

# The Source:

OFFICIAL STATISTICS NEWS

The Official  
Statistics System




**Welcome to the first issue of *The Source*, the newsletter that reports on statistical news and events from across New Zealand's government sector.** This issue focuses on new work being undertaken in the areas of youth health and retirement savings, and introduces regular columns on Best Practice and People in Statistics.

As the Chair of the Advisory Committee on Official Statistics (ACOS) I endorse the former New Zealand, now Australian, Government Statistician Brian Pink's comment (see Kim Griggs' article on page 5) that official statistics are fundamental to the basis of a robust democracy. The information they provide about New Zealand's economy and society is key to decision making for our future.

Thanks to collaborative work by government agencies and Statistics New Zealand, the Official Statistics System (OSS) provides a strong national infrastructure that encompasses work done across the public sector. ACOS would particularly like to acknowledge the inter-departmental OSS officials committee who, in representing their chief executives, have made significant contributions to implementing the successes of the OSS. (One member, Dr Michael Slyuzberg of Inland Revenue, is profiled on page 6). Their contribution and feedback on the Principles and Protocols for Tier 1 Statistics and the key issue of reducing the respondent burden for surveys is much appreciated.

#### David Caygill

*Chairman, Advisory Committee on Official Statistics*

*If you would like to be added to the mailing list or have a story idea to suggest, please contact the editorial team at [oss@stats.govt.nz](mailto:oss@stats.govt.nz).*

## YOUTH HEALTH



**Gauging the health and well-being of the next generation of Kiwi adults is the focus of a nationwide survey launched in March.**

Around 10,000 people, aged 12–18 years, from schools around the country are being surveyed as part of Youth'07, a nationwide survey funded as an across-agency initiative. The results, scheduled for release in 2008, will provide a comprehensive look at current and emerging youth health issues, and help build a picture of long-term youth health trends.

Surveying for this follow-up to Youth2000, one of New Zealand's first comprehensive national youth health and well-being studies, is being undertaken using new technology well suited to the audience. Data is being collected using Internet tablets with touch-sensitive screens: students navigate their way through a series of questions using leading-edge technology that both encourages engagement and honesty. In this 'self-report' survey, the student interacts with the tablet anonymously without third-party assistance.

The project is being led by Drs Simon Denny and Peter Watson of the Adolescent Health Research Group of the University of Auckland.

"A recently released UNICEF report highlighted New Zealand's poor youth health record, with rates of unintended pregnancy, suicide and self-harm amongst the highest in OECD countries," says Dr Denny. "The survey looks at these issues through the eyes of the students themselves with the aim of providing accurate and up-to-date information, which will be used to improve young people's health and well-being."

Youth'07 questions students about ethnicity and culture, physical and emotional health, family and living arrangements, and attitudes towards diet and physical activity. The survey looks at school environments (what makes them 'healthy' places?) and also includes questions about alcohol, drugs and gambling.

The self-report format will give its results an authentic youth voice, says Dr Watson, and its use of this technology is a first for a national survey. "Multi-media computer-assisted surveying is being done in other countries, but not on this level. The Internet survey tablets are unique and are very successful in engaging the audience. Ticking boxes on a sheet of paper would have been a big turn-off for this group."

"We believe there is great value in having a representative database on the health and well-being of this sector of the population," says Dr Watson. "While there are examples of similar work in some other countries, we are not just looking at problems but at the positive factors as well, to provide a balanced view of

young people  
in New Zealand  
in 2007."




**In this issue**  
**Retirement savings in focus,**  
**page 2**

**GDP by region, page 7**

**Importance of arrival card**  
**data, page 8**

# Retirement savings in focus

 **A recent study undertaken by the Treasury examines the impact of home ownership on retirement saving.**

Home equity should not be seen as a substitute for other forms of retirement saving (in simple terms, you can't eat your house), say economists at the Treasury. Home ownership is linked to building social capital and a sense of community, and most importantly is seen as a significant contributor to retirement saving for many New Zealanders – but exactly how much will a freehold property contribute to your comfort in later years?

A recent Treasury working paper, *Housing in the Household Portfolio and Implications for Retirement Saving*, written by Grant Scobie, Trinh Le and John Gibson, examines how much New Zealanders need to save to maintain their current standard of living in retirement – and the impact of home ownership on this picture.

Its empirical results indicate that a 'typical' couple aged 45–64 years needs to save over 20 percent of their after-tax income to maintain their pre-retirement standard of living in retirement. The required saving rate will decrease if they downsize their home to support retirement consumption. However, even if they planned to draw down half of its value, the impact on how much they need to save would be modest. As a result, home equity should be seen as a buffer against unforeseen circumstances rather than as a substitute for other forms of retirement saving.

The Treasury paper has drawn on data contained in the 'asset and liability' module of Statistics

New Zealand's Survey of Family, Income and Employment (SoFIE), which is the country's only source of long-term household-level data on wealth and socio-economic variables.

