

New Zealand



KEY FACTS

Joined Commonwealth:	1931 (Statute of Westminster)
Population:	4,460,000 (2012)
GDP p.c. growth:	1.3% p.a. 1990–2012
UN HDI 2012:	world ranking 6
Official languages:	English, Maori
Time:	GMT plus 12–13hr
Currency:	New Zealand dollar (NZ\$)

Geography

Area:	270,500 sq km
Coastline:	15,130 km
Capital:	Wellington

New Zealand's Maori name is *Aotearoa*, meaning 'Land of the Long White Cloud'. A well-watered and fertile mountainous island country in the South Pacific, New Zealand consists of two large islands (North Island and South Island), Stewart Island and a number of offshore islands. It is somewhat isolated, being about 1,600 km east of Australia, the nearest land mass. Other neighbouring countries are Vanuatu and Tonga.

Time: GMT plus 12hr. The clock is advanced by one hour from the first Sunday in October to the third Sunday in March.

Topography: New Zealand being in the 'Pacific ring of fire', volcanic activity has shaped the landscape. Earthquakes, mostly shallow, are common, and volcanic eruptions occur in the North Island and offshore to the Kermadec Islands. Some 75 per cent of the country is higher than 200 metres above sea level. Around one-tenth of the North Island (113,729 sq km) is mountainous. Its Rotorua area, a much-visited tourist attraction, has boiling mud pools and geysers. The South Island (150,437 sq km) is very mountainous; the Southern Alps extend almost its entire length; they have many outlying ranges to the north and south-west; there are at least 223 peaks over 2,300 metres above sea level and 360 glaciers. There are numerous lakes, mostly at high altitude, and many rivers, mostly fast-flowing and difficult to navigate, which are important sources of hydroelectricity (which provides more than 90 per cent of the country's power). Stewart Island, named after Captain Stewart, who first charted the island in 1809, and (further out) the Auckland Islands lie south of the South Island. The Chatham and Pitt Islands are 850 km east of Christchurch. In addition, the Kermadec Islands were annexed in 1887 and the Ross Dependency in Antarctica was acquired in 1923. The country has a long coastline (15,130 km) in relation to its area.

Climate: Temperate marine climate influenced by the surrounding ocean, the prevailing westerly winds, and the mountainous nature of the islands. The weather tends to be changeable. Winds can be very strong, sometimes damaging buildings and trees. Rain, sometimes very heavy, occurs throughout the year. Cold southerly winds bring snow in winter, sometimes in spring. At Wellington, yearly average rainfall is 1,270 mm (143 mm in July, and averaging 87 mm from November to February); average January temperature is 13–20°C, and July temperature 6–11°C. Most of the country experiences at least 2,000 hours of sunshine annually. In recent years, weather patterns have been affected by La Niña and El Niño; some unusually high temperatures have been recorded; and drought and unusually heavy rainfall have occurred.



Did you know?

New Zealand was a founder member of the Commonwealth in 1931 when its independence was recognised under the Statute of Westminster.

Sir Don McKinnon of New Zealand was Commonwealth Secretary-General 2000–08.

Six New Zealanders have won overall Commonwealth Writers' Prizes: Witi Ihimaera in 1987 (Best First Book); Janet Frame in 1989; John Cranna in 1990 (Best First Book); Lloyd Jones in 2007; Craig Cliff in 2011 (Best First Book); and Emma Martin in 2012 (Short Story Prize). Another, Eleanor Catton, took the Man Booker Prize in 2013.

Environment: The most significant environmental issues are deforestation and soil erosion and the impact on native flora and fauna of species introduced from other countries.

Vegetation: Forest cover includes species of conifer, kauri (North Island only) and beech – forest covers 31 per cent of the land area, having increased at 0.3 per cent p.a. 1990–2010. A great range of flora, depending on latitude and altitude, from subtropical rainforest to alpine, with 25 per cent of plants growing above the tree-line. Many species are unique to New Zealand. Arable land comprises two per cent of the total land area.

Wildlife: Fauna are often also unique because of geographical isolation, and include such flightless birds as the kiwi, kakapo and weka, and a great diversity of seabirds, as well as 400 kinds of marine fish and many sea-mammals including 32 whale species. The introduction of land-mammals (unknown before the arrival of humans, save for three species of bat) by successive settlers, Polynesian and European, has seriously damaged the habitat of many species, including the flightless birds – of which the moa, adzebill and flightless goose have become extinct – and reduced the forest area.

Main towns: Wellington (capital, pop. 188,600 in 2010; greater Wellington includes Lower Hutt, Porirua and Upper Hutt), Auckland (421,900; greater Auckland includes Manukau, North Shore and Waitakere), Manukau (greater Auckland, 410,200), Christchurch (South Island, 377,400), North Shore (greater Auckland, 269,500), Waitakere (greater Auckland, 206,300), Hamilton (166,700), Napier–Hastings (120,700), Tauranga (119,900), Dunedin (South Island, 112,100), Lower Hutt (greater Wellington, 97,700), Palmerston North (77,600), Rotorua (54,100), Whangarei (50,600), New Plymouth (49,700), Porirua (greater Wellington, 48,900), Invercargill (South Island, 46,200) and Nelson (South Island, 43,800).

Transport: There are 94,280 km of roads, 66 per cent paved. The railway network, privatised in 1993 and subsequently renationalised, extends over 3,900 km, with many scenic routes.

There are 13 major commercial ports, including those in Whangarei (shipping oil products), Tauranga (timber and newsprint) and Bluff (alumina and aluminium) as well as container ports in Auckland, Wellington, Lyttleton (near Christchurch) and Dunedin.

There are international airports in Auckland (23 km to the south of the city), Christchurch (10 km north-west), Wellington (8 km south-east), Hamilton and Dunedin.

Society

KEY FACTS 2012

Population per sq km:	16
Life expectancy:	81 years
Net primary enrolment:	99% (2011)

Population: 4,460,000 (2012); 86 per cent of people live in urban areas and 32 per cent in urban agglomerations of more than one million people; growth 1.2 per cent p.a. 1990–2012; birth rate 14 per 1,000 people (22 in 1970); life expectancy 81 years (71 in 1970).

