

# Quick guide to Our Country

Our Country is split into four sections: Indicator Overview, International Comparison, New Zealand Distribution and New Zealand Population Subgroup Comparison. On this page you can find the **Indicator Overview**, the **Sparklines** and the **Line graphs**.

## Current Wellbeing

Current wellbeing can be thought of as wellbeing at a 'point in time', and is multi-dimensional. The 12 domains that we use to measure current wellbeing in New Zealand are:

*Civic Engagement and Governance, Cultural Identity, Environment, Health, Housing, Income and Consumption, Jobs and Earnings, Knowledge and Skills, Safety, Social Connection, Subjective Wellbeing and Time Use.*

Each of the domains and their subgroups are defined on the **Indicator Overview** page. Using these domains, we can provide a snapshot of the overall state of wellbeing in New Zealand. We can use them to look at the distribution of wellbeing as experienced by different sections of the population, organised by sex, ethnicity, family type and region. We can gauge levels of inequality and prosperity, and use these to inform policy on a broad scale.

Over time, our performance in each of these 12 domains improves or declines depending on our use of the four capitals (Natural, Human, Social and Financial & Physical). See *Our Future* for more information on the four capitals.

### Reading a Line graph

Each dot on the Line graph represents a data point, and each data point measures the same variable at a different point in time. The year that each data point was collected is recorded on the horizontal axis (the line at the bottom), while the vertical axis (the numbers on the left side) records the values of the data points. Straight lines connect each consecutive data point to show the trend over time.

Data points in a Line graph are arranged left-to-right, oldest-to-newest. It is important to remember that data for every year may not be included; however, we still display the same size gap between each length of time to ensure the reliability of the overall shape of the graph.

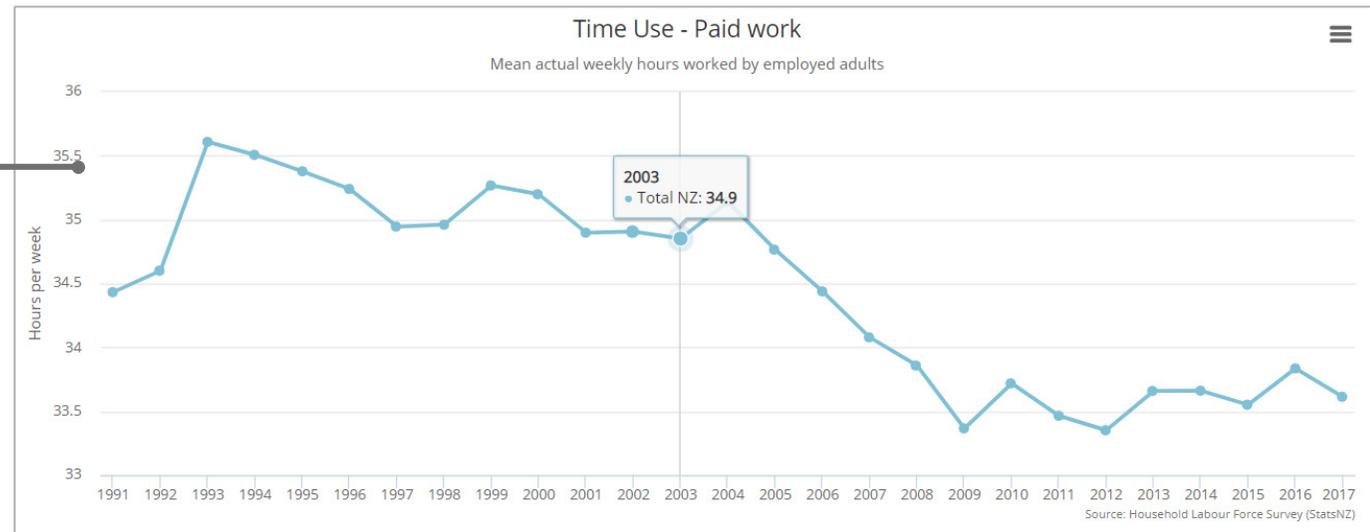
When looking at the trend, be aware of the scale of the vertical axis (particularly if there are only two or three data points). A small change in values can look steep if the scale only covers a small range.

