

# Is working Later Our Future? Growing Participation of Older New Zealanders in Labour Force

Mansoor Khawaja, Bill Boddington  
Statistics New Zealand

New Zealand Association of Gerontology and Age  
Concern New Zealand Conference, 7-9 October 2009

## OUTLINE

- **This study uses census data to analyse trends in the labour force participation of New Zealanders aged 65 years and over, during the 20-year period 1986–2006.**
- **Definition of labour force**
- **Senior New Zealanders in labour force**
- **Differentials by age group, ethnicity and education**
- **Part-time versus full-time work**
- **Future outlook and concluding thoughts**

## LABOUR FORCE DEFINED

The census definition of labour force covers people aged 15 years and over who regularly work for one or more hours per week for financial gains, or who are unemployed and seeking either full-time or part-time work.

It includes people who worked without pay in work that contributed directly to the operation of a farm, business, or professional practice owned or operated by a relative.

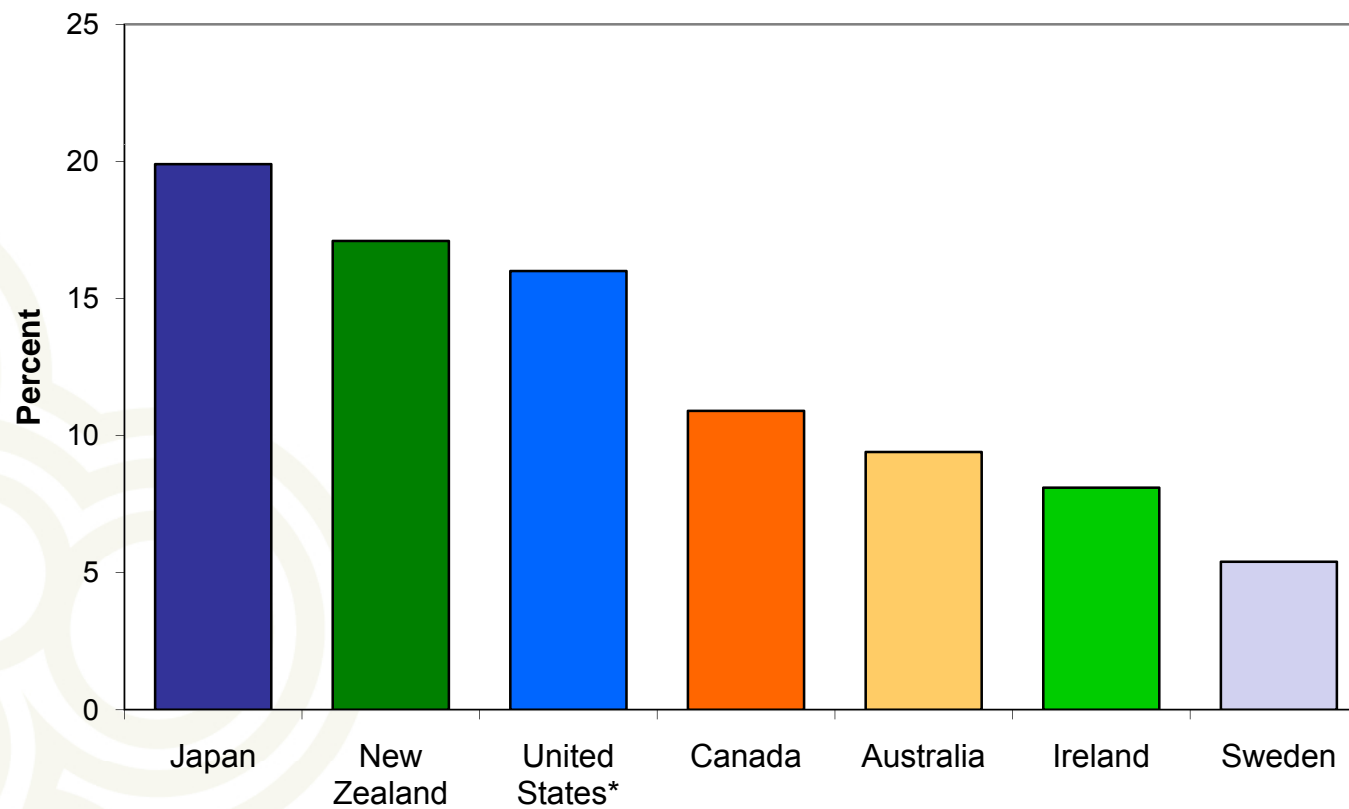
It also includes people who had a job but were not at work due to illness or injury, personal or family responsibilities, bad weather or mechanical breakdown, direct involvement in an industrial dispute, being on leave or holiday.

