Infometrics

QUARTERLY ECONOMIC MONITOR



DOWNLOADED TUE 17 NOV 2026

Timaru District

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Overview of Timaru District

Spotlight

	Timaru	New Zealand
GDP	+2.2% ▲	+2.1% ▲
Consumer spending	+4.1% ▲	+1.3% ▲
Employment	+0.2% ▲	+0.2% ▲
Unemployment	3.7% ▼	5.5% ▲
House values	$512,535 ▲	$847,431 ▼

Timaru's economy grew impressively in the year to September 2026, with broad-based economic growth and improvement across all economic and labour market indicators. Infometrics provisionally estimates that Timaru's GDP grew 2.3% in the year to September 2026, ahead of national growth of 2.1%, underpinned by growth across most industries.

Employment of Timaru residents grew 1.0%pa in the September 2026 quarter, with broad-based growth offsetting declines in manufacturing (particularly meat, seafood and wood). Growing employment opportunities have likely supported a fall in Jobseekers in Timaru, down 4.4% in the year to September 2026. Most of the decrease in Jobseekers has been amongst those on the benefit for less than one year, and with work-ready status.

Strong global dairy prices are keeping the dairy payout at a high level, though farmers are facing sharply elevated costs in some areas. Timaru dairy farmers are expected to earn $592m in the 2026/27 season, up $8m from last season. Timaru's payout has been boosted by increased production volumes, with a 6.2% increase in milk solids production per hectare in the year to May 2026. Sheep and beef farmers are facing strong meat prices, with beef prices up 24%pa over the September 2026 year, with lamb prices up 25%pa too.

Timaru's population declined 0.5% in the year to June 2026, following zero population growth in 2025, according to Stats NZ's subnational population estimates. Deaths outnumbered births in Timaru by 100 in 2026, and net migration turned negative as well, reflecting modest international migration to New Zealand, and limited migration within New Zealand.

Interest in Timaru's housing market has picked up faster than the rest of the country. House sales in Timaru rose 6.2%, compared to a 1.4% fall nationally, in the year to September 2026. House values in Timaru rose 1.3%pa, ahead of a 0.9%pa decline nationally, in the September 2026 quarter. However, this focus on house purchases is yet to translate to building, with new dwelling consents in Timaru down 17% in the year to September 2026, and at a 15-year low.

New Zealand's tourism growth remains focused in the South Island, with international visitor arrivals to Christchurch up 20%, and Queenstown up 18% in the year to September 2026. Guest nights at

commercial accommodation in Timaru rose 1.9%, driven by an 8.1% increase in international guest nights.

Economic indicators

Overview

Table 1. Overview of economic indicators

Indicator	Timaru District	Canterbury Region	New Zealand
Gross domestic product (provisional)	+2.2% ▲	+3.2% ▲	+2.1% ▲
Business counts	+2.7% ▲	+2.7% ▲	+1.2% ▲
Consumer spending	+4.1% ▲	+2.4% ▲	+1.3% ▲
Traffic flow	+0.9% ▲	+0.0% ▶	+0.0% ▶
Guest nights	+1.9% ▲	+3.2% ▲	+3.8% ▲
Non-residential consents	+78.1% ▲	-13.5% ▼	-3.1% ▼
Electric vehicle registrations	+117.5% ▲	+125.0% ▲	+115.9% ▲
Car registrations	+12.3% ▲	+13.8% ▲	+9.1% ▲
Commercial vehicle registrations	+9.6% ▲	+10.6% ▲	+1.0% ▲
Greenhouse gas emissions (provisional) 🕒	-0.1% ▼	+0.3% ▲	-3.0% ▼

🕒 Data up to the June 2026 quarter.

All measures are annual average percentage changes.

Gross domestic product

Figure 1. Gross domestic product growth (provisional)

Annual average % change September 2025 - September 2026

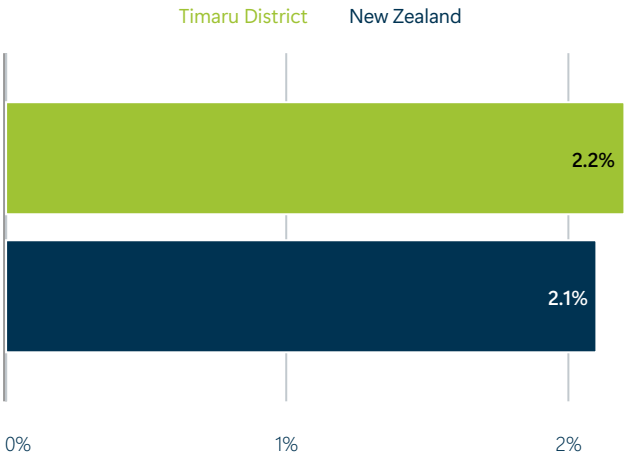
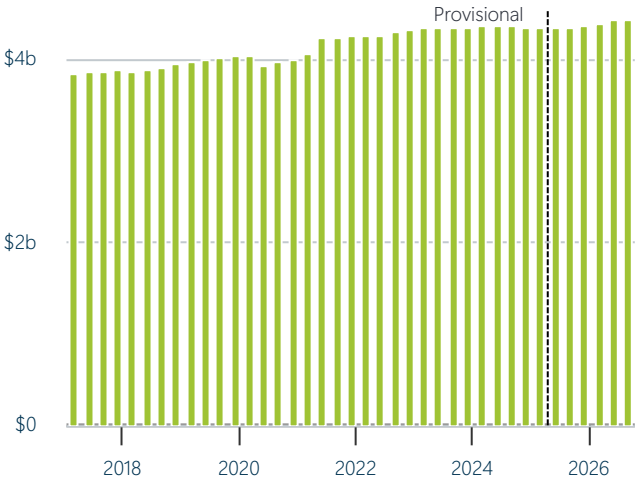


Figure 2. Gross domestic product

Annual level, Timaru District



Highlights

- GDP in Timaru District was provisionally up 2.2% for the year to September 2026, compared to a year earlier. Growth was higher than in New Zealand (2.1%).
- Provisional GDP was $4,446 million in Timaru District for the year to September 2026 (2025 prices).
- Annual GDP growth in Timaru District peaked at 7.8% in the year to June 2021.

National overview

Economic activity continues to improve, although from a still-sluggish position, with provisional estimates from Infometrics pointing to a 2.1%pa lift in activity over the 12 months to September 2026 based on early indicators of activity for the most recent quarter. This improvement comes despite a still downbeat labour market, which is taking time to turn, and fluctuating fuel prices which has heightened uncertainty. Various industries, including the primary sector, tourism, business services, construction and more are improving, it can still feel hard at first glance to see those better economic trends amid persistent challenges for businesses and households alike. Higher fuel prices, again, are likely to exacerbate the uncertainty many are feeling and is set to limit growth over the next few months. Yet the economy is continuing to grind out a recovery, which remains uneven across different regions and industries.

Business counts

Figure 3. Growth in number of business units

Annual average % change September 2025 - September 2026

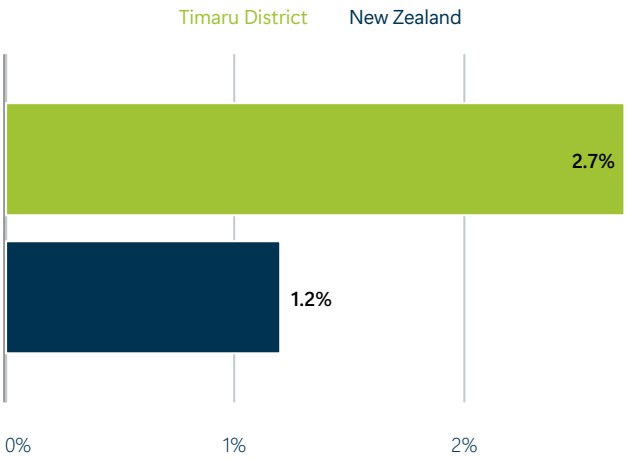
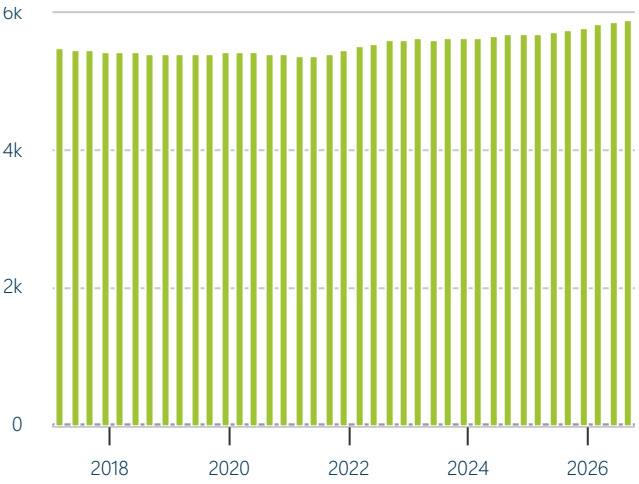


Figure 4. Business units

Annual level, Timaru District



Highlights

- The number of business units in Timaru District was up 2.7% for the year to September 2026, compared to a year earlier. Growth was higher than in New Zealand (1.2%).
- The number of business units in Timaru District reached an annual average of 5,906 in the year to September 2026, up from 5,748 in the previous 12 months.
- Annual growth in the number of business units in Timaru District peaked at 3.3% in the year to September 2022.

National overview

Business units rose 1.2% in the year to September 2026, having grown at around this rate for the past three years. Business unit growth is notably outpacing employment, which rose 0.2%. Some people struggling with the labour market may be looking to self-employment or starting their own businesses, but it's not clear if these are economically successful amid the current subdued economy.

Consumer spending

Figure 5. Growth in consumer spending

Annual average % change September 2025 - September 2026

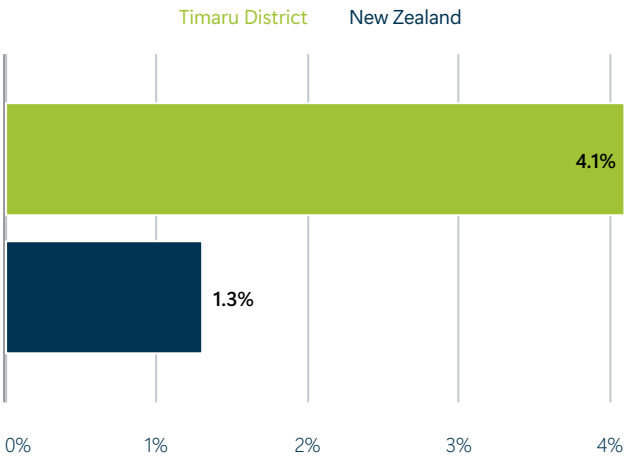
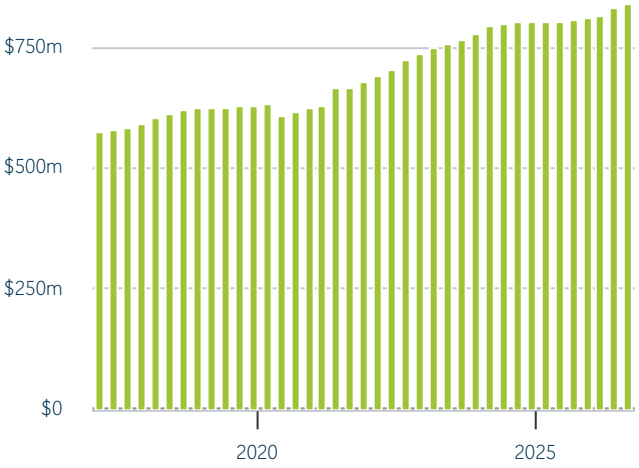


Figure 6. Consumer spending

Annual level, Timaru District



Highlights

- Electronic card consumer spending in Timaru District as measured by Marketview, increased by 4.1% over the year to September 2026, compared to a year earlier. This compares with an increase of 1.3% in New Zealand.

National overview

Marketview card spending data showed a 1.7%pa lift in retail spending in the September 2026 quarter compared to the same quarter a year ago – a slower growth rate than seen in the June quarter. Nonetheless, this quarterly gain has seen annual average growth increase to 1.3%pa over the 12 months to September 2026, with just under $79.5b spent. Stronger economic activity is supporting spending appetites down south, with the strongest spending growth occurring in Southland, Otago, and Canterbury regions. However, after adjusting for retail price inflation, Infometrics estimates that spending volumes fell 0.4%pa over the last year, with higher prices including for fuel reducing the real level of spending activity.

Traffic flow

Figure 7. Annual change in traffic flows

Annual average % change September 2025 - September 2026

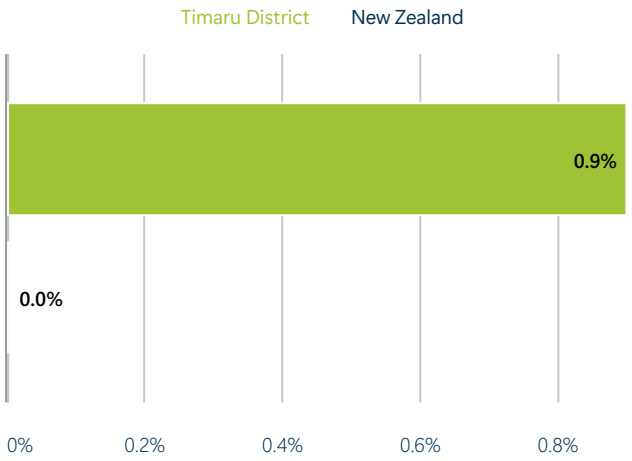
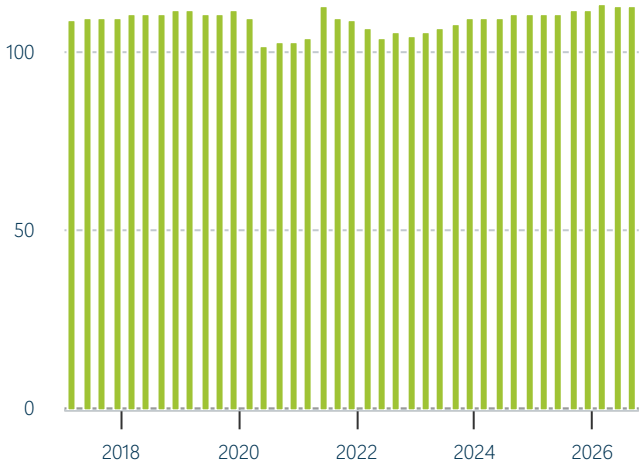


Figure 8. Traffic

Annual level, Timaru District



Highlights

- Traffic flows in Timaru District increased by 0.9% over the year to September 2026, compared to a year earlier. This compares with no change in New Zealand.

