



Cook Islands Government

Census of Population and Dwellings 2021





CENSUS OF POPULATION AND DWELLINGS 2021

Report prepared by the
Cook Islands Statistics Office (CISO)

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Standards

Source

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Symbols

The following symbols have been used in this bulletin and should be interpreted as follows:

- nil or zero
- .. not applicable
- ... not available
- too small to be disclosed

Values

All values are in New Zealand dollars except where otherwise stated.

Foreword

This report is the official output from the Cook Islands Census of Population and Dwellings 2021. The report presents a wealth of information on the demographic, social and economic situation of the Cook Islands and helps us understand who we are and where we've come since the last census in 2016. It also provides information on the diversity of activities throughout our islands.

The report is presented in six sections: (1) General information (2) Census Administration (3) Census Result (4) Census Supervisors and Enumerators (5) Census Questionnaires and (6) Basic Tables.

The people of the Cook Islands deserve to be praised for giving their invaluable support by cooperating and providing their information without hesitation. Additionally, Census Supervisors and Enumerators who did most of the hard fieldwork need to be commended for their efforts and dedication during the enumeration period (a full list of those involved can be found at the end of this report). It is certainly no simple task to visit and obtain personal information from every individual and household in the country.

Furthermore, I recognize the critical role Statistics New Zealand and the Statistics for Development Division (SDD) of the Pacific Community (SPC) played in supplementing the Cook Islands Statistics Office's capabilities and commend them for providing technical support and assistance during the Census 2021.

Lastly, I would like to acknowledge the staff of the Cook Islands Statistics Office whose workload has been strenuous during this time. They must be commended for undertaking this huge task while continuing to produce the wide range of statistical series, which the Statistics Office is committed to on a regular basis. I also recognize their efforts in assisting me in writing this report, a process which was interrupted by the conduct of our 2022 Parliamentary Elections, a task which the Government Statistician and the Statistics Office is responsible for.

Meitaki maata



Taggy Tangimetua

Government Statistician and Chief Electoral

December 2022

Key results table

	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>
Total enumerated population	15,040	7,392	7,648
Resident population	14,987	7,369	7,618
Median age (years)	34.6	34.1	35.1
Sex ratio (males per 100 females)	97		
Resident population structure	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>
Population younger than 15 years	3,768	1,955	1,813
Population 15 years and older	11,219	5,414	5,805
Population 15-59 years	8,693	4,189	4,504
Population 60+ years	2,526	1,225	1,301
Dependency ratio (15-59)	72%		
Average annual rate of growth (2016-2021)	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Persons</u>	
Total population	-2.7	-478.8	
Resident population	0.2	37	
Population density (persons per sq. km)	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>Urban</u>	<u>Rural</u>
Total population	64	162	24
Resident population	63	162	24
Number of private households	4,681		
Average household size (persons per household)	3.2		
Educational level	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>
(Resident population 5 years and older)	number	percent	percent
No schooling	164	0.6	0.6
Early Child Education	165	0.6	0.6
Primary attended/completed	1,840	7.3	6.0
Secondary attended/completed	11,705	40.6	43.8
Resident population 15 years and over	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>
Paid employment	7,424	3,800	3,624
Unpaid employment	120	62	58
Not in the Labour Force	3,580	1,507	2,073
Unemployed (number)	95	45	50
Not in the Labour Force	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>
Students	648	306	342
Retired	1,498	690	808
Home Duties	1,006	271	735
Others	428	240	188
Labour force	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>
Labour force participation rate	68.09	72.16	64.29
Employment–population ratio	67.24	71.33	63.43
Unemployment rate (%)	1.24	1.15	1.34
Gross average annual income NZD	19,246	20,209	18,348

SECTION 1: GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Introduction

This report contains the results of the 2021 Census of Population and Dwellings undertaken on 1st December 2021. This census was conducted under the authority of the Statistics Act, 2016. The confidentiality provisions in this act provide against the release or publication of any particulars relating to individuals.

This is the eleventh population census undertaken by the Statistics Office since 1971, spanning over a period of 55 years. Prior to this the Cook Islands censuses were conducted by the Registrar General of the Justice Department. Since the annexation of the Cook Islands by New Zealand, regular census activities have been held every five years. The census counts all persons present in the Cook Islands on census night, including visitors temporary in the country. Cook Islanders who are living or are temporarily on vacation abroad are excluded.

2. Setting

The Cook Islands is a self-governing island country in free association with New Zealand. It has a representative democracy with a parliamentary system. The head of state is the King of England, who is represented in the Cook Islands by the King's Representative. Executive power is exercised by the government with the Prime Minister as head.

The total land area is 23,261 hectares while its exclusive economic zone covers an area of nearly 2 million sq. km or 750,000 sq. miles. Rarotonga, with a total land area of 6,719 hectares is the largest and most populous island (over 50 per cent of the population) and also the administrative centre. Mangaia the second largest island is also the closest island to Rarotonga and the furthest away from the urban centre is Penrhyn at 737 nautical miles.

Cook Islands-Distances in Nautical Miles Island to Island

	Rarotonga	Aitutaki	Mauke	Mitiaro	Manuae	Atiu	Mangaia	Palmerston	Pukapuka	Nassau	Manihiki	Rakahanga	Penrhyn	Suvarrow
Size(km ²)	67	18	18	22	6.2	27	52	2.1	1.3	1.3	5.4	4.1	9.8	0.4
Rarotonga		140	150	142	124	116	110	270	715	673	650	674	737	513
Aitutaki	140		160	130	55	113	208	198	588	540	511	535	600	385
Mauke	150	160		32	107	50	115	355	735	690	618	642	670	528
Mitiaro	142	130	32		77	27	125	330	704	657	595	619	650	500
Manuae	124	55	107	77		60	168	250	628	580	540	564	612	435
Atiu	116	113	50	27	60		116	310	700	653	590	614	660	495
Mangaia	110	208	115	125	168	116		380	794	746	704	728	774	600
Palmerston	270	198	355	330	250	310	380		455	408	475	498	620	288
Pukapuka	715	588	735	704	628	700	794	455		48	286	289	480	215
Nassau	673	540	690	657	580	653	746	408	48		270	273	464	170
Manihiki	650	511	618	595	540	590	704	475	286	270		24	196	208
Rakahanga	674	535	642	619	564	614	728	498	289	273	24		191	225
Penrhyn	737	600	670	650	612	660	774	620	480	464	196	191		396
Suvarrow	513	385	528	500	435	495	600	288	215	170	208	225	396	

3. Cook Islands on the Map

The Cook Islands is defined as all the islands between 156-167° West and 8-23° South of the equator, shown in the map below¹. It is situated to the east of Tonga and Samoa, to the north-east of New Zealand and midway between French Polynesia and Niue in the Pacific region. Such distances over the sea linking small populations presents a hindrance to the development of transportation and communication systems of the country.



The islands are geographically divided into two groups, commonly referred to as the Northern and Southern Group islands. The two groups of islands portray marked differences in their social, cultural and economic activities. The Northern Group islands remain relatively isolated from the Southern Group islands.

Being a remote country has its own positive effects, this makes Cook Islands a largely unspoiled destination for tourists. Tourism is the country's leading source of revenue accounting for around 60 per cent of the country's Gross Domestic Products (GDP) in 2019 and plays a vital role in correcting the balance of payments. The COVID-19 pandemic set the country's economy back and saw a huge drop in GDP for the years 2020 and 2021. With travel restrictions uplifted and borders opening the country is now slowly getting back to normal.



¹ Image from <https://www.worldatlas.com> and may be subject to copyright

SECTION 2: CENSUS ADMINISTRATION

Census Administration

The overall management and control of the census, by virtue of the Statistics Act 2016, is vested upon the Government Statistician who, for the purpose of the census will be referred to as the Census Officer. A number of sections of the Act apply in carrying out the census. These include the “confidentiality” clause, which provides against the release or publication of any individual information and the offences and penalty clauses, which may be invoked against any persons failing to abide by the provisions of the Act.

Objectives of the Census

The main objectives of the 2021 Census of Population and Dwellings are listed below. The COVID-19 pandemic has played a big part in reshaping the different characteristics of the population. This census attempts to provide the data that supports governments’ efforts in addressing the changes and challenges brought forward by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The 2021 Census is based on a number of key strategic aims:

- To collect and update information on the demographic characteristics of the population
- To collect and update information on the housing characteristics of the country
- To update information on employment and education in our country
- To provide high quality, value-for-money, fit-for-purpose statistics that meet user needs

Scope and Coverage

The scope of the Census was all occupied households in the Cook Islands (it is not the physical structure (dwelling) in which people live) and all persons present in the Cook Islands on census night but excludes those persons on foreign vessels, cruisers and aircraft flying through or stopping temporarily (transit).

Earlier censuses was limited to head counts only. With the passage of time the census has expanded, gradually including questions on sex, age, marital status, religion, education, employment, etc.,. Questions on unpaid work and income were included for the first time in the 1996 Census and in 2011 a question on households engagement in agriculture and fishing activity was used to filter out those active households for inclusion in the Agriculture Census. Questions on relationship to head of household was expanded to reflect households’ living arrangements, which is the relationship of household members to each other.

The selection of topics and questions

The topic content of the 2021 Census has been driven largely by the demands and requirements of users of census statistics, the evaluation of the 2021 and 2016 Census, and the priority of government as stated in the National Strategic Development Plan of the Cook Islands (NSDP). We also took the advice and guidance of organizations with experience of similar operations. These have been determined by extensive consultation with various Ministries of government and NGO’s.

The topics proposed for the census are those that have been shown to be most needed by the major users of census information and for which questions have been devised that can be expected to produce reliable and accurate data. In each case, no other comparable and accessible source of the information is available in combination with other items in the census.

