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New Zealand General Social Survey: 2008

Highlights

This first release of data from the New Zealand General Social Survey (NZGSS) provides new information about key social and economic outcomes in one dataset. The survey allows for analysis of key population groups across a range of areas of life at the same time. It confirms that some population groups are at higher risk of poor outcomes for both traditional measures (income, employment, and qualifications) and new measures (housing quality, social isolation, safety, and discrimination). These include the unemployed, those in single-parent families, and those with low household incomes.

The NZGSS includes areas where there has been little or no official information available, such as housing, social isolation, environment, discrimination, and emergency preparedness.

- Over 90 percent of people agreed that it is good that people in New Zealand can have different values and ways of living. However, 1 in 10 people had been discriminated against in the past 12 months.
- Less than half of people lived in households that had stored enough water for three days in case of emergency.
- Half of people reported one or more problems relating to their house, street, or neighbourhood.

The NZGSS acts as a policy-monitoring tool, enables international comparisons to be made, shows the impact of social changes, allows for new topics to be investigated, and tells us what New Zealanders think and feel about their lives.

- Around 1 in 7 people said they did not have enough money to meet their everyday needs.
- More than 80 percent of people had some sort of contact with family living outside their household, at least once in the last month. Despite this, one-quarter of people felt they did not have enough contact with non-resident family.
- Most people (86 percent) were very satisfied or satisfied with life overall (a result that is broadly comparable with other countries, including Canada, the United Kingdom, and Australia).

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Commentary

The New Zealand General Social Survey

This is the first release of information gathered by the New Zealand General Social Survey (NZGSS).

The NZGSS provides data on key social and economic outcomes of New Zealanders aged 15 years and over. The NZGSS provides new information about how people think they are faring, which complements other objective information about their situation such as labour force status, income, and material standard of living.

The NZGSS is an important monitoring tool for areas that receive considerable government funding. Increasingly, government seeks to act in a coordinated way across agencies and this survey contributes to that goal. In particular, the survey enables a view of those with multiple good and/or bad outcomes.

As the depth of information that the NZGSS provides cannot all be covered in this Hot Off the Press, a selection of measures are presented instead. The selected measures represent various aspects of people's lives:

- financial well-being
- health
- housing and neighbourhood
- safety and security
- social contact and isolation
- participation in voluntary and unpaid work
- environment
- overall life satisfaction.

These measures are considered against a series of population groups: sex, age, ethnicity, family type, education, labour force status, household income, tenure, and region.

The NZGSS was in the field from April 2008 to March 2009 and its achieved sample size was 8,721 people. The survey will be repeated every two years to measure changes over time and respond to changing information needs.

Total population

- Over 80 percent of people reported that they had adequate money to meet their everyday needs for things such as accommodation, food, clothing, and other necessities.
- Most people (88 percent) said they had excellent, very good, or good general health.
- Half of people reported one or more major problems relating to their house, street, or neighbourhood.

- The two most common problems with housing were related to sufficient size and to heating.
- The most common neighbourhood problem was noise or vibration.
- One-third of New Zealanders said they felt unsafe or very unsafe walking alone in their neighbourhoods at night.
- Almost everyone (96 percent) said they could get support in a time of crisis from someone living in another household.
- Less than half of people (41 percent) lived in households that had stored a three-day supply of water in case of emergency.
- Over 90 percent of people agreed or strongly agreed that it is good that people in New Zealand can have different values and ways of living.
- 1 in 10 people reported that they had been discriminated against in some way in the past 12 months.
- More than 80 percent of people had some sort of contact with non-resident family (ie those not living in the same household), and more than 90 percent with non-resident friends, at least once in the last four weeks.
 - Despite this, one-quarter of people felt they did not have enough contact with their non-resident family and one-fifth reported not having enough contact with non-resident friends.
- Four percent of people reported feeling isolated from those around them all or most of the time in the last four weeks.
- One-third of people had undertaken voluntary work for a group or organisation in the last four weeks, and about two-thirds had done unpaid work for someone outside of their household.
- Almost three-quarters of people lived in households that recycled all or most of those things they knew could be recycled.
- Just over half of people lived in households that did things to minimise energy use all or most of the time.
 - People who lived in households that minimised energy use for environmental (as compared with non-environmental) reasons tended to be those people that were better off financially.
- Most New Zealanders (86 percent) reported that they were satisfied or very satisfied with their life overall.

Results for New Zealanders' self-assessed health status are broadly comparable with results from Australia (2006), the United Kingdom (2007), and from the 2006/07 New Zealand Health Survey. Results for level of access to support in a time of crisis are broadly comparable with those of Australians' (2006).

The high level of overall life satisfaction is also broadly comparable with other countries, including Canada (2008), the United Kingdom (2008), and Australia (2007).

Selected NZGSS Measures <i>For the total population</i> April 2008–March 2009	
Measure	Population (%)
Financial well-being	
Personal income	
\$70,001 or more	12.2
\$30,001–\$70,000	36.1
\$30,000 or less	51.6
Adequacy of income to meet everyday needs ⁽¹⁾	
More than enough	13.7
Enough / just enough	71.8
Not enough	14.5
Self-assessed general health status	
Excellent / very good / good	87.5
Fair / poor	12.5
Major problem with house / neighbourhood	
Have a major problem	51.2
Safety and security	
Very safe / safe walking alone in neighbourhood at night	52.4
Can access support in a time of crisis ⁽²⁾	96.4
Household has stored emergency water	40.7
Experienced discrimination in last 12 months	10.1
Social contact and isolation	
Had face-to-face contact with family ⁽³⁾	83.7
At least once a week ⁽⁴⁾	66.0
Had non-face-to-face contact with family ⁽³⁾	95.8
At least once a week ⁽⁴⁾	79.6
Felt isolated from others most / all of time in last four weeks	3.6
Voluntary and unpaid work	
Undertook voluntary work ⁽⁵⁾	32.6
Undertook unpaid work ⁽⁶⁾	64.6
Environment	
Household recycles all / most recyclable items	73.9
Household minimises energy use all / most of the time	53.9

Overall life satisfaction	
Very satisfied / satisfied	85.8
<p>(1) Only asked of people aged 18 years and over, and includes partner's income where applicable.</p> <p>(2) From someone living in another household.</p> <p>(3) Living in another household during the past four weeks.</p> <p>(4) Percentage is of those who had contact.</p> <p>(5) For a group or organisation in the last four weeks.</p> <p>(6) For someone living in another household in the last four weeks.</p> <p>Note: Related measures have been grouped under topic headings, but do not cover the entire topic. Data users can access a wider array of measures relating to the topics in the NZGSS dataset.</p>	