"This is the first time we have had access to longitudinal data about the social and economic variables within New Zealand households," say the authors, "and it will become more valuable with each wave\* of the survey." A one-off (or cross-section) survey is of limited use in analysing an issue like retirement saving, the authors say, because of the unobservable variables, such as people's attitude to investment risk. But longitudinal data (such as SoFIE provides), which is collected from the same units over a period of time, removes this problem because attitudes to saving remain the same.

This working paper is part of a broader programme on retirement saving, based on SoFIE data, which is being conducted jointly by the Treasury and the Office of the Retirement Commissioner. Work in this area will be used as a basis for setting public policy and to aid the Commission's successful targeting of financial education programmes.

Other main findings of the study include:

- Sixty percent of households are recorded as owning a home.
- Almost half of home-owning households have no mortgage debt.

- One in six households own residential investment property.
- One in 12 households own a rental property.
- Patterns of property ownership in New Zealand are similar to those in selected comparator countries.
- Housing represents a major share of household wealth, and this share has risen in line with the increase in house prices.
- The composition of household portfolios is comparable to other selected countries except for the United States.

Despite the popular belief that owning your own home is a cornerstone of New Zealand society, the paper showed home-ownership rates in this country to be slightly lower than in Australia, Canada, Finland, Italy, Sweden, and the United States (except for the over 75s, who in New Zealand have one of the world's highest rates of home ownership). Our ownership of investment property (rentals, holiday homes, timeshares and other non-residential property) is at a similar rate to Australians (except for the under 25s, who across the Tasman are more likely to own investment property).

The full text of the working paper can be found at: <http://www.treasury.govt.nz/workingpapers/2007/wp07-04.asp>

*\*SoFIE is a longitudinal survey that began on 1 October 2002. It will run for eight years. It gathers information about income levels, sources and changes for New Zealand individuals and families. It also covers major influences on income, including employment and education experiences, household and family status and changes, demographic factors and health status. For the survey's duration, information is collected annually (each collection is referred to as a new 'wave') from the same groups of individuals and households.*

## SoFIE

SoFIE also provides the source of data for a baseline study of individual net worth released by Statistics NZ recently. This showed the wealthiest 1 percent of New Zealanders collectively own 16 percent of the country's total net worth; the wealthiest 5 percent own 38 percent of the total; the top 10 percent own 52 percent; and the top 50 percent own a massive 95 percent. While the media were quick to interpret the data as showing "the rich getting richer", Jit Cheung of Statistics NZ says that patterns from SoFIE were broadly comparable with those from the 2001 Household Savings Survey, despite differences in the two survey methodologies. The real value of SoFIE will become apparent over the next few years as the study matures.

"What this first paper shows is where we are at now. When wave four SoFIE data becomes available, after the asset and liability module has been administered the second time, we will start to see the movement from this base position – are those in the top quartile still there, what percentage of those in the bottom quartile have increased their net worth, and so on.

"SoFIE has the benefit of collecting data in association with other individual and family attributes, such as employment status and income level, which gives richness to the information. It is much wider than the financial information. SoFIE is designed to look at the dynamics of family, income and employment, so net worth data is collected and analysed in that context," Jit Cheung says.

Sustainable wealth creation is one of the central themes for New Zealand's economic and social development. Measuring income, asset and net worth in the household sector of the economy is an integral contribution to the development path, say the paper's authors. In future, they hope to analyse the detailed asset and liability data in a much richer family and life course context – which could be "a useful starting framework analytically for integrating individual and family net worth accumulation processes, thus informing policy response."

## ACCESSING OFFICIAL STATISTICS



**The Official Statistics System (OSS) is committed to ensuring that government, business, communities and citizens use official statistics about New Zealand's economy, society and environment to inform debate, research and decision making.**

All official statistics can be accessed through Statisphere ([www.statisphere.govt.nz](http://www.statisphere.govt.nz)), where you'll also find information about the OSS.

Government departments and other researchers (with backing from a recognised institution) who are undertaking research for public benefit can access unit record data

(or microdata). This is available in specified formats, which does not compromise respondents' privacy and individual information, through the Data Archive and the Data Lab at Statistics NZ.


The Data Lab provides secure access to unit record data within a Statistics NZ office. It also makes confidentialised unit record files (or CURFs) available. Basic versions are currently offered on CD-Rom. In future, expanded versions containing a higher number of variables or more detailed classifications will be available via remote access software. In both instances the data is subject to stringent confidentiality processes to protect individual privacy.

The Data Archive, managed by Statistics NZ, is designed to assist government and Crown agencies to preserve unit record data for use in the future. It holds:

- metadata for all datasets underlying Tier 1 statistics
- Statistics NZ's unit record datasets
- unit record data for Tier 1 surveys, which is collected by other government agencies.

An online catalogue for viewing statistical datasets via the Statistics NZ website is currently being created. This will be a significant step towards providing researchers with greater access to valuable data.

