

# General Social Survey Content Evaluation Update 2005

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## 1. Introduction

This paper follows on from the General Social Survey Preliminary Views paper that formed the basis for the General Social Survey (GSS) submission process on content in September 2005.

Statistics New Zealand would like to thank the many individuals and organisations that took part in the recent submission process and prior content development work. The submission process enabled Statistics New Zealand to reconfirm content priorities with data users and provided a focused forum for further topic development. In addition, we have identified subject matter expertise from which to draw on as topics develop towards specific measures.

In this report, Statistics New Zealand outlines the content development work done so far, summarises the submissions received, and discusses the evaluation process and further work to be done. This paper begins with some background on the GSS and its position within the social statistics programme. A list of content which is still to be considered, as well as content which will not be included, is found in the final part of the report.

## 2. Background to the General Social Survey

The primary purpose of the General Social Survey (GSS) will be to provide information on the social well-being of New Zealanders. The GSS is one of a number of social surveys and statistical initiatives undertaken through the Programme of Official Social Statistics (POSS). Comprehensive and coherent statistics on social well-being and social outcomes will provide a sound basis for assessing progress towards important social goals.

Measuring well-being is a complex task. It involves mapping the whole of life and considering life events or social context that have the potential to affect the quality of individual lives or the cohesion of society. This includes the social, material and natural environments surrounding each individual.

The GSS will collect information on well-being across a range of social domains on a regular basis, to enable cross-sectoral and trend analysis. The GSS will address some of the gaps and deficiencies identified in the POSS consultation.

Statistics New Zealand has adopted a framework for measuring social well-being based on that used in *The Social Report* produced by the Ministry of Social Development. Social well-being is described in that report as comprising those aspects of life that are important to us as a society and contribute to our quality of life, welfare and happiness. The framework for the report uses 10 outcome domains to measure aspects of life. Statistics New Zealand has adopted a further two so that the 12 domains are: population, housing, safety and security, economic standard of living, knowledge and skills, health, paid work, culture and identity, social connectedness, human rights, physical environment, and leisure and recreation.

The GSS will collect information across these 12 outcome domains. Within each domain, aspects of social life that are important to well-being will be identified. A range of pragmatic decisions will then be made about what phenomena will provide the greatest insights into these aspects of life, how these can be measured accurately, and how the resulting measures can be combined, constructed and presented to be informative and accessible. The GSS will provide broad information, enabling the exploration of interrelationships between different areas of peoples' lives and the identification of multiple disadvantage. The survey will not provide detailed information within each domain. Detailed information on particular domains will be obtained from topic-specific surveys, such as the Household Labour Force Survey Supplements, Housing Survey or Family Survey.

### **3. Background to the Programme of Official Social Statistics**

The Programme of Official Social Statistics (POSS) is a 10 year programme to develop a coordinated set of official social statistics across government. It is the result of extensive consultation and discussion with government agencies and other interested individuals and organisations over the last three years to identify gaps and deficiencies in existing data.

The POSS is made up of a suite of social surveys to be developed and managed, not all by Statistics New Zealand. Examples of proposed new surveys include a housing survey and a family survey. A complete list of the surveys is included in Appendix A. The POSS also encompasses more effective use of administrative data for statistical purposes and aims to improve analysis and dissemination of data. An advisory group has been established to advise Statistics New Zealand on the development of new surveys and databases that will contribute to the POSS. The group is made up of representatives from key government agencies.

A coordinated whole-of-government programme of official social statistics will provide a robust foundation for planning and investment decisions, and associated research and evaluation activity. The first new survey in the programme is the GSS which aims to provide information on selected aspects of social well-being.

Statistics New Zealand is developing an information plan for each outcome domain. These plans will provide a tool for Statistics New Zealand to establish a shared understanding of priorities and agreement between key users and data custodians on what is required to address statistical needs into the future.

### **4. General Social Survey Content Consultation**

In September 2005, Statistics New Zealand sought submissions from interested parties on the content for the GSS. A preliminary views paper was prepared which contained suggested topic areas for inclusion in the GSS and formed the basis for this consultation. In total, 45 submissions were received from a variety of individuals and organisations (see Appendix B). The submissions received were extensive and included a large number of suggested new topic areas for inclusion in the GSS.

Submissions were assessed in conjunction with the assistance of an interdepartmental advisory group. The criteria used to assess the topic submissions were:

- fit with the survey objectives
- feasibility of statistical measurement
- alignment with the survey methodology and design.

Further detail of these criteria is contained within the General Social Survey Preliminary Views paper.

From this process, over 25 new topics have been introduced for further consideration, which will involve balancing the new topics against originally proposed material (See Section 5. Next Steps).

