

This monthly fact sheet summarises the latest labour market information. It focuses on the most recent monthly changes and complements MBIE's quarterly *Labour Market Statistics Snapshot*¹. For more information on sectors and regions, see MBIE's *COVID-19 economic data*². The *Monthly Labour Market Fact Sheet* will be updated next on 18 March 2022.

Overview

Headline quarterly statistics

Data up to December 2021 quarter

Measures	Dec-20	Mar-21	Jun-21	Sep-21	Dec-21
Employment	2,730,000	2,748,000	2,776,000	2,828,000	2,831,000
— Paid Employee or Employer	2,376,800	2,368,200	2,398,500	2,438,300	2,462,500
— Self-employed	343,400	354,300	342,600	352,000	353,900
Employment Rate	66.8%	67.1%	67.7%	68.8%	68.8%
Participation Rate	70.2%	70.4%	70.5%	71.2%	71.1%
Underutilisation	354,000	362,000	312,000	278,000	277,000
— Unemployment	141,000	133,000	114,000	98,000	93,000
— Underemployment	117,000	122,000	107,000	97,000	102,000
— Potential Labour Force	95,000	106,000	91,000	83,000	82,000
Underutilisation Rate	11.9%	12.1%	10.5%	9.2%	9.2%
Unemployment Rate	4.9%	4.6%	4.0%	3.3%	3.2%
Not in the Labour Force	1,217,000	1,212,000	1,209,000	1,184,000	1,190,000
Youth Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET)	81,000	79,000	79,000	79,000	70,000
NEET Rate	12.4%	12.2%	12.3%	12.2%	10.8%
Average Weekly Hours Paid (per FTE)	38.27	38.41	39.04	38.88	39.01

All measures are from the Household Labour Force Survey except for average hours worked, which is from the Quarterly Employment Survey. *Labour Market Statistics, Stats NZ (Data to December 2021 quarter, next release on 04/05/2022)*

The recent story

Positive growth was recorded in jobs advertised online in the month of January 2022, reflecting a continuing demand for labour. The highest growth rates by industry were recorded in Health care, Business services and Manufacturing. This growth in jobs advertised online follows on from the tight labour market observed in the September and December quarters 2021.

In the December quarter 2021, the unemployment rate (3.2 per cent) was the lowest recorded since the data series started in 1986. The underutilisation rate remained steady at 9.2 per cent, as 5,000 fewer people unemployed were offset by 5,000 more people underemployed. The highest increase in employment over the year was for people aged 15 to 24 years (up by 27,800 people). Māori youth Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) decreased to 70,000 people, down by 9,000 from last quarter.

In December 2021, there were large increases in filled jobs in the Professional, scientific and technical services, Construction, Administrative and support services, Public administration and safety, Health care and social assistance, Rental, hiring and real estate services, Wholesale trade, and Retail trade industries, with levels of filled jobs similar to those seen pre-COVID. However, for the Accommodation and food services, Agriculture, forestry and fishing, Arts and recreation, Education and training and Transport, postal and warehousing industries, filled jobs have not recovered to levels of pre-COVID.

There were 363,636 people on all main benefits as at 4 February 2022, with 105,069 receiving the Jobseeker support benefit. In the week ending 4 February 2022 there were 2,181 new recipients and 2,526 cancellations of Jobseeker Support.

After the implementation of COVID-19 Protection Framework, the Wage Subsidy Scheme was discontinued. However, support is available for those unable to work due to being tested for COVID-19 or needing to isolate. Since 2 December 2021, a total of 5,463 applications under the new Leave Support Scheme (LSS) and 11,580 applications under the Short-term Absence Payment (STAP) have been approved.

The growing difficulties in finding skilled and unskilled workers are attributed partly to border restrictions³. It is unclear how the gradual opening of New Zealand's border during 2022 will affect this. The impacts of the COVID-19 Protection Framework and continuing supply chain disruptions have added to inflation pressures and uncertainty to the labour market.

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/>

³<https://nzier.org.nz/publications/qsbo/quarterly-survey-of-business-opinion-january-2022-members-only>

