 7pm, Monday to Friday.

**Non-standard working time:** one hour or more in the evening, at night, in the early morning, on a Saturday, or on a Sunday.

**Long hours:** 45 hours or more per week in all jobs, as identified by HLFS questions on usual hours worked.

**Paid overtime:** productive paid work outside standard paid hours, paid at a higher rate. This might include additional time at work, taking work home to do, or reading papers on the way home.

**Extra unpaid hours:** productive unpaid work outside standard paid, scheduled, or contracted hours. This might include additional time at work, taking work home to do, or reading papers on the way home.

**Job tenure:** continuous period of time working for the same employer, or business for those who are self-employed. Any periods of paid or unpaid leave for up to and including six months, or parental leave of 12 months or less, would not constitute a break in continuous employment.

**Flexible hours:** hours that allow an employed person to vary the time they start **and** finish work. This is often referred to as 'flexi-time' or 'glide-time', and excludes one-off arrangements to vary a start or finish time; for example, because of an emergency at home.

**Arrangement or understanding with employer to be paid for work done at home:** verbal or written agreement with an employer to be paid for some or all the employment hours worked at home.

**Employment agreement:** agreement between an employee and an employer that covers the terms and conditions of employment.

**Individual agreement:** employment agreement that applies only to an individual employee.

**Collective agreement:** employment agreement that covers two or more employees who are members of a union.

**Union:** a group that negotiates on behalf of employees for pay and working conditions.

**Employer-funded study or training:** is partly or wholly paid for by the employer. It can be: organised by the employer or an external training provider (training establishments, educational institutions, agencies, or consultants); conducted in-house or externally; delivered by the company's own employees or external training providers. It does not include on-the-job training at an employee's desk or normal place of work.

**Health and safety risk in the workplace:** risk of work-related illness and/or injury, including both physical and mental harm.

**Work at home:** Work for the respondent's job or jobs (work for pay or profit and any work without pay in a family business or farm) at the respondent's usual residence or any associated land and buildings for which they are responsible. This includes work done in any office attached to the house or any associated land or buildings, such as a stand-alone garage or workshop, and any work on the property associated with their home (eg farm work).

**Work-life balance:** effectively managing paid work and the other activities that are important to people; such as time with family, participation in community activities, voluntary work, personal development, leisure and recreation.

**Work stress:** when being at work, or work itself, makes a person feel tense, anxious, or less able to cope.

## **Related links**

### **Upcoming releases**

A stream of analytical work using the Survey of Working Life data will be released in 2013/14.

[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**

[Survey of Working Life](#) has links to past releases.

### **Related information**

[Household Labour Force Survey](#) provides New Zealand's official employment and unemployment statistics.

## Data quality

### Period-specific information

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

- [Response rate](#)
- [Population comparability](#)
- [Questionnaire changes](#)
- [Table changes](#)
- [Reference period](#)

### General information

This section has information that does not generally change between releases.

- [Data source](#)
- [Target population](#)
- [Accuracy of the data](#)
- [Interpreting the data](#)
- [Questionnaire content and structure](#)
- [Confidentiality and accessing the data](#)

## Period-specific information

### Response rate

The target response rate for SoWL was 80 percent. This represents Statistics NZ's minimum acceptable response rate. The achieved response rate for employed individuals was 84 percent. There were 14,335 employed individuals in households that responded to SoWL.

Non-response was partly due to the increased burden of it being a supplement to the Household Labour Force Survey (HLFS), and partly because proxy responses were not accepted in most situations (even though they are accepted for the HLFS). A proxy response is a response by one member of a household on behalf of another. SoWL accepted proxy responses only for a disability or other health condition, or language difficulties.

### Population comparability

#### Seasonality

The 2008 SoWL ran in the March quarter, but SoWL 2012 was run in the December quarter – because working times and hours during the December quarter are likely to be more typical of those over a full year. Interviewing during the December quarter would also enable a similar coverage of seasonal workers to the full year.

Regular seasonal factors or cycles can affect survey results. For the labour market, cyclical events that occur around the same time each year affect both labour supply and demand. For example, in summertime there is a large pool of student labour that is both available for, and actively seeking, work.

We have seen seasonal differences between quarters for the HLFS. For example, the December quarter has shown a higher number of people in the retail trade industry – due to the holiday shopping period – compared with other quarters during the year. These differences can also affect SoWL. We do not have enough information within SoWL to account for these differences. Hence, we do not recommend direct comparison of the March 2008 and December 2012 SoWL – this could lead to inaccurate conclusions.

