

Overview of Lower Hutt City

The Lower Hutt City economy contracted 11%pa in the June 2020 quarter, resulting in the provisional Infometrics GDP estimate for the city falling 0.7% in the June 2020 year - the first time the city's economy has contracted since 2014. Lower Hutt's result compares reasonably well with a 2.1% fall in GDP in the June 2020 year nationally, and a 1.5% fall across the Wellington region as a whole.

Electronic card spending on retail purchases fell 15% in the June quarter according to Marketview data, resulting in an annual fall of 0.7% in the June 2020 year as lockdown constrained consumers' ability to spend on the high street.

The contraction in the city's economy has resulted in a rise of 8.7% in the number of Jobseeker Support recipients to just over 4,300 in the June 2020 year – the highest since our series began in 2010. However, the rise of 8.7% is lower than the 19% rise nationally and reflects the fact that Lower Hutt City's economy is reasonably sheltered from the worst effects of COVID-19 on sectors such as tourism and international education.

The construction sector is also well positioned for the coming year if recent consent numbers translate into building work. Residential consents grew 9.8% in the June 2020 year on the back of very strong September 2019 and December 2019 quarters, and non-residential consents rose 70% in the June 2020 year.

House sales fell 15% in the June 2020 year, which reflects softness in the housing market nationwide. However, with fewer properties on the market, house price inflation remains elevated with prices growing 14%pa in the June 2020 quarter.

Indicator	Lower Hutt City	Wellington Region	New Zealand
<i>Annual average % change</i>			
Gross domestic product	↓ -0.7%	↓ -1.5%	↓ -2.1%
Traffic flow	↓ -10.1%	↓ -11.7%	↓ -9.4%
Health Enrolments	↑ 2.2%	↑ 1.7%	↑ 2.5%
Consumer spending	↓ -0.7%	↓ -3.0%	↓ -2.8%
Residential consents	↑ 9.8%	↑ 19.5%	↑ 8.1%
Non-residential consents	↑ 69.5%	↑ 26.6%	↓ -8.8%
House prices*	↑ 13.7%	↑ 10.9%	↑ 7.5%
House sales	↓ -14.6%	↓ -11.9%	↓ -6.0%
Tourism expenditure	↓ -7.3%	↓ -14.4%	↓ -12.3%
Car registrations	↓ -16.1%	↓ -12.8%	↓ -19.3%
Commercial vehicle registrations	↓ -21.4%	↓ -21.4%	↓ -24.6%
Jobseeker Support recipients	↑ 8.7%	↑ 12.5%	↑ 19.0%
<i>Level</i>			
Unemployment rate	4.0%	3.9%	4.1%

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

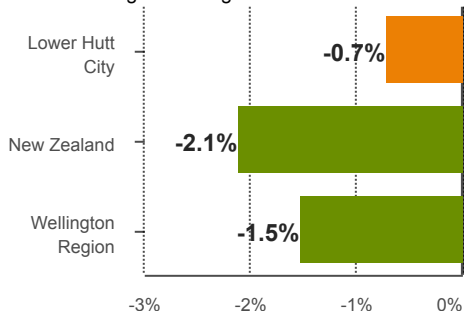
Overview of national economy

The New Zealand economy took a severe hit during the June 2020 quarter, as the COVID-19 pandemic saw the country locked down at home for around four weeks at Alert Level 4, before a rapid move down the Alert Levels to Level 1 in early June. The economy has endured a dramatic shift in focus, from life support at Level 4 to an adrenaline rush at Level 1. Yet the immediate economic ramifications are clear to see – economic activity has fallen, nearly 50,000 Kiwis lost their jobs, businesses struggled to cope with lower earnings, and incomes were reduced. The June quarter likely represents the largest single hit to the economy, but the economic scarring and restructuring will continue to occur over the coming years. New Zealand is not out of the woods yet.

Gross domestic product (provisional)

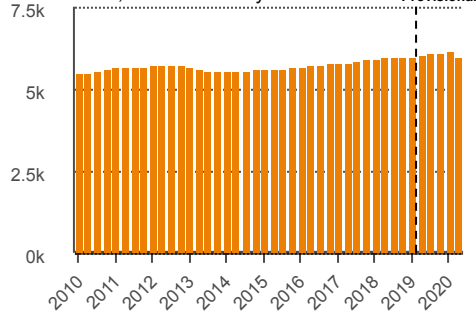
Gross domestic product growth (provisional)