Consultation on the topic content for the 2021 Census has (as ever) resulted in a much larger demand for questions than would be possible to accommodate on a census form that households

could reasonably be expected to complete. Consequently a number of difficult decisions have had to be made in assessing the different requirements for information and balancing the needs for change against continuity.

In assessing which topics should be included in the census, Statistics Office has had to consider a number of factors. The criteria for evaluating the strength of users' requirements for information were that:

- there should be a clearly demonstrated and significant need
- the information collected was of major national importance
- users' requirements could not adequately be met by information from other sources
- there should be a requirement for multivariate analysis (that is the ability to cross-analyse one variable against other), and
- there should be consideration of the ability for comparison with previous censuses wherever possible

Census questionnaire

There were two questionnaires used in the conduct of the population census:

- A dwelling questionnaire to be completed for every occupied dwelling as at midnight on census night.
- A personal questionnaire to be completed for every man, woman and child alive at midnight on census night within the geographical boundaries of the Cook Islands.

The 2021 Census utilised two methods of data collecting:

- Computer Assisted Personal Interview (CAPI) and
- Pen-and-Paper Personal Interview (PAPI) method.

The CAPI method involves the use of tablets during the data collection, while the PAPI method as the name implies require the paper forms to be completed.

Both methods require face-to-face interview, usually with the head of household or an adult member of the family providing most of the information, with other household members being interviewed when necessary. Although there were advantages to using the CAPI method such as minimising data input errors, reduction in interview time, monitoring and tracking the GPS location of the interviewer, it had no greater advantage over the paper questionnaire.

The paper questionnaire were more in demand on the main island as it was difficult to find household members at home or at a time convenient for the household to be interviewed.

Census field operation

The field work was carried out by Field Supervisors and Field Enumerators (*list attached*). All teams were under the supervision of CAPI Supervisor. Efforts to mobilize field enumerators was slow but as of end of July 2021 a team was confirmed. Transportation to the Pa Enua is always a hindrance in particular transportation to the Northern Group is very expensive and schedule is always uncertain. At the time of the data collection, there were no Covid-19 restrictions that affected the Census collection.

Concepts and Definitions

A full list of definitions and terms used for the Census of Population and Dwellings 2021 is contained in the instruction manual, but the following should be emphasized.

- Census night is the night between the 30th November and the 1st December 2021. The census time-point is midnight of that night.
- Dwelling is a building or group of buildings or part of a building occupied by at least one household on census night.
- Household is a group of persons, related or unrelated, living together in the same dwelling sharing the same kitchen or contributing to a common budget. One member of the group is regarded as the head. The term family is synonymous in this respect. (Note: a household can consist of one person).
- Southern Group islands consists of the islands of Aitutaki, Mangaia, Atiu, Mauke and Mitiaro
- Northern Group islands consists of the islands of the islands Palmerston, Pukapuka, Nassau, Manihiki, Rakahanga and Penrhyn
- Te Pa Enua normally referred to all islands outside of Rarotonga

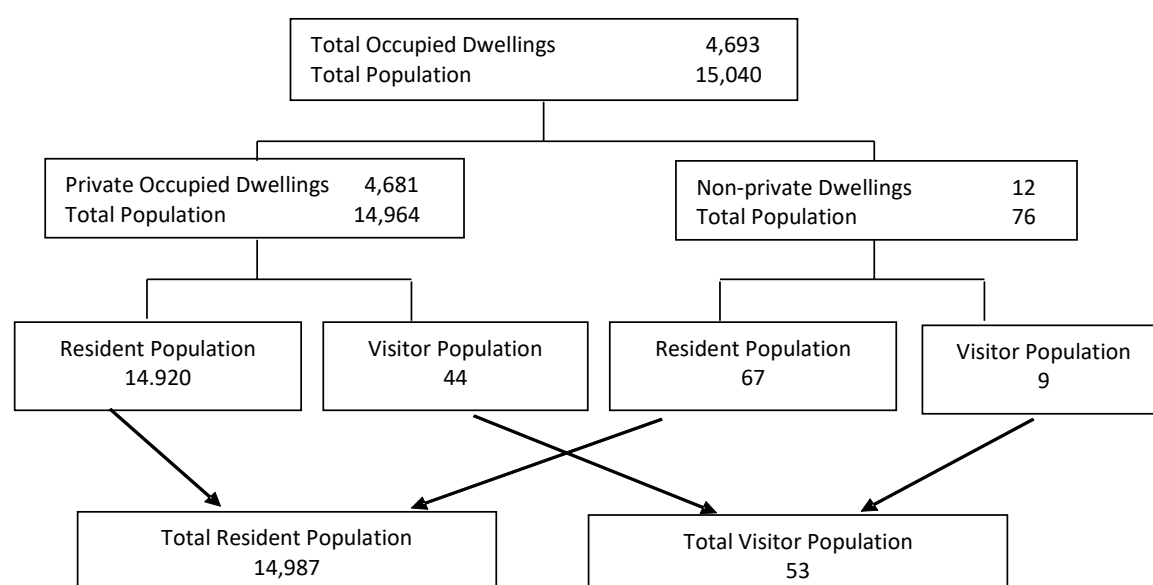
SECTION 3: CENSUS RESULT

1. Population and Demographic Characteristics

1.1 Population Structure

The total population of the Cook Islands, as enumerated on 1 December 2021, was 15,040 people: 7,392 men and 7,648 women. As the census was a *de facto* count, this number included all persons present at census night in the Cook Islands excluding residents away from the Cook Islands at the time of the census (even if they intended to be away only for a short time). Thirty five inmates were counted but are not included in the analysis.

Figure 1: Population Composition



1.2 Population Trend

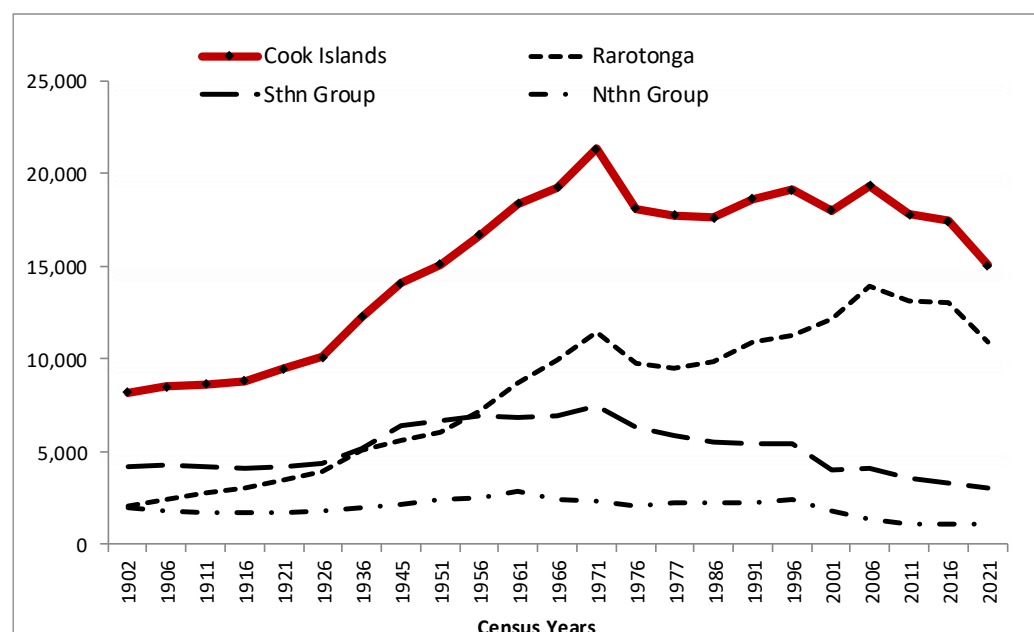
Figure 2 shows the population of the Cook Islands from 1902 to 2021. The Cook Islands population has continuously increased from the beginning of the last century reaching 21,322 in 1971 but declined dramatically during the early 70s, especially between 1971 and 1976, as a result of the opening of Rarotonga's International Airport in 1974, when many people took the opportunity to migrate to New Zealand. Since the 2016 Census, Cook Islands population was estimated to grow at an annual rate of 2 to 3 per cent bringing the 2021 resident population to 17,000 and total population to 20,000 as tourism and migrant workers were projected to increase. In 2019 the estimated population reached the 2021 forecast² for both the resident and total population, not only as a result of natural increase but for a booming tourism industry and a growing economy.

The 2021 Census count reflects a massive decrease of 2,394 people since the 2016 Census (17,434). The decrease in the Cook Islands population and the unmet population estimate was not surprising as the world experienced the effect of the Coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19). Out migration affected the population of the Cook Islands with local residents seeking employment overseas and a large

² Cook Islands Vital Statistics 2020

number of migrant workers who were key to our tourism industry lost their jobs and had to return to their countries of origin.

