

The Social Report 2002

te purongo oranga tangata 2002

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Ministerial Foreword

The Government is pleased to see the on-line publication of The Social Report 2002 Update and believes it represents an important step towards regular social reporting in New Zealand. The report draws together key pieces of information that enable us - both Government and ordinary New Zealanders - to assess the social health of the nation. The report presents information on New Zealander's living standards, health, knowledge and skills, our sense of identity and belonging; the quality and sustainability of our natural environment; the human rights that we enjoy; our ability to access meaningful and rewarding work; and our freedom from crime and violence. The report assesses how well we are performing over time, how different groups within the community are faring and how our performance compares with other OECD nations. The report enables us to think about the direction in which we are heading and to consider where concerted effort and investment may be required.



The Social Report was first published in 2001, in response to Government's request for a publication reporting on the social health of the nation. A set of key outcomes and indicators that captured the characteristics of a good society was developed by the Ministry of Social Development (then the Ministry of Social Policy) to form the basis of The Social Report. This set was based on findings from the 1972 and 1988 Royal Commissions on Social Security and Social Policy respectively, and from national and international research, as to what constitutes social wellbeing.

The 2001 report generated useful discussion and debate about what is important to social wellbeing. Subsequent to its publication, public consultation was held as to how accurately the Social Report reflected the values and aspirations of New Zealanders. While there was much agreement with the outcomes and indicators used in the report, the consultation underlined that the Social Report must reflect the diverse priorities of different communities. The Ministry of Social Development is currently revising the outcome domains and indicators in-line with the feedback received during consultation. The Social Report 2003 will be based on the revised set of outcome domains and indicators that results from this process.

The Social Report 2002 Update is based on the 2001 outcome domains and indicators. The publication of this update is driven by a commitment to regular social reporting and to keeping information in the public domain. Out of 36 indicators, 22 have been updated. For the most part, indicators could not be updated because they are either based on one-off surveys or on surveys that are not conducted on an annual basis.

The Social Report Update 2002 presents a mixed picture of social wellbeing in New Zealand. Life expectancy and employment rates continue to increase and youth suicide and teenage pregnancy rates continue to decline. While there has been an increase in tertiary participation rates, there has been no improvement in the proportion of young people leaving school with at least Sixth Form Certificate. A significant number of families continue to experience a poor standard of living and the disparity between groups within the population in terms of their standard of living and their health and educational outcomes remains relatively high.

There are a range of influences on people's social wellbeing. Families, communities, Government, and international and national economic trends all, to varying degrees, impact on eventual social outcomes. Having said that, this Government believes that it can and does make a difference to the quality of people's lives and to their long term wellbeing. We aim to provide individuals and communities with the opportunities to make choices and shape their own futures.

The Social Report is central to this Government's commitment to social

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development. For this country to progress, we need to invest in our people - in our children and young adults - to ensure that everyone can reach their full potential and meaningfully contribute and belong to their family/whanau, to the workplace, and to the community. New Zealanders want to live in country where all people have the rights, benefits and responsibilities that go alongside belonging. The Social Report helps to assess how close we are towards achieving this vision today, and tells us about where we might be heading in the future.

The Social Report reflects that social wellbeing does not happen in isolation and provides an integrated picture of the impact of economic, social and environmental policy on the quality of people's lives. The Social Report also underscores the interdependency of these sectors - a well-performing economy and a healthy environment are central to the long term social wellbeing of New Zealanders, which in turn is critical to our long term economic success and prosperity.

