

This monthly fact sheet summarises highlights from the latest labour market information, including changes since the start of the COVID-19 Alert Levels. It focusses on the most recent changes and complements MBIE's *Labour Market Statistics Snapshot*¹, which is produced every quarter and uses the traditional Labour Market official statistics. For more detail about sectors and regions, see fact sheets available at MBIE's *COVID-19 economic data*².

The *Monthly Labour Market Fact Sheet* will next be updated on 12 February 2021.

Overview

Headline statistics

Measures	Sep-19	Dec-19	Mar-20	Jun-20	Sep-20
Employment	2,703,000	2,711,000	2,740,000	2,731,000	2,709,000
— Wages or Salaried	2,369,400	2,393,900	2,391,600	2,346,400	2,337,200
— Self-employed	300,400	313,600	330,000	345,800	336,300
Employment Rate	67.7%	67.5%	67.7%	67.1%	66.4%
Underutilisation	303,000	294,000	308,000	354,000	392,000
— Unemployment	118,000	116,000	120,000	114,000	151,000
— Underemployment	94,000	91,000	93,000	127,000	135,000
— Potential Jobseekers	90,900	86,500	94,600	113,700	105,400
Underutilisation Rate	10.4%	10.1%	10.4%	12.0%	13.2%
Unemployment Rate	4.2%	4.1%	4.2%	4.0%	5.3%
Not in the Labour Force	1,171,000	1,188,000	1,185,000	1,223,000	1,218,000
Youth Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET)	72,000	77,000	93,000	83,000	82,000
NEET Rate	10.9%	11.8%	14.1%	12.6%	12.6%
Average Hours Worked	38.60	38.66	38.63	37.43	38.21

All measures are from the Household Labour Force Survey except for average hours worked from the Quarterly Employment Survey. *Labour Market Statistics, Stats NZ (Data to September 2020, next release on 03/02/2021)*

The recent story

The effects of COVID-19 and Alert Level economic restrictions continue to affect New Zealand's labour market, with women faring worse than men across key labour market measures. The overall unemployment rate saw a record rise to 5.3 per cent in the September 2020 quarter, with many people starting to actively seek work after the end of the Alert Level restrictions. Employment also fell over the quarter, with significant job losses in key tourism-related industries.

During April, the number of people receiving Jobseeker Support Work-Ready benefits increased markedly and filled jobs fell by a record 1.6 per cent. From May onwards the number of filled jobs rebounded and monthly changes are now within the usual historic patterns, although annual growth remains below that of recent years. November 2020 is the first time since the 2009-10 Global Financial Crisis that the annual change in filled job numbers has been negative.

It is likely that the COVID-19 Wage Subsidy supported employment levels by allowing businesses to keep paying their staff during the Alert Level restrictions. The original Wage Subsidy peaked in late May, covering 1.66 million jobs; the Wage Subsidy Extension peaked in late July, covering 480,000 jobs; and the Resurgence Wage Subsidy peaked in early September, covering 230,000 jobs.

The number of benefit recipients has continued to grow slowly, although the number of people receiving the COVID-19 Income Relief Payment fell to 2,100 in early January 2021 from a peak of 24,800 in late August 2020. As of November 2020, the number of advertised job vacancies has begun to grow again on an annual basis, recovering from a large drop in April and May.

¹<https://www.mbie.govt.nz/business-and-employment/employment-and-skills/labour-market-reports-data-and-analysis/labour-market-statistics-snapshot/>

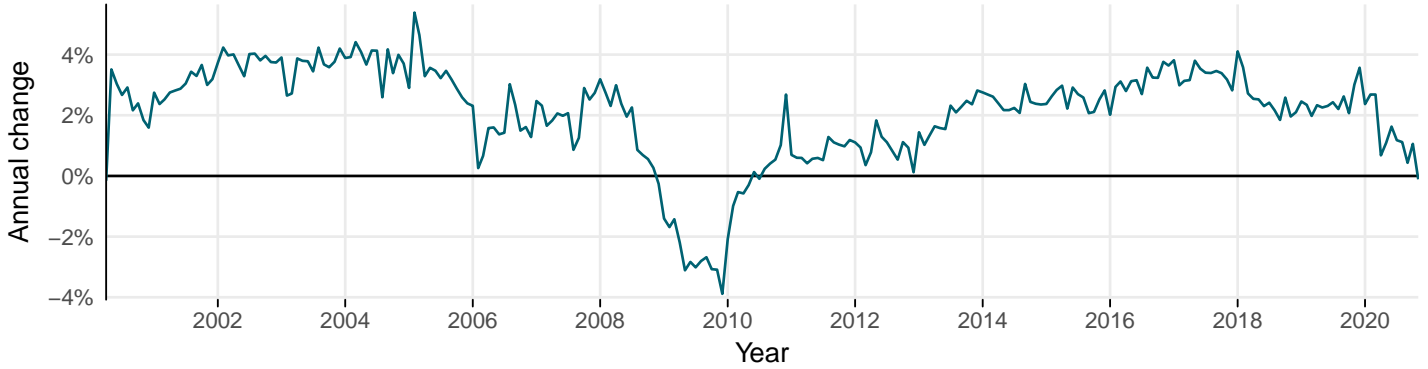
²<https://www.mbie.govt.nz/business-and-employment/economic-development/covid-19-data-resources/covid-19-economic-data/>