Figure 2: Cook Islands total population from 1902 to 2021



1.3 Population Density

Table 1: Total Population size, change, distribution and density by Island

Island/ Region	Area (km ²)	Total population			Population change		Population distribution	Density
		2011	2016	2021	(2016-2021)		2021	
					Total	%	%	pp per km ²
Rarotonga	67.1	13,095	13,007	10,898	-2,109	-16	72	162
Southern Islands	145.2	3,586	3,326	3,040	-286	-9	20	21
Aitutaki	18.3	2,038	1,941	1,782	-159	-8	12	97
Mangaia	51.8	572	499	471	-28	-6	3	9
Atiu	26.9	480	434	383	-51	-12	3	14
Mauke	18.4	307	297	249	-48	-16	2	14
Mitiaro	22.3	189	155	155	0	0	1	7
Manuae	6.2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Takutea	1.3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Northern Islands	24.4	1,113	1,101	1,102	1	0	7	45
Palmerston	2.1	60	58	25	-33	-57	0	12
Pukapuka	1.3	451	444	456	12	3	3	351
Nassau	1.3	73	78	92	14	18	1	71
Manihiki	5.4	239	212	215	3	1	1	40
Rakahanga	4.1	77	83	81	-2	-2	1	20
Penrhyn	9.8	213	226	233	7	3	2	24
Suvarrow	0.4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Cook Islands	236.7	17,794	17,434	15,040	-2,394	-14	100	64

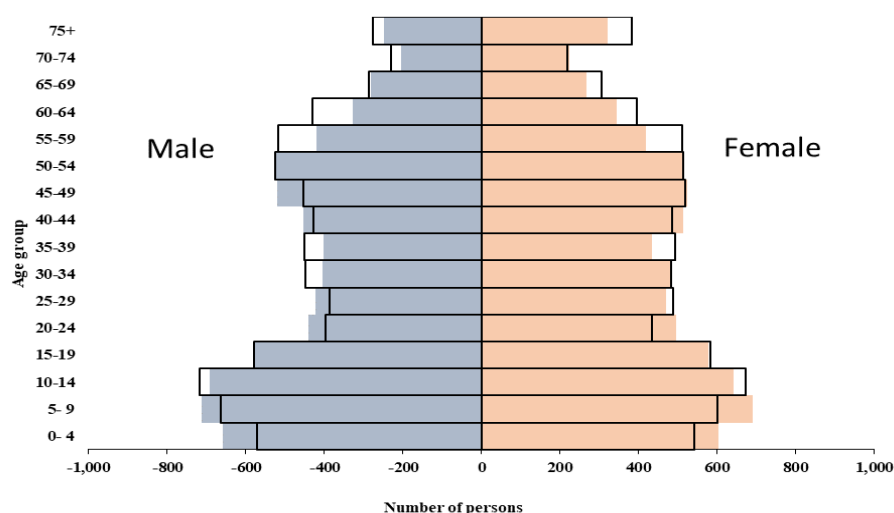
Over 70 per cent (10,898) of the total population lived on Rarotonga, 20.2 per cent (3,040) in the Southern Group islands and 7.3 per cent (1,102) in the Northern Group islands. The population density varied island by island. Pukapuka island in the north has always been densely populated, from 342 person per kilometre square in 2016 to 351 in 2021. While there were about 351 people per km² in Pukapuka, only 9 people per km² inhabited Mangaia Island which is the second largest

island in the Cook Islands. The population density of Rarotonga was 162 people per square kilometre compared to 194 in 2016.

1.4 Age and Sex

Population pyramids, sometimes called an age picture diagram (Figure 3) are often viewed as the most effective way to graphically depict the age and sex structure of a population.

Figure 3: Cook Islands Resident population 2016(shaded) 2021 (outline)



A distinct feature of the Cook Islands population pyramid in 2021 is the indent in the 20-29 age groups who were the 15-24 cohort groups in 2016. We can assume that these are young Cook Islanders who have migrated overseas for employment opportunities or tertiary education.

Another way of looking at the population structure is through dependency ratios relating to the number of young and old people who do not, or no longer work, to the economically active population 15-59 or 64. Cook Islands dependency ratio is 72 that is, for every 100 persons of working age there are 72 dependent children and aged persons.

1.5 Internal Migration

A question on usual residence one year ago provides information on inward migration in the year leading up to the census. Based on the question where one lived one year before the census, 89.7 per cent of the resident population had not moved from their current place of residence and 6.7 per cent were living elsewhere in the Cook Islands. About 2.2 per cent of the resident population moved to the Cook Islands in the year to December 2021.

Table 2: Resident population by usual residence one year ago

Usual resident at time of Census	Usual resident address one year ago				
	Not born one year ago	In the Cook Islands at current address	In the Cook Islands at another address	Overseas	Total
Rarotonga	160	9,646	789	268	10,863
Southern Islands	24	2,808	171	30	3,033
Northern Islands	18	996	47	30	1,091
COOK ISLANDS	202	13,450	1,007	328	14,987

Over sixty five per cent of the resident population had not moved from their current place of residence since 2016, 14.4 per cent lived elsewhere within the Cook Islands while 12.6 per cent were living overseas.

Table 3: Resident population by usual residence five years ago

Usual resident at time of Census	Usual resident address five years ago				
	Not born five years ago	In the Cook Islands at current address	In the Cook Islands at another address	Overseas	Total
Rarotonga	751	6,860	1,714	1,538	10,863
Southern Islands	229	2,163	366	275	3,033
Northern Islands	133	804	73	81	1,091
COOK ISLANDS	1,113	9,827	2,153	1,894	14,987

1.6 Place of Birth

Fifty-three per cent (7,828) of the total resident population were living at the same place they were born; 18 per cent (2,684) were born in the Cook Islands but not at their current (December 2016) place of residence, and 29 per cent (4,290) of the resident population was born overseas (Table 4 below or Table 2.1 in the appendices).

Table 4: Resident population by place of birth

Usual resident at time of Census	Place of Birth											
	Rarotonga			Southern Islands			Northern Islands			Outside Cook Islands		
	2011	2016	2021	2011	2016	2021	2011	2016	2021	2011	2016	2021
Rarotonga	5,565	5,497	5,894	1331	1168	921	396	357	351	3,280	3,627	3,697
Southern Islands	765	763	817	2028	1752	1622	50	49	37	447	508	557
Northern Islands	272	336	385	24	11	16	664	579	528	152	155	162
COOK ISLANDS	6,602	6,596	7,096	3,383	2,931	2,559	1,110	985	916	3,879	4,290	4,416

Seventy one per cent (10,571) of all Cook Islands residents were born in the Cook Islands and the remaining 29 per cent (4,416) were born outside the Cook Islands.

Overall 54 per cent of the Rarotonga residents were born in Rarotonga, 34 per cent were born overseas, 8 per cent in the Southern Group islands, and 3 per cent in the Northern Group islands. About 53 per cent of the Southern Group residents were born there, 18 per cent were born overseas, and 27 per cent were born in Rarotonga.

1.7 Ethnicity

Cook Islands Maori population accounted for 77 per cent or 11,603 persons, a slight decrease from 78 per cent in 2016 and 81 per cent in 2011. Non-Cook Island Maori population accounts for 14 per cent of the population. Most of them resides on Rarotonga the centre of commercial and government activities.

Table 5: Resident population by ethnic origin

Usual resident at time of Census	Cook Island Maori			Part Cook Island Maori			Other Ethnic Origin		
	2011	2016	2021	2011	2016	2021	2011	2016	2021
Rarotonga	8,060	7,732	7,833	853	1002	1,072	1,659	1,915	1,958
Southern Islands	3,061	2,795	2,701	107	114	163	122	163	169
Northern Islands	1,059	1,048	1,069	19	12	11	34	21	11
COOK ISLANDS	12,180	11,575	11,603	979	1,128	1,246	1,815	2,099	2,138

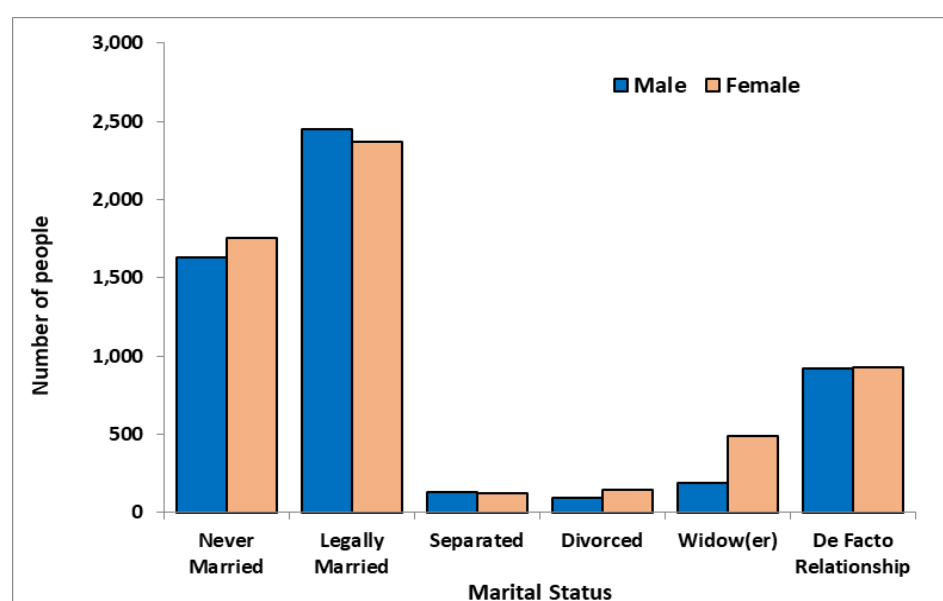
2. Social Characteristics

2.1 Marital Status

Marital status was the most common measure of family relationship collected in the census. During the 2021 census, 43.0 per cent of the population aged 15 years and over was legally married, 50.9 per cent (2,452) males and 49.1 per cent of females (2,368). The proportion of never married (single), were 48.2 per cent of males (1,633) and 51.8 per cent of females (1,752).

De facto relationship continue to increase from 12.4 per cent in 2011 to 14.1 per cent in 2016 and now in 2021 was recorded at 16.5 per cent. This is more common amongst the younger age group, but the prevalence of de facto relationships then decline in the older age groups, where more people are married. A de facto relationship is a relationship between two people who are not married but live together as a couple on a genuine domestic basis. Same-sex partners is not captured in the census.

Figure 4: Cook Islands resident population marital status



2.2 Households and Families

This is the second time a question on relationship between household members was asked in the census. Previous censuses focused on the relationship of each household member to a reference person or the head of the household. The proportion of one-person household in 2021 (964) increased by 25.2 per cent since 2016 (770). The likelihood of living alone increased with age. Of those who lived alone in 2021, nearly half (46.7 per cent) were aged 60 years and older and only 7.2 per cent of people below the age of 30 years lived alone.

