

OFFICIAL NAME: New Zealand

CAPITAL: Wellington

SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT: Constitutional Monarchy

AREA: 268,798 Sq Km (103,783 Sq Mi)

ESTIMATED 2000 POPULATION: 3,721,200



LOCATION & GEOGRAPHY: New Zealand is located in the Southwest Pacific Ocean and consists of two main islands as well as a number of smaller ones. The principal islands are the North and South Islands which are separated by the Cook Strait. North Island has a mountainous center with many hot springs and volcanic peaks while it also contains the country's longest river, the Waikato and the largest lake, Lake Taupo. South Island is much more mountainous with the Southern Alps, which has some 350 glaciers, running across the length of the island. Much of the lowlands are broken and hilly while plains are not prominent on either island. The largest area of level lowland is the Canterbury Plains on the east side of South Island. Major Cities (pop. est.); Auckland 336,500, Christchurch 308,800, Manukau 243,400, North Shore 163,600, Wellington 153,800 (1995). Land Use; forested 27%, pastures 50%, agricultural-cultivated 14%, other 9% (1993).

CLIMATE: New Zealand has a temperate climate dominated by the east moving anti cyclones that bring clear skies or fog while weather conditions are highly changeable throughout the year. All months are moderately wet while the high mountains carry snow throughout the year. Average annual precipitation varies between 600 and 1,500 mm (24 and 59 inches). Average temperature ranges in Wellington are from 6 to 12 degrees Celsius (43 to 54 degrees Fahrenheit) in July to 13 to 21 degrees Celsius (55 to 70 degrees Fahrenheit) in January.

PEOPLE: The principal ethnic majority are the Whites who account for around 82% of the population and are overwhelmingly of British descent while 9% are Maori who are of Polynesian origins and 3% are Pacific Islanders including Cook Islanders. Other non-European minorities include small numbers of Chinese, Indians and Arabs.

DEMOGRAPHIC/VITAL STATISTICS: Density; 13 persons per sq km (34 persons per sq mi) (1993). Urban-Rural; 75.9% urban, 24.1% rural (1991). Sex Distribution; 49.3% male, 50.7% female (1992). Life Expectancy at Birth; 72.0 years male, 77.9 years female (1991). Age Breakdown; 23% under 15, 24% 15 to 29, 22% 30 to 44, 15% 45 to 59, 11% 60 to 74, 5% 75 and over (1992). Birth Rate; 17.2 per 1,000 (1992). Death Rate; 7.9 per 1,000 (1992). Increase Rate; 9.3 per 1,000 (1992). Infant Mortality Rate; 8.3 per 1,000 live births (1991).

RELIGIONS: Mostly Christians which account for 81% of the population and are mostly Protestant. Other Christian minorities include Roman Catholics, Baptists, Methodists and Presbyterians.

LANGUAGES: The official languages are English and Maori with English understood by all the population while Maori is the language of the indigenous New Zealanders.

EDUCATION: Aged 25 or over and having attained: primary and incomplete secondary 54.9%, secondary 31.1%, higher 6.9%, unspecified 6.1% (1991). Literacy; literate population aged 15 or over virtually 100% (1993).

MODERN HISTORY - WWII TO 1993: In 1945 New Zealand became a founding member of the UN and in 1951 New Zealand signed the ANZUS Treaty with Australia and the US. During the 1950's New Zealand troops fought with US forces in the Korean War. In 1960 Sir Keith Holyoake led the National Party (NP) to power and in 1975 Robert Muldoon of the NP was elected Prime Minister. In 1984 David Lange of the Labor Party became Prime Minister and in 1985 New Zealand banned nuclear weapons and nuclear power ships from its ports, which resulted in the US withdrawing guarantees of security to NZ under the ANZUS treaty and later imposing a trade freeze. Also in 1985 Greenpeace's flagship the Rainbow Warrior, which was preparing to embark on a voyage to protest the testing of nuclear weapons in French Polynesia, was sabotaged and sunk in Auckland Harbor by French secret agents killing one person. Two of the secret agents were subsequently arrested and convicted of manslaughter. In 1987 Lange was re-elected as Prime Minister and in Aug. 1989 resigned as Labor Party leader and Prime Minister. Mike Moore succeeded Lange and in Oct. 1990 the National Party led by Jim Bolger won the general elections. In 1991 the government facing a worsening economic situation announced plans for the country's traditional entitlement for women and men over 60 to receive a pension to be subject to a means test of assets and income. Following the July 1991 budget the New Zealand media reflected popular resentment with headlines such as "Welfare State in Tatters" and "Target Middle Income Earners". Eventually the resistance from community and parliamentary groups led to the government dropping their plans to subject pensioners to a means test. On Sept. 25, 1991 the Reserve Bank increased its money circulation by \$5 million per day that resulted in interest rates easing and greater stock market activity. Also in 1991 the government supported the US-led coalition Gulf War through supplying medical teams while Prime Minister Bolger announced he would consider the lifting of the ban on nuclear-powered vessels entering its ports but would retain the ban on nuclear arms. In 1992 the government continued with its economic restructuring program that included some user-paid health services while unemployment rose to 15%. On Aug. 5, 1992 former Prime Minister from 1975 to 1984, Sir Robert Muldoon died. On Sept. 19, 1992 the first part of a two-part referendum on electoral methods resulted in the support for changes to the first-past-the-post method to a preferred method based on mixed member proportional (MMP)