Filled jobs

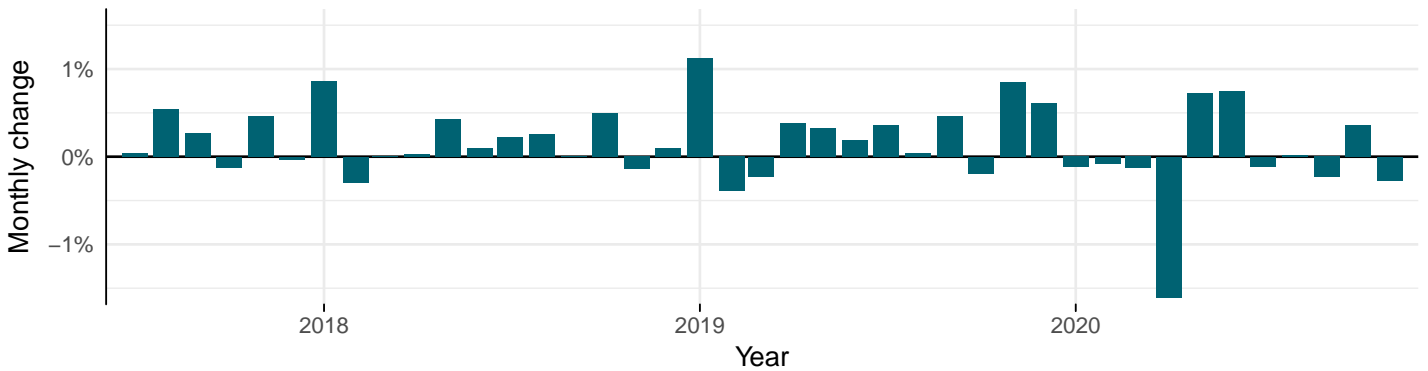
Stats NZ's Monthly Employment Indicators (MEIs) count filled jobs, using employer payroll filing tax data. These statistics are a useful indicator to supplement the official Labour Market Statistics, although they do not count the self-employed, they don't necessarily represent full-time or permanent jobs, and recent results can be subject to fluctuations due to different employers' payroll schedules.

Annual percentage change in filled jobs



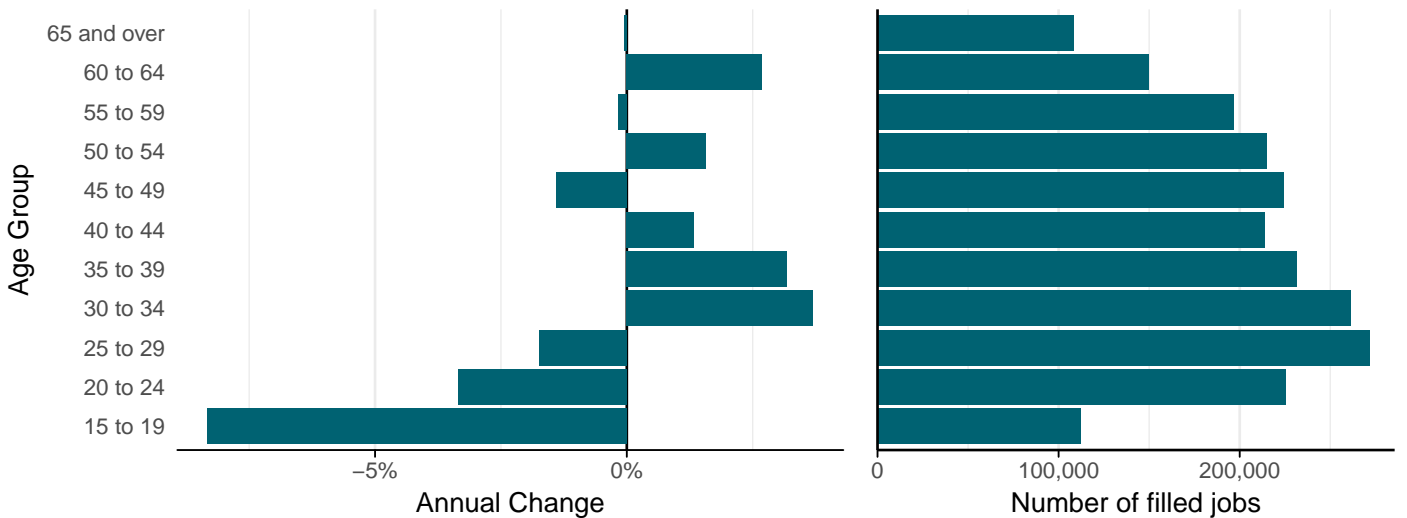
Monthly Economic Indicator - Filled Job Series, Stats NZ (Data to November 2020, next release on 29/01/2021)

Monthly change in the number of filled jobs, seasonally adjusted



Monthly Economic Indicator - Filled Job Series, Stats NZ (Data to November 2020, next release on 29/01/2021)

