Employment: Employment rate

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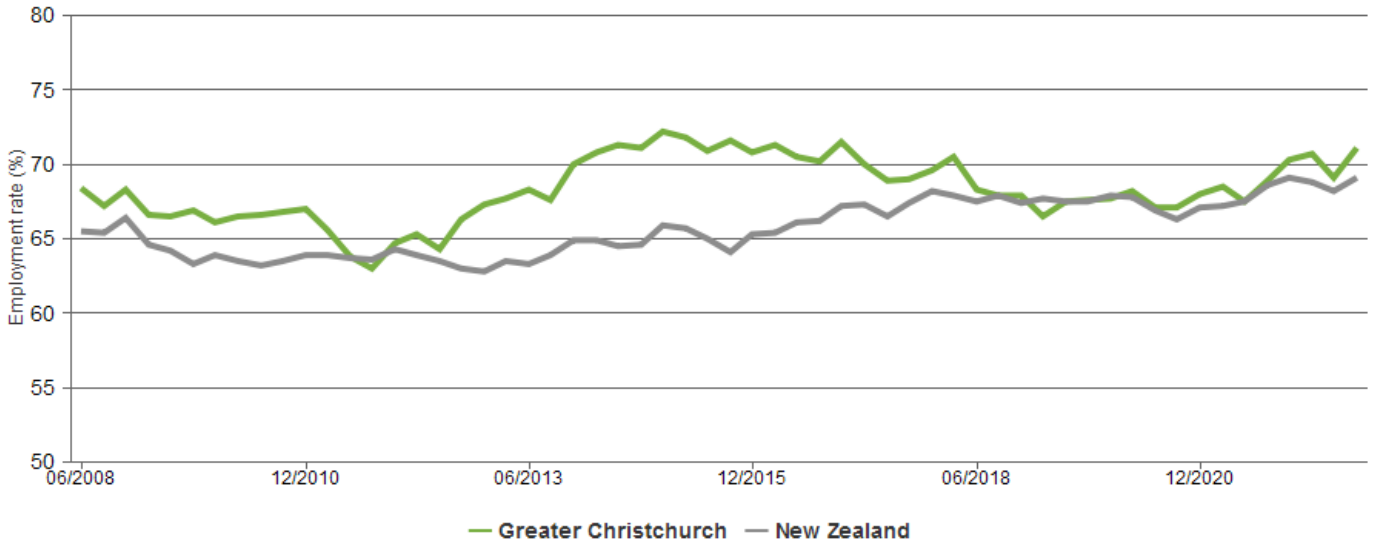
Employment improves physical health, mental health, and wellbeing [14]. The social effects of having a job are experienced at different levels. Having a job is important to an individual's wellbeing and to the others in the household, and to sustaining vibrant communities [11]. Employment boosts living standards, raises productivity, and fosters social cohesion [14].

The employment rate generally describes the overall employment-to-population ratio and gives a sense of how easily people can find paid employment. A high employment rate combined with a low unemployment rate is a sign of a robust job market. Several factors affect the employment rate, including the state of the economy, the availability of work, migration, and skill levels.

This broad measure does not, however, differentiate or illuminate the reasons why people are not working [15]. For example, they may be looking for work but unable to secure a job (unemployed), they may not want to be working at the moment, they may be retired, or they may be students in high school or university.

This indicator presents the (non-seasonally adjusted) employment rate for greater Christchurch and New Zealand. The employment rate is defined as the number employed (for more than an hour a week) as a proportion of the working-age population. The working-age population is the usually resident (expecting to live in New Zealand for more than 12 months), non-institutionalised, civilian population of New Zealand aged 15 years and over who live in private dwellings.

Figure 2.1: Employment rate (number employed for more than an hour a week as a proportion of the working-age population, non-seasonally adjusted), in greater Christchurch and New Zealand, 2008–2022

