

Overview of Manawatū

The Manawatu economy continues to feel the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, but not as keenly as the national economy. Provisional estimates from Infometrics show that the region's economic activity fell 1.5%pa in the September quarter, contributing to an annual decline of 1.8% in the September 2020 year compared with a 3.3% decline nationally.

Consumer spending has started to recover but has yet to make up for the loss of spending during lockdown. Marketview data shows that spending in the district rose 5.0%pa in the September 2020 quarter, but spending is down 2.6% in the September 2020 year. The region's traffic flows were down 8.1% in the September 2020 year, car registrations fell 17%, and commercial vehicle registrations dropped 20% - all of which adds to the view of an economy struggling to shrug off the hit it took in the June quarter.

House price inflation is being sustained by a bottleneck of sellers entering the market. House sales fell 5.6% in the September 2020 year. Although September's result is an improvement on June's. House prices remain elevated, rising 13%pa in the September 2020 quarter, easily outpacing nationwide house price growth of 8.0% but down from a recent high of 17% in the September 2019 quarter. Residential consents are strong, growing 12% in the September 2020 year on the back of a particularly strong June 2020 quarter. At \$193.7m in the September 2020 year, non-residential consents are at unprecedented levels.

The number of Jobseeker Support recipients in the region grew 16% in the September 2020 year, reflecting weakness in the local economy. In contrast, the unemployment rate continued its fall to 4.1% in the September 2020 year compared with the national average 4.4%. This is the first time since 2017 that the region's unemployment rate has been below the national rate. Nationally, the rising unemployment rate does not fully reflect job losses, with some unemployed choosing to not actively seek work, which places them in the 'not in the labour force category'. The same may be true for the Manawatu Region's unemployed.

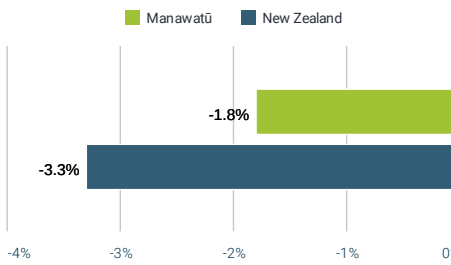
Indicator	Manawatū	New Zealand
Annual Average % change		
Gross domestic product (provisional)	-1.8 % ▼	-3.3 % ▼
Traffic flow	-8.1 % ▼	-10.5 % ▼
Health enrolments	1.6 % ▲	2.3 % ▲
Consumer spending	-2.6 % ▼	-2.7 % ▼
Residential consents	11.9 % ▲	3.5 % ▲
Non-residential consents	86.9 % ▲	-7.6 % ▼
House values *	12.6 % ▲	8 % ▲
House sales	-5.6 % ▼	1.1 % ▲
Tourism expenditure	-11.3 % ▼	-16.5 % ▼
Car registrations	-17.4 % ▼	-22.9 % ▼
Commercial vehicle registrations	-20.2 % ▼	-26.1 % ▼
Jobseeker Support recipients	15.6 % ▲	27.3 % ▲
Level		
Unemployment rate	4.1 % ▲	4.4 % ▲

* Annual percentage change (latest quarter compared to a year earlier)

Gross domestic product

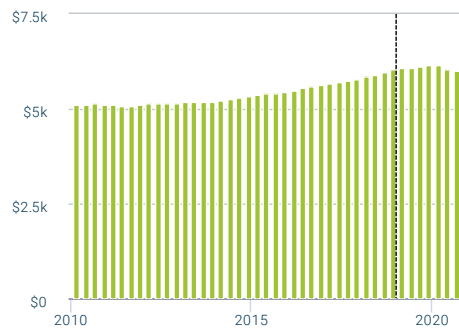
Gross domestic product growth (provisional)

Annual average % change September 2019 - September 2020



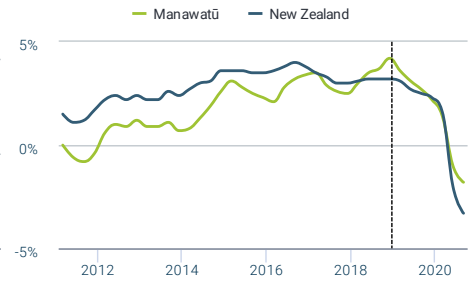
Gross domestic product (provisional, \$m)

Annual level, Manawatū



Gross domestic product growth (provisional)

Annual average % change



Highlights for Manawatū

- GDP (provisional) in Manawatū was down 1.8% for the year to September 2020 compared to a year earlier. Growth was higher than in New Zealand (-3.3%).
- GDP (provisional) was \$6,007 million in Manawatū for the year to September 2020 (2019 prices).
- Annual GDP growth in Manawatū peaked at 4.2% in the year to December 2018.

