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In preparing this Information Release, the Treasury has considered the public interest considerations in section 9(1) of the Official Information Act.

Continuation of the New Zealand Population and Social Statistics Programme

Proposal

1. This paper seeks agreement to continue the current time-limited component of the New Zealand population and social statistics programme. This measure will sustain delivery of the most important elements of that part of the programme and support the completion of modernisation measures to improve production efficiency and reduce compliance costs.
2. The additional baseline funding required is \$6.9m per annum (averaged over the 10 years 2012/13 to 2021/22) and \$9.6m per annum thereafter. This represents a reduction in the current level of time-limited funding in real terms.
3. There is broad stakeholder support for the continuation of this programme. In the development of the proposal the allocation of statistical production responsibilities between Statistics New Zealand and other agencies has been clarified.

Executive Summary

4. This proposal seeks the continuation of funding to provide information around the core topics of the labour market, the standard of living of households and the wider aspects of wellbeing that underpin social policy. Well-designed interventions in specific policy areas require this information. The measures in the population and social statistics programme have been prioritised by an inter-departmental advisory group.
5. Population and social statistics provide a set of outcome indicators that give an objective perspective on the impacts of economic and social changes, including information on New Zealand's increasingly diverse and highly mobile population, and how it is faring in changing economic circumstances. They also identify the driving factors behind these outcomes. This information enables the allocation of resources in health and education and the targeting of services to the most vulnerable in society.
6. Without continuing investment in the future delivery and improvement of the suite of population and social statistics, there will be a significant degradation of the statistical information to inform policy formation, decision-making and evaluation in vital areas including poverty, welfare reform, education, health, justice, childcare, housing, savings, the labour market, and tax policy. They are also crucial for monitoring and understanding Māori language use.
7. The population and social statistics programme will provide a rationalised, more flexible and responsive set of outputs across the Official Statistics System. It will deliver greater value to meet priority information needs (ie Tier 1 Statistics) for social and economic policy decision-making, and allow for future flexibility and adaptability, while being fiscally prudent.
8. The programme will contribute to support the Better Public Services programme and public sector reform by ensuring better co-ordination and utilisation of data across government agencies.

Context

9. Cabinet agreed in March 2011 to consider a business case on the future composition of the New Zealand programme of population and social statistics, and options for the Census of Population and Dwellings. It was subsequently agreed that the population and social statistics programme and future census options proposals would be presented in separate papers [EGI Min (11) 4/10 refers].
10. Time-limited funding currently accounts for some 70 percent of the total \$15.4m (annual average) social and population statistics programme funding (excluding the census). The major part of the time-limited funding component was established in 2005, for a ten year period, to fill high priority information gaps and invest in making more and better use of existing data.
11. The time-limited funding finishes in the 2014/15 year. Approval to continue the funding is needed for Budget 2012 rather than Budget 2013 to provide certainty to other agencies, as users and producers of population and social statistics, and maximise the value of the investment in *Statistics 2020: Achieving the Statistical System of the Future*. Non-renewal of the funding would result in a severe reduction in critical statistics from 2014/15 onwards. Deferral of the decision could result in agencies commissioning ad hoc surveys to provide the information needed to support decision-making.
12. Further time-limited funding of \$15.5million from 2000/01 to 2009/10 was provided to Statistics New Zealand to conduct a longitudinal survey – the Survey of Family, Income and Employment (SoFIE). Statistics New Zealand is not seeking continuation of this funding as part of this proposal.

The current programme

13. The baseline-funded component of the programme covers the production of population, labour market, income, household expenditure and injury statistics.
14. The current time-limited component covers other important topics, such as wealth acquisition, non-financial living standards, social cohesion, quality of working life, childcare, knowledge and skills acquisition, volunteer work and civic participation, time use patterns, and income and employment dynamics. It includes annual measurement of household income which is critical for tax and welfare modelling.
15. The survey content also provides information on population groups such as Māori (including te reo measurement) and people with disabilities.
16. The future-looking element of the time-limited component is investment to make more use of existing data by integrating data sources and reusing administrative data sources.