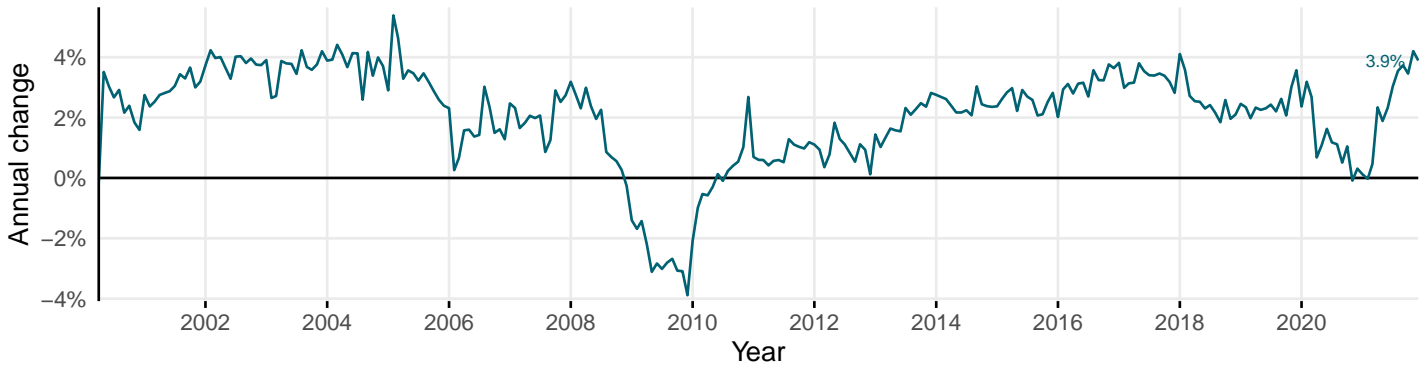


Filled Jobs

Data up to December 2021

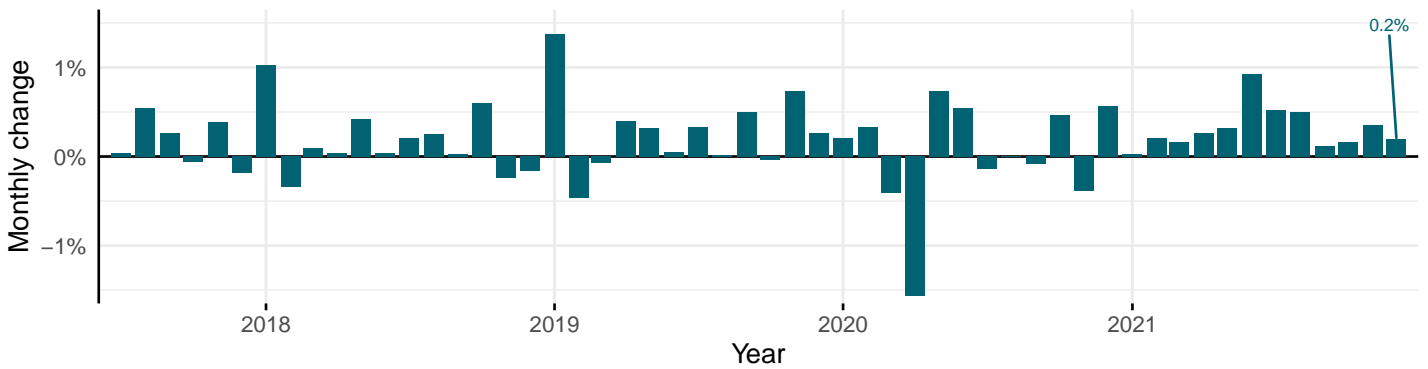
Stats NZ's Monthly Employment Indicators (MEIs) count of filled jobs uses employer payroll filing of tax data. These statistics are a useful indicator to supplement the official Labour Market Statistics, although they do not count the self-employed, do not necessarily represent full-time or permanent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

Annual percentage change in the number of filled jobs



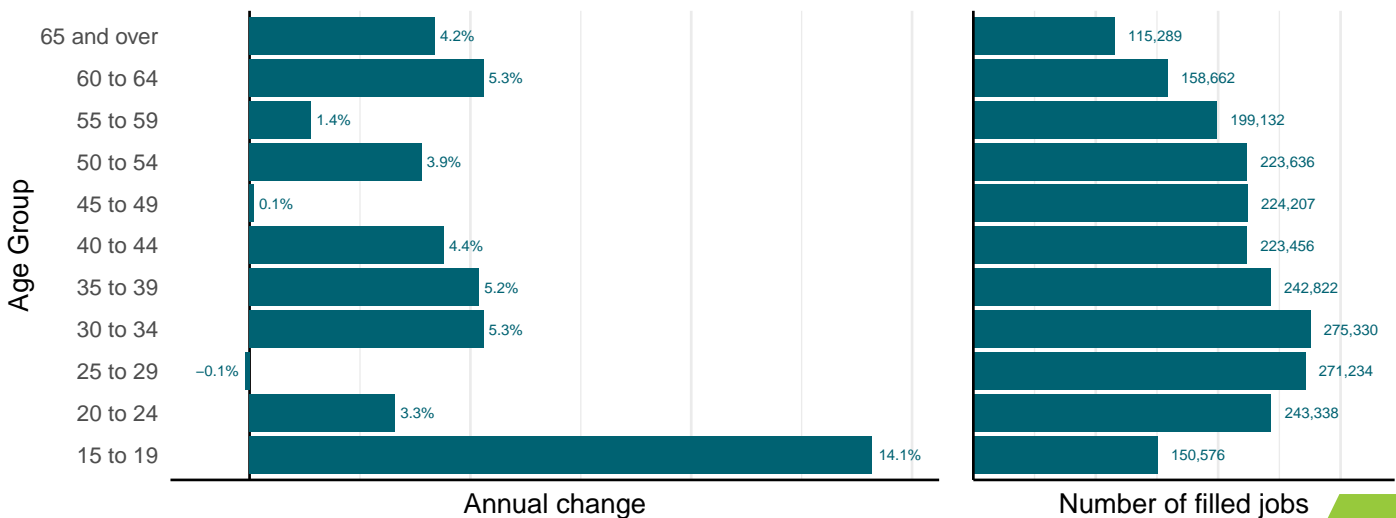
Source: Monthly Employment Indicators - Filled Job Series, Stats NZ (Data to December 2021, next release on 28/02/2022)