## MEASURING OUR ENVIRONMENT

 **The Ministry for the Environment (MfE) has worked with a number of government agencies and other organisations to develop a set of environmental indicators that will be the basis for the reporting programme on the state of New Zealand's environment.**

The indicators will allow information to be compared across New Zealand and show trends or changes in the environment.

They will form the basis of a 'national state of the environment' report due to be released by MfE at the end of this year. Environment New Zealand 2007, the first national overview since 1997's *State of New Zealand's Environment* report, will present a national picture of the current state of New Zealand's environment and add to existing topic-specific reports produced regularly by MfE.

The indicators cover air quality; water quality; water allocation; greenhouse gases; stratospheric ozone levels; solid waste; contaminated sites; land cover and land use; land use capability; ecological footprint; distribution of native plants and animals; the extent of indigenous vegetation and legally protected areas; the extent of marine areas with legal protection; status of fish stocks; seabed bottom trawled; trends in total vehicle kilometres travelled; trends in energy demand, use and supply; and trends in real household consumption and expenditure. Full details are available on the MfE website: [www.mfe.govt.nz](http://www.mfe.govt.nz)

The Project Advisory Committee, representing the agencies who will

provide core indicator data and supporting information for the report, is made up of:

- Statistics New Zealand
- Resource Managers Group
- Ministry of Economic Development
- Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry
- Department of Conservation
- Ministry of Fisheries
- Ministry of Transport
- Ministry of Health
- Ministry of Social Development
- Queen Elizabeth II National Trust
- The Treasury
- Land Information New Zealand.


"The indicators establish the foundations for an ongoing national state of the environment programme. They help us build on current reporting about vital aspects of our environment such as air and water quality," said MfE Chief Executive, Hugh Logan.

This month's OECD Report on New Zealand's environment recommends expanding the availability of quantitative indicators and time series data related to environmental quality. "The Ministry's state of the environment reporting programme shows that work is already well underway to ensure this goal is met," says Mr Logan.

In addition to a national overview, the indicators will also be used to monitor individual aspects of the environment, for example reporting on water quality (broken down to the quality of river water, lake water, ground water and recreational water, as well as water allocation). Indicator data will be updated annually and a series of environmental reports will be produced regularly.

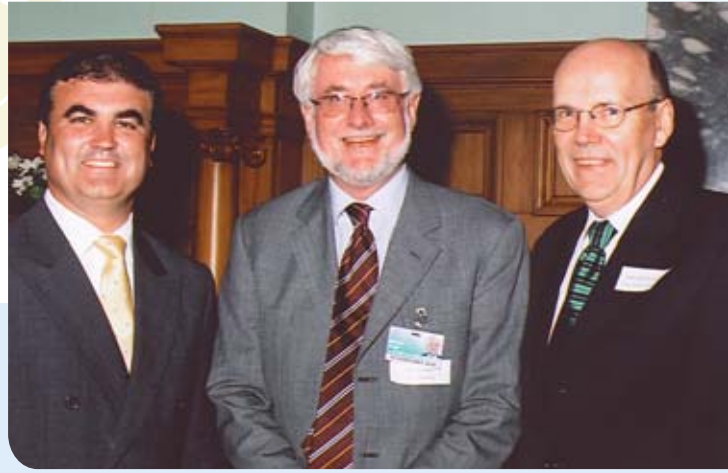


## ENERGY MANAGEMENT

 **The results of the first Manufacturing Energy Use Survey (MEUS) were released by Statistics NZ in late March.** The MEUS, developed by Statistics NZ in collaboration with the Ministry of Economic Development and the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority, collected data about energy use in the manufacturing industry of New Zealand from approximately 1,600 businesses. Its findings (key information about energy used by businesses in the manufacturing industry and their energy management practices) will be used to bridge gaps in energy information and provide a benchmark that can be used in energy modeling. They will also deliver information for benchmarking and enhanced awareness of energy management practices that are used within the manufacturing industry.



BRIAN PINK (CENTRE)  
WITH HON CLAYTON  
COSGROVE (LEFT) AND  
HON DAVID CAYGILL



## Best Practice

# The numbers man



**Journalist Kim Griggs discovers a national resource of a different kind.**

If you ask New Zealanders to name an ‘enduring national resource’, the answer is unlikely to be statistics.

But that is what the former head of Statistics NZ, Brian Pink, has tried to ensure New Zealand has.

“People don’t wake up every morning looking for the latest set of statistics to help them judge how things are going,” says Brian, who left New Zealand in March to return to the top statistics job in his native Australia, “but the cumulative impact, I would argue very strongly, of all the statistics that are put into the public domain, is to help people form views.”

“Official statistics,” he says, “are a fundamentally important part of a robust democracy.”

A strong system of official statistics should provide insights into most aspects of the economic, social, and environmental aspects of a nation in order to give people the ability to make informed decisions, he says. “Our job is to put the best possible information into the community.”