Annual average % change Jun 19 - Jun 20



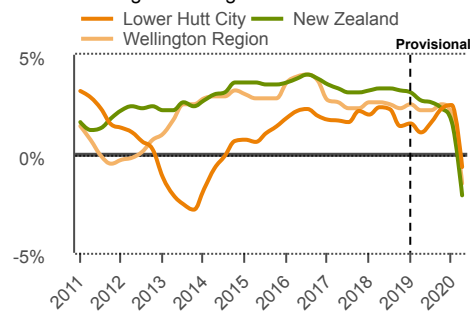
Gross domestic product (provisional, \$m)

Annual level, Lower Hutt City



Gross domestic product growth (provisional)

Annual average % change



Highlights for Lower Hutt City

- GDP (provisional) in Lower Hutt City was down 0.7% for the year to June 2020 compared to a year earlier. Growth was higher than in New Zealand (-2.1%) and higher than in Wellington Region (-1.5%).
- GDP (provisional) was \$5,975 million in Lower Hutt City for the year to June 2020 (2019 prices).
- Annual GDP growth in Lower Hutt City peaked at 3.2% in the year to March 2011.

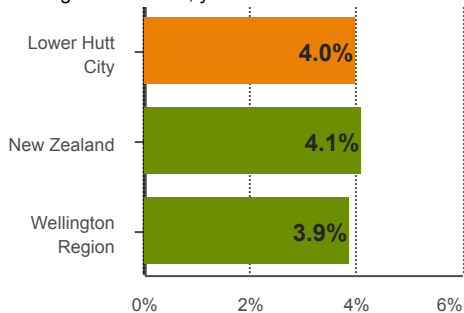
National overview

Infometrics estimates that economic activity across New Zealand fell 12.6%pa in the June quarter, with year-end economic growth sitting at -2.1%pa. A substantial proportion of the economy was closed or operating at a significantly reduced level, with transport, accommodation, hospitality, retail, tourism, and construction activity taking the greatest hit. This steep fall also accounts for the rapid evolution of the economy back down the Alert Levels, with pent-up demand in the economy, and a rebuilding of economic momentum, helping to temper the four-and-a-half-week collapse in economic activity. Primary sector operations continued on broadly unchanged, helping to keep a base level of economic momentum.

Unemployment rate

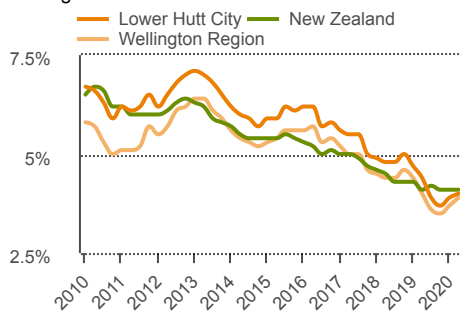
Unemployment rate

Average annual rate, year to June 2020



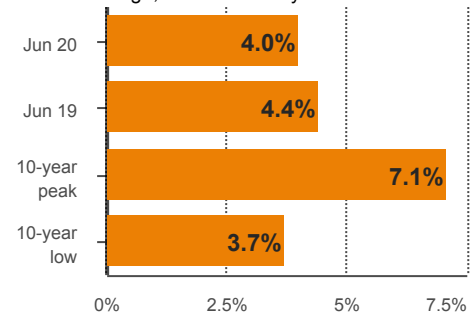
Unemployment rate

Average annual rate



Unemployment rate

Annual average, Lower Hutt City



Highlights for Lower Hutt City

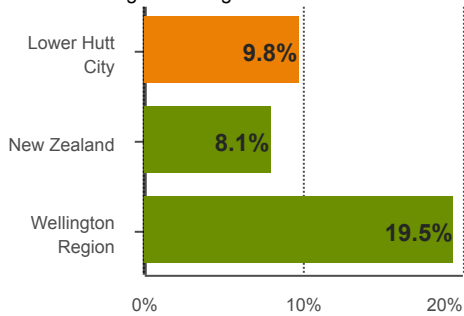
- The annual average unemployment rate in Lower Hutt City was 4.0% in June 2020, down from 4.4% a year earlier.
- The unemployment rate in Lower Hutt City was lower than in New Zealand, where the unemployment rate averaged 4.1% over the year to June 2020.
- Over the last ten years the unemployment rate reached a peak of 7.1% in March 2013;

National overview

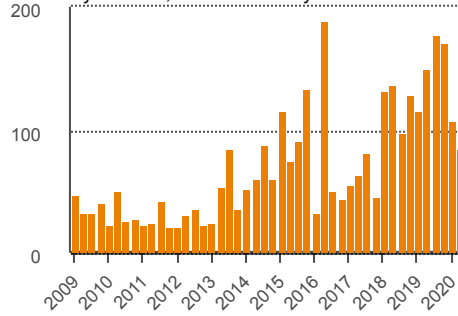
The June 2020 Household Labour Force Survey showed an incredulous drop in the unemployment rate to 4.0%, although this outcome is driven by definitions rather than a surprisingly rosier labour market. With many unable to be “actively” looking for work due to the Alert Level restrictions, those who lost jobs were counted in the 3.1% rise in the “Not in Labour Force” category as they didn’t fit the definition of unemployed. The underutilisation rate, a broader measure of spare capacity in the labour market, also rose from 10.4% to 12.0%. The weekly unemployment rate increased to 6.2% at the end of the quarter.

