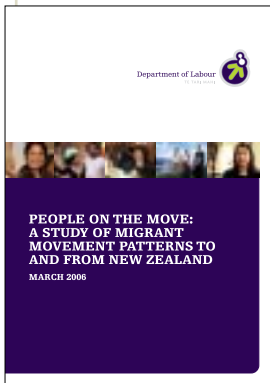


At a glance

newzealand.govt.nz

PUBLICATION:

GLOBAL MOBILITY



PEOPLE ON THE MOVE

DEPARTMENT OF LABOUR, NEW ZEALAND
2006

INTRODUCTION

People on the Move extends previous studies to understand more fully the dynamics of migrants' absenteeism and movement patterns. The purpose is to identify migrants with particular movement patterns into and out of New Zealand, and to explore the characteristics of those who spend lengthy periods out of the country.

Migrants included in the analysis were those with residence applications approved between January 1998 and December 2004. The analysis involved producing a client history of each migrant's movements into and out of New Zealand from the date of final residence approval. Variables that were calculated for each migrant included:

- whether they arrived to take up residence
- the number of spells of absence
- the length of each spell of absence
- the time spent absent on a year-by-year basis
- the total time spent absent
- location on a monthly basis (i.e. onshore, offshore temporarily, or offshore and not returned during the analysis period).

The second stage of the analysis involved exploring the characteristics of migrants with particular movement and absence patterns.

FINDINGS

A total of 257,230 migrants had residence applications approved and took up residence between 1998 and 2004. Main source

countries were Great Britain (15%), China (13%), India (12%), South Africa (9%) and Fiji (6%). It is of note that, in the year ended June 2005, the proportion of migrants from Great Britain was much higher (31%). The main category of approvals between 1998 and 2004 was the General Skills Category (50%). This was followed by Partnership (17%), Family Parent (9%) and the Investor Category (4%). Between 1998 and 2003, 6,016 approved people did not arrive to take up residence.

Six main groups of migrants emerged based on their movement patterns (including length of absences and number of spells of absence). These broad categories include:

- **Low mobility and lower absence** – The majority of migrants were not highly mobile and did not spend lengthy periods absent.
- **Highly mobile and lower absence** – Certain groups of migrants, for example, migrants from Japan and the USA, travel to and from New Zealand regularly but, overall, were not highly represented in those spending lengthy periods absent.
- **Highly mobile and higher absence** – Certain sub-groups were highlighted as being very mobile, as well as spending lengthy periods out of New Zealand. The top five long-term absence countries were Taiwan, Singapore, Hong Kong, Malaysia and Canada. Migrants from these same countries were also among the main source countries to have five or more spells of absence over the analysis period.

PACIFIC

YOUTH

LISNZ

SETTLEMENT

FAMILY

ECONOMIC

GLOBAL MOBILITY

REFUGEE

CRIME

- **Low mobility and higher absence** – These migrants were not highly mobile, but often spent lengthy periods out of the country, for example secondary applicants from China.
- **Spend all time in New Zealand** – Some groups of migrants were highly represented in the proportion spending no time out of the country, for example Refugee Quota and Pacific Access Migrants.
- **Non-arrivers** – A small proportion of those approved each year did not arrive to take up residence.

DISCUSSION

Migrants approved in 1998 and 1999 had out-migration rates that were more than twice as high as the estimated rates for the New Zealand usually resident population. The different characteristics of the migrant and the usually resident populations need to be considered when interpreting the differences in out-migration rates. Comparison with the New Zealand population highlights three main components in migrants' out-migration. These include:

- an out-migration rate that is overall higher than the usually resident population
- a large retirement age out-migration flow
- a large number of children leaving (probably with their parents).

The high out-migration rate for older migrants may indicate that they return to their home country or move elsewhere to retire. It may also reflect settlement being more difficult for older than younger migrants.

Report findings challenge the notion that people granted permanent residence remain here permanently. The data shows that migration is more dynamic. While the majority of migrants do not spend large amounts of time out of New Zealand after taking up residence, some migrants spend much of their time absent. There is also a consistent (and growing) loss of migrants over time. The findings also have impacts in terms of understanding the longer-term impact migrants have on areas such as health, education and infrastructure.

There are varying reasons that migrants may leave New Zealand after taking up residence. Some of the non-return would reflect unsuccessful settlement, such as migrants not being able to find work. Other reasons could include migrants missing their home countries, overseas family or business commitments. Similar reasons could also account for migrants spending time out of the country temporarily. Not all migrants would have intended staying permanently, and many migrants who remain in New Zealand for a shorter period make a valuable contribution while they are here. Also, non-return needs to be considered in the context of continual gain of new skilled residents and other skilled people through temporary flows.

People on the Move can be obtained from the New Zealand Department of Labour's website at <http://www.dol.govt.nz/pdfs/Migrants-absenteeism-from-NZ.pdf>

For further information please contact research@dol.govt.nz