2.3 Religion

The question on religion was not compulsory, nevertheless, only 2 per cent or 323 people refused or did not respond to this question.

The Cook Islands' religion remain predominantly Christian with the Cook Islands Christian Church (CICC) denomination having the biggest share of members, however its share has declined from 48.8 per cent in 2016 to 43.1 per cent in 2021 (6,461). Much of this decline occurred in Rarotonga. The next largest group was the Roman Catholic Church with a share of 16.7 per cent (2,500 members)

followed by the Seventh Day Adventist Church (SDA) with 8.3 per cent share or 1,241 members. *Table 6* show further distribution of religious affiliation of Cook Islands residents across the country.

Table 6: Resident population and church affiliation 2016-2021

Church	Cook Islands		Rarotonga		Southern Group		Northern Group	
	2016	2021	2016	2021	2016	2021	2016	2021
Cook Islands Christian Church	48.8	43.1	45.5	38.6	52.4	48.4	70.8	73.1
Roman Catholic	17.4	16.7	18.4	17.6	13.8	12.9	17.5	18.2
Seventh Day Adventist	8.4	8.3	7.3	6.9	12.5	13.7	8.1	6.8
Church of Latter Days Saint	4.1	3.9	4.5	4.1	4.1	4.7	0.4	0.1
Assemblies of God	3.8	3.6	4.4	4.1	2.9	2.8	0.8	0.4
Apostolic Church	1.9	2.1	1.4	1.7	4.5	4.4	0.2	0.1
Jehova's Witness	2.4	2.2	2.3	2.2	3.6	2.9	0.3	-
Other Religion	5.7	4.5	6.6	5.1	3.9	3.3	1.5	0.9
No Religion or Refused	7.4	15.6	9.6	19.6	2.2	6.7	0.5	0.4
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

2.4 Health and Physical Challenges

The Washington Group set of question was included in the Census for a second time. The questions ask about difficulties seeing, hearing, walking or climbing stairs, remembering or concentrating, self-care, and communication. All information were collected from the population aged 5 years and over, with a responsible adult providing information for children.

From the result only 2,607 persons reported to having one or more form of health or physical challenges/difficulties which was about 18.8 per cent of the resident population 5 years and older. The most common challenges were seeing (blindness) of 10.1 per cent followed by difficulty in walking or climbing stairs or slopes, both strongly age related from late 60's onwards. The incidence of deafness was relatively low up to age 40-44 before rising steadily thereafter. Self-care was also low with 1.7 per cent of the population identifying this as a problem.

2.5 Alcohol and Tobacco Consumption

Over 70 per cent of the population aged 15 years and over have at one time or another consumed alcohol but 11.6 per cent reported to no longer drinking. Of those men and women that reported to drinking alcohol, 52.5 per cent are men compared with 47.5 per cent women. Male drinkers tend to drink more regularly than female and regular drinkers are mostly found in the age group 40 to 59 years.

Table 7: Alcohol and Tobacco Consumption of resident population 15 years and over (per cent)

Frequency	Smoking				Drinking			
	2016		2021		2016		2021	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Never	51.3	60.8	50.2	62.4	20.0	31.0	24.0	33.8
Regularly	20.4	13.6	23.3	14.6	26.9	14.1	12.4	4.2
Sometimes	11.4	10.3	11.3	9.9	35.5	37.6	52.3	50.4
No Longer	13.2	11.9	15.2	13.1	11.2	11.3	11.4	11.7
No response	3.7	3.3	0.0	0.0	6.4	6.1	0.0	0.0

2.6 Cultural Activity

About 40.3 per cent of the population 15 years and older do not actively participate in a cultural activity. For the remaining 59.7 per cent, the majority are spectators. Performers make up 24.3 per cent and about 13.3 per cent are engaged in making costumes. Composers and choreographers

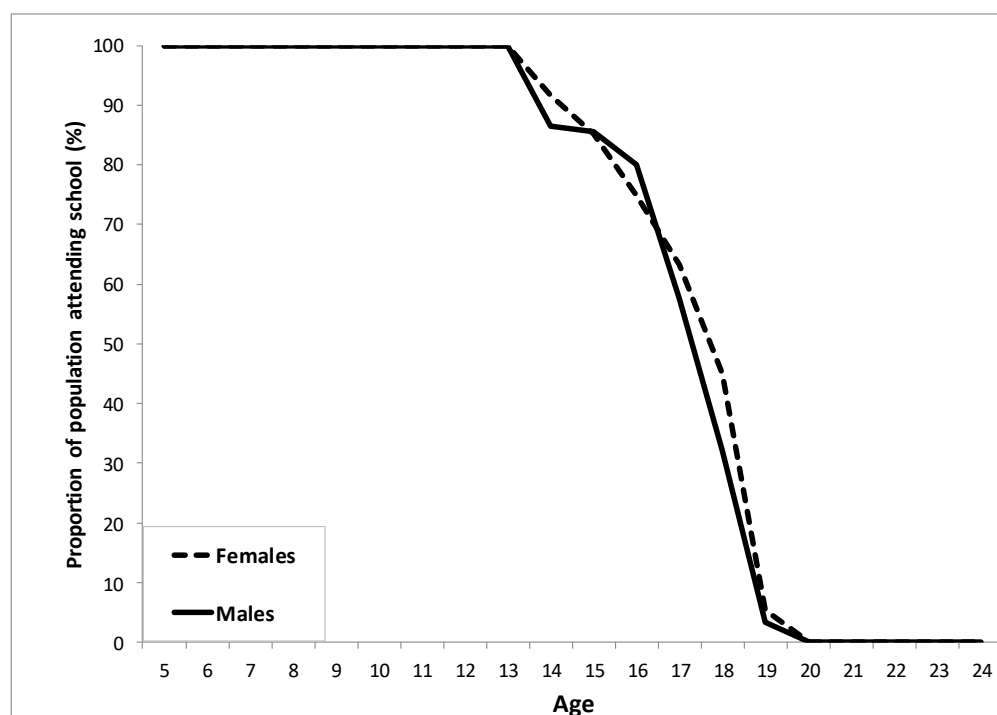
together make up 8.9 per cent of those actively engaged in cultural activities. Most of the performers are in the younger age group 15 to 34 years. Composers are older between the ages of 40 to 64 years whereas choreographers are much younger aged between 20 to 40 years. This makes sense since these young choreographers tend to introduce modern moves or action and typically develop new interpretations for existing dances. Those practicing local medicine make up 5.5 per cent of the culturally active population.

3. Education Characteristics

3.1 School enrolment

Education in the Cook Islands is free, inclusive and compulsory for all children from 5 to 16 years of age. Every person in the Cook Islands is entitled to attend school in the Cook Islands school from 3 years of age, commencing their learning with early childhood education. There are 31 schools in the Cook Islands of which 23 are government owned and 5 are church schools and 3 are private schools.

Figure 5: School enrolment ages 5-24 years



At the compulsory age of schooling of 5 to 16 years 3,060 persons or 95.9 per cent were enrolled in school, 1,584 males and 1,476 females. From the ages of 5 to 13 years the rate of enrolment was 100 per cent, then the rate started to fall, at 11.0 per cent at the age of 14 then accelerated to 61.7 per cent at the age of 18 when students are at the last level of secondary education available in the Cook Islands.

Although there were more 16 year old boys than girls attending school within the same year, the enrolment rate was lower for males than for females at 17 to 19 years (66.9 male to 59.9 female). It could well mean that at the age of 19 to 24 most young persons if they had not already joined the workforce may have been attending tertiary education overseas (mainly in New Zealand).

3.2 Highest primary or secondary level completed

About 65 per cent of the population 5 years and over reported their highest level of education as secondary but only about 20 per cent reported secondary level as their highest completed. While

the proportion of those who reported secondary level as their highest attended was higher in the Pa Enua than Rarotonga, the proportion of those with secondary as highest level completed was higher in Rarotonga than the Pa Enua.

There is no significant difference in the proportion of males and females that have attended and/or completed the different educational levels. More females, 21.7 per cent completed secondary education compared to 17.5 per cent of males.

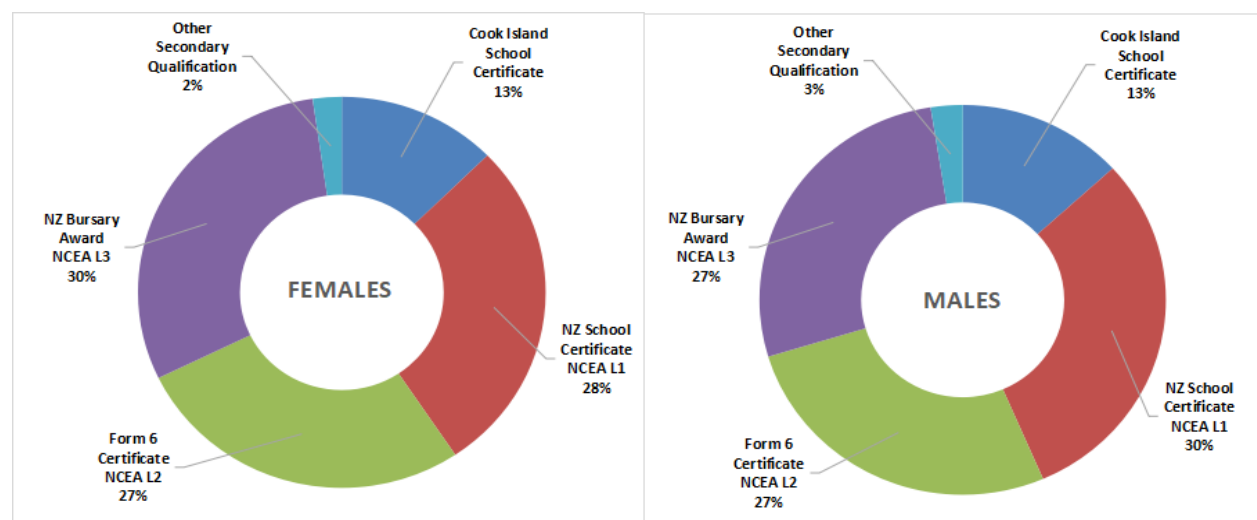
Table 8: Highest primary or secondary level completed of those 5 years and over

Higher level education attended/completed	Cook Islands		Rarotonga		Southern Islands		Northern Islands	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
No schooling	1.2	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.4	1.5	1.7	0.9
Early Child Education (Pre-school)	1.2	1.2	0.9	1.0	1.8	1.6	1.9	2.0
Primary attended	10.3	8.4	9.2	7.9	11.8	9.1	17.3	12.9
Primary completed	4.5	3.3	4.0	3.0	6.2	4.0	4.3	5.4
Secondary attended	65.2	64.2	63.2	60.8	70.2	73.9	71.1	74.0
Secondary completed	17.5	21.7	21.5	26.3	8.6	10.0	3.7	4.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

3.3 Secondary School Qualification

The proportion of the resident population aged 15 and over with a Secondary School qualification was 71.5 per cent with the majority earning a NCEA levels 1, 2 and 3 Certificates. Cook Islands School Certificate was mostly for those who were attending colleges in the late 1960s to 1980s. New Bursary Award or University Entrance were highly high especially in the female population. The 15-19 year age group is likely to still be attending school and therefore won't have completed a qualification yet.