Residential consents

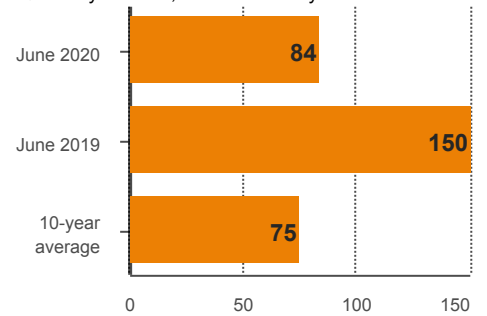
Growth in no. of new dwelling consents
Annual average % change Jun 19 - Jun 20



Residential consents
Quarterly number, Lower Hutt City



Number of new dwelling consents
Quarterly number, Lower Hutt City



Highlights for Lower Hutt City

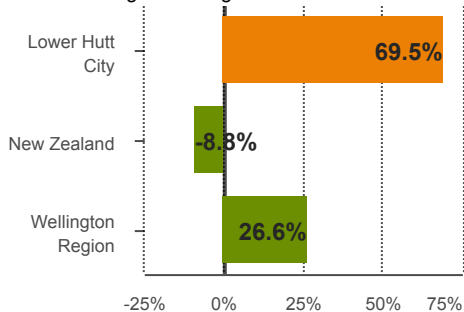
- A total of 84 new residential building consents were issued in Lower Hutt City in the June 2020 quarter, compared with 150 in the same quarter last year.
- On an annual basis the number of consents in Lower Hutt City increased by 9.8% compared with the same 12-month period a year ago. The number of consents in New Zealand increased by 8.1% over the same period.

National overview

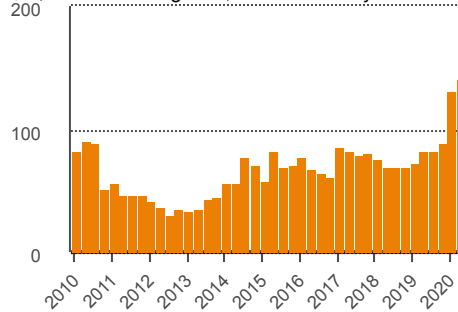
Consents for new dwellings grew by 8.1% over the year to June 2020. Despite soft consent issuance through April due to the Level 4 lockdown, a strong rebound in May and June meant that consents for the June 2020 quarter were unchanged from June 2019. This strong level of consenting will keep builders busy for the rest of the year, but consents are likely to ease as we approach Christmas, leading to soft workloads in 2021.

Non-residential consents

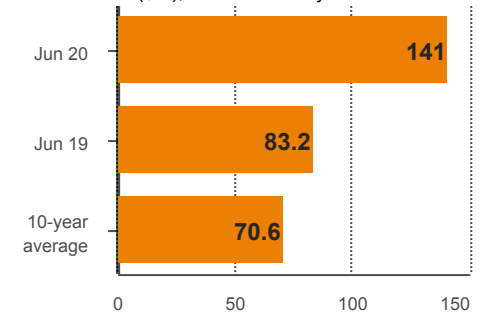
Growth in value of consents
Annual average % change Jun 19 - Jun 20



Non-residential consents, Lower Hutt City
\$m, annual running total, Lower Hutt City



Value of non-residential consents
Annual value (\$m), Lower Hutt City



Highlights for Lower Hutt City

- Non-residential building consents to the value of \$141 million were issued in Lower Hutt City during the year to June 2020.
- The value of consents increased by 69.5% over the year to June 2020. By comparison the value of consents in New Zealand decreased by -8.8% over the same period.
- Over the last 10 years, consents in Lower Hutt City reached a peak of \$141 million in the year to June 2020.

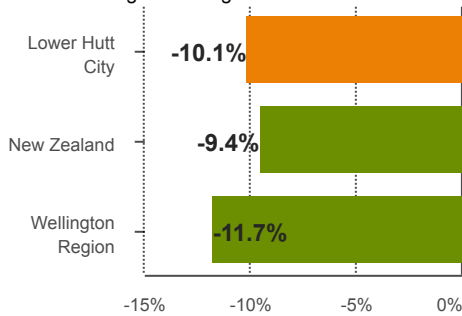
National overview

Non-residential building consents eased by 8.8% over the year to June 2020, following a peak in June 2019. Consents dipped through April and May due to the Level 4 lockdown but recovered strongly in the month of June. The June resurgence likely represents a catchup for projects which were delayed due to lockdown. With weak growth prospects across the economy, consents are likely to ease in coming quarters.