The 2006 census recorded 2,609,592 people of European origin (65 per cent); 565,329 people of Polynesian (Maori) descent (14 per cent); 265,974 Pacific Island Polynesians (6.6 per cent), mostly

from Samoa (131,103), Cook Islands (56,895) and Tonga (50,478); some 139,728 Chinese (3.5 per cent); and 97,443 Indians (2.4 per cent). About 75 per cent of people live in North Island, of which the average population density is 24 per sq km (South Island: six per sq km).

Language: English and Maori are the official languages and many information documents are also translated into Polynesian.

Religion: Some 70 per cent of people adhere to a religion: Christians 56 per cent (Anglicans 14 per cent, Roman Catholics 13 per cent, Presbyterians/Congregational/Reformed ten per cent, Methodists three per cent); Hindus 1.6 per cent; and Buddhists 1.3 per cent (2006 census).

Health: Public spending on health was eight per cent of GDP in 2011. Treatment in public hospitals is free for everyone. There are medical schools at the University of Auckland and the University of Otago. Infant mortality was five per 1,000 live births in 2012 (22 in 1960).

Education: Public spending on education was seven per cent of GDP in 2011. There are 12 years of compulsory education starting at the age of five. Primary school comprises six years and secondary seven, with cycles of four and three years. The school year starts in January.

Universities New Zealand recognises eight government-funded universities with a total student enrolment of about 180,000 in 2011: the Auckland University of Technology; Lincoln University (near Christchurch, South Island); Massey University (campuses in Auckland, Palmerston North and Wellington); University of Auckland; University of Canterbury (at Christchurch, South Island); University of Otago (main campus at Dunedin, South Island); University of Waikato (main campus at Hamilton); and Victoria University of Wellington.

There are many colleges of education across the country and the University of Waikato has its own School of Education. The tertiary sector also includes 20 institutes of technology and polytechnics, all offering degree courses. The Maori Education Trust – established in 1961 as the Maori Education Foundation – awards scholarships and grants to encourage Maori into tertiary education. The female–male ratio for gross enrolment in tertiary education is 1.50:1 (2010). There is virtually no illiteracy among people aged 15–24.

Media: Largest dailies include *The New Zealand Herald* (Auckland, the main national newspaper), *The Dominion Post* (Wellington) and *The Press* (Christchurch). Many other daily papers – mostly evening editions – are published locally and regionally. The principal Sunday papers are *Sunday Star-Times* and *Sunday News*.

Broadcasting was deregulated in 1988. Television New Zealand operates two public channels and further digital channels, and Maori Television promotes Maori language and culture. TV3, Prime TV and Sky TV are private channels.

Radio New Zealand provides three public stations and an external service, RNZi. Ruia Mai is a Maori-owned radio station broadcasting in Maori, and Niu FM provides a public service for the Pacific Islander communities. There are several private radio stations.

Some 97 per cent of households have TV sets (2009). There are 530 personal computers per 1,000 people (2006).

Communications: Country code 64; internet domain '.nz'. Public phones are generally phonecard- or credit card-operated. Mobile phone coverage is good. Internet access and internet cafés are widely available.

There are 422 main telephone lines, 1,104 mobile phone subscriptions and 895 internet users per 1,000 people (2012).

Public holidays: New Year (two days), Waitangi Day (anniversary of the 1840 treaty, 6 February), ANZAC Day (25 April), Queen's Official Birthday (first Monday in June), Labour Day (fourth Monday in October), Christmas Day and Boxing Day. The anniversaries of the former provinces of New Zealand are observed locally as holidays.

Religious and other festivals whose dates vary from year to year include Good Friday and Easter Monday.

Economy

KEY FACTS 2012

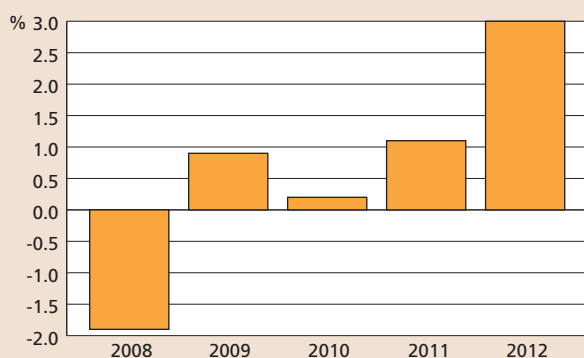
GDP:	US\$167.3bn
GDP p.c.:	US\$37,750
GDP growth:	0.7% p.a. 2008–12
Inflation:	2.7% p.a. 2008–12

From the 1950s the country diversified both its economy and its export markets, reducing its dependence on sheep and butter. Diversification has taken it into new agricultural products (kiwi fruit, apples, timber and wine), and seen significant growth in fishing, tourism, manufacturing and services.

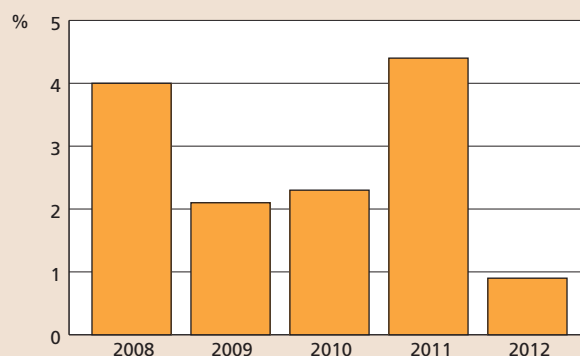
In 1984, after a period when the economy stalled, inflation was high and the currency devalued, the country embarked on a policy of liberalisation, deregulation and privatisation. In 1989, control of inflation was passed to the Reserve Bank; the subsequent austerity measures brought inflation to below two per cent by the end of 1991, and tight fiscal policy was maintained. Economic policy has been to protect the core of social spending while reducing government expenditure through privatisations and cost-cutting. New Zealand is a proponent of regional free trade, including the entire Pacific Rim.