Monthly percentage change in the number of filled jobs, seasonally adjusted



Source: Monthly Employment Indicators - Filled Job Series, Stats NZ (Data to December 2021, next release on 28/02/2022)

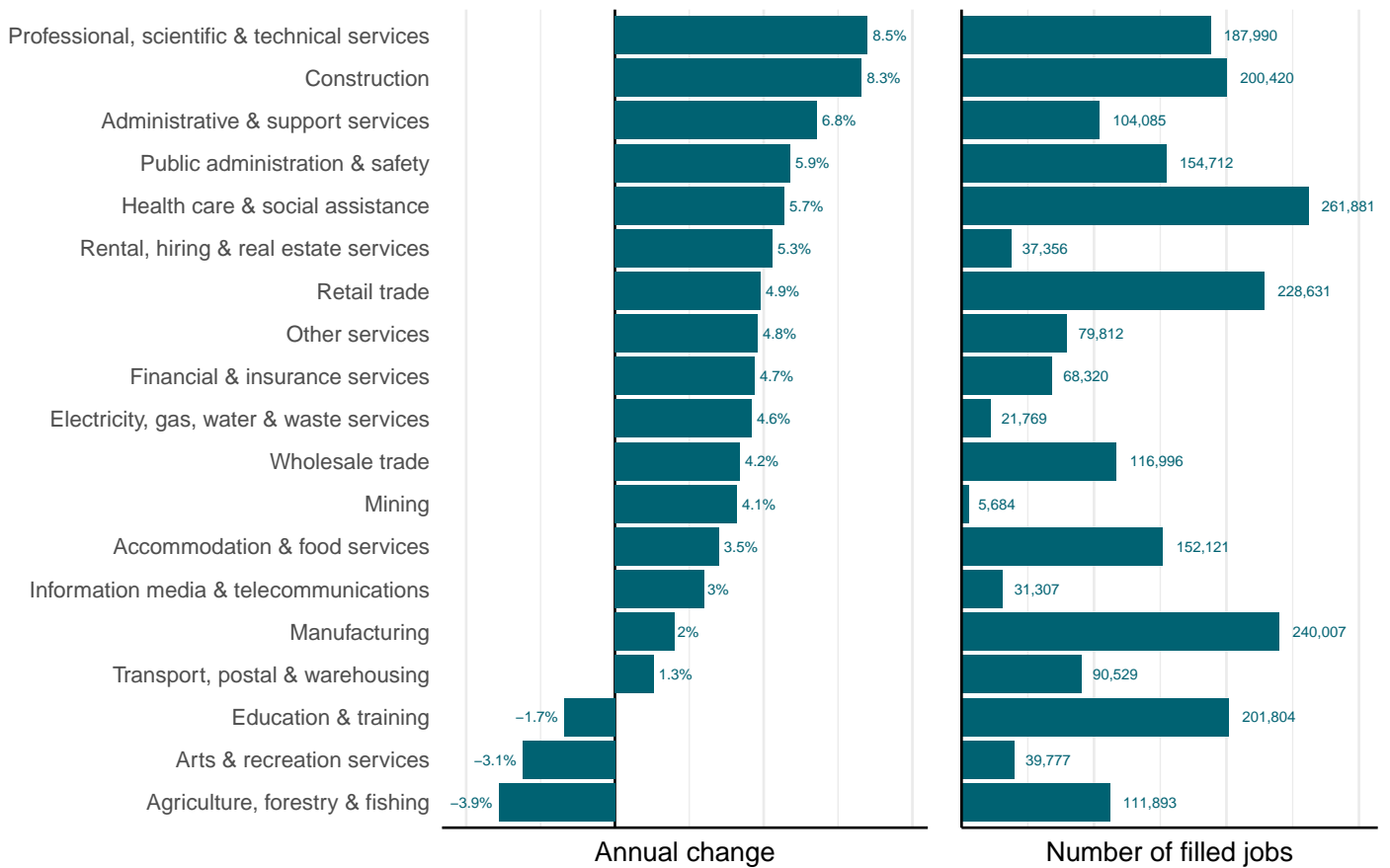
Filled jobs by age group



Source: Monthly Employment Indicators - Filled Job Series, Stats NZ (Data to December 2021, next release on 28/02/2022)

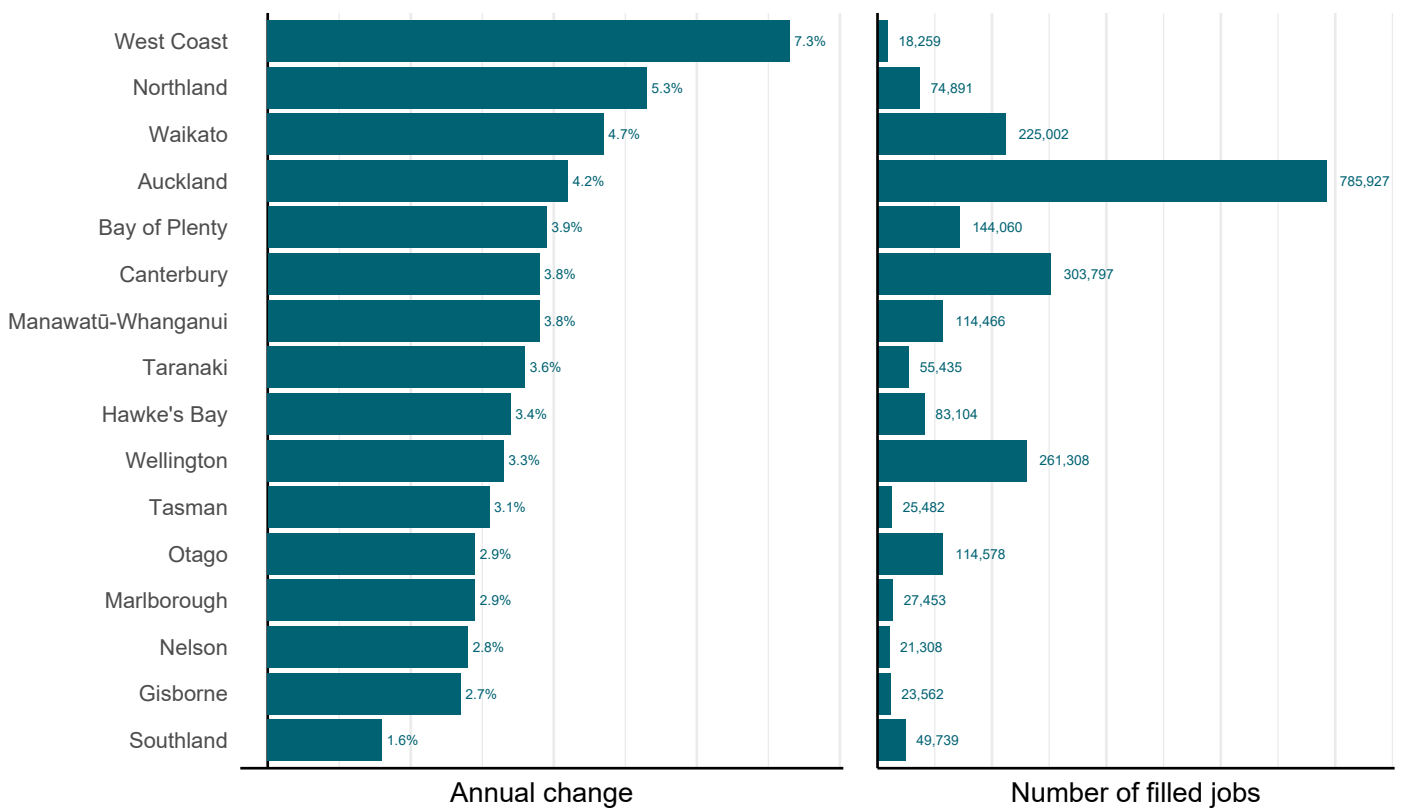


Filled jobs by industry



Source: Monthly Employment Indicators - Filled Job Series, Stats NZ (Data to December 2021, next release on 28/02/2022)