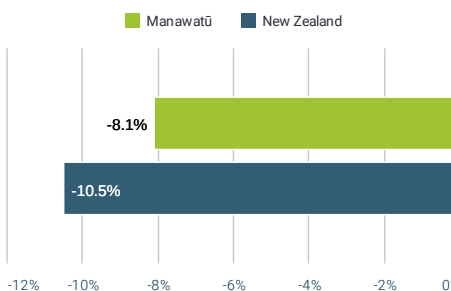
National overview

Economic activity in New Zealand expanded 11.8% in the September quarter, according to provisional estimates from Infometrics. After recording the sharpest quarterly fall in economic activity on record in the June quarter, September's rebound was always going to sound impressive. Although New Zealand is now technically out of a recession (for now), economic activity in September was still 3.3%pa below 2019 levels. Tourism-based sectors and others originally unable to operate drove the rebound in the September quarter after being severely restricted from operating during higher Alert Levels, although the Auckland restrictions in August took the shine off activity in the third quarter.

Traffic flow

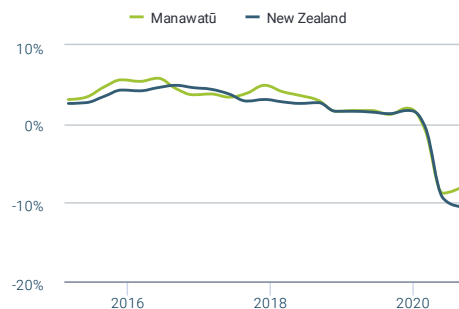
Annual change in traffic flows

Annual average % change September 2019 - September 2020



Traffic volume growth

Annual average % change



Highlights for Manawatū

- Traffic flows in Manawatū was decreased by -8.1% over the year to September 2020. This compares with a decrease of -10.5% in New Zealand.

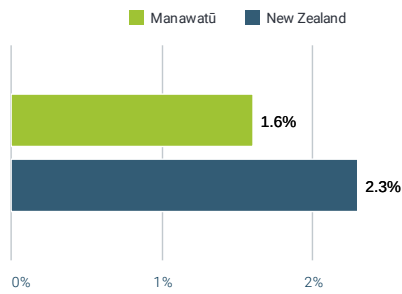
National overview

Vehicle movements in the September 2020 quarter recovered substantially from lower levels in June, as Kiwis got moving again. However, traffic activity was still 3.3%pa lower than a year earlier, with fewer tourists in the country and lower trade activity overall. The effects of the Auckland restrictions in August are clear, with Auckland and neighbouring Waikato recording sustained hits to traffic activity even as most of the country saw a sustained bounce-back from the Level 4 lockdown hit the previous quarter. Otago recorded an annual decline, partially stemming from the lack of tourist activity, while both Wellington and Canterbury also saw weak traffic activity as major urban centres remained harder hit.

Health enrolments

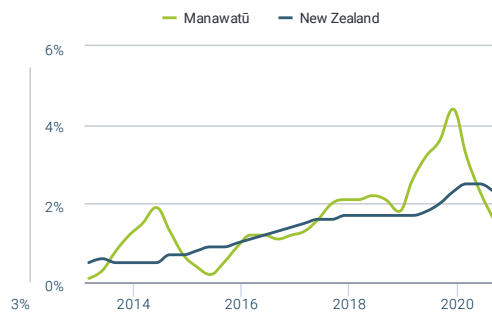
Annual change in health enrolments

Annual average % change September 2019 - September 2020



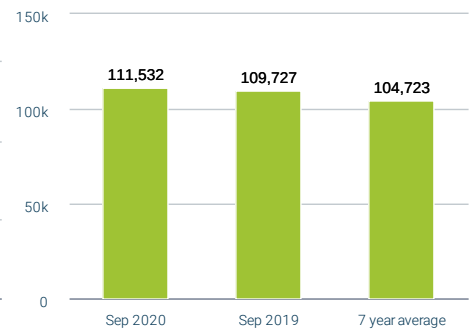
Health enrolments

Annual average % change



Health enrolments

Annual average, Manawātū



Highlights for Manawātū

- The number of people enrolled with a primary health organisation in Manawātū in the year to September 2020 increased by 1.6% compared with previous year. Growth was lower relative to New Zealand (2.3%).
- An average of 111,532 people were enrolled with primary healthcare providers in Manawātū in the 12 months ended September 2020. This compares with an average of 104,723 since the start of the series in 2014.

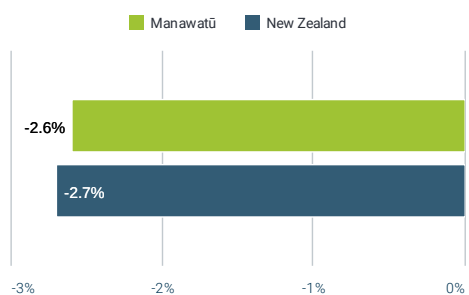
National overview

Population growth is slowing, with health enrolment figures rising at a slower pace of 2.3%pa over the 12 months to September 2020. Recent months have driven the deceleration in population growth, with total health enrolments in the September 2020 quarter up just 1.7%pa – the slowest since the end of 2018. The key driver of New Zealand’s population growth – migration – has collapsed. Although there are a steady stream of people moving through Managed Isolation and Quarantine (MIQ) facilities, migration estimates from Stats NZ point towards a collapse in inward migration since COVID-19 forced New Zealand to close its borders. Net migration over the last six months has been just 2,513, compared to nearly 30,000 for the same period in 2019.