International context

17. The need for comprehensive and detailed social and population statistics to complement economic statistics has been the subject of several recent international initiatives, including the Stiglitz/Sen/Fitoussi Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress. The Commission's report noted that the current system of measurement has become unbalanced and is not focusing on the things that matter. It emphasised the need for improved measures of peoples' quality of life and a stronger focus on distributional issues.
18. Most OECD countries have household survey programmes that provide core information on work, income and expenditure, and social wellbeing. Many countries also run regular surveys on crime victimisation, time use, wealth, education and training, and working conditions, and have flexibility to respond to new and emerging needs in a timely way. Population-specific surveys on groups of

policy interest, such as indigenous people, older people and people with disabilities, are a further feature of the survey programmes of some countries.

19. A number of National Statistics Offices are implementing more integrated approaches to surveying. These are driven by the need to deliver better value for money and to increase the value of statistical outputs. They also recognise the need to produce a more integrated picture of social and economic outcomes for a range of policy purposes, and to meet the increasing demand for regional and sub-regional information.
20. Initiatives to make greater use of administrative data for statistical purposes are also becoming increasingly common internationally. The use of administrative data on its own or in combination with other data sources provides opportunities to enhance or replace existing outputs, improve data quality, increase the efficiency of statistical processes and reduce compliance burden.
21. The proposed programme will align New Zealand with international direction, both in terms of content and the development of a more integrated approach to the production of population and social statistics, involving greater use of administrative data.

Information needs the programme serves

22. The key purposes of population and social statistics are:
 - a. understanding the structural drivers of change in society. This is necessary for estimating long-term fiscal costs and helping identify policy alternatives. For example, population ageing plays out across a range of policy areas and has profound implications for health, housing and other infrastructure investments.
 - b. monitoring changes in economic and social outcomes. This is needed to assess how New Zealanders are faring through various economic cycles. Robust information on the distribution of outcomes across population groups (eg age groups, ethnic groups, family types) is critical for identifying those groups experiencing poor outcomes, particularly those experiencing multiple disadvantage. Policy interventions can then be targeted where the need is greatest.
 - c. supporting resource allocation for both current operational planning and future service delivery. The ongoing operation of existing policies requires distribution of resources and an adequate information base to help provide public confidence that these processes are rational and transparent. For example, income data are used to support annual tax and welfare costing, and fiscal projections.
 - d. understanding cause and effect relationships as they impact on social outcomes, particularly understanding the potential impact of the policy levers available to Governments. Most policy interventions are about modifying behaviour and detailed information about planned interventions helps identify the best ways to intervene and maximises the opportunity to mitigate potential adverse effects.

Key user expectations of the programme

23. Bearing in mind current policy priorities and enduring policy questions, key users of population and social statistics expect that the programme should:
 - a. provide core information about the labour market, the standard of living of households and wider aspects of wellbeing that underpin social policy. Most interventions in specific policy areas need this context and it makes sense for Statistics New Zealand to provide a rich, coherent core set of information.

- b. be sufficiently flexible to enable shifts in the focus of policy to be informed. As understanding develops around policy questions or people change their behaviours it is necessary to be able to respond to changing information needs.
- c. provide a more comprehensive and linked view of issues that are critical to policy development. The Social Sector briefing to the incoming Government, amongst other documents, identified that increasingly “joined up” government interventions will require “joined up” information.
- d. provide sufficient geographic and sub-population detail to reflect the circumstances of people of policy interest. The diversity of outcomes across the population needs to be identified and understood.
- e. be constructed in a cost-effective way.