The tables below detail all topics which have been put forward for consideration. Items in italics do not fit the requirements of the GSS and will not be considered further.

### Population

Topics listed in Preliminary Views Document	Expanded or new topics from submissions
Age	Overall measure of well-being/happiness
Sex	Disability
Ethnicity	Religious affiliation
Social marital status	Residency status
Family type	Sexual orientation
Household type	<i>English language competency</i>
Number and age of children	<i>Intention regarding duration of stay in New Zealand</i>
Number of dependent children not living in household	<i>Family background, parents' education</i>
Country of birth/year of arrival	

### Housing

Topics listed in Preliminary Views Document	Expanded or new topics from submissions
Tenure	Suitability/overcrowding
Housing costs (ie mortgage/rent)	<i>Access to home ownership</i>
Number of bedrooms	<i>Type of dwelling</i>
Satisfaction with quality of housing (eg dampness, heating, condition of exterior, noise etc)	<i>What type of heating system the house has</i>
Number of moves in the last two years	<i>Whether the house is insulated</i>
Reasons for moving	<i>Age of house</i>
	<i>Value of house</i>
	<i>Property ownership (number of properties)</i>
	<i>Privacy</i>
	<i>Affordability of housing/percent of income spent on housing</i>
	<i>Distance from workplace</i>

### Safety and Security

Topics listed in Preliminary Views Document	Expanded or new topics from submissions
Feelings of safety (eg in own home during day/after dark)	Why people feel unsafe

Fear of walking alone after dark	Walking alone rather than just after dark
Victim of property crime in last 12 months	Preparedness for emergencies
Victim of force/violence or threat of force/violence by stranger in last 12 months	Domestic violence
	Feelings of safety on public transport
	A measure of human rights in relation to Hate Crimes
	Neighbourhood watch
	Fear of crime
	<i>Car crime</i>
	<i>Identity fraud</i>
	<i>Concerns about graffiti and vandalism in the area</i>
	<i>Hours of house being unoccupied (while at work)</i>
	<i>Impacts of Information and Communication Technology (ICT)</i>

### Economic Standard of Living

Topics listed in Preliminary Views Document	Expanded or new topics from submissions
Personal income and sources	Economic Living Standard Index Short Form (ELSI)
Whether total income (including partner's) is enough to meet everyday needs	Income of economic family unit
Savings habits (eg saving/paying off debt vs using up savings, borrowing more)	<i>Retirement plans, do they belong to a superannuation scheme</i>
Difficulty paying bills in last 12 months (eg difficulty paying power bill, phone bill, mortgage/rent etc)	<i>Total value of other assets (excluding house)</i>
Quick access to \$2,000 in times of financial stress	<i>Expenditure (excl housing costs)</i>
Household income	<i>How much spent on energy (electricity, gas, wood etc) and transport (petrol, diesel) \$ per year</i>
Rating of material standard of living compared with other people	<i>Percent of total household income spent on travel costs – focused on travel to work.</i>
Satisfaction with material standard of living	<i>Debt levels</i>
Current personal financial situation compared with 12 months ago	<i>Access to ICT</i>

### Knowledge and Skills

Topics listed in Preliminary Views Document	Expanded or new topics from submissions
Highest qualification	All qualifications both formal and informal and how they are learned/acquired
Current enrolment in formal education and training	Early childhood education enrolment
Satisfaction with own education	<i>Barriers to access/learning</i>
Attitudes to education and learning	<i>Access to educational services</i>
	<i>Literacy/numeracy skills</i>
	<i>Current enrolment in informal education and training, learning mode</i>

	<i>Impact of ICT</i>
	<i>Length of time in education and training</i>
	<i>Preference for institution type</i>
	<i>Provider type</i>
	<i>Most recently completed education and training and year completed</i>
	<i>Utilisation of skills/qualifications</i>
	<i>Satisfaction with opportunities for children</i>

## Health

Topics listed in Preliminary Views Document	Expanded or new topics from submissions
Self assessed health status	How experience of significant others effects satisfaction with health services and respondent's own well-being
Long-term health problems	Self assessed mental health status
Access to/satisfaction with health services	<i>Illicit drug consumption</i>
Smoking	<i>Food and nutrition/healthy eating</i>
Alcohol consumption	<i>Access to child and maternal care</i>
Exercise	<i>Information on gambling and health of families</i>
	<i>Food security and nutrition</i>
	<i>Alternative medicine</i>
	<i>Effect of family break-up and disruption of relationships between children and their parents</i>
	<i>Housing and health impacts</i>
	<i>Attitude towards illness/health</i>
	<i>Access to clean water and waste disposal</i>
	<i>Percent of people travelling to work/school involving walking or cycling</i>
	<i>Health costs</i>
	<i>Body Mass Index (obesity)</i>
	<i>Attitudes towards illness prevention or the promotion of a healthy life style</i>