Consumer spending

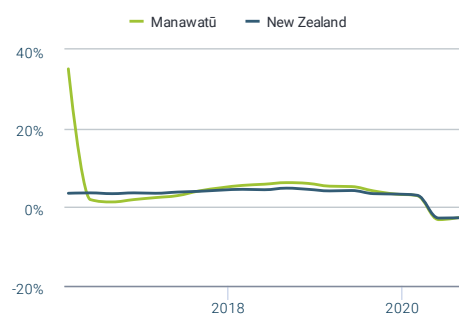
Growth in consumer spending

Annual average % change September 2019 - September 2020



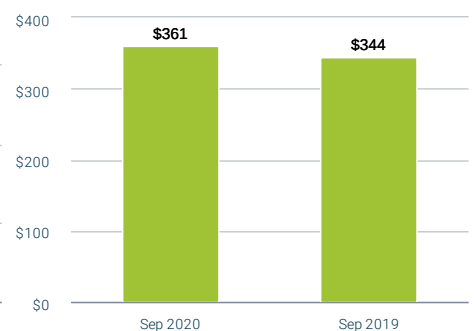
Consumer spending

Annual average % change



Consumer spending

Quarterly spending (\$m), Manawātū



Highlights for Manawātū

- Electronic card consumer spending in Manawātū as measured by Marketview, decreased by -2.6% over the year to September 2020 compared to the previous year. This compares with a decrease of -2.7% in New Zealand.

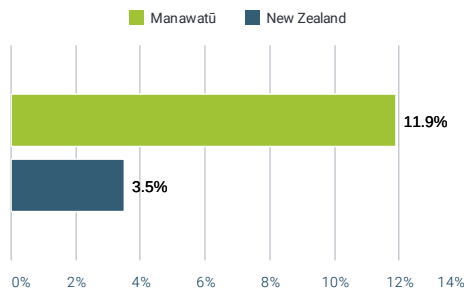
National overview

Consumer spending roared back into life after lockdown, growing 3.0%pa in the September 2020 quarter according to Marketview data. Declines in spending categories such as hospitality and accommodation were offset by growth in retail spending, particularly in the food and home improvement segments. Despite the impressive bounce back, considerable risk exists for spending to soften as the wage subsidy and COVID-19 Income Relief Payment benefit come to an end, and consumers feel the need to hold onto their wallets. The December quarter is expected to provide something of a litmus test for retailers – if spending levels hold up relatively well, it may relieve some of the pressure on employers to make further staff cuts in the new year.

Residential consents

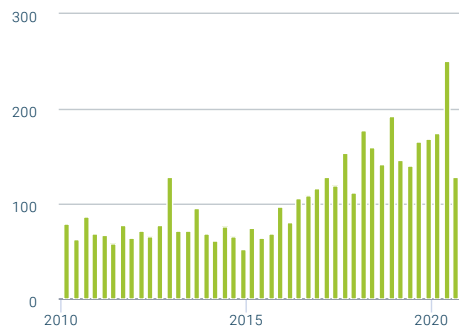
Growth in number of new dwelling consents

Annual average % change September 2019 - September 2020



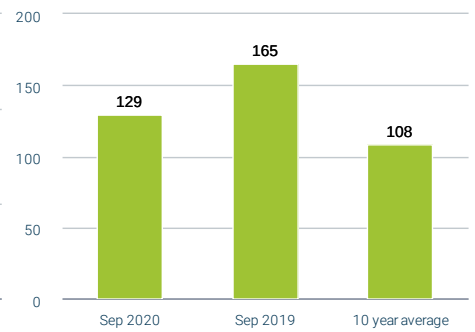
Residential consents

Quarterly number, Manawatū



Number of new dwelling consents

Quarterly number, Manawatū



Highlights for Manawatū

- A total of 129 new residential building consents were issued in Manawatū in the September 2020 quarter, compared with 165 in the same quarter last year.
- On an annual basis the number of consents in Manawatū increased by 11.9% compared with the same 12-month period a year ago. This compares with an increase of 3.5% in New Zealand over the same period.

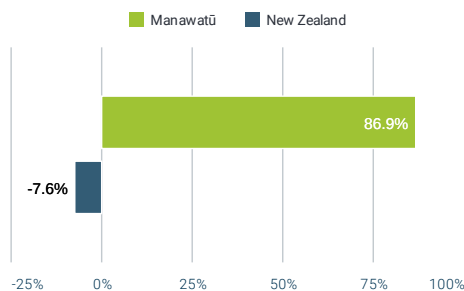
National overview

Residential building consents were up 3.5% over the year to September 2020. New townhouses were responsible for most of the growth over the year, up 34%, driven by an incredibly hot housing market and rapid house price growth. Apartment and retirement buildings were dragging the chain for the quarter. We expect the number of residential consents to weaken throughout next year. However, the heat in the housing market continues to provide upside risks, particularly as interest rates are set to be lower, and loan to value ratio restrictions are still a few months away at earliest.