Proposed future programme

24. In light of key user expectations and international directions, the scope and shape of the programme has been reviewed, reprioritised and clarified. Cost reductions will be achieved by:
 - a. not repeating the longitudinal Survey of Family, Income and Employment (SoFIE). Instead, initiatives in the data integration part of the programme, such as iLEED¹, will be developed to deliver information previously met through this survey.
 - b. some rescheduling of the programme to spread the costs and smooth cash flows. In particular, the Māori and Disability surveys will be conducted 10-yearly in the preferred option, rather than five-yearly.
25. These changes do not have the support of all stakeholders who by and large want more, not less. However, Statistics New Zealand believes they provide the best value for money in the medium term.
26. The investment part of the programme has three elements:
 - a. rationalising the structure of the survey programme by developing three generic survey vehicles² to reduce the need to conduct separate and costly topic-based surveys.
 - b. implementing an investigative programme to maximise use of existing data by integrating data sources and reusing administrative data.
 - c. taking a government-wide system view by extending and continuing the work of reviewing sectors of statistics and establishing agreement about priority information needs.
27. The programme will meet the key user expectations identified above in the following ways:
 - a. the survey programme will meet core information needs, and the expanded use of administrative data will enrich this further.
 - b. the transformation of surveys into flexible vehicles will provide the capacity to respond to changes of policy focus and emerging needs.
 - c. the integration of data across topic areas will contribute to a more joined up view of issues.
 - d. the increased use of administrative data will extend the amount of detail (eg on population groups and geographic areas) compared to that delivered by sample surveys.

¹ iLEED is a proposed ‘integrated’ extension of the Linked Employer-Employee Data (LEED) database measuring labour market dynamics.

² The three survey vehicles are the Household Labour Force Survey, Household Economic Survey and General Social Survey.

e. cross-agency processes will ensure a continuing focus on what is needed most.

28. A recent inter-departmental review of Tier 1 official statistics has refreshed the list of the most important national statistics for New Zealand. The initial results of this review were reported to Ministers in February 2011. To ensure that New Zealand's population and social statistics programme is focussed on priority needs, it has been aligned to the Tier 1 statistics.

Options considered and assessed

29. Within the broad approach identified above, three options were considered in the business case, reflecting different levels of output and flexibility in pursuing investment options:

Option A: Reduced outputs, no flexibility, average of \$4.3million per annum for 10 years, then \$6.6million per annum ongoing.

Option B: Rationalised outputs, good flexibility, average of \$6.9million per annum for ten years, then \$9.6million per annum ongoing.

Option C: Enhanced outputs, enhanced flexibility, average of \$9.6million per annum for ten years then \$12.6million per annum ongoing.

30. The table below summarises the comparison of these options:

	Option A	Option B	Option C
Survey approach	Single focus per survey	Modular and adaptable	Modular, adaptable and more frequent
Outputs	Essential only – relating to economic progress of individuals and families; Less than is currently produced.	Rationalised set which provide socio-economic information on individuals and families.	Enhanced set which provides a more frequent and comprehensive range of socio-economic information.
New use of administrative data	Slow and reactive – only limited exploration	Incremental progress due to systematic investigation	Steady and continuous due to significant investigation
Stakeholder satisfaction	Likely to be low	Mixed – although a good range of outputs will be provided, the frequency and depth achieved may not satisfy some stakeholders	Good – more stakeholders will be satisfied, but not all
Future-proofing/ agility	Will not satisfy current or future demands and will be expensive to change/expand, due to low resource base	Allows for foundations to be built that are adaptable and expandable in future, if required	Allows for foundations to be built that are adaptable and expandable in future, if required, but provides more information immediately
Risk summary	Not aligned to strategic direction, may compromise full benefit realisation of Statistics 2020	Manageable – similar to level of operation established through the current Programme of Official Social Statistics	Manageable – level of operation above that established through the current Programme of Official Social Statistics
Funding level required-10 year average annual	\$4.3 m	\$6.9 m	\$9.6 m
Funding level required – annual ongoing post 2021/22 year	\$6.6 m	\$9.6 m	\$12.6 m
Indirect fiscal impacts	High likelihood as other agencies seek alternative sources of data	Medium – low likelihood	Low, if any likelihood
Overall assessment	Not Recommended	Preferred	Acceptable