Filled jobs by region



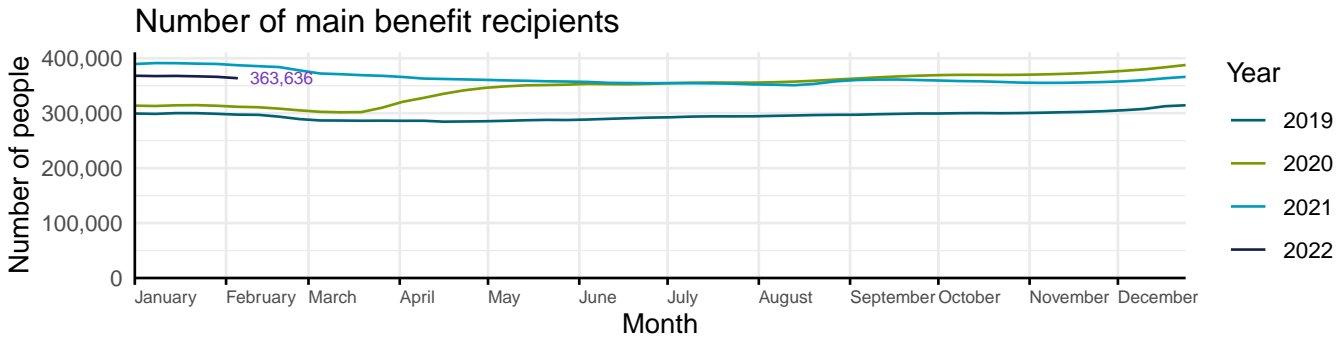
Source: Monthly Employment Indicators - Filled Job Series, Stats NZ (Data to December 2021, next release on 28/02/2022)



