

New Zealand

Ethnicity in New Zealand

Group selection

The following ethnic groups are identified as being politically relevant in today's New Zealand: **Maori, New Zealanders, Pacific Islanders and Asians.**

The size of the minorities was updated based on the 1996 Census (³¹⁸⁴). It is important to note that according to 2006 Census Asians constitute 8.8% of population and are the fastest growing minority.

³¹⁸⁴ [Statistics New Zealand, 2006]

The relative share of New Zealand's Asian population has steadily and significantly increased since the 2006 census. From 2006 to 2013, the number of people who identified themselves with at least one Asian ethnicity has increased by 33%, and Asians now constitute approximately 12% of New Zealand's population (³¹⁸⁵). The increase to a population share slowly approaching the size of the Maori community (15% as of 2013 (³¹⁸⁶)) is however not accompanied by an explicit representation of interests of the Asian community in government, as is true for the Maori.

³¹⁸⁵ [Statistics New Zealand, 2013]

³¹⁸⁶ [Statistics New Zealand, 2013]

Power relations

Maori

The Maori are coded as powerless from 1946 -1972. In this period, although the office of Minister of Maori affairs already existed in order to give political advocacy to the interests of Maori, none of the Ministers was actually ethnic Maori. Thus, the EPR definition of "powerless" (elite representatives hold no political power at the national level without being explicitly discriminated against) suits when understanding representatives not solely as individuals representing ethnic interest, but moreover descending from a certain ethnicity themselves.

With Matiu Rata taking over the office of Minister of Maori affairs on December 8, 1972, 10 out of 13 Ministers up to 2013 have been ethnic Maori. In fact, from 1996 to 2013, all Ministers of Maori Affairs were Maori themselves, and thus Maori representatives along the lines of the EPR definition (³¹⁸⁷). For this reason, Maori have been coded as Junior Partners from 1973 to date.

³¹⁸⁷ [New Zealand Parliament, 2014]

In general, special representation of Maori in Parliament and the bureaucracy stretch well back into the pre- WWII period. There have been independent political parties representing Maori on and off since the 1930s, and most major mainstream political parties

have had Maori members appealing to the Maori electorate. A major change in Maori access to power came in 1977 with the establishment of the Waitangi Tribunal to investigate alleged violations of the Treaty of Waitangi (which had been signed between the British Crown and Maori chiefs in 1840). The establishment of the Tribunal elevated the Treaty to semi-constitutional status and led to large scale redress of Maori grievances, without changing executive power or regional autonomy of the Maori.

The Te Ture Whenua Maori Act of 1993 is a parliamentary statute and aims at regulating the rights to land between Maori and the Crown (³¹⁸⁸). In essence, it is a reassessment of principles entailed in the Treaty of Waitangi. In section 131(1) for example, the document spells out that “The Maori Land Court shall have jurisdiction to determine and declare, by a status order, the particular status of any parcel of land, whether or not that matter may involve a question of law.” (³¹⁸⁹) Since this involves primarily the exercise of legal autonomy, and seems to be a politicised, but not ultimately political matter, it is decided to not introduce a new status of regional autonomy as of 1993 in retrospect.

³¹⁸⁸ [New Zealand Legislature, 2013]

³¹⁸⁹ [New Zealand Legislature, 2013]

Another significant step occurred in 1996 - the first election held under the new mixed-member proportional electoral system established in 1993, which significantly increased the proportion of Maori MPs in Parliament from well below their share of the national population to slightly above it.

According to an article in The New Zealand Herald, the National party is planning to abolish Maori electorates (known as Maori seats, designated seats for Maori representatives within the New Zealand parliament) by the time the settlement issues surrounding the Treaty of Waitangi have been completed (³¹⁹⁰). No information on recent developments which confirm this push from 2008 could be found however.