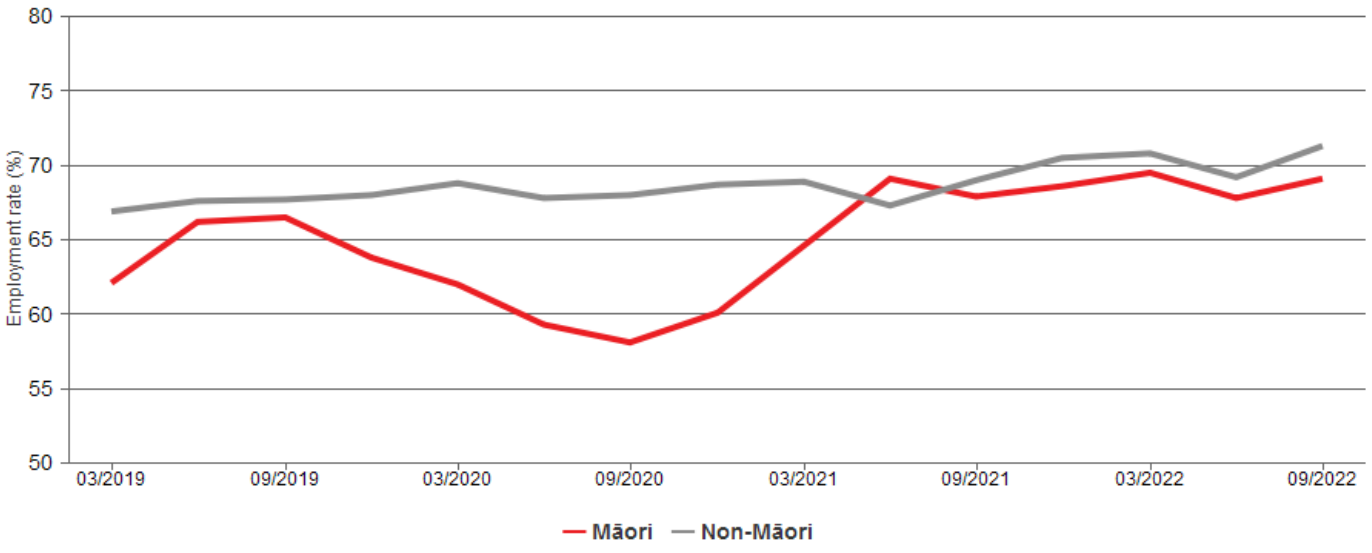


The figure shows a general pattern of an increasing employment rate (non-seasonally adjusted) for greater Christchurch and New Zealand, over the last ten (plus) years. Over the year to September 2022, the employment rate in greater Christchurch increased further to 71.1 percent; similar to New Zealand overall (69.1%, the highest rate for NZ since the series began in 1986) [16]. This increase at the national level is a result of employment growth exceeding growth in the working-age population over the year. The employment rate for greater Christchurch has outstripped the New Zealand rate since the beginning of the post-earthquake rebuild period (late 2012). The rate was steadily four or five percentage points above the national rate until June 2016, reflecting rebuild-related economic activity. However, since early 2016, the employment rates for greater Christchurch

and New Zealand have converged.

Breakdown by ethnicity

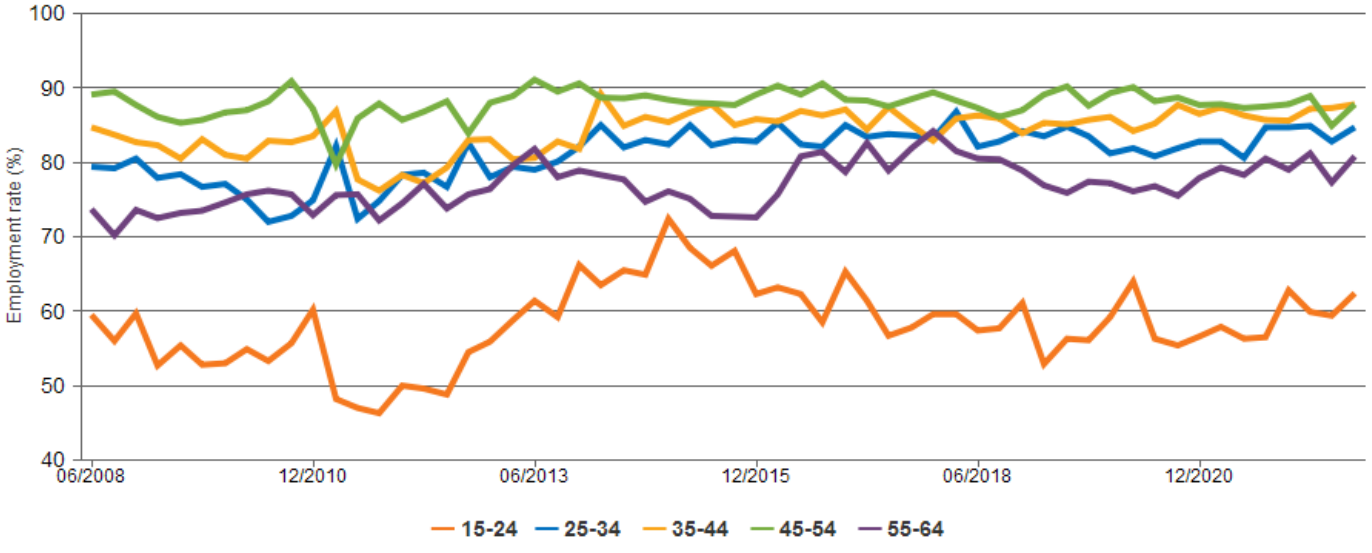
Figure 2.2: Employment rate (number employed for more than an hour a week as a proportion of the working-age population, non-seasonally adjusted), in greater Christchurch, by ethnicity, 2019–2022



The figure shows a general pattern of an increasing employment rate (non-seasonally adjusted) for Māori respondents in greater Christchurch, from September 2020 (58.1%) to September 2022 (69.1%). Seventy-one percent (71.3%) of non-Māori respondents in greater Christchurch were employed in September 2022.

