



Photo credit: Patrick Bodzak

# Departure cards factsheet

## Key facts and stats:

- › In 2017, 6.5 million cards were completed.
- › This represents around 100,000 hours of traveller time (which is around 12 years).
- › Departure cards were introduced in April 1921
- › Based on departure statistics, it is estimated over 132 million cards have been filled out since they were introduced

## Why do the departure cards need to go?

The main current purpose for the cards is statistical. Stats NZ has confirmed there are alternative sources of information and methods they can use to produce tourism and migration statistics, removing the need for travellers to complete these cards.

The removal of departure cards will align with international best practice. Few other countries have departure cards with the level of detail required by the New Zealand one. They were originally used to process and account for all travellers departing New Zealand, but this is now done electronically. Continuing with this requirement is inconsistent with the border sector vision to provide world class facilitation for travellers.

## When will the departure cards be removed?

Departure cards will be removed in November. The exact date is yet to be decided.

Removing the cards in November maximises the benefit to the border (due to the busy holiday period), while also allowing enough time to implement the changes.

## How will information on departure cards now be collected?

Electronic systems will capture who is leaving New Zealand accurately. Tourism and migration statistics currently rely on departure cards, which ask travellers how long they have been in New Zealand and how long they intend to be away. From November, Stats NZ will switch to a new system that measures actual time that travellers are in New Zealand and how long they are away. This approach is similar to Australia's.

From November, the Government will continue to collect the information required for the most critical functions of the card (border processing and key statistics) by electronic and other means. This includes information in passports; departure date; actual time spent in New Zealand and actual time away. Other less important information currently collected on departure cards may be collected in other ways in future.

## What about arrival cards?

Removing the arrival card is more difficult. Arrival cards collect important traveller declarations that are used by border staff to manage immigration, smuggling and biosecurity risks. Officials are in the early stages of exploring alternative means of capturing this information, but there are no set timeframes.

MBIE 3767\_JUL16\_2018