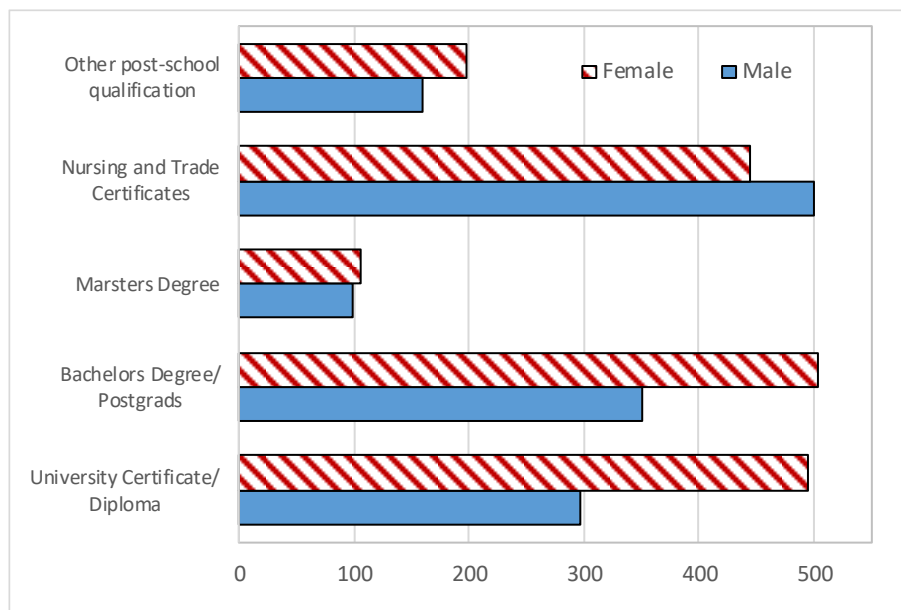
Figure 6: Highest Secondary School Qualification gained by sex



3.4 Higher education qualification

The percentage of females achieving higher education was higher than males in most of the qualification. Females were dominant in the Bachelor's degree category with 58.9 per cent and also in Post graduate Certificate and Diplomas with 59.3 per cent. Males however dominate in the Trade qualifications with new training and study programs introduced by the Cook Islands Tertiary Training Institute (CITI). Other qualifications included overseas qualifications, Doctorates and some where it was difficult to classify.

Figure 7: Higher educational qualification gained



3.5 Reading, Writing and Spoken Language

A vast majority of the population 5 years and older have no difficulty in reading and/or writing in any language including Cook Islands Maori. Only 0.7 per cent cannot read at all and 0.9 per cent cannot write.

The “Language Spoken At Home” question, asks specifically about the Cook Islands Maori language and any other language without specifying the language in the “Other” category. Nearly thirty per cent (29.9) spoke a language other than Cook Islands Maori, 11.4 per cent spoke Cook Islands Maori only and the majority, 58.7 per cent were bi-lingual or multi-lingual. *Table 9* show the proportion of the population responding to Spoken language at home question, broken down by 4 age groups.

Table 9: Language spoken at home (percentage)

Age Group	Local language only	Other language only	Local and Other language
05-14	2.4	6.4	10.3
15-44	3.8	14.0	23.0
45-59	2.8	5.8	13.3
60+	2.5	3.7	12.1
Total	11.4	29.9	58.7

4. Economic Characteristics

4.1 Activity Status

Of the population 15 years and older, 68.1 per cent (7,638) were in employment and the rest, 3,581 were classified as not in employment. Of those in employment, 83.4 per cent were paid employees, 15.1 per cent were either a self-employed or an employer and 1.6 per cent were working in a family business without pay.

Of the proportion of the population not in employment 31.9 per cent (3,581), the bulk was made up of retirees or persons too old to work with 40.1 per cent and 29.8 per cent were those doing basic household duties and 18.1 per cent were full time students. The rest were either physically or mentally unable to work, did not do anything at all or freely volunteer their time in the community.

Table 10: Activity Status of those 15 years and over

Activity Status	Cook Islands		Southern Islands		Northern Islands		Male	Female
	Islands	Rarotonga	Islands	Islands	Islands	Islands	percent	percent
Employer with paid employees	363	317	40	6			2.0	1.3
Self-employed without paid employees	787	638	139	10			3.9	3.2
A paid employee (full time)	5,550	4,408	859	283			25.4	24.1
A paid employee (part time)	818	538	160	120			3.1	4.2
Working in a family business without pay	120	89	27	4			0.6	0.5
Producing goods for own/family use	91	60	22	9			0.5	0.3
Volunteer work	81	57	17	7			0.4	0.3
Full time student	648	451	157	40			2.7	3.0
Basic household duties	1,068	648	313	107			2.7	6.9
Retired or too old to work	1,435	973	389	73			5.9	6.9
None, did not do anything	135	74	52	9			0.6	0.6
Physically/mentally disabled	101	66	27	8			0.5	0.4
Other activity	22	9	12	1			0.1	0.1
Total	11,219	8,328	2,214	677			48.3	51.7

4.2 Labour Force

Total labour force of the Cook Islands was 7,733 persons, defined as those 15 years and over in employment, including the 95 persons that were classified as unemployed. Labour force indicators in *Table 11* show the Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR), Employment to population ratio and unemployment rates for both male and female.

Table 11: Labour force indicators by region

Island/Region	Labour force participation rate			Employment-population ratio			Unemployment rate		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Rarotonga	72.8	76.1	69.8	71.9	75.2	69.0	1.2	1.2	1.2
Southern Group	56.2	62.5	50.3	55.3	61.8	49.3	1.6	1.2	2.1
Northern Group	63.2	71.6	53.8	62.5	71.0	52.8	1.2	0.8	1.8
COOK ISLANDS	68.9	73.1	65.1	68.1	72.2	64.2	1.2	1.1	1.3

4.2.1 Labour Force participation

The rate of participation was 68.9 per cent. The labour force participation rates obtained from population census tend to be lower, as census forms do not typically allow for detailed probing on the labour market activities of the respondents. Labour force participation rates were higher for males, 73.1 per cent than for females at 65.1 per cent.

4.2.2 Employment-Population ratio

The employment to population ratio (EPR) showing the number of people employed as a percentage of the total working age group was 68.1 per cent, 72.2 males and 64.2 for females. The working age population in the Cook Islands are those 15 years old and over since there is no minimum age at which people can legally work.

4.2.3 Unemployment

According to the international definition of unemployment, only those people who were not in employment and indicated that they were available for work and were actively seeking for work would be classified as unemployed. People who wanted a job but have given up on their quest to find one are not included in the unemployment category. There were 95 people categorized as unemployed; 45 males and 50 females. This translates into an overall unemployment rate of 1.2 per cent. Unemployment is slightly higher in the Southern Group at 1.6 per cent than in Rarotonga and the rest of the outer islands. Over 50 per cent of the unemployed population are between 15 and 30 years and are basically doing home duties.

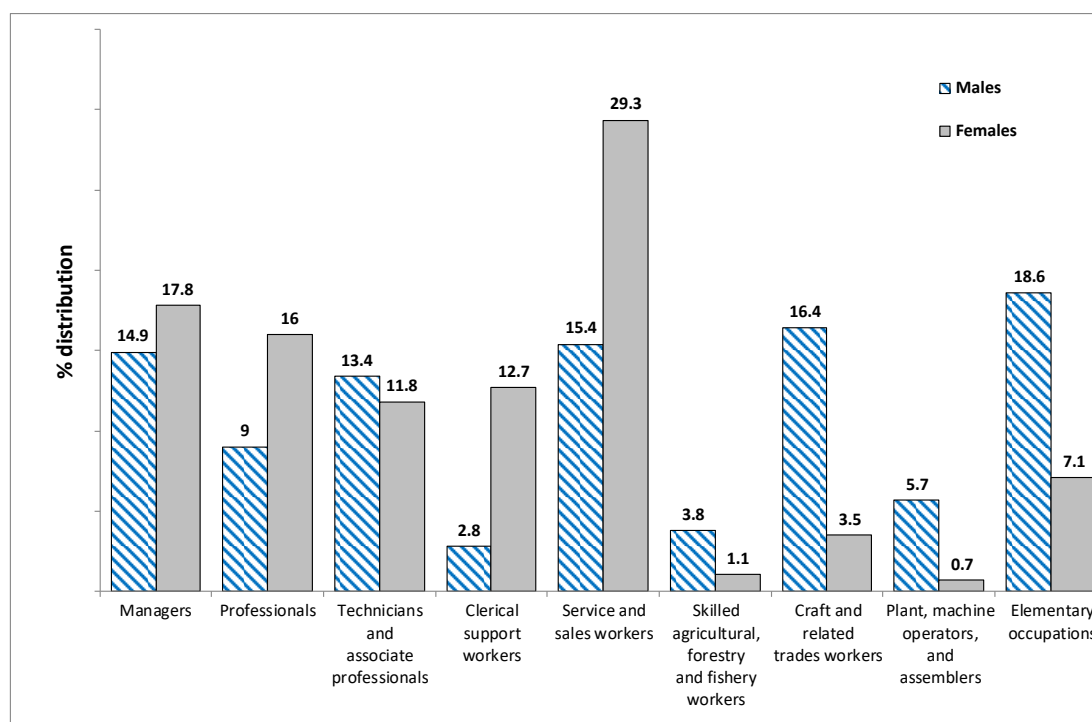
4.3 Not in the Labour Force

People are classified not in the Labour Force if they were not employed and they had not actively looked for work in the last four weeks prior to the night of the census. People not in the labour force were asked their reason for not having looked for work or tried to start a business in the most recent 4 weeks. The majority of those not in the labour force, 41.8 per cent were already retired and 28.1 per cent were doing basic household chores.