representation, a system that calls for inter party consultation. The government announced that the second part of the referendum would be held in conjunction with general elections due in 1993. Also in 1992 the government signed a compensation agreement with Maori tribes over a 150 year old dispute over fishing rights. In 1993 the government continued with its plan of deregulation and privatization program that was originated by its Labor government predecessor. The government broke down national industry-wide union contracts into plant-centered ones based on voluntary union membership. In June 1993 unemployment had fallen to 9.9% of the labor force. In Nov. 1993 general elections resulted in the ruling NP retaining a narrow majority over the Labor Party by 50 seats to 45. In the same elections the electoral reform referendum resulted in the approval of the MMP system, in which the Parliament would expand from 99 members to 120 members, of which 64 were to be elected and 56 appointed from party lists.

CURRENCY: The official currency is the Dollar (NZD) divided into 100 Cents.

ECONOMY: Gross National Product; USD \$44,660,000,000 (1993). Public Debt; NZ \$29,565,000,000 (1994). Imports; NZD \$18,468,900,000 (1994). Exports; NZD \$19,827,000,100 (1994). Tourism Receipts; USD \$1,165,000,000 (1993). Balance of Trade; NZD \$1,358,200,000 (1994). Economically Active Population; 1,730,000 or 48.8% of total population (1995 est.). Unemployed; 6.3% (1995 est.).

MAIN TRADING PARTNERS: Its main trading partners are Australia, the UK, Japan and the USA.

MAIN PRIMARY PRODUCTS: Cattle, Cereals, Coal, Fish, Fruit and Vegetables, Iron, Natural Gas, Sheep, Timber.

MAJOR INDUSTRIES: Agriculture, Aluminum Smelting, Cement, Fertilizers, Fishing, Glass, Iron and Steel, Meat and Dairy Processing, Machinery, Natural Gas Processing, Paper, Tanning, Timber Milling, Transport Equipment, Tourism, Wine Making, Wool and Textiles, Wood Processing.

MAIN EXPORTS: Dairy Products, Fish, Fruit and Vegetables, Hides and Skins, Meat, Timber Products, Wood Pulp and Paper, Wool.

TRANSPORT: Railroads; route length 4,227 km (2,627 mi) (1990), passenger-km 458,160,000 (284,687,000 passenger-mi) (1984), cargo ton-km 2,682,000,000 (1,837,000,000 short ton-mi) (1990). Roads; length 92,659 km (57,576 mi) (1990). Vehicles; cars 1,438,704 (1989), trucks and buses 297,598 (1989). Merchant Marine; vessels 135 (1990), deadweight tonnage

302,352 (1990). Air Transport; passenger-km 10,608,000,000 (6,592,000,000 passenger-mi) (1990), cargo ton-km 332,000,000 (227,387,000 short ton-mi) (1990).

COMMUNICATIONS: Daily Newspapers; total of 31 with a total circulation of 1,050,000 (1992). Radio; receivers 3,215,000 (1992). Television; receivers 1,530,000 (1992). Telephones; units 1,593,000 (1993).

MILITARY: 10,050 (1995) total active duty personnel with 44.3% army, 33.3% navy and 21.9% air force while military expenditure accounts for 1.5% (1993) of the Gross National Product (GNP).