



2006

the social report

te pūrongo oranga tangata
2006

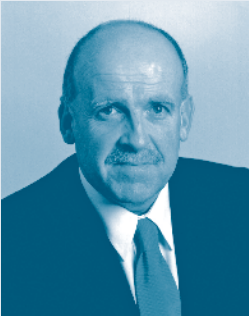
indicators of social wellbeing in
New Zealand

1	MINISTERIAL FOREWORD		
2	CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S PREFACE		
3	INTRODUCTION		
11	PEOPLE		
20	HEALTH		
22	Health expectancy		
24	Life expectancy		
26	Suicide		
28	Cigarette smoking		
30	Obesity		
32	KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS		
34	Participation in early childhood education		
36	School leavers with higher qualifications		
38	Participation in tertiary education		
40	Educational attainment of the adult population		
42	Adult literacy skills in English		
70	CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS		
72	Voter turnout		
74	Representation of women in government		
76	Perceived discrimination		
78	Perceived corruption		
80	CULTURAL IDENTITY		
82	Local content programming on New Zealand television		
84	Māori language speakers		
86	Language retention		
88	LEISURE AND RECREATION		
90	Satisfaction with leisure time		
92	Participation in sport and active leisure		
94	Participation in cultural and arts activities		

Contents

44	PAID WORK		
46	Unemployment		
48	Employment		
50	Median hourly earnings		
52	Workplace injury claims		
54	Satisfaction with work-life balance		
56	ECONOMIC STANDARD OF LIVING		
58	Market income per person		
60	Income inequality		
62	Population with low incomes		
64	Population with low living standards		
66	Housing affordability		
68	Household crowding		
96	PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT		
98	Air quality		
100	Drinking water quality		
102	SAFETY		
104	Intentional injury child mortality		
106	Criminal victimisation		
108	Perceptions of safety		
110	Road casualties		
112	SOCIAL CONNECTEDNESS		
114	Telephone and internet access in the home		
116	Regular contact with family/friends		
118	Trust in others		
120	Loneliness		
122	Contact between young people and their parents		
124	CONCLUSION		
139	BIBLIOGRAPHY		
144	APPENDIX 1 Changes to <i>The Social Report 2006</i>		
146	APPENDIX 2 Technical details		
164	ENDNOTES		

Ministerial Foreword



The Government welcomes the publication of the fifth report charting changes in New Zealanders' social wellbeing and quality of life.

The Social Report 2006 is rich with information about what matters for New Zealanders – the things that make a difference to our lives.

The Government has three priorities for the next decade: economic transformation, families – young and old, and national identity. Economic transformation is about creating a knowledge-based high-income economy that has opportunities for everyone. Families – young and old is about supporting families to be strong and safe for their members. National identity is about all New Zealanders taking pride in who we are.

This year's social report shows the progress we're making towards these themes: a growing economy, with its positive impact on unemployment, incomes and living standards; gains in health and education; pride in our rich culture and unique identity; protection of our environment; improved safety at work and elsewhere; enjoyment of sport and active leisure; and building a nation from an increasingly diverse population.

The Social Report 2006 looks at how New Zealanders have fared over the past 20 years, and shows that we're enjoying improved wellbeing. Although there are still disparities between Europeans and other ethnicities, the report shows real gains for these other groups. Working for Families will further improve the circumstances of low and middle income families over the next few years.

The inclusion of regional and territorial authority level indicators in last year's social report expanded its usefulness for organisations that focus on local issues, particularly councils. I'm pleased to see that this information has been updated and expanded this year. This is valuable information for local councils' community outcomes processes as well as for local organisations wanting more relevant information for their planning and monitoring.

This Government knows that economic and social wellbeing are equally important. A strong economy will deliver the living standards, services and quality of life that people deserve. In turn, a strong economy requires healthy, well educated and highly motivated people. I look forward to seeing our continued progress reflected in future social reports.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Benson-Pope', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

David Benson-Pope

Minister for Social Development and Employment

Chief Executive's Preface



The Social Report 2006 is a vital resource of information for social development. It presents a comprehensive picture of New Zealanders' social and economic wellbeing, and shows how social conditions are changing over time.