## **Questionnaire changes**

Five new questions were added to the SoWL 2012 questionnaire.

Two relate to 90-day job trials: the first, which asked if the respondent had started their main job on a 90-day trial, was asked only of employees. All employed people were asked the second question – if they had started any (employers and self-employed), or any other (employees), job on a 90-day trial in the previous four years.

Respondents who had worked in the previous four weeks were asked if they worked in one, two, three, or four of those weeks. This helps with more accurate analysis.

Whether a respondents' employment agreement was a written agreement or not was asked of all employees who said they had an individual or collective agreement.

An additional health and safety question for employees was added. This asked if there were reasonable opportunities to take part in improving health and safety at their place of employment (main job).

## **Table changes**

### **Ethnicity classification**

SoWL uses the total response output method for classifying ethnicity. Using this method, people who reported more than one ethnic group are counted once in each group reported. This means the total number of responses for all ethnic groups can be greater than the total number of people who stated their ethnicities.

See the [New Zealand statistical standard for ethnicity \(2005\)](#) for more information.

### **Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification 2006**

Since the September 2009 quarter, industry statistics are based on the Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification 2006 (ANZSIC06), the latest edition of the classification. The 1996 version (ANZSIC96) was used in the previous SoWL release. Note that industry outputs defined using ANZSIC06 are not comparable with those based on ANZSIC96.

### **New Zealand Standard Industrial Output Categories**

With the introduction of ANZSIC06, Statistics NZ also developed the New Zealand Standard Industrial Output Categories (NZSIOC), which help standardise outputs. Under NZSIOC level one, industries are published at the 1-digit divisional level, apart from three categories which are combined ANZSIC06 divisions. The category titled 'retail trade and accommodation' is the combined 'retail trade' and 'accommodation and food services' divisions. The 'professional, scientific, technical, administrative, and support services' category is the combined 'professional, scientific, and technical services' division and the 'administrative and support services' division.

The 'arts and recreation services' division is combined with the 'other services' division to form the 'arts, recreation, and other services' category.

See the [Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification 2006 \(ANZSIC06\)](#) for more information.

## **Reference period**

SoWL is a supplement to the HLFS and was carried out in the December 2012 quarter. All eligible responding individuals in the HLFS who were employed in the reference week were asked to participate.

The survey was carried out from 7 October 2012 to 5 January 2013.

## **General information**

### **Data source**

SoWL was collected by computer-assisted interviewing (CAI). Part of the data was collected by computer-assisted personal interviewing (CAPI) for selected households (approximately 30 percent of all SoWL respondents). The remaining households were surveyed by centralised computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI).

### **Target population**

The target population for SoWL is the employed population within the HLFS target population. This is the usually resident, civilian population of New Zealanders aged 15 years and over and living in occupied private dwellings, who were employed for one hour or more in the HLFS reference week. 'Employed' includes all respondents who worked for pay or profit, or worked without pay in a family business or farm, or who had a job, business, or farm that they were away from because of sickness, holidays, or any other reason.

The survey does not provide statistics for residents of institutions (eg retirement homes, hospitals, prisons), residents who are temporarily staying in non-private dwellings when contact is attempted, members of the permanent armed forces, and members of the non-New Zealand armed forces. It also excludes overseas visitors who intend to stay in New Zealand for less than 12 months, New Zealand residents temporarily overseas when contact is attempted, non-New Zealand diplomats and diplomatic staff, and those aged under 15 years.

### **Accuracy of the data**

This section outlines the methodology used for dealing with sampling errors in the data. Two types of error are possible in estimates based on a sample survey: sampling error and non-sampling error.

#### **Sampling errors**

Sampling error can be measured, and quantifies the variability that occurs by chance because a sample rather than an entire population is surveyed.

We calculate sampling errors using the jackknife method. It is based on the variation between estimates, based on different subsamples taken from the whole sample. This is an attempt to

see how estimates would vary if we were to repeat the survey with new samples of individuals. We calculate sampling errors for each cell in the published tables. For example, the estimated total number of employees that are on an individual agreement is 1,100,100. This estimate is subject to a sampling error of plus or minus 28,500 or 2.59 percent (measured at the 95 percent confidence level). This means that there is a 95 percent chance that the true number of employees on individual agreements lies between 1,071,600 and 1,128,600.