When Brian arrived to become the Government Statistician in 2000, he found a demoralised organisation that had been scrabbling around trying to generate income under a user-pays system. At the height of the user-pays regime, Statistics NZ had to generate about 25 percent of its budget from market sales.

It wasn’t working, Brian says. “Essentially it had tried to do a lot of things on a shoestring.”

And the user-pays system was also damaging the trust that a statistical agency needs to operate successfully. “You’ve got a fundamental clash between the basis of the market and the principles of equity of access which are right at the heart of the trust around the release of official statistics,” he says.

*“Official statistics are a fundamentally important part of a robust democracy.”*

As well, the statistical output was being skewed. “It quite often distorts priorities, because it will force an institution to be opportunistic, to do things where the money is going to be available, rather than doing the right things.”

After an 18-month review, Statistics NZ is once again the acknowledged leader for the government’s statistical activities, under the umbrella of the Official Statistics System. The neglected area of social statistics has been spruced up and new measures, such as productivity, are being added

to New Zealand’s macro-economic statistics.

All this has pleased the likes of Arthur Grimes, a senior research fellow at the Motu Economic and Public Policy Research Institute. “Things come out faster than they did before. They’re a lot better quality than before and the coverage of [macro-economic] statistics has increased,” says Arthur.

Statistics NZ has also ranked statistics and set a benchmark for government statistics, deeming certain top-notch statistics ‘Tier 1’. It’s developing a statistical history for the country, setting up an archive of official statistics so survey data aren’t lost when a department or ministry is reshuffled. And the agency is also trying to lessen the burden on those who provide the raw data for statistics by using more ‘administrative’ data in its work – data that’s collected by other government departments.

All this hasn’t been cheap – but it’s an investment that society needs to make, Brian says, “to be able to have good information to make public and private decisions, and to be able to assess how their nation is performing.”

Brian Pink’s legacy to New Zealand is the revitalised Official Statistics System, under which all statistics produced by government departments and Crown agencies are registered centrally (to avoid duplication and reduce the burden on those taking part in surveys). They also need to meet set protocols and policies (to ensure quality and facilitate ongoing access). Official statistics generate internationally benchmarked measures of New Zealand’s economic, social and environmental performance, and provide key information used in decision making by central and local government, government departments, and businesses.

## PEOPLE IN STATISTICS



**Michael Slyuzberg from Inland Revenue sits on the OSS Officials Committee, a cross-government advisory group on official statistics.**

Michael joined Inland Revenue's National Research Unit in 2004, where he manages a small team of highly qualified analysts undertaking research of mostly strategic nature. "An important part of my work is providing methodological leadership in statistical analysis," says Michael – and he has a broad international background to draw on in this regard.

"I was born in St Petersburg (then Leningrad), Russia. There I grew up, studied, married my wife Julia (our marriage is already 32 years old with two almost-adult daughters). I graduated with a PhD in economics from the State University for Engineering and Economics, with a thesis around statistical modelling (business and social applications) and decision support systems.

"I started my career in 1977 as an analyst/programmer. By 1990 I had become a research director of a large data processing centre. At the same time I was an assistant professor at my alma mater, lecturing in statistics and statistical modelling.

"But when the family decided to emigrate from the-then Soviet Union, I had to start my career almost from scratch."

The long journey from St Petersburg to Wellington included almost 10 years in Israel, where Michael's family survived missile attacks during the first Gulf War; and a stint in South Africa, where he worked as head of an IT department and later as director for a Johannesburg-based business intelligence consulting company.

Michael has devoted 30 years to statistical analysis and as a leader in this field he both maintains close relations with Statistics NZ and represents Inland Revenue on the OSS Officials Committee. "Although I joined the committee quite recently, there has been enough time to find out that this is a bunch of people combining top professionalism with wonderful personalities (*The Source* hopes to bring you more of these in future issues), so I am really enjoying this part of my work!"

Recently Michael and his Inland Revenue team undertook a joint project with Statistics NZ as part of the government-funded Official Statistics Research programme. The project focused on the protection of confidentiality in administrative tabular data.

In certain situations Inland Revenue provides tabular summaries to aid cross-departmental research projects. It is current practice to provide collapsed tabular data that protects confidentiality, in line with the Tax Administration Act, 1994. The major aim of this project was to assess other confidentiality protection methods (such as rounding, compression, aggregation) that are currently used by government agencies, and also the resulting information loss from applying these methods to tabular administrative data. The key research outcomes from this work were the comparative analysis of different confidentiality protection methods, and recommendations on where each method works better, in terms of information loss and providing the required level of confidentiality. The key project results were reported in an Official Statistics Research seminar, "Preserving and Optimising Confidentiality".