**It excludes unpaid voluntary work.**

## Labour Force Participation of Population aged 65 years and over, New Zealand, 1986-2006

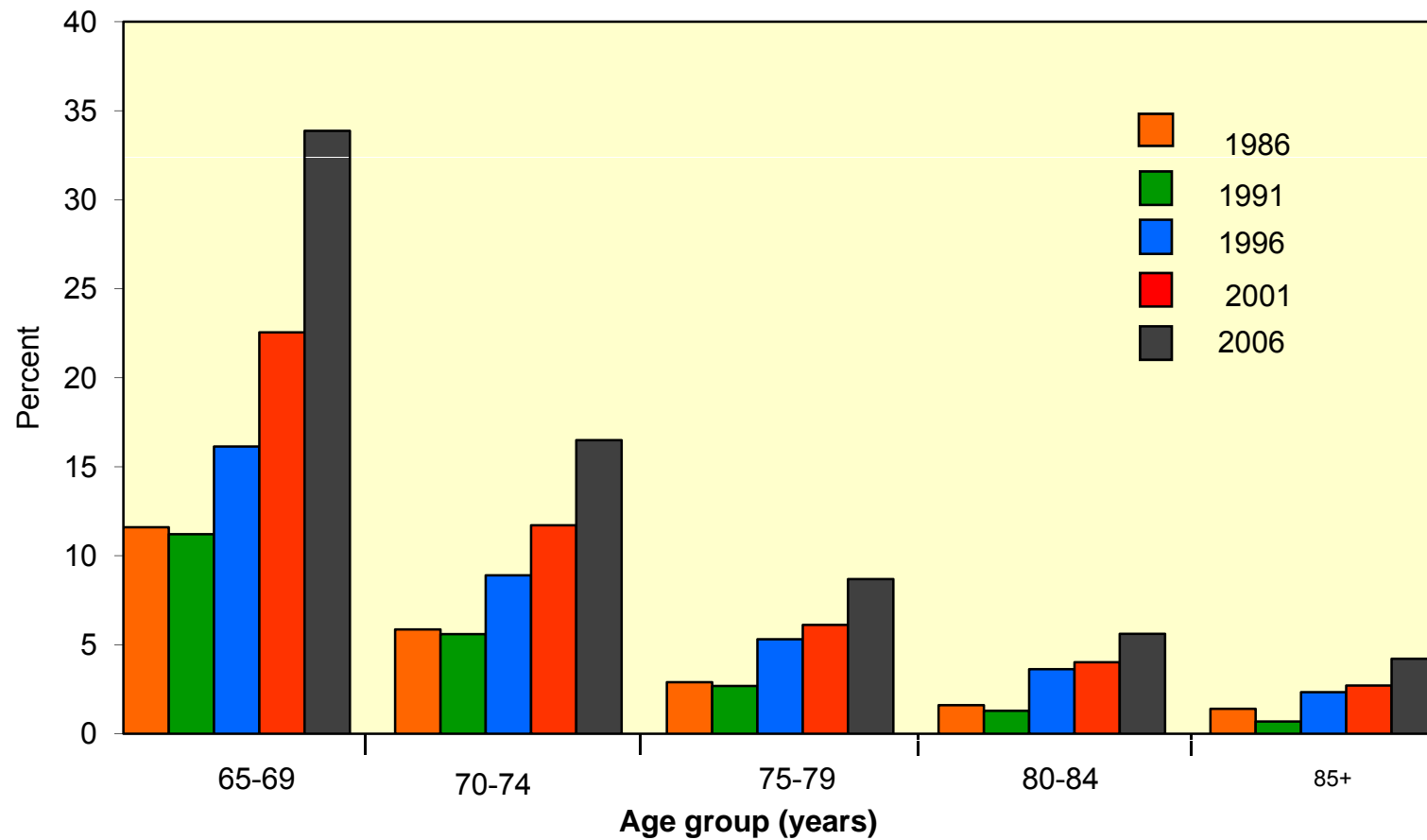
Census year	Total population aged 65+	Population aged 65+ in labour force		Labour force participation rate
		Number	Increase	
1986	342,111	21,828	...	6.4
1991	379,767	22,632	804	6.0
1996	422,667	37,719	15,087	9.2
2001	450,423	50,745	13,026	11.6
2006	495,603	82,545	31,800	17.1
Total growth	153,492	60,717		

## Labour Force Participation of 65+ Population, Selected OECD Countries, 2006



\*US data is for 2007.