Option B: Rationalised Outputs, Good Flexibility, is preferred option

31. The preference for Option B balances user benefits, fiscal considerations, and the capacity of Statistics New Zealand to manage the programme transformation. This represents a reduction in the current level of time-limited funding in real terms.
32. This option delivers a portfolio of social statistics prioritised to meet key information needs for social policy, with long-term certainty of delivery. The modular approach built into the surveys and the investigation programme for extending statistical use of administrative data provides the ability to adapt to changing requirements in a cost-effective way.
33. Standardised systems and data structures will improve efficiency and capability, and will make it easier to use the data. This option will also deliver a comparable level of output for about a ten percent reduction in full-time equivalents (FTE), when compared to the level of resources funded under the current time-limited programme.
34. The content selected to be delivered in Option B has been agreed by expert users to be of high relative value. Agencies will be able to target their research and analytical efforts effectively and rationally, knowing with certainty the range and frequency of relevant statistical information they can expect from the programme.
35. The content and scope of this programme places New Zealand in the middle of the range of programmes of OECD member countries.
36. A method to quantify the value of statistics developed in the United Kingdom was adapted to produce the equivalent of a Net Present Value on the options. The methodology employed judgements of a group of experts external to Statistics New Zealand. The results confirmed that Option B provides enough core information utilising the flexible tools to strike the right balance between avoiding the limitations of underinvesting in production capacity (in Option A) and producing information that might be valuable only in a more specific context (in Option C).
37. Key generic benefits of this proposal are that it:
 - a. provides an adaptable and flexible system for aiding monitoring of the socio-economic impacts of welfare reforms and other policy initiatives.
 - b. provides a cost-effective, value-for-money system for the continued delivery of key population and social statistics.
 - c. provides a basis for agencies to rationalise their investment in statistical production and research.
38. Key benefits of this proposal to improving the policy process are that it:
 - a. provides information on a range of enduring issues – such as preparedness for retirement and those that will be considered by the Ministerial Committee on Poverty – by generalising Statistics New Zealand's surveys so that it is possible to understand the relationship between wealth and income, and to get a better understanding of the issues caused by a lack of financial resources.
 - b. will help continue the process of facilitating self reliance that underpins the government welfare reforms by establishing the General Social Survey as a flexible tool to enable policy developers to understand issues around multiple disadvantage, barriers to self reliance, and factors associated with resilience.

- c. further enriches the environment for bringing together agency data in a research environment by enhancing the iLEED database with an increasing range of administrative data that will eventually enable Statistics New Zealand to explore employment, income, wealth acquisition, health and education related interventions in a joined up way.
 - d. provides the scope to use the survey vehicles to develop a range of intermediate outcomes that can be used to assess progress towards the achievement of longer-term outcomes.
 - e. provides tools to better understand the joint causes of socio-economic deprivation (assisting the identification and evaluation of effective interventions).
 - f. builds statistical infrastructure to reduce the costs of statistical production in general.
39. While Option C is valued more than Option B by some stakeholders (because of its greater frequency of outputs), Option C also has a potentially higher risk profile, especially in relation to recruiting and retaining the more skilled FTE resourcing that would be required.

Financial implications

40. Option B requires a total of \$68.7million operating funding for the ten years from 2012/13 to 2021/22, and \$9.6million per annum thereafter. The capital funding required is \$0.2million.
41. The profile of operating and capital costs, and associated funding requirements for the continued programme preferred option (B) is summarised in the Table below.