Smaller estimates, such as the total number of casual workers whose reasons for doing casual work are lifestyle and family 19,700, are subject to larger relative sampling errors than larger estimates. This estimate is subject to a sampling error of plus or minus 3,800 or 19.6 percent (measured at the 95 percent confidence level). This means that there is a 95 percent chance that the true number of casual workers living whose reasons for doing casual work are lifestyle and family lies between 15,900 and 23,500.

The following table shows the likely sampling errors of estimates of different sizes. This table can be used by finding the closest figure to the estimate of interest in the left-hand column of the table and reading off the corresponding relative sampling error in the right-hand column. For example, a total estimate of 43,200 employed people would have a sampling error of about 15 percent. Estimates of less than 10,000 within the output tables are likely to have relative sampling errors between 30 and 50 percent; hence, these estimates should be used with caution. The SoWL relative sampling errors are slightly larger than those for the HLFS employed estimates because SoWL has a smaller sample size.

<b>Guide to Survey of Working Life sampling errors</b>		
<b>Size of survey estimates</b>	<b>Sampling error <sup>(1)</sup></b>	<b>Relative size of sampling error (%)<sup>(2)</sup></b>
3,500	1,600	45
5,000	2,000	40
7,500	2,600	35
10,000	3,000	30
20,000	4,000	20
30,000	6,000	15
40,000	6,000	15
50,000	6,500	13
75,000	8,250	11
100,000	9,000	9
300,000	15,000	5
700,000	21,000	3

1. Equivalent to the 95 percent confidence interval half-width.  
2. Sampling error as a percentage of the survey estimate.

## **Non-sampling errors**

Non-sampling errors are all errors that are not sampling errors and are not quantifiable. Non-sampling errors include unintentional mistakes by respondents when answering questions, variation in the respondent's and interviewer's interpretation of the questions asked, and errors in recording and coding data. Statistics NZ endeavours to minimise the impact of these errors through applying best survey practices and by monitoring known indicators (eg non-response).

## **Suppressed estimates in this release**

All estimates provided in the output tables have a relative sampling error (measured at the 95 percent confidence level) of less than 50 percent. Some estimates are suppressed (replaced by 'S' in the tables) for reliability and confidentiality reasons. These suppressed estimates had a relative sampling error of 50 percent or more and/or reflect a low number of responses (10 or fewer).

## **Editing and imputation**

A minimal approach to editing was implemented for SoWL. With CAI, the computer software runs checks for validity and consistency as responses to questions are captured. If required, the software prompts the interviewer to clarify answers with the respondent at the time of interview. This keeps the number of inconsistent answers low. A further round of validity, logic, and error checks was performed on the data at the data processing stage.

A unit (or complete) non-response to the SoWL occurred either when an eligible individual in the sample did not respond to the SoWL questionnaire or did not respond to all core questions in the SoWL questionnaire. Any non-responding employed individuals from the HLFS sample were dealt with by adjusting the weights of the responding SoWL individuals.

Item (or partial) non-response could occur within the responses for SoWL. This includes a response of 'don't know' or 'refused' to non-core questions. Since all the core SoWL questions had been answered, the record was deemed to be a full response. No imputation has been applied to any item non-response.

If a response to age, sex, or full-time/part-time status was missing in the HLFS then it will have been imputed by the HLFS and used in SoWL. There is no other imputation for variables collected in SoWL.

## **Interpreting the data**

### **Mean (average) and median**

The mean or average is calculated as the total divided by the number of units in the population. A mean can be sensitive to extreme values. Unusually high or low values will have a large impact on the estimate of the mean.

The median is the value at which half the units in the population have lower values and half have higher, when all values are ordered from highest to lowest. It corresponds to the 50th percentile. The median is less sensitive to extreme values than the mean.

### **Rounding**

All estimates provided in this release are independently rounded to the nearest hundred. For this reason estimated totals may differ from the sum of individual cells. All percentages are calculated using unrounded figures and are rounded to one decimal place.

## **Questionnaire content and structure**

The SoWL questionnaire contained the following sections:

**Job tenure:** Information on how long the respondent had been working for their employer in their main job, or in their business if they were self-employed.