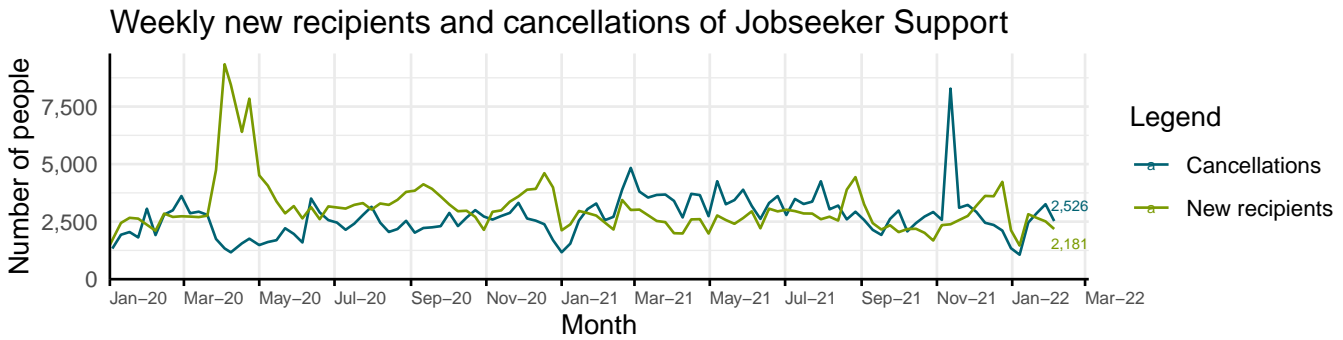
Benefit Recipients

Data up to 4 February 2022

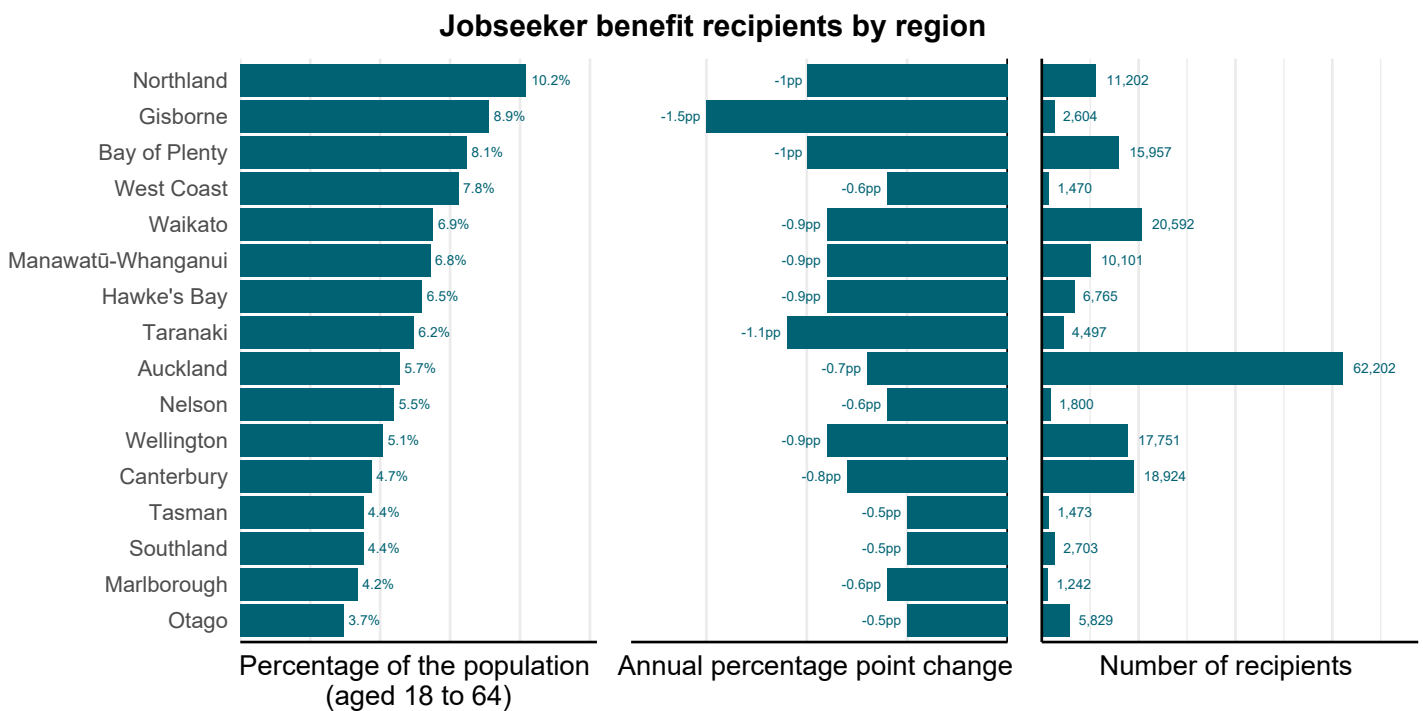
Benefits are primarily a measure of how many people are receiving income support rather than a measure of unemployment, but since 2008 the number of Jobseeker Support recipients has mostly tracked in line with the number of unemployed individuals. Measuring all working-age main benefits covers additional 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 the unemployment rate alone.



Source: Working-age main benefits, MSD (Data to 04/02/2022, released every Friday)



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Wage Subsidy

Wage Subsidy data up to 9 December 2021 and LSS and STAP data up to 4 February 2022

A number of COVID-19 wage subsidies have been available since March 2020 to help employers and self-employed people who would otherwise have had to lay off staff or reduce their hours due to COVID-19⁴.