- This Government recognises that improving the education, training and skills of children and adults alike is critical to long term economic growth, sustainable employment, and people's living standards. Early childhood education remains a priority for this Government and our early childhood education strategy is designed to both improve the quality of education offered and to increase participation rates - in particular for children in low socio-economic areas and Maori and Pacific children. We are dedicated to reducing the number of young people not in education, training or work and have committed significant resources to improving training opportunities for young people by connecting up schools and employers and by the expansion of the Modern Apprenticeship programme. The tertiary education strategy has refocused the tertiary sector towards Government's social and economic development goals, we have held tertiary fees constant and are currently reviewing options for improving financial support for tertiary students.
- Health status is vital to people's quality of life and their ability to participate in the workforce and the community. We have introduced a number of successful structural changes and are committed to investing heavily in primary and preventative health care. Investment will be targeted initially towards those in low decile areas who are at risk of worse health outcomes, including higher rates of infant mortality, disease and injury, diabetes, and heart disease.
- Sustainable employment is key to positive social and economic outcomes for individuals, their families/whanau and communities. The overall unemployment rate is low and the focus on regional development has seen increases in employment rates across the country. Regional flexibility continues to enable Work and Income offices to respond to local labour market needs and recent benefit reforms have improved the financial incentives for sole parents to enter the labour market.
- We are committed to improving people's living standards - in particular for poor children and their families. Living in poverty can have an adverse effect on people's quality of life and for children, can have lasting consequences on the cognitive development, health and employment outcomes later on in life. We have introduced income related rentals for state housing tenants, improved access to hardship assistance and increased minimum wages. We are currently reviewing family income assistance to better support parents' sustainable employment and to address the recent decline in assistance to low income families.
- We are committed to helping make people safe both inside and outside of their homes. There is a growing concern in the community about youth offending and we intend to implement strategies to reduce youth offending. Child safety remains a key priority and last year we increased funding to Child Youth and Family and are currently implementing a family violence prevention strategy. Government will also continue to focus on youth suicide.
- This Government recognises the importance of culture and identity in people's sense of belonging and their confidence to engage with others and to move into new environments. We have undertaken a number of measures to increase local content on both radio and television, are committed to getting the Maori Television Service on air and are supporting the nationwide trial of Pacific broadcaster, Niu FM. TVNZ's charter has been implemented and we are currently looking at ways to broaden the appeal of Radio New Zealand.
- A healthy environment is key to people's social wellbeing. This Government will make sustainable development a cornerstone of policy development across a range of portfolios and will lead international efforts to be

economically, socially and environmentally sustainable. We are committed to ratifying the Kyoto Protocol and have developed a National Energy Efficiency Conservation Strategy to improve energy efficiency by 20 percent by 2012. Marine conservation is also a priority and we intend to include 10 percent of New Zealand's marine environment in a network of protected areas.

The next Social Report will be published in June 2003, based on the revised set of indicators and outcome domains. These outcome domains will be linked within a broader framework of outcomes monitoring encompassing the whole of Government.

The Ministry of Social Development will continue to play a key role in providing Government with integrated advice on important social trends and long term strategies for advancing social wellbeing in New Zealand.

The Government welcomes any feedback you may have on the Social Report Update 2002 - this may be about the outcomes and indicators used in the report, about the report format or about social reporting in the future.

Steve Maharey

Minister of Social Services and Employment

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Chief Executive's Preface

In 2001, as the first step towards regular monitoring of social outcomes, the Ministry of Social Policy produced The Social Report 2001. Since then, the Ministry of Social Policy and the Department of Work and Income have merged to form the Ministry of Social Development.



The Social Report 2002 Update is the first produced by the new Ministry of Social Development.

The Social Report provides a picture of New Zealand society - how well we are doing, where we have come from, and how different groups are faring.

Social problems have complex and inter-related causes. Solving these problems will not be easy, but is essential if New Zealand is to prosper in the twenty-first century.

It is increasingly important that policy decisions can be directly linked to the social outcomes of concern. The Social Report is a tool that supports this. By bringing together information on a wide range of different social outcomes The Social Report can assist government in developing integrated social policies.

I would like to acknowledge the work done to update The Social Report and to translate it into an on-line format.

It is my hope that the on-line update of The Social Report makes up-to-date information accessible to a wide audience, and that people find The Social Report of continued value and relevance.

Peter Hughes

Chief Executive,
Ministry of Social Development

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Introduction

THE SOCIAL REPORT 2002 UPDATE

The Social Report 2002 Update is the second stage in the programme of social monitoring initiated by [The Social Report 2001](#). It aims to provide up-to-date information on the overall social health and well-being of our society.

The report captures information about a wide range of areas that are important to New Zealanders. These include the health of the population, access to knowledge and skills, safety and security, participation in paid work, civil, political and human rights, culture and identity, the economic standard of living, social connectedness, and the quality of the environment.

A range of social indicators are used to provide information on the current social health and well-being of the nation, historical trends in these outcomes, variation across the population, and international comparisons. The approach is the same as that taken in The Social Report 2001. No attempt has been made to revise or review the indicators used in the report for 2002. Instead, the aim has been to update those indicators used in The Social Report 2001 for which more recent information is now available.

In mid 2003 the Ministry of Social Development will publish The Social Report 2003. This report will build on the results of widespread consultation by the Ministry on The Social Report 2001, and will look to improve the indicators used and better align the desired social outcomes of the report with the views expressed by New Zealanders during the consultation process.

