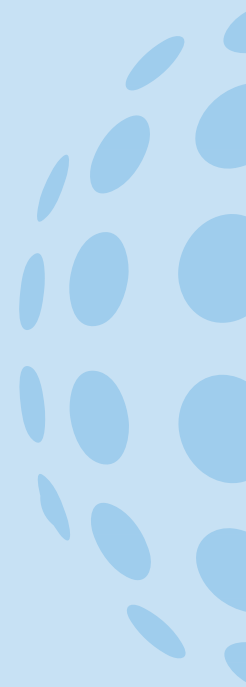


➔ Advisory Committee on Official Statistics
(ACOS) Annual Report

➔ Advisory Committee on Official Statistics
(ACOS) Annual Report

2008



Reproduction of material

Material in this report may be reproduced and published, provided that it does not purport to be published under government authority and that acknowledgement is made of this source.

Citation

Advisory Committee on Official Statistics. (2009). *Advisory Committee on Official Statistics (ACOS) annual report: 2008*. Wellington: Statistics New Zealand

**Published in February 2009 by
Statistics New Zealand
Tatauranga Aotearoa
Wellington, New Zealand**

ISSN 1175-0383 (print)
ISSN 1175-0367 (online)

Foreword

The Advisory Committee on Official Statistics (ACOS) Annual Report: 2008 is the third annual report on the health of the Official Statistics System.

The report covers:

- the relevance and quality of Tier 1 statistics
- changes necessary to improve the coverage of Tier 1 statistics
- the appropriateness of standards, policies, and protocols for official statistics.

During 2008, three members of the committee completed their terms of office. The committee acknowledges the work of Jas McKenzie, Emeritus Professor Alastair Scott, and Professor Linda Tuhiwai Smith and thanks them for their contributions to furthering the work of ACOS. The committee also welcomed four new members, Rob Davison, Ria Earp, Professor Alan Lee, and Dr Colin Tukuitonga and looks forward to working with them over the next three years.

In 2009, ACOS will focus on:

- continued interaction with agencies that produce Tier 1 statistics
- statistical planning (for example, domain plans) to inform the committee's understanding of priorities, gaps, and areas of duplication
- the review of Tier 1 statistics
- the continued development and initial application of the performance monitoring framework
- consideration of the short and long-term capability of the system to deliver quality, relevant statistics for New Zealand.



Hon David Caygill

Chairman, Advisory Committee on Official Statistics

ACOS members

Hon David Caygill	Chair (Chair of the Electricity Commission)	Sep 2005 –
Professor Richard Bedford	Professor of Population Geography and Director, Population Studies Centre, University of Waikato	Sep 2005 –
Dr Peter Bushnell	Deputy Secretary to The Treasury	Sep 2005 –
Rob Davison	Executive Director, Economic Service, Meat and Wool New Zealand	Sep 2008 –
Ria Earp	Chief Executive, Mary Potter Hospice	Sep 2008 –
Don Gray	Deputy Chief Executive, Ministry of Social Development	May 2007 –
Dr Bryan Jenkins	Chief Executive Environment Canterbury	Sep 2005 –
Professor Alan Lee	Department of Statistics, Auckland University	Sep 2008 –
Jas McKenzie	Former Secretary of Labour	Sep 2005 – Jun 2008
Phil O'Reilly	Chief Executive Business New Zealand	Sep 2005 –
Roger Procter	Chief Economist Ministry of Economic Development	Sep 2005 –
Emeritus Professor Alastair Scott	Department of Statistics, University of Auckland	Sep 2005 – Jun 2008
Dr Colin Tukuitonga	Chief Executive, Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs	Sep 2008 –
Professor Linda Tuhiwai Smith	Pro Vice-Chancellor Māori, University of Waikato	Sep 2005 – Jun 2008
Geoff Bascand	Government Statistician	ex-officio

Contents

Overview of ACOS	4
Overview of the Official Statistics System	5
Outcomes sought from the Official Statistics System	8
Activity in 2008	9
The overall health of the system	10
Statistical research	15
Opportunities	17
Challenges	21
References	23
Appendices	
The Advisory Committee on Official Statistics (ACOS)	24
The role of a national statistics office and its support for researcher access to data	25
Results of the 2008 survey of public awareness of official statistics	29
Review of the confidentiality, privacy and security protocol	33
Tables	
Awareness of Official Statistics, By statistics type, 2008	30
Information Source of Official Statistics, 2008	30
Official Statistics Accessed in the Past 12 Months, By statistics type, 2008	31
Scoring System for Each Confidentiality, Privacy and Security Protocol	33
Figures	
Outcomes Sought From the Official Statistics System	8
The Integrated Information System	26
Attitudes Regarding Official Statistics	32
Average Score for Tier 1 Statistics' Adherence to Elements of the Confidentiality, Privacy, and Security Protocol	34
Average Score for Adherence to Elements of the Confidentiality, Privacy, and Security Protocol	35
Average Score for Tier 1 Statistics' Adherence to Key Sub-elements of the Confidentiality, Privacy, and Security Protocol	36

Overview of ACOS

Official statistics are a vital part of New Zealand's infrastructure, underpinning decisions by central and local government, businesses, international investors, potential migrants, community groups, and citizens.

The Advisory Committee on Official Statistics (ACOS) was established in 2005 to provide independent and reliable advice on official statistics to the Minister of Statistics and the government.

ACOS, along with the Government Statistician, supports the Minister of Statistics to:

- ensure that statistical information is used to lift New Zealand's growth and progress by making sure that official statistics meet the country's needs for relevant, timely information that supports decision-making and progress monitoring
- ensure that better policy and fiscal decisions are made across government by using official statistics to inform them
- assure the quality, relevance, and value for money of the statistics produced across the Official Statistics System by looking for opportunities to fill gaps, reprioritise investment, remove duplication and inefficiency, improve standards, and increase the use of statistics
- ensure the integrity of New Zealand's Official Statistics System.

ACOS's role is to:

- advise on the integrity, relevance, and quality of Tier 1¹ statistics so that they best meet users' needs
- provide independent and reliable advice to the Minister of Statistics
- improve public confidence in official statistics by monitoring and reporting on standards, policies, and protocols
- provide comment to the Government Statistician on the performance of the Official Statistics Research and Data Archive Centre
- provide comment or advice on any other matters relating to the Official Statistics System that are referred to ACOS by the Minister of Statistics.

¹ Tier 1 statistics are key official statistics that are performance measures of New Zealand. They are of high public interest, have long-term continuity, and provide international comparability.

Overview of the Official Statistics System

The Official Statistics System is New Zealand's national statistics system. Statistics New Zealand produces most of the core official statistics that result from this system, particularly economic and population statistics. Official statistics on education, health, crime, justice, and welfare are produced by other government agencies, primarily from administrative sources or, in some cases, from surveys conducted by or for them.

Statistics New Zealand leads the system in which official statistics are produced by a range of agencies.

Guiding frameworks

The United Nations *Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics* (1994) provides the basic framework for official statistics. In New Zealand, the work of Statistics New Zealand and other government agencies that produce official statistics is guided by the Statistics Act 1975 (the Act). The Act gives Statistics New Zealand the mandate to lead a coordinated system as well as collect and provide information to enable a range of stakeholders to understand economic, social, demographic, and other matters of interest.

The *Top Down Review of the Official Statistics System* (Statistics New Zealand, 2003) sets the system's framework and strategy. The review was initiated by concerns about a lack of coordination and management of the system. It recommended a model for a strengthened system, with:

- stronger governance and leadership
- greater focus on the most important statistics and the standards expected of these
- improved access to a wider range of data by a wider range of users
- improved management of the burden on respondents
- long-term protection (archiving) of key datasets
- more research to support statistical development.

The model, approved by Cabinet, included the concept of Tier 1 statistics. The aim of this model is to identify the most important official statistics, as well as develop principles and protocols designed to ensure that these important statistics are produced to consistent standards of high quality and integrity. These two elements are described in more detail below.

Official statistics that are not classified as Tier 1 still play an important role in the Official Statistics System. Producers of these statistics are strongly encouraged to use the same standards in their production, but the coordination work focuses on Tier 1 statistics.