The COVID-19 Wage Subsidy and Leave Payment Scheme, available from 27 March 2020 to 9 June 2020, supported a larger number of jobs (1,787,216 jobs) compared with subsequent available subsidies.

The original Wage Subsidy Scheme was followed by the Wage Subsidy Extension Scheme introduced on 10 June 2020, which supported 588,379 jobs, and a Resurgence Wage Subsidy payment was available for the last two weeks in August 2020 when Auckland was placed at Alert Level 3 and the rest of the country moved back into Alert Level 2 (supporting 296,169 jobs).

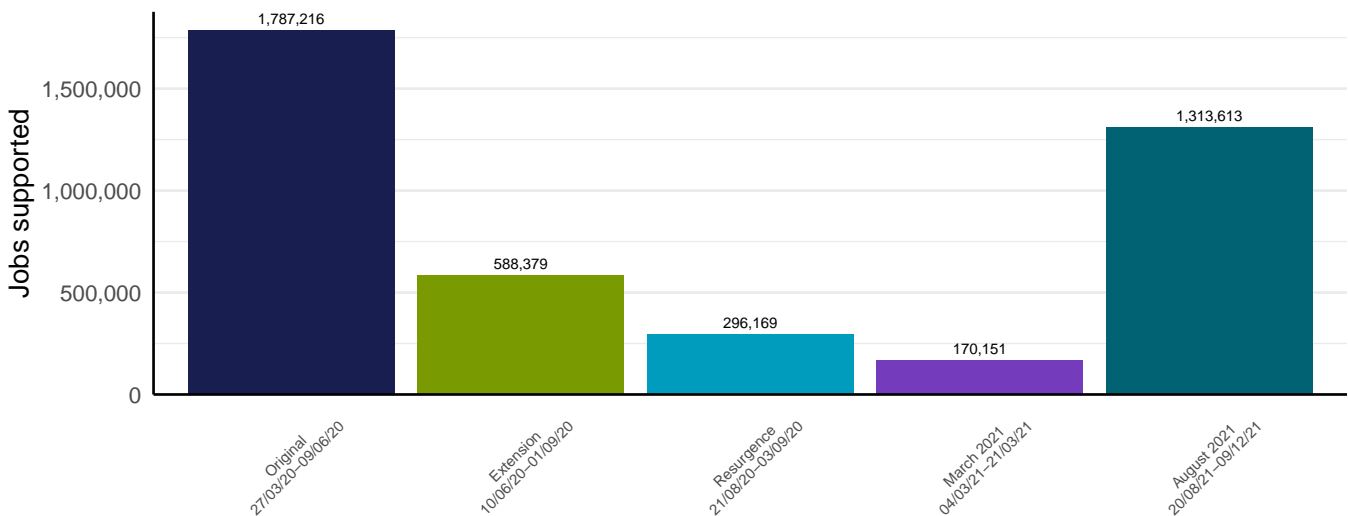
When Auckland once again moved to Alert Level 3 and the rest of the country moved to Alert Level 2 on 28 February 2021, the COVID-19 Wage Subsidy March 2021 payment was introduced. This subsidy supported a total of 170,151 jobs.