The economy grew steadily during the 1990s until 1998. By mid-1998 the impact of the Asian financial crisis had become very serious, causing a sharp fall in trade with Asia and the government announced emergency spending cuts. However, in 1999 there was a return to confident growth.

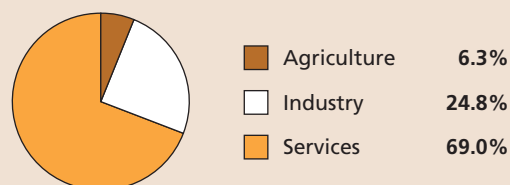
Real Growth in GDP



Inflation



GDP by Sector (2012)



The early 2000s saw the start of a strategy to reduce the gap between rich and poor, which had opened up since the introduction of free-market policies in the mid-1980s. Measures included increases in spending on health, education and public housing, focused on the Maori and Pacific Islander communities. Economic growth was steady at around four per cent p.a. 2002–04 but slowed to 1.9 per cent p.a. during 2004–08. As demand for New Zealand's exports collapsed in the global recession in 2008, the economy moved sharply into recession, resulting in a contraction for the year of 1.9 per cent. However, after exports picked up during 2009–10, the economy began to grow again and growth was sustained at two to three per cent p.a. in 2012–14.

Constitution

Status: Monarchy under Queen Elizabeth II

Legislature: New Zealand Parliament

New Zealand is a constitutional monarchy and parliamentary democracy, with Queen Elizabeth II titular head of state, represented in the country by the Governor-General.

There is a unicameral House of Representatives, directly elected for a three-year term, with universal suffrage for everyone over 18. Voting is not compulsory, though enrolment is. The number of MPs rose from 99 to 120 in 1996, under the new electoral system when the country moved to a form of proportional representation known as MMP (mixed member proportional). Voters have an electorate vote and a party vote. The former is used to select an MP in 70 constituencies – including seven Maori constituencies – on a first-past-the-post basis, while the latter is used to select a party and determine the total number of seats for each party in parliament. All parties polling more than five per cent of this vote (or with at least one electorate seat) are entitled to further seats based on the proportion of the party votes cast. Normally 50 members are party MPs but this number can be increased (increasing the total number of seats in parliament for the term) when a party wins more

electorate seats than it is entitled to according to the party vote. This happened for the first time in September 2005, when there was a single Maori Party 'overhang' MP.

The Prime Minister is appointed by the Governor-General on the basis of party strength in the House of Representatives and the Prime Minister appoints a cabinet.

History



The Polynesian ancestors of the present Maori, skilled navigators of canoes fitted with sails and outriggers, arrived in New Zealand around the tenth century from Hawaiki (Eastern Polynesia). The Maori population may have been over 100,000 at the time the first Europeans arrived. The Dutchman Abel Tasman sighted New Zealand in 1642 in his search for the southern continent, i.e. Antarctica, but was driven off by Maori on his one attempt to land. He named the South Island Nieuw Zeeland after the Dutch province.

James Cook, on a search for the southern continent combined with general scientific and navigational observation, sighted the North Island in 1769. He circumnavigated both islands and charted the shores. He visited the country twice more, in 1773–74 and in 1777. His encounters with Maori were usually peaceful, though occasional skirmishes resulted in one Maori and ten European deaths. Jean de Surville (France) arrived in the country in the mid-1770s; his relations with the Maori, bad from the beginning, ended in the deaths of 25 of his men and the subsequent massacre of over 200 Maori. Cook's good reports attracted sealers and traders, some from the new community in Sydney (established in 1788 as Port Jackson, a penal settlement), and whalers came from America, Britain and France.

With extensive European arrival, the Maori suffered severely from influenza, dysentery and diphtheria, to which they had no resistance. In 1814 the Maori were taken under the protection of the British monarch, but this protection was not always effective in practice. In 1828 the jurisdiction of the courts of New South Wales was extended to New Zealand whose population of European and European-descended settlers was estimated at 2,000 by 1839. Pressure from settlers, traders and missionaries led to intervention by Britain. On 14 January 1840 the Governor of New South Wales proclaimed British sovereignty over New Zealand and appointed a governor. Under the Treaty of Waitangi (6 February 1840) the Maori received the full rights and privileges of British subjects, and 46 Maori chiefs ceded sovereignty to Queen Victoria, in exchange for retaining ownership of their natural resources. The treaty has been widely interpreted and is now applied in all aspects of New Zealand public life, notably in organisation and employment practice.

When New Zealand became a British territory in 1840, it was divided into two provinces. Twelve years later the number of provinces was increased to six (and later increased still further) and a general assembly established, consisting of the governor, a nominated Legislative Council (an upper house) and an elected House of Representatives (a lower house). This bicameral system lasted until 1950. Maori-occupied land was governed according to Maori custom.

Immigration from Britain increased in the mid-19th century, and by 1858 settlers outnumbered Maori. A census of Maori, in

The MMP system is designed to prevent domination by a majority group and to give voice to minorities, under-represented in Westminster (first-past-the-post) systems. It is also intended to encourage voting on the basis of policies rather than a party bloc. In the first election under MMP, the proportion of women MPs rose by half to about one-third of the total and the Maori community obtained representation to match its 13 per cent share in the population.

1857–58, put their numbers at about 56,000. Pressure to acquire land from reluctant Maori led to land wars from 1860 to 1872, which resulted in general but not absolute European domination. Sheep farming was expanded in the late 1840s. Wool overtook timber and flax as export commodities and in 1882 the first ship carrying refrigerated meat sailed for England. There was gold mining on the South Island during the 1860s; this attracted considerable European immigration but ended in a slump.

During the 1890s a series of laws turned New Zealand into what was probably the most socially advanced state in the world. New Zealand women were the first in the world to be enfranchised, obtaining the vote in 1893. Men had been enfranchised in 1890, the year of the country's first general election. From 1936 the country developed into a pioneering welfare state.

In 1907, New Zealand became a Dominion – in effect an acknowledgement of its independence, which was formally recognised by the Statute of Westminster in 1931. In 1947 the last restrictions on the right of its parliament to amend its constitution were removed.