Sex

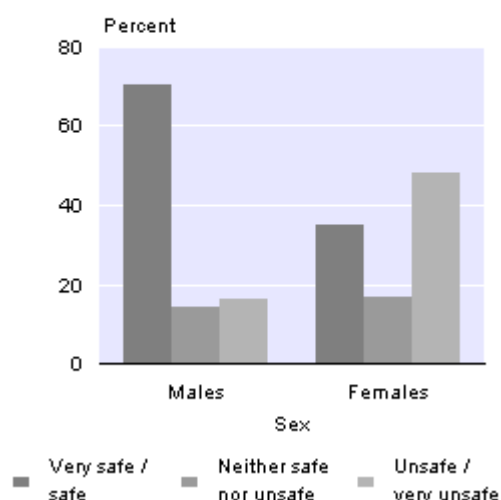
- Adequacy of income to meet everyday needs was similar for both males and females.
- Females were over one-and-a-half times more likely than males to live in a household with a total annual income of \$30,000 or less.
- Males and females were equally likely to be able to access support in a time of crisis from someone who did not live with them.
- Females were three times more likely than males to feel unsafe or very unsafe when walking alone in their neighbourhood at night.
- Although the overall rate of discrimination was similar for males and females, females reported gender discrimination more frequently than males.
- While around two-thirds of both males and females had undertaken unpaid work for someone living in another household in the last four weeks, the frequency with which they had undertaken unpaid work differed – females were more likely than males to have undertaken unpaid work at least once a week, and males were more likely than females to have undertaken unpaid work just once in the four-week period.
- Overall life satisfaction and self-assessed general health status results were similar for males and females.

Across all the reported population groups, females showed one of the highest rates of feeling unsafe or very unsafe walking alone at night in their neighbourhoods.

Feeling of Safety When Walking Alone in the Neighbourhood at Night

By sex

April 2008–March 2009



Selected NZGSS Measures By sex		
Measure	Males	Females
	Percent	
<i>Distribution</i>	48.5	51.5
Do not have enough money to meet everyday needs ⁽¹⁾	13.5	15.5
Fair / poor health	11.7	13.3
Have a major problem with house / neighbourhood	49.2	53.1
Very safe / safe walking alone in neighbourhood at night	69.5	35.0
Household has stored emergency water	43.0	38.6
Experienced discrimination in the last 12 months	11.1	9.2
Had face-to-face contact with family ⁽²⁾	83.0	84.4
Felt isolated from others most / all of time in last four weeks	3.0	4.3
Undertook voluntary work ⁽³⁾	32.6	32.6
Household recycles all / most recyclable items	72.6	75.2
Very satisfied / satisfied with life overall	85.1	86.5
<p>(1) Only asked of people aged 18 years and over, and includes partner's income where applicable.</p> <p>(2) Living in another household during the past four weeks.</p> <p>(3) For a group or organisation in the last four weeks.</p> <p>Note: Apart from the sex distribution, all percentages refer to the proportion of people in each group who reported the specific state or behaviour.</p>		

Age

- People in the young adult (those aged 15 to 24 years), prime working age (those aged 25 to 44 years), and middle age (those aged 45 to 64 years) groups were around two to two-and-a-half times more likely than older people (those aged 65 years and over) to report inadequate income to meet their everyday needs.
- People of prime working age were almost twice as likely as older people to have a major housing or neighbourhood problem.
- Of those who said they had been discriminated against in the last 12 months, only 8 percent thought it was because of their age.
- Young adults were the most likely of any age groups to have had at least weekly contact with non-residential friends.
- Older people were the most likely to say they had about the right amount of contact with their non-residential friends (older people were also the most likely to be satisfied with the amount of non-residential family contact).
- While the proportion of people who were very satisfied or satisfied with life overall was high across all age groups, older people were slightly more likely to be very satisfied or satisfied than people of prime working or middle age.

Important life cycle changes such as raising children, entering and leaving the workforce, and the experience of aging all influence social and economic outcomes. Differences between the age groups may also be driven by cohort effects, that is, they may reflect the different life experiences of the generations.

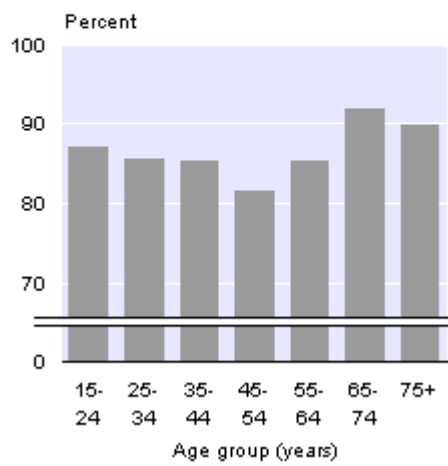
Changes in home-ownership trends, the housing market, and housing quality awareness mean that the housing problems identified by the NZGSS may have less to do with typical stages in life cycles and more to do with cohort effects – time-bound impacts that affect particular generations. However, the greater likelihood of housing and neighbourhood problems for those in the prime working age group may reflect transitions to home-ownership, disaffection with renting, and the impact of having children on housing needs.

The life satisfaction pattern over the life cycle follows similar trends to those of overseas studies.

People Who Were Very Satisfied / Satisfied with Life Overall

By age (10-year groupings)

April 2008–March 2009



Selected NZGSS Measures By age				
Measure	Young adults (15–24 years)	Prime working age (25–44 years)	Middle age (45–64 years)	Older people (65 years and over)
	Percent			
<i>Distribution</i>	18.2	34.9	31.6	15.3
Do not have enough money to meet everyday needs ⁽¹⁾	20.2	15.8	14.2	7.8
Fair / poor health	9.8	8.9	14.0	21.1
Have a major problem with house / neighbourhood	54.3	60.6	48.2	32.3
Very safe / safe walking alone in neighbourhood at night	50.9	54.0	55.3	42.7
Household has stored emergency water	34.8	35.0	45.5	51.0
Experienced discrimination in the last 12 months	15.1	11.6	9.3	2.7
Had face-to-face contact with family ⁽²⁾	81.6	82.9	84.1	87.3
Felt isolated from others most / all of time in last four weeks	4.1	4.9	2.3	2.9
Undertook voluntary work ⁽³⁾	27.0	30.8	36.4	35.6
Household recycles all / most recyclable items	70.8	73.1	74.2	79.0
Very satisfied / satisfied with life overall	87.0	85.3	83.2	90.9
<p>(1) Only asked of people aged 18 years and over, and includes partner's income where applicable.</p> <p>(2) Living in another household during the past four weeks.</p> <p>(3) For a group or organisation in the last four weeks.</p> <p>Note: Apart from the age distribution, all percentages refer to the proportion of people in each group who reported the specific state or behaviour.</p>				

Note: Ten-year age breakdowns are included in the 'Tables' section.

