

4. INTERNAL MIGRATION FLOWS TO AND FROM CHRISTCHURCH 1996-2001¹

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The purpose of this report is to inform the Committee of latest census data relating to internal migration flows between Christchurch and other areas in New Zealand.

Christchurch's resident population is highly mobile, with only 41 per cent (129,531 people) of the 2001 resident population living at the same address as they did five years ago. Between 1996 and 2001, 92,808 people changed their address within the city boundaries and 39,843 people moved to Christchurch from other parts of New Zealand. At the same time the city lost 33,231 residents to other parts of the country. The resulting internal migration gain to Christchurch was 6,612 people. This is considerably more than the 2,979 people gained through internal migration between 1991 and 1996.

Figure 1 and Table 1 show the movements of people between Christchurch and other parts of New Zealand for the five years to March 2001. There have been substantial flows between Christchurch and the Canterbury, Southern, Auckland, Wellington and Nelson/Marlborough areas. Some of these flows have resulted in net population gains to Christchurch, for example from Southern areas where Christchurch gained close to 4,000 people, whereas Christchurch had a net loss of people to the Canterbury and Wellington areas.

Internal migration patterns between the 1991-1996 and 1996-2001 census periods have changed. These include a large net flow towards Auckland between 1991 and 1996 switching to a small net flow towards Christchurch for 1996-2001. Conversely, the net loss of migrants to Wellington increased considerably to over 600 residents since 1996. Also, net flows of migrants towards Christchurch have increased since 1996 from the western areas of both the North and South Islands, Nelson/Marlborough and Southern areas (Table 1).

Migration Between Christchurch and Surrounding Local Authorities

The Canterbury region experienced the largest flows of people to and from Christchurch between 1996 and 2001. While 12,888 people moved to Christchurch from elsewhere in Canterbury, 14,025 people moved from Christchurch to Canterbury. The resulting net migration loss was 1,137 people, about half the size of the net migration loss experienced between 1991 and 1996 (Figure 2 and Table 2).

This loss was largely a result of significant flows of people between Christchurch and its neighbouring local authorities; Waimakariri, Selwyn and Banks Peninsula. These flows resulted in a 3,411 net internal migration loss from Christchurch between 1996 and 2001. Waimakariri and Selwyn Districts had net gains of 2,055 and 1,410 people respectively, while Banks Peninsula lost 54 people to the city (Table 2 and Figure 2).

Residents Most Likely to Move

The age groups most likely to move either within the city or to other parts of New Zealand are aged between 20 and 34 years (Figure 3). Over 75 per cent of this group had moved in the past five years. People move less as they get older, with only 30 per cent of people aged between 70 and 79 changing address in the last five years. However, after the age of 80 there is an increase in people moving as the need for support services and health care forces lifestyle changes².

Maori are more mobile than the Christchurch population as a whole. Fifty-eight per cent of Maori residents changed address in the last five years. This is consistent with national figures and may reflect the younger age structure of the Maori population².

¹ The only source of internal migration information is Statistics New Zealand's five yearly Census of Population and Dwellings.

Internal migration is determined by matching details supplied in "usual address five years ago" question on the census form against the current usual address. If the two are the same then the person is classified as a non-mover. If there are differences then it is assumed that the person has changed where he or she usually lives. Internal migration recorded in this way tends to under-estimate the magnitude of movements that have taken place because the census only looks at two points in time.

² Statistics New Zealand, Population Structure and Internal Migration, 2002.
<http://www.stats.govt.nz/domino/external/pasfull/pasfull.nsf/web/Reference+Reports+2001+Census:+Population+Structure+and+Internal+Migration+2001?open>

Staff

Recommendation: That this information be received.

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