Breakdown by age

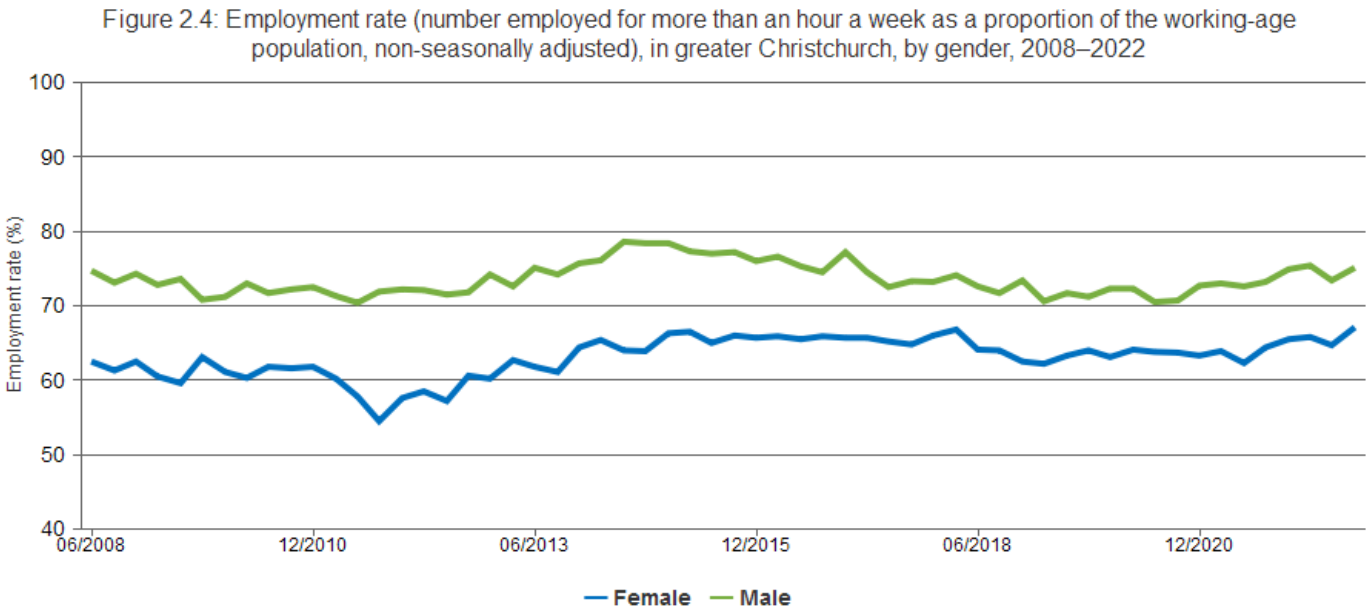
Figure 2.3: Employment rate (number employed for more than an hour a week as a proportion of the working-age population, non-seasonally adjusted), in greater Christchurch, by age group, 2008–2022



The figure shows a general pattern of convergence between the age groups, for non-seasonally adjusted employment rates in greater Christchurch over the last ten years. The employment rate for younger people (15–24 years) appears to have been influenced by earthquake and rebuild-related activities; declining substantially following the start of the Canterbury earthquake sequence, before rebounding during the years 2012 to 2015 (72.4%, December 2014), then flattening from 2016 to the most recent result of 62.4 percent.

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Breakdown by gender



The figure shows noticeable differences between the female and male employment rate (non-seasonally adjusted) in greater Christchurch, following the beginning of the Canterbury earthquake sequence (employment rate for females falling from 61.8 percent in December 2010 to 54.5 percent in March 2012). This suggests that a greater proportion of females were adversely affected by the impact of the earthquakes on employment, compared with males. However, the employment rate for females appears to have recovered during the subsequent years, and has remained above pre-earthquake levels since late 2014. The approximately 10 percentage points difference between the male and female employment rates in greater Christchurch (75.1% male; 67.1% female, September 2022) is consistent with male and female employment rates for New Zealand overall (data not shown).

Data Sources

Source: Statistics New Zealand.
Survey/data set: Household Labour Force Survey to September 2022. Custom data request for greater Christchurch region.
Source data frequency: Quarterly.

Metadata for this indicator is available at https://www.canterburywellbeing.org.nz/our-wellbeing/index-data

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