Maori membership of the House of Representatives was increased on six occasions. A Ministry of Maori Development was established in 1992, replacing the Ministry of Maori Affairs. The purpose of the Ministry of Maori Development is to assist in developing an environment of opportunity and choice for Maori, consistent with the Treaty of Waitangi.

At the general election in November 1993, the National Party won 50 seats, the Labour Party 45 seats. The National Party, not having an overall majority following defections and realignments, agreed in February 1996 on a coalition with the United New Zealand Party, which had seven MPs.

The first general election under the mixed member proportional representation system was held in October 1996. It gave 53 seats to a grouping consisting of: the National Party (44 seats) and its allies the Association of Consumers and Taxpayers of New Zealand (eight) and United New Zealand (one). The Labour Party won 37 seats, New Zealand First 17 and the Alliance Party 13. Although 34 parties contested the elections, only five received more than five per cent of the votes and so earned the right to party seats. As no single party had an overall majority in the 120-member house, New Zealand First held the balance of power. Only when that party decided to support the National Party was party leader Jim Bolger able to form a government.

In November 1997 Bolger announced his resignation as Prime Minister, when it became clear that Transport Minister Jenny Shipley had enough support among National Party MPs to force his resignation from the job he had held continuously since 1990. He took on a foreign affairs role outside the cabinet until he became US ambassador in April 1998.

Politics

Last elections:	20 September 2014
Next elections:	2017
Head of state:	Queen Elizabeth II, represented by Governor-General, Lt-Gen Sir Jerry Mateparae (2011–)
Head of government:	Prime Minister John Key
Ruling party:	National Party
Women MPs:	30%

In the general election of November 1999 the Labour Party, led by Helen Clark, won 49 seats and its coalition partner Alliance ten. The National Party, led by Jenny Shipley, took 39 seats and its ally, the Association of Consumers and Taxpayers of New Zealand (ACT New Zealand), nine. With the support of the Green Party (seven seats), Labour was able to command a majority in the 120-member House of Representatives and Helen Clark became Prime Minister.

In the July 2002 general election, Labour (52 seats) and its coalition partner – Progressive Coalition Party (two) – were unable to command a parliamentary majority without the support of smaller parties. These now included United Future (eight) and the Green Party (nine). The National Party secured 27 seats and ACT New Zealand nine, while its former coalition partner, New Zealand First, strengthened its position to 13.

The September 2005 general election was very close, but when all the votes were counted, the ruling Labour–Progressive coalition (Labour 50 seats, Progressive one) was returned for a third successive term and Helen Clark continued as Prime Minister, still able to command a majority in parliament only with support from New Zealand First (seven) and United Future Party (three). The National Party won 48 seats and the Green Party six.

The National Party – under the leadership of John Key – won the November 2008 election with 58 seats and 44.9 per cent of votes, and like previous governments would only be able to command a majority in the House with support from minority parties. Turnout was 79.5 per cent and Labour took 43 seats (34.0 per cent of votes), Green Party nine, ACT New Zealand five, the Maori Party five, Jim Anderton's Progressive one, United Future one and New Zealand First none.

In the November 2011 election the National Party increased its share of votes to 47.3 per cent, though with 59 seats still short of an absolute majority in parliament. Labour took 34 seats (27.5 per cent), the Green Party 14 (11.1 per cent), New Zealand First eight (6.6 per cent) and the Maori Party three. ACT New Zealand, Mana and United Future each won one seat. With the support of ACT and United Future, John Key was sworn in as Prime Minister for a second time. In December 2011 the National Party formed a coalition government with ACT New Zealand, United Future and the Maori Party.

The National Party won the election held on 20 September 2014, with 47.0 per cent of the vote and 60 seats, just short of an outright majority. The Labour Party received 25.1 per cent of the vote (32 seats); the Green Party 10.7 per cent (14); and New Zealand First 8.7 per cent (11). The Maori Party, ACT and United Future each won an 'electorate' seat. But United Future's party vote did not entitle it to any seats, so its electorate seat was an 'overhang' seat, bringing the total number of members in the new parliament to 121. John Key reached 'confidence and supply' agreements with the three smaller parties and formed a new government.

International relations

New Zealand is a member of Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Pacific Community, Pacific Islands Forum, United Nations and World Trade Organization.

Traveller information

Immigration and customs: Passports must be valid for at least three months from the date of departure. Visas are required by most Commonwealth nationals. Prohibited imports include ivory and marine mammal artefacts, for example of turtle shell or whalebone; and some plant species, for example certain orchids. All food; plants and plant material; animals and animal products; and golf clubs must be declared on arrival.

Travel within the country: Traffic drives on the left. Drivers and passengers are legally required to wear seatbelts at all times.

New Zealand has a modern and efficient transport network including comprehensive air and train services covering North and South Islands.

Travel health: There are no prevalent diseases where appropriate precautionary measures are recommended.

There were 2,565,000 tourist arrivals in 2012.

Further information

New Zealand Government: newzealand.govt.nz

Electoral Commission: www.elections.org.nz

New Zealand Parliament: www.parliament.nz

Statistics New Zealand: www.stats.govt.nz

Reserve Bank of New Zealand: www.rbnz.govt.nz

Tourism New Zealand: www.tourismnewzealand.com

Commonwealth Secretariat: www.thecommonwealth.org

Commonwealth of Nations:

www.commonwealthofnations.org/country/New_Zealand

Media

The Dominion Post: www.stuff.co.nz/dominion-post

The New Zealand Herald: www.nzherald.co.nz

The Press: www.stuff.co.nz/the-press

Sunday News: www.stuff.co.nz/sunday-news

Sunday Star-Times: www.stuff.co.nz/sunday-star-times

Maori Television: www.maoritelevision.com

Niu FM: www.niufm.com

Prime TV: www.primetv.co.nz

Radio New Zealand: www.radionz.co.nz

Television New Zealand: tvnz.co.nz

TV 3: www.tv3.co.nz

Radio New Zealand International: www.rnzi.com

Stuff: www.stuff.co.nz

New Zealand Press Association: www.nzpa.co.nz

Scoop: www.scoop.co.nz

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New Zealand

New Zealand: Associated Countries and External Territories



Cook Islands and Niue have full self-government in free association with New Zealand. Tokelau and the Ross Dependency in the Antarctic are New Zealand External Territories administered directly by New Zealand.