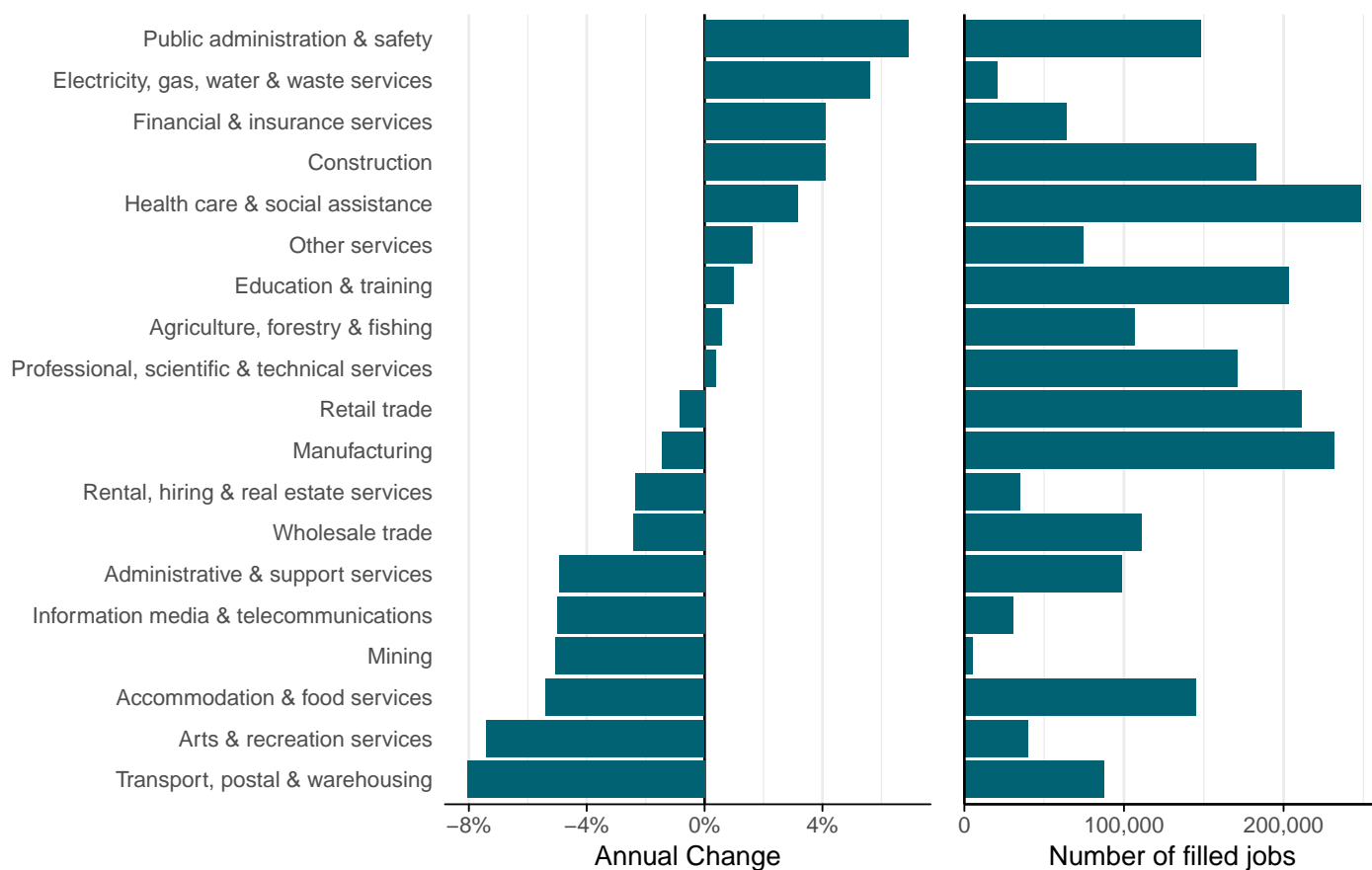
Filled jobs by age group



Monthly Economic Indicator - Filled Job Series, Stats NZ (Data to November 2020, next release on 29/01/2021)

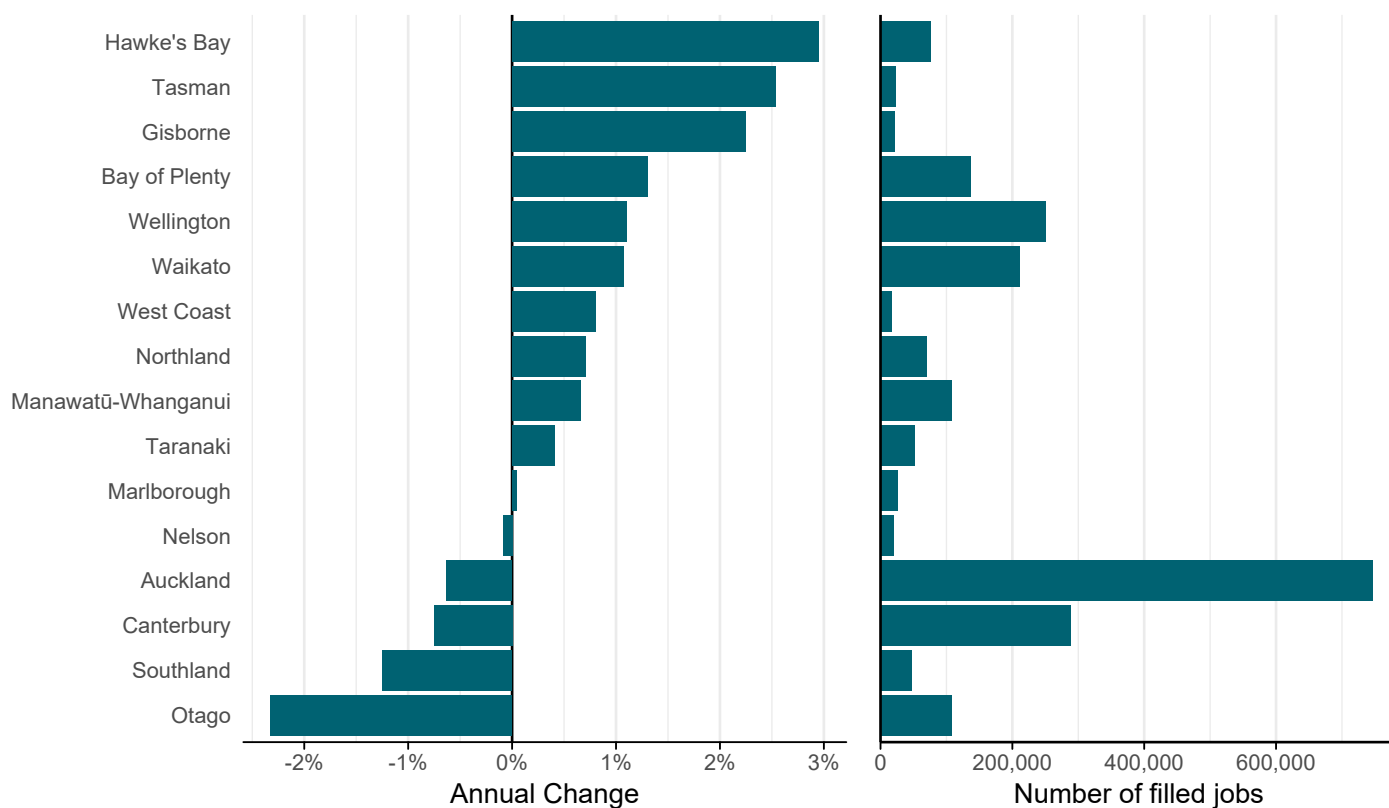


Filled jobs by industry



Monthly Economic Indicator - Filled Job Series, Stats NZ (Data to November 2020, next release on 29/01/2021)

