



General Social Survey (GSS)

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General Social Survey (GSS)

Abstract

The General Social Survey (GSS), formerly the New Zealand General Social Survey (NZGSS), is part of a suite of integrated household surveys run by Stats NZ. It is conducted under the Programme of Official Social Statistics. The GSS provides a cross-domain perspective of social wellbeing for the population of New Zealand. As such, it provides a basis for cross-domain analysis, not possible with other more narrowly focused surveys. It is also a basis for coherent monitoring of some key aspects of social wellbeing over time.

Purpose

The GSS produces statistics about social wellbeing to inform decision-making by government agencies and the wider community. Data gathered includes objective information about circumstance, such as labour force status and income, as well as a personal assessment of different aspects of New Zealander's lives, such as life satisfaction, health, housing, human rights, and relationships. In particular, the survey provides a view of how wellbeing outcomes vary across different groups within the population.

Population

General Social Survey target population

The target population for the NZGSS is the usually resident population aged 15 years and over in private dwellings in the North Island, South Island, or Waiheke Island of New Zealand.

The target population includes:

- New Zealand usual residents temporarily overseas
- New Zealand usual residents temporarily staying elsewhere in New Zealand (including other permanent and temporary private dwellings, institutions, and non - private dwellings; and people who have no fixed abode, but were found in private dwellings on the household enumeration date)
- people in the New Zealand armed forces if they reside in a private dwelling
- young adults at boarding schools (young adults who fall into this category are not surveyed in the personal questionnaire, but are included as members of the household in the household questionnaire).

The target population excludes:

- overseas visitors and international students who expect to be resident in New Zealand for less than 12 months
- people living in non-private dwellings such as hotels, motels, boarding houses, hostels, and homes for the elderly
- patients in hospitals, or residents of psychiatric and penal institutions
- people living on offshore islands (excluding Waiheke Island)
- members of the non-New Zealand armed forces and their dependents
- non-New Zealand diplomats or diplomatic staff members and their dependents
- New Zealand usual residents temporarily overseas who don't return within the survey period
- New Zealand usual residents temporarily staying elsewhere in New Zealand (including other permanent and temporary private dwellings, institutions, and non - private dwellings; and people who have no fixed abode, but stay at private dwellings) who don't return within the survey period
- New Zealand usual residents who live in remote areas that are costly or difficult to access .

Frequency

- Two-yearly

Usage and limitations of the data

The GSS is run every two years. The data collected will be used to develop future iterations of the survey and for time series monitoring. Future use of each GSS dataset would be high for the first two years after first release. This is likely to drop down to medium after that.

Significant events impacting this study series

Data Collection Disruption 2020-2021:

Due to the first nationwide Covid-19 pandemic lockdown in March 2020, face-to-face interviewing for the GSS 2020 data collection (due to begin in April 2020, and end in March 2021) was delayed by a full year (until April 2021), following consultation with stakeholders.

Data collection for GSS 2021 (formerly GSS 2020), began on 1 April 2021. However, a second nationwide lockdown began in August 2021, during the Delta variant outbreak, suspending face-to-face interviewing for a second time. Collection stopped on 17 August, meaning the collection period for GSS 2021 was around four and a half months. This meant the sample size for GSS 2021 was significantly smaller than for previous collections.

Data Collection Disruption 2011:

After the Christchurch earthquake in February 2011, interviewers were unable to work in certain parts of the Canterbury area. This led to a lower number of completed cases for February and March in the Canterbury area. The weights used for the survey have controlled for the loss of cases. The September 2010 earthquake in Christchurch did not affect data collection.

Main users of the data

Government departments, researchers, regional and local councils, community organisations and the wider public.

Related Materials

Questionnaires

- [General Social Survey 2018 Questionnaire - Flowcharts](#)
- [General Social Survey 2016 Questionnaire](#)
- [General Social Survey 2014 Questionnaire](#)
- [General Social Survey 2012 Questionnaire](#)
- [General Social Survey 2010 Questionnaire](#)
- [General Social Survey 2008 Questionnaire](#)

Recent releases

- [Wellbeing Statistics: 2018](#)
- [Stats NZ - Wellbeing \(topic\)](#)
- [Housing in Aotearoa: 2020](#)
- [The state of housing in Aotearoa New Zealand \(December 2020\)](#)
- [Stats NZ - Housing \(topic\)](#)

Past releases

- [Perceptions of housing quality in 2014/15 | Stats NZ](#)
- [Loneliness in New Zealand: Findings for the 2010 NZ General Social Survey \(April 2013\)](#)
- [Vulnerable children and families: Some findings from the New Zealand General Social Survey \(October 2012\)](#)
- [Working together: Racial discrimination in New Zealand \(September 2012\)](#)
- [How prepared are New Zealanders for a natural disaster? \(June 2012\)](#)
- [Parents supporting children who do not live with them \(March 2012\)](#)
- [General Social Survey 2008 Fact Sheet: Natural disaster preparation at home](#)

Reports

- [Social Cohesion in New Zealand: Facts from the NZ General Social Survey 2008 \(June 2011\)](#)

Other useful links

- [Social well-being in New Zealand: Interactive tool](#)
- [Social well-being in New Zealand in 2014: Poster and brochure](#)

NZ.Stat Tables

- [NZ.Stat Tables](#)

Archived Information

- [Archived Information](#)

Variables