Cook Islands

Status: Self-governing in free association with New Zealand.

Geography

The Cook Islands archipelago lies in the South Pacific, with the largest island, Rarotonga, 3,013 km north-east of Auckland, New Zealand. There are 15 islands (Rarotonga, Mangaia, Atiu, Mauke, Mitiaro, Aitutaki, Penrhyn, Suvarrow, Manihiki, Rakahanga, Pukapuka, Nassau, Manuae, Takutea, Palmerston), of which 13 are inhabited. The islands, which form two groups, extend over two million sq km of ocean.

Area: 237 sq km (Rarotonga 65 sq km)

Main town: Avarua (capital; pop. 13,300 in 2010) on Rarotonga.

Topography: The southern group of islands, which accounts for about 90 per cent of the total land area, is of mainly volcanic formation. The northern group consists of low-lying coral atolls, except for Nassau, a sandy cay. The highest island is Rarotonga, rising to 653 metres at Te Manga, and surrounded by a coral reef. Most of the larger islands have lagoons surrounded by fertile soil backed by hills. Valuable metals, including significant amounts of manganese nodules, have been discovered on the sea bed and cover almost one-third of the Cook Islands' exclusive economic zone (EEZ).

Climate: April to November: mild and equable (20–26°C). December to March: wet and humid (22–28°C). Average rainfall on Rarotonga: 2,030 mm p.a.

Vegetation: Lush tropical on Rarotonga and the fertile southern group of islands. Vegetation on the coral atolls is sparse; mainly pandanus and coconuts. Forest covers 67 per cent of the land area (2010).

Wildlife: There is a bird-nesting sanctuary on Suvarrow. Varied marine life, including coral-reef dwelling species.

Transport/Communications: A 33 km surfaced coastal road encircles Rarotonga, while roads in the outer islands are not surfaced.

There are two deep-water ports: one in Rarotonga in the southern group and the other in Penrhyn in the northern group. Cargo for all outer islands is carried between ship and shore through passages in the reef in barges or lighters.

The international airport is 3 km west of Avarua on Rarotonga. Air Rarotonga operates internal flights; Air New Zealand, scheduled services to regional destinations such as Tahiti, Auckland, Suva and Honolulu.

The international dialling code is 682.

Society

Population: 20,750 (2012); population density 88 per sq km; more than half of the people live on Rarotonga and some 74 per cent in urban areas; growth 0.7 per cent p.a. 1990–2012; life expectancy 75 years.

The indigenous people are Cook Islands Maori. There are 56,895 Cook Islanders living in New Zealand, more than 70 per cent of whom were born there (2006 New Zealand census). Virtually all land is owned by Cook Islands Maori under a land-tenure system, which precludes its sale or mortgage except under very constrained circumstances. Land may be leased for up to 60 years, again under constrained circumstances.

Language: Maori (official), English

Religion: Mainly Christians (Cook Islands Congregationalists).

Health: Most health services are free, but new user charges are being implemented. There is a central hospital on Rarotonga, plus seven island cottage hospitals, and outpatient clinics, health centres and maternity/child clinics. The outer islands are mainly serviced by nurses. There is no malaria, but lifestyle diseases such as hypertension, diabetes and gout are increasing. Infant mortality was nine per 1,000 live births in 2012.

Education: There are 11 years of compulsory education starting at age five. Net enrolment ratio for primary is 98 per cent. The school year starts in January.

Tertiary education is provided by a teachers' college, nursing school, tourism training school, trade training centre and University of the South Pacific extension centre. Overseas scholarships are available for university-level studies. Cook Islands is a partner in the regional University of the South Pacific, which has its main campus in Suva, Fiji. Adult literacy is about 95 per cent.

Media: *Cook Islands News* (daily, in English and Maori), *The Cook Islands Herald* (weekly) and *Cook Islands Independent* (weekly). There are private providers of radio and TV.

Public holidays: New Year's Day, ANZAC Day (25 April), Queen's Official Birthday (first Monday in June), Rarotonga Gospel Day (25 July, only in Rarotonga), Constitution Day (early August), National

Gospel Day (26 October), Christmas Day and Boxing Day. The Constitution Day celebrations begin on the last Friday in July and continue for up to two weeks. Most islands celebrate their own Gospel Day, as well as the National Gospel Day.

Religious festivals whose dates vary from year to year include Good Friday and Easter Monday.

Economy

The Cook Islands economy is based on agriculture (especially copra and citrus), fishing and tourism. The copra industry has declined. Clam and pearl oyster farming have been developed. Offshore banking was established in 1982. Tourism, largely in Rarotonga, accounts for around 65 per cent of GDP. There were 122,000 tourist arrivals in 2012, mostly from New Zealand; the numbers holding up well despite the global downturn in 2008–09.

Despite the economy's relative diversity, in the 1990s there was a heavy reliance on imports, a large civil service (almost 20 per cent of the population) and many young people emigrated – largely to New Zealand – though remittances from expatriates make a significant contribution. After the mid-1990s, when growth was very slow, the government embarked on economic reforms including a reduction of civil service jobs from 3,350 in 1996 to 1,340 in 1998 and of ministries from 52 to 22.

There was a surge of growth in 2000 (13.9 per cent) and 2001 (4.9 per cent), before the downturn in long-haul tourism after 11 September 2001 and the reduction in air services in the Pacific region caused growth to moderate.

History

The islands were colonised by Polynesians during the seventh and eighth centuries. James Cook – the islands take his name – sighted them in 1773 and in 1789 Rarotonga was visited by the mutineers from *The Bounty* during their bid for freedom. In 1888 the islands were made a British protectorate and administered by a British resident. In 1891 an elective federal parliament was set up, but in 1901 it was abolished, following a petition by prominent Cook Islanders, and the country was annexed by New Zealand.