Non-residential consents

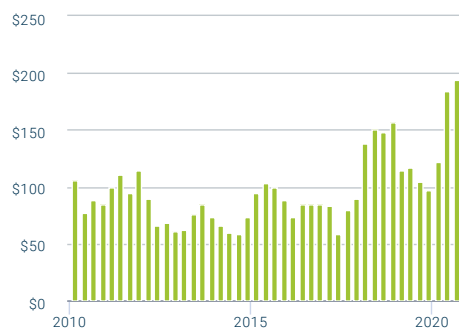
Growth in value of consents

Annual average % change September 2019 - September 2020



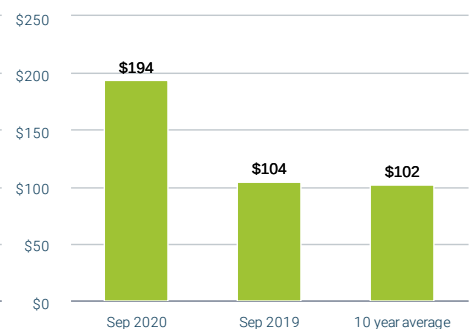
Non-residential consents, Manawatū

\$m, annual running total, Manawatū



Non-residential consents

Annual value (\$m), Manawatū



Highlights for Manawatū

- Non-residential building consents to the value of \$194 million were issued in Manawatū during the year to September 2020.
- The value of consents increased by 86.9% over the year to September 2020. By comparison the value of consents decreased by -7.6% in New Zealand over the same period.
- Over the last 10 years, consents in Manawatū reached a peak of \$151 million in the year to June 2018.

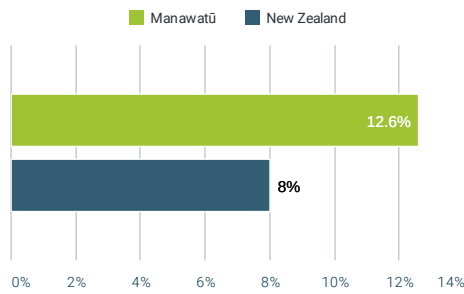
National overview

Non-residential building consents were strong in the September 2020 quarter, helping to offset some of the weakness earlier in the year, with consents now down 7.6% over the year to September 2020. New consents were responsible for all the growth in the last quarter, while the value of alterations and additions contracted. Social, cultural, and religious building consents have been particularly strong in recent months. We expect the government to open their purse strings to help support the COVID-19 recovery, and therefore expect strong public non-residential consents going forward. Conversely, we expect private consents to weaken over the next year as businesses struggle with a weaker economy going forward.

House values

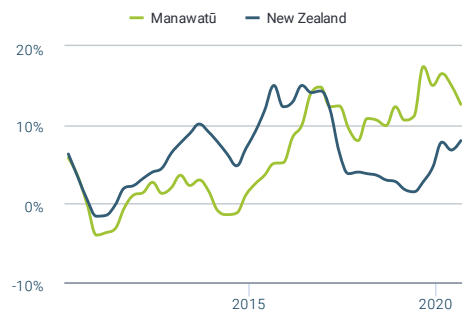
Annual change in house value

Annual % change in house value September 2019 - September 2020



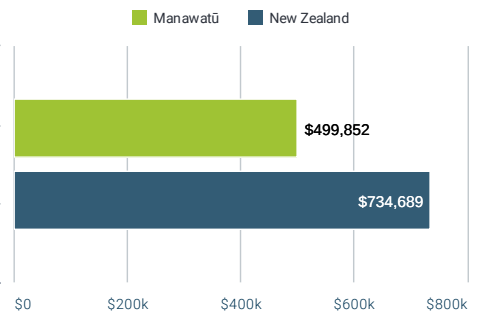
House value growth

Annual % change



Average current house value

Average 12 month to September 2020



Highlights for Manawatū

- The average current house value in Manawatū was up 12.6% in September 2020 compared with a year earlier. Growth outperformed relative to prices increased by 8% in New Zealand.
- The average current house value was \$499,852 in Manawatū over the September 2020 year. This compares with \$734,689 in New Zealand.

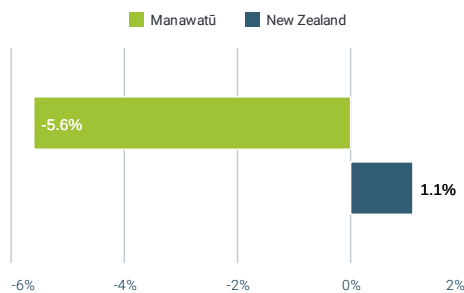
National overview

House prices have shot ahead in the September quarter, rising 8.0% on average over the year to September 2020. This incredibly strong growth has been driven by high net migration at the beginning of the pandemic, and incredibly low interest rates. We expect house prices to continue to grow through summer, as the Reserve Bank implements policy to lower interest rates further, while threatening the return of loan to value ratio restrictions. This strong growth in house prices is at a time where housing is already highly unaffordable to most first home buyers, and the economy battles its sharpest contraction on record.