Ethnicity

- Europeans were less likely than Māori, Asian, or Pacific peoples to report that they did not have enough money to meet everyday needs.
- Māori and Pacific peoples (62 percent of each) were more likely to report major problems with their house or neighbourhood than Europeans (49 percent).
- Māori and Asian people were two-to-three times more likely to report discrimination than Europeans.
- The most common reasons given for why people thought they had been discriminated against were their 'nationality, race, or ethnic group', or their 'skin colour'.
- European, Māori, and Pacific peoples were one-and-a-half times more likely than Asian people to have had face-to-face contact with non-resident family in the last four weeks.
- Pacific peoples (42 percent) were more likely than European (32 percent) or Asian (28 percent) people to report doing volunteer work in the last four weeks.

People were asked which ethnic group or groups they belonged to, and were therefore able to identify with more than one ethnic group.

Ethnic groups have different age structures and immigration patterns that can have some impact on high-level outcomes. For example, the Māori, Pacific, and Asian ethnic groups have younger median age structures than the European grouping. In addition to differing age structures, differences in voluntary work participation rates are likely to be influenced by Pacific peoples greater participation in church-related activities.

The higher proportion of recent migrants in the Asian ethnic group is likely to be a contributing factor to a lower rate of face-to-face contact with non-resident family.

Selected NZGSS Measures <i>By ethnicity</i>				
Measure	European	Māori	Pacific	Asian
	Percent			
<i>Distribution</i> ⁽¹⁾	78.9	12.6	4.5	8.6
Do not have enough money to meet everyday needs ⁽²⁾	11.5	25.3	31.3	20.3
Fair / poor health	12.1	15.4	12.0	11.9
Have a major problem with house / neighbourhood	49.3	62.4	62.1	56.0
Very safe / safe walking alone in neighbourhood at night	52.6	56.1	52.7	45.6
Household has stored emergency water	41.2	37.5	41.3	34.3
Experienced discrimination in the last 12 months	7.9	16.0	14.1	23.2
Had face-to-face contact with family ⁽³⁾	86.4	89.8	90.6	54.1
Felt isolated from others most / all of time in last four weeks	3.4	4.7	5.3*	3.4*
Undertook voluntary work ⁽⁴⁾	32.1	34.2	41.5	28.2
Household recycles all / most recyclable items	74.6	67.0	67.6	77.2
Very satisfied / satisfied with life overall	87.1	81.5	80.2	84.1
<p>(1) People were able to identify with more than one ethnic group; therefore, percentages do not add up to 100.</p> <p>(2) Only asked of people aged 18 years and over, and includes partner's income where applicable.</p> <p>(3) Living in another household during the past four weeks.</p> <p>(4) For a group or organisation in the last four weeks.</p> <p>* Relative sampling error is greater than 50 percent.</p> <p>Note: The classification groups 'Middle Eastern / Latin American / African' and 'Other' were too small for analysis. Apart from the ethnicity distribution, all percentages refer to the proportion of people in each group who reported the specific state or behaviour.</p>				

Family type

- People in one-parent families were twice as likely to report not having enough money to meet everyday needs compared with those in couple-with-children families or who were not living in a family, and over four times as likely as couples without children.
- People in couple-with-children families were twice as likely as those in couple-without-children families to say they did not have enough money to meet their everyday needs.
- Major housing and neighbourhood problems were most often reported by people in one-parent families (64 percent), and least often by couples without children (43 percent).
- People who lived in a family that included a couple, with or without children, were more satisfied with life overall than those who lived in a one-parent family or did not live in a family.

People living in family structures without children tend to be young couples or those who are older and whose children have left home (empty nesters). People who do not live in a family tend to be older people living alone and younger people who are flatting with others.

Across all the reported population groups, one-parent families showed one of the highest rates of income inadequacy.

Selected NZGSS Measures <i>By family type</i>				
Measure	Couple without child(ren)	Couple with child(ren)	One parent with child(ren)	Not in a family
	Percent			
<i>Distribution</i>	30.0	42.6	8.4	18.9
Do not have enough money to meet everyday needs ⁽¹⁾	7.7	15.0	34.7	16.7
Fair / poor health	12.3	8.7	17.6	19.3
Have a major problem with house / neighbourhood	43.1	54.2	63.7	51.8
Very safe / safe walking alone in neighbourhood at night	52.5	54.8	44.8	50.3
Household has stored emergency water	46.0	40.4	33.7	36.2
Experienced discrimination in the last 12 months	7.1	10.8	16.0	10.7
Had face-to-face contact with family ⁽²⁾	87.5	82.1	84.9	80.8
Felt isolated from others most / all of time in last four weeks	1.9	3.6	6.2	5.3
Undertook voluntary work ⁽³⁾	33.0	34.5	29.2	29.3
Household recycles all / most recyclable items	74.6	74.9	70.2	72.2
Very satisfied / satisfied with life overall	90.1	87.3	74.1	81.1
<p>(1) Only asked of people aged 18 years and over, and includes partner's income where applicable.</p> <p>(2) Living in another household during the past four weeks.</p> <p>(3) For a group or organisation in the last four weeks.</p> <p>Note: Apart from the family type distribution, all percentages refer to the proportion of people in each group who reported the specific state or behaviour.</p>				

Education

- Personal income and adequacy of income to meet everyday needs were both higher for people with higher levels of qualifications.
- People with no educational qualifications were around twice as likely as people with qualifications to report fair or poor health.
- The likelihood of people having undertaken voluntary work tended to rise along with their level of qualification.
- People with higher qualifications were generally more likely to live in households that recycled more.
- People with a qualification were slightly more satisfied with life overall than those without.

In the last 30 years, demand for skills increased within the labour market. Successive generations have spent longer periods of time in education gaining more formal qualifications.