In 1957 a legislative assembly was set up, consisting of 14 members elected by universal adult suffrage. In 1962 the Assembly debated the question of the country's political future and chose self-government in free association with New Zealand. United Nations observers attended the general election of April 1965, at New Zealand's request. Albert Henry became the country's first Premier, after his Cook Islands Party won 14 of the 22 seats.

Since Cook Islands became self-governing, power has alternated between the Cook Islands Party (CIP) and the Democratic Party, later becoming the Democratic Alliance Party. In the general election in June 1999, the coalition of the CIP and recently established New Alliance Party (NAP), led by Norman George, gained a majority and Sir Geoffrey Henry, the CIP leader, was confirmed as Prime Minister for another five-year term. The CIP won 11 seats, the NAP four – one by one vote – and the Democratic Alliance Party (DAP) ten seats. A period of political instability followed the elections when first Joe Williams of CIP became Prime Minister, and then, in November 1999, Terepai Maoate of DAP, who formed a government in coalition with George's NAP.

In February 2002 a vote of no confidence brought Dr Robert Woonton to office, forming a four-way coalition of DAP, NAP, CIP

and independents. In January 2003, following reunification of the Democratic Party and a merger with NAP, Woonton formed a new government with a two-thirds majority in the legislature, and the CIP left the government and became the opposition.

Constitution

Under the 1965 constitution, Cook Islands is a sovereign state with Queen Elizabeth II as head of state and a unicameral legislature, which has exhaustive and (since 1981) exclusive legislative powers (including constitutional reform); the New Zealand House of Representatives cannot legislate under any circumstances in respect of the Cook Islands. The parliament has 24 members elected by universal adult suffrage; elections are held at intervals of not more than five years.

The cabinet consists of the Prime Minister and between six and eight ministers of the Prime Minister's choice. The House of Ariki consists of hereditary chiefs representing their respective islands who are elected annually. The House concerns itself largely with advising government on issues relating to land use and traditional customs. Local government consists of island councils, district councils (*vaka*) and village committees. Cook Islands residents are also New Zealand citizens.

Under a constitutional relationship, New Zealand may exercise, if requested by Cook Islands, certain responsibilities for its defence. Cook Islands has full constitutional capacity to conduct its own external affairs and to enter directly into international arrangements engaging its international responsibility.

Politics

Last elections: 9 July 2014

Next elections: by 9 July 2019

Head of state: Queen Elizabeth II, represented by the Queen's Representative

Head of government: Prime Minister Henry Puna

Ruling party: Cook Islands Party

The general election in September 2004 was a very close contest with a turnout of more than 80 per cent. The Democratic Party (DP) took 47 per cent of the votes and won 13 seats to the Cook Islands Party's (CIP) 44 per cent and ten seats. Several of the results, including Prime Minister Robert Woonton's own narrow majority, were challenged. After a recount he had the same number of parliamentary supporters as his CIP opponent and then declined to stand in the by-election that was called for February 2005 and was unable to continue in office. In the ensuing parliamentary vote, Jim Marurai of the DP was elected Prime Minister.

The CIP won a by-election in July 2006 and the government no longer had a majority in parliament. So an early general election was called in September 2006. The ruling DP won 14 seats and CIP eight. One seat was tied and CIP won the consequent by-election in November 2006.

The CIP won 16 seats in the November 2010 election and the DP the remaining eight. CIP leader Henry Puna was sworn in as Prime Minister shortly afterwards.

The CIP narrowly won the general election of 9 July 2014 with 12 of the 24 parliamentary seats. The DP secured nine, One Cook Islands Movement two and one seat was tied. Henry Puna continued as Prime Minister.

Niue

Status: Self-governing in free association with New Zealand.

Geography

Niue is a coral island in the South Pacific, stretching 19 km from north to south, lying 480 km east of Tonga and 930 km west of the Cook Islands.

Area: 259 sq km

Main town: Alofi (capital; pop. 560 in 2010); there are 14 villages. The government may not sell the freehold to land, but may grant 60-year leases.

Topography: Niue is a raised coral outcrop rising to a height of 65 metres, and full of caves and fissures. The coast is steep and jagged; a coral reef surrounds the island. There are no rivers, but good-quality water from wells is plentiful. The soil is fertile, but not abundant and endangered by over-cropping and by bulldozing and burning to clear the land. Since 1983, cover crops have been allowed to grow along with the crops, to keep the soil moist.

Climate: Tropical, with cooling south-east trade winds and occasional storms. The rainy season is from December to March.

Environment: There is increasing attention to conservationist practices to counter loss of soil fertility from traditional slash and burn agriculture.

Vegetation: Bush and forest. Forest covers 73 per cent of the land area (2010).

Transport/Communications: There are some 120 km of paved roads.

Only small ships are able to berth at Alofi, Niue's port, so goods and passengers are transferred to and from larger ships in smaller vessels.

The international dialling code is 683. There are 723 main telephone lines and 822 internet users per 1,000 people (2012).

Society

Population: 1,500 (2011); population density six per sq km; some 38 per cent of people live in urban areas; growth -2.3 per cent p.a. 1990-2011; life expectancy 72 years.

The people are largely of Polynesian descent (originally from Samoa and Tonga). There are 22,476 Niueans living in New Zealand (2006 New Zealand census). The government is attempting to stem depopulation and encourage Niueans to return home.

Language: Niuean and English are official languages; Niuean is the national language.

Religion: Mainly Christians (Ekalesia Niue 61 per cent, Latter-day Saints nine per cent, Roman Catholics seven per cent).

Health: A new hospital, Niue Foou, opened in 2006 following the devastation of Niue's then only hospital, Lord Liverpool Hospital, by Cyclone Heta in January 2004. Tropical diseases are not generally prevalent, though there have been occasional outbreaks of dengue fever. Infant mortality was 21 per 1,000 live births in 2012.

Education: There are 12 years of compulsory education starting at age five. The pupil-teacher ratio for both primary and secondary is 8:1 (2005). The school year starts in January.