Filled jobs by region

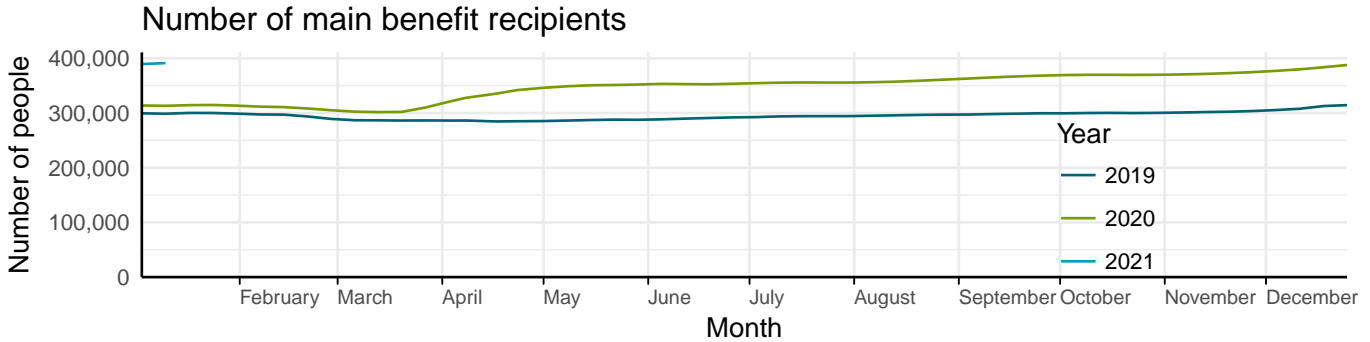


Monthly Economic Indicator - Filled Job Series, Stats NZ (Data to November 2020, next release on 29/01/2021)

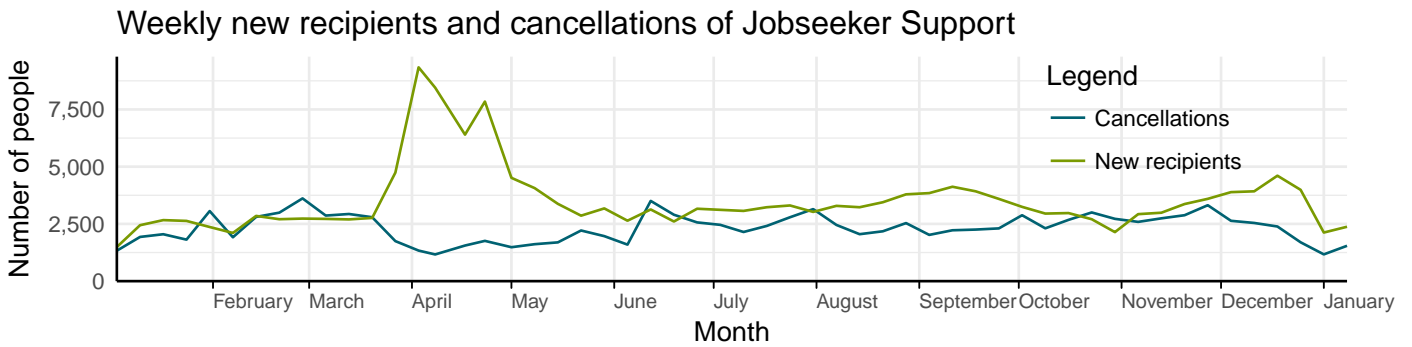


Benefit Recipients

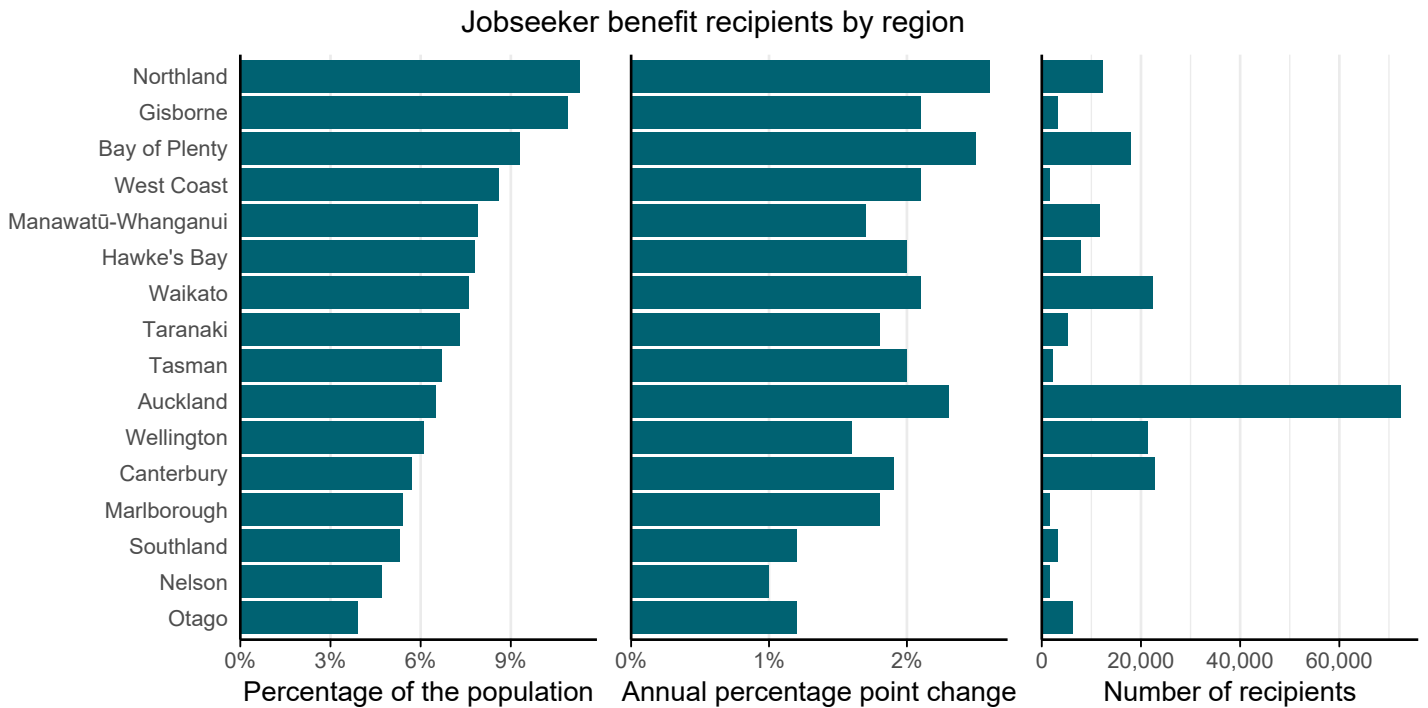
Benefits are primarily a measure of how many people require income support rather than a measure of unemployment, but since 2008 the number of Jobseeker Support recipients has mostly tracked in line with the number of unemployed individuals. Measuring all working-age main benefits covers additional circumstances in which someone could need extra income and is a better proxy for the underutilisation rate, which is a more useful measure of “slack” in the labour market than unemployment alone.