House sales

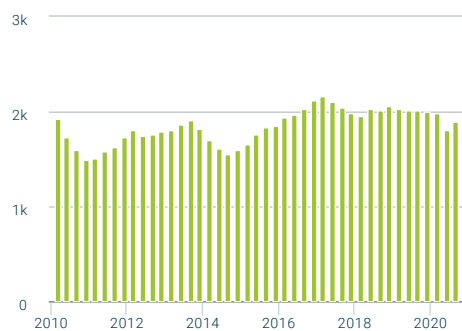
Annual change in house sales

Annual average % change September 2019 - September 2020



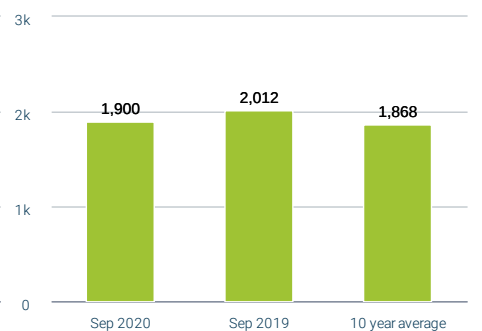
House sales

Annual number, Manawatū



House sales

Annual number, Manawatū



Highlights for Manawatū

- House sales in Manawatū in the year to September 2020 decreased by -5.6% compared with the previous year. Growth underperformed relative to sale increased by 1.1% in New Zealand.
- A total of 1,900 houses were sold in Manawatū in the 12 months ended September 2020. This compares with the ten year average of 1,868.

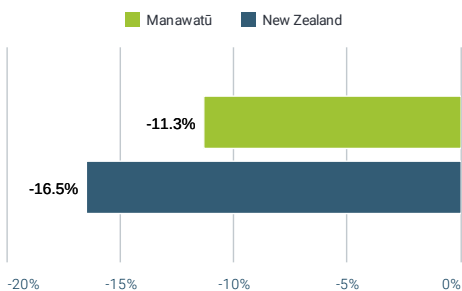
National overview

The number of houses sold in the year to September 2020 was sitting 1.1% higher than the same period a year earlier. Growth in sales has been particularly high through the last couple of months, as prices race ahead and interest rates fall lower, encouraging even more buyers into the market. We expect real estate activity to remain hot through summer, as buyers look to take advantage of record low interest rates before loan to value ratio restrictions return.

Tourism expenditure

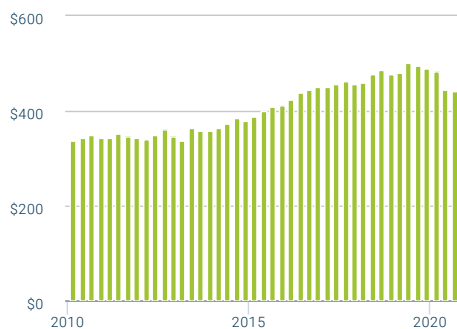
Tourism expenditure

Annual average % change September 2019 - September 2020



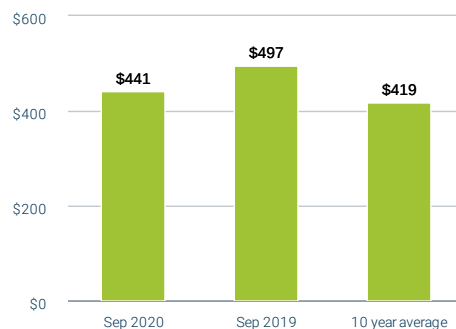
Tourism expenditure

Annual total, Manawatū (\$m)



Tourism expenditure

Annual total, Manawatū (\$m)



Highlights for Manawatū

- Total tourism expenditure in Manawatū decreased by -11.3% in the year to September 2020. This compares with a decrease of -16.5% in New Zealand.
- Total tourism expenditure was approximately \$441 million in Manawatū during the year to September 2020, which was down \$497 million a year ago.

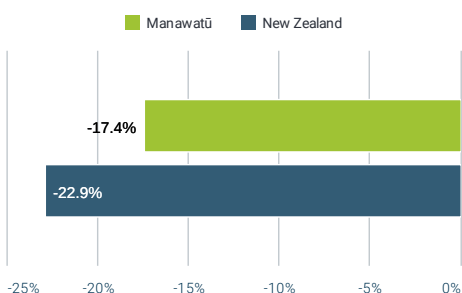
National overview

With New Zealand's borders remaining closed to all but essential travellers and returning citizens and residents, tourism expenditure continued to decline, falling 16.5% over the year to September 2020. This decline was despite relatively successful efforts to promote domestic tourism during the July school holidays. Auckland was the worst affected region, with visitor spending declining by 24% over the year to September 2020, partly as a result of the second lockdown in August. Other regions heavily affected include Otago (-21%) and the West Coast (-20%). Tourism spending figures are likely to continue this downward trend through the summer months, as the lack of international tourists becomes more acutely felt.