MICHAEL  
SLYUZBERG



*"An important part of my work is providing methodological leadership in statistical analysis,"*

# Gross domestic product (GDP)

## by region

 **Earlier this year the Ministry of Economic Development and Statistics NZ released the results of a research project on regional GDP.**

The regional GDP project was conducted as a feasibility study, funded under the Ministry of Economic Development's Regional Partnership Programme (RPP).

The project was underpinned by the view that enhanced regional economic data can contribute to regional development policy because it:

- helps achieve a greater understanding of the growth and innovation performance of regions
- provides a sound basis for monitoring and evaluating economic development trends
- supports central government's ability to target regional development programmes, including the further development and implementation of the RPP
- provides a more robust basis for economic decision making by regional and local bodies and the private sector
- provides a more effective information base for public and community understanding and debate of regional economic development.

The regional GDP methodology developed by Statistics NZ was found to be robust. The data has been published on Statistics NZ's website, so that central government and regional stakeholders can test the data's application for their purposes and

determine how useful it is relative to other measures of regional economic activity.

The figures give regional GDP estimates (by industry) for the years 2000 to 2003, using existing data sources (such as the Annual Enterprise Survey, Linked Employer-Employee Data, the Crown Financial Information System and the Local Authority Survey) to generate information on relative regional growth performance around the country.

The information is consistent with Statistics NZ's national accounts and has been peer reviewed by independent auditors. Bas de Vet (from Statistics Netherlands and Eurostats) reported that the New Zealand figures are equal to, and in some areas an improvement on, international best practice. Business and Economic Research Ltd (BERL) provided local input, highlighting issues that arise in, for example, agriculture data, when stock cross regional boundaries.

"We are very pleased that the study has shown that it is feasible to produce estimates of regional GDP using existing data sources and applying internationally recognised methods. While the regional GDP project has produced estimates of acceptable quality, the work has also identified where the quality could be improved with further development," says Louise Pirini of Statistics NZ.

The future development of regional GDP is currently subject to the budget process.

## 2007 Agricultural Production Census

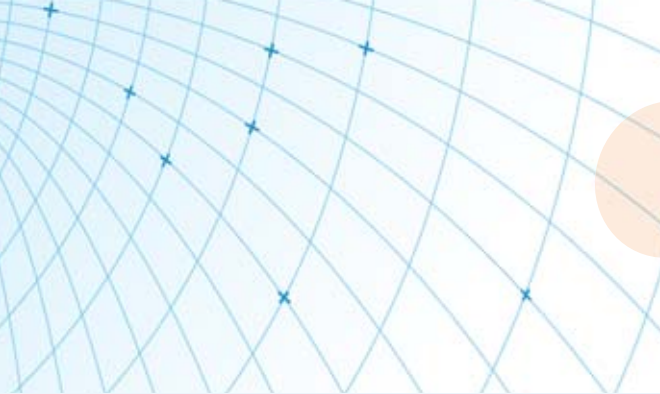
The 2007 Agricultural Production Census, which is undertaken by Statistics NZ on behalf of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF), is due to be posted out to around 80,000 farmers at the end of June. The census provides information to support:

- figures on agricultural production and productive capacity
- monitoring, policy development and forecasting activities of MAF
- monitoring, research and decision making by the agriculture sector
- calculation of GDP
- climate change reporting requirements
- international reporting requirements for the OECD and the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization
- trade negotiations
- research into land use and farming practices.

Agricultural production statistics consist of a five-yearly census with a sample survey in each inter-censal year.

## Research journal

A journal of Official Statistics Research will be launched later this year. The first issue will include papers on: using small area estimation methods to enhance statistics on Māori; investigating methods to create synthetic datasets; investigating the translation of employees across the labour market to higher-paying jobs; developing an inward foreign-affiliates trade statistic for New Zealand; and updating telephone sampling methods. Official Statistics Research is a programme that commissions and funds research on the usefulness, reliability, coverage, and availability of official statistics.



## Stats case study:

# International Visitor Arrivals (IVA)/ International Visitor Survey (IVS), Tourism Importance of arrival card data



BRUCE BASSETT



**Every day thousands of travellers (visitors and returning Kiwis) complete New Zealand arrival cards, collected by Customs at their entry point to the country.**

For the Ministry of Tourism, these arrival cards are a crucial and accurate way of measuring exactly how many tourists enter New Zealand's shores.

"The analysis of this information provides us with basic, but critical information," says Bruce Bassett, Ministry of Tourism Research Manager.

"The fact that we are an island country, with almost all our arrivals coming through airports, means that we are in an excellent position

*"The fact that we are an island country, with almost all our arrivals coming through airports, means that we are in an excellent position to measure inbound tourism."*

to measure inbound tourism. For countries with open land-based borders, such as Germany, this is a much more difficult and less accurate task."

The data is managed by Statistics NZ and forms a dataset that the Ministry of Tourism terms International Visitor Arrivals (IVA). The time series is robust. In its current form, it stretches back to the 1970s (and in cruder forms back to the late 1800s).