Working-age main benefits, MSD (Data to 08/01/2021, released every Friday)



Working-age main benefits, MSD (Data to 08/01/2021, released every Friday)



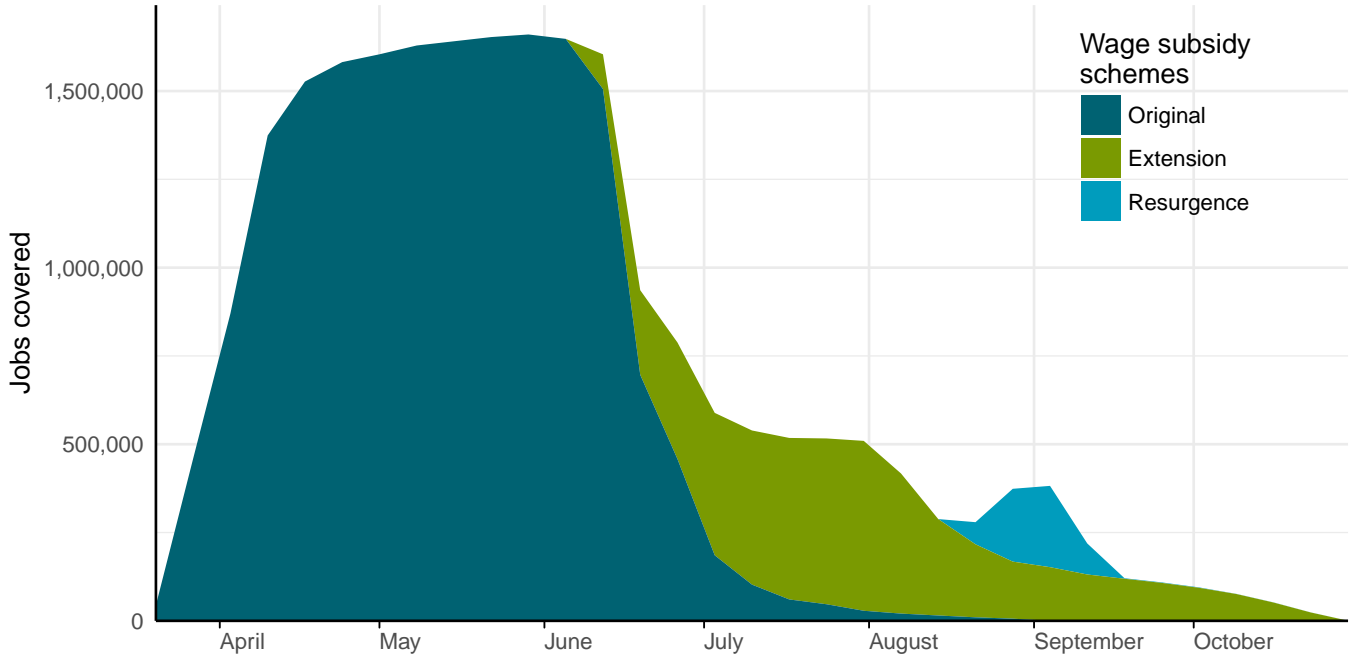
Working-age main benefits, MSD (Data as at 08/01/2021, released every Friday)



Wage Subsidy

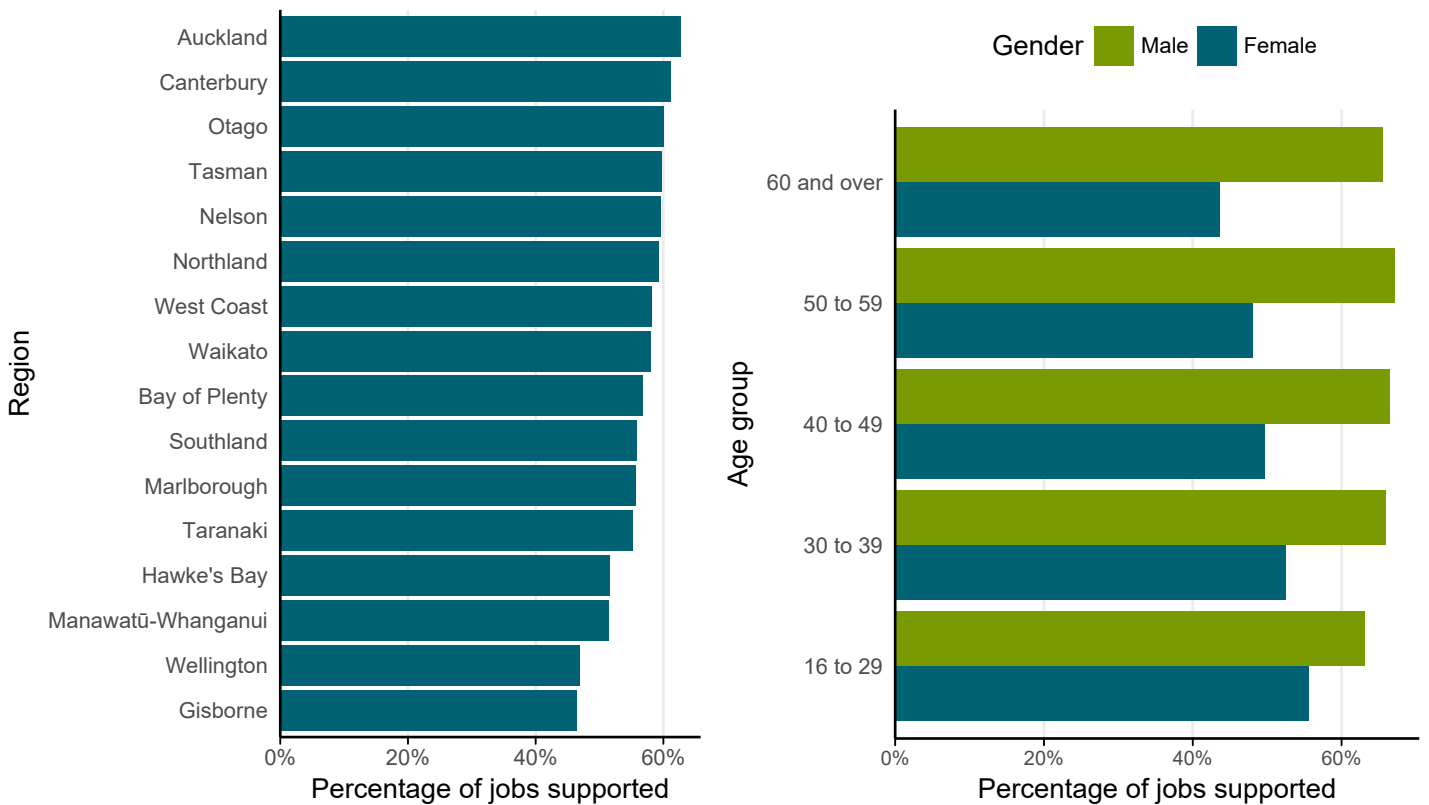
The COVID-19 Wage Subsidy and Leave Payment Scheme was introduced to assist businesses in paying their staff, allowing businesses to claim \$585.80 per week per full-time employee (\$350 per part-time employee) for up to 12 weeks. The Wage Subsidy Extension scheme was introduced on 10 June, covering jobs for up to 8 weeks, and a Resurgence Wage Subsidy payment was available for the last two weeks in August when Auckland was placed at Alert Level 3 and the rest of the country moved back into Alert Level 2.