Car registrations

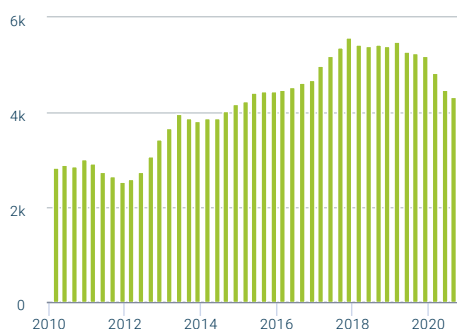
Car registrations

Annual average % change September 2019 - September 2020



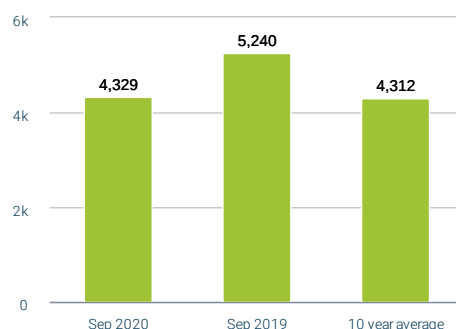
Car registrations

Annual number, Manawatū



Car registrations

Annual number, Manawatū



Highlights for Manawatū

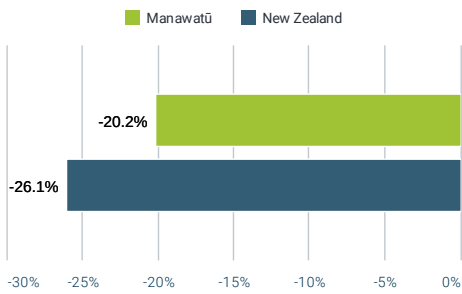
- The number of cars registered in Manawatū decreased by -17.4% in the year to September 2020 compared with the previous 12 months. Growth was higher than in New Zealand (-22.9%).
- A total of 4,329 cars were registered in Manawatū in the year to September 2020. This compares with the ten year average of 4,312.

National overview

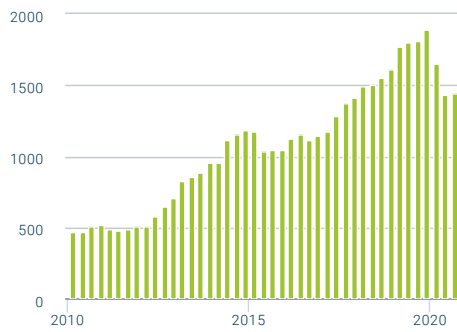
Car registrations recovered ground after lockdown, as pent up demand and a shift in spending patterns seeing a focus on vehicle sales. However, registrations in the September quarter were still 19% below registration levels last year. The momentum in car registrations is unlikely to continue, as job losses in the economy mount, the lack of international tourism reduces registrations of new rental cars, and potential constraints on the international supply of both new and used cars start to bite.

Commercial vehicle registrations

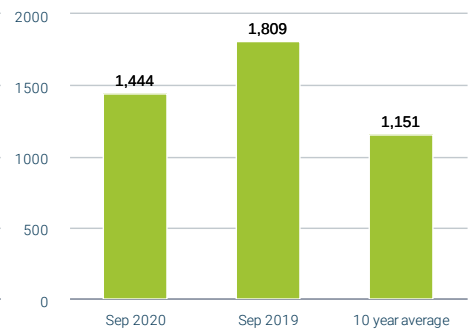
Commercial vehicle registrations
Annual average % change September 2019 - September 2020



Commercial vehicle registrations
Annual number, Manawatū



Commercial vehicle registrations
Annual number, Manawatū



Highlights for Manawatū

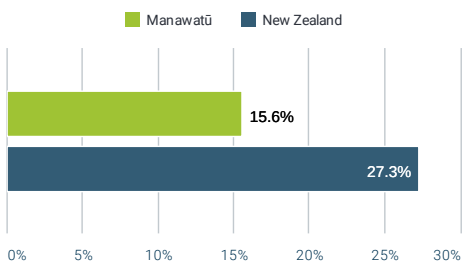
- The number of commercial vehicles registered in Manawatū decreased by -20.2% in the year to September 2020 compared with the previous 12 months. Growth was higher than in New Zealand (-26.1%).
- A total of 1,444 commercial vehicles were registered in Manawatū in the year to September 2020. This is higher than the ten year annual average of 1,151.

National overview

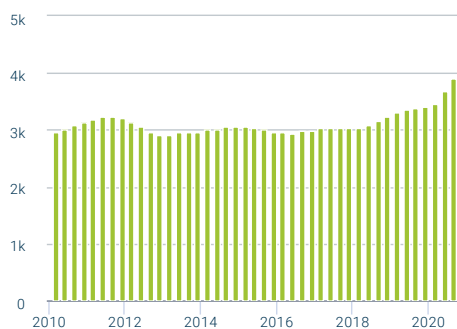
Commercial vehicle registrations have recovered some ground from their sharp fall experienced during lockdown earlier this year. This recovery points to continued resilience in the primary sector, where demand for New Zealand's food products remains high, and in construction, where sharp growth in house prices is stimulating residential construction activity. Despite this recovery, commercial registrations remain considerably weaker than pre-pandemic, with commercial vehicle registrations in the September quarter still sitting 13% lower than a year ago.