The IVA has established itself as the number one benchmark for monitoring tourist numbers. Figure 1 demonstrates a recent change which saw visitors from China (14,927) exceed Korean visitor arrivals (8,510) for the first time, in the year ended February 2007.

However, the IVA not only provides vital information in itself, but it provides a solid base against which

other research can be weighted. The best example of this is in the methodology used for the International Visitor Survey (IVS). The IVS originated in 1996 and was primarily designed to calculate spending by international visitors in New Zealand. Each year a sample of 5,000 international visitors is interviewed in one of seven languages, while they wait for their flights to depart from Christchurch, Wellington and Auckland airports. The survey is managed by the Ministry of Tourism. The quota-based sample is weighted against the IVA and ultimately a total spend figure is calculated. Spending is then broken down by markets (see Figure 2), visitor type, and a number of other key variables, including the distribution of tourism activity throughout New Zealand.



“The fact that we can determine a spend measure by international tourists is crucial to the whole tourism industry. This would not be possible for us without Statistics NZ’s arrival card data to weight against,” Mr Bassett says.

The direct spend figure (currently \$6.7 billion per year) is then fed into the Tourism Satellite Account (TSA) which is prepared by Statistics NZ on the Ministry’s behalf. The TSA gives an annual measure of the total value of tourism to the New Zealand economy. Currently the TSA confirms that tourism directly and indirectly accounts for 9.0 percent of GDP, one in 10 jobs and 18.7 percent of foreign exchange.

Mr Bassett says the TSA outputs are important to help government and industry stakeholders understand the value of the sector to the economy.

“Tourism marketing is an expensive business. The New Zealand dollar doesn’t go far in key markets like the US and UK and Tourism New Zealand needs as much money as it can get to promote our tourism offering. The TSA provides the industry, and those who hold the purse strings, with a trusted benchmark and a true picture of the value tourism holds.”

The IVA data also influences other areas within the Ministry of Tourism’s research portfolio. Importantly, this includes the forecasting programme that helps establish a robust future focus for the industry to strengthen its strategic planning processes.

FIGURE 1

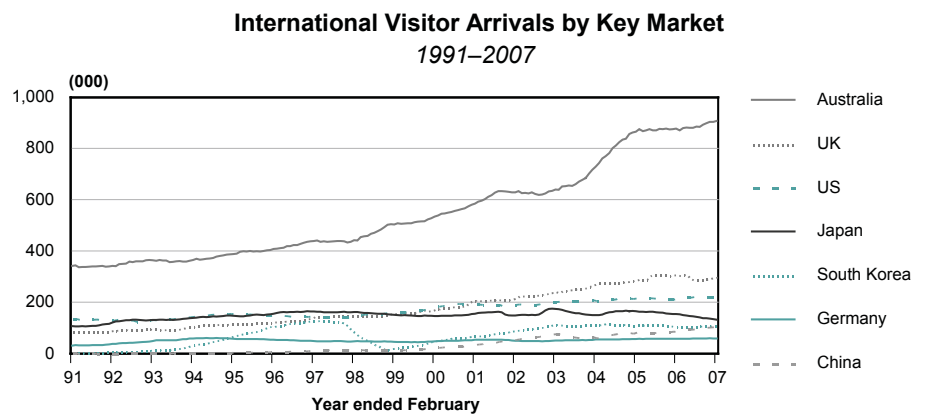
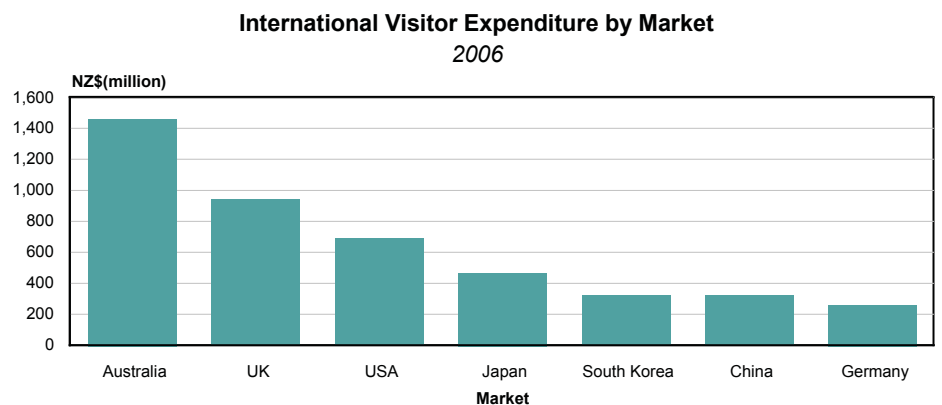


FIGURE 1



For more information on the Ministry of Tourism’s research programme visit [www.tourismresearch.govt.nz](http://www.tourismresearch.govt.nz) or telephone Bruce Bassett on 04 498 7448.