Excluding those aged 15–20 years, for whom large numbers are still participating in study, young adults were more likely to have qualifications, and to have higher levels of qualifications, than older people. Therefore, findings associated with education in the NZGSS have strong links to the age-related patterns described earlier.

Selected NZGSS Measures <i>By level of education</i>				
Measure	No qualification	Level 1–4 certificate	Level 5–6 diploma	Level 7 / bachelor's degree and above
	Percent			
<i>Distribution</i>	22.7	43.3	13.7	20.3
Do not have enough money to meet everyday needs ⁽¹⁾	20.3	15.0	11.9	8.4
Fair / poor health	22.4	9.8	11.5	7.9
Have a major problem with house / neighbourhood	47.8	51.5	53.1	57.4
Very safe / safe walking alone in neighbourhood at night	48.8	53.9	52.0	56.7
Household has stored emergency water	40.8	40.5	42.1	38.5
Experienced discrimination in the last 12 months	9.0	9.2	10.6	13.1
Had face-to-face contact with family ⁽²⁾	87.5	88.6	82.7	74.4
Felt isolated from others most / all of time in last four weeks	4.1	3.7	2.1*	3.4
Undertook voluntary work ⁽³⁾	25.9	29.8	37.7	41.8
Household recycles all / most recyclable items	68.9	70.6	77.3	81.3
Very satisfied / satisfied with life overall	80.6	86.1	87.3	89.9
<p>(1) Only asked of people aged 18 years and over, and includes partner's income where applicable.</p> <p>(2) Living in another household during the past four weeks.</p> <p>(3) For a group or organisation in the last four weeks.</p> <p>* Relative sampling error is greater than 50 percent.</p> <p>Note: Respondents with an overseas secondary school qualification were not included in the population of analysis. Apart from the level of education distribution, all percentages refer to the proportion of people in each group who reported the specific state or behaviour.</p>				

Labour force status

- Nearly half of the unemployed said their income was not enough to meet everyday needs, and this rate was four times higher than for employed people and almost three times higher than for people not in the labour force.
- Unemployed people were more likely to report major housing or neighbourhood problems (66 percent) than people who were employed (53 percent) or not in the labour force (46 percent).
- Regardless of labour force status, people had similar patterns of contact with non-resident family and friends, and had someone outside their household to ask for support in times of crisis.
- People who were employed or not in the labour force were less likely to report feeling socially isolated than those who were unemployed – 67 percent of employed people and 68 percent of those out of the labour force never felt isolated from the people around them compared with only 56 percent of unemployed people.
- Unemployed people were two-to-three times more likely than people who were employed or not in the labour force to say they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with life overall.

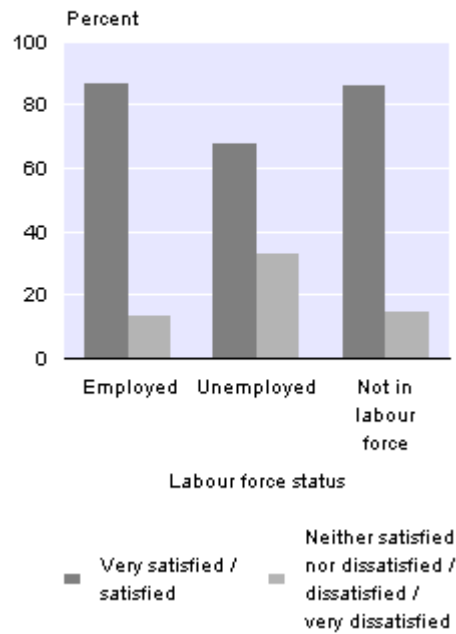
The NZGSS began at a time of very low unemployment – the non-seasonally adjusted unemployment rate measured by the Household Labour Force Survey was 3.9 percent in the June 2008 quarter. However, this had risen to 5.6 percent in the March 2009 quarter when the NZGSS was completed. The unemployment rate for the NZGSS, an average for the year, was 4.2 percent.

Across all the reported population groups, unemployed people showed one of the highest rates of income inadequacy, and one of the lowest levels of overall life satisfaction.

Overall Life Satisfaction

By labour force status

April 2008–March 2009



Selected NZGSS Measures <i>By labour force status</i>			
Measure	Employed	Unemployed	Not in the labour force
	Percent		
<i>Distribution</i>	68.9	3.0 ⁽¹⁾	28.1
Do not have enough money to meet everyday needs ⁽²⁾	12.1	48.7	17.7
Fair / poor health	8.7	14.1	21.7
Have a major problem with house / neighbourhood	52.9	66.2	45.5
Very safe / safe walking alone in neighbourhood at night	56.0	50.4	42.9
Household has stored emergency water	39.2	40.8	44.6
Experienced discrimination in the last 12 months	10.4	19.2	8.6
Had face-to-face contact with family ⁽³⁾	84.0	84.4	83.0
Felt isolated from others most / all of time in last four weeks	3.1	8.3*	4.4
Undertook voluntary work ⁽⁴⁾	32.7	28.7	32.9
Household recycles all / most recyclable items	73.1	72.5	76.1
Very satisfied / satisfied with life overall	86.7	67.4	85.6
<p>(1) Refers to the percentage of people aged 15 years and over in the total population who were unemployed, whereas the unemployment rate given in the text was calculated from the labour force population, ie those in paid work and those actively seeking work.</p> <p>(2) Only asked of people aged 18 years and over, and includes partner's income where applicable.</p> <p>(3) Living in another household during the past four weeks.</p> <p>(4) For a group or organisation in the last four weeks.</p> <p>* Relative sampling error is greater than 50 percent.</p> <p>Note: Apart from the labour force status distribution, all percentages refer to the proportion of people in each group who reported the specific state or behaviour.</p>			

Household income

- One-quarter of people with an annual household income of \$30,000 or less reported having fair or poor health, and this proportion was three times higher than for people with an annual household income of \$100,001 or more.
- People with an annual household income of \$30,000 or less were one-and-a-half times more likely to feel unsafe or very unsafe walking alone in the neighbourhood at night than people with an annual household income of \$100,001 or more.

- While about three-quarters (78 percent) of people with an annual household income of \$30,000 or less were very satisfied or satisfied with life overall, they were less likely to be satisfied than people with higher household incomes.

