

# Coal

New Zealand has extensive coal resources, mainly in the Waikato and Taranaki regions of the North Island and the West Coast, Otago and Southland regions of the South Island.

These coals cover almost the full range of coal rank, but resource quantities are heavily skewed towards low rank coals. National in-ground resources of all coals are over 16 billion tonnes, but 80% of this is lignite in the South Island.

Coal production in 2015 was 3.4 million tonnes, of which 1.4 million tonnes were exported. Coal accounts for about 10% of New Zealand's primary energy (excluding transport fuels). The domestic coal market is complex for its small size, dominated by steel making and milk processing, with a declining quantity being used for electricity generation. Coal is also used for cement making, and to provide process heat for the meat and timber industries. The many medium-to-small users of coal include hotels, schools, hospitals and various industries. Coal is the only cost-effective option for fueling industrial plant and primary production in the South Island because there is no reticulated gas.

While lignite dominates New Zealand's coal inventory, bituminous and sub-bituminous and coals for thermal and metallurgical use have been by far the most important economically since mining began in the 1860s. In-ground resources of these coals are about 4 billion tonnes, but a large proportion does not have reasonable prospects for eventual economic extraction.

More information about coal production, reserves and consumption is available on the [Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment website](http://www.mbie.govt.nz/info-services/sectors-industries/energy/energy-data-modelling/statistics/coal/?searchterm=coal%20production%2A) [<http://www.mbie.govt.nz/info-services/sectors-industries/energy/energy-data-modelling/statistics/coal/?searchterm=coal%20production%2A>].

[View a map of New Zealand coal fields and resources \[PDF 243KB\]](http://mbie17.cwp.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/our-industry/minerals/new-zealand-coal-fields.pdf) [<http://mbie17.cwp.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/our-industry/minerals/new-zealand-coal-fields.pdf>]

## Public data

All prospecting and exploration data collected by mineral permit holders has to be shared with NZP&M – including physical core samples, and all seismic and aerial survey data.

Usually this technical data is made publicly available after five years, or when a permit expires or is surrendered. It is available through [NZP&M's exploration database](http://mbie17.cwp.govt.nz/maps-geoscience/exploration-database/) [<http://mbie17.cwp.govt.nz/maps-geoscience/exploration-database/>].

The data makes a significant contribution to the geological knowledge of New Zealand and is used by our science community, as well as minerals explorers. For example, the 2300m<sup>2</sup> National Core Store in Featherston [<http://mbie17.cwp.govt.nz/maps-geoscience/core-store/>], Wairarapa, houses the collected minerals and coal core, cuttings and samples, and is regularly used by researchers.

The Government has also invested in aerial surveys to gather data about New Zealand's mineral resources.

## **Regional coal resources** [<http://mbie17.cwp.govt.nz/our-industry/nz-minerals/minerals-data/coal/regional-coal-resources/>]

Find out more about New Zealand's regional coal resources.

## **Operating coal mine production figures** **[<http://mbie17.cwp.govt.nz/our-industry/nz-minerals/minerals-data/coal/operating-mines/>]**

As at May 2016 there are 17 producing coal mines in New Zealand

2014 production figures [<http://mbie17.cwp.govt.nz/our-industry/nz-minerals/minerals-data/coal/operating-mines/2014/>]

2013 production figures [<http://mbie17.cwp.govt.nz/our-industry/nz-minerals/minerals-data/coal/operating-mines/2013/>]

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