Comparing employment using matched datasets

Matching HLFS data with LEED
Statistics New Zealand recently matched data from people in the Household Labour Force Survey (HLFS) from 2006 to 2010 to their administrative records in the Linked Employer-Employee Dataset (LEED). The matched data allows us to compare responses, from two independent sources, for the same people. This provides insight into the accuracy of reporting in the HLFS, which is of particular interest to commentators given the recent volatility in published HLFS data.

Key findings
- The counts of paid employees show a great deal of agreement (see below graph).
- This agreement indicates that volatility in the HLFS is not due to errors in responding by participants, nor in recording by interviewers.

Limitations
- Because the self-employed and unemployed are defined differently for the two datasets, it is not possible to compare LEED and HLFS for these two groups.
- The small difference between the counts of employed people recorded by HLFS and LEED probably exists because LEED references a longer time-period. People in the HLFS are counted as employed if they work during the previous week, whereas people in LEED are counted as employed if they work anytime during the month.

Aggregate comparison of people's records from matched LEED and HLFS
December 2006 quarter–June 2010 quarter

Source: Statistics New Zealand

For more detail on the methods and analysis of this matched data please see Exploring the probabilistic link between the Household Labour Force Survey and the Linked Employer-Employee Dataset.

Statistics NZ undertook this project in accordance with its Data Integration Policy and with the approval of the Government Statistician. Investigation is continuing into how the matched data can inform on the published aggregate statistics from HLFS and LEED.