Jobseeker Support recipients

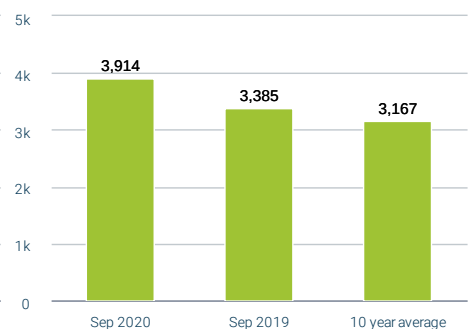
Annual change in Jobseeker Support recipients
Annual average % change September 2019 - September 2020



Jobseeker Support recipients
Annual average, Manawatū



Jobseeker Support recipients
Annual average, Manawatū



Highlights for Manawatū

- Jobseeker Support recipients in Manawatū in the year to September 2020 increased by 15.6% compared with previous year. Growth was lower relative to New Zealand (27.3%).
- An average of 3,914 people were receiving a Jobseeker Support benefit in Manawatū in the 12 months ended September 2020. This compares with an average of 3,167 since the start of the series in 2011.

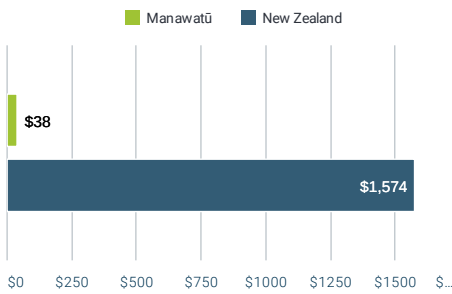
National overview

The number of Jobseeker Support has continued to rise, as job losses mounted across the economy. In total, over 204,000 New Zealanders are on a Jobseeker Support benefit, up over 61,000 from September 2019 – a 43%pa rise. There were also a considerable number of Kiwis on the COVID-19 Income Relief Payment (CIRP). In August, nearly 25,000 people were CIRP recipients, which provides a 12-week payment. With entitlements now ending, just under 12,000 CIRP recipients were recorded at the end of September 2020.

Dairy payout

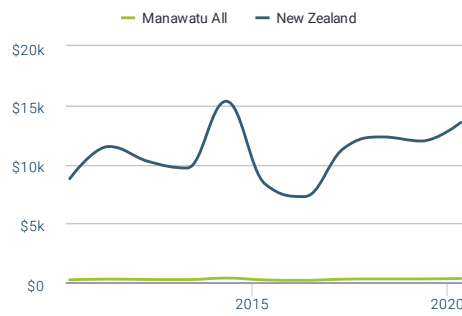
Total dairy payout

Change (\$m) between 2018/2019 and 2019/2020 seasons



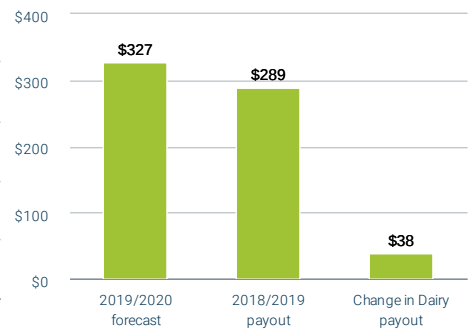
Total dairy payout

\$m each season, Manawatū



Total dairy payout

\$m each season, Manawatū



Highlights for Manawatū

- Manawatū total dairy payout for the 2018/2019 season is estimated to have been approximately \$289 million.
- Manawatū's dairy payout for the 2019/2020 season is expected to be approximately \$327, million \$38 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 \$11,964 million in the 2018/2019 season, and is expected to be \$1,574 million higher in the 2019/2020 season.

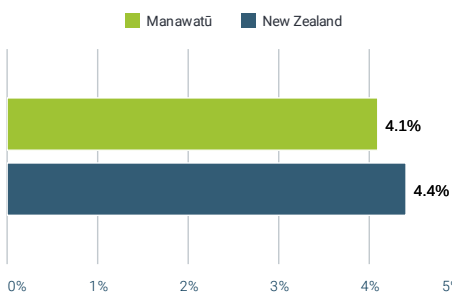
National overview

Primary sector performance remains robust, as New Zealand exports continue their solid run. Dairy export values since February remain up 3.8%pa, although activity weakened in September and through into October. Dairy won't escape the expected hit from COVID-19 but will weather the blow better. Fonterra has recently revised the midpoint milk price for the 2020/21 season to \$6.80/kgms off the back of stronger GlobalDairyTrade performances – a 40c lift from May's forecast. This rise in pay-out will bring an additional \$758m into the economy. However, the 2020/21 pay-out is lower than the pay-out last season, with a \$644m gap year-to-year.

