

5. EXTERNAL PERMANENT AND LONG-TERM MIGRATION TRENDS

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The purpose of this report is to provide the Council with a summary of the latest external permanent and long-term migration trends for Christchurch City.

MIGRATION - INTRODUCTION

Migration from overseas has been a major factor in Christchurch City's population growth. External migration, along with fertility (births) and mortality (deaths), contribute to the size and growth of the City's population.

$$\text{Net Population Growth} = \text{Births} - \text{Deaths} + \text{In Migration} - \text{Out Migration}$$

(Arrivals) (Departures)

The type of migration that is discussed in this report is permanent and long-term external migration. External permanent and long-term migrants are those who are intending to migrate to or from an overseas country for 12 months or more or permanently. Although permanent and long-term migrants make up a small number of the total migration flows (compared to short-term visitors), they have the biggest impact on long-term population change.

External migration information is split into three categories; arrivals, departures and net migration. Net migration is expressed as a net gain or net loss and is derived by subtracting departures from arrivals. A net gain will occur when there are more arrivals than departures and a net loss is when there are more departures than arrivals. For each of the three categories, the information is split into two groups; New Zealand citizens and all other nationalities. Within these two groups, each migrant is categorised by where their last (arrivals) or next (departures) country of permanent residence was or intends to be. Migration information is gathered from the arrival/departure cards which are issued to all travellers as they arrive or depart New Zealand.

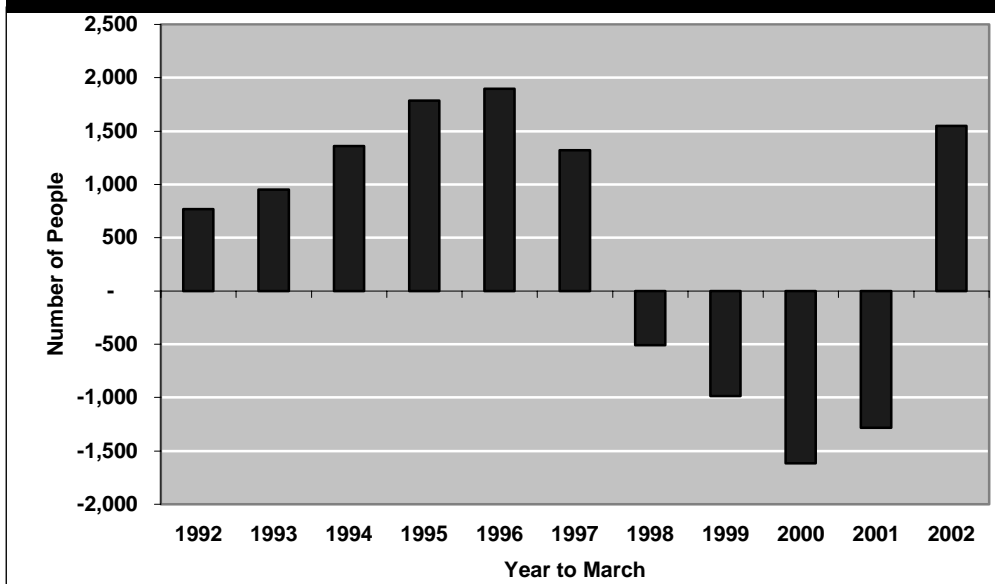
RECENT NET MIGRATION TRENDS

Over the past ten years Christchurch's external migration has fluctuated considerably, reflecting national trends, and changing immigration policies made by the New Zealand Government. Between 1992 and 1997, Christchurch experienced positive net migration or more arrivals than departures (Figure 1.). During this period, a total of 8,085 people came to Christchurch as external migrants who intended to stay for 12 months or more. The peak in 1996 of 1,895 people was a reflection of the Government approving 56,260 applications for residency into New Zealand in 1995 and the delayed peak in 1996 due to migrants having a year in which to migrate.

Since 1998 however, Christchurch has seen a net migration loss, where more people have been leaving than arriving. This is a result of the Government lowering the national target of approved residencies to 35,000 in 1997. In Christchurch, this represented a net loss of 1,615 people in the year 2000. This loss lessened in 2001 to 1,282 departures due to an easing of the pass level for residency approval and an increased migrant target.

Most notably though, is the sudden return to a positive net migration in 2002, from a loss of 1,282 people in 2001 to a gain of 1,549 people. In September 2001, to help alleviate a perceived national skills shortage, the Government announced an increase in the number of migrants allowed into New Zealand. This was an increase of 7,000 migrants from the then 38,000 target, with a provision of up to 50,000 residency permits per year. This, coupled with events in America in September 2001, seem to have created a change to a net migration gain.