Education beyond Form 6 is largely provided in New Zealand, Australia and Fiji. Niue is a partner in the regional University of the South Pacific, which has its main campus in Suva, Fiji. There is an extension centre of the university in Niue. Adult literacy is virtually 100 per cent.

Media: *Niue Star* is published weekly. Niue Broadcasting Corporation provides radio and TV services.

Public holidays: New Year's Day, Takai Commission Holiday (2 January), Waitangi Day (anniversary of the 1840 treaty, 6 February), ANZAC Day (25 April), Queen's Official Birthday (first Monday in June), Constitution Day (two days in October), Peniamina Day (anniversary of the landing of the first missionaries, October), Christmas Day and Boxing Day.

Religious and other festivals whose dates vary from year to year include Good Friday and Easter Monday.

Economy

With its tiny economic base, declining population and limited potential for exports (mainly vegetables, honey and vanilla), Niue is dependent on aid from New Zealand, which gradually declined during the 1990s. Despite attempts to diversify the economy (for example, into offshore finance) it remains fragile and self-sufficiency is not likely. There were some 5,000 tourist arrivals in 2012.

History

Samoans and Tongans are thought to have been Niue's first inhabitants. The island was visited by Captain James Cook in 1774; he named it 'Savage Island' after the warlike reputation of the people. The London Missionary Society began administering the island in 1846. It became a British protectorate in 1900, and the following year it was annexed to New Zealand as a dependency. Emigration began with the recruitment of Niueans to work in the phosphate mines of the region.

In 1974 Niue became self-governing in free association with New Zealand. Robert Rex was Niue's first Premier. He remained in post, with three-yearly general elections, from 1974 until his death in 1992. He was succeeded by Young Vivian, who lost power to Frank Lui in the elections of March 1993. Lui lost his seat in the general election in March 1999 and was succeeded by Sani Lakatani of the Niue People's Party (formed in 1987), which gained a majority in the 20-seat assembly.

After ten years of discussions with the USA, a treaty fixing the sea boundary between Niue and American Samoa was signed in May 1997.

Constitution

Under the 1974 constitution, Niue is self-governing in free association with New Zealand, which is still responsible for defence and the conduct of foreign affairs. Its people are citizens of New Zealand and UK subjects. The legislative assembly has 20 members (one for each village and six elected every three years on a common roll) with universal adult suffrage. Government is headed by the Premier, elected by the assembly. The cabinet consists of the Premier and three members of the assembly. The New Zealand High Commissioner conducts transactions between the Niue and New Zealand governments. There are 14 village councils whose members are elected and serve for three years.

Politics

Last elections: 12 April 2014

Next elections: 2017

Head of state: Queen Elizabeth II, represented by the Governor-General of New Zealand

Head of government: Premier Toke Talagi

Until 1987 – when the Niue People's Party (NPP) was formed – politics was conducted on an individual and not a party basis. In the general election in April 2002 there was close to 100 per cent voter turnout and all 20 assembly members were returned, eight of the village representatives unopposed. The NPP won six seats and formed a government with the support of independent members. Young Vivian of the NPP became Premier. In 2003 the NPP was dissolved.

In the April 2005 election Vivian was elected unopposed, and was subsequently confirmed as Premier when he received the endorsement of 17 of the 20 assembly members.

In the Niue Assembly vote following the general election in June 2008, Toke Talagi defeated incumbent Premier Young Vivian by 14 votes to five and became Premier for the first time.

Following the May 2011 general election Talagi was re-elected Premier with the support of 12 of the 20 assembly members.

Following a general election on 12 April 2014, in a Niue Assembly vote on 24 April, incumbent Premier Talagi defeated Stanley Kalauni by 12 votes to eight.

The Ross Dependency

Status: New Zealand external territory, directly administered by New Zealand.

Geography

The Ross Dependency in the Antarctic comprises all the islands and territories south of 60°S latitude between 160°E and 150°W longitude.

Area: Estimated at 413,540 sq km and permanent shelf ice of 336,770 sq km.

Topography: Antarctica is a vast plateau continent, covered in ice, its landscape made up of glaciers, mountain ranges and deep crevasses. The Transantarctic Mountains extend across the continent, dividing the eastern and western ice sheets. The volcanic Mt Erebus rises to 3,794 metres. The deep embayment of the Ross Ice Shelf forms part of the western ice sheet; here, at 30–60 metres, the ice is 200–300 years old and samples show the increase in atmospheric pollution at the start of the industrial revolution in Europe. Flat-topped tabular icebergs, peculiar to the Antarctic (Arctic bergs are jagged), break off the ice cliffs and drift north. Bergs are 30–45 metres high (four or five times deeper below the surface) and up to 100–115 km (even 145 km) long. As they move north, the bergs calve (that is, fracture), emitting a continuous sound like frying fat as they melt. In fine weather, the air is very clear, allowing distant vistas of great sharpness.

Climate: The Antarctic latitudes are far colder than their Arctic equivalents. The Antarctic climate is bitter, windy and inhospitable (average temperature at the Pole is –50°C). Fierce winds blowing outwards from the central plateau scour the icy surfaces; blizzards can rage for weeks. During white-outs, shadows and horizon vanish as the light from the overcast sky bounces off the snow. Snowfall is light near the South Pole, heavier at the coastal margins. Within the Antarctic circle, winter days are very short, with corresponding days of midnight polar sun in summer.

Wildlife: The Antarctic landmass is barren: it is treeless and virtually plantless, with only lichens and mosses able to survive. However, the Antarctic waters are rich in plankton and shrimp-like krill which attract larger marine life. There are 18 species of penguins, of which only the emperor and Adélie penguins are truly Antarctic, spending their entire lives on the coast or close to its shores. Other birds include skuas and petrels. There are six species of seals in Antarctic waters; the Ross seal (nicknamed the 'singing seal' for its gentle cooing noise) inhabits the perennial pack ice and gives birth on the ice. The fur seal (once hunted almost to extinction and now protected) has small ears and is closer to the sea-lion. Various species of whales visit the region.

Society

Population: There are no permanent inhabitants, but the Scott Base on Ross Island is staffed all the year round and there are two seasonal bases.