Traffic flow

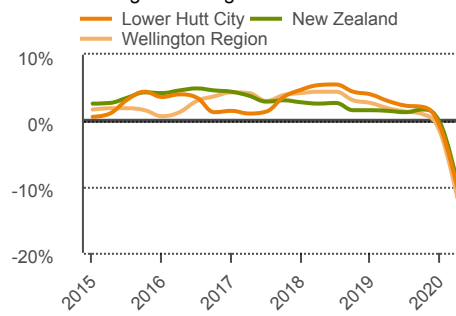
Annual change in traffic flows

Annual average % change Jun 19 - Jun 20



Traffic volume growth

Annual average % change



Highlights for Lower Hutt City

- Traffic flows in Lower Hutt City decreased by -10.1% over the year to June 2020. This compares with an decrease of -9.4% in New Zealand.

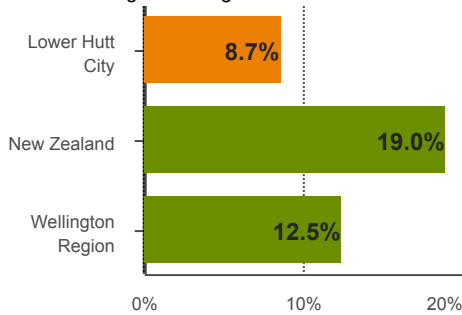
National overview

Traffic flows across New Zealand hit the brakes in the June quarter, with usually bustling roads left deserted at the start of the quarter as the lockdown was enforced. Freight continued to move across the country, but at reduced levels, with only essential goods ordered and delivered. Transport activity recovered as New Zealand moved down the Alert Levels, with Kiwi road trips bolstering domestic tourism activity, and a dash to online retailing seeing package delivery delays. Traffic levels during Level 4 dropped to 15% of usual in the depths of Level 4, before increasing to just over 80% towards the end of the quarter.

Jobseekers

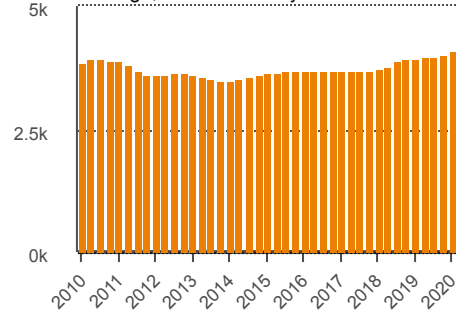
Annual change in Jobseekers

Annual average % change Jun 19 - Jun 20



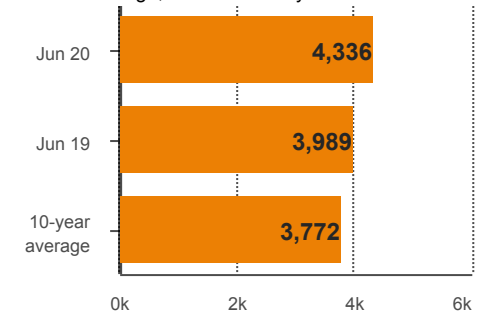
Jobseekers

Annual average, Lower Hutt City



Jobseekers

Annual average, Lower Hutt City



Highlights for Lower Hutt City

- Working age Jobseeker Support recipients in Lower Hutt City in the year to June 2020 increased by 8.7% compared with the previous year. Growth was lower relative to New Zealand, where the number of Jobseeker Support recipients increased by 19.0%.
- An average of 4,336 people were receiving a Jobseeker Support benefit in Lower Hutt City in the 12 months ended June 2020. This compares with an average of 3,772 since the start of the series in 2010.

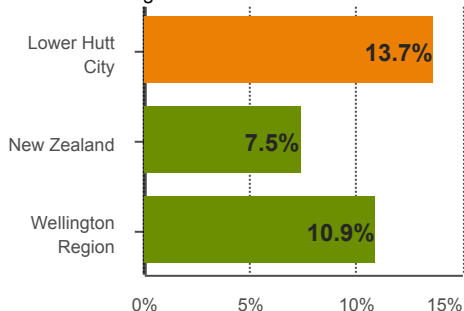
National overview

In total, nearly 50,000 New Zealanders were added to government unemployment support over the June 2020 quarter, taking the total number of people supported to over 200,000. On average over the last year, Jobseeker Support recipients are up 19%pa. This rise doesn't include the COVID-19 Income Relief Payment which was supporting nearly 11,000 more people at the end of June 2020. This rise in government support of Jobseeker Support recipients occurred even as the government spent over \$12.3b to support 1.7m workers (61% of the labour force) through the Wage Subsidy and extension.

