

Infrastructure, Transportation and Communication

Rail. Almost all major population centres in New Zealand are served by an extensive rail network of about 4 300 km (2 672 miles). Most services are provided by the New Zealand Railways Corporation, a state-owned company. Freight cars of all types are available for any kind of product, including bulk raw materials and containers. There is an efficient rail/ferry service linking the North and South islands.

Roads. In addition to the railway network, products can reach consumers over more than 93 000 km (57 789 miles) of highways. A large fleet of trucks and other commercial vehicles offer competition to the railways.

Air. Air New Zealand, the national airline, and Ansett New Zealand are the main domestic airlines linking the major centres. Third-level carriers complete the network.

Labour Force

The New Zealand labour force numbers some 1.6 million, with a generally high level of education and training. The labour force is highly unionized; approximately one-half of it is covered by collective agreements which fall within the purview of the Labour Relations Act (1987).

The average work week is 40 hours and most industries operate on a five-day week, Monday to Friday. All collective agreements provide for overtime bonuses. Annual vacations are normally three weeks in length and an additional week is traditionally given to long-service employees. A comprehensive system of social security has been built up over the years.

Foreigners working in New Zealand, with the exception of Australian citizens and citizens of other countries who have an Australian permanent resident's permit, require an entry permit and a work permit. Work permits are generally issued for a period of six months and are renewable for an additional six-month period. Permits for extended periods are, however, normally granted to applicants who possess special skills not generally available in New Zealand.