More recently, the Wage Subsidy August 2021 was introduced, consisting of eight wage subsidies related to the August Alert Level changes. The subsidies were open from 20 August 2021 to 9 December 2021 and supported an increased number of jobs (1,313, 613 jobs), reflecting the extended lockdown period particularly in Auckland.

The Wage Subsidy Scheme was discontinued after COVID-19 Protection Framework came into effect in early December 2021. However, workers who cannot work from home and need to miss work while waiting for a COVID-19 test result, and those advised to self-isolate due to COVID-19 (and who can't work from home), are eligible for support via the Short-term Absence Payment (STAP) and Leave Support Scheme (LSS). The latest Income Support and Wage Subsidy weekly data shows that 2,112 applications were approved for the STAP and 1,041 applications were approved for the LSS to 4 February 2022, showing a marked increase in approvals over the past month as we see more cases of COVID-19 emerging in the community.

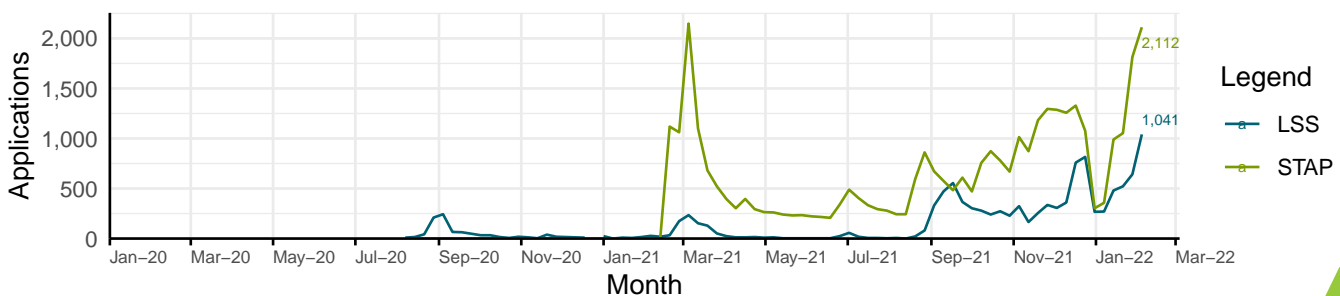
The STAP which covers those waiting for a COVID-19 test result has more applications compared to LSS which is for those who are advised to self-isolate. The STAP is now at a similar level to when it was introduced in February 2021.

Number of jobs supported by wage subsidy schemes



Source: Income Support and Wage Subsidy Weekly Update, MSD (Data to 09/12/2021, released every Friday)

Weekly New LSS and STAP Applications Approved



Source: Income Support and Wage Subsidy Weekly Update, MSD (Data to 04/02/2022, released every Friday)

⁴<https://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/newsroom/2020/covid-19/covid-19-wage-subsidy-employer-search.html>