Figure 1. Net Migration for Christchurch City, 1992 - 2002

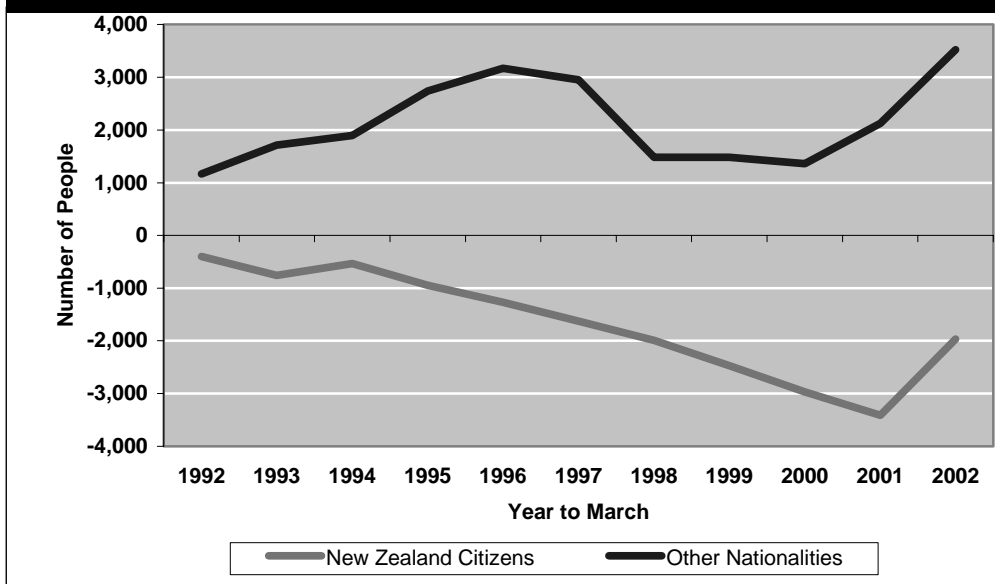


NET MIGRATION BY NATIONALITY

Since 1992, Christchurch has had an annual net migration loss of New Zealand citizens (Figure 2.). This trend has accelerated since 1994 as a result of a change to *The Migration Reform Act 1958* that meant New Zealanders wanting to migrate to Australia could do so if they held a valid New Zealand passport and therefore did not need to apply for a visa.

Migrants from other nationalities have remained positive over the last ten years with more migrants arriving than leaving. This net gain peaked in 1996 at 3,167 people and slumped to a low of 1,359 in 2000. Since 2001 the net loss of New Zealand citizens reduced to 1,968, while the net gain for other nationalities has increased to 3,517.

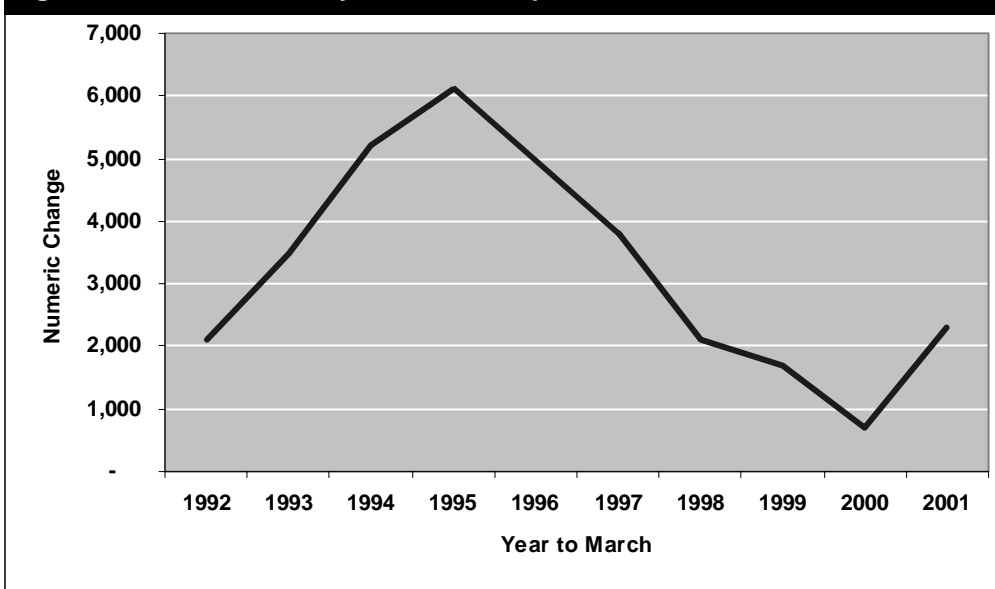
Figure 2. Christchurch Net Migration by Nationality, 1992-2002



POPULATION GROWTH

Net migration (arrivals minus departures) directly influences the rate of population growth. Christchurch's population growth rate reflects the changes in net migration for the City. The peak in population growth in 1995 corresponds to a period of high inward migration to the City, while the converse occurred in the year to March 2000 when both migration and population growth reached their lowest levels.

Figure 3. Christchurch City Estimated Population Growth, 1992 - 2002



Note – There was no estimate in 1996.

SUMMARY

For the year ended March 2002, migration has become positive again after four years of negative migration flows with 1,549 people coming to the City. The number of New Zealand citizens leaving the City have decreased in 2002, while the number of people coming from foreign countries has continued to increase. Christchurch City's net migration has fluctuated over the past decade with a period of migration gain, followed by a period of migration loss. These changes have been influenced by national migration flows and changing government policies regarding immigration. These changing patterns have had a huge influence on the City's population growth rate.

**Chairman's
Recommendation:** That the information be received.