Each year, the social report draws together information from across the social sector to chart New Zealanders' progress in areas like employment, health, education, and income. Producing a social report each year enables us to monitor social changes and trends, and respond to problems and opportunities as they emerge.

We are continually seeking to improve the value of the social report to the thousands of organisations and individuals who use it. Last year we included, for the first time, significant information on regional social wellbeing. This year we've updated the regional data, made it available on the website www.socialreport.msd.govt.nz and we are publishing it in companion books to *The Social Report 2006*.

We regularly review what we're measuring and how we measure it, to ensure that the social report continues to be relevant and uses the most up-to-date data. This year, the social report draws together data from the early 1980s to provide a picture of how the social conditions of New Zealanders today compare with conditions before the economic reforms of the 1980s and 1990s.

The high quality of *The Social Report 2006* is due to the hard work of many Ministry of Social Development staff, and the support and advice we get from across the government and community sectors. Since the first social report was published in 2001, it has made a valuable contribution to informed discussion about national and regional social policy and social development. I hope that *The Social Report 2006* will be of great interest and use to many readers.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'P' followed by 'eter Hughes'.

Peter Hughes
Chief Executive
Ministry of Social Development

Introduction

The Social Report 2006

The social report is an annual publication that monitors the wellbeing of New Zealanders

The social report uses a set of statistical indicators to monitor trends across 10 “domains”, or areas of people’s lives. Together these domains provide a picture of wellbeing and quality of life in New Zealand.

The Social Report 2006 is the fifth in the annual series. It builds on the social monitoring framework first established by *The Social Report 2001* and uses the same outcome domains and indicators as last year’s report. This year’s report contains additional information on trends in social wellbeing since the mid-1980s.

The regional and territorial authority information provided for the first time last year has been updated on the social report website (www.socialreport.msd.govt.nz). This regional information has also been published in companion books to *The Social Report 2006 (The Social Report 2006 Regional Indicators)*. This year, in addition to providing the most recent data for regions and territorial authorities, we have included time series information where it is available. This will allow councils and others working locally to assess progress over time and to compare themselves with other regions. The regional information has become a core part of the social report and will continue to be updated regularly.

Purpose of the social report

The social report has four key aims:

- to provide and monitor over time measures of wellbeing and quality of life that complement existing economic and environmental indicators
- to compare New Zealand with other countries on measures of wellbeing
- to provide greater transparency in government and to contribute to better informed public debate
- to help identify key issues and areas where we need to take action, which can in turn help with planning and decision making.

The report enables us to examine the current level of wellbeing in New Zealand, how this has changed over time, and how different groups in the population are faring. It helps us to identify adverse trends in social outcomes at an early stage. While the report cannot always illuminate what is driving these trends, it can point to the need for further research to understand what is happening and what actions need to be taken to address them.

Government policy, as well as individuals, families, communities, businesses and international factors, influence the outcomes we report on. The cross-cutting nature of many social issues means the social report is not a tool for evaluating the effectiveness of specific government policies.

Social wellbeing

Social wellbeing comprises those aspects of life we care about as a society

To get a sense of the level of wellbeing in New Zealand and how it has changed over time, we first need to identify what is meant by the notion of wellbeing.

“Wellbeing”, in the context of this report, means those aspects of life that society collectively agrees are important for a person’s happiness, quality of life and welfare.

Many of the constituent components of wellbeing will be common to all New Zealanders. For example, Professor Mason Durie, Assistant Vice-Chancellor (Māori) and Professor of Māori Research and Development, Massey University, has noted that important outcomes for Māori are likely to include outcomes relevant to the rest of society such as good health and a high standard of living.¹ However, the needs and aspirations of different people and communities will also vary in important ways. For example, for people who get comfort and strength from their religion, an important outcome could be spiritual wellbeing, and this might mean having access to a place of worship. The social report focuses on those aspects of wellbeing most people hold in common.