Number of jobs supported by wage subsidy schemes



Income Support and Wage Subsidy Weekly Update, MSD (Data as at 30/10/2020)

Proportion of jobs supported by wage subsidy schemes



COVID-19 evidence,³ MSD (Data as at 24/07/20)

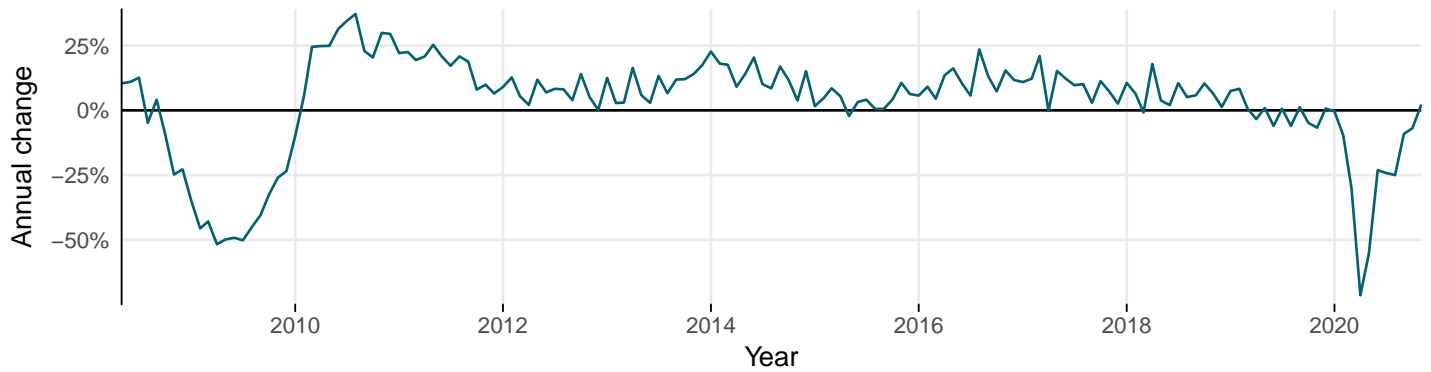
³<https://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/statistics/covid-19/covid-19-evidence.html>



Job Vacancies

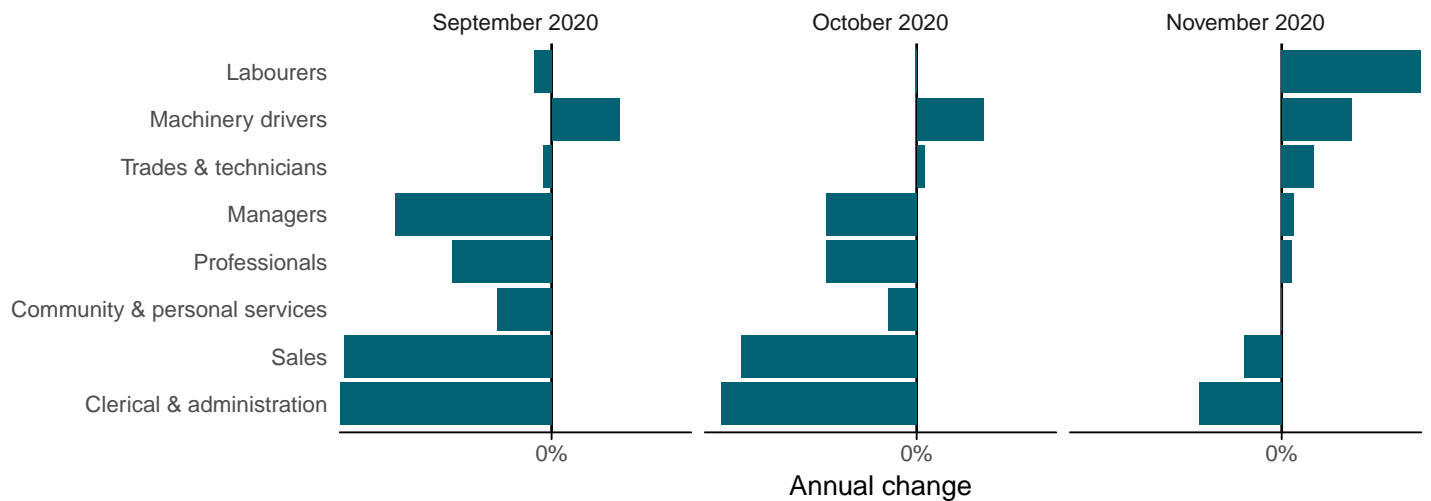
The number of jobs advertised online on major job boards can be used as a proxy for job vacancies, a key indicator of both labour demand and economic change. However, because of different hiring practices and changes in the rate of worker churn within industries, the relationship between online job advertisements and labour demand is complex.