Trend	Domain	Indicator	Units
	Civic Engagement and Governance	Trust in government institutions	Percentage of adults who, overall, trust the public service
	Civic Engagement and Governance	Voter turnout	Percentage of enrolled electors who voted in the general election

### Sparkline graphs in the Indicator Overview

On the Indicator Overview page you can see all 12 wellbeing indicators divided into their subgroups, in the form of simple Sparkline graphs. A Sparkline is a heavily-simplified Line graph, intended to show trends in a small space for quick comparisons with other indicators. In the *Units* column, you can see the definition of each subgroup.

The years included in each Sparkline are in alignment with one another; for example, the year 2007 is always in the same spot as you travel down the table. This way, you have a consistent basis for comparison. However, some of the Sparkline graphs have fewer data points than others, so it is important to check the scale for that particular graph. You can click on any Sparkline graph that interests you to expand it into a full Line graph.



**Example:** Time Use: Paid work

# Quick guide to Our Country

Here we are looking at the **International Comparison (OECD)** section of Our Country, which is displayed in **Box & Whisker plots**. We use Box & Whisker plots when we want to compare wellbeing in New Zealand with the OECD as a whole.

## International Comparison

### New Zealand and the OECD

Box & Whisker plots are great for measuring how we are doing relative to other countries in the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). The OECD is an intergovernmental organisation comprised of 36 high-income, democratic countries, including New Zealand.

It's important to remember that the OECD is by no means representative of the entire world. However, we have a good basis for comparison with the OECD – it is a group of countries similar to us, who approach their aims in similar ways.

## Box & Whisker Plots

### Reading a Box & Whisker plot

Box & Whisker plots are similar to Line graphs, but they give us a more nuanced view of the data. Each yellow dot represents a data point for New Zealand. Each grey Box-and-Whisker represents the OECD distribution for that year.

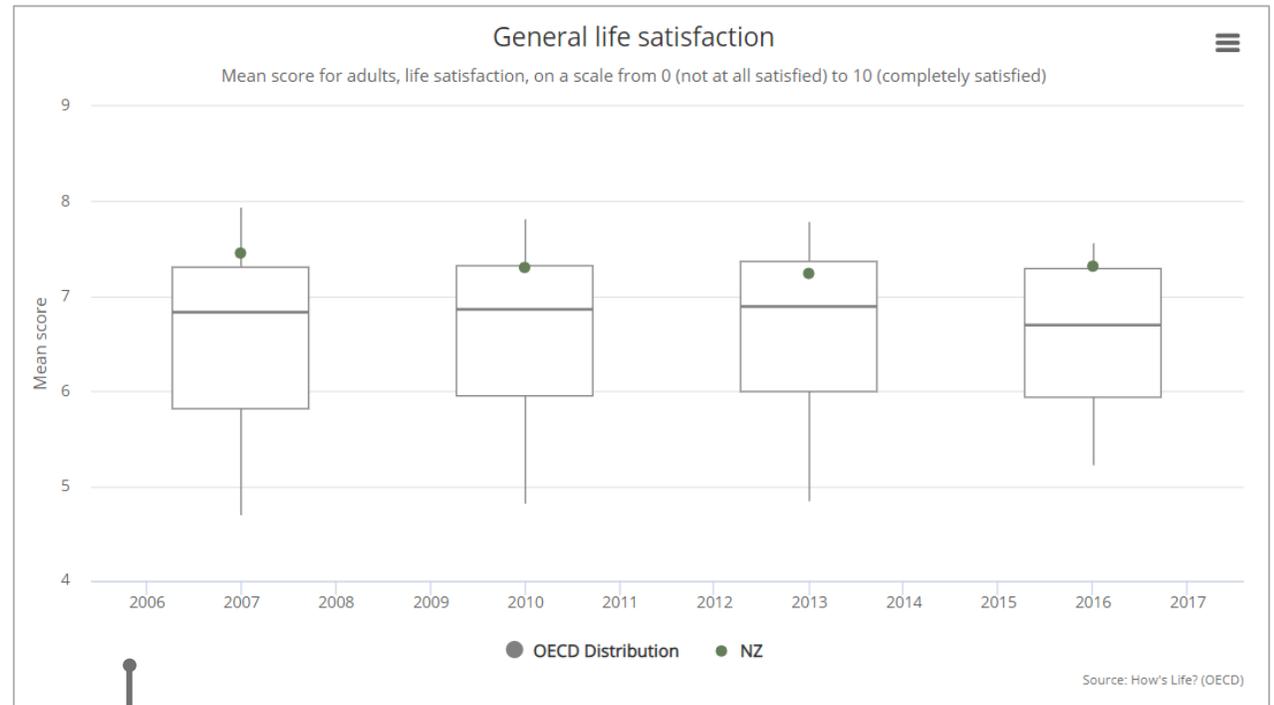
The highest point of each whisker is the highest value in any OECD country in that year. Similarly, the lowest point is the lowest value in any OECD country in that year.