Summary table of financial requirements for preferred option (B)

\$ millions	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	Total over 10 years	Ongoing costs/funding
Total Gross operating cost	15.5	15.8	14.5	14.9	15.8	15.7	16.3	14.5	15.0	15.5	153.5	15.1
Existing funding*	17.5	17.0	12.2	5.8	5.1	5.1	6.0	5.0	5.1	6.0	84.8	5.5
Additional operating funding requirement	-2	-1.2	2.2	9.1	10.7	10.7	10.4	9.4	9.9	9.5	68.7	9.6
Capital funding requirement	-	-	0.1	0.1	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.2	0
Total funding sought (operating, capital and contingency)											68.9	9.6

*Programme of Official Social Statistics (current time-limited funding) and Vote Statistics, including incremental savings

42. Key points to note are:
- a. The preferred option (B) includes \$3.2million savings which would be available for reprioritisation within the Official Statistics System or used to offset the funding required for this programme. The Government Statistician submitted purchase advice as part of Statistics New Zealand's Four Year Budget Plan for Budget 2012 which recommended "\$2.2M be retained in Vote Statistics to offset the operating funding requirement for TOPSS in 2014/15. I further propose that the remaining \$1M be earmarked as a Budget 2012 contingency for consideration

alongside the Tier 1 statistics development proposals to be considered by Cabinet in May/June 2012'. If this advice is accepted then the operating funding sought will increase from \$68.7million to \$69.7million.

- b. Statistics New Zealand has re-prioritised the use of baseline resources and will absorb the costs to undertake census transformation research for the period 2012/13 to 2013/14, in order to minimise the requirement for new money.
 - c. The slightly varying amounts in the annual funding profile reflect some cyclical activity.
43. The profile of operating cost for the preferred option (B) and its relationship to the existing operating baseline for the social statistics programme is shown in the above table, demonstrating the impact on baseline funding if replacement funding for the continued population and social statistics programme is not received when the current time-limited appropriation ends in 2015.
44. The preferred option (B) places Statistics New Zealand on a sustainable financial footing, ensures that the production of high priority social and population statistics is maintained, offers scope for rationalisation across the Official Statistics System, and positions Statistics New Zealand to be able to respond flexibly if statistical priorities change.

Implementation

45. The continued population and social statistics programme will be governed as a sub-programme within the framework of Statistics 2020. The reporting, change and risk management arrangements applying to Statistics 2020 will apply to the continued programme.

Consultation

46. The following agencies have been consulted in the preparation of this Cabinet paper: the Ministries of Social Development, Education, Health and Justice, the Departments of Internal Affairs, Labour, and Te Puni Kōkiri, the Treasury and the State Services Commission. The Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet have been informed.
47. An independent review of the time-limited programme was commissioned. The findings indicate that the programme was successful and met many of its objectives. It also noted that there was wide-spread support for the continued production of the greater range of population and social statistics produced by the programme.
48. During the development of the continued programme business case, Statistics New Zealand formalised a previously operating interagency group (the Tomorrow's Official Population and Social Statistics (TOPSS) Interagency Group) to consult extensively and regularly with agencies on their information needs. There has also been consultation with the Minister's Advisory Committee on Official Statistics (ACOS) and the Business-Facing Chief Executives Group, the Chief Executive Steering Group for Official Social Statistics and the Māori Statistical Advisory Committee, and the Social Sector Chief Executive Forum.
49. The business case has been independently peer reviewed and considered by a Gateway Review team and central agencies. Members of the Gateway Review team, as part of their quality assurance for the TOPSS business case, interviewed the Minister of Statistics, senior officials of Statistics New Zealand, the Treasury, the State Services Commission, the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, and user agencies. The Gateway Review team found there is broad support for continued production of the outputs generated from the current Programme of Official Social

Statistics (POSS) programme and support for the proposed developments under the continued programme options B and C.

50. The independent purchase advice to the Minister from the Government Statistician, as Chair of the Official Statistics System, is to adopt the approach recommended in the business case, while noting the concerns of Te Puni Kōkiri and other data users that Option C better meets their information needs.
51. Te Puni Kōkiri notes Option C would provide more substantial, relevant and timely information for and about Māori. Te Puni Kōkiri notes secondary data sources would be needed to supplement the Māori Social Survey if it were conducted only every 10 years as proposed in Option B; and that these data requirements could have additional budgetary implications for the agencies concerned.
52. The TOPSS Interagency Group will be replaced by a Population and Social Statistics Stakeholder Advisory Group going forward. A key role for this Advisory Group will be to provide advice on information priorities, and the development of, and opportunities for rationalisation across the Official Statistics System.