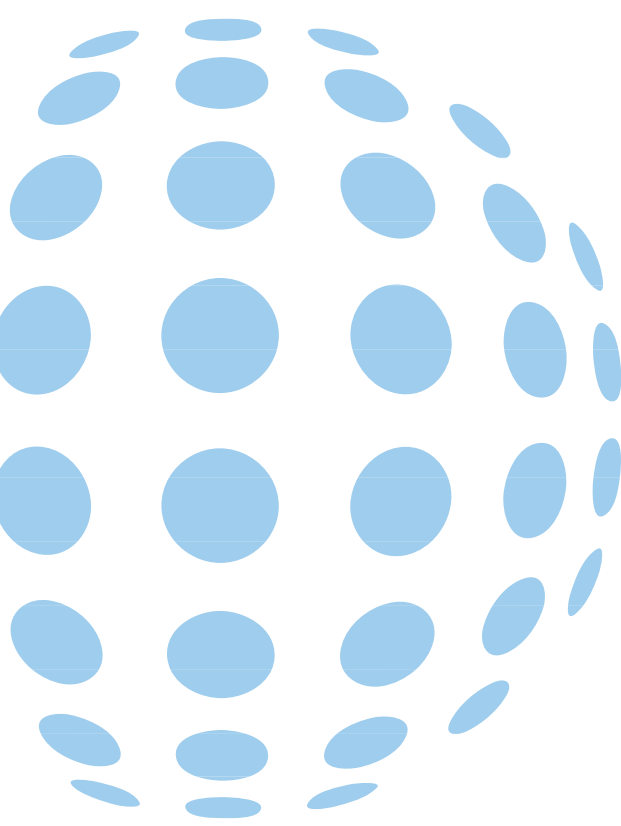
Tier 1 statistics

Tier 1 statistics are key official statistics that are performance measures of New Zealand. They are of high public interest, have long-term continuity, and provide international comparability.

They primarily include economic, population, and demographic information. Tier 1 statistics include market sensitive statistics such as consumer price indexes, labour market statistics, retail sales, trade, national accounts, balance of payments, and census statistics. Key industry statistics such as agriculture, forestry, fishing, and tourism, as well as key social statistics, particularly health, education, justice, and social development, are also included.

The statistics in the current Tier 1 set are produced by 13 different government agencies:

- Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry
- Ministry of Economic Development
- Ministry of Education
- Ministry for the Environment
- Ministry of Fisheries
- Ministry of Health
- Ministry of Justice
- Ministry of Social Development
- Ministry of Tourism
- New Zealand Police
- Reserve Bank of New Zealand
- Statistics New Zealand
- the Treasury.



Principles and protocols

Ten principles and six protocols were identified to help producers of Tier 1 statistics use consistent and collectively agreed standards, protocols, and policies for official statistics. The *Principles and Protocols for Producers of Tier 1 Statistics* (Statistics NZ, 2007a) was published to help all government agencies use methodologies and practices that are statistically sound.

Principles and protocols

The principles are:

- relevance
- integrity
- quality
- coherence
- accessibility
- efficiency
- protecting respondent information
- minimising respondent load
- maximising existing data sources
- international participation.

In addition, a range of protocols provide practical frameworks for applying these principles across Tier 1 statistics and the Official Statistics System.

The six protocols cover:

- quality
- frameworks, standards and classifications
- respondent management
- confidentiality, privacy and security
- release practices
- management, documentation and preservation of statistical records.

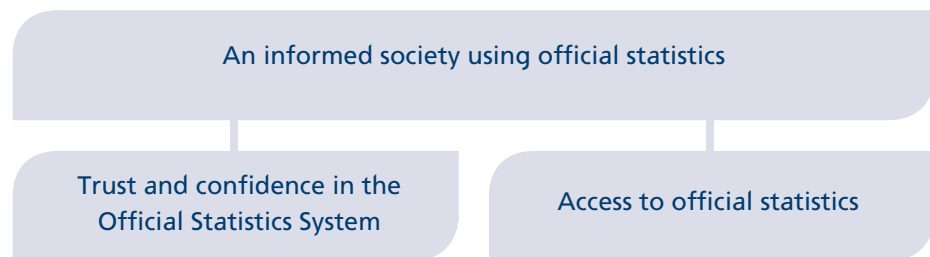
Outcomes sought from the Official Statistics System

The overall outcome sought from the Official Statistics System is an informed society where governments, businesses, communities, and citizens use official statistics to make better decisions that contribute to New Zealand's economic and social development. Official statistics are used to inform debate and research, and to understand New Zealand's economy, society, and environment.

In an informed society, users and potential users have trust and confidence in official statistics and are able to access and use them. Figure 1 illustrates the outcomes framework for the Official Statistics System.

Figure 1

Outcomes Sought From the Official Statistics System



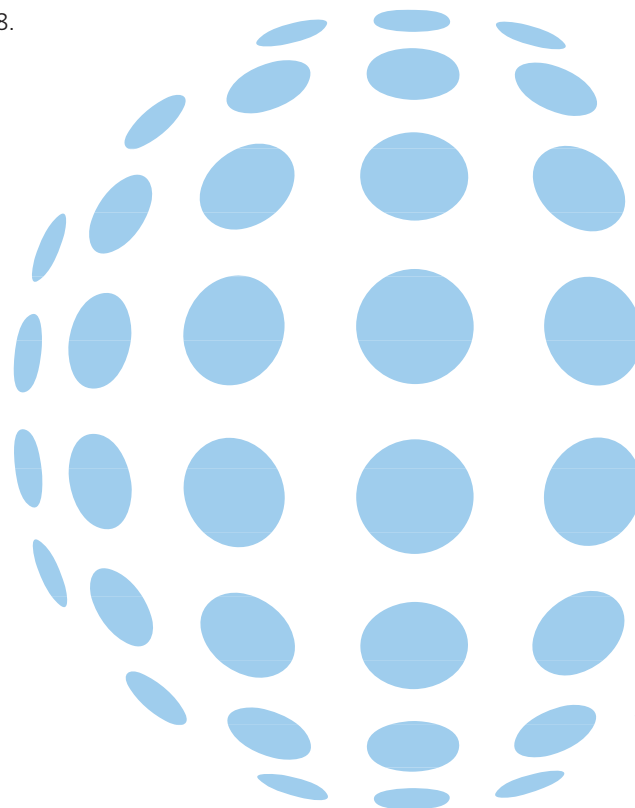
Activity in 2008

ACOS represents the wider statistical community, including users, producers, and suppliers of official statistical information through ongoing interaction in the form of surveying and face-to-face meetings. The committee seeks to be well informed on the interests of users, producers, and respondents.

During 2008, ACOS met three times to review and learn about activity across New Zealand's Official Statistics System. The committee received papers and presentations from participants in the Official Statistics System on a range of topics which helped members form views on the system's health.

Since its 2007 Annual Report, ACOS has:

- met with officials from the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Tourism to consider the state of health and tourism statistics and discuss their plans for the further development of Tier 1 statistics in their sectors
- considered two commissioned papers from former Australian Statistician and international statistical expert, Dennis Trewin, that addressed the role of a national statistics office in the 21st century and the challenges that this raises. See appendix 2
- looked at progress in developing a performance monitoring framework that will enable the committee to better assess the health of Tier 1 statistics and the wider Official Statistics System
- received the results of a survey of the general public on awareness of official statistics (see appendix 3)
- received the results of a review of how well producers of Tier 1 statistics adhere to the confidentiality, privacy and security protocol (see appendix 4)
- appraised progress on the review of Tier 1 statistics that began in 2008.



The overall health of the system

ACOS believes that in overall terms New Zealand's Official Statistics System is in good health. Under this system the statistics provide a wide view of New Zealand's progress, which is expanding over time, and enables international comparisons.

Significant gains have been made in recent years, with new statistics on issues such as productivity, employment dynamics, business performance, migration, mortality, and the non-profit sector. There is also improved access to statistics, with most statistics now freely available on the web, and reduced costs to businesses through greater use of tax data.

The institutions and governance arrangements for the Official Statistics System are sound and there are appropriate structures to support a coordinated wider Official Statistics System across government.

From its discussions in 2008, ACOS has comments to make on the three areas it is required to report on. These are:

- the relevance and quality of Tier 1 statistics
- what changes are necessary to improve the coverage of Tier 1 statistics
- the appropriateness of standards, policies, and protocols for official statistics.

The relevance and quality of Tier 1 statistics

Two measurements of the health of Tier 1 statistics were made in 2008, building on work from previous years. They were:

- a public awareness survey that examined the general public's knowledge and perception of official statistics
- a self-assessment, completed by producers of Tier 1 statistics, to determine their degree of adherence to the confidentiality, privacy and security protocol of the *Principles and Protocols for Producers of Tier 1 Statistics* (Statistics NZ, 2007a).

Public awareness survey

This survey of 1,000 people found that half were aware of official statistics. The most well-known official statistics are prices and inflation, population, and employment statistics and the most actively sought official statistics are prices and inflation, population, and housing. Approximately one in four people who were aware of official statistics actively sought them in the past 12 months. The general public report that official statistics are trusted, and easy to find and understand. See appendix 3.

ACOS is encouraged by the attitude of trust and perceptions of accessibility, awareness and use of official statistics among the general public. However, the number of users who actively sought official statistics in the past 12 months suggests that there may be potential users among the general public who would benefit from greater promotion of official statistics.

Producer adherence to the confidentiality, privacy and security protocol

Producers of statistics rely on the cooperation and goodwill of New Zealanders in order to produce official statistics. This information, provided by government, businesses, communities, and citizens provides the foundations for the outputs of the Official

Statistics System. Cooperation and goodwill are maintained in part by protecting the confidentiality of information collected from respondents through ensuring identifiable information is maintained securely, is used only for statistical purposes and is not revealed in any outputs.

