

Review of the Measurement of Ethnicity



Huan ying Foon ying Selamat datang Haere mai Welcome
Willkommen Soyez bienvenue Talofa lava Kia orana Malo e lelei
Fakalofa lahiatu Ni sa bula vinaka Namaste Tēnā koe Helo ola keta Talohani Noa ia
Kamshora Lei ho Ne hou Ni Hao Buenos dias Mabuhay Sawat dii khrap
Konnichi wa Ciao Jum riap suor Wilkom

Welcome and haere mai to the second newsletter from the Review of the Measurement of Ethnicity project team at Statistics New Zealand.

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The consultation process is starting soon

Planning and preparation for the consultation process have been underway for several months, and the RME team are almost ready to begin contacting stakeholders about their views on, and experiences of, collecting data on ethnicity.



As the consultation process is expected to take several months to complete, please do not worry if you have not heard from us. We have a large number of stakeholders and we will contact all of them in due time.

There will be a web address for groups who would like to provide their submissions electronically. You will be notified of this address when we contact you for consultation.

We will produce another newsletter to update you on our progress once the consultation process is complete.

Summary of perspectives papers

A series of perspectives papers has been written to provide background information about the review. These papers, and their executive summaries, will be progressively available over the next few weeks from our website:

<http://www.stats.govt.nz/ethnicity>

You can also contact the review team (see contact details at the end of this newsletter) for a hard copy version of any of these papers. Several of the papers contain extensive literature reviews of some well-known authors. Below is a brief description of the content of each of the perspectives papers.

Background paper (now available)

The background paper gives the historical context of ethnicity data collection in New Zealand statistics, along with previous reviews of ethnicity, the ethnicity questions used in censuses from 1986 to 2001, and the current statistical standards and practices for measuring ethnicity. It also gives the terms of reference for the current review; and outlines the scope and work required, constraints in the review process and plans for consultation.

Policy perspectives paper (now available)

This paper identifies key issues for policy development in regard to existing sources of ethnicity data, and discusses the statistical needs of policy-based agencies. It covers the collection of ethnicity data, key policy needs and uses for information on ethnicity, and key issues in the collection and uses of the data, such as consistency across different data collections. The paper also provides background information on the ways in which ethnicity data is produced and used by a range of public policy agencies.

Comparison of the measurement of ethnicity in Australia and New Zealand (now available)

This paper compares New Zealand's present classification of ethnicity with Australia's classification of cultural and ethnic groups. It examines a wide range of issues. Including the definitions of ethnicity used in the classifications, the conceptual issues behind these definitions, classification criteria and structures, where and how the country's indigenous people and majority ethnic group are classified, and statistical balance, quality and coding structures. An appendix, which compares the two classifications, highlights some of the main classification differences.

The definition and measurement of ethnicity: a Pacific perspective

This paper begins with a literature review on concepts of ethnic identity among Pacific peoples in New Zealand. The literature review covers topics such as the many diverse Pacific cultures in New Zealand, components of identity, and the influence on ethnic identity of being born in New Zealand, compared with being born in island nations. The paper also gives a statistical profile of the Pacific population in New Zealand. It concludes with the identification of some key groups within the Pacific population, and poses some questions that might be relevant to the review of ethnicity.

Classification and issues (now available)

This paper is a discussion document that raises some of the classification issues that need to be addressed in the review. However, it does not provide any solutions to these. For example, one issue raised is the lack of agreement on what term best describes the largest ethnic group in New Zealand; the category is currently called 'New Zealand European/Pākehā'. Other issues include the structural basis and the content of the ethnicity classification.

A question of ethnicity — one word, different people, many perceptions: the perspectives of groups other than Māori, Pacific peoples and New Zealand Europeans

This paper discusses the strong links between language and ethnic identity, and it explores multiple ethnicity in these groups. It also looks at how people's perceptions of their ethnicity change in response to changes in themselves and in society in the short term and over generations. It explores dimensions such as ancestry and strength of identity, and provides some detail on the perspectives of New Zealand's ethnic communities.

Ethnicity matters: Māori perspectives paper

This paper covers a wide range of Māori views on the definition and measurement of ethnicity. The paper contains three main sections. The first covers indigenous people's and ethnic minorities' rights, individual and collective identities, and the relationship between the Crown and Māori. The second section analyses Māori in official statistics in some detail. The final section discusses the value-laden nature of statistics and their analysis.

International concepts and classifications

This paper outlines international perspectives on what ethnic group information countries collect. Countries collect statistics on one or more of these variables: nationality, ethnic group, race, citizenship, immigrant status, place of birth, language, religion and ancestry. Differences encountered relate to the particular history, politics, religion and social dynamics of individual countries.

Classification theory

One of the major outcomes of the Review of the Measurement of Ethnicity will be a revised statistical standard and classification that better meets the needs of users and producers of, and respondents to, data on ethnicity. For more technical information on these, see www.stats.govt.nz/classifications-standards, and for the current ethnicity classification, see www.stats.govt.nz/classifications.

A classification is basically a set of boxes or categories into which items can be put in order to get some kind of meaning. Classifications are all around us, although we may not realise it. For example, you might sort your washing into whites and colours, your emails into subject folders, or sort your CDs by groups or performers.

When revising the ethnicity classification, the Classifications and Standards section will have to consider some basic classification principles:

- Each survey response can fit into only one category.
- All responses, no matter what they are, have to fit into the classification.
- Ideally, the classification should produce data that is comparable with data previously produced on the subject.
- There should be a conceptual basis to the way the items are grouped.
- The categories provided should reflect the ethnic groups present in New Zealand.
- The classification should be able to be used for a number of years with only minimal revision.
- The classification should be able to be used in a variety of different types of collections, for example, telephone, Internet, interviewer-administered and self-administered surveys.

Introducing new review team members

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