House prices

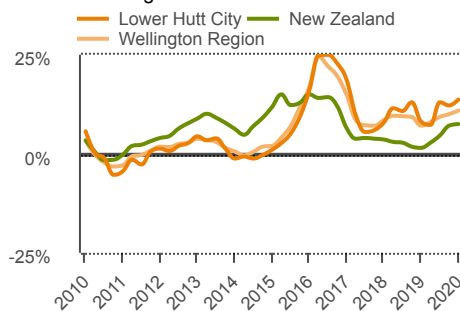
Annual change in house prices

Annual % change Jun 19 - Jun 20



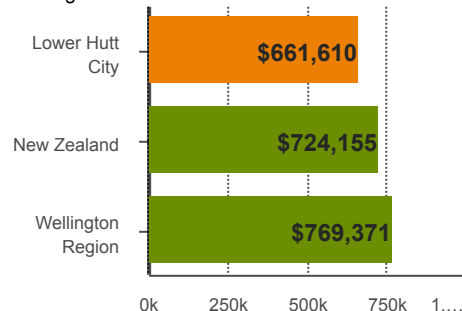
House price growth

Annual % change



Average current house value

Average for 12 months to Jun 2020



Highlights for Lower Hutt City

- The average current house value in Lower Hutt City was up 13.7% in June 2020 compared with a year earlier. Growth outperformed relative to New Zealand, where prices increased by 7.5%.
- The average current house value was \$661,610 in Lower Hutt City over the June 2020 year. This compares with \$724,155 in New Zealand.

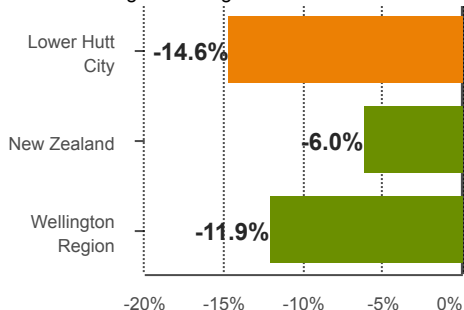
National overview

House values have grown strongly in the year to June 2020, up by 7.5% compared to the year to June 2019. Interest rate cuts throughout 2019 spurred on late-cycle growth in the property market, particularly in Auckland. Values have bounced back relatively strongly post-lockdown, but the impending removal of the wage subsidy and mortgage holiday schemes will likely bring softness to the housing market.

House sales

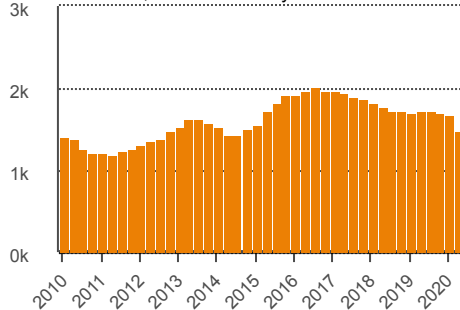
Annual change in house sales

Annual average % change Jun 19 - Jun 20



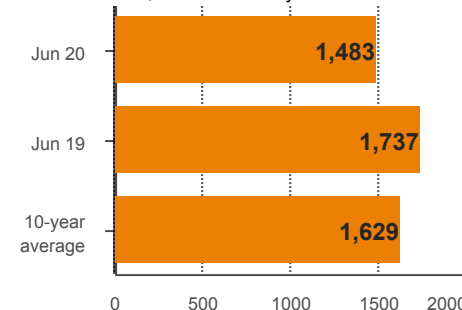
House sales

Annual number, Lower Hutt City



House sales

Annual number, Lower Hutt City



Highlights for Lower Hutt City

- House sales in Lower Hutt City in the year to June 2020 decreased by 14.6% compared with the previous year. Growth underperformed relative to New Zealand, where sales decreased by 6.0%.
- A total of 1,483 houses were sold in Lower Hutt City in the 12 months ended June 2020. This compares with the ten year average of 1,629.