Since 2007, producers of Tier 1 statistics have made self-assessments of their adherence to a selected protocol from the *Principles and Protocols for Producers of Tier 1 Statistics* (Statistics NZ, 2007a). In 2007, producers were surveyed about their adherence to the quality protocol.

In 2008, producers of Tier 1 statistics were asked to participate in a self-assessment process measuring their adherence to the confidentiality, privacy and security protocol. This self-assessment survey was done because statistical producers have an obligation to suppliers of information to protect and care for that information in a variety of ways.

The self-assessment survey found that of the 104² Tier 1 statistics included in the survey, 41 use excellent practices, 52 use good practices and 11 use acceptable practices. No Tier 1 statistics were found to be in need of immediate improvement. The protocol requires record-keeping of those who are able to access Tier 1 statistics prior to release, as well as keeping a record of the individual accesses that are made. The detailed results of this self-assessment survey showed that many producers rely on their information technology (IT) to control both these practices and record details about electronic accesses only. Also, although the protocol requires it, no Tier 1 datasets have yet been deposited in the Data Archive. Of the 10 leading sub-elements of the confidentiality, privacy and security element, seven are fully met by all Tier 1 statistics.

Although there are shortcomings in adherence to the protocol, ACOS is broadly confident that respondents' rights to confidentiality are respected and their information is stored securely. See appendix 4.

Changes necessary to improve the coverage of Tier 1 statistics

During 2008, ACOS has continued to build a picture of the coverage of New Zealand's Tier 1 statistics. ACOS acknowledges that coverage in many areas is good. Coverage continues to improve in terms of both the scope of what should be measured as well as the comprehensiveness of what is already being measured.

However, the committee notes that there are some important gaps in our official statistics and in those classified as Tier 1. Key gaps include statistics that are not currently produced in the economic and environmental areas as well as those that are currently produced but are not defined as Tier 1. This latter group includes productivity statistics as well as many health and education statistics.

Economic statistics and the measurement of productivity

New Zealand's economic statistics are of good quality and broadly meet the most important needs. However, they could be improved to keep up with international standards and expectations, to meet local pressures for the purposes of better economic management and to drive growth.

Limited monthly series and a lack of information about business profitability hinder timely economic and fiscal forecasts, budget-setting, and interest rates. Shortcomings in our measurement of savings and gross domestic product (GDP) make the country vulnerable to uninformed and negative perceptions of its economic health. Limited information about public sector productivity restricts the ability to assess the effectiveness of this

² There is a total of 109 Tier 1 statistics. Five were excluded from the survey as the source data for them is available in the public arena and therefore confidentiality, privacy and security are not relevant.

expenditure. Poor quality economic statistics can result in uncertainty among international agencies and adversely affect interest rates.

The successes of integrated information systems such as the Linked Employer-Employee Database (LEED) and the longitudinal business activity database (Improved Business Understanding via Longitudinal Database Development – IBULDD) suggests that further integration of linked water, land, energy, and employment data in a suite of economic and social indicators would be useful.

There have been significant developments in the coverage of productivity statistics over the past 12 months. Productivity statistics now cover 73 percent of the New Zealand economy, up from 63 percent. ACOS has noted the significant achievements in the measurement of productivity and endorses these expansions.

Environment statistics

The environment is becoming an increasingly important policy area. Key environmental decisions rely on official statistics. Some important statistics, such as the levels of water and energy usage, are unknown, which hinders good policy decision-making.

Such gaps in information occur for a range of reasons. They include statistics that do not exist at all, statistics that are produced and perhaps should be classified as Tier 1, and statistics that require improvements in quality before being classified as Tier 1 statistics. The reasons why this is occurring include the need to develop methodologies and strategies for the collection and production of the statistics as well as investment in both capability and funding.

In its 2007 *Environment Performance Reviews: New Zealand*, the OECD recommended that New Zealand “expand the availability of quantitative indicators and time series data”. New Zealand is developing comprehensive reporting on progress under the banner of sustainable development.

Sustainable development

Statistics New Zealand has developed a framework for measuring sustainable development in New Zealand, based around the international work that Statistics New Zealand has been involved in over the past two years.

Economic, social and environmental sustainability measurement is underway, with publication planned for 2009. This will provide a picture of New Zealand’s progress towards sustainable development. It will address specific questions of how well we live, how our resources are distributed, what we are leaving behind for our children, and how efficiently we are using our natural resources.

In addition, the review of Tier 1 statistics that is underway and the ongoing development of domain plans will help to resolve the concerns in these areas.

Review of Tier 1 statistics

ACOS is aware that gaps remain in the list of Tier 1 statistics and welcomes the current review of both the definition of Tier 1 and the list.

The current set of Tier 1 statistics was assembled in 2005 by members of a cross-agency officials committee and received ministerial endorsement. At this time officials also identified existing statistics that could become Tier 1 at a later stage. ACOS endorses the plan to review these and other official statistics in consultation with users and producers, so that a collaboratively selected and revised list of Tier 1 statistics is published in 2009.

ACOS members support:

- action that will result in clarity of the definition of Tier 1
- the list being those that are the most important statistics.

Some effort may be subsequently required to bring those statistics up to Tier 1 standard. This review will enable producers of official statistics to more readily identify Tier 1, assisted by domain planning work that is progressively being completed as outlined in the following section of this report.

Statistical domain plans

ACOS notes the progress that continues to be made on domain plans. These plans seek to:

- identify information needs (including a forward view) in a subject area
- identify all relevant and available data sources in a subject area
- undertake a stocktake of data and data sources
- address any gaps in needs
- develop a prioritised plan to idealise the statistical coverage in a subject matter area
- assist with the identification and coverage of Tier 1 statistics.

The committee sees this work as making a significant contribution to evaluating the current coverage of statistics across the overall Official Statistics System and assisting with the assessment of the suitability of Tier 1 statistics' coverage in New Zealand.

The *Domain Plan for Energy Sector 2006–2016* was completed in 2006 (Statistics NZ et al.) and the Family Domain Plan in 2007, published as *Report of the Review of Official Family Statistics* (Statistics NZ, 2007b). The Agriculture, Horticulture and Forestry Domain Plan is near completion. Public consultation on the Crime and Criminal Justice Domain Plan is complete and final recommendations are being prepared. The Culture and Identity Domain Plan and the Housing Domain Plan are being prepared for final public consultation. Work on an Environment Domain Plan and a stocktake of existing environment data sources is underway and due for completion in 2009. The Population Domain Plan is currently being drafted.

Agriculture, Horticulture and Forestry Domain Plan

The Agriculture, Horticulture and Forestry Domain Plan has been developed by Statistics New Zealand and the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry in consultation with key stakeholders. Its scope is restricted mainly to quantifying the productivity and sustainability of New Zealand's land-based agricultural activities. The process included consultation with the Ministry for the Environment, Department of Labour, Ministry of Economic Development, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and Meat and Wool New Zealand.

Eight enduring topic areas and 18 proposed development issues have been identified. The eight enduring topic areas are:

- market access and global competitiveness
- market-led research and development
- production
- innovation, growth, productivity, labour, and supply-chain efficiency
- food safety, bio-security, and consumer concerns
- land use, changes, and demands
- environmental sustainability, biodiversity, and integrity
- rural social capital.

The domain plan should be completed by mid-2009, following final consultation.

The appropriateness of standards, policies, and protocols for official statistics

ACOS is required to report on the appropriateness of standards, policies, and protocols for official statistics. This falls into two parts:

- the appropriateness of the principles and protocols
- the adoption of common statistical standards.

Principles and protocols

The confidentiality, privacy and security protocol self-assessment identified that in some cases, producers of Tier 1 statistics adhere to the spirit of the protocol and achieve the protocol's intent rather than taking a literal approach. The same issue was identified in the 2006/07 quality protocol measurement process. In these cases the outcomes achieved are not negatively affected and indicate a need for the protocols to be revised to reflect current appropriate practice.

ACOS proposes to continue discussions with government agency officials on the range of statistics each department produces and any issues they may have with implementing the *Principles and Protocols for Producers of Tier 1 Statistics* (Statistics NZ, 2007a).

Common statistical standards

The value of statistical data is enhanced through the use of common frameworks, standards, and classifications. In 2008 there were changes to two significant classification systems used in the presentation of a range of official statistics. These revised classifications reflect the need to keep them relevant and to allow access to newly classified statistical information. Developments were made to the Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification (ANZSIC06) and similarly to the Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification for Occupation (ANZSCO).

Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification (ANZSIC06)

A new version of the Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification (ANZSIC06) is being implemented in Statistics New Zealand's industry-based statistics.

The revisions were introduced to reflect recent changes in the structure and composition of the industry, such as new production practices, new products and services, and recent advances in technology. It enables industry statistics to be presented in a way that better reflects how New Zealand businesses operate and it improves the international comparability of statistics by aligning closely with the International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities (ISIC) (Revision 4). All information and communications technology (ICT) activities have been brought together within a single ANZSIC division and reflect the rapid development in this industry and the significantly larger proportion of total business activity it now occupies. The Quarterly Employment Survey (QES) results will become available by the new industry classification in 2009.

Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification for Occupation (ANZSCO)

Statistics New Zealand and the Australian Bureau of Statistics have developed a harmonised occupation classification called the Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification for Occupation (ANZSCO). The new version of ANZSCO makes it easier to analyse trans-Tasman labour market data. The results from the Household Labour Force Survey, the New Zealand Income Survey, and the Labour Cost Index results will be available by the new occupation classification in 2009.

ACOS members commend this significant improvement in labour market information outcomes.

Statistical research

Research

Official statistics research contributes to an improvement, over time, in the relevance and quality of official statistics. ACOS endorses the principle of research that focuses on new ways of producing new statistics from existing data sources.

Statistics New Zealand has supported a formal programme of funded statistical research for the past five years. In addition, cross-government collaboration is becoming increasingly important, especially in the production of new statistics. Relationships with other government agencies, such as Inland Revenue, are particularly crucial, as tax data underpins modern economic statistics.

ACOS recognises the work of the Official Statistics Research Programme, which commissions and funds research on the usefulness, reliability, coverage, and availability of the statistics produced by the Official Statistics System each year.

In 2008, 12 expressions of interest were received for facilitating research programmes that meet these criteria. Four projects are being funded. These will examine:

- geovisualisation and policy
- using statistical modelling to produce less expensive official statistics
- sexual orientation data in probability surveys
- statistics for sustainable development.

Official Statistics Research Programme

The programme has commissioned and funded 36 research projects in its first five years. Six are due for completion in 2009. Findings have been presented at national and international conferences.

In the year ended June 2008, 12 Official Statistics System seminars were attended by 350 state sector staff, academics and private sector personnel. Between July and November 2008, 300 people attended the first five seminars.

Statistics New Zealand also works closely with many government agencies when producing key economic, social and environmental statistics, and in collecting and integrating administrative data.

Statistics New Zealand facilitates a research programme with agencies including the Ministry of Social Development, Treasury, and the Department of Labour, which focuses on labour market dynamics and outcomes. A major resource for these studies is LEED (Linked Employer-Employee Database), which is largely sourced from tax information and draws on Statistics New Zealand's business classification information.

Researcher access to data

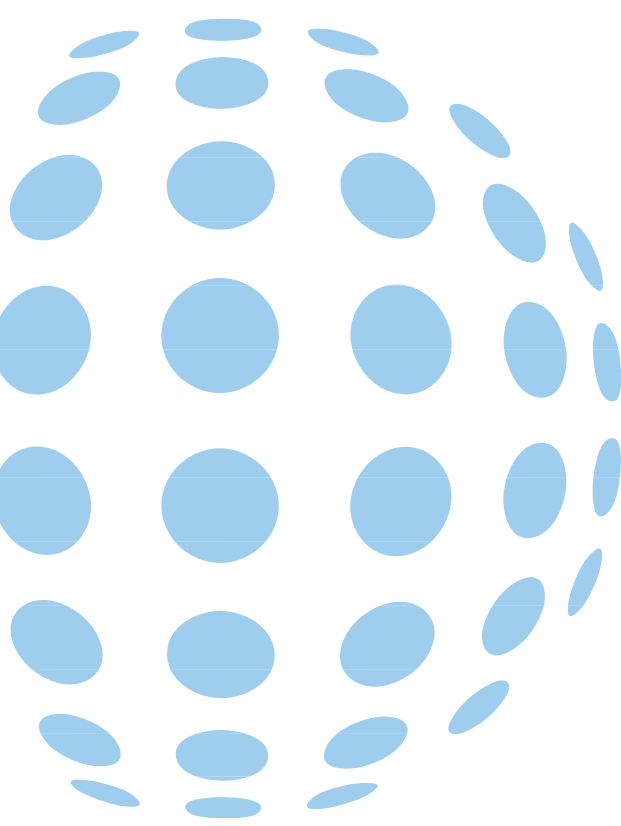
Readily accessible data is important to researchers. ACOS notes that there has been an increased demand for:

- data at the individual level (known as microdata)
- longitudinal links to understand changes and trends across time
- access to datasets to enable sophisticated analysis
- international comparisons.

Additionally, ACOS has noted that for data to be of maximum value to researchers, access to microdata needs to be well-managed and meet publicly available standards that ensure:

- data usage is transparent
- informed consent is obtained to protect data that is used for genuine research purposes
- limiting statements are managed so that data is not unduly restricted and therefore precluded from contributing to valuable research purposes in the future.

Microdata provide a rich basis for research to underpin decision-making. The access to microdata that Statistics New Zealand gives researchers in government agencies is more generous than most other OECD statistical agencies. However, the Statistics Act 1975 imposes significant restrictions on data access by non-government agency researchers. This situation is not ideal given the desire to gain as much knowledge about New Zealand as possible from data that is already collected. The committee accepts that a review of the Act is needed to bring New Zealand into line with international best practice. Such a review would need to be carefully managed so that the Act's existing strengths are not lost. It would also need to look toward the future so that proposed changes are relevant for some time to come and provide an enabling environment for the 21st century.



Opportunities

The committee believes that there are opportunities to improve outcomes for New Zealanders by:

- filling gaps in some existing statistics
- improving access to, and the use of, official statistics
- reducing costs to businesses and households providing data to statistics producers.

ACOS is pleased to note that there has been progress in each of the above three areas during 2008.

Lessening the gaps in official statistics

In an ever-changing world, it is important to keep the portfolio of official statistics relevant. There are key gaps in the country's economic and environmental statistics, as outlined in the earlier section 'Changes necessary to improve the coverage of Tier 1 statistics'.

Official statistics are an important infrastructure component and production of official statistics is affected by available funding. This issue is discussed in the 'Challenges' section of this report.

Improving access and use

The committee believes New Zealand could get greater benefit from its investment in official statistics if they were used more by a wider range of users. If official statistics are to inform decisions, they must be accessible. ACOS is encouraged by the progress that has been made in these areas over the last year. More information is being provided at minimal cost and advances have been made in statistical education activities.

Information at minimal cost

Since May 2007, a large range of Statistics New Zealand data and products have progressively become available for free. Free information is more likely to be accessed and therefore used and more widely understood. This initiative allows more New Zealanders, and more New Zealand businesses, to make decisions based on quality information.

During the year, Infoshare, a new tool for accessing time series data has become available free of charge on the Statistics New Zealand website. Infoshare provides free online customisation and downloads of a range of time series data.

ACOS notes that Statistics New Zealand supports best practice in the use of statistics in a number of ways. This includes their sponsorship of annual awards that promote statistical excellence in journalism.

Statistics New Zealand Journalism Awards

Statistical excellence in journalism is recognised by Statistics New Zealand's annual Journalism Awards. These are for journalists who use official statistics (particularly Tier 1 statistics) to write a story of interest to the public.

The award is given to the best news or feature story from print, radio, television or online that makes the best use of official statistics. A separate award is given to students of journalism.

The awards are judged by a panel of both journalism and statistical experts. The most recent winners are Caroline Courtney, Stacey Anyon and Sarah Lang from 'North and South' magazine for their article titled 'Change of Place, Change of Pace' and featured the use of population, housing and environmental statistics to highlight stories of New Zealanders making changes of lifestyle and location.

John Hartevelt, from Canterbury University School of Journalism, is the latest Student Journalism Award winner.

ACOS endorses programmes that make information more accessible so that all participants in New Zealand's society and economy get full value from the investment that is made in official statistics. The committee will continue to monitor the progress and impact of implementing these initiatives.

Education initiatives

Improving statistical capability is an important part of a successful statistical system. A programme of statistical education and research mandated with upskilling the state sector has taken a three-way approach through tertiary teaching and learning, open seminars, and workshop training series. Led by Statistics New Zealand, these three programmes contribute to improving statistical skills and knowledge across the Official Statistics System.

National Certificate of Public Sector Services

This programme consists of four statistical unit standards and an elective component. The certificate is endorsed by the New Zealand Qualifications Authority and is for government staff requiring basic skills in statistics. Candidates are assessed for each unit standard, demonstrating their abilities to understand reports using statistics and make decisions based on statistics. Currently, 43 candidates from across the state sector are enrolled, including staff from Inland Revenue, Ministry of Defence, Statistics New Zealand, Department of Labour and Archives New Zealand. Nine have completed the Certificate and Statistics New Zealand hosted a graduation ceremony to recognise their achievement.

Seminar series

Monthly one-hour seminars bring official statistics producers and users together to build a greater shared commitment to the Official Statistics System and generate ideas and discussion. Attendances have increased 75 percent on 2007. Topics have included:

- learning more about Statistics New Zealand
- engaging the public in data evidence
- understanding ethnicity.

Training series

The Official Statistics System training series is a comprehensive programme that provides basic statistical upskilling. A needs assessment of 13 government departments established specific learning requirements.

