

'Please Have Children,' an Expert Researcher Warns

An expert New Zealand researcher is [warning women to "please have children"](#) as, mirroring other Western nations, New Zealand's fertility rate reaches an all-time low. The country's total fertility rate is now 1.71 children per woman, well below the population replacement level of 2.1.

Increasingly, greater numbers of researchers are acknowledging the grave problems associated with a society that delays having children and seemingly celebrates career milestones over marriage and parenthood.

It is likely that, for many couples, the increased cost of housing and food in New Zealand also plays a part in their decision about family size. The current global uncertainty surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic could well now contribute too.

Dr. Pushpa Wood, who is the director of Massey University's financial education and research centre, says that if the downwards trend continues New Zealand will be left with an aging population, more retired people needing care, and fewer people to care for them, with devastating impacts on the country.

A recent report from a New Zealand organization entitled ["Families: Ever Fewer or No Children, How Worried Should We Be?"](#) also worries:

"Without population replacement or growth, economies decline. A nation's strength lies in its young: their energy, innovation, risk-taking and entrepreneurship. The new blood drives the exchange of ideas and experimentation. If these attributes aren't home-grown, they have to be imported. At an individual level, single person households are the fastest

growing household type in New Zealand. Increasingly people face old-age with few or no family supports.”

As the working-age population reduces globally in the coming years, it will likely become untenable for New Zealand to simply rely on immigration. Wood suggests that the Government needs to take action by incentivizing people to have children. Measures could include increased parental leave, financial support for childcare, and initiatives such as the “baby box” which the Finnish Government provides to new mothers, and includes items such as clothes, sheets, and toys.

However, governmental incentives to have children [do not appear to have made much of a difference](#) to dire fertility rates overseas. Changing social trends likely have a far greater impact. If we want women to have babies, ultimately we [need to value parenthood, family and the important role of a homemaker](#), no matter what other roles it might, or might not, be balanced with.

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