

# CIVIL REGISTRATION AND VITAL STATISTICS IN NEW CALEDONIA

New Caledonia is located in the southwest Pacific Ocean. The archipelago, part of the Melanesia sub-region, includes the main island of Grande Terre, the Loyalty Islands, the Belep Archipelago, the Isle of Pines and a few remote islands. Locals refer to Grande Terre as Le Caillou (the pebble).



Land area  
(km<sup>2</sup>)  
**18,576**

2020 mid-year  
population estimate  
**273,000**

Population growth  
rate (%)  
**0.3**



Pacific  
Community  
Communauté  
du Pacifique



Pacific CRVS  
supported by Brisbane Accord Group

unicef  
for every child

## OVERVIEW

This civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS) country profile for New Caledonia is part of a series of country profiles for the Pacific Island region. The CRVS profiles consolidate knowledge shared by countries on the status of their CRVS systems in the recent past, including through government websites, published reports, media releases and presentations, and direct engagement between the authors of these profiles and in-country civil registration offices and health information offices. The objective of these CRVS country profiles is to provide a living resource (updated every 2-3 years) and quick reference point on the status and developments in CRVS systems in the Pacific Island region. The profiles provide an overview of the legislative, organisational and management frameworks of CRVS systems, registration processes, levels of completeness of birth and death registration, and the most recent developments towards improving CRVS systems. Whilst civil registration covers many vital events, these profiles focus on the registration of births and deaths, and collation of cause of death information. It is envisaged that these country profiles will serve as a fundamental tool in advocating for further investment in strengthening the coverage and completeness of CRVS systems across the Pacific Island region.

## SOURCE OF BIRTH AND DEATH DATA

The source of figures in Table 1 (births) and Table 2 (deaths) is outlined below each table, with the full citation given in the Reference section at the end of the document. All figures were obtained from published sources or through direct contact with in-country civil registration offices and health information offices. The date figures were obtained through direct in-country contact is stated below the tables, and indicates when those figures were extracted from in-country databases.

## SUGGESTED CITATION

Pacific Community and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) 2021. Civil registration and vital statistics in New Caledonia. Noumea, New Caledonia: Pacific Community.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information please contact the Statistics for Development Division (SDD) – Pacific Community at: [contact-sdd@spc.int](mailto:contact-sdd@spc.int); <https://sdd.spc.int/>

## CRVS LEGISLATION, ORGANISATION AND MANAGEMENT

### *Current legal framework governing birth and death registration*

The recording and registration of births and deaths in New Caledonia is governed by the customary act no. 2006–2015, which was implemented on 15 January 2017.

### *Agencies responsible for birth and death recording and registration*

The registration of births and deaths in New Caledonia is undertaken by civil status services. There is a civil status service in each of the 33 municipalities of New Caledonia. By right, the mayor of each municipality is the civil status officer, but this officer may delegate some functions to a deputy, a municipal councillor or a municipal agent. The registrar must record all events that take place in the municipality (births, marriages, deaths, etc.). Information of birth and death registration in each municipality is sent to the *Institut de la statistique et des études économiques (ISEE) Nouvelle-Calédonie*, where it is collated.

### *National CRVS committee and CRVS action plan*

New Caledonia has a well-functioning CRVS system, with birth and death registration assessed to be complete (approx. 100%). The *ISEE Nouvelle-Calédonie* regularly publishes detailed socio-demographic information on all births and deaths in New Caledonia on their website, which dates back to the 1980s. New Caledonia does not have a CRVS committee or a CRVS action plan, as the current CRVS system is complete and well-functioning.

### *National ID systems*

New Caledonia has no current plans to implement a national ID system.

## REPORTING AND REGISTRATION OF BIRTHS

### *Recording births at health facilities and registering births at the civil registry*

A birth must be declared within 30 days to the Civil Status Officer of the town hall of the town where the birth occurred. It can be done by the father, mother, family member, doctor, midwife or anyone who has knowledge of the birth.

### *Timeframes and costs*

Standard, on-time birth registration	no charge
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### *Tasks that require a birth certificate and incentives (financial or other) for completing the birth registration process*

A birth certificate is required to obtain a passport and for enrolment in school.

## REPORTING AND REGISTRATION OF DEATHS

### *Recording deaths at health facilities and registering deaths at the civil registry*

A death must be noted by a doctor, then declared within 9 days at the town hall of the town where the death occurred. Anyone who has knowledge of the death can make this declaration.

### *Timeframes and costs*

Standard, on-time death registration	no charge
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### *Tasks that require a death certificate and incentives (financial or other) for completing the death registration process*

A death certificate is required for inheritance of land, property and estates of deceased persons.