The New Zealand Royal Commission on Social Policy (1988) is a useful source of research on what New Zealanders agree constitutes wellbeing and a decent quality of life. The Commission concluded that:

[New Zealanders] have said that they need a sound base of material support including housing, health, education and worthwhile work. A good society is one which allows people to be heard, to have a say in their future, and choices in life ... [they] value an atmosphere of community responsibility and an environment of security. For them, social wellbeing includes that sense of belonging that affirms their dignity and identity and allows them to function in their everyday roles.²

The Social Report 2006 identifies 10 discrete components of wellbeing. We refer to these components as “desired social outcomes”, and these are listed in Table IN1 on pages 8 and 9. Nine of these domains were used in the prototype *The Social Report 2001*. A number of changes were made to these domains in subsequent reports as a result of stakeholder consultation on the content of the report in 2002. The most significant amendment was the addition of a new leisure and recreation domain in the 2004 report. We have not made any changes this year to the outcomes framework.

The outcome domains are interconnected. Doing well or poorly in one domain is often likely to impact upon performance in another outcome domain. For example, participation in leisure and recreation is a good thing in itself, but it may also lead to improved physical and mental health, and better social networks.

Social indicators

Progress towards the desired outcomes within each domain is measured using a set of social indicators

Social indicators are signposts that help measure progress towards a desired outcome. Indicators are chosen because they measure the outcome of interest directly (for example, the unemployment rate in the Paid Work domain) or because they are known to be a good predictor of, or are associated with, that outcome (for example, smoking in the Health domain).

The use of social indicators means we can measure trends over time by compressing the sizeable body of statistical information in an outcome domain to a few high-level measures. For example, we use five indicators to represent the desired outcomes in the Knowledge and Skills domain. Though the indicators do not describe the state of knowledge and skill acquisition in New Zealand in detail, they provide important summary information on outcomes in that domain (for example, educational attainment of the adult population) or they act as key predictors of future outcomes (for example, participation in early childhood education).

One of the key features of a social indicator is that any change can be interpreted as progress towards, or a movement away from, the desired outcome. This distinguishes social indicators from some social statistics that cannot be interpreted in this way. For example, while a change in the average age at which New Zealand women give birth to their first child is an important social statistic, it cannot be said to be necessarily “good” or “bad” for social wellbeing.

Indicators have been selected against the following criteria, first established in *The Social Report 2001*:

- **relevant to the social outcome of interest** – the indicator should be the most accurate statistic for measuring both the level and extent of change in the social outcome of interest, and it should adequately reflect what it is intended to measure
- **based on broad support** – ideally there should be wide support for the indicators chosen so they will not be changed regularly
- **grounded in research** – there should be sound evidence on key influences and factors affecting outcomes
- **able to be disaggregated** – it should be possible to break the data down by age, sex, socio-economic status, ethnicity, region and, where possible, to the individual (or smallest group possible), so we can compare outcomes for different groups
- **consistent over time** – the usefulness of indicators is related directly to the ability to track trends over time, so indicators should be consistent over time
- **statistically sound** – the measurement of indicators needs to be methodologically rigorous
- **timely** – data needs to be collected and reported regularly and frequently to ensure that indicators are providing up-to-date information
- **allow international comparisons** – as well as reflecting the social goals of New Zealanders, indicators need to be consistent with those used in international programmes so we can make comparisons.

As some indicators perform well against some criteria and poorly against others, trade-offs are necessary. For example, we base most of the Economic Standard of Living indicators on Household Economic Survey data, rather than data from the Income Supplement Survey of the Household Labour Force Survey. We do this because it provides a more accurate measure of annual income and is hence a more relevant indicator to the outcome of interest. As a result, however, we are only able to update these indicators every three years rather than every year, and the sample size is smaller.