Human Rights implications

53. If this proposal is agreed then it is considered there are no adverse human rights implications arising. However, if funding is not approved, then the data on people with disabilities and Māori would be seriously compromised.

Legislative and Regulatory Implications

54. The regulatory impact analysis requirements do not apply.
55. The proposals outlined in this paper appear to be consistent with the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990 and the Human Rights Act 1993.
56. The proposals outlined in this paper have no specific gender or disability implications.

Recommendations

57. It is recommended that Cabinet Economic Growth and Infrastructure Committee:
 - a) **note** that Cabinet decisions taken in March 2011 for *Statistics 2020: Achieving the Statistical System of the Future* agreed that funding for the Tomorrow's Official Population and Social Statistics (TOPSS) sub-programme would be separately considered through the development of a Stage 2 business case to focus on future pathways for population and social statistics with census variations; for submission to Cabinet Economic Growth and Infrastructure Committee by 31 March 2012 [EGI Min (11) 4/10 refers].
 - b) **note** that the current programme of population and social statistics (apart from the census) is using ten-year time-limited funding (of approximately \$9.2 million per annum) due to end on 30 June 2015. Without continued funding, significant cuts to social statistics outputs will be required.
 - c) **note** that a further time-limited funding of \$15.5 million from 2000/01 to 2009/10 was provided to Statistics New Zealand to conduct a longitudinal survey – the Survey of Family, Income and Employment (SoFIE), which is not sought to be continued.
 - d) **note** that robust statistical evidence will be critical to advance the Government's social reform agenda; to understand structural drivers of changes in society; monitor changes in economic

and social outcomes; understand cause and effect, in particular the levers available to government; and to support resource allocation, future service delivery and operational planning.

- e) **note** that Option A would deliver a smaller, less efficient programme of population and social statistics and does not meet stakeholder approval.
- f) **note** that Statistics New Zealand recommends Option B for the continued population and social statistics programme, offering rationalised outputs and good flexibility. This option balances user requirements and fiscal considerations. Under this option Statistics New Zealand is able to sustain its capability to lead Official Population and Social Statistics.
- g) **note** that a decision is needed in Budget 2012 to provide planning certainty for New Zealand's statistical production; and to manage risk, including the potential for other agencies to initiate ad hoc data collections, and the potential loss of key Statistics New Zealand staff.
- h) **agree** in principle to the funding proposal outlined in the preferred option B, subject to suitable sources of funding being identified as part of the final Budget package. This increases Departmental Output Expense appropriations in Output Class 2 (population and social statistics) for Vote: Statistics as set out in the table below:

\$ millions	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	Total over 10 years	Ongoing costs/ funding
Funding sought	-2.0	-1.2	2.2	9.1	10.7	10.7	10.4	9.4	9.9	9.5	68.7	9.6
Capital required	-	-	0.1	0.1	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.2	0

- i) **note** that the preferred option includes \$3.2 million savings which would be available for reprioritisation within the Official Statistics System or used to offset the funding required for this programme. The Government Statistician submitted purchase advice as part of Statistics New Zealand's Four Year Budget Plan for Budget 2012 which recommended "*\$2.2M be retained in Vote Statistics to offset the operating funding requirement for TOPSS in 2014/15. I further propose that the remaining \$1M be earmarked as a Budget 2012 contingency for consideration alongside the Tier 1 statistics development proposals to be considered by Cabinet in May/June 2012*". If this advice is accepted then the operating funding sought will increase from \$68.7 million to \$69.7 million.
- j) **note** that this funding represents a real decrease in spending on population and social statistics.
- k) **note** that the population and social statistics programme of work will be governed as a sub-programme within the framework of governance for Statistics 2020. The reporting, change and risk management arrangements applying to Statistics 2020 will apply.
- l) **note** that the attached business case has been through an external review process.

Minister of Statistics

_____/_____/_____ [date of signing]