National overview

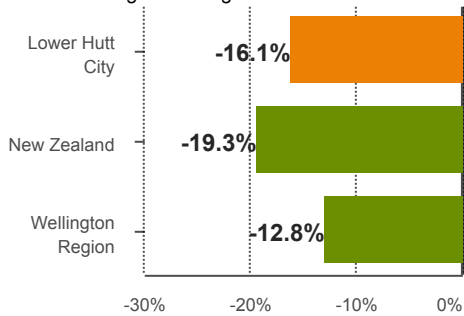
House sale volumes fell sharply in the June quarter, as the Level 4 lockdown period impeded sales taking place. The weak June quarter led to a 6.0% decline in sales over the year to June 2020.

Surprisingly strong house prices at present may encourage more listings to come to market in the coming months but with an overall deterioration in economic conditions, households are more likely to stay put, keeping sales volumes low.

Car registrations

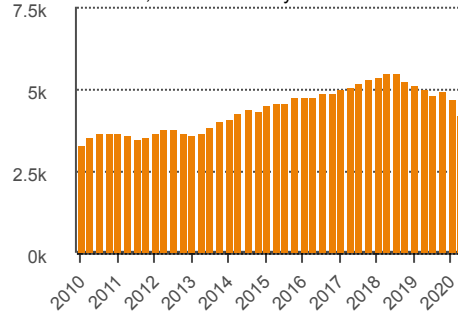
Car registrations

Annual average % change Jun 19 - Jun 20



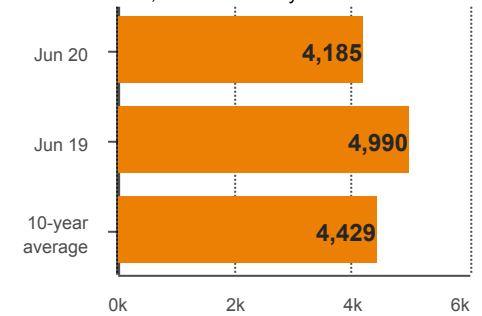
Car registrations

Annual number, Lower Hutt City



Car registrations

Annual number, Lower Hutt City



Highlights for Lower Hutt City

- The number of cars registered in Lower Hutt City decreased by -16.1% in the year to June 2020 compared with the previous 12 months. Growth was higher than in New Zealand, where car sales decreased by -19.3%.
- A total of 4,185 cars were registered in Lower Hutt City in the year to June 2020. This compares with the ten year average of 4,429.

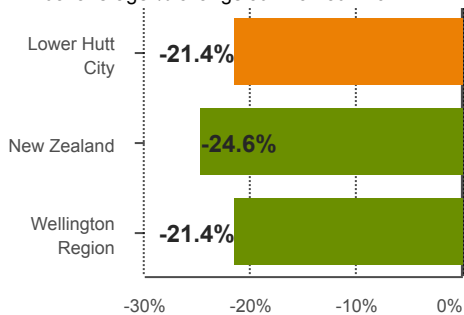
National overview

The decline in car registrations has accelerated, falling 43%pa in the June 2020 quarter, which contributed to a 19% fall in the June 2019 year. Car registrations have been on a downward path since the middle of last year, but constraints on trading during lockdown were a major contributor to the June quarter's result, with registration numbers toppling across the board in both new and used, large and small cars. There are signs that money saved by households during lockdown is being spent on new cars, but this spending may only be temporary. As job losses begin to accumulate, consumers' and businesses' willingness to make major purchases could well dry up. The additional impact of New Zealand's closed borders on demand for rental cars from the tourism industry and the outlook for the car market is far from rosy.

Commercial vehicle registrations

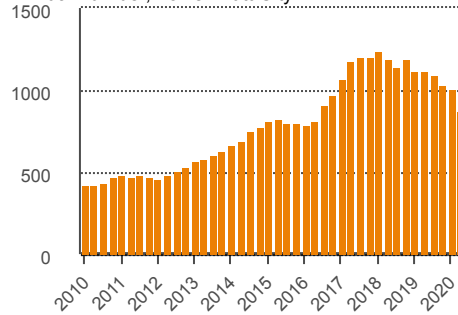
Commercial vehicle registrations

Annual average % change Jun 19 - Jun 20



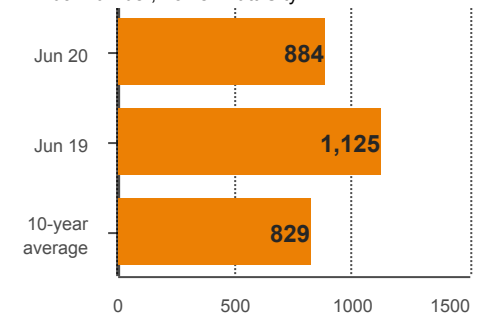
Commercial vehicle registrations

Annual number, Lower Hutt City



Commercial vehicle registrations

Annual number, Lower Hutt City



Highlights for Lower Hutt City

- The number of commercial vehicles registered in Lower Hutt City decreased by -21.4% in the year to June 2020 compared with the previous 12 months. Growth was higher than in New Zealand, where commercial vehicle sales decreased by -24.6%.
- A total of 884 commercial vehicles were registered in Lower Hutt City in the year to June 2020. This is higher than the ten year annual average of 829.