THE PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

This report has three main purposes:

- to provide and monitor over time measures of well-being and quality of life that complement existing economic indicators
- to allow us to assess how New Zealand compares with other countries on various measures of well-being
- to help identify key issues and areas where action is needed, which can in turn help with planning and decision-making.

Since The Social Report 2001 was published, New Zealand has seen the release of a number of cross-sectoral indicator reports. The Quality of Life Project report has a similar focus to The Social Report in terms of desired social outcomes, but provides information at the level of individual cities rather than across New Zealand as a whole. Statistics New Zealand has produced a report on Monitoring Progress Towards a Sustainable New Zealand that takes a higher level approach, focusing on inter-linkages between the social, economic, and environmental sectors. These reports build on and supplement existing sectoral reports - such as those produced by the Ministries of Health and the Environment - and population based monitoring reports - such as those produced by Te Puni Kokiri and the Ministry of Women's Affairs.

The Social Report provides a high-level view of the overall social health and well-being of the nation that reflects the cross-cutting nature of many different social issues. These indicators can be used collectively to assist in judgements about priority areas for social action, and the overall coherence of current policies. Similarly, The Social Report can be used to identify key social issues at a national level which can then be followed up in other reports at a regional level or for specific population groups such as Maori.

This report is not designed to evaluate the performance of any particular government agency. Government policy is one among many complex factors that influence high-level social outcomes. Specific evaluation information that controls for these factors is needed before precise statements can be made about the

effectiveness of government policy. However, integrated social reporting can help in the identification of key areas for further research and evaluation.

Social reporting can also help to focus public debate around the final outcomes achieved for New Zealanders rather than the specific outputs produced by government agencies. In this respect, the social outcomes framework provided by The Social Report supports the increasing focus on outcomes monitoring as part of the public accountability arrangements for government agencies.

The Social Report 2002 Update is intended for a wide audience, not just government officials and academics. The information it contains will enhance the ability of people and groups to identify important issues of concern and participate in debates over decision-making and the setting of priorities.

Social reporting

The fundamental aim of social reporting is to measure what is important - what a society cares about. In order to do this, agreement is needed about what to measure. This involves making some explicit value judgements about what quality of life means, and about the characteristics of society considered desirable (referred to in this report as "desired social outcomes"). This objective underlies the approach taken in The Social Report.

Defining the social outcomes to be measured is not easy. It is important to recognise that New Zealand society consists of many diverse communities and while certain core outcomes are common to all, the needs and aspirations of different communities must also be incorporated into any social reporting programme.

For example, all might agree on having a society free from child abuse. But some outcomes that are relevant for one group may not be relevant to others. Professor Mason Durie, for example, has noted that important outcomes for Maori, in common with the rest of society, are likely to include good health and a high standard of living. He suggests that a further outcome might also be for Maori to be able to live as Maori. This could mean having access to language, culture, marae and resources such as land and tikanga.

Local and international research provides some information on societal goals. The Royal Commission on Social Policy (1988), for example, carried out extensive consultation and surveys and 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....(t)hey value an atmosphere of community responsibility and an environment of security. For them, social well-being includes that sense of belonging that affirms their dignity and identity and allows them to function in their everyday roles.

In the preparation of The Social Report 2001, a range of government and non-government social policy experts were consulted on their views about what constitutes good outcomes. Common themes that emerged through this process included: good jobs, education and health; meaningful relationships with others; the ability to participate in recreation, leisure and cultural activities; and a sense of belonging and inclusion.

To this might be added the concept of self-determination, of individuals and groups having control over their own lives, and the opportunity to reach their full potential. Individuals and groups in society should have the resources and capacities to live the kind of lives they value. The outcomes also reflect a concern with raising overall standards of living and well-being across society and preventing social exclusion and poverty. In the report, an attempt is also made to capture some of the diverse values of different groups in society.

Discrimination on the basis of gender, ethnicity, culture, sexual orientation, religious

belief or disability is regarded as a barrier to participation and opportunity. Investing in future generations is crucial, as is protection and sustainable development of the physical environment.

Subsequent to publishing The Social Report 2001, the Ministry of Social Development undertook widespread consultation on the overall approach taken, the nature of indicators chosen, and areas where data and research could improve social reporting in the future. This consultation indicated a high level of support for the approach taken in The Social Report 2001, as well as some ideas for future improvements. These improvements will be considered and included in The Social Report 2003. The Social Report 2002 Update, however, uses the desired social outcomes used from The Social Report 2001. These are listed below.