## Paid Work

Topics listed in Preliminary Views Document	Expanded or new topics from submissions
Labour force status	Type of job (permanent, fixed term, temp etc)
Main occupation	Labour force status and hours of work (all working age household members)
Main industry	<i>Career path</i>
Hours of work (eg total number, unsociable hours, full time/part time)	<i>Years in current occupation</i>
Job satisfaction	<i>Reasons for working</i>
Perception of job prospects if unemployed	<i>Job search time (for most recent occupation)</i>
Work/life balance	<i>Last previous occupation</i>
Preference to work more/less hours	<i>Unpaid work</i> <i>Time spent caring for other people</i>
Duration of unemployment if not working	<i>Average time per week spent caring for other people (unpaid)</i>
	<i>Barriers to paid work – access/attitudes to childcare</i>

	<i>Incentives to work</i>
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### Culture and Identity

Topics listed in Preliminary Views Document	Expanded or new topics from submissions
Language retention	Belief systems
Strength in belonging in New Zealand	Level of integration between ethnic groups in New Zealand
Values/attitudes towards other cultural groups in New Zealand	<i>Visitation and frequency to Department of Conservation (DOC)-managed natural and cultural heritage places</i>
Attendance and frequency of attendance at cultural events (eg libraries, museums etc)	<i>Involvement in protecting and restoring natural, historic and cultural heritage</i>
Values/attitudes towards Māori culture (eg Treaty obligations, maintenance of language etc)	<i>Values/attitudes towards New Zealand natural and cultural heritage</i>
	<i>Further detail on Māori language</i>
	<i>Access to English language tuition</i>
	<i>Attitudes/values towards Pakeha culture</i>
	<i>Impact of ICT</i>
	<i>Ability to pass on cultural values, language – satisfaction/perception and importance of</i>
	<i>Knowledge of Te Reo Māori and Māori culture</i>
	<i>Attitudes towards retention of heritage language and culture, uptake of heritage language/second language</i>
	<i>Accepting values of host community</i>

### Social Connectedness

Topics listed in Preliminary Views Document	Expanded or new topics from submissions
Contact with family (outside of immediate household), friends, neighbours	Access to transport
Type of contact (eg face to face, email)	<i>Availability of role models/mentors/counsellors</i>
Availability of help in times of crisis	<i>Self perception of social stratification</i>
Ability to ask family/friends for small favours	<i>Access to internet</i>
Satisfaction with amount of contact with others	<i>Access to goods/services/power/energy</i>
Membership of group (eg church, community etc)	<i>Democratic participation</i>
Access to motor vehicle	<i>Family based overseas</i>
Feelings of isolation, trust, sense of community	
Formal voluntary work (ie work done for organisations), type of organisation, hours	
Informal voluntary work done outside of own household (not through organisation), who for, hours	

## Human Rights

Topics listed in Preliminary Views Document	Expanded or new topics from submissions
Attitudes/values and satisfaction questions about a range of human rights issues in New Zealand (eg civil and political rights, economic rights, race relations, perceived corruption/lack of corruption)	Experience of harassment/discrimination – nature of, action taken/impact of
	Democratic participation/input into decision making
	Trust in government/civic institutions
	Importance/perception of human rights in New Zealand
	<i>Interference of government</i>
	<i>Right of redress</i>
	<i>Identity fraud</i>

## Physical Environment

Topics listed in Preliminary Views Document	Expanded or new topics from submissions
Local access to public services and facilities (eg school, public transport, shops etc)	Satisfaction with quality of physical/built environment, town, city residing in (look and feel of new developments)
Satisfaction with public services and facilities	Importance of conservation, knowledge of/attitudes to conservation
Recycling, energy efficiency in own home	Physical safety against natural disasters
Attitudes/awareness of sustainability (eg importance of New Zealand's clean green image, etc)	Does the environment affect social well-being
	<i>Involvement in protecting and restoring natural, historic and cultural heritage</i>
	<i>Access to power/energy</i>
	<i>Satisfaction with transport times/congestion/mobility</i>
	<i>Satisfaction with involvement in conservation, contact with DOC</i>
	<i>Water and air quality</i>
	<i>Understanding of/satisfaction with management of environment</i>
	<i>Main assets that contribute to clean green image</i>

## Leisure and Recreation

Topics listed in Preliminary Views Document	Expanded or new topics from submissions
Amount of leisure time	<i>Role of protected areas in recreation, leisure, health and cultural identities</i>
Satisfaction with amount of leisure time	<i>Impact of ICT</i>
Type of leisure activities	<i>Access to information about recreational opportunities</i>
Barriers to leisure/recreation activities	<i>Participation in/satisfaction with activities on DOC lands</i>

It was evident from the submissions that there is a high demand for regional data. However, the GSS is primarily designed to produce national level estimates. Subnational analysis of a few broad groupings of regions or urban/rural may be possible for some variables. As mentioned in the Preliminary Views paper, it may be possible to produce estimates for five or six regions, and measure differences in well-being between Auckland and the rest of New Zealand.