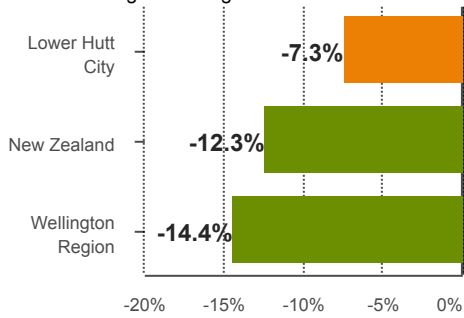
National overview

Commercial vehicle registrations fell 48%pa in the June 2020 quarter, which contributed to a 25% fall in the June 2020 year. Commercial vehicle registrations have been weakening since the middle of last year but, at just over 9,000 registrations, the June 2020 quarter result was comparable to levels last seen in the aftermath of the GFC. The June 2020 quarter saw falls in light, medium and very-heavy commercials. However, there are early signs of a recovery in light commercials on the back of a primary sector that is seeing continued demand for New Zealand's food exports, a better than expected pipeline of construction work in the near-term, and households' willingness to spend money saved during lockdown.

Tourism Spending

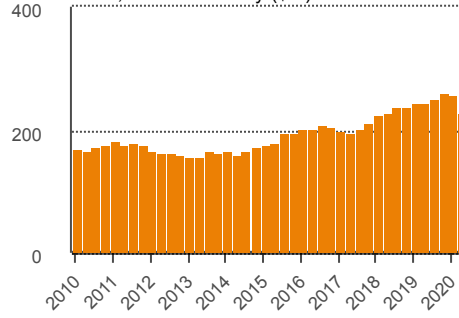
Tourism expenditure

Annual average % change Jun 19 - Jun 20



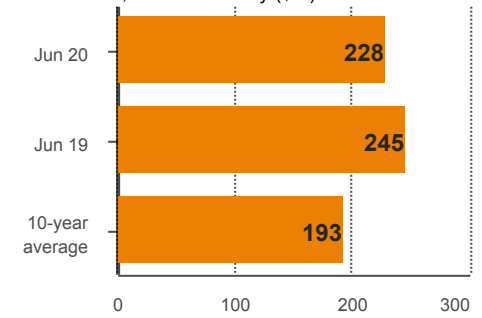
Tourism expenditure

Annual total, Lower Hutt City (\$m)



Tourism expenditure

Annual total, Lower Hutt City (\$m)



Highlights for Lower Hutt City

- Total tourism expenditure in Lower Hutt City decreased by 7.3% in the year to June 2020. This compares with a decrease of 12.3% in New Zealand.
- Total tourism expenditure was approximately \$228m in Lower Hutt City during the year to June 2020, which was down from \$245m a year ago.

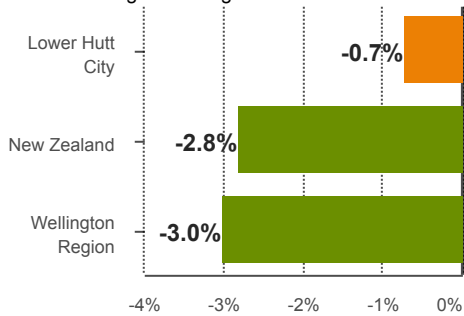
National overview

Tourism spending fell 12.3%pa over the year to June 2020, as the border closure and domestic restrictions hit visitor activity. Total tourism spending over the last 12 months totalled \$26b, with spending of \$3.6b lost compared to the June 2019 year. The West Coast recorded the hardest hit, with tourism spending down just over 20%pa, followed by Southland (-16%), Otago (-15%) and Wellington (-14%). Domestic travel has helped bolster tourism activity in recent months but won't be enough to outweigh the loss of international tourism activity.