Those with an annual household income of \$30,000 or less include a range of young and old people, including: retired people, beneficiaries, and young people not working or in part-time work while studying. Lower household incomes are usually single person or single-income households. Households with higher annual incomes are more likely to include people in the working-age groups.

Selected NZGSS Measures <i>By household income</i>				
Measure	\$30,000 or less	\$30,001– \$70,000	\$70,001– \$100,000	\$100,001 or more
	Percent			
<i>Distribution</i>	14.3	32.2	19.6	33.9
Do not have enough money to meet everyday needs ⁽¹⁾	26.0	16.8	13.9	7.7
Fair / poor health	24.6	13.8	10.2	7.5
Have a major problem with house / neighbourhood	51.2	54.2	54.0	46.8
Very safe / safe walking alone in neighbourhood at night	42.8	50.1	51.7	58.5
Household has stored emergency water	41.4	41.5	41.4	39.4
Experienced discrimination in the last 12 months	10.2	10.1	10.4	9.9
Had face-to-face contact with family ⁽²⁾	82.5	83.5	85.6	83.3
Felt isolated from others most / all of time in last four weeks	5.0	4.1	4.4	2.2
Undertook voluntary work ⁽³⁾	29.0	31.9	32.6	34.8
Household recycles all / most recyclable items	73.2	71.8	74.2	76.0
Very satisfied / satisfied with life overall	78.2	84.7	87.1	89.4
(1) Only asked of people aged 18 years and over, and includes partner's income where applicable.				
(2) Living in another household during the past four weeks.				
(3) For a group or organisation in the last four weeks.				
Note: Apart from the income distribution, all percentages refer to the proportion of people in each group who reported the specific state or behaviour.				

Note: A table of selected NZGSS measures by personal income is included in the 'Tables' section.

Tenure

- People who lived in rented dwellings were more than twice as likely as people who lived in owner-occupied dwellings to report that they did not have enough money to meet everyday needs.
- About two-thirds of people in rented dwellings had a major housing or neighbourhood problem, compared with less than half of people who lived in owner-occupied dwellings.
- People in owner-occupied dwellings were around one-and-a-half times more likely to have emergency water than people in rented dwellings.
- People in rented dwellings were twice as likely to report that they had experienced discrimination in the past 12 months as people in owner-occupied dwellings.
- Social connections were stronger for those in owner-occupied compared with rented dwellings – these connections include greater access to support in a time of crisis from someone in another household, greater satisfaction with the amount of contact with non-resident family and friends, and lower levels of feeling isolated from others.
- People in rented dwellings reported slightly lower overall life satisfaction than those in owner-occupied dwellings.

Across all the reported population groups, people in rented dwellings reported one of the highest rates of housing or neighbourhood problems, and one of the lowest rates of emergency water storage.

Although people in owner-occupied dwellings as a whole were more satisfied with life overall than people in rented dwellings, people in rented dwellings with a household income of \$70,001 or more had similar levels of overall life satisfaction to people in owner-occupied dwellings.

Selected NZGSS Measures By tenure		
Measure	Owner-occupied ⁽¹⁾	Rented
	Percent	
<i>Distribution</i>	71.2	28.8
Do not have enough money to meet everyday needs ⁽²⁾	10.3	24.9
Fair / poor health	11.4	15.3
Have a major problem with house / neighbourhood	45.1	66.4
Very safe / safe walking alone in neighbourhood at night	53.0	51.1
Household has stored emergency water	44.6	31.2
Experienced discrimination in the last 12 months	7.8	15.7
Had face-to-face contact with family ⁽³⁾	85.6	79.1
Felt isolated from others most / all of time in last four weeks	2.3	6.9
Undertook voluntary work ⁽⁴⁾	34.9	27.1
Household recycles all / most recyclable items	75.1	71.1
Very satisfied / satisfied with life overall	88.4	79.4
<p>(1) Owner-occupied dwellings include dwellings owned or partly-owned (with or without a mortgage), and dwellings held in a family trust.</p> <p>(2) Only asked of people aged 18 years and over, and includes partner's income where applicable.</p> <p>(3) Living in another household during the past four weeks.</p> <p>(4) For a group or organisation in the last four weeks.</p> <p>Note: Apart from the tenure distribution, all percentages refer to the proportion of people in each group who reported the specific state or behaviour.</p>		

Region

- The Auckland and Wellington regions had the highest proportions of people with an annual personal income of \$70,001 or more (around 16 percent each) compared with other regions.
- People living in the Auckland region were one-and-a-half times more likely than those in the Wellington region to report that they had inadequate income to meet their everyday needs.
- Across the regions, there was not much difference in reporting of major housing or neighbourhood problems.
- Distinct regional differences showed in feelings of safety when walking alone in the neighbourhood at night – for example, people in the Auckland region felt less safe than people in the Wellington or Rest of the South Island regions.
- People in the Auckland and Canterbury regions were the most likely to live in a household that recycled all or most of those things they knew could be recycled.

- Across the regions, people reported very similar levels of overall life satisfaction.

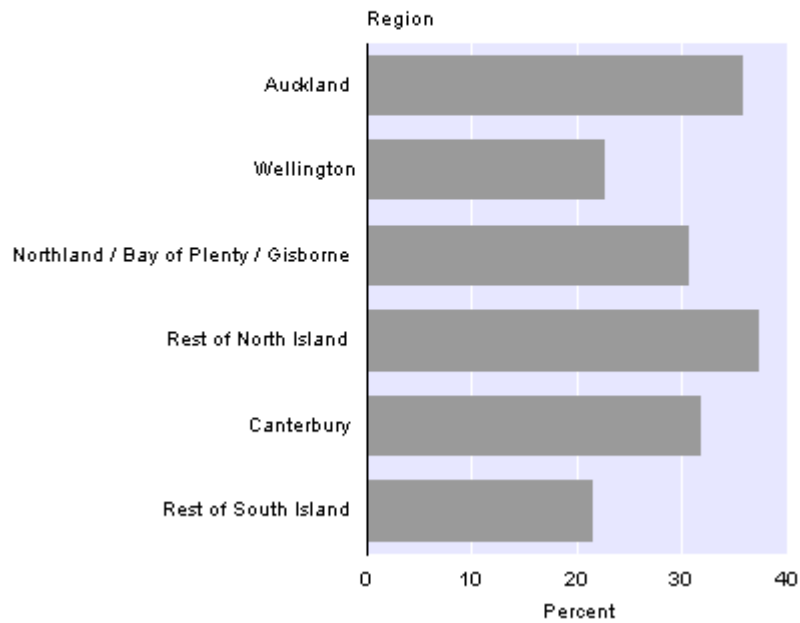
The regional breakdowns presented in this report are based on regional council areas, and grouped where necessary for analysis (for example, Northland / Bay of Plenty / Gisborne).