## Labour Force Participation, by age group, New Zealand, 1986-2006



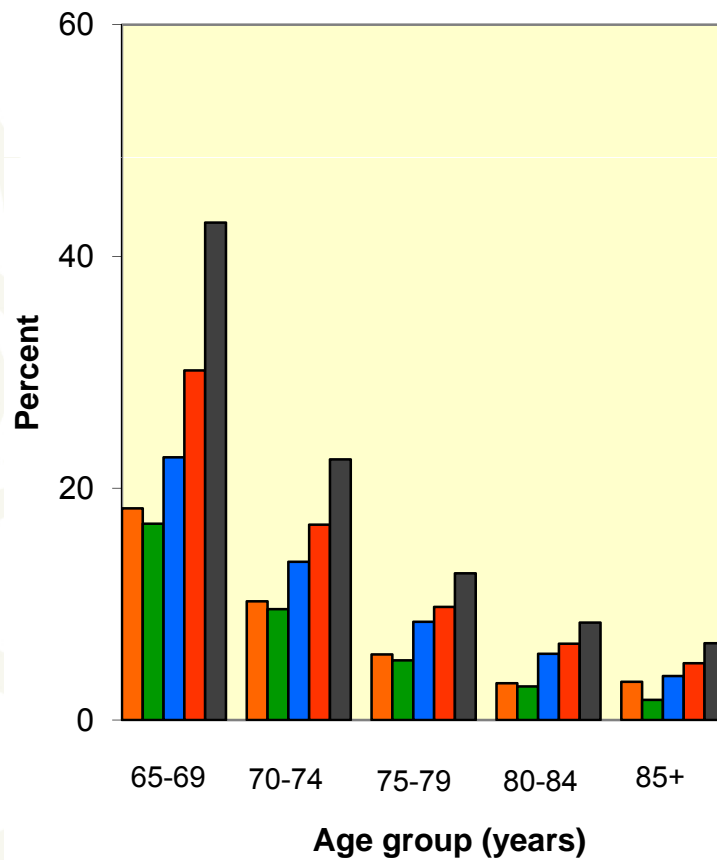
## Men and Women aged 65+ years in labour force, 2006

Year	65+ group in labour force		Women as a percentage of labour force	LF participation rate (1)	
	Men	Women		Men	Women
1986	16,100	5,700	26.2	11.2	2.9
1991	16,600	6,000	26.7	10.3	2.8
1996	25,400	12,300	32.6	14.4	5.2
2001	33,500	17,300	34.0	17.5	7.0
2006	51,500	31,300	37.6	23.9	11.6

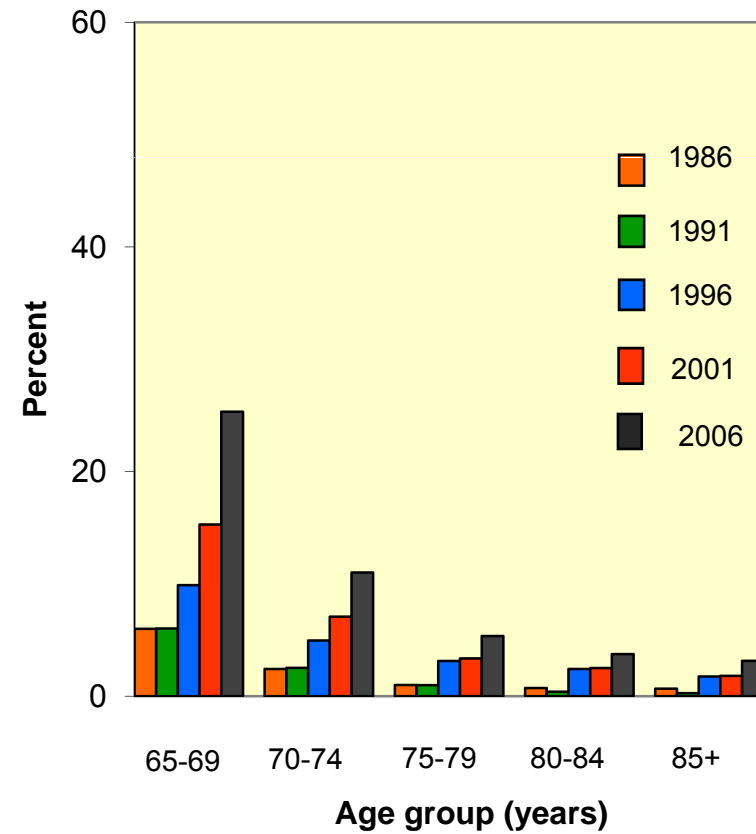
(1) Number of men or women aged 65+ in labour force as a percentage of all men or women aged 65+ years respectively.