The middle line in each box is the value of the middle-ranked OECD country in that year (the median). The top line in the box is the median for the highest half of the OECD (the upper quartile).

The bottom line in the box is the lower quartile: the median, or middle country, in the bottom half of the distribution.

If the box is small, the countries in the middle with similar values are bunched closely together. If the whiskers are long, the countries at the top or bottom of the distribution are very different to the countries in the middle, signalling greater depth of poverty or greater heights of advantage.

If the median is closer to the top of the box than the bottom, those above the median are more closely bunched together than those below.



**Example:** Subjective Wellbeing: General life satisfaction

### Making sense of the data

We can see from this graph that in 2016 in New Zealand, mean life satisfaction was 7 (on a scale of 0-10). In the worst (reported) OECD country in 2016, mean life satisfaction was 5.2, and in the best (reported) OECD country mean life satisfaction was 7.5. In the median OECD country, mean life satisfaction was 6.7, in the upper-quartile country 7.3, and in the lower-quartile country 5.9. New Zealand is near the upper quartile in all four years presented.

When taking note of trends, it is important to note whether New Zealand is trending up (or down) in absolute value, not just comparatively. Even if we are in the upper quartile of the OECD, and the overall curve is in a negative direction, we still have work to do. And remember: we are not in competition with the other countries in the OECD; we do not necessarily want to track too high (which might be suggestive of global instability) or too low (which would be an indicator that New Zealand is not performing up to par).

# Quick guide to Our Country

Here we are looking at the **New Zealand Distribution** section of Our Country, displayed in **Stacked Bar graphs**. This way, we are able to look at how trends in wellbeing affect different segments of the population. We also use Multi-line graphs in this section – you will find these covered on the next page.

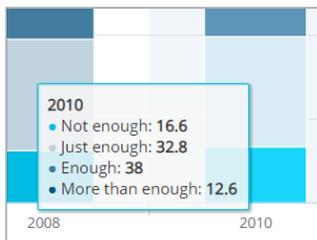
## Stacked Bar Graphs

### Reading a Stacked Bar graph

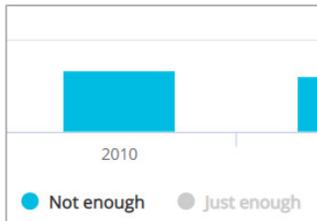
Stacked Bar graphs show trends for different categories within a wellbeing indicator. The data used in these graphs are taken from representative surveys, in which survey respondents evaluate their own situation and place themselves in their preferred category.

The categories within bars are ranked vertically: the worst category is shown in the bottom segment, the next-worst in the following segment, and so on up to the best category in the top segment. Each bar adds to 100% of the data pool in any given year, signified by the '100' on the vertical axis.