**Employment relationships of employees:** Only respondents who were employees (working for wages or salary) in their main job were asked if they were permanent or temporary employees. If temporary, they were asked additional questions about the types of temporary work they were doing to enable them to be priority classified as: a casual worker, fixed-term worker, temporary agency worker, seasonal worker (employment relationship not further defined), or some other type of temporary worker. Temporary employees were also asked if their hours of work changed from week to week to suit the needs of their employer, about their reasons for doing temporary work, and their preference for getting an ongoing/permanent job.

**Working-time patterns:** All respondents were asked about patterns across all their jobs. We collected the following working-time information:

- usual working time
- usual number of days worked per week
- overall work pattern (mainly daytime, mainly evening, mainly night, changing shifts, other)
- preference for working at different times of the day than those usually worked
- whether they worked long hours and if this caused any difficulties
- preference for working fewer hours and earning less in their main job.

Respondents who had worked in the four weeks before the interview were also asked the following information for that four-week period:

- incidence of work for one hour or more at non-standard times – the number of times worked at night, in the evening, in the early morning, on a Saturday, and on a Sunday
- payment for any work done at the weekend or in the evening
- any difficulties caused by working at a non-standard time
- number of hours of paid overtime and other extra unpaid hours.

The numbers and proportions for people who did some work on Saturdays and Sundays may be slightly underestimated in the tables. These figures do not include people who did weekend work but did not specify if they worked on a Saturday or a Sunday, or those who did not know how many times they worked on a Saturday or a Sunday in the last four weeks.

**Work at home:** Information on the number of hours worked from home in the four-week period prior to the interview was collected. Employees (working for wages or salary) were also asked if they had an arrangement with their employer to be paid for any work done at home.

**Job flexibility:** Respondents were asked about job flexibility options available to them in their main job. This information was asked for:

- if they had flexible hours available in their main job (all employed)
- if their employer would let them take a few days unpaid leave if needed (employees only)
- if their employer would let them reduce their hours to less than 30 a week if wanted (full-time employees only)
- how much notice they had of their work schedule (temporary agency, casual, and seasonal workers, and those who worked changing shifts or some 'other' work pattern only)
- if they could make changes to their shifts if wanted (employees who worked changing shifts only).

**Terms and conditions of employment:** Only employees (working for wages or salary) were asked these questions. Information on union membership, perceived job security, employer-

funded study and training, annual leave entitlement, and whether the respondent was on a collective or an individual employment agreement was collected.

**Work-related health and safety:** These questions focused on work-related health and safety issues. Respondents were asked about the extent to which they had experienced these work-related health problems in the last 12 months:

- finding being at work or the work itself stressful
- physical problems or pain because of work
- tiredness from work that affected life outside work.

Respondents were also asked if they had experienced discrimination, harassment, or bullying at work in the last 12 months. Employees were asked how well health and safety risks were managed in their main job.

**Parent/caregiver status:** Where there was a child in the household aged under 14 years, the respondent was asked if they were a parent or main caregiver to that child.

**Satisfaction:** Respondents were asked about their level of satisfaction with their main job, and overall satisfaction with their work-life balance.

**Earnings:** Information on earnings for all respondents working for pay or profit in their main job or business was collected. For employees, only earnings from the main job was collected. For the self-employed, earnings from all forms of self-employment from the previous 12 months was collected.

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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. Employment relationship, by demographic, geographic, and educational characteristics
2. Employment relationship, by characteristics of main job
3. Employment relationship and sex, by characteristics of main job: employees only
4. Detailed employment relationship and seasonal employment: temporary employees only, by sex, age group, reasons, preferences, tenure, usual hours worked, and usual working time
5. Job tenure, by sex, age group, geographic, and educational characteristics
6. Job tenure, by characteristics of main job
7. Working times in all jobs, by employment relationship and sex
8. Family and household characteristics, by employment relationship, usual working time, and full-time/part-time status
9. Non-standard working times in all jobs, by age group and sex
10. Night and evening work in all jobs, by tenure, industry, occupation, and usual hours worked
11. Difficulties working at a non-standard time, by sex, age group, parental status, usual hours worked, and working times
12. Preferred hours, by sex, age group, usual hours worked, and working times
13. Job flexibility in main job: employees only, by employment relationship and sex
14. Employer-funded study and training: employees only, by sex and characteristics of main job
15. Work-related health and safety, by age group and sex
16. Job and work-life balance satisfaction, by characteristics of main job
17. Work at home, by sex, age group, parental status, and characteristics of main job
18. Weekly earnings from main job, by characteristics of main job, overall work pattern, and employer-funded study and training