## Labour Force Participation by Sex, 1986-2006

### Male



### Female

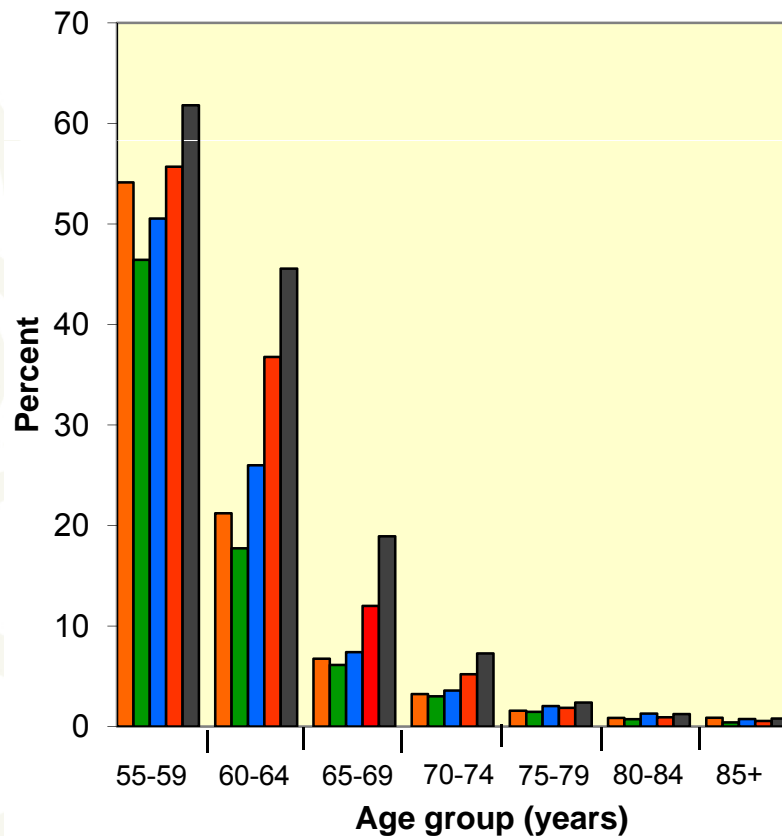


## Full- and Part-time Employment 1986-2006

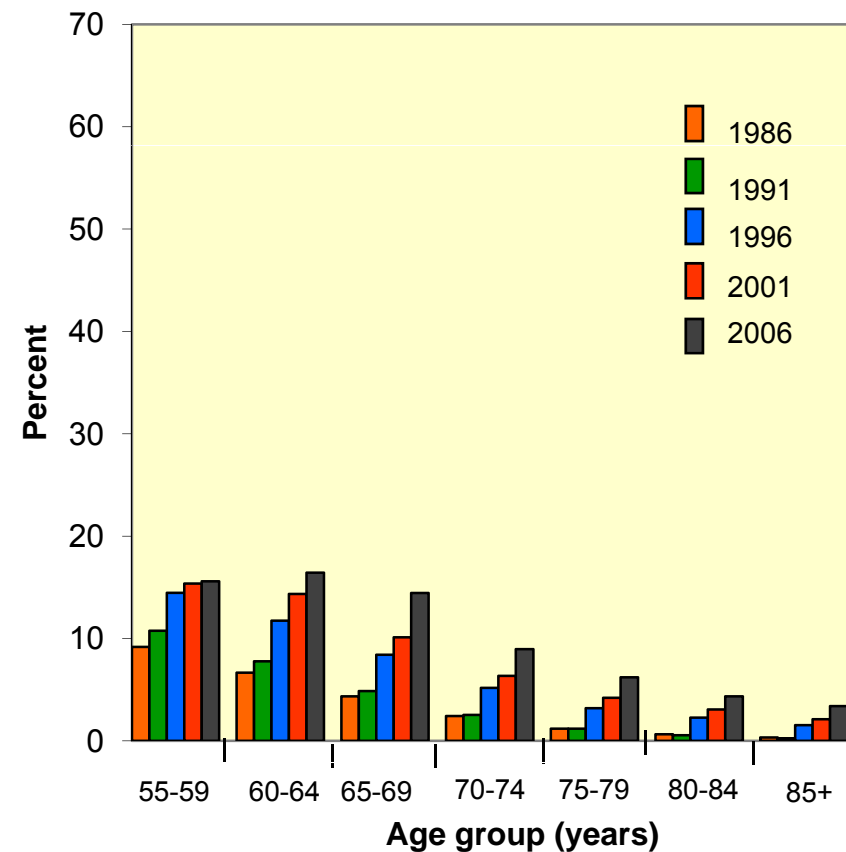
Census year	Part-time as percentage of total employed			Full-time employment		Part-time employment		Total 65+ Employed
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Male	Female	
1986	35.5	54.1	40.3	9,960	2,481	5,478	2,925	20,844
1991	39.1	59.3	44.5	9,927	2,415	6,369	3,519	22,230
1996	50.7	68.2	56.4	12,303	3,822	12,660	8,205	36,990
2001	45.6	67.6	53.1	17,913	5,508	15,030	11,478	49,929
2006	42.9	66.3	51.7	28,968	10,311	21,780	20,310	81,369