National overview

Traffic flows were flat over the past year, with zero change in either the year or the quarter to September 2026. Traffic flows reflect growth of both population and economic activity, and both have been subdued lately with weak population growth and a tentative economic recovery.

Guest nights

Figure 9. Guest nights

Annual average % change September 2025 - September 2026

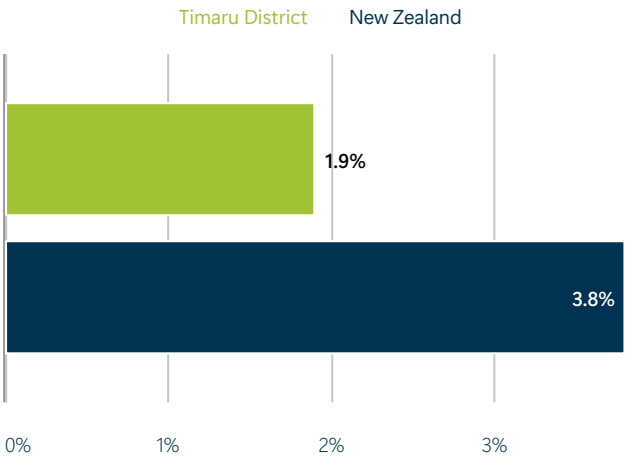
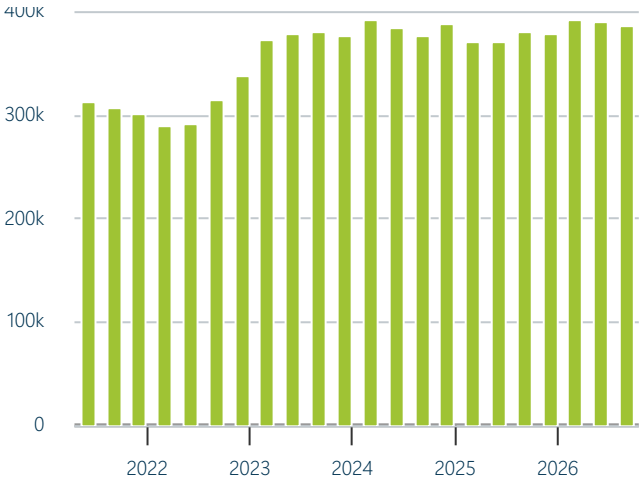


Figure 10. Guest nights

Annual number, Timaru District



Highlights

- Total guest nights in Timaru District increased by 1.9% in the year to September 2026, compared to a year earlier. This compares with an increase of 3.8% in New Zealand.
- Visitors stayed a total of 387,000 nights in Timaru District during the year to September 2026, which was up from 379,800 a year ago.

National overview

Guest nights continue to improve steadily, with a 3.8% increase in the year to September 2026. International visitors continue to lead tourism activity, with international guest nights rising 9.5% in the year to September 2026 and 11%pa in the September 2026 quarter. Domestic tourist activity remains soft, reflecting the cost-of-living pressures faced by households, with domestic guest nights rising just 0.7% over the year to September 2026.

International visitor arrivals to New Zealand rose 9.0% in the year to September 2026, underpinning growth in international visitor guest nights.

Non-residential consents

Figure 11. Growth in value of consents

Annual average % change September 2025 - September 2026

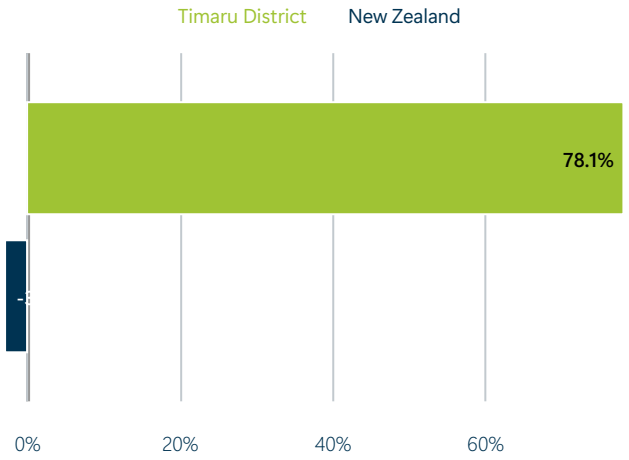
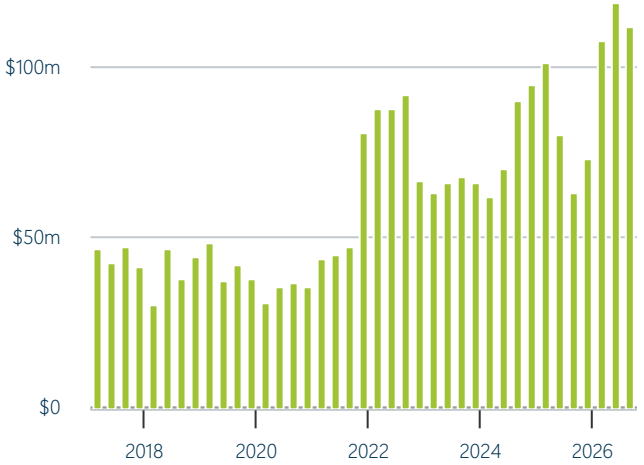


Figure 12. Non-residential consents, Timaru District

Annual running total, Timaru District



Highlights

- Non-residential building consents to the value of $112.0 million were issued in Timaru District during the year to September 2026. This compares with the ten year annual average of $63.6 million.
- The value of consents in Timaru District increased by 78.1% over the year to September 2026, compared to a year earlier. In comparison, the value of consents decreased by 3.1% in New Zealand over the same period.

National overview

The value of non-residential consents issued over the September 2026 year dropped back 3.1%pa, to total $8.7b. Once adjusted for building cost inflation, the annual volume of non-residential consents is at a 12-year low. Both public and private sector consents have reduced over the last year, public consents by 3.2%pa and private consents by 3.1%pa. Limited funding across councils for civic buildings and delays on bringing new hospital projects has contributed to the lower pipeline of public sector work, although education building consents have lifted 12% and there has been a large surge of signalled prison and corrections work in some regions. Uncertainty about the economic recovery and higher interest rates have hit private sector office, retail, and factory work, but farm consents have lifted 38%pa.

Dairy payout

Figure 13. Total dairy payout

May years

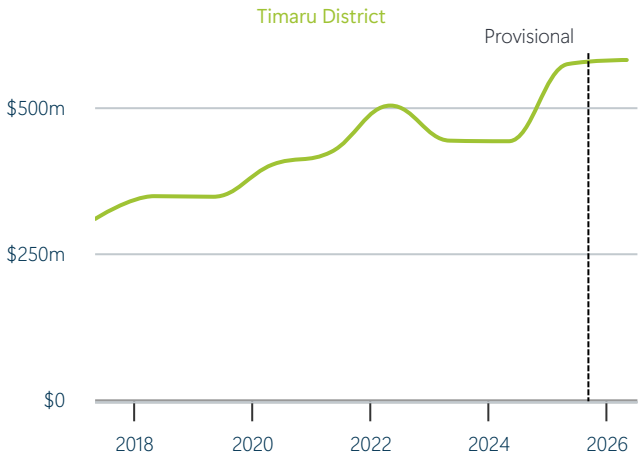
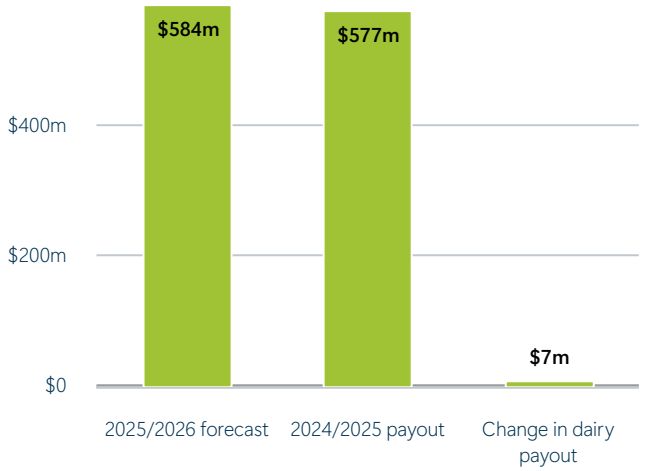


Figure 14. Total dairy payout

May years



Highlights

- Timaru District total dairy payout for the 2024/2025 season is estimated to have been approximately $577 million.
- Timaru District's dairy payout for the 2025/2026 season is expected to be approximately $584 million, $7 million higher than last season, assuming that production levels from last season are maintained.
- The total dairy payout for New Zealand is estimated to have been approximately $19,678 million in the 2024/2025 season, and is expected to be $68 million lower in the 2025/2026 season.

National overview

Dairy production volumes continue to rise, with milksolids up 4.3%pa over the 12 months to September 2026. Fonterra has upgraded the Farmgate Milk Price to a mid-point of $9.75/kgMS, with a range of $9.00 - $10.50/kgMS. Stronger Global Dairy Trade results in recent times have supported this upgrade, with strong demand for milk powder and proteins, but less demand for butter and fats. Sustained growth in dairy production and a strong farmgate milk price points to a pay-out of nearly $19.9b, the highest ever pay-out in nominal terms and up $268m from the last season total. Some caution remains, with farmers dealing with sharply higher on-farm costs, and rising milk supply globally.

Electric vehicle registrations

Figure 15. Growth in number of EV registrations

Annual average % change September 2025 - September 2026

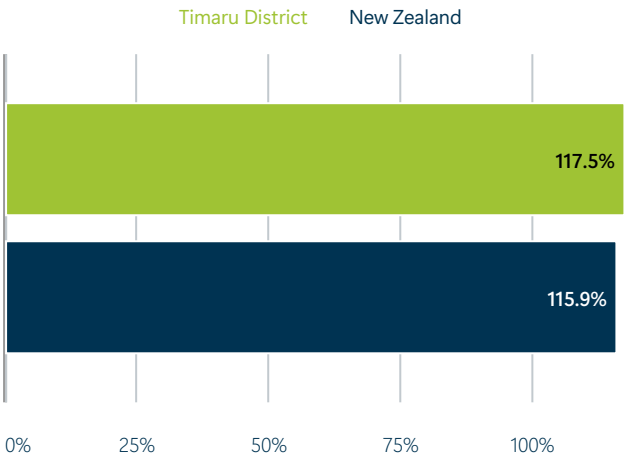
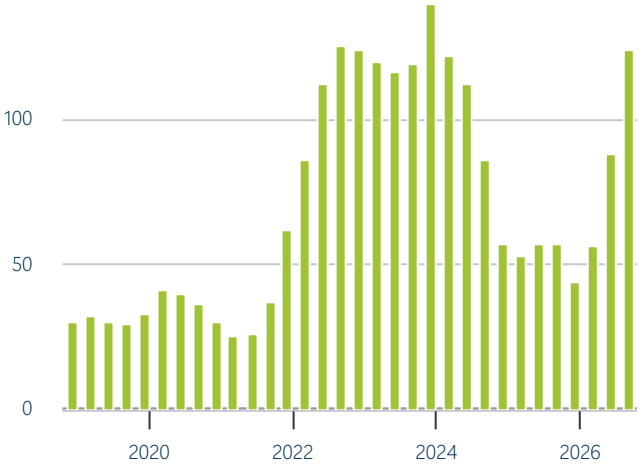


Figure 16. EV registrations

Annual level, Timaru District



Highlights

- The number of EV registrations in Timaru District increased by 117.5% in the year to September 2026, compared to a year earlier. Growth was higher than in New Zealand (115.9%).
- The number of EV registrations in Timaru District reached an annual total of 124 in the year to September 2026, up from 57 in the year to September 2025 and 86 in the year to September 2024.

National overview

Electric vehicle registrations surged to over 10,000 in the September 2026 quarter, the second highest quarter on record, and the highest since the Clean Car Discount scheme ended in 2023. Registrations in the 9 months to September 2026 were 162% higher than the same period in 2025.

High fuel prices resulting from the Iran War have driven a surge in purchases of EV vehicles, aided by competitive pressure with new models from China.