Health

All people have the opportunity to enjoy long and healthy lives. Avoidable deaths, disease and injuries are prevented. People have the ability to function, participate and live independently in society.

Knowledge and skills

All have the knowledge and skills that provide the opportunity to participate fully in society. Lifelong learning and education are valued and supported. New Zealanders have the necessary skills to participate in a knowledge society and to become global citizens.

Safety and security

People enjoy personal safety and security. Society is free from victimisation, abuse, violence and avoidable injury.

Paid work

Access to meaningful, rewarding and safe employment is available to all.

Civil, political and human rights

Civil and political rights, as well as economic, social and cultural rights, are enjoyed by all. The principles of the Treaty of Waitangi are recognised and incorporated into government decision-making.

Culture and identity

Cultural diversity is fostered. People have the right to express different cultural values and practices and to pass cultural traditions on to future generations. Our national identity reflects the values and aspirations of Maori, European, Pacific peoples and other groups and communities.

Economic standard of living

Everyone has access to an adequate income and enjoys a standard of living that means they can participate fully in society and have choice about how to live their lives.

Social connectedness

People enjoy constructive relationships with others in their families, whanau, communities, iwi and workplaces. They are able to participate in society and have a sense of belonging.

The environment

A clean and healthy environment is maintained, sustaining nature and meeting the needs of people now and in the future.

A SOCIAL REPORTING FRAMEWORK

This social report is based on social indicators. The Australian Bureau of Statistics defines social indicators as:

measures of social well-being which provide a contemporary view of social conditions and monitor trends in a range of areas of social concern over time

In order to avoid being simply a collection of ad hoc statistics, social reporting programmes require an explicit framework. The components of the framework in this report are:

- **purpose** - how the report is to be used
- **desirable social outcomes** - what is meant by quality of life and well-being, the characteristics of the kind of society communities in New Zealand want
- **causes and influences** - what is known about the factors that influence the desired outcomes. Measuring such factors can help signal progress, or not, towards the desired outcomes⁵. The rate of smoking, for example, is not a final outcome in itself but is an important indicator because rates of smoking can indicate how healthy people may be in the future
- **criteria for indicator selection** - including:

- relevance to the social outcomes 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 the phenomena it is intended to measure

- being based on broad support - ideally there should be wide support for the indicators chosen to ensure they will not be regularly changed

- being grounded in research - on key influences and factors affecting outcomes

- ability to be disaggregated - the data needs to be broken down by age, gender, ethnicity and region in order to be able to compare outcomes for different groups

- consistency over time - the usefulness of indicators is related directly to the ability to track trends over time, so as far as possible indicators should be consistent

- being statistically sound - indicator measurement needs to be methodologically rigorous

- timeliness - data needs to be collected and reported regularly and frequently. There should also be minimal time lag between collection and reporting of data to ensure that indicators are reporting contemporary rather than historical information

- allowing international comparison - indicators need to reflect the social goals of New Zealanders, but also need to be consistent with those used in international indicator programmes so comparisons can be made.

Trade-offs between these criteria are sometimes necessary. For example, it may be necessary to choose an indicator where data is produced at long intervals in order to ensure a consistent time series is available.

One approach to social reporting is based on the view that it should always be possible to interpret changes in indicators quite clearly as an improvement or deterioration in the quality of life. That is, if there is a change in the "right" direction while other things remain equal, then people's lives have improved. In addition, indicators should focus on the outcomes of social processes or policies, rather than inputs. Thus, in this approach statistics on the number of doctors or police would not be perceived as social indicators, whereas figures on life expectancy or crime rates would be.

Another approach is to include indicators that are more contextual in nature, such as changes in the age structure of the population. These types of indicators provide background information against which social outcomes occur, but changes in size or direction cannot be interpreted as being good or bad.

Following [The Social Report 2001](#), this report adheres to the former approach. Indicators either directly or indirectly measure the outcomes of interest, or in one or two instances (such as smoking) are important predictors or risk factors known to be associated with those outcomes.

The distinction between causes and outcomes is not always clear however. Indicators that are outcomes in one area are often causes in another. For example, a poor standard of living (such as not being able to afford to eat properly) is a poor outcome in itself but it is also a major contributor to poor health and educational outcomes for children. Because of this interconnectedness of outcomes and causes, the two types of indicators are not separated in this report.

Finally, it should be noted that there is significant interconnection between outcomes. Many indicators relate to more than one desired social outcome but for the sake of simplicity they have been placed in one domain only. Paid work, for instance, is important not only for the income it provides but also as a major source of social interaction for many people. It has, however, been reported under the "paid work" domain rather than "social connectedness".