Consumer Spending

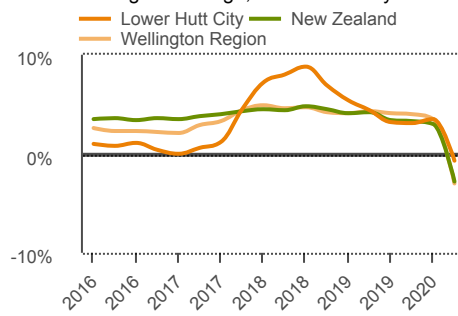
Growth in consumer spending

Annual average % change Jun 19 - Jun 20



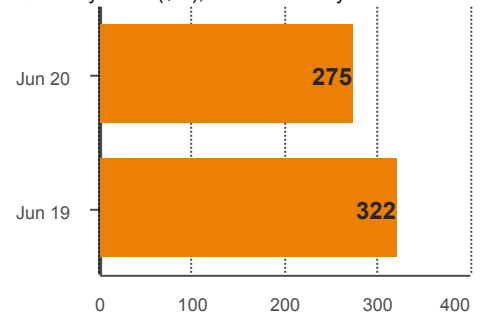
Consumer spending (\$m)

Annual average % change, Lower Hutt City



Consumer spending

Quarterly value (\$m), Lower Hutt City



Highlights for Lower Hutt City

- Electronic card consumer spending in Lower Hutt City, as measured by Marketview, decreased by -0.7% over the year to June 2020 compared to the previous year. This compares with an decrease of -2.8% in New Zealand.

National overview

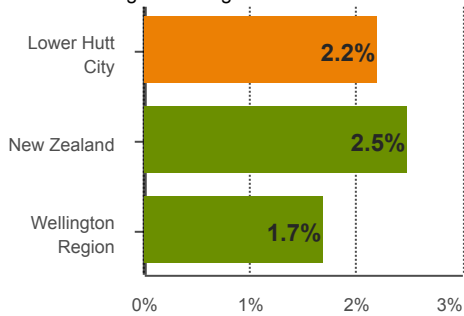
Consumer spending fell off a cliff in the June 2020 quarter, with spending down 20% compared to June 2019, as households held onto their wallets during the lockdown period. Spending over the year to June 2020 was down 2.8% compared to the June 2019 year.

Consumer spending has been surprisingly resilient since the Level 4 lockdown, but we expect it to soften in the coming quarter as post-lockdown surge ends and the end of the wage subsidy extension brings about a second wave of redundancies.

Health Enrolments

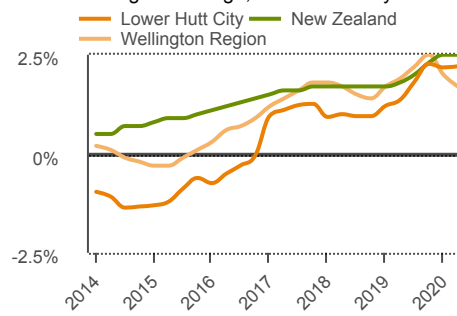
Annual change in Health enrolments

Annual average % change Jun 19 - Jun 20



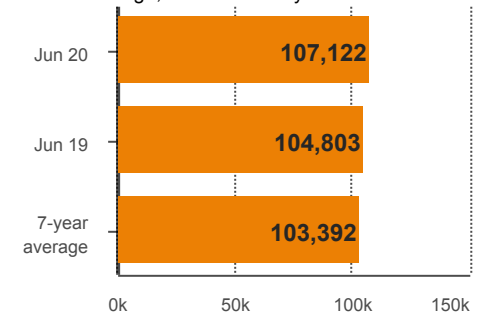
Health enrolments

Annual average % change, Lower Hutt City



Health enrolments

Annual average, Lower Hutt City



Highlights for Lower Hutt City

- The number of people enrolled with a primary health organisation in Lower Hutt City in the year to June 2020 increased by 2.2% compared with the previous year. Growth was lower relative to New Zealand, where the number of enrolments increased by 2.5%.
- An average of 107,122 people were enrolled with primary healthcare providers in Lower Hutt City in the 12 months ended June 2020. This compares with an average of 103,392 since the start of the series in 2013.

National overview

The number of people enrolled at a health provider remained strong in the June 2020 year, with a 2.5%pa rise – in line with the March 2020 year. Net migration has increased in recent months, driven by an influx of returning New Zealanders, with national population growth of 2.1%pa in June 2020. The health and contact tracing focus of the COVID-19 pandemic is likely seeing an increase in the number and accuracy of health enrolment details, meaning that the strength of health enrolments might not be driven purely by an increasing population.

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.

Dairy

Dairy data has been sourced from the “New Zealand Dairy Statistics”, a publication co-owned 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 from the previous season.

Earnings

The earnings data comes from the quarterly Linked Employer Employee Data (LEED) published by Statistics New Zealand. LEED publishes the mean earnings of full quarter jobs for each quarter. Full quarter jobs may include full time and part time jobs. Earnings include overtime and lump sum payments. We sum the mean earnings for the four quarters making up the year to arrive at an estimate of average annual earnings. Infometrics projects average annual earnings to the current quarter using growth rates in industry earnings measured in the Labour Cost Index.

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.

Jobseekers Support

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.

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

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.