4.4 Occupation

The division of occupations (jobs) between male and female is illustrated in Figure 8 where certain jobs are clearly male or female dominated.

Figure 8: Resident population 15 years and over by occupational classification



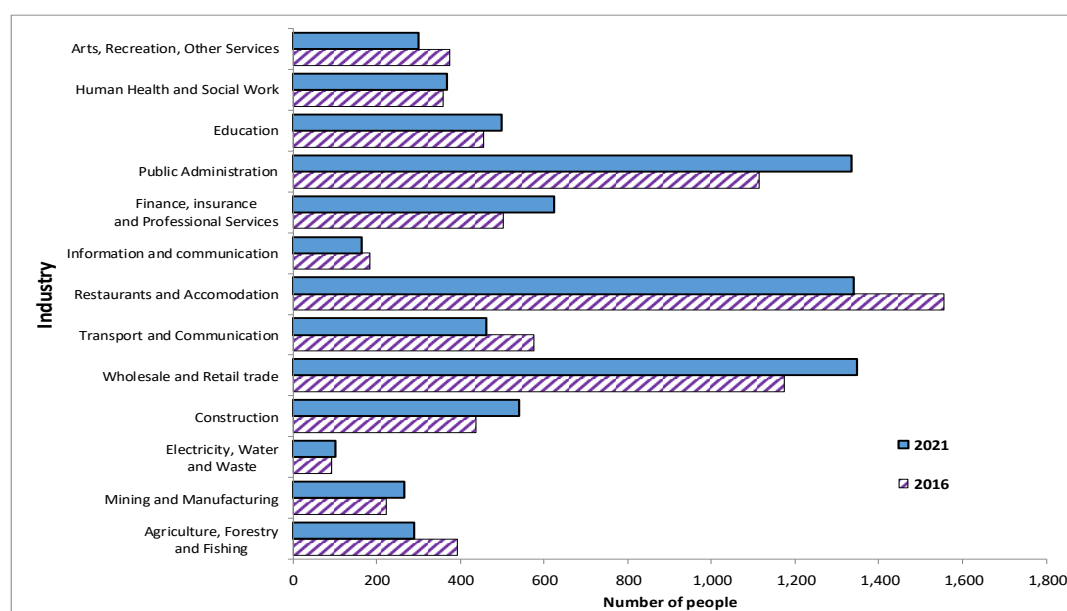
The biggest occupational group was the 'Service and Sales Workers' dominated by females with 29.3 per cent and 15.4 per cent for males. Jobs in this sector includes shop assistant, housekeeping and caregiving for children and for the elderly.

Clerical support workers are also an area dominated by females along with the Professional group where nurses and teaching professionals are classified. Males were found mostly in the elementary occupations engaged in building, metal works, machinery and trades related work.

4.5 Industry

The Public Administration sector was the largest employing industry in 2021 with 17.8 per cent closely followed by Wholesale and Retail Trade with 17.5 per cent. Although employment in the agriculture and fishing employing sector took a downfall in 2021, subsistence farming and fishing, (those not in employment) increased. In 2016 the restaurant and accommodation sector was the largest employment sector, employing 20.9 per cent of all employees but fell by 15 per cent in 2021. This was due to border lockdown when the country recorded minimal or no tourist at all. Sectors related to tourism, such as transport, arts and recreation also took a hit during this period. The trend for the rest of the industries are seen in the graph below (Fig 9).

Figure 9: Employment by Industry Sector 2016 and 2021



4.6 Unpaid Work

Unpaid work are for those persons providing unpaid services for their own homes or households. These include general housework, cooking, cleaning, gardening, looking after own children and family members. Housework was the most common form of unpaid work which was nearly equally carried out by both sexes, men 43.3 per cent and women at 56.7 per cent. Gardening also was a task shared equally between both sexes (males at 50.3 per cent and females at 49.7 per cent). Females were found to be performing more the caregiving household tasks such as looking after the children and elderly. Paid caregivers are not included in this section.

4.7 Income Sources

Wages and salaries make up a large proportion of income accounting for 48.3 per cent of all incomes of the Cook Islands followed by old aged pension at 14.8 per cent and child benefit at 8.8 per cent. Income from self-employment was also significant at 8.1 per cent.

Table 12: Income by Income type (percentage distribution)

Income Type	Cook Islands		Southern Group	Northern Group
	Islands	Rarotonga		
Wages and Salaries	61.3	64.7	49.2	59.5
Self Employment	10.2	10.9	9.3	4.3
Interest, Dividend, Rent, etc	2.2	2.8	0.4	0.3
Superannuation	4.4	4.6	4.5	1.5
Remittance	4.0	3.5	6.1	3.5
Old Age Pension	18.8	17.3	24.8	17.7
Child Benefit	11.1	10.0	12.0	21.4
Infirm, Invalid or Other	4.9	4.6	6.4	4.6
No Source of Income	9.8	9.0	11.9	13.0

4.8 Income

Information on income is recorded in ranges as it is thought that respondents are more willing to give a range for income than they are to state the precise value. However, there is a loss of accuracy in obtaining ranges only, as the calculation of average incomes would be based on the midpoint of the range and also income information in the census is usually very approximate.

Nearly 10 per cent of the population had no income, while 9.4 per cent had an income of more than \$40,000 per annum. The median income in Rarotonga was calculated to be \$18,000 and Te Pa Enua median income was at \$11,000 a notably large increase when compared to the 2016 census.

Table 13: Income level of those 15 years and older

Income Level	COOK ISLANDS			Rarotonga			Southern Group			Northern Group		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
No income	9.8	9.7	9.9	9.0	8.9	9.1	11.9	12.2	11.6	13.0	11.7	14.5
\$0-\$4,999	8.7	6.7	10.6	6.5	5.2	7.8	16.2	11.9	20.2	11.1	7.5	15.1
\$5000-\$9,999	15.2	14.0	16.4	12.1	10.8	13.3	23.5	23.2	23.9	26.3	21.2	32.1
\$10000-\$14,999	16.9	18.0	15.8	15.3	15.7	15.0	20.6	23.3	18.0	24.2	28.1	19.8
\$15000-\$19,999	17.2	18.8	15.6	18.1	19.3	16.9	13.7	15.3	12.2	17.3	23.4	10.4
\$20000-\$29,999	14.2	14.7	13.7	16.8	17.4	16.2	7.7	8.4	7.0	4.1	4.5	3.8
\$30000-\$39,999	8.6	7.8	9.4	10.3	9.6	10.9	4.1	2.6	5.4	2.7	2.5	2.8
\$40000-\$49,999	3.7	4.0	3.5	4.6	4.9	4.3	1.1	1.6	0.7	0.9	0.6	1.3
\$50000-\$59,999	2.3	2.2	2.4	3.0	2.8	3.1	0.6	0.7	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.3
\$60000-\$69,999	0.9	1.2	0.7	1.2	1.5	0.9	0.3	0.4	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0
\$70000-\$79,999	0.6	0.7	0.5	0.8	1.0	0.6	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
\$80000-\$89,999	0.5	0.6	0.4	0.6	0.7	0.6	0.1	0.2	0.0	0.1	0.3	0.0
\$90000-\$99,999	0.3	0.4	0.2	0.4	0.5	0.2	0.1	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0
\$100000 or more	1.0	1.2	0.8	1.3	1.6	1.0	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0

Table 14: Total, Average, Per capita, household income by region in \$NZ

Region	Total Annual Income	Average Annual Income		
		All those 15+ years	per capita	Private Household
Rarotonga	182,072,500	21,863	16,761	52,516
Southern Group	26,470,000	11,956	8,727	27,516
Northern Group	7,415,000	10,953	6,797	29,425
COOK ISLANDS	215,957,500	19,249	14,410	46,135

Total income was estimated around NZD 216million per annum, roughly translating to a per capita income of \$14,400 for every man, woman and child. The average annual income of all those 15 years and older was \$19,249 (males \$20,209 and females \$18,348). Income levels in Rarotonga nearly more than double that in the Outer Islands. Household income was estimated to be \$46,135 on an annual basis.

5. Fertility Characteristics

Although civil registration or administrative records is the preferred ways to collect data on fertility, sets of core questions about fertility was advised for inclusion in a census. The following questions were targeted to all women aged 15 years and older:

- Have you ever given birth to a child even if the child had later died?
- If yes, how many babies have you given birth to?
- How many are still living?
- What was the date of birth of your first child; and
- What was the date of birth of your last or youngest child

Considering the sensitivity of the question, women were asked for the child's date of birth instead of the woman's age when the birth occurred. The children ever born alive questions ask about lifetime fertility, while the question on date of birth of last child born alive collects information about recent fertility.