## WHAT'S NEW...

- The Minister of Statistics Hon Clayton Cosgrove has approved the discontinuation of the quarterly economic activity Local Authority Trading Enterprises Survey. This means 170 local authorities no longer need to complete this quarterly questionnaire. Instead, the required information can be gleaned from the Annual Enterprise Survey.
- The Bureau Service, which deals with OSS enquiries, was launched on 2 April. Contact details are: ph 0508 525 525; fax 04 931 4030; email [OSS@stats.govt.nz](mailto:OSS@stats.govt.nz); mail Statistics New Zealand, PO Box 2922, Wellington; visit Strategic Planning and Policy unit, Statistics NZ, The Boulevard, Harbour Quays, Wellington.
- The first issue of the *Journal of the European Survey Research Association* (ESRA) has been published. ESRA's peer-reviewed journal aims to be a high-quality scientific publication that will be of interest to researchers in all disciplines involved in the design, implementation and analysis of surveys. The journal publishes articles in English that discuss methodological issues related to survey research. Topics include: survey design, sample design, question and questionnaire design, data collection, non-response, data capture, data processing, coding and editing, measurement errors, imputation, weighting and survey data analysis methods.
- The *Official Statistics System Principles and Protocols for Producers of Tier 1 Statistics* document is now available in hardcopy. Copies can be requested through the Bureau Service or can be downloaded from [www.statisphere.govt.nz](http://www.statisphere.govt.nz).
- Since the end of last year the OSS survey notification system has received a steady stream of notifications about Crown agencies' surveys and statistical outputs, totalling about 30 new resources. Find out more at [www.statisphere.govt.nz](http://www.statisphere.govt.nz) (the portal to statistics from across the government sector) where resources from the following have recently been added:
  - Broadcasting Commission (New Zealand on Air)
  - Broadcasting Standards Authority
  - Families Commission
  - Health Research Council of New Zealand
  - Housing New Zealand Corporation
  - Industrial Research Limited
  - New Zealand Blood Service
  - New Zealand Fire Service Commission
  - New Zealand Historic Places Trust (Pouhere Taonga)
  - New Zealand Qualifications Authority
  - Privacy Commissioner
  - Standards New Zealand
  - Tertiary Education Commission
  - Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori
  - Transit New Zealand

## IN BRIEF

### Family statistics reviewed

Released in March, the *Report of the Review of Official Family Statistics* examines information needs for family statistics in New Zealand. The report, which focuses on family information relevant to the Official Statistics System, looks at what information is currently available and recommends how information gaps can be filled.

Two key needs identified were for more detailed information on family structure, and more information about social and economic support arrangements within and across households.

Significant recommendations to come from the report include:

- the development of a conceptual framework for families, which will provide a clear and explicit foundation for the collection of consistent and relevant statistics on families across the OSS
- a household and family classifications review, to improve definitions and collection of data on shared living arrangements, the ability to distinguish step-families, and types of social and economic support
- the development of a survey about families, focused on family structure and support arrangements.

The full report is available at: <http://www.stats.govt.nz/developments/review-official-family-statistics.htm>



## State of education

The Ministry of Education released its *State of Education 2006* report in February 2007. It surveys the number of children in early childhood education services, compares the performance of New Zealand's primary and secondary school pupils with international counterparts, looks at participation rates in tertiary education, and disparities between different population groups.

The report can be downloaded from: <http://educationcounts.edcentre.govt.nz/>

## Non-profit sector

Statistics NZ's *Non-Profit Institutions Satellite Account*, due out on 28 August 2007, will measure the contribution of non-profit institutions to the New Zealand economy and include a valuation of volunteer labour given to non-profit organisations.

A register of non-profit institutions (collected from Statistics NZ's register of businesses and other sources, including the registers of incorporated societies and charitable trusts held by the Companies Office) has recorded 97,000 non-profit institutions operating in New Zealand in 2005. The largest number were in culture, sport and recreation (45 percent), followed by social services (12 percent) and religion (10 percent). Non-profit institutions are defined as being organised, not set up to make a profit, not distributing profits, separate from government, self-governing and having voluntary membership.

Visit <http://www.stats.govt.nz>, click on Products & services, then Information releases, then scroll down and click on Counting Non-profit Institutions in New Zealand.

## 2006 Census

According to 2006 Census results, New Zealand's ethnic make-up has continued to change:

- European remained the largest of the major ethnic groups, with 2,609,592 people (67.6 percent of the population) in 2006. The Māori ethnic group is the second largest, with 565,329 people (14.6 percent).
- Of the major ethnic groups, the Asian ethnic group grew the fastest between 2001 and 2006, increasing from 238,176 people in 2001 to reach 354,552 people in 2006 (an increase of almost 50 percent).
- Those identifying with the Pacific ethnic group had the second-largest increase from the 2001 Census, up 14.7 percent to total 265,974 people in 2006.
- Auckland was the most ethnically diverse region in New Zealand, with 56.5 percent of its population identifying with the European ethnic group, 18.9 percent with the Asian ethnic group, 14.4 percent with the Pacific ethnic group, and 11.1 percent with the Māori ethnic group.
- Around 1 in 10 people (10.4 percent) identified with more than one ethnic group in 2006, compared with 9.0 percent in 2001.
- People aged 0 to 14 years were more likely than those aged 15 years and over to belong to more than one ethnic group. The differences between the youngest and oldest age groups are the most pronounced. In 2006, 19.7 percent of children were reported as belonging to two or more ethnic groups, compared with 3.5 percent of people 65 years and over.