In some outcome domains, such as Health, there is an abundance of good data from which to draw appropriate indicators. In other outcome domains, in particular Physical Environment and Cultural Identity, there is less good-quality, relevant data available, resulting in fewer indicators in these domains.

Disaggregation of social report indicators

Data limitations restrict the extent of disaggregation

Ideally, it would be possible to break down each indicator by sub-populations of interest, such as age, sex, ethnicity, socio-economic status, disability status and regional and local authority. Most indicators can be broken down by sex and ethnicity.³ However, the majority of the indicators rely on data sources that do not allow us to disaggregate by socio-economic status or disability status because this type of information is not collected, or sample sizes are too small to allow this form of disaggregation.

For some indicators (eg unemployment and employment) detailed disaggregations are possible. However, the two-page format for each indicator in the report precludes the inclusion of more information than is currently provided.

There is an increasing demand for information on social wellbeing at a regional and local authority level. This largely results from the introduction of the Local Government Act 2002, which requires regional and local authorities to monitor community outcomes. In response to this demand, last year we disaggregated those social report indicators for which there was subnational data to regional and territorial authority boundaries. This information was intended to help local authorities identify areas of comparative strength and weakness within their communities, as well as to assist central government agencies in their work at a local level.

We have updated these indicators this year where more recent data is available and we have added some new indicators. We have also provided time series information where historical data is available. The regional and local authority indicators are in the regional section of the social report website (www.socialreport.msd.govt.nz). Information for the 16 regions only is also available in hardcopy books that complement the social report.

Indicators for *The Social Report 2006*

There are 42 indicators in this year's report

There have been no major changes to the indicators or outcome domains in this year's report. However, we are using a revised measure of participation in sport and active leisure to reflect Sport and Recreation New Zealand's 2005 continuous monitoring. We have added Māori and Prime television data to the indicator of local content programming on New Zealand television. Because we are no longer able to obtain information on participation in family/whānau activities, the second indicator in the Social Connectedness domain measures only regular contact with family/friends. We have reordered the indicators in the Knowledge and Skills domain, to reflect typical learning patterns through a person's life. We have also redefined the drinking water quality indicator to measure the total population receiving compliant water. A full summary of the changes is provided in Appendix 1.

Twenty-five of the 42 indicators in the report have been updated this year. Those that have not been updated are either based on surveys that are not repeated annually or new data was not available in time for it to be included in this report.

The indicators for *The Social Report 2006* are set out on the following pages. The indicators that have been updated are highlighted in bold. Technical details about indicator construction are in Appendix 2.

Table IN1 **The Social Report 2006 outcome domains and indicators** (updated indicators in bold)

Health

DESIRED OUTCOME STATEMENT

Everybody has the opportunity to enjoy a long and healthy life. Avoidable deaths, disease, and injuries are prevented. Everybody has the ability to function, participate and live independently or appropriately supported in society.

INDICATORS

1. Health expectancy
 - 2. Life expectancy**
 - 3. Suicide**
 - 4. Cigarette smoking**
 5. Obesity
-

Knowledge and Skills

DESIRED OUTCOME STATEMENT

Everybody has the knowledge and skills needed to participate fully in society. Lifelong learning and education are valued and supported.

INDICATORS

- 6. Participation in early childhood education**
 - 7. School leavers with higher qualifications**
 - 8. Participation in tertiary education**
 - 9. Educational attainment of the adult population**
 10. Adult literacy skills in English
-

Paid Work

DESIRED OUTCOME STATEMENT

Everybody has access to meaningful, rewarding and safe employment. An appropriate balance is maintained between paid work and other aspects of life.

INDICATORS

- 11. Unemployment**
 - 12. Employment**
 - 13. Median hourly earnings**
 - 14. Workplace injury claims**
 15. Satisfaction with work-life balance
-

Economic Standard of Living

DESIRED OUTCOME STATEMENT

New Zealand is a prosperous society, reflecting the value of both paid and unpaid work. Everybody has access to an adequate income and decent, affordable housing that meets their needs. With an adequate standard of living, people are well-placed to participate fully in society and to exercise choice about how to live their lives.

