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"

The New Zealand General Social Survey
- Face-to-face interviews with 8,500 people nationwide
- Held every two years since 2008
- 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”


**The GSS asks people about their:**

- Overall life satisfaction
- Standard of living
- Safety & security
- Knowledge and skills
- Leisure & recreation
- Social Connectedness

**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.

Important aspects of well-being

Four aspects of people’s lives have a strong relationship with their overall life satisfaction:
- Health
- Money
- Relationships
- Housing

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 …

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.

The GSS vehicle and supplement(s)
GSS programme 2016 & 2018

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

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.

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

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
Questions?