Annual change in online job advertising



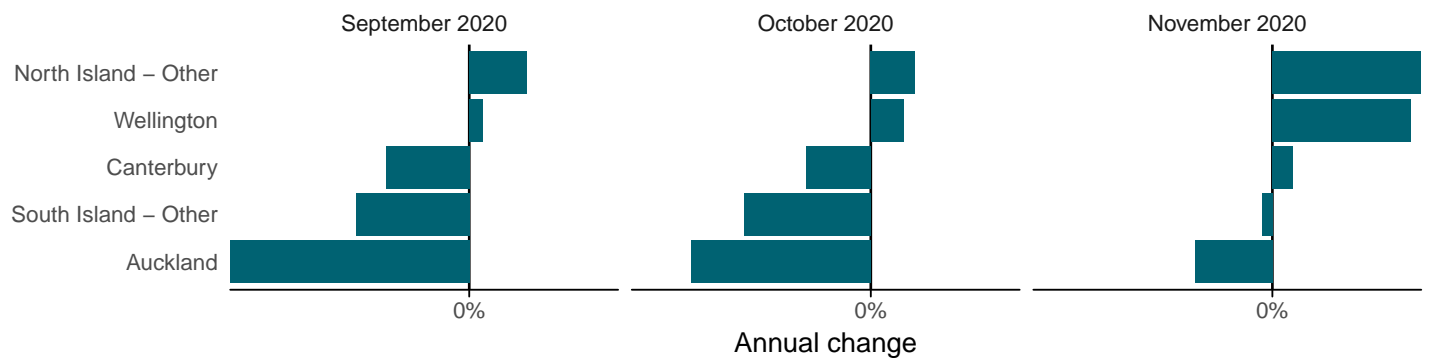
Jobs Online, MBIE (Data to November 2020, next release 15/01/2021)

Annual change in online job advertising by occupation, latest three months



Jobs Online, MBIE (Data to November 2020, next release 15/01/2021)

Annual change in online job advertising by region, latest three months



Jobs Online, MBIE (Data to November 2020, next release 15/01/2021)

