

## Overview

### Industry snapshot

Although mineral exploration in New Zealand has been mainly directed at coal, gold, silver, and ironsand, a wide range of other minerals are produced, contributing to several sectors of the economy such as construction, energy, transport, agriculture and manufacturing.

### Metallic minerals

The most important metallic minerals produced are gold, silver and titanomagnetite ironsand, with reported production in 2010 worth NZ\$679,126,842.

In 2010, 13,494 kg of gold was produced from two large hard rock mines at Waihi and Macraes Flat, several medium sized alluvial operations, and a large number of small alluvial mines.

2,438,641 tonnes of sand was reported to have been mined in the 2010 year at the Waikato North Head and Taharoa mines.

- In addition to jewellery, gold has many other uses including medicine, telecommunications, and a wide range of applications in industry and aviation.
- Silver, which is produced together with gold in hard rock mines, is also used for jewellery, electronics and medicine. Due to the light sensitivity of silver compounds, silver's main use throughout the world is in photography.
- Ironsand is mined for steelmaking in New Zealand and overseas. This steel is used to manufacture roofing, cutlery and kitchen utensils, aeroplanes and cars among other uses.

### Industrial minerals

The total value of all industrial minerals produced in 2010 was just over \$361 million.

Roughly 478 million tonnes of rock, sand, and aggregate was produced for roading and construction, making a vital contribution to New Zealand's infrastructure development, although reported industrial mineral production decreased by 8 percent for the 2010 year.

- Industrial minerals are used for making glass, steel, paper and cardboard, ink and paint, cosmetics, carpet, and many other items.

### Non-metallic minerals

A number of other industrial rocks and minerals are produced for local and export markets. They include bentonite, various clays, diatomite, perlite, pounamu, pumice, serpentine, silica and zeolite.

- Clays, including bentonite, are used to make; bricks, tiles and pottery, as filters in the manufacture of paper, paint, pharmaceutical and animal health products. It's also used in the production of beer and wine, laundry detergent, sunburn cream and children's crayons.
- Most of New Zealand's pumice was formed during volcanic eruptions in the last 20,000 years. It is used to manufacture wallboard, plaster, and lightweight concrete.
- Silica sand is used in bottle glass and window glass manufacture. Other uses include foundry sands and as a filler in the building industry.

Information on the uses of particular minerals was sourced from [The New Zealand Minerals Industry Association](#).