Car registrations

Figure 17. Car registrations

Annual average % change September 2025 - September 2026

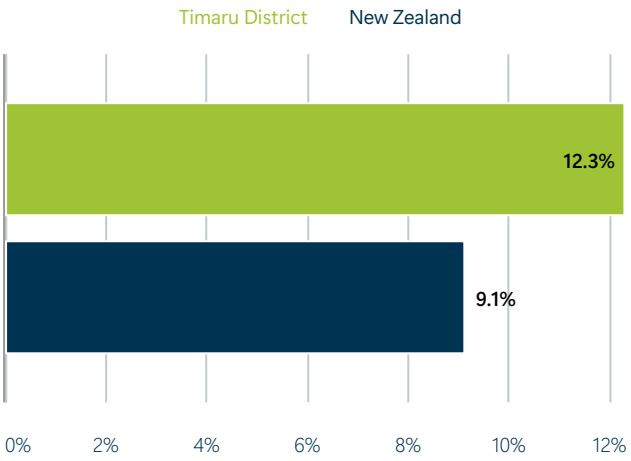
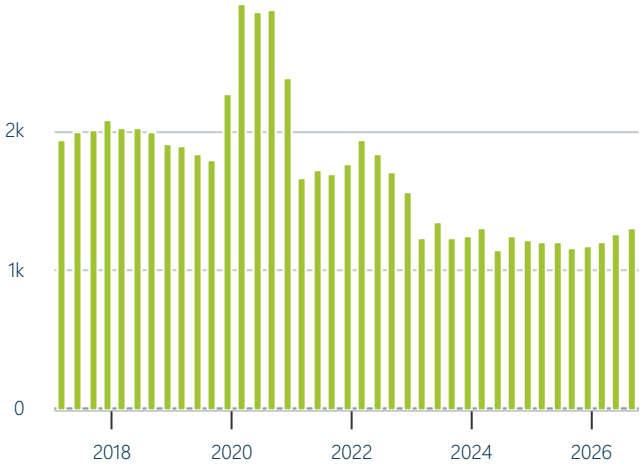


Figure 18. Car registrations

Annual number, Timaru District



Highlights

- The number of cars registered in Timaru District increased by 12.3% in the year to September 2026, compared to a year earlier. Growth was higher than in New Zealand (9.1%).
- A total of 1,299 cars were registered in Timaru District in the year to September 2026. This compares with the ten year annual average of 1,702.

National overview

There were just over 55,300 passenger car registrations in the September 2026 quarter, a 14%pa lift. This increase saw the annual number of car registrations just shy of 199,000, up 9.1%pa on average over the 12 months to September 2026. Car registrations have continued to increase at a strong pace amid the Middle East conflict and high fuel prices, with households seeking to limit their potential fuel bill where possible. The number of petrol passenger car registrations has fallen nearly 10%pa over the last 12 months, and hybrids have increased 10%pa. Although smaller total registrations, the number of full battery EV and plug-in hybrid EVs entering the fleet have more than doubled in the last year.

Commercial vehicle registrations

Figure 19. Commercial vehicle registrations

Annual average % change September 2025 - September 2026

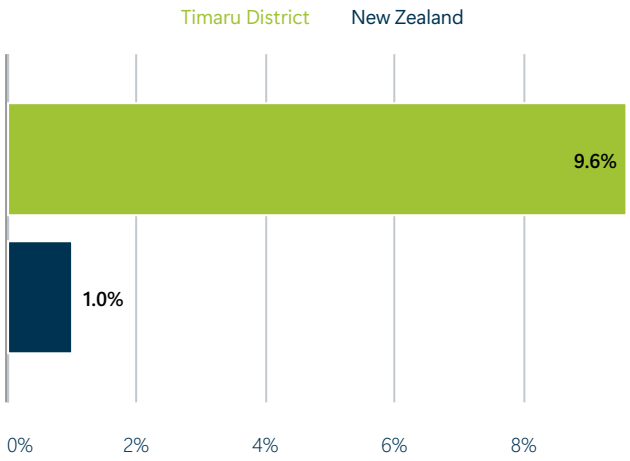
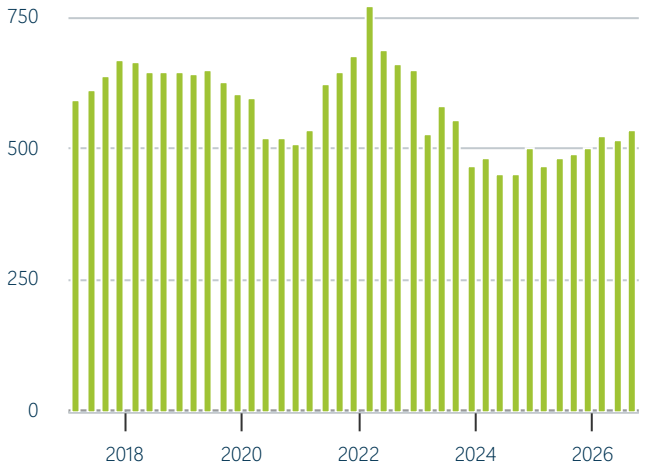


Figure 20. Commercial vehicle registrations

Annual number, Timaru District



Highlights

- The number of commercial vehicles registered in Timaru District increased by 9.6% in the year to September 2026, compared to a year earlier. Growth was higher than in New Zealand (1.0%).
- A total of 536 commercial vehicles were registered in Timaru District in the year to September 2026. This is lower than the ten year annual average of 577.

National overview

Commercial vehicle registrations growth has slowed as businesses act more cautiously about investing in new transport. There were nearly 11,200 commercial vehicle registrations in the September 2026 quarter, a 9.5%pa fall compared to the same quarter a year ago. That result saw the annual commercial registration total slow back to around 44,300 vehicles, up just 1.0%pa over the 12 months to September 2026. In contrast to households, who are buying more vehicles overall and shifting towards EVs, commercial vehicle registrations are shifting away from diesels but only partially compensating with more EVs. Plug-in hybrid and full battery EV registrations are up on a year ago, but that hasn't been enough to offset a 1.0%pa decline over the last year in diesels.

Greenhouse gas emissions

Figure 21. Greenhouse gas emission growth (provisional)

Annual average % change June 2025 - June 2026

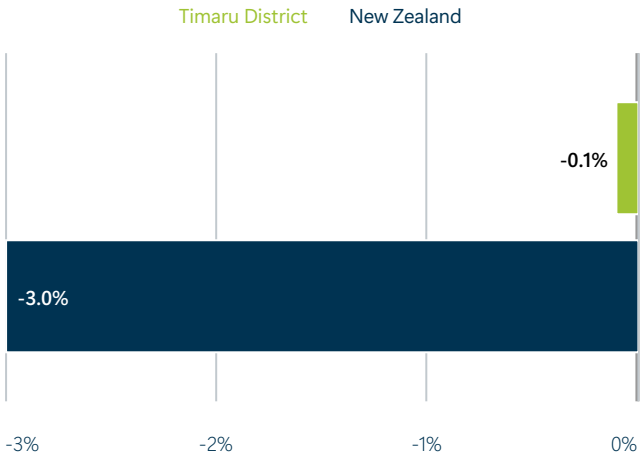
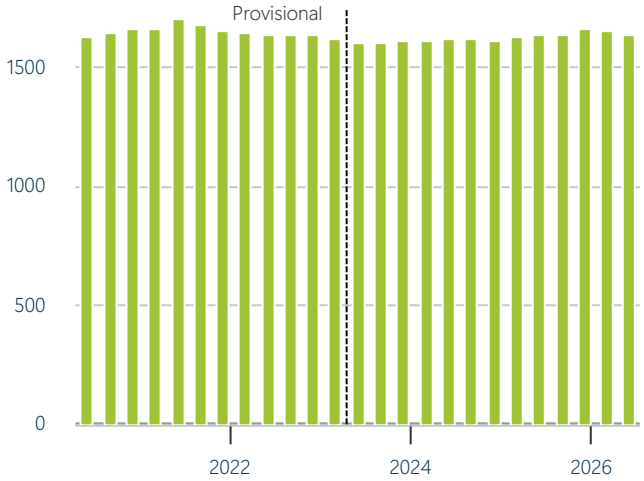


Figure 22. Greenhouse gas emissions

Annual level kilotonnes CO_2-e, Timaru District



Highlights

- Greenhouse gas emissions in Timaru District were provisionally down 0.1% for the year to June 2026, compared to a year earlier. The decline was not as low as in New Zealand (3.0%).
- Provisional greenhouse gas emissions were 1,632 kilotonnes CO_2-e in Timaru District for the year to June 2026.
- The sharpest decline in greenhouse gas emissions in Timaru District occured in the year to June 2022, with a fall of 4.3%.
- *Please note that greenhouse gas emissions is not yet available for the year to September 2026. Data for the year to June 2026 is displayed instead.*

National overview

Greenhouse gas emissions, in terms of carbon dioxide equivalents, eased 3.0% nationally in the year to June 2026, driven by less use of fossil fuels in the electricity, gas, water, and waste services industry.

Our greenhouse gas emissions estimates are based on Stats NZ's estimates of national and regional emissions, and our own modelling with GDP and employment.

Labour market indicators

Overview

Table 2. Overview of labour market indicators

Indicator	Timaru District	Canterbury Region	New Zealand
Employment (place of residence)	+0.2% ▲	+1.5% ▲	+0.2% ▲
Jobseeker Support recipients	-4.4% ▼	-1.6% ▼	+2.4% ▲
Unemployment rate ^	3.7% ▼	4.1% ▼	5.5% ▲
NEET rate ^	10.8% ▼	10.2% ▼	13.9% ▲

All measures are annual average percentage changes unless:

^ Levels

Employment (place of residence)

Figure 23. Employment (place of residence) growth

Annual average % change September 2025 - September 2026

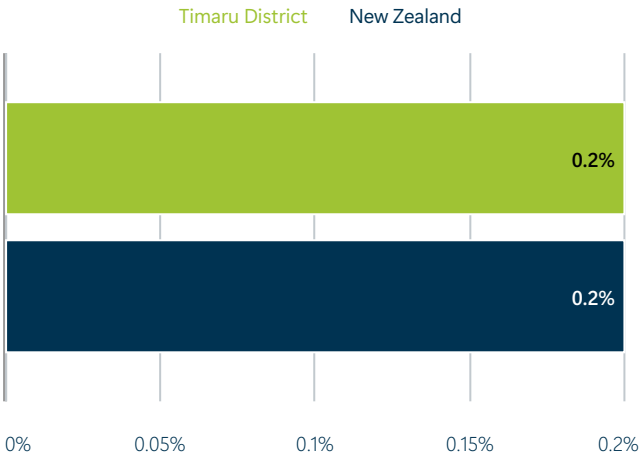
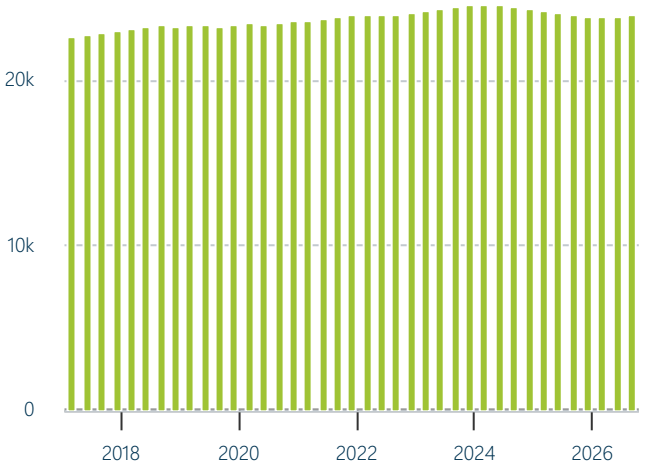


Figure 24. Employment (place of residence)

Annual level, Timaru District



Highlights

- Employment for residents living in Timaru District was up 0.2% for the year to September 2026, compared to a year earlier. Growth was the same as in New Zealand (0.2%).
- An average of 23,978 people living in Timaru District were employed in the year to September 2026.
- Annual employment growth for Timaru District residents peaked at 2.2% in the year to December 2023.

National overview

Jobs growth has turned positive on an annual average basis for the first time in two years, as employment activity slowly recovers. The number of filled jobs was 1.1%pa higher in the September 2026 quarter compared to a year earlier, helping lift annual average growth to 0.2%pa. Jobs growth remains strongest across the South Island, but growth broadening across the North Island now too. The largest job gains have occurred in the health, public administration, and education industries in the last year, with a sizable gain in primary sector employment too as commodity prices remain strong. Construction employment has recovered ground in recent months, but is still recovering, while many private sector businesses are still slow to hire.

Jobseeker Support recipients

Figure 25. Annual change in Jobseeker Support recipients

Annual average % change September 2025 - September 2026

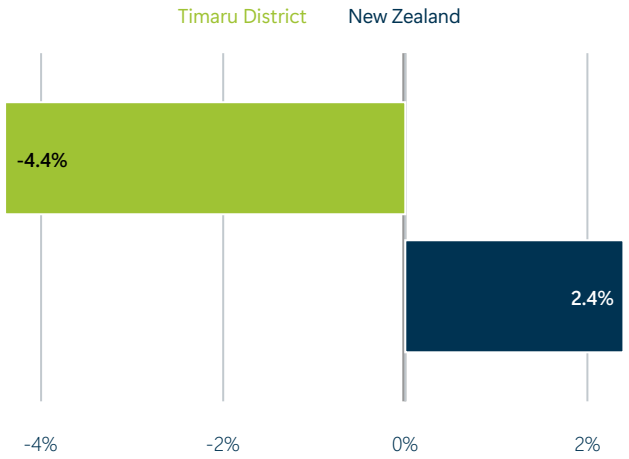
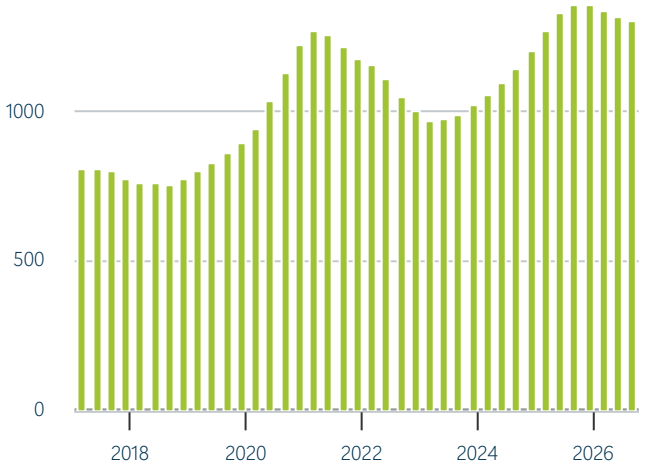


Figure 26. Jobseeker Support recipients

Annual average, Timaru District



Highlights

- Jobseeker Support recipients in Timaru District in the year to September 2026 decreased by 4.4% compared to a year earlier. The decline was greater than in New Zealand (2.4% growth).
- An average of 1,302 people were receiving a Jobseeker Support benefit in Timaru District in the 12 months ending September 2026. This compares with the ten year annual average of 1,062.