Statistics New Zealand is continuing to investigate strategies and develop small area modelling techniques for improving the capability for producing regional breakdowns. The feasibility of producing regional estimates based on small domain estimation techniques for the GSS will be reviewed.

## 5. Next Steps

The next step in the process is to select subsets from the remaining list of topics which are considered to be the best indicators for each domain. This process will involve collaboration with other agencies and experts in domain areas. It will also involve looking across the domains, as various aspects of well-being are related to a greater and lesser extent. Once an agreed list has been established for each domain, work will proceed on the development of measures. In some domains, the concepts and statistical measures are well-developed, but others, such as human rights and physical environment, will require conceptual and methodological investigations into the feasibility and form of their inclusion.

Statistics New Zealand will continue to assess similar social surveys conducted by overseas statistical agencies and consult with these agencies on the use of measures that are consistent internationally. The results of this process will help determine the statistical measures included in the GSS.

As work on the content development for the GSS progresses, Statistics New Zealand will continue to update the information contained on this webpage for your information. A full list of content will be produced for September 2006.

## Appendix A

### List of proposed and existing surveys in the Programme of Official Social Statistics

- Census of Population and Dwellings
- Household Economic Survey (HES)
- Household Labour Force Survey (HLFS)
- New Zealand Income Survey
- New Zealand Health Survey
- Housing
- Survey of Family Income and Employment (SoFIE)
- Longitudinal Immigration Survey: New Zealand (LisNZ)
- General Social Survey
- Māori Social Survey
- Family Survey
- Disability Survey
- Household Income Survey (HIS)
- Time Use Survey
- Household Savings Survey
- Literacy/adult competencies Survey
- The New Zealand Crime and Safety Survey
- Supplementary surveys to the HLFS on new and emerging labour market issues.

## Appendix B

### List of individuals and organisations that made submissions on proposed content for the General Social Survey:

- Andrew Weaver, Promote
- Auckland Regional Council
- Auckland University of Technology
- Biosecurity Strategic Unit, (Ministry of Health secondment), Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry
- Building & Housing Policy, Department of Building and Housing
- Canterbury Development Corporation (CDC)
- Centre for Applied Cross Cultural Research, Victoria University of Wellington
- Centre for Public Policy Evaluation, Massey University
- Community Policy, Local Government and Community Branch, Department of Internal Affairs
- Data Management and Analysis Division, Ministry of Education
- Department of Labour
- Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority (EECA)
- Environmental Health, Communicable Disease & Environmental Health Policy, Public Health Directorate, Ministry of Health
- Family, Whanau and Wellbeing Project (FWWP) team, Sociology Department, Auckland University
- Gender and Women's Studies, School of Education Studies, Victoria University of Wellington
- Heritage Appreciation Unit, Research, Development and Improvement Division, Department of Conservation
- Housing New Zealand Corporation
- Information Technology & Telecommunications Policy, Ministry of Economic Development
- Institute of Policy Studies, School of Government, Victoria University of Wellington
- Ministry for Culture and Heritage
- Ministry of Social Development
- Ministry of Women's Affairs
- National Accounts, Statistics New Zealand
- National Council of Women of New Zealand
- New Zealand Action Plan for Human Rights, Human Rights Commission (Te Kahui Tika Tangata)
- Office for Disability Issues, Ministry of Social Development
- Policy & Research Unit, SPARC ihi Aotearoa
- Policy Team, National Office, New Zealand CCS

- Policy, Planning and Reporting Analyst, Auckland Regional Public Health Service
- Prue Hyman, Victoria University of Wellington
- Public Health Intelligence, Public Health Directorate, Ministry of Health
- Public Health Workforce Development, Population Health Service
- Quality of Life Project Team
- Reporting and Review, Ministry for the Environment
- Research, Analysis and Information Unit, New Zealand AIDS Foundation
- Research, Evaluation and Modelling Unit, Ministry of Justice
- School of Social and Cultural Studies, Massey University (Albany/Auckland) – Mark Henrickson
- School of Social and Cultural Studies, Massey University (Auckland) – Dr Neil Lunt
- State Services Commission
- Statistical Analysis, National Research Unit, Inland Revenue Dept
- Strategy and Research, Tertiary Education Commission
- Taupo District Council
- The Treasury
- Tim Barnett, MP for Christchurch Central
- Volunteering New Zealand