## Full-time and Part-time Employment, by Age Group, 1986-2006

### Full-time

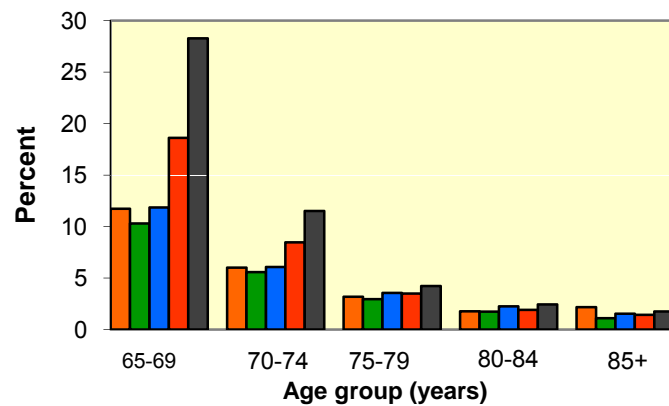


### Part-time

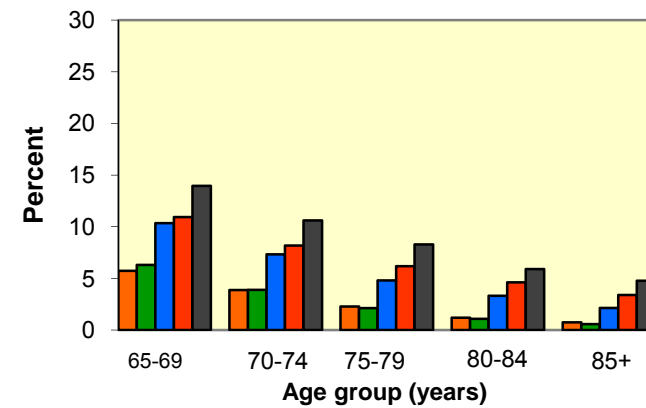


## Employment by Age Group and Sex, 1986-2006

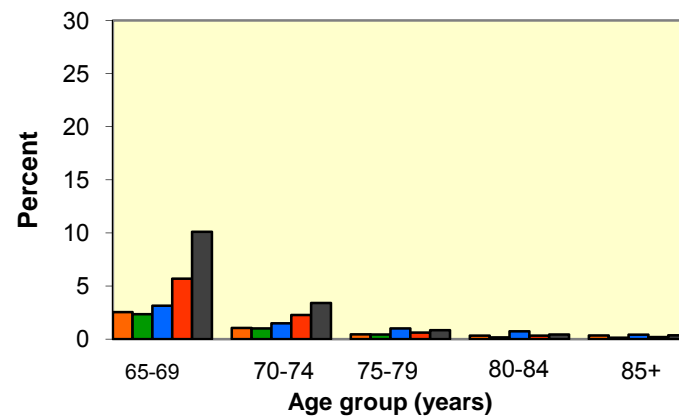
Male Full-time



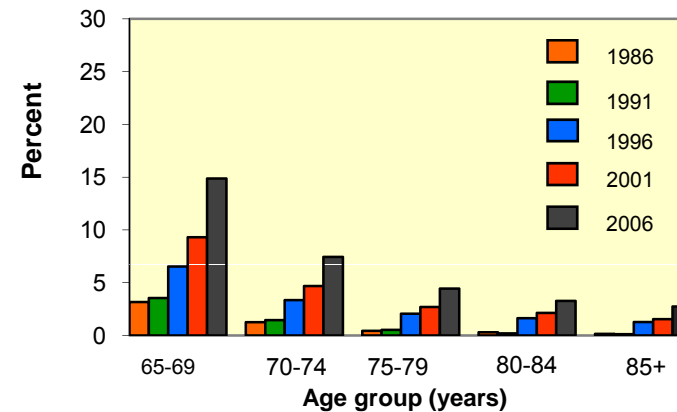
Male Part-time