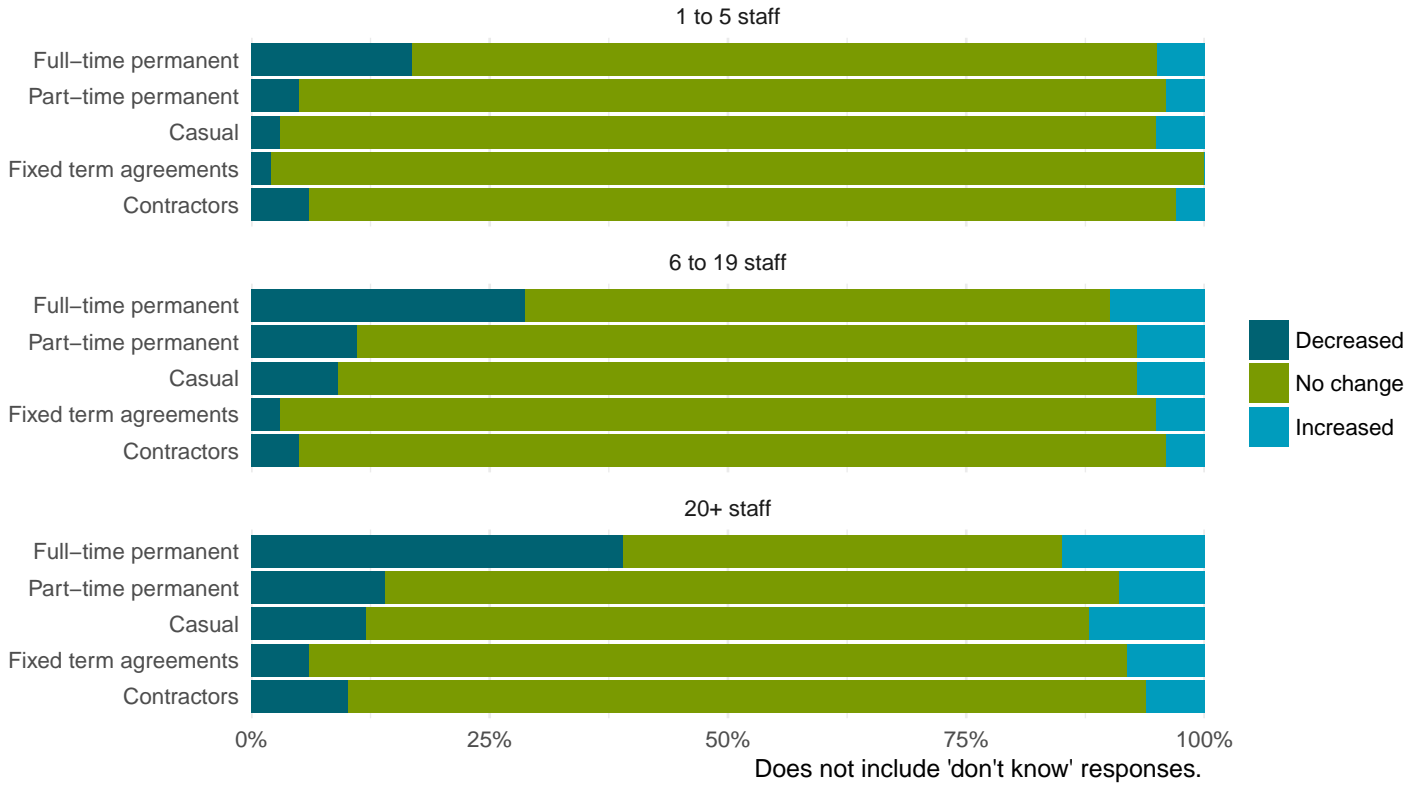


National Survey of Employment Intentions

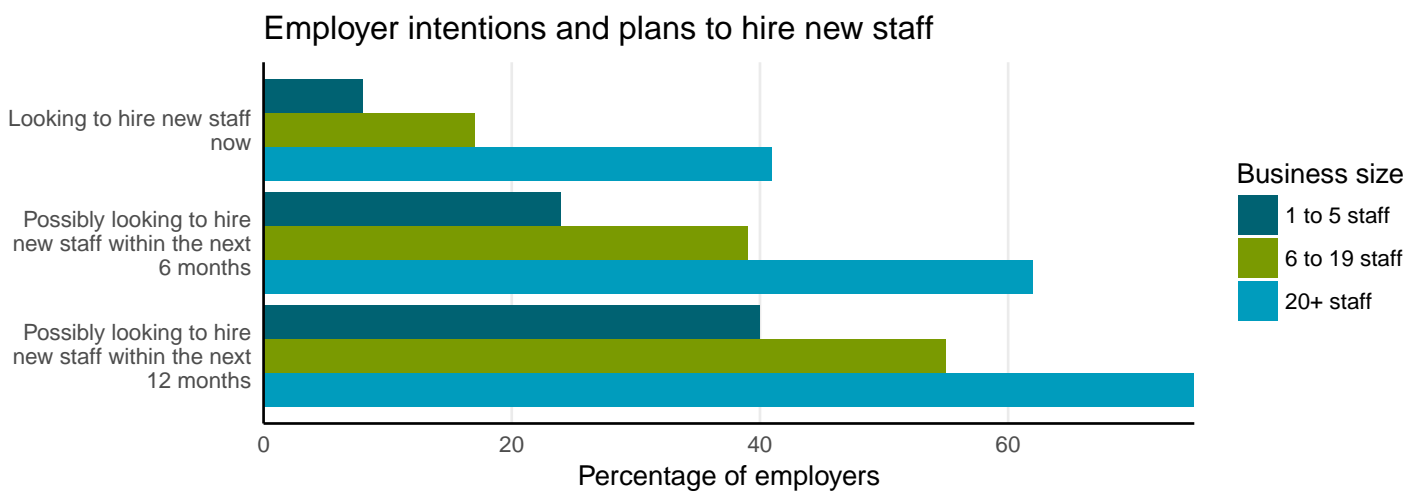
The National Survey of Employment Intentions measures changes since 22 March 2020 in workforce size and composition, and workforce arrangements. It also measures employers' intentions for 6 and 12 months in the future.

Results from the first wave were collected in September/October 2020 show that, generally speaking, COVID-19 has had less of an impact on employment than was expected earlier in the year, with 36 per cent of businesses saying that none of their recent staff changes were due to COVID-19. The findings of the survey also show a more positive outlook, with 48 per cent of employers planning to hire new staff within the next year.

Change in number of staff employed by business size since March 2020



National Survey of Employment Intentions, MBIE (Data collected in September/October 2020)



National Survey of Employment Intentions, MBIE (Data collected in September/October 2020)



Data sources

Household Labour Force Survey (HLFS) | Stats NZ

The HLFS is a nationwide, quarterly survey of households run by Stats NZ. It is the official measure of employment and unemployment in New Zealand. Data from the HLFS is used as an indicator of the overall health of the economy, particularly the unemployment rate. HLFS data is also used to compare labour force variables across demographic characteristics.

Monthly Employment Indicator (MEI) | Stats NZ

The MEI series from Stats NZ provides an early indication of changes in the labour market. These indicators use a combination of data from two different Inland Revenue sources: the Employer Monthly Schedule (EMS) and payday filing. This data is used to produce the filled jobs and gross earnings indicator series, published four to five weeks after the end of the reference month.

Monthly Benefits Update | Ministry of Social Development (MSD)

The Monthly Benefits Update from MSD provides an overview of benefit and supplementary assistance data. The report presents monthly benefit receipt numbers, and the accompanying data file provides additional information and breakdowns.

Income Support and Wage Subsidy Weekly Update | Ministry of Social Development (MSD)

The Income Support and Wage Subsidy Weekly Update provides an overview of income support, including COVID-19 Income Relief Payment data. MSD's COVID-19 reporting is available at: <https://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/statistics/covid-19/index.html>

Jobs Online | Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE)

Jobs Online is a regular data series published quarterly by MBIE that measures changes in online job advertisements from four internet job boards — Seek, Trade Me Jobs, Education Gazette and Kiwi Health Jobs. A monthly series is available at <https://www.mbie.govt.nz/business-and-employment/employment-and-skills/labour-market-reports-data-and-analysis/jobs-online/#jobs-online-monthly-data-release>

National Survey of Employment Intentions | Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE)

The National Survey of Employment Intentions is a new survey of businesses which measures changes in workforce size and composition, and workforce arrangements since 22 March 2020. It also measures employers' intentions for 6 and 12 months in the future. The National Survey of Employment Intentions will be undertaken in two waves: in September/October 2020 and in March/April 2021. Initial results from the first wave were released in December 2020 and are available at <https://www.mbie.govt.nz/business-and-employment/employment-and-skills/labour-market-reports-data-and-analysis/national-survey-of-employment-intentions/>

Previous editions

The Monthly Labour Market Fact Sheet brings together the latest available data and surveys. July's edition⁴ included findings from the Ministry of Health's *COVID-19 Health and Wellbeing Survey*, the Ministry of Social Development's *Wage Subsidy Survey* and Auckland Tourism, Events and Economic Development's (ATEED) *COVID-19 Business Survey*. August's edition⁵ included findings from Victoria University's *Life in Lockdown* survey.

Contact us

For further information on the data contained in this fact sheet, please email us: LabourMarketInsights@mbie.govt.nz.

⁴<https://www.mbie.govt.nz/dmsdocument/11556-monthly-labour-market-fact-sheet-july-2020>

⁵<https://www.mbie.govt.nz/dmsdocument/11637-monthly-labour-market-fact-sheet-august-2020>