The difference between the Auckland and Wellington regions in having 'enough money to meet everyday needs' may reflect a higher cost of living in some areas of Auckland, particularly in housing and rental costs.

People Who Felt Unsafe / Very Unsafe Walking Alone in their Neighbourhood at Night

By region

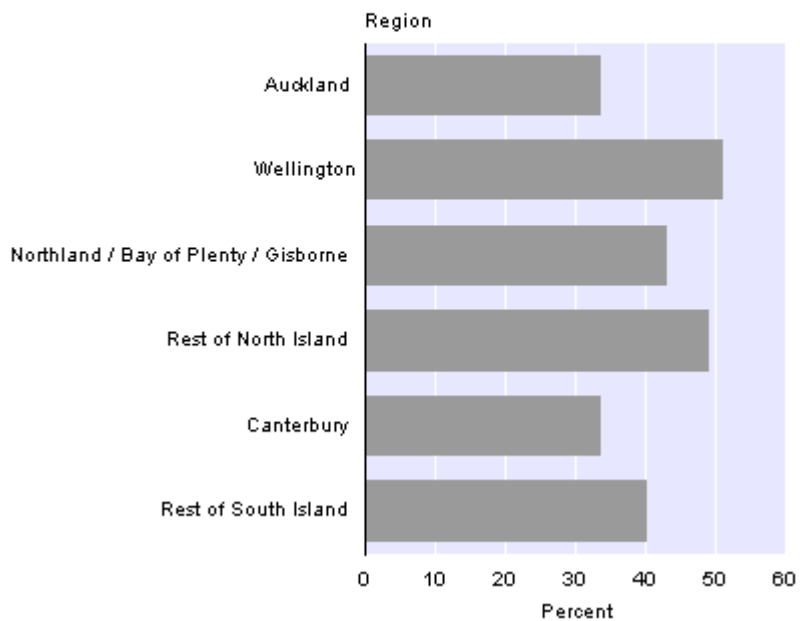
April 2008–March 2009



People Who Lived in Households That Had Stored Emergency Water

By region

April 2008–March 2009



Selected NZGSS Measures <i>by region</i>						
Measure	Auck -land	Welling -ton	Northland / Bay of Plenty / Gisborne	Rest of North Island	Canter -bury	Rest of South Island
	Percent					
<i>Distribution</i>	33.2	11.2	10.8	20.5	13.2	11.0
Do not have enough money to meet everyday needs ⁽¹⁾	17.5	10.7	14.4	13.7	13.4	12.7
Fair / poor health	10.9	10.7	13.8	13.7	13.1	15.0
Have a major problem with house / neighbourhood	51.5	50.5	53.2	51.7	49.5	50.2
Very safe / safe walking alone in neighbourhood at night	48.0	57.2	52.7	49.7	52.5	65.7
Household has stored emergency water	33.9	51.3	43.2	49.3	33.8	40.4
Experienced discrimination in the last 12 months	11.3	8.9	11.5	10.5	8.7	7.3
Had face-to-face contact with family ⁽²⁾	80.3	82.0	84.3	89.5	84.9	83.1
Felt isolated from others most / all of time in last four weeks	3.3	2.9	4.3	3.8	3.5	4.5
Undertook voluntary work ⁽³⁾	30.6	31.6	32.0	34.4	31.4	38.6
Household recycles all / most recyclable items	84.7	70.2	73.2	64.5	83.1	52.7
Very satisfied / satisfied with life overall	86.2	86.5	83.2	86.4	86.6	84.7
<p>(1) Only asked of people aged 18 years and over, and includes partner's income where applicable.</p> <p>(2) Living in another household during the past four weeks.</p> <p>(3) For a group or organisation in the last four weeks.</p> <p>Note: Apart from the regional distribution, all percentages refer to the proportion of people in each group who reported the specific state or behaviour.</p>						

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Next release...

Further results will be published as they become available.

Technical notes

Background to the survey

The New Zealand General Social Survey (NZGSS) is a multidimensional, biennial survey that provides data not available from other sources on social and economic outcomes of New Zealanders aged 15 years and over.

The survey provides the ability to look at information on different outcomes for the same person at a specific time. The survey also gives new information about how people think they are faring, which complements other objective information about their situation, such as employment status, income, and material standard of living.

The NZGSS also enables new and emerging topics to be investigated in a timely and cost-effective manner, as modules can be adapted and added to collect new information.

General Social Surveys and surveys of a similar nature are a regular feature of statistical programmes in a number of countries including, Australia, the United Kingdom, and Canada. Statistics Canada undertook their first GSS in 1985 and the Australian Bureau of Statistics started theirs in 2002. The data collected in the NZGSS is similar to GSS data collected in other Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries. Where international comparisons are made, data from the NZGSS is broadly comparable with data from other countries although some questions, scales, or survey populations may vary between countries.

The NZGSS is set to repeat every two years, which provides a base for measuring changes in outcomes over time and across population groups (using both self-assessed and objective measures). It also allows for timely analysis of the impacts of events on social and economic outcomes (for example, an economic recession).

The NZGSS 2008 was in the field from April 2008 to March 2009 and the second iteration of the survey will be in the field from April 2010 to March 2011.

Survey content

The NZGSS is made up of two questionnaires: the household questionnaire and the personal questionnaire.

One individual in the household completes the household questionnaire, which collects information about all the residents in the household (eg family relationships and household income). If you are interested in finding out more about the household questionnaire, please refer to the *New Zealand General Social Survey Data Dictionary* on the Statistics New Zealand website: www.stats.govt.nz/nzgss.

One individual in the household aged 15 years or over answers the personal questionnaire. That individual is randomly selected from within the eligible members of the household (a computer-generated random selection). The personal questionnaire consists of these components:

- paid work
- economic standard of living
- health
- knowledge and skills
- environment
- safety and security
- culture and identity
- housing
- leisure and recreation
- social connectedness
- human rights
- overall life satisfaction.

Questions in the economic standard of living module were only asked of those respondents aged 18 years and over.