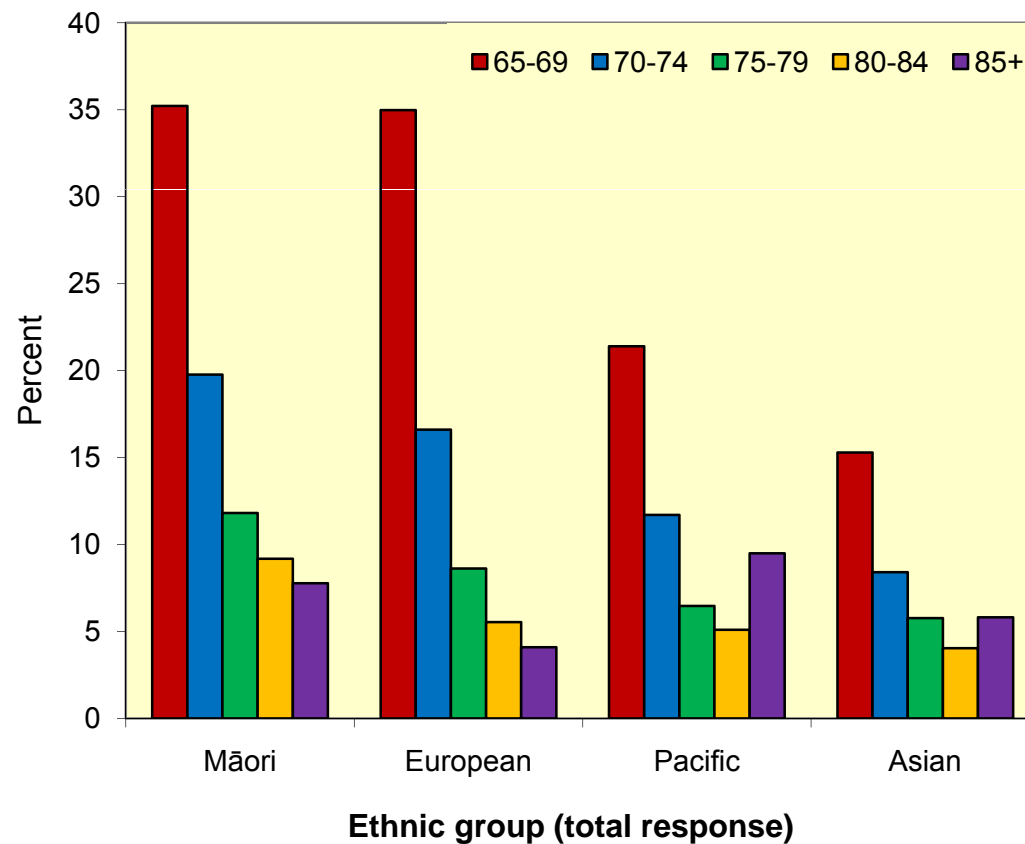
Female Full-time



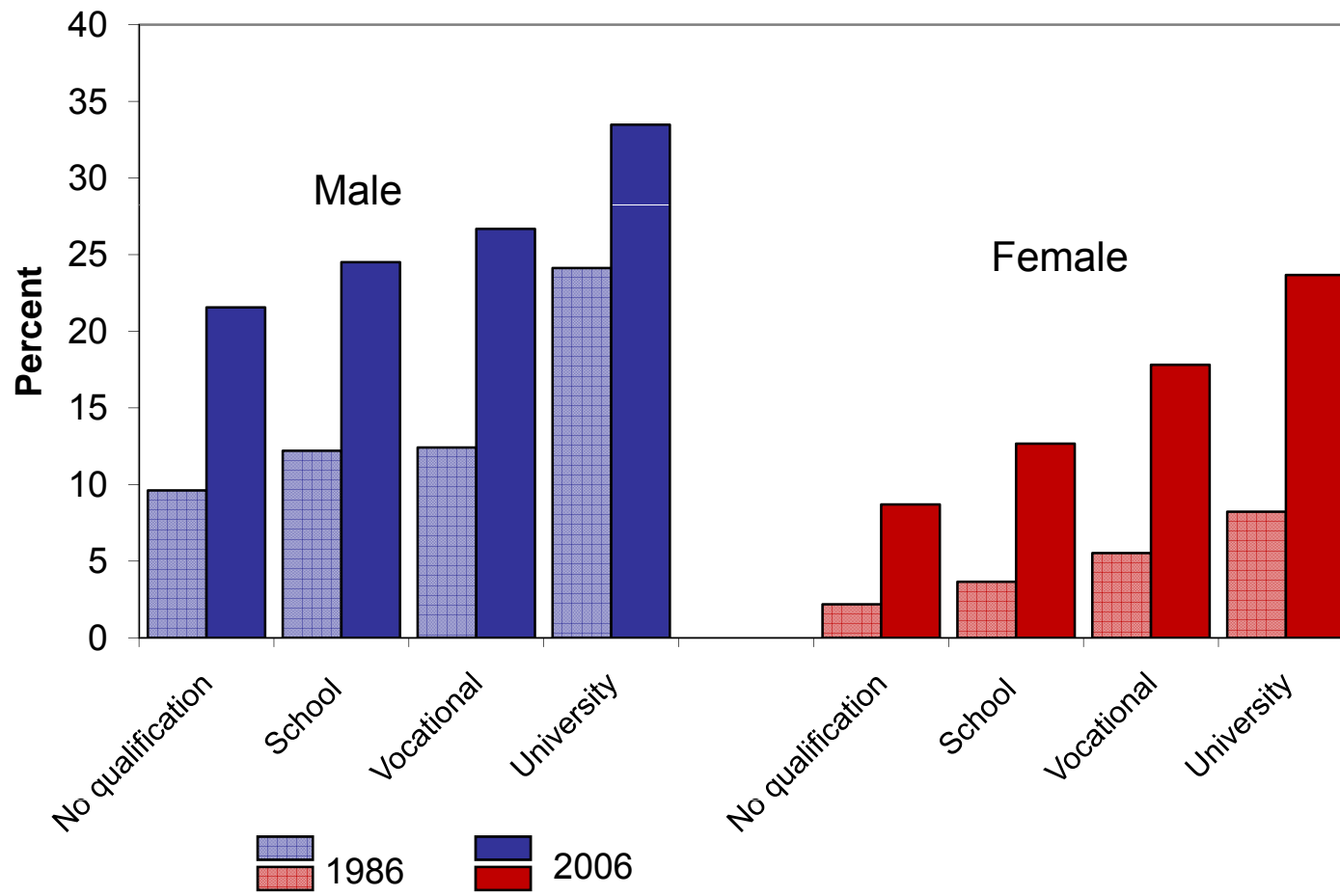
Female Part-time



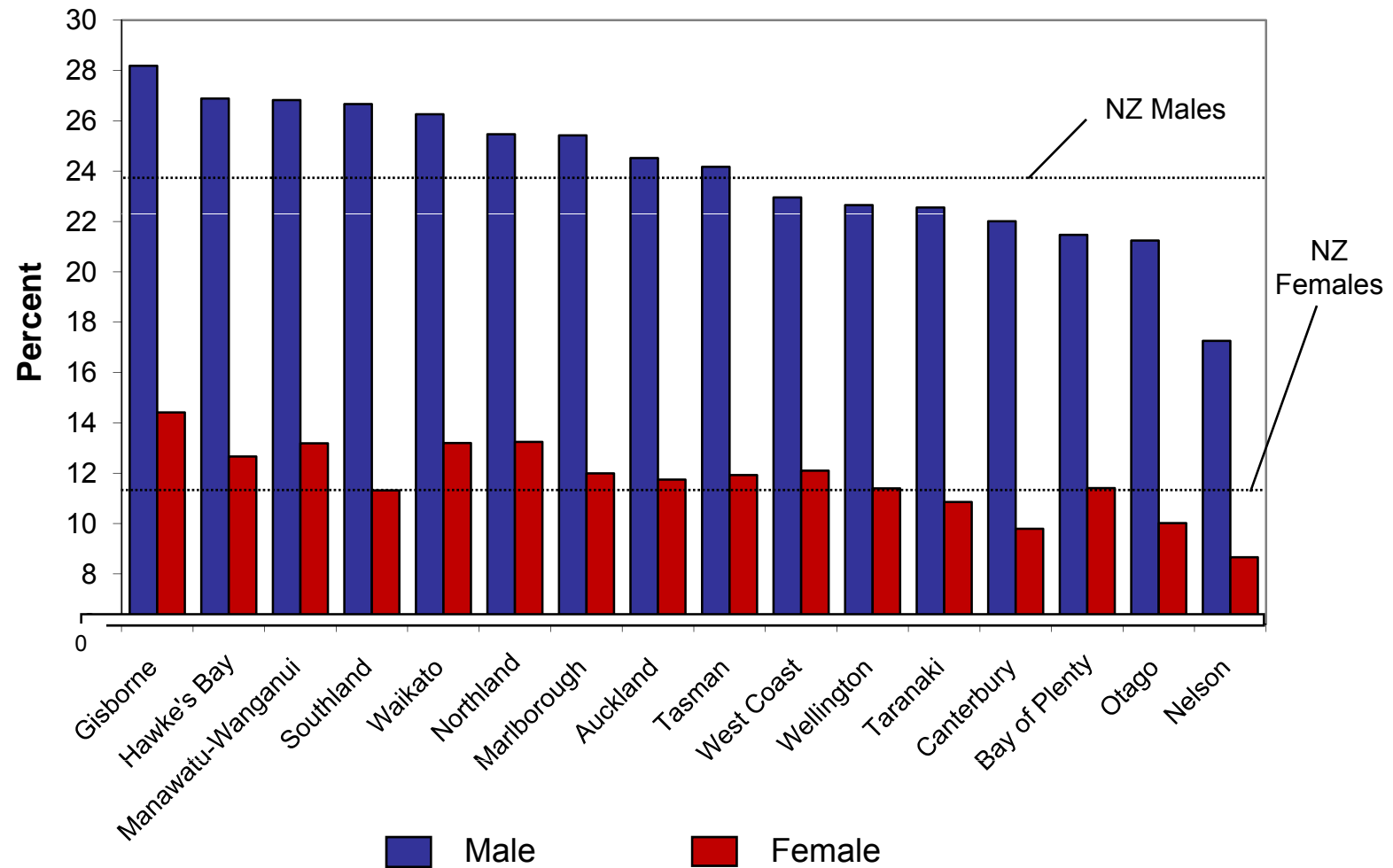
## Labour Force Participation by Ethnic Group and Age Group, 2006



## Labour Force Participation of 65+ population by Highest Educational Qualification, 1986 and 2006



## Labour Force Participation by Region, 2006



## Concluding thoughts

- Is retirement going out of fashion?
- Is working later our future?
- A majority of New Zealanders aged 65+ years are not gainfully employed, but a growing proportion are continuing working and extending their working life.
- Living longer, growth of service industries, and opportunities for part-time or contractual work.
- Global financial crisis, and its economic fall-out (especially business closures, slowdown in retail spending, staff-layoffs and the projected increase in unemployment) - limited employment opportunities for mature workers in the foreseeable future!
- **Impact of likely rise in the age of eligibility for NZ Superannuation?**