National overview

The number of Jobseeker Support recipients rose 2.4%pa on average over the 12 months to September 2026, with the annual average number of recipients reaching nearly 219,500. The pace of growth in Jobseeker Support recipients has been slowing in recent months, with September quarter recipient numbers up 1.3%pa from the same quarter a year ago. There remains a concerning trend where the number of work-ready Jobseekers has only seen a limited increase, while three-quarters of the annual average increase is due to more Jobseekers who are unavailable to work with a health condition or disability. It's harder to get Jobseekers into work too, with a 7.2%pa annual average increase in Jobseekers who have been a recipient for more than a year, and a 5.6%pa drop in those who have been a recipient for a year or less

Unemployment rate

Figure 27. Unemployment rate

Annual average rate to September 2026

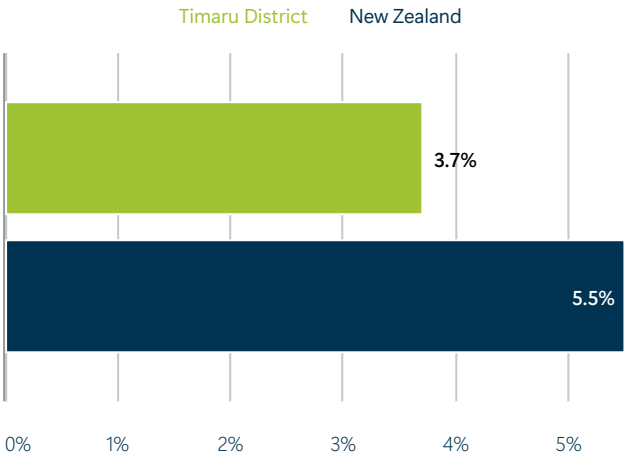
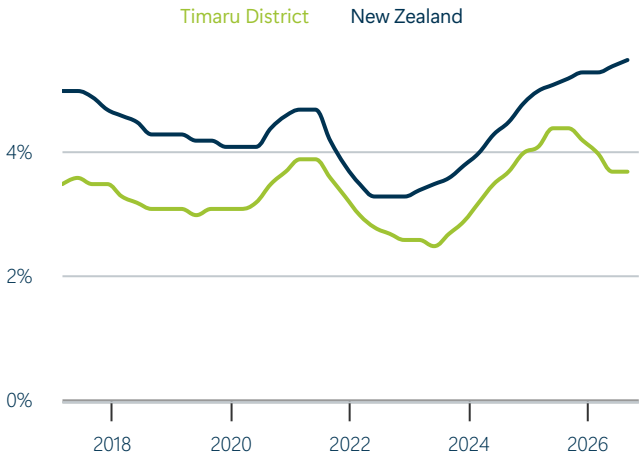


Figure 28. Unemployment rate

Annual average rate



Highlights

- The annual average unemployment rate in Timaru District was 3.7% in the year to September 2026, down from 4.4% in the previous 12 months.
- In the year to September 2026, the annual average unemployment rate in Timaru District was lower than in New Zealand (5.5%).
- Over the last ten years the annual average unemployment rate in Timaru District reached a peak of 4.4% in September 2025.

National overview

The unemployment rate rose to 5.7% in the September quarter, up from 5.6% in June both (seasonally adjusted). This increase has seen the annual average unemployment rate rise to 5.5% of the labour force over the September 2026 year. Employment growth has remained weak – but positive – with the strongest growth for part-time roles as business' hiring activity remains subdued. Regional differences remain stark, with Otago experiencing a 3.2% average unemployment rate, while Northland and Auckland are above 6.5%. With job ads still 27% below pre-pandemic levels and showing only muted signs of growth, new job opportunities remain limited compared to the number of people seeking work.

NEET rate

Figure 29. NEET rate

% of people aged 15-24 not in employment, education or training, annual average rate to September 2026

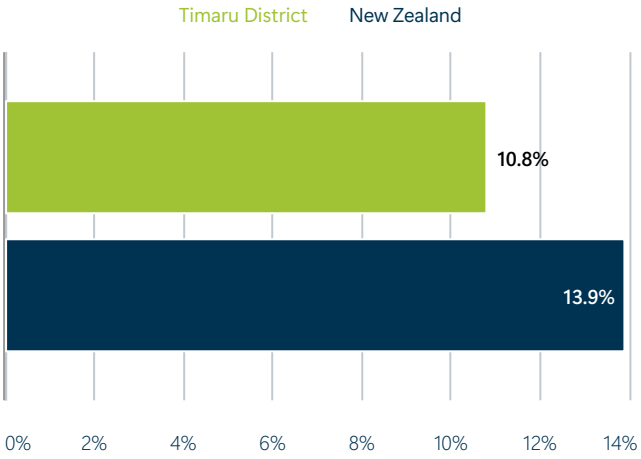
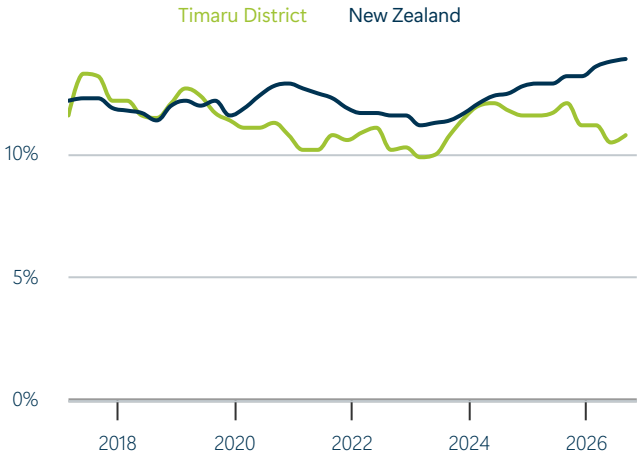


Figure 30. NEET rate

% of people aged 15-24 not in employment, education or training, annual average rate



Highlights

- The annual average NEET rate in Timaru District was 10.8% in the year to September 2026, down from 12.1% in the previous 12 months.
- In the year to September 2026, the annual average NEET rate in Timaru District was lower than in New Zealand (13.9%).
- Over the last ten years the annual average NEET rate in Timaru District reached a peak of 13.3% in June 2017.

National overview

The labour market deteriorated further in the September 2026 quarter, and young people continue to bear the brunt, missing out on scarce job opportunities. The proportion of people aged 15-24 that were not in employment, education or training (NEET) rose to 13.9% on average in the year to September 2026, up from 13.2% in the year to September 2025. This is the highest NEET rate since the series began in 2006.

Employment of 15-24-year-olds fell 0.2%pa in the September 2026 quarter, despite overall employment lifting 0.7%pa.

Housing indicators

Overview

Table 3. Overview of housing indicators

Indicator	Timaru District	Canterbury Region	New Zealand
Residential consents	-17.2% ▼	+31.0% ▲	+17.8% ▲
House sales	+6.2% ▲	+1.4% ▲	-1.4% ▼
Real estate listings	-1.2% ▼	+2.6% ▲	+3.2% ▲
House values *	+1.3% ▲	+2.9% ▲	-0.9% ▼
Housing affordability ^	4.1 ▼	5.4 ▼	5.6 ▼
First Home Loan purchases 🕒	+39.2% ▲	+25.6% ▲	+31.2% ▲
Residential rents	+1.7% ▲	+3.4% ▲	+0.2% ▲
Rental affordability ^	19.5% ▼	20.5% ▼	19.5% ▼
Emergency housing grants	+0.0% ▶	+0.0% ▶	-5.4% ▼
Housing register applicants	-14.9% ▼	-7.4% ▼	-1.3% ▼
Public housing stock	+0.9% ▲	-0.1% ▼	+2.0% ▲

🕒 Data up to the June 2026 quarter.

All measures are annual average percentage changes unless:

* Annual percentage changes

^ Levels

Residential consents

Figure 31. Growth in number of new dwelling consents

Annual average % change September 2025 - September 2026

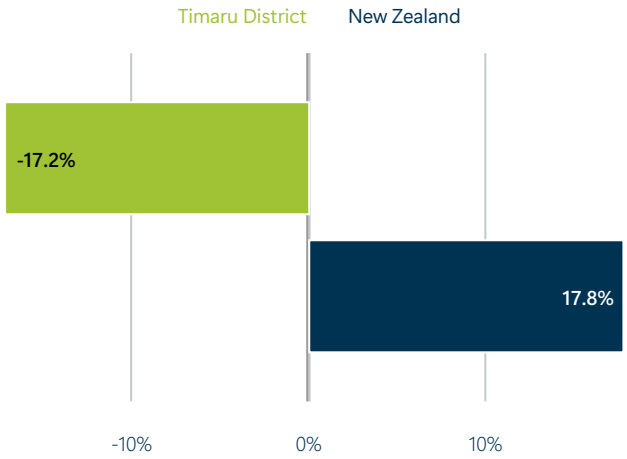
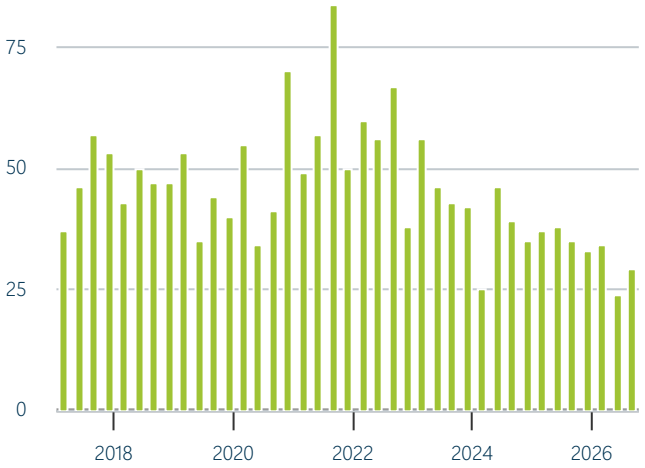


Figure 32. Residential consents

Quarterly number, Timaru District



Highlights

- A total of 29 new residential building consents were issued in Timaru District in the September 2026 quarter, compared with 35 in the same quarter last year.
- On an annual basis the number of consents in Timaru District decreased by 17.2% compared with the same 12-month period a year before. This compares with an increase of 17.8% in New Zealand over the same period.

National overview

Residential building consents continue to increase, with 41,091 new dwellings consented over the year to September 2026, an 18%pa lift. An increase in standalone house consents led the charge, rising 20%pa over the year to September 2026, with townhouse consents up 18%, retirement consents up 44%, but apartment consents fell 11%. Almost two-thirds (64%) of residential consent growth over the year to September 2026 came from Auckland and Canterbury. Residential consents in Canterbury increased 31%pa, and lifted 16%pa in Auckland. However, the soft state of the housing market means that the fundamentals for sustaining further growth still aren't there, and some early signs of softening in consenting pace is already showing through.

House sales

Figure 33. Annual change in house sales

Annual average % change September 2025 - September 2026

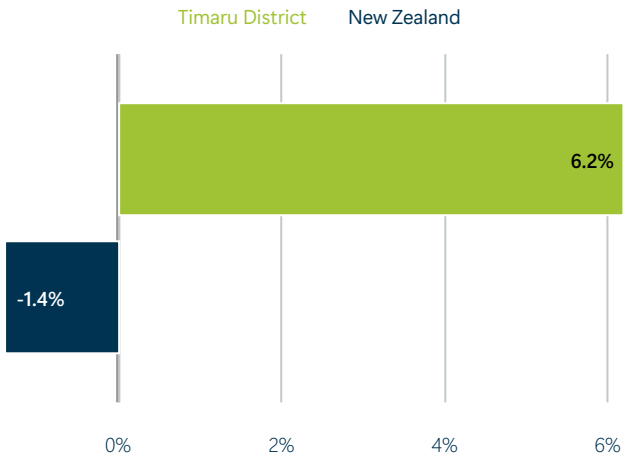
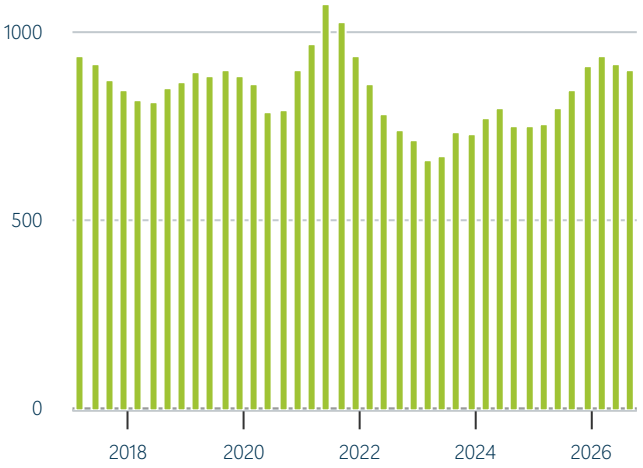


Figure 34. House sales

Annual number, Timaru District



Highlights

- House sales in Timaru District increased by 6.2% in the year to September 2026, compared to a year earlier. This compares with a decrease of 1.4% in New Zealand.
- A total of 901 houses were sold in Timaru District in the 12 months ending September 2026. This compares with the ten year annual average of 843.

National overview

Housing market activity has slowed back in recent months, as uncertainty from Middle East conflict and high fuel prices, the higher unemployment rate, and rising interest rates combine to limit housing market interest. House sales have fallen 9.4%pa in the September 2026 quarter, dragging the annual total down 1.4%pa over the 12 months to September 2026. More supply available on the market is continuing to provide significant options to would-be buyers, with the highest volume of unsold stock in 12 years. But with few, and more cautious buyers, sales activity is likely to remain constrained in many areas.