Survey population

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

The target population includes:

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

The target population excludes:

- overseas visitors and international students who expect to be resident in New Zealand for less than 12 months
- people living in non-private dwellings such as hotels, motels, boarding houses, hostels, and homes for the elderly
- patients in hospitals, or residents of psychiatric and penal institutions
- people living on offshore islands (excluding Waiheke Island)
- members of the non-New Zealand armed forces and their dependents
- non-New Zealand diplomats or diplomatic staff members and their dependents
- New Zealand usual residents temporarily overseas who don't return within the survey period
- New Zealand usual residents temporarily staying elsewhere in New Zealand (including other permanent and temporary private dwellings, institutions, and non-

- private dwellings; and people who have no fixed abode, but stay at private dwellings) who don't return within the survey period
- New Zealand usual residents who live in remote areas that are costly or difficult to access.

Data collection

The data collection period took place over a twelve-month period and was run from April 2008 to March 2009.

Interviews were conducted using computer-assisted personal interviews (CAPI) lasting an average of 45 minutes.

The NZGSS personal questionnaire was answered by 8,721 individuals. Dwellings were selected at random using a multistage sample design and the NZGSS provides estimates at a national level.

The target response rate for the NZGSS was 80 percent. The achieved response rate was 83 percent. The response rate was calculated by dividing the weighted percentage of eligible individuals who responded by the estimated total number of eligible individuals.

Statistical methodology

Weights

The survey has two sets of weights attached, one for the household and one for the person. The weights are used for answering different types of questions. The household weight is used to describe the attributes of a household (eg how many households have dependent children who live outside that household). The person weight is used to describe the attributes of a person (eg how many people are 'very satisfied' with their life satisfaction).

Each of these weights is calculated over three stages. An initial selection weight is selected, then it is adjusted for non-response, and then for calibration. The population totals for the NZGSS are annual resident population estimates.

Reliability of survey estimates

Two types of error are possible in estimates based on a sample survey: sampling error and non-sampling error. Sampling error can be measured and quantifies the variability that occurs by chance because a sample rather than an entire population is surveyed. Non-sampling errors are all errors that are not sampling errors. These errors are not quantifiable and include unintentional mistakes by respondents, variation in the respondent's and interviewer's interpretation of the questions asked, and errors in the recording and coding of data. Statistics NZ endeavours to minimise the impact of these errors through the application of best survey practices and monitoring of known indicators (eg non-response).

Sampling errors have been estimated using a jackknife method, which is based on the variation between estimates, and based on taking 100 mutually exclusive subsamples from the whole sample. Sampling errors are quoted at the 95 percent confidence level. For example, if the estimated total number of people is 1,575,200, and the estimate is subject to a sampling error of plus or minus 35,500 or 2.3 percent (measured at the 95 percent confidence level), that shows that there is a 95 percent chance that the true total number of people lies between 1,539,700 and 1,610,700.

Smaller estimates, such as the total number of people unemployed (11,400), are subject to larger relative sampling errors than larger estimates. This estimate is subject to a sampling error of plus or minus 3,200 or 27.9 percent (measured at the 95 percent confidence level).

High level analysis of the Asian and Pacific groupings indicated that the samples were representative of the population. However, conclusions about these and other groups with small population size can potentially be vulnerable to unmeasured differences between the survey participants and the population.

Generally, data in this Hot Off the Press have a relative sampling error of less than 50 percent. Any data with a relative sampling error of 50 percent or more has been flagged with an asterisk (*) in the tables.

Rounding and percentages

All percentages have been calculated from unrounded data and then rounded to a whole number, except in the 'Tables' section where they have been rounded to one decimal place. To improve the readability of the data, the calculation of percentages excludes residual categories such as 'don't know' and 'refused' in the population base from which percentages are calculated.

Imputation for item non-response

Occasionally, some question responses are not recorded and in these instances, imputation is sometimes used to 'fill' the gaps. Imputation is very selectively done to maintain the quality of the data, as this allows more questionnaire responses to be included in the final dataset. Imputation was not done for all questions, but only for some of the demographic variables: age, personal income, and labour force status questions. Very little imputation was required for the NZGSS (see the table below for a breakdown of the number of imputations).

Imputation was done using donor imputation, a hot-deck imputation method, which replaces missing values by data values from another record (a donor). This donor will be identified by matching the records on other (complete) matching variables and will be the one that most closely matches the record with missing values.

Number and Percentage of Imputed Records for the Personal Questionnaire <i>By type of imputation</i>		
Type of imputation	Number of imputed records	Percentage of imputation
Age	17	0.20
Income	306	3.51
Labour force status	38	0.44

Edits

An edit is when a respondent's inconsistent answer is changed to reflect the correct answer based on information they have provided. In total, only 45 edits were made throughout the survey. Edits were made only where there was clear information provided elsewhere by the respondent to inform a change.

Selected definitions and item notes

Adequate money to meet everyday needs

Respondents were asked: "Think about how well you and your partner's combined income meets your everyday needs for such things as accommodation, food, clothing, and other necessities. Would you say you have not enough money, just enough money, enough money, or more than enough money?"

Child in a family nucleus

A usual resident with at least one parent and no partner or child(ren) of their own living in the same household. They can be of any age.

Dependent child

A child in a family nucleus who is aged under 18 years and who is not employed full time.

Dependent child outside of the household

A dependent child of the respondent or the respondent's partner, who does not live in the same household as them.

Discrimination

Respondents were asked: "In the last 12 months, have you been treated unfairly or had something nasty done to you because of the group you belong to or seem to belong to?"

Ethnicity

Ethnicity is the ethnic group or groups that people identify with or feel they belong to. Thus, ethnicity is self-perceived and people can belong to more than one ethnic group. Ethnicity is a measure of cultural affiliation, as opposed to race, ancestry, nationality, or citizenship.

The Hot Off the Press contains total response ethnicity data, but single and combination ethnicity data can be acquired from the NZGSS dataset.

Total responses counts number of responses, not the number of people. People with responses that fall into more than one group are counted once in each ethnic group at level one of the standard ethnicity classification. A person may specify more than one ethnicity; therefore, the sum of individual cells in a table may add to more than the total population. For example, people of Samoan, Tongan, and German ethnicities would be counted (when outputting at the highest level of the classification) once in the Pacific ethnic group and once in the European group.