Economy

There is no economic activity and the continent is protected under the Antarctic Treaty. A continuing programme of scientific research has been carried out since 1958 under the New Zealand Antarctic Research Programme. Areas of study include zoology, botany, geology, meteorology, limnology and geo-chemistry. Monitoring of the hole in the ozone layer has recently been undertaken in the territory.

History

From the early 18th century European explorers ventured into the waters of the far south. In 1700 astronomer and explorer Edmond Halley, encountering icebergs, described them as 'great islands of ice of so incredible a height and magnitude'. Among subsequent explorers, James Cook reached the high latitude of 71°S in 1774. From the late 18th century commercial interests took off with the hunting of wildlife. In 1821–22 alone some 320,000 fur seals were killed; elephant and fur seals were slaughtered almost to extinction. Whales were similarly hunted and fell victim to the improving technology of harpooning.

James Ross, leading a British expedition in the mid-19th century, explored the embayment of what is now known as the Ross Sea. He saw the volcano of Mt Erebus and the ice barrier, collected numerous marine specimens (subsequently lost or damaged), and conducted experiments, advanced for their time, on ocean depths and temperatures.

In the 20th century, Antarctic expeditions, both for polar exploration and scientific purposes, were sponsored by various nations. In 1911, the Norwegian Roald Amundsen, camped on the eastern side of the Ross Sea, reached the South Pole. A month later, Captain Robert Scott's British team reached the Pole from their camp on the western side of the Ross Sea, but perished on the return journey, victims of atrocious weather and faulty planning. Later explorers include the American Richard Byrd, the first to fly over the Pole.

After World War II, the International Whaling Commission banned the hunting of certain species of whales, but the numbers of right, humpback, blue and fin whales remain vestigial in the Southern Ocean. Seals are protected under a convention of 1971.

In 1923 steps were taken to assert sovereignty over the Antarctic territory by vesting administration in the New Zealand Government by an order in council under the British Settlements Act of 1887.

The New Zealand Antarctic Expedition established Scott Base on Ross Island in 1957; the following year, the Ross Dependency Research Committee was appointed to co-ordinate all New Zealand activity in the dependency.

In 1959, 12 nations, including New Zealand, signed the Antarctic Treaty, which reserves the Antarctic for peaceful purposes. The parties have agreed to freeze territorial claims, conduct scientific research according to accepted international standards, to share research and not to test nuclear or other weapons. By 2013, the treaty had been signed by 50 countries.

Administration

In 1995 the government concluded a year-long review of New Zealand's Antarctic structure. Key outcomes included the establishment of a New Zealand Antarctic Institute (Antarctica New Zealand), and the continuation of the Officials' Antarctic Committee (OAC) with enhanced terms of reference.

The OAC is an interdepartmental committee that contributes policy advice on Antarctic affairs to the government. Antarctica New Zealand is responsible for developing and managing New Zealand's national activities in the Ross Dependency and New Zealand's activities generally in Antarctica, and is a Crown entity managed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

Tokelau

Status: New Zealand external territory, directly administered by New Zealand.

Geography

Tokelau consists of three atolls (Atafu, Nukunonu and Fakaofu) lying in the South Pacific 480 km north of Apia, Samoa. The atolls are scattered: Atafu lies 64 km north-west of Nukunonu, and Fakaofu 92 km south-east of Nukunonu.

Area: Atafu (2.03 sq km), Nukunonu (5.46 sq km) and Fakaofu (2.63 sq km) – totalling 10.12 sq km.

Topography: Each atoll consists of a number of low-lying islets, surrounding a lagoon, nowhere higher than five metres. The projected rise in sea level as a result of the greenhouse effect of atmospheric pollution could put the territory at risk. The soil is thin and infertile.

Climate: Tropical with average annual temperature of 28°C and heavy rainfall.

Transport/Communications: There are no roads, no airstrip and no harbour. Vessels anchor offshore, and there is a regular sea link between the atolls and with Samoa.

Tokelau was the last country in the world without a telephone system. All government departments and most households are now connected to the telephone network. The international dialling code is 690.

Society

Population: 1,200 (2012), with about one-third of people on each of Atafu, Nukunonu and Fakaofu; population density for the territory as a whole is 119 per sq km.

Population has been declining, with emigration mainly to New Zealand and Samoa (about 6,800 Tokelauans live in New Zealand, 2006 New Zealand census). The people are of Polynesian origin.

Language: Tokelauan is the official language; English widely spoken. Local dialects are also spoken.

Religion: Mainly Christians (Congregationalists 67 per cent and Roman Catholics 30 per cent).

Health: Each of the three atolls has a 12-bed hospital manned by at least one doctor, several nurses and nurses' aides.

Education: Compulsory from age five to 15. There are three government schools, one on each atoll, providing education at all levels.

Additional secondary, tertiary and vocational education is provided in New Zealand and other Pacific countries, and there are links with the regional University of the South Pacific in Fiji.

Media: There is one newspaper (not daily) and a radio station on each atoll to broadcast shipping and weather reports.

Economy

Subsistence farming (coconuts, fruit), livestock production (pigs, ducks, poultry, goats) and fishing are the principal economic activities. There is a tuna-processing plant on Atafu and some handicraft production. Revenue is also raised through the sale of licences to fish in Tokelau's exclusive economic zone and through philatelic sales. Remittances from expatriate Tokelauans are an important source of income.

History

The islands became a British protectorate in 1877. In 1916, the islands (known as the Union Islands until 1946) were annexed by the UK and included within the Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony. In 1925, the Tokelau group was separated from the Colony and New Zealand assumed responsibility for administration. In 1948, it was included 'within the territorial boundaries' of New Zealand. The Tokelau Public Service, formerly based in Apia, Samoa, has now largely been relocated to the islands.

Administration

There is an Administrator responsible to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade in New Zealand. (The Administrator may also be the Secretary of Foreign Affairs and Trade but at present the post is separate.) The Tokelau Apia Liaison Office (that is, the government office) is located in Samoa because of its better communications.

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