A full list of the 36 indicators selected for this report is contained in Table 2. These are discussed in detail in the chapters that follow.

DATA ISSUES

This report has been limited to updating only 22 of the 36 indicators contained in The Social Report 2001. The remaining indicators are either derived from one-off surveys or from data sources that are not updated annually. Ideally it would be possible to update all of the indicators on an annual basis. In future reports the number of indicators that can be updated should increase as New Zealand develops a better portfolio of social statistics.

Wherever it is possible, data is presented tracking changes from 1986 to the present and each indicator is broken down by age, gender, ethnicity and region. This is done to show issues for particular groups which can be lost when only total aggregate information is provided. It should be noted, however, that such breakdowns tend to accentuate average differences between groups and can obscure differences within groups. There is often considerable variation within groups - not all members will conform to the group average, and there is often substantial overlap in the circumstances of households and individuals despite their being in different groups.

Ethnicity breakdowns are particularly problematic. Definitions of ethnicity are inconsistent between agencies and frequently change over time. Recent immigration reinforces the difficulty of providing an accurate picture. Statistics New Zealand has initiated an official review of the measurement of ethnicity to re-examine the concepts that have been in use for some time and produce recommendations on how ethnicity should be measured by all government agencies that collect information on ethnic groups.

Three aspects of the data used in this report should be noted. First, there is little information about people's experiences across a range of indicators. It is important to know, for instance, about social exclusion on many fronts. To what extent do

people with low incomes also have poor health and educational outcomes? Do they also feel isolated or unable to participate in social and cultural activities?

Secondly, the indicators generally represent aspects of people's lives at a particular point in time. They do not tell us how long people have been in crowded housing or on a low income.

Finally, this report includes little in the way of people's own views of their lives. For example, there is information about how many people have jobs but little about how satisfying or meaningful those jobs are. The inclusion of subjective indicators of well-being, of how happy or satisfied people are about various aspects of social life, would significantly complement the more objective indicators included here.

Some of the indicators in this report are more robust than others. Data on health and employment indicators, for example, has been gathered and analysed consistently over some time, which adds confidence in its reliability, although even here indicators cannot always perfectly reflect the phenomena they are intended to measure.

In contrast, measurement of outcomes in some areas is relatively underdeveloped. For example, there is still much debate about how to define and measure community or civil society. As such, the indicators of social connectedness in this report have been limited to the activities of individuals. There is clear scope for future reports to attempt to include indicators relating to the strength of social institutions such as families and communities and to measure the quality of interactions. The measurement of opportunities, aspirations and barriers also needs further exploration. Similarly, discrimination is of vital importance when considering quality of life and well-being yet the extent to which it occurs is perhaps one of the most difficult aspects to measure accurately.

All of this points to a need for better specification and collection of social statistics within New Zealand. This may involve investigating options such as making better use of existing data, repeating certain key surveys, expanding the scope of existing regular surveys, establishing a focused social indicators survey or making better use of longitudinal and panel studies. The Ministry of Social Development and other agencies, including Statistics New Zealand, are currently reviewing New Zealand's social statistics programme. This work should, in time, result in better and more comprehensive social statistics available to inform social reporting.

TECHNICAL DETAILS

Details of technical issues relating to definitions of indicators and limitations of data can be found in Appendix 2.

THE INDICATORS

Health

- Life expectancy at birth
- Dependent disability
- Independent life expectancy
- Youth suicide
- Births to young adolescents
- Prevalence of cigarette smoking

Knowledge and skills

- Participation in early childhood education
- School leavers with higher qualifications
- Educational attainment of the adult population
- Adult literacy skills in English
- Participation in tertiary education

Safety and security

- Child abuse and neglect
- Criminal victimisation
- Road casualties

Paid work

- Unemployment
- Employment
- Workplace injury claims

Human rights

- Voter turnout
- Complaints to the Human Rights Commission and Race Relations Office

Culture and identity

- Participation in cultural and arts activities
- Maori language speakers
- Maori and Pacific children receiving Maori medium and Pacific medium education
- Local content programming on New Zealand television

Economic standard of living

- Market income per person
- Income inequality
- Population with low incomes
- Housing affordability
- Household crowding
- Food insecurity
- Self-reported standard of living

Social connectedness

- Unpaid work outside the home
- Telephone and Internet access in the home
- Participation in family/whā-nau activities and regular contact with family/friends
- Membership of and involvement in groups

The environment

- Air quality
- Drinking water quality