Real estate listings

Figure 35. Real estate listings

Annual average % change September 2025 - September 2026

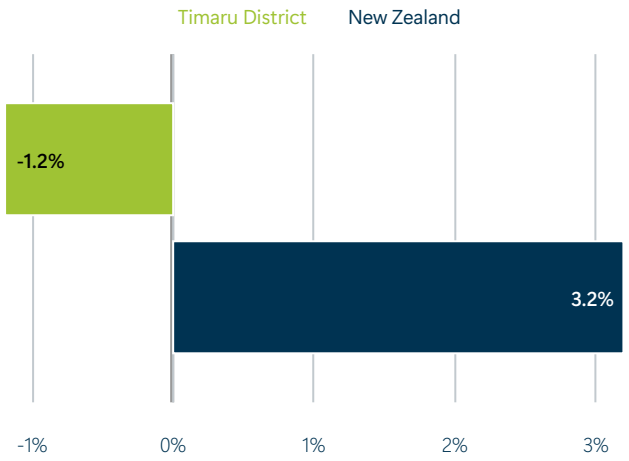
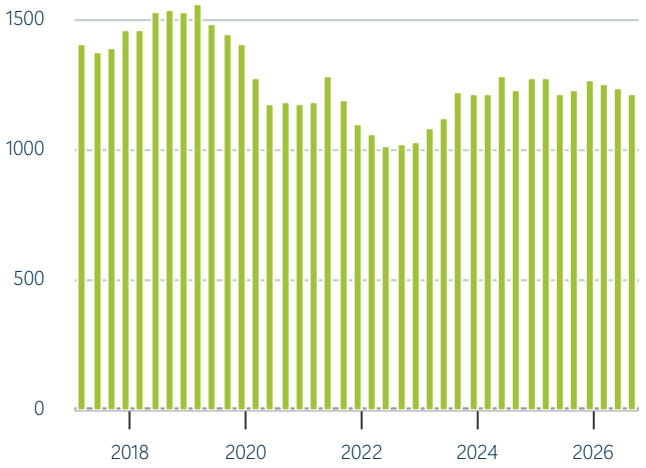


Figure 36. Real estate listings

Annual number, Timaru District



Highlights

- The number of new real estate listings in Timaru District decreased by 1.2% in the year to September 2026, compared to a year earlier. The decline was greater than in New Zealand (3.2% growth).
- There were an average of 1,210 new real estate listings in Timaru District in the 12 months ending September 2026. This compares with the ten year annual average of 1,265 new real estate listings.

National overview

The number of new real estate listings rose 3.2% in the year to September 2026, with a total of 114,900 new listings, among the highest since 2019. At the same time, house sales eased 1.4% to 78,200, showing that new listings substantially outnumber houses being sold, in turn suppressing house price growth. Households remain under pressure from a weak labour market, which coupled with low migration has led to weak housing market activity.

House values

Figure 37. Annual change in house value

Annual % change in house value September 2025 - September 2026

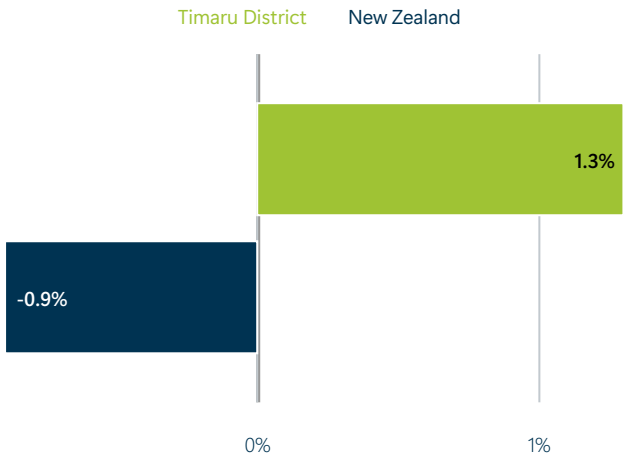
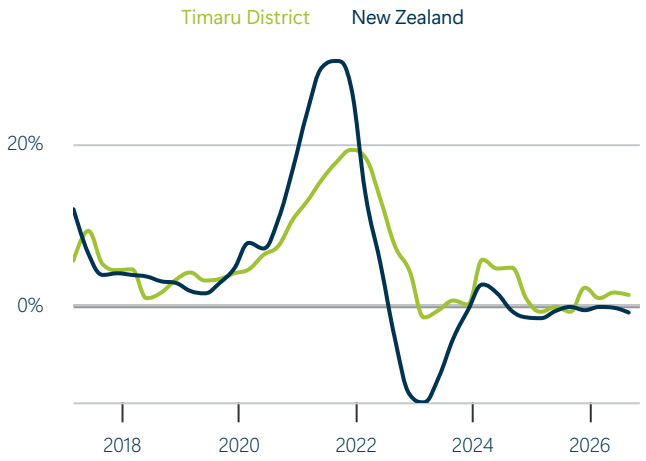


Figure 38. House value growth

Annual % change



Highlights

- The average current house value in Timaru District was up 1.3% in September 2026, compared to a year earlier. Growth was higher than in New Zealand (-0.9%).
- The average current house value was $512,535 in Timaru District in September 2026. This compares with $847,431 in New Zealand.

National overview

House values across New Zealand continue to decline, down 0.9%pa in the September 2026 quarter to an average of around $847,000. House values have now been in decline for two years, and the recent 0.9%pa decline is a sharper deterioration than seen in recent quarters. House values earlier on in 2025 and 2026 had been subdued, with smaller 0.2-0.3%pa decline in the first half of this year. However, house price declines have worsened recently as uncertainty from Middle East conflict and high fuel prices, the higher unemployment rate, and rising interest rates combine to limit housing market interest and hit house sales.

Housing affordability

Figure 39. Housing affordability

Ratio of house prices to household incomes, year to September 2026

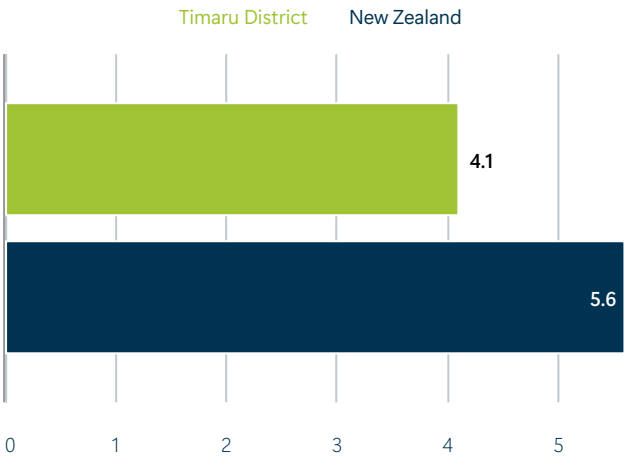
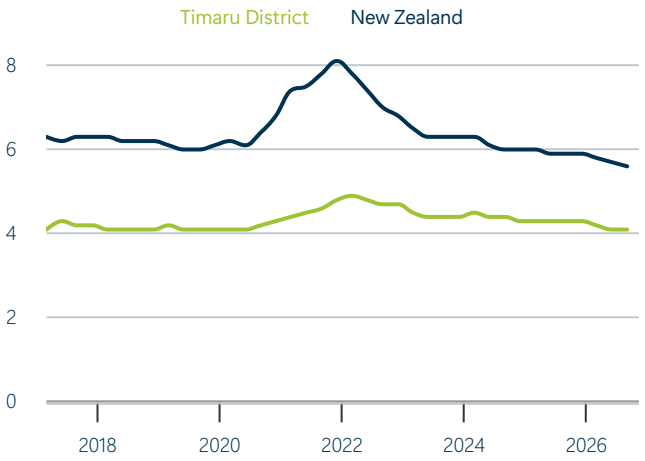


Figure 40. Housing affordability

Ratio of house prices to household incomes, annual average



Highlights

- Housing in Timaru District (4.1) was more affordable than in New Zealand (5.6) in September 2026, based on the ratio between mean house values and mean household incomes.
- Housing affordability in Timaru District improved on average between September 2025 and September 2026. Housing affordability has improved in New Zealand over the same period.
- During the last ten years, housing in Timaru District was most affordable in September 2026, when the index reached a low of 4.1.

National overview

Housing affordability has improved slightly, with the average house value easing from 5.9 times household incomes in the year to September 2025, to 5.6 times in the year to September 2026. This marks the most affordable housing since 2015. This improvement in affordability was driven by a 4.6% increase in household incomes, and a 0.9%pa fall in house values.

First Home Loan purchases

Figure 41. Annual change in First Home Loan purchases

Annual average % change June 2025 - June 2026, First Home Loan purchases

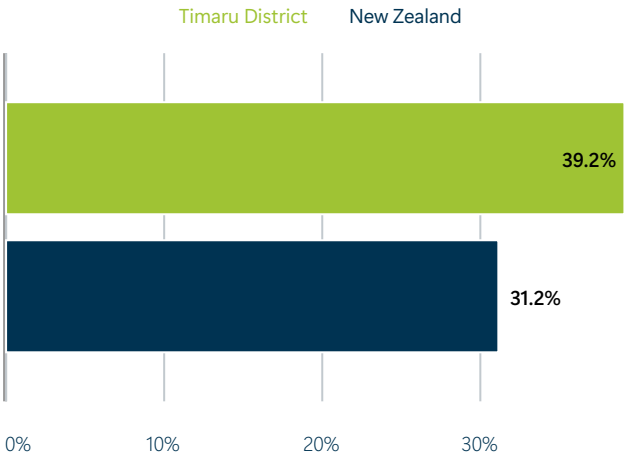
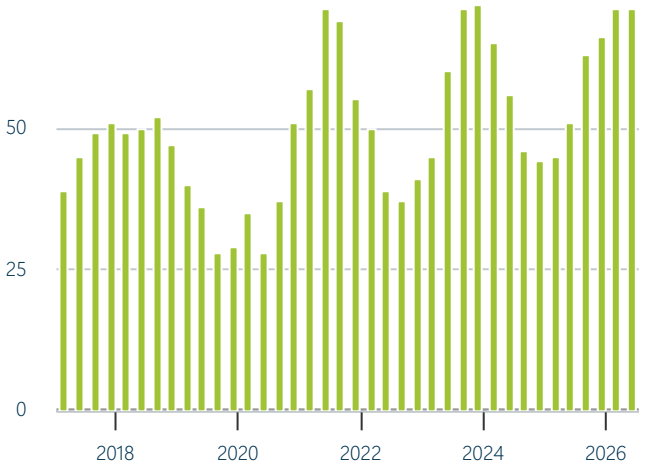


Figure 42. First Home Loan purchases

Annual number First Home Loan purchases, Timaru District



Highlights

- Purchases using the Kainga Ora First Home Loan scheme in Timaru District increased by 39.2% in the year to June 2026, compared to a year earlier. This compares with an increase of 31.2% in New Zealand.
- A total of 71 properties were purchased using the Kainga Ora First Home Loan scheme in Timaru District in the 12 months ending June 2026. This compares with the ten year annual average of 51.
- *Please note that First Home Loan purchases is not yet available for the year to September 2026. Data for the year to June 2026 is displayed instead.*

Residential rents

Figure 43. Annual change in residential rents

Annual average % change September 2025 - September 2026

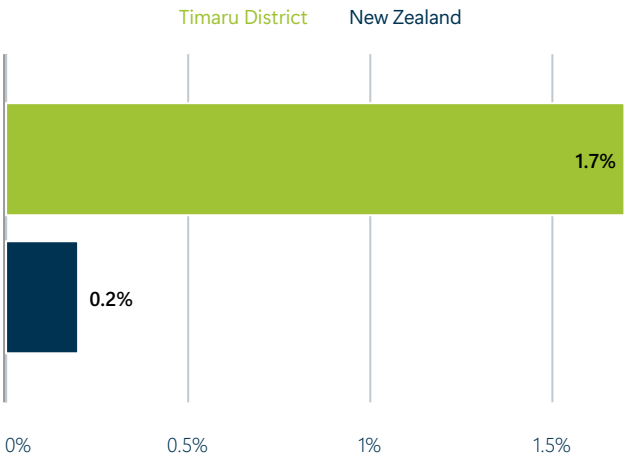
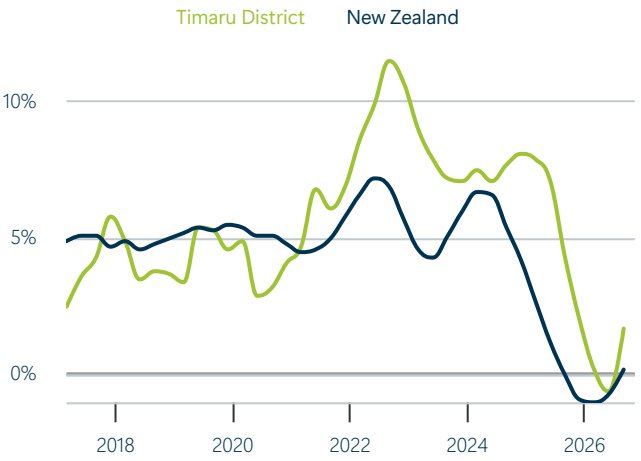


Figure 44. Residential rents growth

Annual average % change



Highlights

- The average residential rent in Timaru District was up 1.7% in the year to September 2026, compared to a year earlier. Growth was higher than in New Zealand (0.2%).
- The average residential rent in Timaru District was $474 in the year to September 2026. This compares to $569 in New Zealand.
- Annual growth of residential rents in Timaru District peaked at 11.5% in the year to September 2022.

National overview

Residential rents rose 0.2% in the year to September 2026, driven by a 2.0%pa lift in the September 2026 quarter. Changes in rents vary widely across the country, with falls of 0.8% in Auckland and 2.1% in Wellington Region dragging down the national average. Otago, Southland, West Coast and Canterbury – among the strongest regions for employment growth – saw rent increases over 3.0%.