Based on these results, a robust programme is being developed to offer a range of statistical upskilling to directly reflect the indicated learning needs. It is anticipated that universities will provide the training in Wellington and Auckland.

ACOS believes that statistical capability is an important part of the Official Statistics System and congratulates the achievers in the National Certificate of Public Sector Services programme.

Reducing the costs of supplying information

In any statistical system it is important to balance individual rights to privacy and the costs to businesses and households of completing questionnaires with the need to know about economic, social, and environmental outcomes. ACOS notes that there are opportunities to continue to reduce costs to business and households through initiatives aimed at increasing integration and reducing duplication.

Respondents are critical to the production of statistics and producers of statistics rely on the information they provide. Ensuring that respondents willingly supply the information needed is fundamental to producing high-quality and cost-effective official statistics. Minimising the imposition of survey requests, providing a variety of ways of responding and demonstrating the value of the information yielded from survey activity, are key to maintaining a good relationship.

These features must be combined with efforts to ensure that other ways of obtaining the information have been investigated and either exhausted or adopted. ACOS is encouraged by the range of activity that is aimed at minimising the load on respondents.

Respondent load

Minimising the time and cost involved for a person, household or business to complete a survey is one of the key principles within the *Principles and Protocols for Producers of Tier 1 Statistics* (Statistics NZ, 2007a). In 2007, Statistics New Zealand developed an overall respondent load strategy to help reduce the impact on respondents.

Statistics New Zealand's respondent load strategy aims to:

- set a best-practice model for producers of official statistics
- communicate the value of official statistics to respondents
- set load targets
- review the load imposed by existing surveys
- improve responsiveness to Māori statistical needs
- measure respondent load.

In 2009 the number of respondents to Statistics New Zealand's Annual Business Frame Update Survey (AFUS) will fall by 20,000. This will happen because data validation (by direct surveying of businesses) will focus on a smaller selection of businesses than in the past. Data for the Business Frame (a database of New Zealand businesses and their structure) are validated by surveying businesses directly. From next year, validation will focus on a smaller selection of approximately 41,000 businesses.

Additionally, the Annual Enterprise Survey (AES) is being redesigned to use an optimal mix of survey and administrative data. The AES provides financial information and measures of financial performance and position. This information underpins the New Zealand System of National Accounts.

The new AES will reduce the volume of information that has to be collected from people and businesses, while increasing the range and usefulness of the information produced.

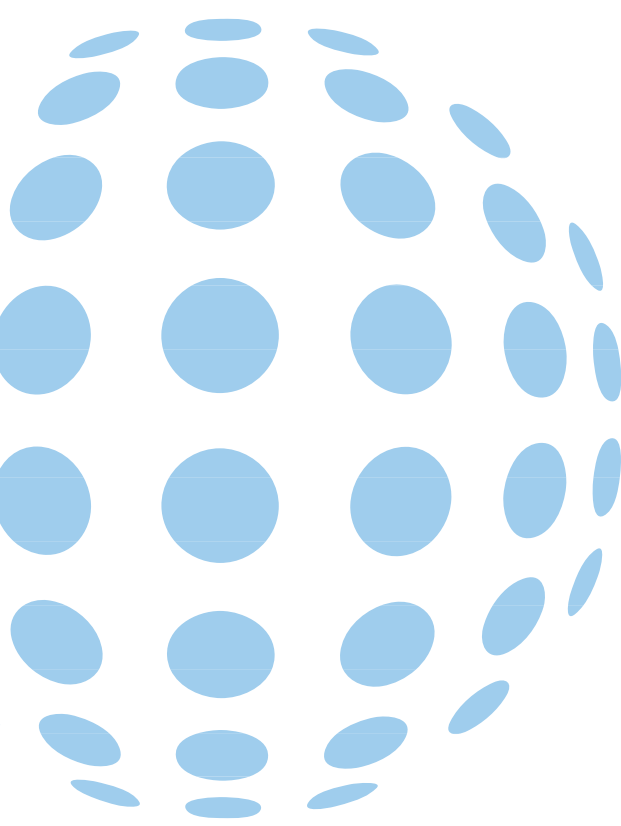
Administrative data is a respected source of statistical information and a viable alternative to the collection of information by direct surveying of respondents. ACOS recommends that Statistics New Zealand develops a conceptual framework and quality assurance guidelines for administrative source data. This will maintain public confidence and mean that the public do not perceive its statistical use to be a tool for policing tax compliance or other government regulatory obligations.

ACOS commends all efforts to reduce the load on survey respondents and encourages the ongoing review of survey activity across the whole Official Statistics System with a view to replacing survey activity wherever possible with administrative data sources. ACOS supports the adoption of the principles of this strategy throughout all government agencies.

Respondent advocate

During 2008, Statistics New Zealand appointed an internal respondent advocate. The advocate will advise the Government Statistician on respondent load and ensure appropriate action is taken in cases of unreasonable personal imposition. The advocate will develop a framework to manage respondent requests for relief and will promote awareness of respondent load issues.

ACOS commends the focus that such an appointment brings to the issue of respondent burden and agrees with Official Statistics System officials that the lead target area for the respondent load strategy should be Statistics New Zealand. After this, consideration should focus on other Official Statistics System partners. ACOS is pleased with progress being made to reduce respondent load within Statistics New Zealand and will continue to monitor progress across the whole Official Statistics System.



Challenges

ACOS is aware of some challenges facing the Official Statistics System. It will continue to focus on these in the coming year.

Ownership of the Official Statistics System

The Official Statistics System can only be successful if all partners actively participate. This is an ongoing challenge and work continues with government agencies so that they understand their roles within the Official Statistics System and the benefits of it. This year, an introduction to the Official Statistics System and agencies' obligations within it was part of the State Services Commission's induction programme for public sector chief executives.

Ensuring the ongoing production of important statistics

ACOS is aware that there are financial and capability pressures within the statistical system. During 2008, Statistics New Zealand had to make cuts to statistical outputs as a result of financial pressures. It also expressed concerns about its ability to deliver a quality census in 2011 within its current funding.

ACOS recognises the importance of the census within the Official Statistics System. As the only collection of statistics in New Zealand on the whole population, it provides a unique source of information at national and regional levels, and underpins critical statistical measures such as population estimates and projections. Poor-quality census data would have a serious effect on a number of statistics uses, including transport planning, local government decision-making, electoral boundary determinations, and the allocation of billions of dollars of education and health spending.

The committee acknowledges it is difficult for a government facing large fiscal deficits to deal with all the competing pressures for funding. We support the work that Statistics New Zealand is doing to address its current financial situation as well as delivering a quality census. ACOS welcomes the current initiatives to prioritise the most important statistics (so that good investment decisions can be made) as well as the work underway to explore efficiency and effectiveness initiatives.

Trust in the objectivity of statistical reporting

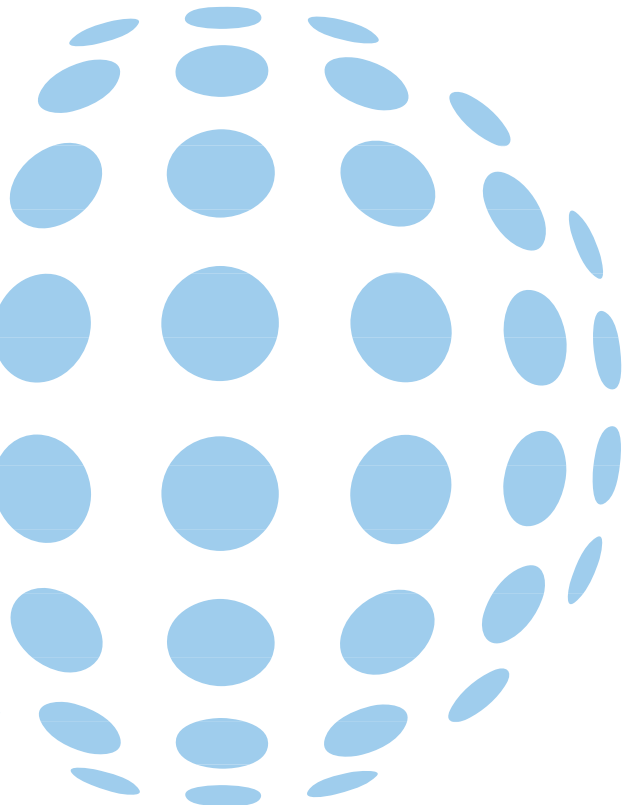
ACOS is interested in the role of government departments when releasing reports. The issues concern the separation of processes that confirm data from the processes of adding commentary that links the information to policy statements.

ACOS believes the separation of reporting, from policy statements, is important throughout the Official Statistics System and that indicator reports should conform to practices and policies as for other official statistics.

Indicator reports bring information together from a variety of sources and there should be a coordinated approach to reports being produced. ACOS is encouraged that multiple agencies are involved in 'higher thinking' around a number of indicator reports like the Social Report and the Economic Indicators Report.