Job Vacancies

Data up to January 2022

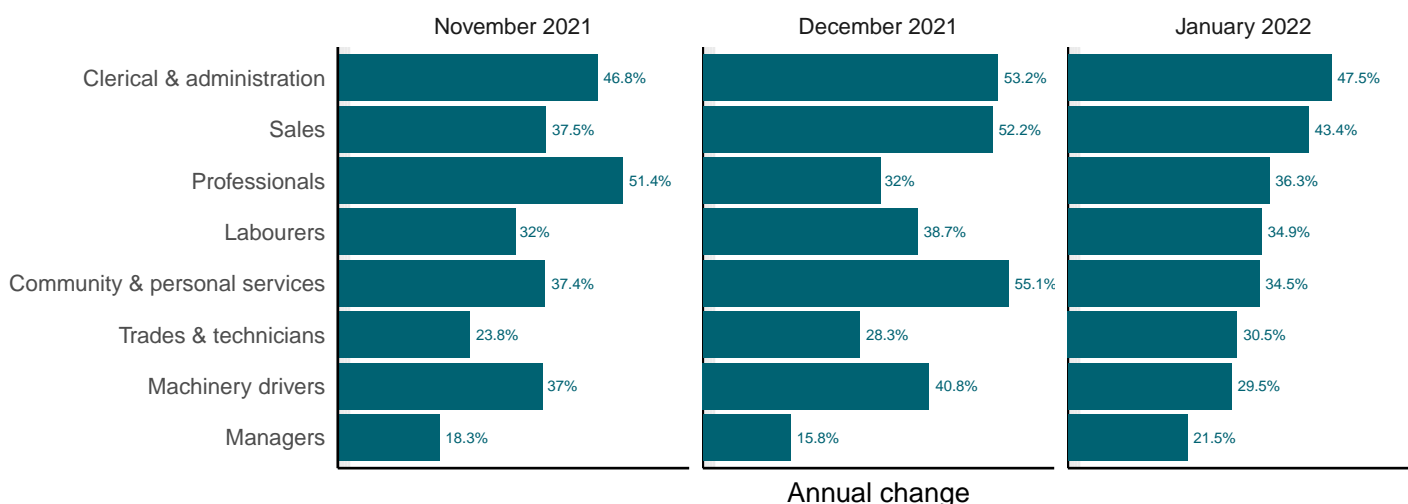
The number of jobs advertised online on major job boards can be used as a proxy for job vacancies, a key indicator of both labour demand and economic change. However, because of different hiring practices and changes in the rate of worker churn within industries, the relationship between online job advertisements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

All Vacancies Index (AVI) – online job advertising



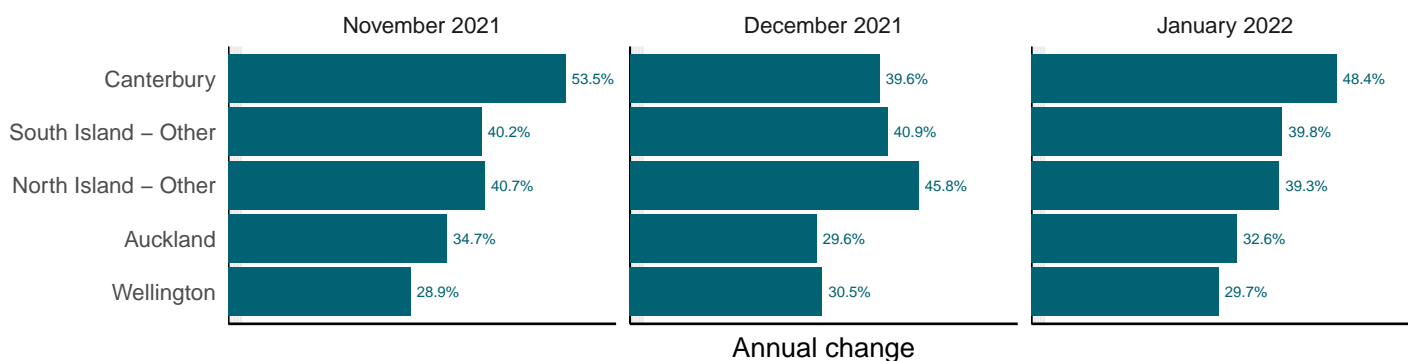
Source: Jobs Online, MBIE (Data to January 2022, next release 15/03/2022)

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



Source: Jobs Online, MBIE (Data to January 2022, next release 15/03/2022)

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



Source: Jobs Online, MBIE (Data to January 2022, next release 15/03/2022)



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>

Quarterly Employment Survey (QES) | Stats NZ

The QES is a quarterly survey run by Stats NZ. It measures employment, earnings and hours paid of economically significant businesses in New Zealand. The purpose of the Quarterly Employment Survey is to provide a short-term indicator of employment and earnings. In addition, the data is used for compiling the business services industry component of the quarterly national accounts (on the production side). Results from the survey provide a valuable guide to the labour market and general economic conditions within New Zealand.

Previous editions

The Monthly Labour Market Fact Sheet brings together the latest available administrative and survey data. The July 2020 edition⁵ 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*. The August 2020 edition⁶ 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.

⁵<https://www.mbie.govt.nz/dmsdocument/11556-monthly-labour-market-fact-sheet-july-2020>

⁶<https://www.mbie.govt.nz/dmsdocument/11637-monthly-labour-market-fact-sheet-august-2020>