Rental affordability

Figure 45. Rental affordability

Rents as % of household income, year to September 2026

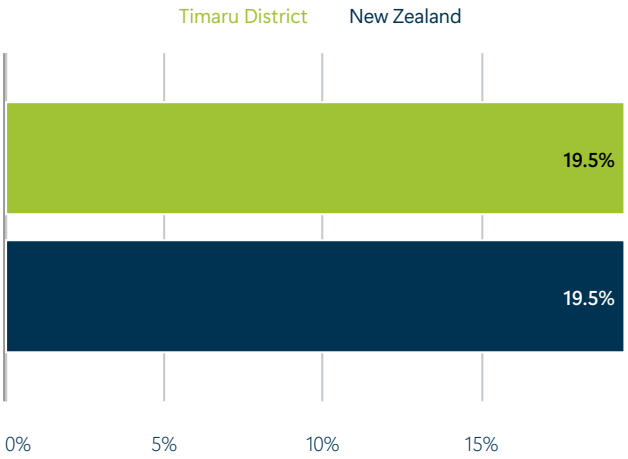
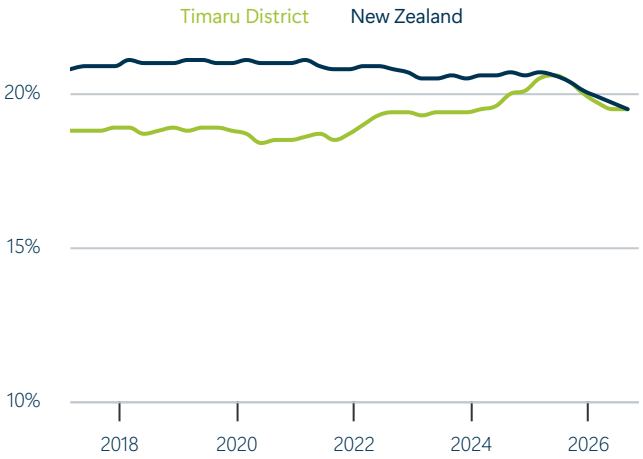


Figure 46. Rental affordability

Rents as % of household income, annual average



Highlights

- Renting in Timaru District (19.5%) was as affordable as in New Zealand (19.5%) in the year to September 2026, based on the ratio of mean rents to mean household incomes.
- Rental affordability in Timaru District improved on average between September 2025 and September 2026. Rental affordability has improved in New Zealand over the same period.
- During the last ten years, renting in Timaru District was most affordable in June 2020, when the index reached a low of 18.4%.

National overview

Rental affordability improved in the year to September 2026, driven by improvements in household incomes and minimal rent increases. Household incomes rose 4.6%, as rents rose just 0.2%, over the year to September 2026. Rents as a share of income eased from 20.4% in the year to September 2025, to 19.5% in the year to September 2026.

Emergency housing grants

Figure 47. Households in emergency housing

Annual average % change September 2025 - September 2026

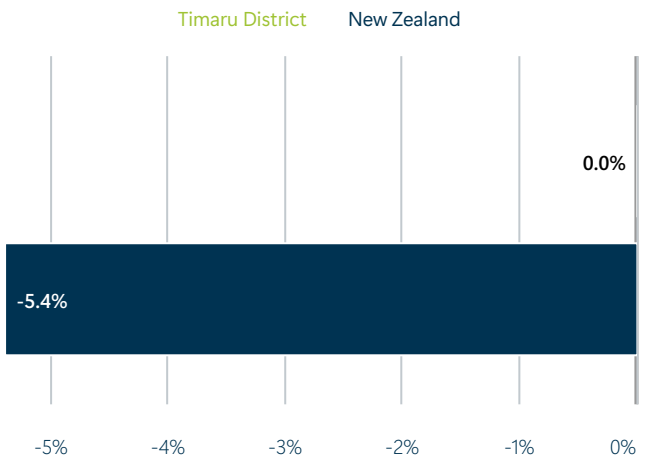
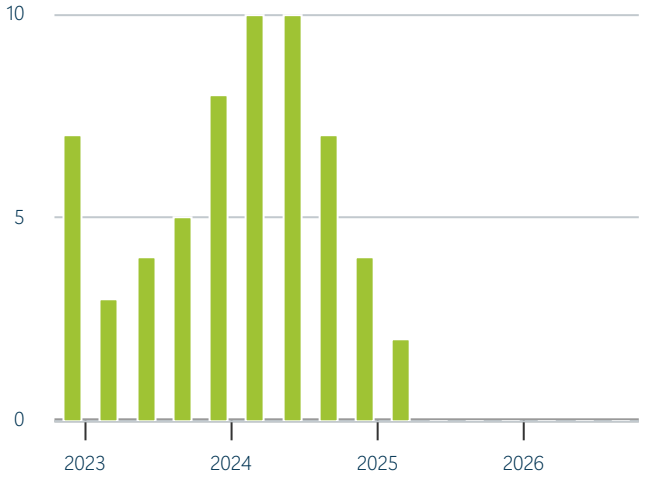


Figure 48. Households in emergency housing

Annual average, Timaru District



Highlights

- The number of households in emergency housing in Timaru District was unchanged in the year to September 2026, compared to a year earlier. This compares with a decrease of 5.4% in New Zealand.
- An average of 0 households were in emergency housing in Timaru District in the 12 months ending September 2026. This compares with the five year annual average of 3.

National overview

The number of households in emergency housing fell 5.4% in the year to September 2026, reflecting a focus of the National-led government to reduce reliance on emergency housing. The outcome for people declined emergency housing isn't clear, as it's not effectively tracked by the government.

Over the year to September 2026, there were 386 households in emergency housing on average, a fraction of the 19,300 households on the housing register, the wait list for public housing.

As the number of emergency housing grants continues to decline, data for more areas is being suppressed to preserve confidentiality for the small number of recipients. In the September 2026 quarter, the number of households receiving emergency housing was suppressed for 23 territorial authorities.

Housing register applicants

Figure 49. Annual change in housing register applicants

Annual average % change September 2025 - September 2026

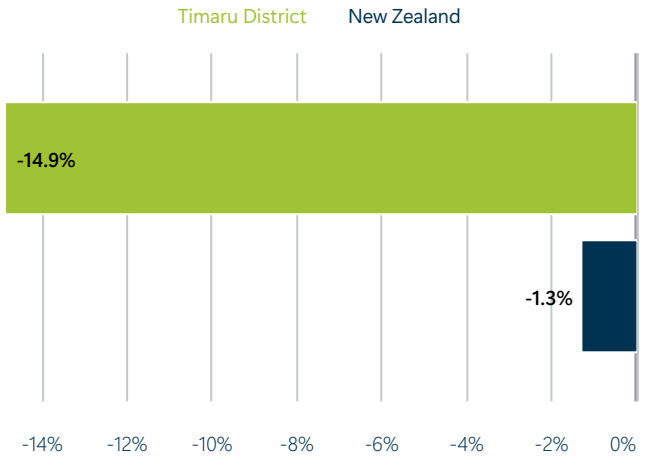
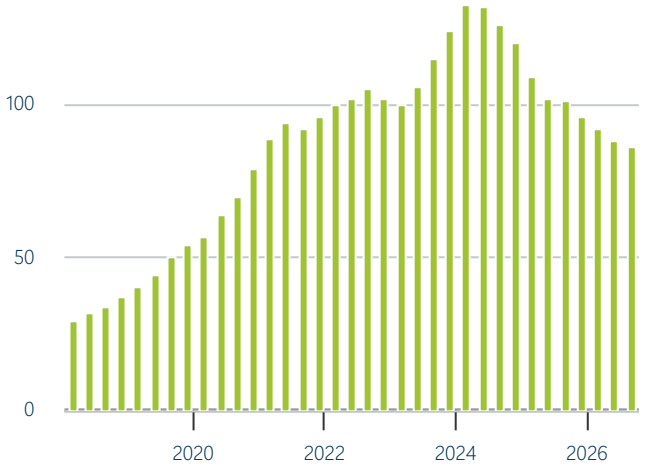


Figure 50. Housing register applicants

Annual average, Timaru District



Highlights

- The number of applicants on the housing register in Timaru District decreased by 14.9% in the year to September 2026, compared to a year earlier. This compares with a decrease of 1.3% in New Zealand.
- An average of 86 applicants were on the housing register in Timaru District in the 12 months ending September 2026. This compares with the nine year annual average of 87.

National overview

Housing register applicants fell 1.3% in the year to September 2026, bringing the annual average register applicants to 19,300. The number of applicants fell by nearly a quarter since 2024.

The housing register, often referred to as the public housing waiting list, counts applicants who are not currently in public housing, who have been assessed as eligible for public housing and who are ready to be matched to a suitable property. These applicants could be living in emergency housing, unaffordable private rentals, or other insecure arrangements.

Public housing stock

Figure 51. Public housing stock

Annual average % change September 2025 - September 2026

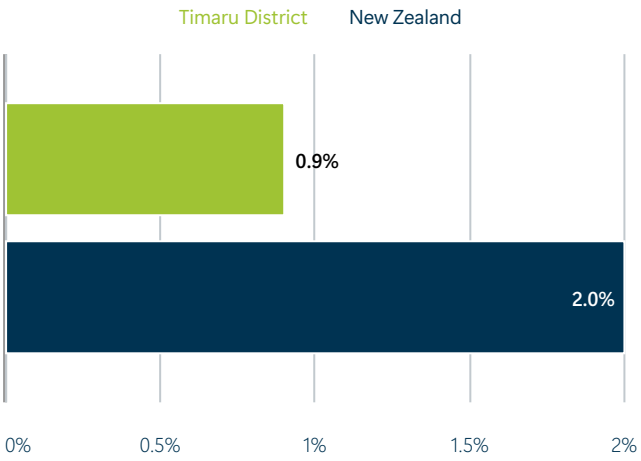
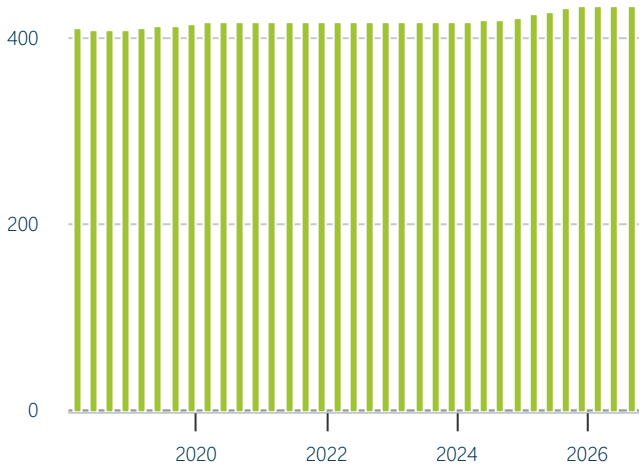


Figure 52. Public housing stock

Annual average, Timaru District



Highlights

- The number of public houses in Timaru District in the year to September 2026 increased by 0.9% compared to a year earlier. Growth was lower than in New Zealand (2.0%).
- There were an average of 436 public houses in Timaru District in the 12 months ending September 2026. This compares with the nine year annual average of 420.

National overview

Public housing stock grew 2.0% in the year to September 2026, with a net 1,700 public houses added in the past year, down from a 4,700 increase in the year to June 2026. There were 87,900 public houses on average in the year to March 2025.

Public housing includes properties that are owned or leased by Kāinga Ora and other registered Community Housing Providers (CHPs) that can be tenanted by people who are eligible for public housing. The totals presented include both occupied and vacant houses. Public housing was previously referred to as social housing.

Social indicators

Overview

Table 4. Overview of social indicators

Indicator	Timaru District	Canterbury Region	New Zealand
School attendance ^ 🕒	60.5% ▲	62.2% ▲	60.2% ▲
Gaming machine profits 🕒	+2.5% ▲	+6.9% ▲	+3.5% ▲
Crime rate ^	215 ▼	182 ▲	217 ▲
Health enrolments	-0.6% ▼	+1.1% ▲	+0.8% ▲
Other benefit recipients	+0.7% ▲	+3.3% ▲	+3.0% ▲

🕒 Data up to the June 2026 quarter.

All measures are annual average percentage changes unless:

^ Levels

School attendance

Figure 53. School attendance

% of school students attending greater than 90% of classes, annual average to June 2026

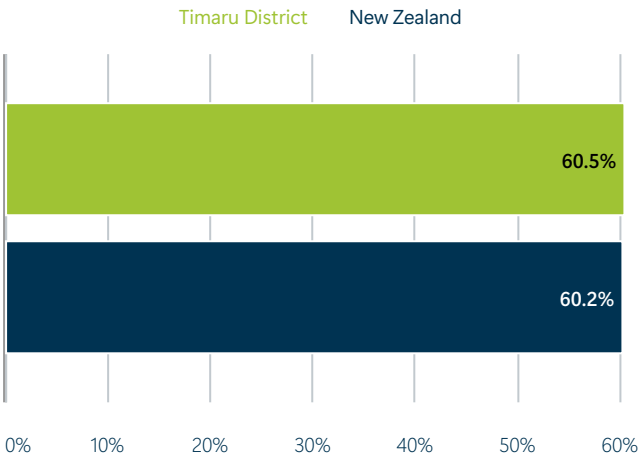
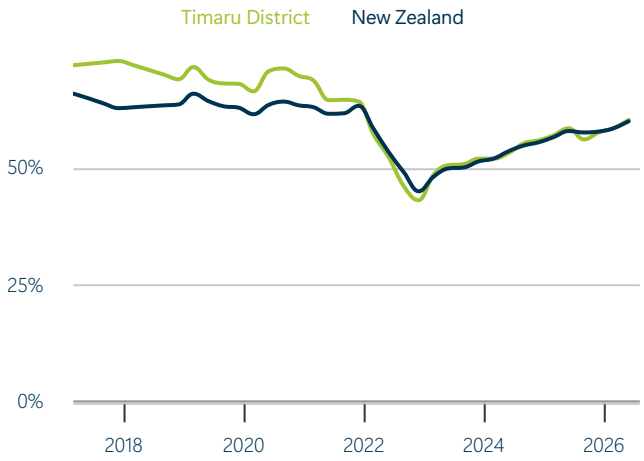


Figure 54. School attendance

% of school students attending greater than 90% of classes, annual average



Highlights

- The annual average school attendance rate in Timaru District was 60.5% in the year to June 2026, up from 58.7% in the previous 12 months.
- In the year to June 2026, the annual average school attendance rate in Timaru District was higher than in New Zealand (60.2%).
- Over the last ten years the annual average school attendance rate in Timaru District reached a peak of 73.1% in December 2017.
- *Please note that school attendance is not yet available for the year to September 2026. Data for the year to June 2026 is displayed instead.*

National overview

School attendance has continued to improve, albeit at a marginal rate, and still well below previous highs. In the year to June 2026, 60.2% of school students attended greater than 90% of their classes, up from 58.1% in the year to June 2025, but below a peak of 66.1% in 2019.