³¹⁹⁰ [Tahana, 2014]

One year prior to this statement, the co-leader of the Maori party, Pita Sharples, suggested to introduce an additional electorate (seven existed at this point and still exist) for Maori living in Australia (³¹⁹¹). Resistance against Maori electorates has been present for decades, and critique about the basic concept of separate minority representation was officially criticized by a Royal Commission report dating back to 1986 (³¹⁹²). While one point of the report was about the fact that Maori representatives first and foremost really only represent Maori concerns, Maori themselves underline the importance of the practice: “Although they were not set up for this purpose, the Maori seats have nevertheless come to be regarded by Maori as an important concession to, and the principal expression of, their constitutional position under the Treaty of Waitangi. To many Maori, the seats are also a base for a continuing search for more appropriate constitutional and political forms through which Maori rights might be given effect” (³¹⁹³).

³¹⁹¹ [Television New Zealand, 2007]

³¹⁹² [Cook, 2008]

³¹⁹³ [Cook, 2008]

Pacific Islanders

The Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs, staffed largely by Pacific Islanders, was established in 1990 to provide policy advice on the development of Pacific Island people in NZ. The Ministry took over from a semi-autonomous unit within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which had been established after a number of years of advocacy by Pacific Island people. Thus, the year 1990 roughly marks the point at which Pacific Islanders became politically relevant in the New Zealand Government. Pacific Islanders remain objects of positive discrimination with reserved places in the parliament.

Asians

Asians are introduced as new group starting in 1996, when a party representing the Asian minority (mostly Indians and Chinese) was formed (³¹⁹⁴). Although the party existed only for a year it indicates rising interest of Asian minorities to influence politics.

³¹⁹⁴ [Wikipedia, 2014]

In 2008, Pansy Wong, who had been elected as first ethnic Asian MP in 1996, was appointed as the first Asian cabinet minister in the history of New Zealand (³¹⁹⁵). Although this does not mark a change in the status of political power of Asians in New Zealand, there seems to be an increased political involvement of Asians in New Zealand politics, albeit so far not organized along the lines of a political party or the like.

³¹⁹⁵ [The New Zealand Herald, 2008]

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Political status of ethnic groups in New Zealand

From 1946 until 1972

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
New Zealanders	0.865	DOMINANT
Maori	0.097	POWERLESS
Asians	0.044	IRRELEVANT
Pacific Islanders	0.038	IRRELEVANT

From 1973 until 1989

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
New Zealanders	0.865	SENIOR PARTNER
Maori	0.097	JUNIOR PARTNER
Asians	0.044	IRRELEVANT
Pacific Islanders	0.038	IRRELEVANT

From 1990 until 1995

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
New Zealanders	0.865	SENIOR PARTNER
Maori	0.097	JUNIOR PARTNER
Asians	0.044	IRRELEVANT
Pacific Islanders	0.038	JUNIOR PARTNER

From 1996 until 2017

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
New Zealanders	0.727	SENIOR PARTNER
Maori	0.132	JUNIOR PARTNER
Pacific Islanders	0.051	JUNIOR PARTNER
Asians	0.044	POWERLESS



Figure 639: Political status of ethnic groups in New Zealand during 1946-1972.



Figure 640: Political status of ethnic groups in New Zealand during 1973-1989.



Figure 641: Political status of ethnic groups in New Zealand during 1990-1995.



Geographical coverage of ethnic groups in New Zealand

From 1946 until 1989



Figure 643: Map of ethnic groups in New Zealand during 1946-1989.

	Group name	Area in km ²	Type
■	New Zealanders	264 057	Statewide
	Maori		Dispersed

Table 225: List of ethnic groups in New Zealand during 1946-1989.

From 1990 until 1995



Figure 644: Map of ethnic groups in New Zealand during 1990-1995.

Group name	Area in km ²	Type
■ New Zealanders	264 057	Statewide
Pacific Islanders		Urban
Maori		Dispersed

Table 226: List of ethnic groups in New Zealand during 1990-1995.

From 1996 until 2017



Figure 645: Map of ethnic groups in New Zealand during 1996-2017.

Group name	Area in km ²	Type
■ New Zealanders	264 057	Statewide
Asians		Urban
Pacific Islanders		Urban
Maori		Dispersed

Table 227: List of ethnic groups in New Zealand during 1996-2017.