The selection of indicators is an important matter and there should be integrity of process and rules around their selection, production and release. ACOS notes that it would be better to agree to a core set of community outcomes and associated indicators that could then be collected nationally in a consistent manner.

ACOS supports the work underway on indicator reporting and the review, led by Statistics New Zealand, of government agency release practice protocols which is underway.



References

OECD. (2007). *Environment performance reviews: New Zealand*. Available from www.oecd.org.

Statistics New Zealand. (2003). *Top down review of the Official Statistics System*. Available from www.stats.govt.nz.

Statistics New Zealand. (2007a). *Principles and protocols for producers of Tier 1 statistics*. Wellington: Author. Available from www.statisphere.govt.nz.

Statistics New Zealand. (2007b). *Report of the Review of Official Family Statistics*. Wellington: Author. Available from www.stats.govt.nz.

Statistics New Zealand, Ministry of Economic Development, and Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority. (2006). *Domain plan for energy sector 2006–2016*. Available from www.med.govt.nz.

United Nations Statistical Commission. (1994). *Fundamental principles of official statistics*. Available from <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/methods/statorg/FP-English.htm>.

Appendix 1

The Advisory Committee on Official Statistics (ACOS)

Role and functions

The key functions of ACOS are to:

- advise on the integrity, relevance and quality of Tier 1 statistics so that they best meet users' needs
- provide independent and reliable advice to the Minister of Statistics
- improve public confidence in official statistics by monitoring and reporting on standards, policies and protocols
- provide comment to the Government Statistician on the performance of the Official Statistics and Research Data Archive Centre
- provide comment or advice on any other matters relating to the Official Statistics System that are referred to ACOS by the Minister of Statistics.

ACOS is required to produce an annual report on the health of the Official Statistics System that covers:

- the relevance and quality of Tier 1 statistics
- any changes necessary to improve the coverage of Tier 1 statistics
- the appropriateness of standards, policies and protocols for official statistics.

The Minister of Statistics appoints members to the committee, including the Chair. The Government Statistician is an ex-officio member.

ACOS's mandate covers the whole Official Statistics System, which comprises all statistics produced by all government departments, as well as the mechanisms used to produce them.

Membership

The members of ACOS represent a broad cross-section of the community, covering government, business, academic, cultural and community interests. They are, or have been, members of significant organisations who bring to the committee their own personal expertise and experience.

Members understand the value of official statistics in analysing New Zealand's economy, society and environment. ACOS therefore, helps to ensure that official statistics, particularly Tier 1 statistics (the key official statistics that are performance measures of New Zealand) meet the needs of users.

Appendix 2

The role of a national statistics office and its support for researcher access to data

In late 2007, former Australian Statistician and international statistical expert Dennis Trewin was commissioned to write a 'think piece' on the future role of a national statistics office and the options and constraints in conducting and supporting statistical research. In response, he prepared two papers, focused on each of these matters. The papers were discussed by ACOS and the issues raised in his papers may arise in further discussion by the committee. The following summary of Dennis Trewin's papers was prepared by Statistics New Zealand.

Summary of the papers

The papers start from the premise that the essential role of a national statistics office is to provide trustworthy official statistics for use by government and the community. Dennis Trewin explains that while this essential role has remained unchanged, the way in which it is fulfilled has, internationally, altered and continues to evolve.

Dennis Trewin focuses on the areas of international debate on the extent to which a national statistics office should be involved or where there has been change in recent years. In doing this, he identified six areas of activity or potential activity. These areas are:

- statistical leadership across the national statistical system
- developing an integrated information system
- increasing the use of administrative data for statistical purposes
- supporting environmental statistics
- increasing analytical capability
- options and constraints for a national statistics office conducting and supporting statistical research.

Statistical leadership across the Official Statistics System

Dennis Trewin notes that while New Zealand's Official Statistics System is a relatively centralised one in which Statistics New Zealand produces and disseminates a large number of official statistics, a number of other important statistics are produced by other agencies and institutions. In recent years, the system has focused on implementing improvements to New Zealand's Official Statistics System by:

- identifying a set of important statistics that are performance measures of New Zealand (Tier 1 statistics)
- broadening the coverage of official statistics to include statistics produced by Crown agencies
- applying a set of consistent standards, protocols and policies for Tier 1 statistics
- providing a survey approval process for new or substantially revised Tier 1 surveys
- providing for leadership by the Government Statistician to develop the Official Statistics System
- providing independent advice through an Advisory Committee on Official Statistics
- maximising access to, and release of, statistics
- establishing an official statistics research and data archive centre
- setting out clear terms for contract survey work done by Statistics New Zealand

- establishing a process to manage respondent burden for large surveys
- establishing a Statistics Notification System (SNS) for reporting all surveys in government.

Dennis Trewin considers that it is important to understand any barriers to implementing a strengthened Official Statistics System. He cites the release practices protocol as an example and notes that other constraints have to be considered, including the:

- technical skills of staff
- technical capacity of the agency providing the statistics
- priority given to statistical work compared with other tasks within agencies.

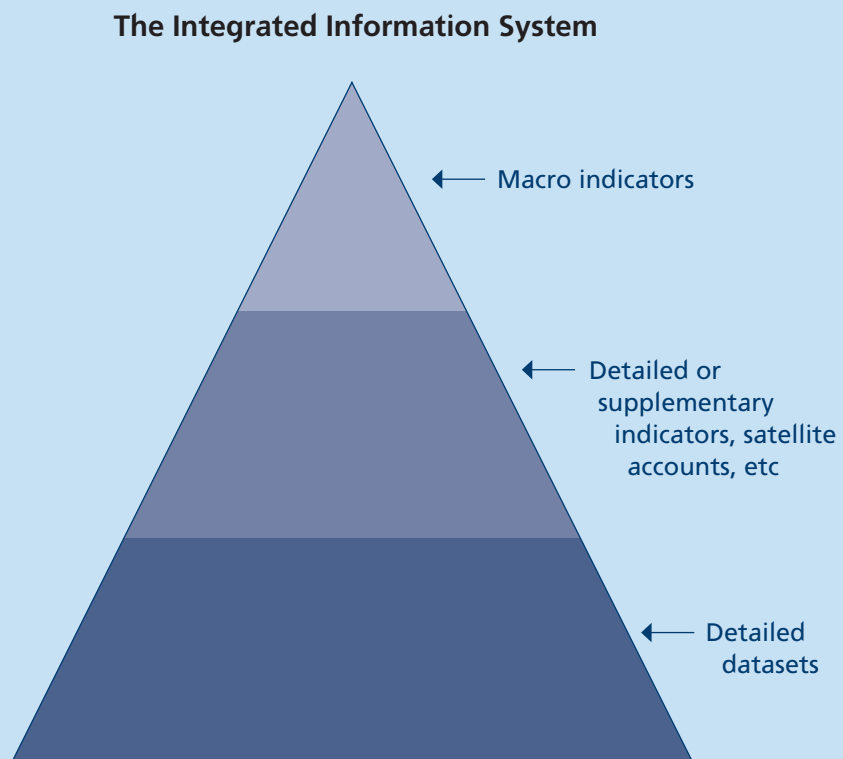
He adds that although mainly technical in nature, it should be noted that technical coordination is only part of the solution. Statistical leadership of the type envisaged by Dennis Trewin in his papers requires investigating ways to do different things and develop different capabilities.

Developing an integrated information system

The papers note that quality information is critical to support evidence-based decision making. Information overload, however, can raise potential problems and appropriate indicators can be an effective way of digesting that information. For these reasons, Dennis Trewin identified a strong push for more indicators.

Statistical indicators are useful tools that play an important role in the overall statistical system. If chosen correctly, he explains, indicators can provide a good picture of what is occurring in a country, although complementary data sources need to be identified for those seeking further detail. This is illustrated in figure 2.

Figure 2



Dennis Trewin identifies four options for the role that Statistics New Zealand might take in the development of indicators. These are:

- providing trusted, high-quality statistical information and underlying data sets
- assisting with the development of a framework to underpin the indicator systems
- providing advice and review services on indicator systems
- publishing the indicator sets.

Dennis Trewin concludes that involving the national statistics office in these processes increases the perception that the quality of the indicators is sound and that it is important that this expectation is met.

Increasing the use of administrative data for statistical purposes

Administrative systems are a census of the in-scope population and are widely-used internationally to support a range of statistics such as foreign trade and migration statistics. Dennis Trewin considers that decisions to use administrative data as the source for official statistics should be made with due regard to quality, timeliness, costs and burden on respondents. Often, the driver behind increased use of administrative records is a desire to reduce respondent load or operational costs.

Dennis Trewin explains that there may be opportunities to link administrative datasets to provide a richer dataset for statistical analysis. However, reliability of supply can be a concern. There can be experiences where administrative data is delivered late, is of poor quality, or changes are made to the content without consultation with the national statistics office. The use of administrative data to produce longitudinal datasets or linked datasets (across administrative data systems) produces further methodological challenges. Methods have been developed and are still evolving.