Gaming machine profits

Figure 55. Gaming machine profits

Annual level, Timaru District

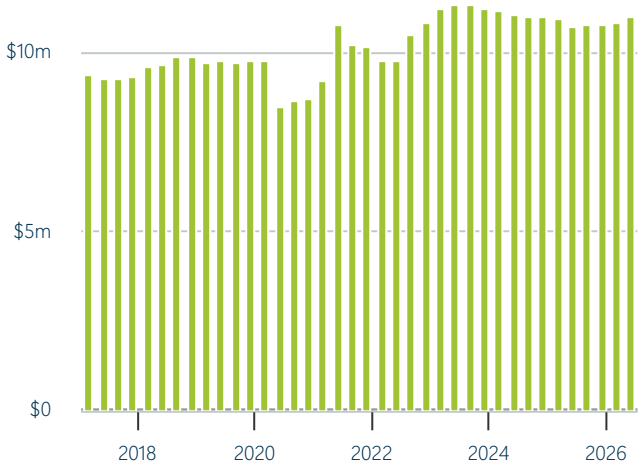
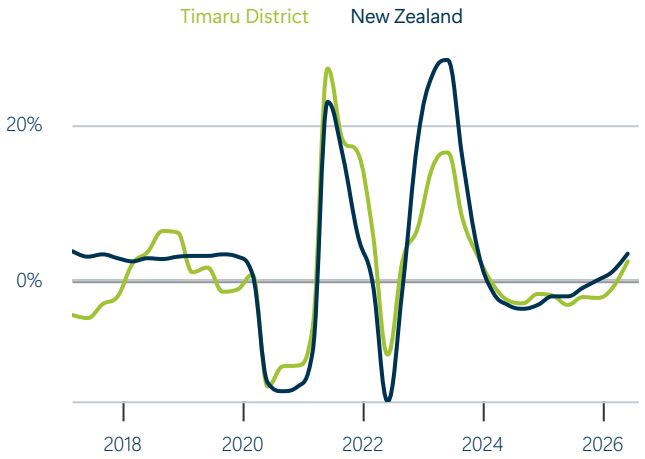


Figure 56. Gaming machine profits

Annual average % change



Highlights

- Gaming machine profits in Timaru District increased by 2.5% over the year to June 2026, compared to a year earlier. This compares with an increase of 3.5% in New Zealand.
- Gaming machine profits in Timaru District totalled $11.00 million in the year to June 2026.
- Annual gaming machine profit growth in Timaru District peaked at 27.3% in the year to June 2021.
- *Please note that gaming machine profits is not yet available for the year to September 2026. Data for the year to June 2026 is displayed instead.*

National overview

Gaming machine profits measure the profits from pokie machines in pubs – which effectively measures the amount of money taken out of communities, before considering what is returned in the form of community grants. Gambling reflects a combination of structural socioeconomic factors and current economic conditions.

Gaming machine profits edged up 3.5% in the year to June 2026, with recovery well underway following sustained declines in 2024 and 2025. By comparison, Marketview card spending rose 1.3% in the year to June 2026, showing that pokie machine recovery is outpacing wider household spending amidst tight household budgets.

Crime rate

Figure 57. Crime rate

Criminal proceedings per 10,000 residents, annual average to September 2026

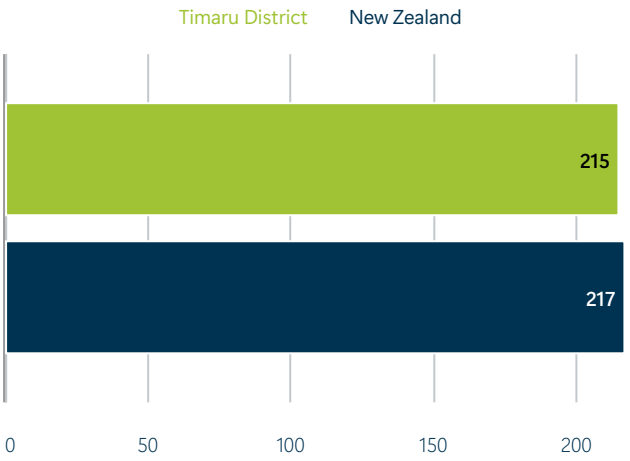
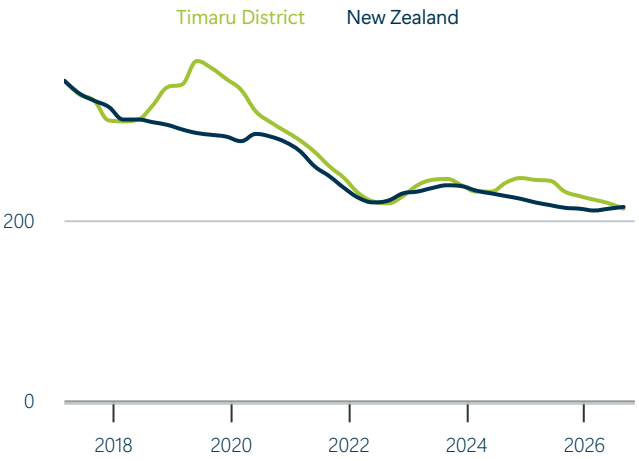


Figure 58. Crime rate

Criminal proceedings per 10,000 residents, annual average



Highlights

- The crime rate in Timaru District was 215 (per 10,000 residents) in the year to September 2026, down from 234 in the previous 12 months.
- In the year to September 2026, the crime rate in Timaru District was lower than in New Zealand (217).
- Over the last ten years the annual average crime rate in Timaru District reached a peak of 379 in June 2019.

National overview

New Zealand's crime rate has edged up slightly in the past year, rising to 217 criminal proceedings per 10,000 people in the year to September 2026, up from 216 in the year to September 2025.

Over the past year, theft offences have increased 23%, offsetting declines in burglary (-5.5%), drug offences (-6.0%), property damage (-11%), and offences against justice procedures and orders (including breaches of bail) (-4.5%).

Health enrolments

Figure 59. Annual change in health enrolments

Annual average % change September 2025 - September 2026

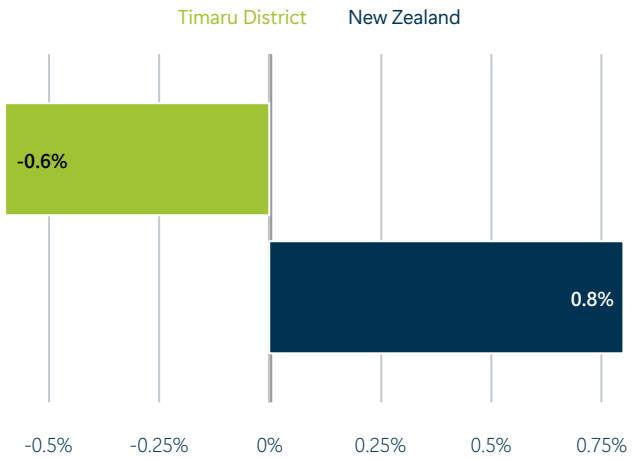
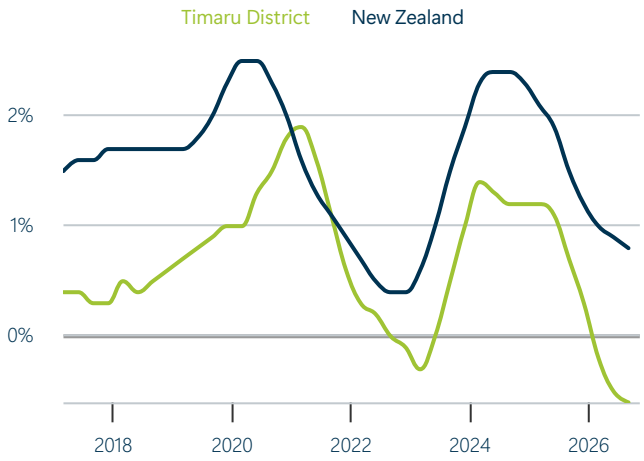


Figure 60. Health enrolments

Annual average % change



Highlights

- The number of people enrolled with a primary health organisation in Timaru District in the year to September 2026 decreased by 0.6% compared to a year earlier. The decline was greater than in New Zealand (0.8% growth).
- An average of 49,028 people were enroled with primary healthcare providers in Timaru District in the 12 months ending September 2026. This compares with the ten year annual average of 47,943.

National overview

Health enrolments serve as a timely indicator for regional population growth. Health enrolment growth continues to slow, with growth of 0.7%pa in the September 2026 quarter, down from 0.9%pa in the June 2026 quarter. Health enrolments rose 0.8%pa in the year to September 2026.

Stats NZ's national population estimates show growth of 0.6%pa in the year to June 2026. Quarterly growth did pick up slightly from 0.6%pa in the March 2026 quarter to 0.7%pa in the June 2026 quarter, as net migration lifted to 17,600 from 14,600. With a weak labour market, growth in net migration and population growth is likely to be limited in the coming year.

Other benefit recipients

Figure 61. Annual change in other benefit recipients

Annual average % change September 2025 - September 2026

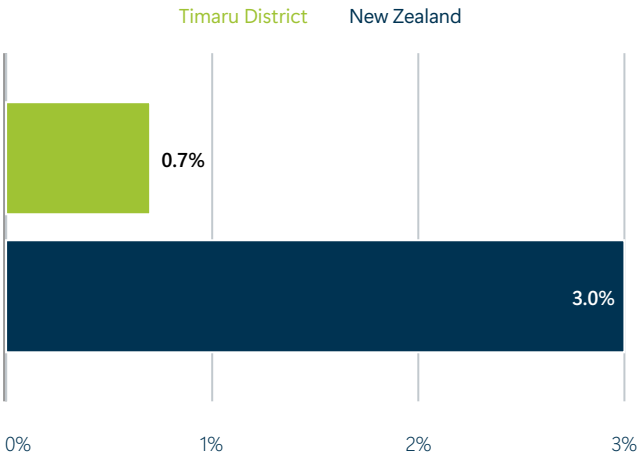
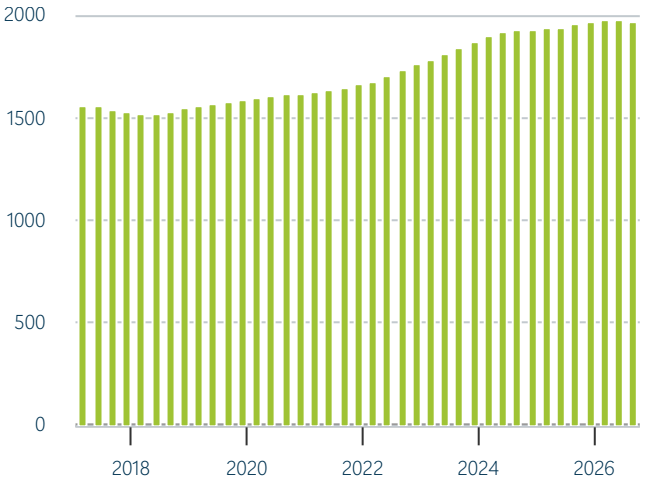


Figure 62. Other benefit recipients

Annual average, Timaru District



Highlights

- Other benefits recipients (including Sole Parent Support and Supported Living Payment) in Timaru District in the year to September 2026 increased by 0.7% compared to a year earlier. Growth was lower than in New Zealand (3.0%).
- An average of 1,974 people were receiving an other benefit (including Sole Parent Support and Supported Living Payment) in Timaru District in the 12 months ending September 2026. This compares with the ten year annual average of 1,736.

National overview

Other benefit recipients (including Sole Parent Support and Supported Living Payment) rose 2.9% in the year to September 2026, having increased at a fairly steady rate for the past five years. Most of the recent increase in other benefits has been driven by supported living payment recipients, which make up the majority of other benefits, rising 3.4%.

Technical notes

Building consents

Building consents data is sourced from Stats NZ. The number of residential consents issued for new dwellings is the measure for residential consents. For non-residential consents, the measure is the value of both new buildings and alterations.

Business counts

This data is from Business Count Indicators (BCI) from Statistics New Zealand. It is a series is based on a monthly count of geographic units as at the end of each month, mostly sourced from administrative data. Geographic units represent a business location engaged in one, or predominantly one, kind of economic activity at a single physical site or base (eg a factory, a farm, a shop, an office, etc).

The business counts data is different from the annually published Business Demography Statistics.

This series is limited to economically significant enterprises. It can be an individual, private-sector and public-sector enterprises that are engaged in the production of goods and services in New Zealand. These enterprises are maintained on the Statistics NZ Business Register, which generally includes all employing units and those enterprises with GST turnover greater than $30,000 per year.