Unemployment rate

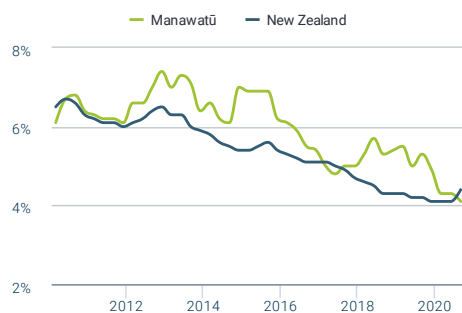
Unemployment rate

Annual average % change September 2019 - September 2020



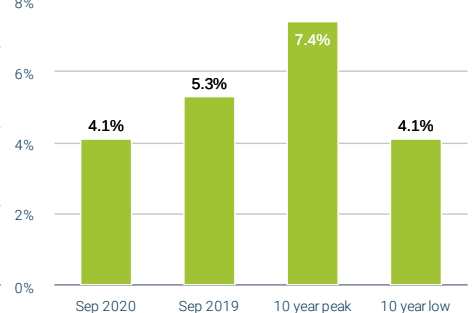
Unemployment rate

Annual average rate



Unemployment rate

Annual average, Manawatū



Highlights for Manawatū

- The annual average unemployment rate in Manawatū was 4.1% in September 2020 down from 5.3% a year earlier.
- The unemployment rate in Manawatū was lower than in New Zealand (4.4%) over the year to September 2020.
- Over the last ten years the unemployment rate reached a peak of 7.4% in December 2012.

National overview

The national unemployment rate rose to 5.3% (seasonally adjusted) in the September 2020 quarter, as job losses continued to mount. On average over the last 12 months, the unemployment rate nationally was 4.4%, highlighting just how fast the pandemic has shifted economic conditions. Our system focuses on annual averages to smooth out volatility at a regional level each quarter, but the sharp rise in unemployment has been felt across the country. The labour market hit from COVID-19 has been less severe than originally feared, with fewer job losses than forecast. The labour market hit is coming through various channels. Some workers are still employed but working fewer hours, whereas others are out of a job, but not looking for a new role yet. However, women, Māori, and young people continue to be hardest hit by the downturn, and we expect that unemployment will continue to rise as we head into 2021.

Technical Notes

Building Consents

Building consents data is sourced from Statistics New Zealand. 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.

Consumer Spending

The consumer spending data is sourced from Marketview. It measures total electronic card spending using spending through the Paymark network and adding to it an estimate of non-Paymark network spending using the pattern of BNZ card holder spending at non-Paymark retailers. For further breakdown of the data by storetype and other variables contact Marketview.

Gross Domestic Product

Gross Domestic Product is estimated by Infometrics. A top down approach breaks national industrial production (sourced from production based GDP measures published by Statistics New Zealand) is broken down to TA level by applying TA shares to the national total. Each TA's share of industry output is based on earnings data from LEED. GDP growth in recent quarters is based on a model which uses the various partial economic indicators presented in this report as inputs. Estimates of GDP for these most recent quarters are provisional until Infometrics updates its annual GDP series in the Regional Economic Profile at the beginning of each year. Gross domestic product is measured in 2019 dollar terms.

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. Changes to how the Ministry of Health recorded this data led to Infometrics revising our approach to health enrolment figures for the March 2019 Quarterly Economic Monitor onwards. Our new approach completely revises our timeseries of health enrolments, so care should be taken when comparing the March 2019 report with previously downloaded reports.

Previously, the data provided was only for those people whose addresses are able to be accurately recorded by the Ministry of Health. We have now switched to breaking down TA-level health enrolments based on trends in stated health enrolments by area, to ensure that the total number of enrolees published in the Monitor align with the national-level figures published by the Ministry of Health. A new system for classifying and recording health enrolment addresses from March 2019 onwards by the Ministry means significantly higher numbers of unallocated enrolees, resulting in the need to review our model.

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 value (dollar value) are sourced from QVNZ. The levels quoted in the report are average current values over the past 12 months. An average current value is the average (mean) value of all developed residential properties in the area based on the latest house value index from QVNZ. It is not an average or median sales price, as both of those figures only measure what happens to have sold in the period. These average current values are affected by the underlying value of houses (including those not on the market) and are quality adjusted based on the growth in each house's price between sales.

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)

Tourism Expenditure

Tourism expenditure data is sourced from the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment's (MBIE) Monthly Regional Tourism Estimates. These are estimated values for tourism spending that approximate values found in the International Visitor Survey (IVS) and Tourism Satellite Account (TSA), using modelling of a sample of electronic card spending throughout New Zealand from domestic and international accounts.

Traffic Flow

Traffic flow growth rates are calculated from the number of vehicles passing approximately 110 sites monitored by New Zealand Transport Agency. Each of the sites has been mapped to a territorial authority.

Unemployment Rate

Regional level unemployment rates are sourced from Statistics New Zealand'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.

Weekly Rents

Rents (\$ per week) are averaged across the quarter in question from monthly rental data sourced from MBIE. 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).