Privacy concerns are also a potential constraint to the use of administrative data, however Dennis Trewin recommends that Statistics New Zealand should continue to position itself to make greater use of administrative data for statistical purposes.

Supporting environment statistics

Dennis Trewin notes that the environment is close to the top of the global policy agenda yet New Zealand's coverage of environmental statistics is minimal compared with many OECD countries.

He advises that greatest attention should be given to those statistical activities that result in better information for the environmental issues that are most important to New Zealand.

Increasing analytical capability

Dennis Trewin reports that a national statistics office needs to remain mindful of its core function of providing a relevant, high quality and professional official statistical service. It should continue to use technology to improve the efficiency of the statistical service, the type of services it can provide, as well as enhancing access.

Analytical services are an increasingly important function of national statistical offices. To improve its analytical capability, a statistics office needs to employ staff with the right skills and policy knowledge. These staff are in high demand and high turnover is to be expected. It is also necessary to face the reality that any increase in staff supply is likely to be outweighed by the increase in demand. Therefore, Dennis Trewin concludes, developing strong relationships with other providers of analytical services (for example, relevant university departments) is an important part of the strategy.

Additionally, he explains, analysis can be done by either a national statistics office or the users of the data with support in various ways from the national statistics office. Confidentiality requirements mean that some datasets can only be used by staff of

a statistics office. There are also some analyses which should be done only outside a national statistics office because of the subjectivity required as well as the skills and understanding needed of the subject matter.

Options and constraints for a national statistics office in conducting and supporting statistical research

Dennis Trewin notes that Statistics New Zealand is more generous in providing micro-data access to government departments than most other OECD statistical agencies. It is at the leading edge in relation to setting up datasets that integrate separate data sources. However, there are significant restrictions on access by non-government department researchers.

These restrictions on non-government researchers, Dennis Trewin notes, are due to constraints within the Statistics Act 1975 (the Act), rather than Statistics New Zealand's policy or practices. While the Act allows government agencies access to micro-data for statistical purposes, he explains, it does not allow for academics, international researchers and local government to access the same microdata unless they are contracted to a government department. Given the desire to gain as much knowledge for New Zealand as possible, Dennis Trewin concludes that this situation is not ideal and that to enable resolution, a review of relevant parts of the Statistics Act 1975 is an option.

Appendix 3

Results of the 2008 survey of public awareness of official statistics

Users of official statistics rely on quality statistics that are relevant, meaningful and easy to find and use. In 2006 and 2007, surveys were done to gain insight into the perceptions of people's use and understanding of official statistics. The audiences for these surveys were selected from users of Statistics New Zealand's products and website.

While these surveys were informative, questions were raised about the levels of awareness of official statistics among the wider public, including people who had never previously accessed official statistics.

Therefore, in 2008, a public awareness telephone survey of 1,000 members of the general public was commissioned. The aim was to provide an indication of how much the public are aware of official statistics and to gauge their perception of how easy official statistics are to find and use.

Summary of the survey of the general public as users of official statistics

The following are the main points from the 2008 public awareness survey of the general public as users of official statistics:

- half of those surveyed are aware of official statistics
- the most well-known official statistics are prices and inflation, population, and employment statistics
- the most actively sought official statistics are prices and inflation, population, and housing statistics
- newspapers and television are the main sources of official statistics
- approximately 1 in 4 of those who are aware of official statistics actively sought official statistics in the past 12 months
- official statistics are trusted, and are easy to find and understand.

ACOS is encouraged by the attitude of trust and perceptions of accessibility, awareness and use of official statistics among the general public. The number of users who actively sought official statistics in the past 12 months suggests that there may be potential users among the general public who would benefit from promotion of official statistics.

Detailed results of this survey are outlined below.

Awareness of official statistics

The public awareness survey showed that without any prompting, half of all respondents were aware of some official statistics. When the results for unprompted and prompted awareness were combined, the types of statistics that respondents were most likely to be aware of were statistics related to prices and inflation, population, and employment. Table 1 shows the percentage of respondents who were aware of different types of official statistics.

Table 1

Awareness of Official Statistics
By statistics type
2008

Type	Percent
Prices and inflation	75
Population	73
Employment	71
Immigration	63
Housing	63
National economy, eg gross domestic product	56
Education	55
Exports and imports	53
Building and construction	51
Births, deaths and marriages	51
Environment	51
Agriculture, forestry, and fisheries	48
Tourism	48
Manufacturing, retail, and wholesale trade	46
Other	7

Accessing official statistics

Among the sources people use to obtain different kinds of official statistics, respondents most frequently mentioned newspapers and television. Men were more likely to mention using the Internet to find official statistics, while women were more likely to mention such sources as general conversation, talking with friends, and family and magazines. Table 2 shows the percentage of respondents using identified sources to obtain official statistics.

Table 2

Information Source of Official Statistics
2008

Source	Percent
Newspapers	64
Television	61
Radio	28
The Internet	15
At workplace	11
General conversation/talking with friends and family	9
School/university education	7
Magazines	3
Public library	1
Other	5

Of those respondents who are aware of official statistics, 24 percent actively sought official statistics in the past 12 months. Most frequently this was for prices and inflation, population and housing statistics. Table 3 shows the different types of official statistics accessed in the past 12 months.

Table 3

Official Statistics Accessed in the Past 12 Months*By statistics type*

2008

Type	%
Prices and inflation	6
Population	6
Housing	6
National economy, eg gross domestic product	4
Education	3
Environment	3
Exports and imports	3
Tourism	2
Agriculture, forestry, and fisheries	2
Immigration	2
Births, deaths, and marriages	2
Building and construction	2
Employment	2
Manufacturing, retail, and wholesale trade	2
Health	2
Crime	1
Other	3

Attitudes regarding official statistics

Those respondents who had obtained official statistics in the past 12 months were asked about their attitudes regarding official statistics. The survey found respondents were likely to agree with the following statements.

- Official statistics are trustworthy.
- Official statistics are easy to understand.
- It is easy to find official statistics.

Appendix 4

Review of the confidentiality, privacy and security protocol

Summary of self-assessment of adherence to the confidentiality, privacy and security protocol

The following are the main points from the self-assessment survey of Tier 1 statistics producers about their adherence to the confidentiality, privacy and security protocol.

- Of the 104 Tier 1 statistics included in the survey, 41 use excellent practices, 52 use good practices, and 11 use acceptable practices.
- No Tier 1 statistics are in need of immediate improvement.
- Some producers rely on IT systems to limit access to data to those that 'need-to-know' and record accesses.
- No Tier 1 datasets have yet been deposited in the Data Archive.
- Of the 10 leading sub-elements of the confidentiality, privacy and security element, seven are fully met by all Tier 1 statistics.

ACOS is confident that respondents' rights to confidentiality are respected and their information is stored securely. As the detailed results of this self-assessment survey show, many producers rely on their IT systems to control access to confidential data and keep records of who accesses it.

Performance measurement

The confidentiality, privacy and security protocol assessment involved measuring whether Tier 1 statistics were produced in accordance with the confidentiality, privacy and security protocol. To complete this assessment, producers of Tier 1 statistics were asked to complete two self-assessment questionnaires. All producers of Tier 1 statistics participated in the assessment process.

To assess the effectiveness of whether or not producers of Tier 1 statistics meet the requirements of the protocol, a scoring system was developed. Table 4 sets out what these scores mean.

Table 4

Scoring System for Each Confidentiality, Privacy and Security Protocol

Score (%)	The statistic uses:
90–100	excellent practices
80–89	good practices
70–79	acceptable practices with some improvement required
0–69	practices that require immediate improvement

Results

Overall performance

Ratings from the confidentiality, privacy and security self-assessment show that of the 104 statistics assessed:

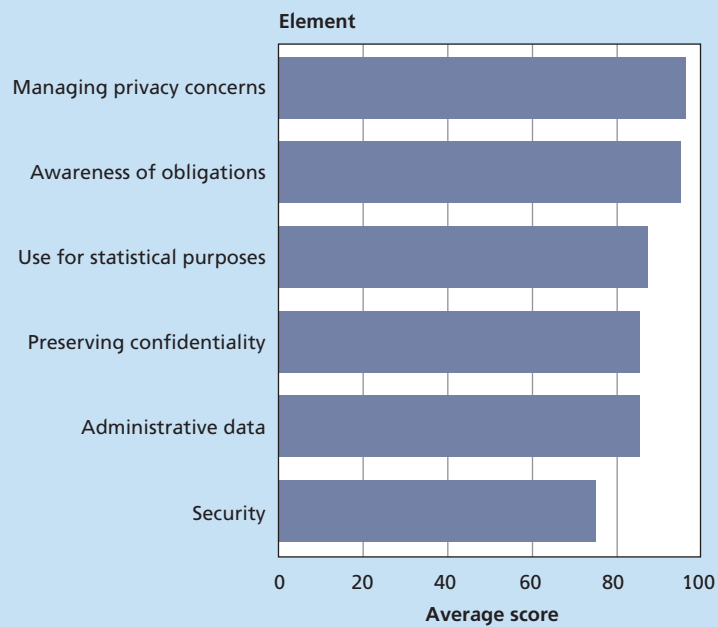
- 41 used excellent practices
- 52 used good practices
- 11 used acceptable practices that may require some improvement
- no Tier 1 statistic was identified as using practices that were in need of immediate improvement.