Single and combination responses cover both people who reported only one ethnic group and people with combination ethnic groups. People are counted just once in the ethnic group that applies to them, according to the ethnic group or combination of ethnic groups they have reported. For example, for outputs of ethnic group, ethnic groups may include European/Māori, or Māori/Pacific. This means that the total population will be equal to the usual subject population for that variable, as individuals are counted once only.

The survey received few New Zealander responses. These are categorised in the 'Other Ethnicity' group, which makes up 2 percent of the sample.

Family (or family nucleus)

A couple, with or without child(ren), or one parent and their child(ren), all of whom have residence together in the same household. The children do not have partners or children of their own living in the household.

Household

A household is either one person who usually resides alone, or two or more people who usually reside together and share facilities (such as eating facilities, cooking facilities, bathroom and toilet facilities, and a living area) in a private dwelling.

Household income

Total household income is derived by aggregating the total personal income of all members of the household. Household income is collected for each household, but it can be given via proxy. Responses via proxy may be an additional source or error and may cause slight deviation from the actual total household income of the household. The household income data from the NZGSS is broadly comparable with the Household Economic Survey (HES).

Major problems with house or neighbourhood

Respondents were asked: "First think about any major problems you have with this house/flat. Looking at the showcard, are any of these things major problems for you? Choose as many as you need:

- too expensive
- too small
- in poor condition
- too cold or difficult to heat/keep warm
- damp
- poor access
- insects, mice, or other pests
- none of the above."

Respondents were then asked: "Next, think about any major problems you have with the street or neighbourhood. Looking at the showcard, are any of these things major problems for you? Choose as many as you need:

- unsafe
- too far from work
- too far from other thing
- noise or vibration from traffic fumes, industry, or other smoke (including trains and aeroplanes)
- air pollutants such as traffic fumes, industrial emissions, and wood smoke
- none of the above."

Non-private dwelling

A dwelling providing short or long-term communal or transitory accommodation. Non-private dwellings are usually available to the public by virtue of employment, study, special need, leisure requirements, or recreation.

Non-private dwellings include:

- hotels and motels
- hospitals, camps, institutional complexes, communal staff quarters, and backpackers
- dwellings that would usually be classified as occupied private dwellings, but which have five or more boarders, lodgers, or guests; for example, homestays, farmstays, and bed and breakfasts (B&Bs).

Personal income

Total personal income received is collected from individuals and it represents the before-tax income of the respondent in the last 12 months from the date of being surveyed. Total personal income is collected as an income range rather than an actual dollar income.

Social marital status

Social marital status looks at whether people are partnered or non-partnered. Social marital status covers people who are in consensual unions, people who are legally married, and people who do not fall into those categories who may be partnered or non-partnered.

Support in a time of crisis

Respondents were asked: "Thinking just about people who you know who don't live you, is there anyone who you could ask for help with these kinds of things?" Examples of types of support in a time of crisis are:

- helping out when you have a serious illness or injury
- helping maintain family responsibilities
- providing emotional support and a place to stay.

This excludes help from those who live with the respondents or help from organisations/government.

Tenure of household

Tenure of household refers to the nature of the occupancy of a household in a private dwelling, at the time of the survey. Owner-occupied dwellings include dwellings owned or partly owned (with or without a mortgage), and dwellings held in a family trust. It does not refer to the tenure of the land on which the dwelling is situated.

Unpaid work

Respondents were asked: "Apart from the voluntary work that you told me about earlier, in the last four weeks did you give any help that you did not get paid for, to people who don't live with you?" Some examples given of help are:

- helping someone move
- driving places or lending transport
- work around the house such as cooking, cleaning, or gardening
- home repairs or car maintenance
- childcare or childminding
- caring for someone who is ill, disabled, or elderly
- tutoring."

These activities are not done for or through an organisation or group.

The NZGSS definition of unpaid work differs from the one used in the Time Use Survey. The NZGSS only collects unpaid work done outside of the household, but the Time Use Survey collects unpaid work both within and outside the household.

Voluntary work

Respondents were asked: "In the last four weeks, did you do any voluntary work for a group or organisation?" Voluntary work covers activities that are carried out for people living outside the respondent's own household, which is done for or through an organisation or group.

The NZGSS definition of voluntary work differs slightly from the definitions used in the Time Use Survey and in the New Zealand Census of Population and Dwellings. The Time Use Survey defines it as: 'Unpaid work that is carried out for people living outside the respondent's own household and which is done for or through an organisation or group'. It does not use the word 'voluntary' in the definition.

The census definition is: 'Other help or voluntary work for or through any organisation, group, or marae'.

How to access NZGSS data

This Hot Off the Press represents only part of the data available from the NZGSS. More data can be accessed from the Statistics NZ website or from our Information Centre:

- **Table Builder** is a web tool that enables you to build your own tables of data from datasets. The NZGSS dataset includes information on the number of households that have dependent children living outside of the household and is available at www.stats.govt.nz/methods_and_services/TableBuilder.aspx.

More tables will be available on the website in 2010.

- **NZGSS Confidentialised Unit Record File (CURF)** – the NZGSS CURF provides those with an approved research application access to unit record level microdata. The *New Zealand General Social Survey Data Dictionary* details what is available in the CURF and is available at: www.stats.govt.nz/nzgss. Applications forms are also available on our website. Visit www.stats.govt.nz and enter 'CURF' into 'Quick search'.
- **Customized Data Requests** – for data customized to your needs, phone our Information Centre on 0508 525 525 toll-free or email info@stats.govt.nz. Note that there may be a charge for a customised request

Statistics NZ will publish analytical reports using the NZGSS data over the next year. If you would like to be part of the NZGSS Data Users Group, please email social.conditions@stats.govt.nz.

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Tables

The following tables are printed with this Hot Off the Press and can also be downloaded from the Statistics New Zealand website in Excel format. If you do not have access to Excel, you may use the [Excel file viewer](#) to view, print and export the contents of the file.

1. Selected NZGSS measures, for the total population
2. Selected NZGSS measures, by sex
- 3.01 Selected NZGSS measures, by age (life cycle)
- 3.02 Selected NZGSS measures, by 10-year age groups
4. Selected NZGSS measures, by ethnicity
5. Selected NZGSS measures, by family type
6. Selected NZGSS measures, by level of education
7. Selected NZGSS measures, by labour force status
- 8.01 Selected NZGSS measures, by household income
- 8.02 Selected NZGSS measures, by personal income
9. Selected NZGSS measures, by tenure
10. Selected NZGSS measures, by region