INDICATORS

- 16. Market income per person**
 17. Income inequality
 18. Population with low incomes
 - 19. Population with low living standards**
 20. Housing affordability
 21. Household crowding
-

Civil and Political Rights

DESIRED OUTCOME STATEMENT

Everybody enjoys civil and political rights. Mechanisms to regulate and arbitrate people's rights in respect of each other are trustworthy.

INDICATORS

- 22. Voter turnout**
 - 23. Representation of women in government**
 - 24. Perceived discrimination**
 - 25. Perceived corruption**
-

Cultural Identity

DESIRED OUTCOME STATEMENT

New Zealanders share a strong national identity, have a sense of belonging and value cultural diversity. Everybody is able to pass their cultural traditions on to future generations. Māori culture is valued and protected.

INDICATORS

- 26. Local content programming on New Zealand television**
- 27. Māori language speakers
- 28. Language retention

Leisure and Recreation

DESIRED OUTCOME STATEMENT

Everybody is satisfied with their participation in leisure and recreation activities. They have sufficient time to do what they want to do and can access an adequate range of opportunities for leisure and recreation.

INDICATORS

- 29. Satisfaction with leisure time
- 30. Participation in sport and active leisure**
- 31. Participation in cultural and arts activities

Physical Environment

DESIRED OUTCOME STATEMENT

The natural and built environment in which people live is clean, healthy and beautiful. Everybody is able to access natural areas and public spaces.

INDICATORS

- 32. Air quality**
- 33. Drinking water quality**

Safety

DESIRED OUTCOME STATEMENT

Everybody enjoys physical safety and feels secure. People are free from victimisation, abuse, violence and avoidable injury.

INDICATORS

- 34. Intentional injury child mortality**
- 35. Criminal victimisation
- 36. Perceptions of safety
- 37. Road casualties**

Social Connectedness

DESIRED OUTCOME STATEMENT

People enjoy constructive relationships with others in their families, whānau, communities, iwi and workplaces. Families support and nurture those in need of care. New Zealand is an inclusive society where people are able to access information and support.

INDICATORS

- 38. Telephone and internet access in the home**
 - 39. Regular contact with family/friends**
 - 40. Trust in others
 - 41. Loneliness
 - 42. Contact between young people and their parents
-

Structure of the report

The remainder of this report is divided into three sections. The first, the People section, provides background and contextual information on the size and composition of the New Zealand population.

The second section is the core of the report and is organised around the 10 outcome domains listed earlier. The outcome domains contain a two-page summary of each indicator.

The final section, the Conclusion, looks across the report and summarises how social wellbeing has changed over time and how different population subgroups are faring.

The future

A comprehensive social statistics programme will enable us to develop new indicators and to update more of the current set of indicators annually

Statistics New Zealand has led a major review of its social survey programme that should, in the long term, lead to the more regular collection of a wider set of social statistics. Statistics New Zealand is also leading the “Linked Indicators” project, one of the aims of which is to identify a common set of indicators across the social, economic, environmental and cultural domains. Progress on this work can be found on the Statistics New Zealand website www.stats.govt.nz. Statistics New Zealand is also developing a complementary set of more detailed indicators targeted at community outcomes. These will also be available on the website.

The Ministry of Social Development is looking at ways to continue to make the social report more useful at a subnational level. As well as providing subnational disaggregations of social report indicators on the social report website, we are working with the “Big Cities” group to improve the alignment of outcomes and indicators of social wellbeing at a national and subnational level.⁴

As previously noted, we currently produce the social report on an annual basis. We will continue to refine the desired social outcomes and indicators, and we welcome your feedback and suggestions as to how you think this might be done. Comments can be made to:

The Social Report Project Manager
Ministry of Social Development
PO Box 1556
Wellington 6140
New Zealand

email: socialreport@msd.govt.nz