## Zip zap data

New Zealand broke new ground in February 2007, with the release of electronic card transaction (ECT) data. This information, believed to be the first of its kind released by a national statistical agency, will be used to monitor debit and credit card spending with New Zealand merchants. It has the added advantage of being drawn from existing records. The information can be used to provide an early understanding of changes in consumer spending and economic activity, and forms part of an ongoing programme investigating new and innovative sources of data. Published as an experimental series.

ECT data is released monthly, and measures the number and value of debit, credit and charge card transactions with New Zealand-based merchants. The series is a census of all transactions processed within New Zealand. Transactions by overseas card-holders in New Zealand are included; transactions by New Zealand card-holders overseas are excluded.

These statistics are produced from administrative data generated in the process of administering New Zealand-based electronic transactions, which are supplied to Statistics NZ in a highly aggregated form. Statistics NZ acknowledges the cooperation of the private sector in providing the data for publication.

# Oral Health Survey

 In June 2006 the Clinical Services Directorate of the Ministry of Health commissioned Public Health Intelligence to undertake a national survey on the oral health status of the New Zealand population. The Project Manager for the survey, Dr Robyn MacLeod, was appointed in January 2007 and planning for the 2008 New Zealand Oral Health Survey (NZOHS) is underway.

Two previous national oral health surveys were undertaken in 1976 and 1988. A significant improvement in oral health was reported for children and young people between these surveys. The 1988 survey concluded that ‘the major improvements in oral health in children and young adults will gradually spread through the population as these cohorts grow older’.

*“Recent child oral health data indicates that initial gains in oral health status are not continuing.”*

Almost 20 years have passed since the last national oral health survey. During this time, the ‘major improvements’ to oral health have not materialised in the manner expected. Recent child oral health data indicates that initial gains in oral health status are not continuing. In some groups oral health status is deteriorating, and inequalities are becoming increasingly evident. International research also indicates that previous assumptions about caries activity declining in adulthood may not be correct and that older adults can be

at equal or greater risk of continuing caries activity.

There is currently an absence of recent national oral health data for any population group, other than children at age five and Year 8. This significantly impairs the Ministry of Health’s ability to assess outcomes from publicly funded child and adolescent oral health programmes. It is also hindering informed discussion of adult and child oral health priorities, and oral health policy and service priority setting.

The objective of the 2008 NZOHS is to gather information on the oral health status, beliefs, attitudes, knowledge, and practices of children and adults in New Zealand. The NZOHS will have two components – a face-to-face interview and a clinical dental/oral examination. The questionnaire will be designed to collect information on dental attitudes, experiences, and reported behaviours, self-perceived function, quality of life assessment related to oral health, and socio-demographic characteristics.

The clinical examination will be designed to collect information on the oral health status of the population and will include dental caries, periodontal disease, tooth loss, enamel opacities/hypoplasia, dental fluorosis, treatments present, treatments needed, untreated dental injuries, oral mucosal status and dento-facial anomalies (orthodontic status).

The 2008 New Zealand Oral Health Survey is intended to become a component of the New Zealand Health Monitor, an integrated programme of household surveys and cohort studies managed by Public Health Intelligence, and will be an element of the cross sector programme of Official Social Statistics.

## THE NEW GOVERNMENT STATISTICIAN



**Geoff Bascand became the Chief Executive and Government Statistician for Statistics New Zealand on 22 May 2007.**

Previously, Mr Bascand was the Deputy Government Statistician responsible for Macro-Economic, Environment, Regional and Geography Statistics. He is a career public servant with senior management experience at three departments.

He started his career in 1981 at the Treasury as an economic analyst and later became its Director of Forecasting. From 1998 until 2004, Mr Bascand was the General Manager of the Labour Market Policy Group at the Department of Labour.

As well as holding senior policy and management positions in the public service, Mr Bascand has been a Research Fellow at the Centre of Policy Studies at Monash University in Australia and, from 1996 to 1997, he was a staff economist at the International Monetary Fund in Washington DC.

Throughout his policy and management career, Geoff has used extensively the diverse statistical data series that are produced across the public sector. He is committed to further strengthening our system of official statistics.

Mr Bascand has a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) degree in geography from the University of Otago and a Master of Economics from the Australian National University. In 2005 Mr Bascand was awarded a Leadership Development Centre Fellowship.