## COLLATION AND CLASSIFICATION OF CAUSE OF DEATH

### Process for coding death certificates

Since 2012, medical causes of death have been coded according to ICD10. The Directorate of Health and Social Affairs (*Direction des affaires sanitaires et sociales*) is the agency responsible for medical death certification and coding of causes of death. Mortality certification and coding practices are strong in New Caledonia. The proportion of deaths classified as cause of death unknown (symptoms, signs and abnormal laboratory and clinical findings, not elsewhere classified) has remained between 9% and 13% over the most recent decade for which data have been published (2009–2018) (ISEE 2020). Deaths coded as cause of death unknown are likely related to the proportion of deaths in New Caledonia that do not occur in a health facility, and therefore a trained medical physician is not present at the time of the person's death in order to complete the medical death certificate. In 2017, around 65% of deaths in New Caledonia occurred in a hospital, health facility, or retirement home, whilst the remainder occurred at home or other places (ISEE 2020).

## BIRTH AND DEATH REGISTRATION COMPLETENESS

New Caledonia has a well-functioning CRVS system, with birth and death registration assessed to be complete (approx. 100%). Each birth and death registration is assigned a unique number, and when all records are collated monthly at the national level by ISEE the sequence of numbers from each municipality is checked. In the event of errors, either in the continuity of record number sequence, or in the completeness or accuracy of information on the registration, the ISEE investigates the town hall in the municipality concerned.

Table 1. Completeness of birth registration data

Year	Source of births				Completeness of birth registration		
	Civil Registry <sup>a</sup>	Health <sup>b</sup>	SPC projection <sup>c</sup>	Census <sup>d</sup>	Compared with health	Compared with SPC	Compared with census
2018	-	-	4,511	-	-	-	-
2017	4,059	4,059	-	-	100%	-	-
2016	4,271	4,271	-	-	100%	-	-
2015	4,191	4,191	-	-	100%	-	-
2014	4,370	4,370	-	-	100%	-	-
2013	4,373	4,373	-	-	100%	-	-
2012	4,389	4,389	-	-	100%	-	-
2011	4,119	4,119	-	-	100%	-	-
2010	4,178	4,178	-	-	100%	-	-

Sources: <sup>a</sup>Civil registry (ISEE 2019a). <sup>b</sup>Direction des affaires sanitaires et sociales (DASS 2019). <sup>c</sup>Calculated from 2018 crude birth rate (Pacific Community 2018a) and 2018 population projection (Pacific Community 2018b). <sup>d</sup>The 2014 and 2019 censuses did not ask questions on annual births and therefore could not be used to estimate the completeness of birth registration. Completeness was calculated by dividing 'Civil Registry' by 'Health'.

Table 2. Completeness of death registration data

Year	Source of deaths				Completeness of death registration		
	Civil Registry <sup>a</sup>	Health <sup>b</sup>	SPC projection <sup>c</sup>	Census <sup>d</sup>	Compared with health	Compared with SPC	Compared with census
2018	-	1,535	1,549	-	-	-	-
2017	1,529	1,529	-	-	100%	-	-
2016	1,569	1,569	-	-	100%	-	-
2015	1,465	1,465	-	-	100%	-	-
2014	1,406	1,406	-	-	100%	-	-
2013	1,374	1,374	-	-	100%	-	-

2012	1,322	1,322	-	-	100%	-	-
2011	1,320	1,320	-	-	100%	-	-
2010	1,191	1,191	-	-	100%	-	-

Sources: <sup>a</sup>Civil registry (ISEE 2019b). <sup>b</sup>Direction des Affaires Sanitaires et Sociales (ISEE, 2020). <sup>c</sup>Calculated from 2018 crude death rate (Pacific Community 2018a) and 2018 population projection (Pacific Community 2018b). <sup>d</sup>The 2014 and 2019 censuses did not ask questions on all-age mortality, and therefore could not be used to estimate the completeness of death registration. Completeness was calculated by dividing 'Civil Registry' by 'Health'.

## PUBLICATION OF CRVS DATA AND REPORTS

The *Institut de la statistique et des études économiques* (ISEE) Nouvelle-Calédonie regularly publishes comprehensive vital statistics information on births and deaths in New Caledonia, which date back to the 1980s. Published and publicly available information on births includes annual figures of live births by province and municipality of birth registration, nationality of parents, marital status of parents, type of birth (single or multiple birth), place of birth (home, hospital, etc.), assistance received by the mother (doctor, midwife, none, etc.), professional occupation of parents, and several other variables (ISEE 2019a). Published and publicly available information on deaths includes annual figures of deaths by sex and age group, province and municipality of residence, province and municipality of death registration, location of death, professional occupation of the deceased, and several other variables (ISEE 2019b).

## REFERENCES

DASS (*Direction des Affaires Sanitaires et Sociales*). 2019. Situation sanitaire en Nouvelle-Calédonie. December 2018 report. I.1.1 Demography. Available at: [file:///C:/Users/z3365613/Downloads/01lademographie2018w%20\(1\).pdf](file:///C:/Users/z3365613/Downloads/01lademographie2018w%20(1).pdf)

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