There were a total of 5,805 women aged 15 years and older and out of this 4,149 (71 per cent) had at least given birth to a child, and 29 per cent (1,736) have not had a child. The total number of children ever born to women aged 15 years and older was estimated to 13,739 babies.

Based on the number of childless women aged 50 years and older, childlessness was about 15 per cent. Of all women who had children, most had 2-3 children. Two per cent or 80 women had 10 or more children.

Table 15: Female resident population 15 years and older by number of children ever born alive

Age of women	Number of Women	Number of children ever born alive													Average Parity
		0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10+	Total		
15-19	582	553	28	1								-	30	0.1	
20-24	433	268	119	33	10	3						-	227	0.5	
25-29	487	207	106	109	41	18	5	1				-	550	1.1	
30-34	482	128	105	101	76	45	21	4	1	1		-	859	1.8	
35-39	493	100	80	99	93	58	34	15	8	4		2	1,157	2.3	
40-44	484	107	53	99	95	48	40	23	9	6		4	1,219	2.5	
45-49	518	92	64	91	96	72	49	28	10	7	6	3	1,446	2.8	
50-54	514	91	56	95	79	88	43	31	17	9	3	2	1,476	2.9	
55-59	511	64	69	98	77	76	62	27	15	12	6	5	1,580	3.1	
60-64	396	42	47	62	66	63	51	31	14	11	8	1	1,330	3.4	
65-69	305	30	19	63	40	53	40	22	21	4	5	8	1,124	3.7	
70-74	217	19	25	23	35	32	30	23	11	5	3	11	852	3.9	
75-79	188	16	17	21	24	29	16	22	17	6	4	16	838	4.5	
80+	195	19	12	19	15	22	14	21	22	13	10	28	1,051	5.4	
TOTAL	5805	1,736	800	914	747	607	405	248	145	78	45	80	13,739	2.4	

The average number of children ever born to all women (average parity) was 2.4 children per woman a decline compared to 2.5 in the 2016 Census. The average parity increases with the age of women. While the 15-19 year old women had on average only 0.1 children (every tenth woman had one child), women aged 45-49 had nearly 3 children, and women aged 80 years or older had on average 5 or more children. The average parities of women older than 49 years is also called the '*Completed Fertility Rate*', a cohort measure demonstrating how many children a certain cohort of women who completed their childbearing actually produced during those years.

Those women who have had children, 46 per cent had their first child at the age of 20 and 24 years and about 26 per cent had their last child between the ages of 30 and 34 years. About 0.6 per cent of women had their first child below the age of 15 years and about 1.4 per cent of all women had their last child at the age of 45 years and over.

6. Dwellings or Housing characteristics

6.1 Dwelling Tenure

A total of 4,681 private dwellings were occupied on Census night, compared to 4,435 in 2016 showing an increase of 5.5 per cent (244 dwellings). Rarotonga experienced the highest increase in the number of occupied dwellings with 7.2 per cent (232 dwellings). The Southern Group experienced a slight change in the number of occupied dwellings however the Northern Group experienced a decrease of 3.8 per cent, 10 dwellings less during this period.

Of the 4,681 private dwellings in the Cook Islands, 2,371 (50.7 per cent) were owned without a loan or mortgage repayments, 15.8 per cent were on loan and 18.1 per cent were available for rent. As expected, the majority of houses on the outer islands are owned outright compared to those on Rarotonga. People on Rarotonga have greater access to financing opportunities thus have a higher proportion (89.3 per cent) of dwellings that have direct loan or mortgage repayment commitments.

Dwellings that were being occupied either free of charge or provided free with employment was 661 compared to 608 dwellings in 2016. Rented dwellings totalled 849 compared to 788 in 2016. Of the rented dwellings, 820 (96.6 per cent) were located on Rarotonga. The majority of the rental properties were rented at \$200 to \$299 per week and the majority were rented out partly furnished.

6.2 Household Size

Average household size was 3.2 persons per household compared to 3.5 in 2016. The assumption is that Cook Islanders are shifting from living in extended family households, towards a nuclear family type or choosing smaller size families. Northern Group has the largest household size with 4.3 persons per household, up by a small margin, when compared to 2016.

Table 16: Number of Occupied Dwellings and Household Size

Usual resident at time of Census	2011			2010			2021		
	Total	Average	Persons Hhld Size	Total	Average	Persons Hhld Size	Total	Average	Persons Hhld Size
Rarotonga	3,154	10,987	3.5	3,235	11,163	3.5	3,467	10,829	3.1
Southern Islands	939	3,360	3.6	940	3,164	3.4	962	3,040	3.2
Northern Islands	279	1,112	4.0	262	1,101	4.2	252	1,095	4.3
COOK ISLANDS	4,372	15,459	3.5	4,437	15,428	3.5	4,681	14,964	3.2

6.3 Number of Rooms

A question on the number of rooms was asked in this census. The number of rooms in combination with the number of people living in a dwelling provides a ratio of people per dwelling, which can be used to measure the extent of overcrowding in our households. A three to five roomed dwellings are the most common in the Cook Islands. Higher average household size was evident in the Northern group islands at 4.3 persons but much lower in Rarotonga at 3.1 persons. Overall the average household size was 3.2 persons in each private dwelling.

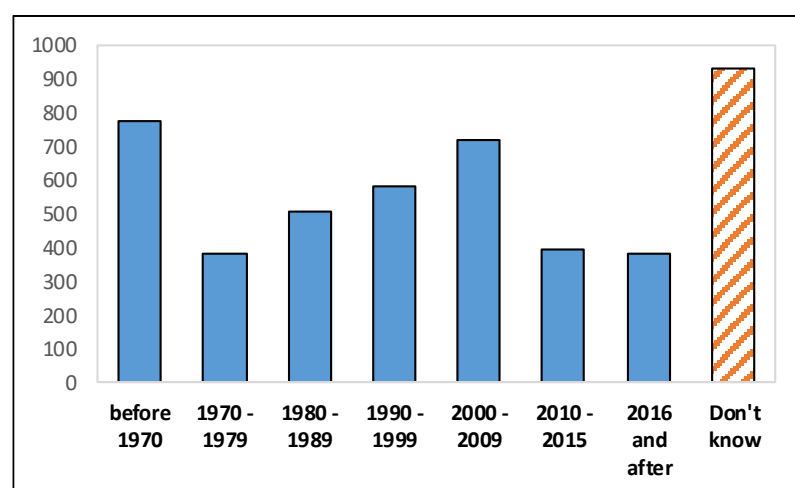
The 2021 census reported 2,500 (53.4 per cent) of private dwellings were constructed of concrete, both floor and walls. Over 50 per cent, 2,411 of these dwellings consist of concrete floor, concrete

wall and iron roofing. Much of these were the newer houses, moving away from the usual hardboard walls. Over 95.0 per cent have iron roofing while the remaining have tile roofing and other materials. Concrete flooring predominates in the Cook Islands, being found in 86.0 per cent of dwellings.

6.4 Year Dwelling was constructed

There has been a significant increase in the number of private dwellings constructed since 2000 up to 2021. As illustrated in *Figure 10*, a large number of household members had no idea of when the house they were living in was built, this could be those houses let out for rental.

Figure 10: Number of Dwellings constructed before 1970 to 2021



7. Socio-economic characteristics

7.1 Sources of Water Supply

The public water main is the major source of water supply in the Cook Islands. A total of 3,990 (85.2 per cent) of private dwellings are connected to the water mains compared to 3,700 (83.4 per cent) in 2016. Over 90 per cent of the Rarotonga households had water supplied directly from the public water main. The next most common supply is the water tank with 2,401 (51.3 per cent) households, prevalent in the outer islands particularly in the Northern islands.

Table 17: Households sources of water supply (per cent)

Region	Public Water Main	Public Water catchment	Own Water Tank	Communal Water Tank	Other Sources
COOK ISLANDS	85.2	2.6	51.3	1.7	0.5
Rarotonga	93.3	2.5	43.0	1.1	0.5
Southern Group	77.4	2.5	68.9	2.4	0.5
Northern Group	3.6	5.2	97.6	7.1	0.4

7.2 Water for general purpose

Water used for cooking, washing and personal hygiene are mainly sourced from public water mains whether filtered or not or whether piped directly into the dwelling or not. Over 40 per cent of all household's main source of water comes from water mains with own filtered tap piped into the

dwelling whilst 34 per cent are from unfiltered tap water. Own water tank is the main source in the outer islands in particular the northern group with 59.9 per cent of all households.

7.3 Drinking Water

The main source of drinking water reported by households in 2021 was from water stations (39.9 per cent), 21.5 per cent reported own filtered water piped into dwelling. Bottled or bought water was lower in this census, 9.5 per cent compared to 34.2 per cent in 2016. Filtered tap water and bottled or bought water was more common in Rarotonga compared to the outer islands which are heavily dependent on rainwater tanks as their main source of drinking water.

7.4 Household Facilities and Amenities

Household amenities affect the overall quality of life of the people and the 2021 Census reveal some important developments in households' living situation.

7.4.1 Sources of electricity

Households with no electricity account for only 0.56 per cent of all dwellings, meaning that nearly 100 per cent of households have access to electricity. The majority of the households, 97.1 per cent had access to electricity through the main power grid and the remaining 2.9 per cent are off-grid households, 2.9 per cent had some access to electricity through diesel generators, solar panels and other sources. The use of electricity and solar panels increased in both Rarotonga and the outer islands.

7.4.2 Basic sanitation

Access to basic sanitation services refers to the use of improved facilities that are not shared with other households, which include flush, composting toilets or pit latrines with slabs. Nearly 100 per cent or 4,581 households had flush or composting toilet and 90.2 per cent are located inside the dwellings, indicating a level of improvement in achieving access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for Cook Islanders.