Calculating changes

We use several different calculations to calculate change in the indicators used in the Quarterly Economic Monitor.

- Annual average percentage change: Annual average percentage change compares average values over the past year with those in the prior year. For example, the change from the year ending March last year to the year ending March this year.
- Annual percentage change: Annual percentage change compares the value this quarter to the value in the same quarter last year. For example, the change from March quarter last year to March quarter this year.
- Levels: In the case of levels, such as unemployment rate, we do not calculate the change in level – we simply show the latest level value.

Consumer spending

The consumer spending data is sourced from Marketview. It measures total electronic card spending at 'bricks + mortar' retailers using a combination of spending through the Paymark network and modelled estimates at non-Paymark retailers. For further breakdown of the data by storetype and other variables contact Marketview.

Crime

The crude crime rate is calculated as the number of crimes committed and recorded (offender proceedings) in an area per 10,000 residents. Crime counts are sourced from the New Zealand Police. Population data is sourced from Stats NZ and Infometrics own population projections (for the most recent quarters).

The data available at a detailed level only included reported crime and does not provide a dimension of how safe people feel. However, higher crime is an obvious proxy for unreported crime (more reported crime would seem to imply a higher overall crime burden), and more crime would logically see people feel less safe.

Dairy

Dairy data has been sourced from the *New Zealand Dairy Statistics*, a publication jointly produced by DairyNZ and LIC, as well as calculations made by Infometrics. The data accords to dairy seasons, which run from June to May. Total dairy payouts in each territorial authority have been calculated by Infometrics by utilising milk solids production in conjunction with Fonterra's farmgate milk price (excluding dividends) from the dairy season in question. For the current season, Infometrics calculates a payout forecast using our own expectation of the farmgate milk price and the assumption that milk solids production continues running at the same level as the last 12 months.

Emergency housing

Emergency housing measures the number of households living in emergency housing at the end of each quarter. This is recorded based on data from the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) on the number of emergency housing special needs grants (EH SNG) issued for individuals and families staying in short-term accommodation such as motels if they are temporarily unable to access a contracted transitional housing place or private rental.

Please note that some publications, such as the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development's Public housing regional factsheets, report the number of emergency housing grants issued. This number is generally much higher than the number of households living in emergency housing, as the grants have to be renewed every few weeks. For example, a household living in emergency housing continously through a quarter would receive several grants during that time. We present the number of households as this better reflects the ongoing use of emergency housing.

Employment (place of residence)

Employment is measured as the number of filled employee jobs and excludes self-employed workers. The series is based on the place of residence of employed people rather than the location of their workplace. As a result, it reflects employment outcomes for an area's residents, which may differ from employment trends within local businesses, particularly in areas with significant commuting flows. Data from 2019 onwards is sourced from Stats NZ's Monthly Employment Indicator (MEI). Historical estimates back to 2000 are derived by backcasting the MEI series using trends from Linked Employer-Employee Data (LEED).

First Home Loan purchases

First Home Loan purchases are measured using data from Kainga Ora on the number of properties bought (settled) using a Kainga Ora First Home Loan. First Home Loans are low-deposit (as low as 5%) home loans underwritten by Kainga Ora and issued through trading banks. First Home Loans were previously known as Welcome Home Loans. First Home Loans have additional eligibility criteria including a maximum income, and carry a 0.5% insurance premium to cover risks associated with such a low deposit. The uptake of First Home Loans varies by area, but changes in the number of purchases using the scheme serve as a useful indicator of changes in first home buyer activity.

First Home Loan purchases were introduced in the September 2024 Quarterly Economic Monitor to replace First Home Grants, which were closed to new applications in May 2024.

Gaming machine profits

Gambling activity is estimated using gaming machine profits (GMP) data published by the Department of Internal Affairs. This GMP data is based on Class 4 gambling which represents electronic gaming machines, commonly known as ‘pokies’, located in venues such as pubs and clubs. This excludes all sports betting and casino-based gaming. GMP represents money spent by gamblers which is not returned to gamblers in the form of winnings. A minimum of 40% of GMP are required by law to go back to the community in the form of grants.

Data for South Taranaki District, Stratford District, Kaikoura District, Hurunui District and Central Hawke's Bay District is not available separately from DIA. From December 2024, Hastings District contains data from one venue in Central Hawke's Bay District.

Greenhouse gas emissions

Greenhouse gas emission estimates are modelled using Stats NZ emissions estimates for industries and regions, coupled with Infometrics estimates of GDP and employment.

Stats NZ's emissions estimates are produced using the System of Environmental-Economic Accounts (SEEA) framework, designed to align greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions data to economic indicators such as GDP. These are production-based emissions of greenhouse gas emissions for ANZSIC industries and households. Emissions are expressed in carbon dioxide equivalents (CO_2-e), which are the emissions of greenhouse gases weighted by their 100-year global warming potential.

Using a production-based approach means that emissions associated with consumption are not accounted for. For example, the emissions associated with burning coal for home heating will accrue to the area in which the coal is burnt. However, the emissions associated with burning coal to generate electricity accrue to the area with the power station, not the area which uses the resulting electricity to heat their homes.

Gross domestic product

GDP for each territorial authority (TA) is estimated by Infometrics. A top-down approach breaks national production-based GDP for each industry (published by Stats NZ) down to TA level by applying TA shares to the national total. Each TA's share of industry output is based on the share of employment measured in the Infometrics Regional Industry Employment Model (RIOM). The model draws on Monthly Employment Indicators for wage earners and Annual LEED for self-employment.

Infometrics GDP estimates are broadly benchmarked on regional GDP published by Stats NZ which ensures we capture differences in regional industry productivity and changes in productivity over time.

Over the COVID period we incorporate Infometrics' estimates of the proportions of industries in each territorial authority which were able to operate under each COVID-19 alert level to capture the economic impacts of the pandemic.

Guest nights

The number of guest nights is sourced from the Accommodation Data Programme, which is funded by the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) and managed by Fresh Info. A guest night is equivalent to one guest spending one night at an establishment. For example, a motel with 15 guests spending two nights would report that they had provided 30 guest nights

Health enrolments

Health enrolments are sourced from the Ministry of Health. They record the number of people in each area who are enrolled with a Primary Health Organisation (PHO). Enrolment is voluntary, but most New Zealanders enrol at a general practice for health reasons and for the benefits of enrolment, such as cheaper doctors' visits and reduced costs of prescription medicines. Health enrolments are attributed to territorial authorities based on the residential address of patients, regardless of where their general practice is located.

The Ministry of Health changed how health enrolments were coded to areas in 2023, which caused a break in the series between the June 2023 and September 2023 quarter. We have undertaken modelling to combine the series over this period.

House sales

The number of house sales is sourced from REINZ. The indicator measures the number of house sales at the point when the sale becomes unconditional. The unconditional date is the date when all the terms of an agreement have been satisfied and the sale and purchase can proceed to settlement.

House values

House values (dollar value) are based on Cotality's Hedonic Home Value Index, the previous Cotality SPAR Index, and the Cotality/CoreLogic/QV/Valuations New Zealand long-term quality adjusted House Price Index. This index assesses the market value of all housing stock (not just properties sold) based on analysis of recent house sales and the characteristics on properties in the area. The level presented is the quarterly average house value of all properties in the area for the quarter in question.

Household income

In 2024 we revised our methodology for estimating household incomes to incorporate new data sources. Previously we relied heavily on Stats NZ's LEED-Annual for historical income estimates, however, we have since uncovered a number of issues with how regional incomes are distributed to territorial authorities within some regions.

Previously, we eschewed Census data, due to its tendency to under-report incomes, due to challenge of accurately recollecting incomes when filling out a Census form. Stats NZ have started producing the Administrative Population Census (APC) which draws upon tax data to more completely record incomes, partially overcoming the problem of Census data. In light of the issues with LEED-Annual at a territorial authority level, we now use APC data to indicate each territorial authority's share of regional income. The APC still underestimates incomes, but is a reliable indicator of relative incomes.

These changes have resulted in historical revisions of our household income and housing affordability estimates for many areas, however, we expect future revisions to be minimal. We always recommend that you download a complete time series if looking to compare changes over time.

Housing affordability

Housing affordability is measured by comparing average current house values from CoreLogic with Infometrics' estimate of annual average household income. Household incomes are a better measure for housing affordability than individual incomes as it reflects the true ability of a household to afford housing. We present a ratio of average house values to average household incomes. A higher ratio, therefore, suggests that average houses cost a greater multiple of typical incomes, which indicates lower housing affordability.

Housing register applicants

The housing register counts applicants who are not currently in public housing , who have been assessed as eligible for public housing and who are ready to be matched to a suitable property. This is often referred to as the public housing waiting list. Public housing was previously referred to as social housing.

Data is sourced from the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) and are shown as the average number of applicants. One applicant could represent a single person, couple or family looking for housing. Applicants could be living in emergency housing, unaffordable private rentals, or other insecure arrangements such as couch-surfing or rough-sleeping.

Jobseeker Support recipients

In July 2013 the New Zealand's welfare system changed to better recognise and support people's work potential. As part of this the Jobseekers Support benefit was introduced. This benefit is for people who can usually look or prepare for work but also includes people who can only work part-time or can't work at the moment, for example, because they have a health condition, injury or disability.

Data presented for the September 2013 quarter onwards is provided by the Ministry of Social Development (MSD). Data prior to September 2013 are Infometrics estimates based on re-grouping pre-July 2013 benefit categories to be consistent with the post-July 2013 benefit categories. The pre-July 2013 benefit categories used to estimate the number of Jobseekers Support recipients are: Unemployment Benefit and Unemployment Benefit Hardship; Unemployment Benefit Training and Unemployment Benefit Hardship Training; Sickness Benefit and Sickness Benefit Hardship; Domestic Purposes Benefit - Sole Parent (if youngest child is 14 or over); Women Alone and Widow's Benefit (without children or with children 14 or over)

NEET

NEET rates measure the proportion of young people aged 15-24 that are not in education, employment or training.

Infometrics estimates NEET rates by territorial authority. The following datasets are used in to estimate territorial authority NEET rates: Stats NZ's Household Labour Force Survey (HLFS), Census data, Jobseeker Support recipients by age, and transient secondary school student numbers.

Territorial authority estimates are benchmarked on annual average regional NEET rates from the HLFS, which at this level of disaggregation can be volatile from year to year. Large year-to-year changes are likely to be partially caused by sampling errors in the HLFS, rather than actual fundamental shifts in NEET rates. As the HLFS is the official measure of youth NEET in NZ, we benchmark our data to align with published NEET rates.

Other benefits

Other benefits include Sole Parent Support, Supported Living and other residual main benefits (excluding Jobseeker Support). Data is sourced from the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) and are shown as the average number of beneficiaries in each benefit category across each quarter for the current year. Further details of the benefit categories can be found on MSD's website.

Public housing stock

Public housing includes properties that are owned or leased by Kāinga Ora and other registered Community Housing Providers (CHPs) that can be tenanted by people who are eligible for public housing. The totals presented include both occupied and vacant houses. Public housing was previously referred to as social housing. This data is sourced from the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development.

Real estate listings

Real estate listings measure the number of new listings for residential dwellings on realestate.co.nz. It is based on the number of listings added each quarter or year.

Rental affordability

Rental affordability is measured by comparing average annualised rents from CoreLogic with Infometrics' estimate of annual average household income. Household incomes are a better measure for housing affordability than individual incomes as it reflects the true ability of a household to afford housing. We present a ratio of an annual ratio of average rent to average household incomes. A higher ratio, therefore, suggests that average rents cost a greater multiple of typical incomes, which indicates lower rental affordability.

Residential rents

Residential rents ($ per week) are sourced from monthly data provided by MBIE and averaged across each quarter or year using weighted geometric means. Rental data pertains to averages from data collected when bonds are lodged and does not control for specifications of the home (eg. size, number of bedrooms, age of home, etc).

School attendance

School attendance is presented as the percentage of school students who attend greater than 90% of their classes. This includes students at primary, intermediate and secondary schools. Some individual students have legitimate absences which bring their attendance to below 90%, but are still counted in this measure as the aim is to reflect overall trends in school attendance. This should not be taken as a proxy for truancy however.

The Ministry of Education provides attendance data on a school term basis. We have apportioned Terms 1, 2, 3 and 4 to the March, June, September and December quarters respectively.

Tourism expenditure

Tourism Expenditure is based on MBIE's monthly regional tourism estimates (MRTEs). The MRTEs are based on electronic card transaction data, calibrated to be consistent with national tourism expenditure data shown in Stats NZ's Tourism Satellite Account. This calibration takes into consideration the International Visitor Survey, so that differences in propensities to use cards versus cash for visitors from various countries of origin are accounted for.

Traffic flow

Traffic flow growth rates are calculated from the number of vehicles passing approximately 110 sites monitored by New Zealand Transport Agency. Each territorial authority has been mapped to one or more sites. Traffic flow is presented as an index, with a base of 100 in September 2012 for each area.

From October 2022 until September 2024, there was a substantial level of non-reporting of traffic sites, forcing Infometrics to interpolate a high proportion of traffic activity based on adjacent reporting sites, or reporting sites that usually had a similar trend to a non-reporting site. Data over this period should be treated with caution.

Unemployment rate

Regional level unemployment rates are sourced from Stats NZ's Household Labour Force Survey. Trends in the number of Jobseekers are used to break down regional unemployment rates to TA levels. The TA level unemployment rates are benchmarked on census following the release of each census. To reduce volatility the unemployment rate is presented as an average for the last four quarters.

Vehicle sales

Car and commercial vehicle sales data are sourced from New Zealand Transport Authority. Sales are based on new registrations which include the first time registration of new vehicles and used vehicles imported from overseas. Electric vehicle registrations are based on new sales of battery electric cars (excluding hybrid, plug-in hybrid or fuel cell cars).