Performance by element

Figure 4 indicates the average score for Tier 1 statistics across the six elements of the protocol.

Figure 4

Average Score for Tier 1 Statistics' Adherence to Elements of the Confidentiality, Privacy, and Security Protocol 2008



Results indicate 'excellent' or 'good' performance from the Tier 1 statistics across all of the elements in the confidentiality, privacy and security protocol with the exception of the 'Security' element, which scored lowest with 75.3 percent. The sub-elements within the 'Security' element that caused this lower result are as follows.

- "An up-to-date list of staff entitled to access the data is maintained. A log of access events should also be maintained."
This sub-element scored 60 percent. A number of respondents restrict access to those who require it, but do not maintain a list of those entitled to do so. Further, many respondents do not keep a log of access events. Many commented that they rely on their IT infrastructure to ensure only people who require access to the data will have it and that access logs can be established retrospectively if needed.

- “An anonymised final or definitive version of each Tier 1 survey dataset is deposited with the Data Archive. Tier 1 administrative unit record data can be taken on a case-by-case basis.”

No Tier 1 datasets or unit record data has yet been deposited in the Data Archive. As a result, no statistic has met this sub-element.

- “Names and addresses of individuals and businesses, whether from administrative sources or surveys, should not be retained electronically on databases used for statistical analysis.”

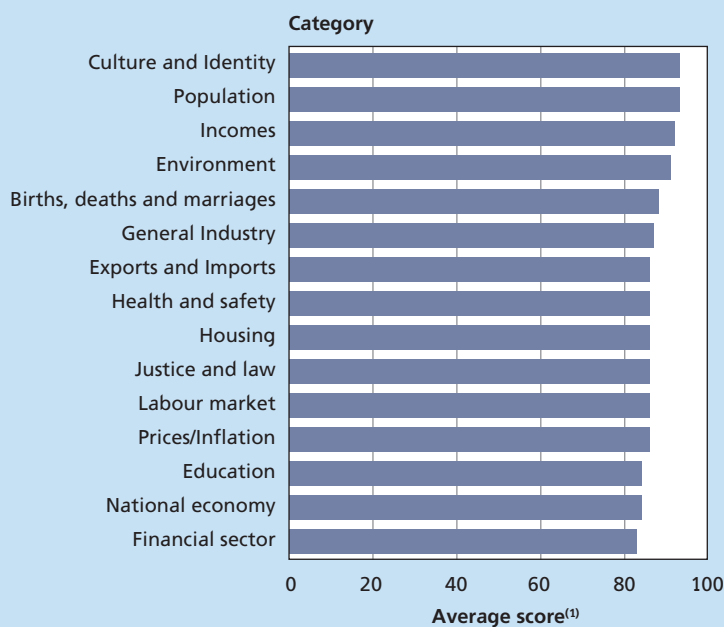
This sub-element scored 60 percent, with a number of respondents stating that names and addresses are not removed in some instances because they are required during the analysis phase.

Performance by category

Figure 5 shows the average confidentiality, privacy and security score for each Tier 1 category (topic area or domain). Results indicate each category is performing well across the protocol elements, with all categories scoring above 80 percent.

Figure 5

Average Score for Adherence to Elements of the Confidentiality, Privacy, and Security Protocol By Tier 1 statistic category 2008



(1) The six elements scored were: administrative data, awareness of obligations, managing privacy concerns, preserving confidentiality, security, and use for statistical purposes.

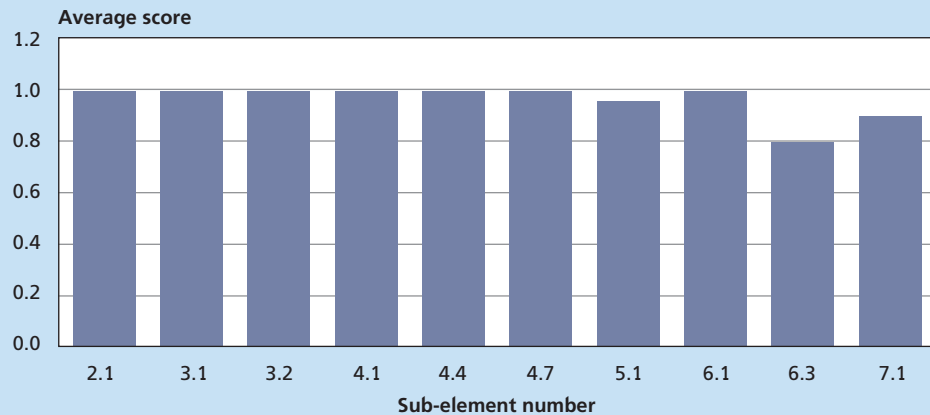
Performance of leading sub-elements

Due to the breadth of the confidentiality, privacy and security protocol, it was decided to focus attention on the leading sub-elements and to measure adherence to these. The 10 sub-elements shown in figure 6 were chosen.

Figure 6 shows that there are high levels of observance with these leading sub-elements of the protocol. All Tier 1 statistics adhere to seven of the 10 sub-elements. Sub-element 6.3 was the lowest-scoring because some electronically-stored records are not password protected. This seems to indicate a reliance on information technology and security processes rather than passwords on relevant records.

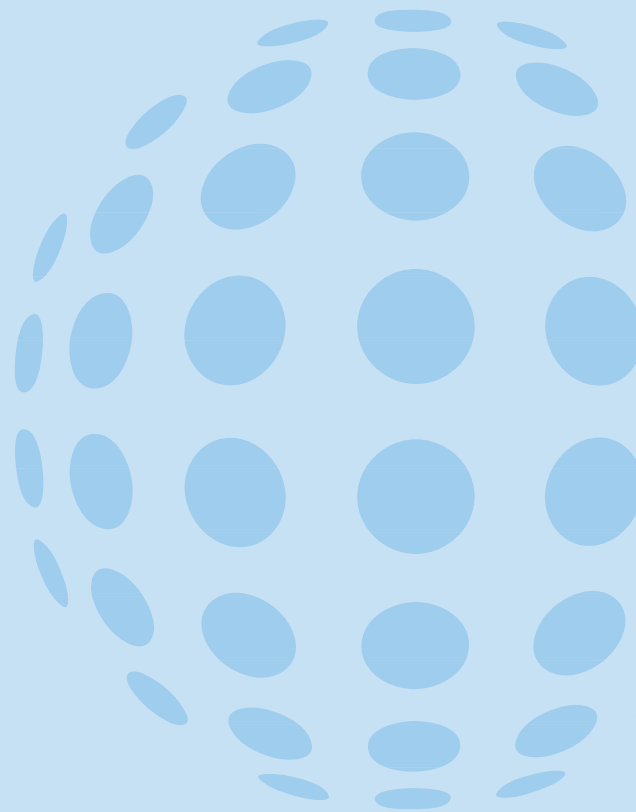
Figure 6

**Average Score for Tier 1 Statistics' Adherence to Key Sub-elements⁽¹⁾ of the Confidentiality, Privacy, and Security Protocol
2008**



(1) The 10 key sub-elements are:

- 2.1 Tier 1 statistics producers ensure their staff, including any contractors, know and understand the confidentiality requirements of each of their statistical resources, and ensure anyone involved with the processing of the statistical resource is aware of the penalties for wrongful disclosure.
- 3.1 Where data are collected in a wholly statistical survey or census for the production of official statistics, they will be used only for statistical purposes.
- 3.2 Administrative data collected for operational purposes may be used for statistical purposes. Respondents should be notified at the time of collection that information they provide may be used for statistical purposes.
- 4.1 The need for any information is justified in terms of its use.
- 4.4 Respondents are informed of the purpose for the information request and the main intended uses of the data they are required to provide. Administrative data collections should inform respondents that information they provide may be used for statistical purposes.
- 4.7 All confidentiality undertakings are honoured without exception.
- 5.1 Statistical information published is arranged in such a manner as to prevent any particulars from being identifiable unless consent has been given for their publication in that manner. Consent to publish data that can be attributed to a respondent must be given in writing.
- 6.1 Access to forms and electronically-stored identifiable unit records of information supplied by respondents is controlled and restricted to those engaged in the production of the statistics for which the data has been collected.
- 6.3 Forms and data are stored securely, that is, in locked areas. Electronically-stored records are password protected.
- 7.1 When administrative records are processed to produce official statistics, the same confidentiality that is given to census and survey respondents will apply, unless there are explicit limitations on confidentiality in the administrative legislation.





The Official
Statistics System

www.statisphere.govt.nz

ACOS Secretariat
c/- Statistics House
The Boulevard
Harbour Quays
PO Box 2922
Wellington 6140