7.4.3 Cooking Fuel and cooking amenities

Although with the highest access to electricity, nearly 90 per cent of households were using gas as the main source of cooking fuel. Only about 12 per cent of households were using electricity as their main cooking fuels. Nearly 10 out of 10 households (90.6 per cent) in the Cook Islands own a gas stove far more than an electric stove. It is evident that a high number of households own electrical appliances such electric jugs, toasters, microwaves, rice cookers and electric frying pans.

7.4.4 Power Tools

The most common tool owned by the household is an electric drill, battery charger, circular saw and sander. With respect to the ownership of safety equipment, torch ranked top with 3,530 households owning a torch. At least 49.5 per cent (2,319) of households own a first aid kit.

7.4.5 Entertainment equipment

About 87.1 per cent of all households own a television with 57.6 per cent owning a stereo or radio. Computer, tablets and iPads are also popular in households.

7.4.6 Household facilities

3,925 households had a washing machine with 2,968 households on Rarotonga. Over 3,000 households reported to owning a freezer and/or refrigerator or fridge/freezer. Other selected appliances owned by households is stated in the tables appended to the report.

7.4.7 Transportation

The motor cycle is a popular mode of transport in the Cook Islands with 80.9 per cent of households owning at least a motor cycle. In the Southern group islands nearly all households (92.1 per cent) own a motor cycle. The motor car is also popular especially on Rarotonga with over 50 per cent of households on Rarotonga reporting to owning a car. By contrast very few households own a car, truck or van in the northern group islands, this makes sense considering the size of the islands.

Table 18: Proportion of Households owning their own transport (per cent)

Region	Motor Car	Truck	Van	Motor Cycle	Bicycle
COOK ISLANDS	49.3	33.9	12.4	80.9	24.6
Rarotonga	59.3	34.5	14.9	77.3	24.9
Southern Group	26.1	38.0	6.4	92.1	22.5
Northern Group	0.4	10.3	1.2	88.1	29.0

7.5 Household Waste Management

A question on the way household's disposes of their waste was asked in the census to measure the availability and accessibility of a reliable waste collection service to the population. The data showed over 80 per cent of private households uses the public collection service as a means of disposing its household rubbish or garbage. Although a high proportion of the population uses the public collection service, over 60 per cent of the northern group islands still burns rubbish in their backyards, a possibility that no public collection service exists in some of the Northern Group islands.

Table 19: Proportion of Households and method of disposing rubbish or garbage (per cent)

Region	Public collection	Take to Dump	Burn	Compost	Bury in the yard	Other
COOK ISLANDS	81.5	2.5	13.7	0.7	0.4	1.3
Rarotonga	90.5	1.0	6.1	0.5	0.3	1.7
Southern Group	62.3	7.1	28.3	1.5	0.6	0.3
Northern Group	30.6	5.6	62.7	0.4	0.8	-

8. Agriculture and Fishing Activities

Since 2021 was the year for the Census of Agriculture and Fishing, the Population Census limited the number of agriculture and fishing questions in the census to asking if the households did engage in any form of agriculture and fishing activity. If they were, what was the main purpose for this activity, whether for home consumption, for sale or for community obligations? This was intended to provide the Agriculture Census a frame for their data collection, so instead of visiting every household the Agriculture Census will only focus on households who had indicated engagement or involvement in any agriculture or fishing activity. Questions on fishing activity also asked the location of the fishing.

8.1 Agriculture Activity

At least 70 per cent of all households in the Cook Islands were engaged in one or more type of agricultural activity. Of those that were engaged, the majority, 44.2 per cent were growing flowers and ornamental plants and 43.8 per cent were engaged in harvesting and growing fruit trees. Southern group households were mostly engaged in raising livestock and poultry as well as growing and harvesting root crops. Northern group households were also engaged in raising livestock and poultry.

Table 20: Households engaged in Agriculture activity

Agriculture Activity	Cook Islands			
	Islands	Rarotonga	Sthn Group	Nthn Group
No Agriculture Activity	1,403	1,162	198	43
Raising Livestock/poultry	1,571	857	540	174
Grow Harvest Fruit trees	2,051	1,438	462	151
Grow Harvest root crops	1,653	1,025	502	126
Grow Harvest vegetables	1,563	1,134	326	103
Grow flowers and ornamentals	2,071	1,578	382	111
Agriculture Active Households	3,278	2,305	764	209

8.2 Purpose of Agriculture Activity

Of those households actively engaged in agriculture over 80 per cent were for home consumption only and a mere 1 per cent was for sale or commercial purposes.

Table 21: Households purpose of engaging in agriculture activity (per cent)

Agriculture Activity	Home Consumption only	Mainly for home, some for sale	Mainly for sale, some for home	For sale only	Other purpose
Raising Livestock/poultry	87.8	8.7	1.5	0.9	1.1
Grow Harvest Fruit trees	87.2	8.2	3.8	0.7	0.1
Grow Harvest root crops	82.9	11.6	4.4	1.0	0.1
Grow Harvest vegetables	85.3	8.4	5.1	0.9	0.4
Grow flowers and ornamentals	88.4	5.2	1.4	1.0	4.0

8.3 Coconut Consumption

A question on the use of and number of coconuts was also asked in the Census. Over 70 per cent of all households reported using coconuts mainly for home (eating, drinking and for making coconut oil). Over 21,000 coconuts were used for this purpose averaging up to 6 coconuts per household per week. About 32 per cent of all households also use coconut for animal feed.

8.4 Farm Equipment

The ownership of farm equipment in itself does not imply agriculture activity since a household may own some form of equipment but not necessarily engaged in agriculture activity. The main farm equipment owned by households in 2021 were more or less the same as those reported in 2016. The percentage of households reporting to owning farm equipment were, grass cutter (67.8), bush knife (63.5), water pump (51.0), motor mower (50.3), and chainsaw (35.8). There is no correlation found between owning a farm equipment to households' agriculture activity.

8.5 Fishing Activity

Overall only 39 per cent (1,825) of all private households were engaged in any type of fishing activity. Rarotonga accounted for 22.2 per cent or 1,040 active households and were mostly engaged in reef or lagoon fishing. Reef and lagoon harvesting includes paua (clams), rimu (seaweed), rori (bêche-de-mer) and other seafood collection.

Table 22: Households engaged in fishing activity

Fishing Activity	Cook Islands			
	Islands	Rarotonga	Sthn Group	Nthn Group
No Fishing Activity	2,856	2,427	386	43
Reef or Lagoon Fishing	1,670	925	548	197
Ocean Fishing	737	294	276	167
Pearls and Pearl Farming	40	22	5	13
Aquaculture Activity	51	31	12	8
Fishing Active Households	1,825	1,040	576	209

8.6 Purpose of Fishing Activity

Of those households actively engaged in reef or lagoon fishing, 90.6 per cent were for home consumption and only 0.5 per cent were for sale or commercial purposes. Ocean fishing was mainly for home consumption while 20.2 per cent engaged in ocean fishing for sale.

Pearls and pearl farming include retail, wholesale and artisanal or craft of pearls and 45 per cent of households reported to farming pearl for home use.

Table 23: Households purpose of engaging in fishing activity (per cent)

Fishing Activity	Home Consumption only	Mainly for home, some for sale	Mainly for sale, some for home	For sale only	Other purpose
Reef or Lagoon Fishing	90.6	7.2	1.4	0.5	0.4
Ocean Fishing	78.7	12.5	6.2	1.5	1.1
Pearls and Pearl Farming	45.0	5.0	7.5	40.0	2.5
Aquaculture Activity	70.6	7.8	2.0	7.8	11.8

9. Telecommunication System

9.1 Household access to telecommunication

Access to telecommunication systems is the ability of residents in a private dwelling to communicate, through telephone, mobile phone, or the Internet, with the outside world or with people outside their household. Overall almost 100 per cent of all private households in the Cook Islands have access to some form of communication system with only 2.3 per cent or 106 households reporting to no access at all.

Access to landlines or phone/fax at home is steady at 59.3 per cent compared to 58.3 per cent in 2016. Internet access is gaining popularity with 59.7 per cent of households now have internet or wi-fi access compared to 41 per cent in 2016. Cellular or mobile phone are the most popular means of communication with over 90 per cent of households reporting to having access to their own mobile devices.

Table 24: Households access to telecommunication system (per cent)

Region	Access to any form of telecommunication		Access to Phone/Fax		Access to Cellular or Mobile Phone		Access to Internet	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Rarotonga	98.7	1.3	59.4	40.6	94.3	5.7	61.7	38.3
Southern Group	94.4	5.6	60.7	39.3	84.6	15.4	53.5	46.5
Northern Group	97.6	2.4	51.2	48.8	85.3	14.7	55.6	44.4

9.2 Internet usage

The question on internet usage relates to those 15 years and older. Over 70 per cent of this population uses the internet. Major users of the internet are those aged between 20 to 39 years while less than 50 per cent of those 65 years and older use the internet.

Table 25: Frequent use of internet

Age Group	More than once a		Once a week or less
	Everyday	week	
15-24	79.2	18.9	1.8
25-34	84.0	13.4	2.6
35-44	83.9	13.5	2.5
45-54	79.4	16.3	4.3
55-64	78.7	16.3	5.0
65+	74.5	17.6	7.9
	80.6	15.9	3.5

Over 80 per cent of internet users used the internet every day, 15.9 per cent use it more than once a week and the rest, 3.5 per cent, use the internet at least once a week or less. Of internet users aged 65 and over, nearly three quarters (74.5 per cent) used the internet every day or almost every day, similarly to 58 per cent of internet users aged 75 and over.

Social media consumption ranks high as the main form of internet usage with nearly 90 per cent of the 15 years and older population use this as a mode of interacting with others. This is more popular in the younger cohorts while the older aged groups use the internet more for obtaining information and for emails.

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Note

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