

## Social Well-being in New Zealand

*Insights from the New Zealand General Social Survey 2012*

*Philip Walker*

## Social wellbeing: measurement beyond GDP

“gross national product ... measures everything in short, except that which makes life worthwhile”

*Robert F Kennedy. Kansas. March 18th 1968*

## The New Zealand General Social Survey

- ⊙ Face-to-face interviews with 8,500 people nationwide
- ⊙ Held every two years since 2008
- ⊙ Data available now from 2008, 2010, 2012
- ⊙ A multidimensional survey of well-being

## Why measure Overall Life Satisfaction?

- ⊙ People are generally the best judges of how their own lives are going
- ⊙ How we respond to circumstances can be as important as the circumstances themselves
- ⊙ Measuring life satisfaction complements objective measures like income because it recognises individual preference

## NZGSS objectives

To measure the social well-being of New Zealanders across life domains.

To measure the distribution of wellbeing among sub populations of policy interest

To enable analysis of the interrelationship of outcomes across domains

## Cross-domain analysis

- “Developments in one domain of quality of life affect other domains”
- “The consequences for quality of life of having multiple disadvantages far exceed the sum of their individual effects”

Stiglitz, Sen & Fitoussi, 2009.

## The GSS asks people about their:

Overall life satisfaction	Health
Standard of living	Housing
Safety & security	Human rights
Knowledge and skills	Paid work
Leisure & recreation	Physical environment
Social Connectedness	Culture and identity

*By core demographics such as age, sex, ethnicity, migrant status (including children of migrants)*

## Unique value of this data

- National survey of well-being
- Robust statistics – use of Statistics Act 1975, survey methodology
- Data available at regional level
- Applications for the monitoring of social, community and regional outcomes
- Sustainable, affordable, embedded

## What NZGSS tells us

- ⊙ 87% of New Zealanders said they were 'very satisfied' or 'satisfied' with their lives overall
- ⊙ But life satisfaction is not evenly distributed across the population

- ⊙ Unemployed : 3x more likely to be very dissatisfied/dissatisfied than employed.
- ⊙ Family : 78% very satisfied/satisfied in one parent compared to 89% in couple with or without children households.
- ⊙ Income: noticeable drop off at \$30K but at higher levels effect trails off.
- ⊙ Age: U shaped relationship between life satisfaction and age. Younger and older tend to report higher levels.

## Important aspects of well-being

- ⊙ Four aspects of people's lives have a strong relationship with their overall life satisfaction
  - Health
  - Money
  - Relationships
  - Housing
  - [Social well being interactive tool](http://www.stats.govt.nz/nzgss)  
[www.stats.govt.nz/nzgss](http://www.stats.govt.nz/nzgss)

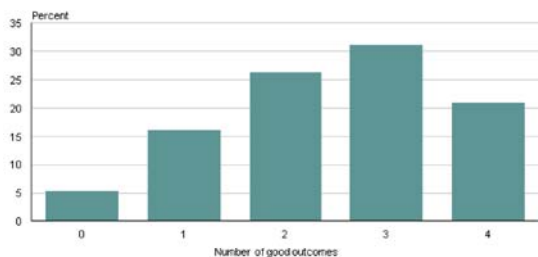
**Better health >** (Employment, HH income over \$100K, higher qualifications (>BA) , home ownership, Europeans/ Asians rather than Māori/ Pacific)

**Enough money >** (Older age, no children, employment, home ownership, living outside Auckland)

**Loneliness >** (one parent families, younger age, renting, living in Wellington, females, unemployed)

**Housing problems <** (HH income over \$100K, people born in NZ, over 65yrs rather than 25 – 44 years, home ownership)

## We found that ...



Source: Statistics New Zealand

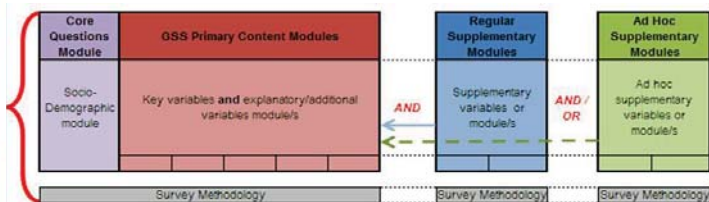
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## People with all four good outcomes were more likely to be

- ⊙ Older – 45 years more than 15-24 years
- ⊙ European more than Maori/Pacific
- ⊙ Born in New Zealand more than recent migrants
- ⊙ Tertiary qualified
- ⊙ Living in a high income household - \$100K +
- ⊙ Living in a couple-without-children family as against one parent families.

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## The GSS vehicle and supplement(s)



## The NZ General Social Survey in the wider Official Statistics System



## GSS programme 2016 & 2018

- ⊙ Potential topics
- ⊙ Civic and cultural participation 2016?
- ⊙ Housing and physical environment 2018?
- ⊙ Or ?
- ⊙ You tell us...

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- ⊙ Formal consultation for NZGSS 2016 will begin in early 2014. Have your say.
- ⊙ Once topic is selected, an objectives paper will be developed.
- ⊙ Consultation on the objectives and specific measures will begin in mid 2014.

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## Te Kupenga 2013

### ⊙ First survey of Māori well-being

- Release date: **6 May 2014**
- Sample of over 5,000 NZers of Māori ancestry from Census 2013



### ⊙ What to expect

- Health of Te Reo Māori
- Engagement in Māori culture
- Subjective measures of whānau
- Perceptions of whānau well-being

Email: [social.cultural.statistics@stats.govt.nz](mailto:social.cultural.statistics@stats.govt.nz) Phone: (04) 931-4600

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## ....Te Kupenga 2013

### ⊙ Further Products

- Analytical programme of reports, and tables to follow first release - more detailed report on Te Reo Māori
- CURF

### ⊙ Potential Uses

- Understanding whānau & Māori well-being – input to any development projects
- Provides new information on Māori outcomes
- Help inform policies and programmes for Māori



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**Questions?**