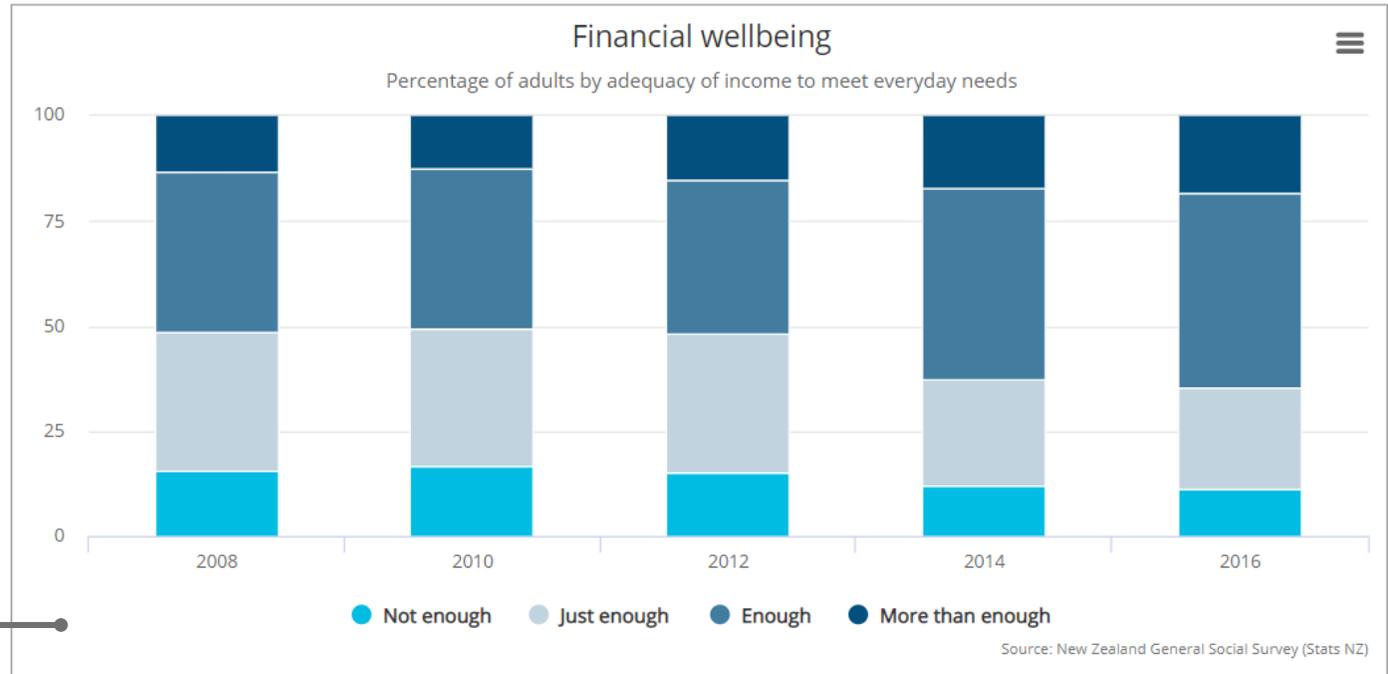
For the graph on the right (Financial wellbeing), these categories are *Not Enough*, *Just Enough*, *Enough* and *More than Enough*. We can use this graph to track changes in the Financial wellbeing of the New Zealand population, by reading the bars from left to right.



*Hover over any of the bars in the graph to see the distribution of values within that bar.*



*You can add, remove or isolate certain categories by clicking on them in the key at the bottom of the graph.*



**Example:** Income and Consumption: Financial wellbeing

### New Zealand Distribution

In this section, you can isolate particular domains, and see how they are distributed across the population. The New Zealand Distribution is especially useful when looking at levels of inequality – both in economic and social terms.

Here we are looking at the distribution of Financial wellbeing in New Zealand. In 2008, 15.4% of people stated they had not enough income to meet their everyday needs, while 13.1% of people stated they had more than enough. In 2016, 11.2% of people stated they had not enough income to meet their everyday needs, while 18.2% of people stated they had more than enough.

This is great news. The proportion of people who do not have enough income for everyday needs has been decreasing since at least 2008, particularly between 2012 and 2014, and the proportion of people who have enough, or more than enough income for everyday needs has increased since 2008.

# Quick guide to Our Country

Here we are looking at the **New Zealand Population Subgroup Comparison** section of Our Country, displayed in **Multi-line graphs**. We use Multi-line graphs when we want to see wellbeing trends over time for different segments of the population.

## Multi-Line Graphs

### Reading a Multi-line graph

Multi-line graphs are Line graphs that include more than one data series. Each data series represents a different category, and shows the data and time series for that category. By including them all on the same graph, it is possible to compare between the categories.

Each category is distinguished by a colour and a different shape for the data points that belong to that category. These are detailed in the key at the bottom of the graph.

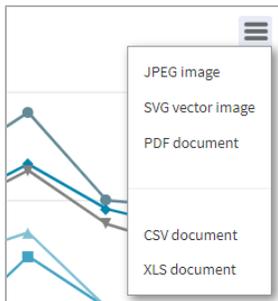
**User Input**

Domain  
Civic Engagement and Governance

Population Focus  
Total NZ

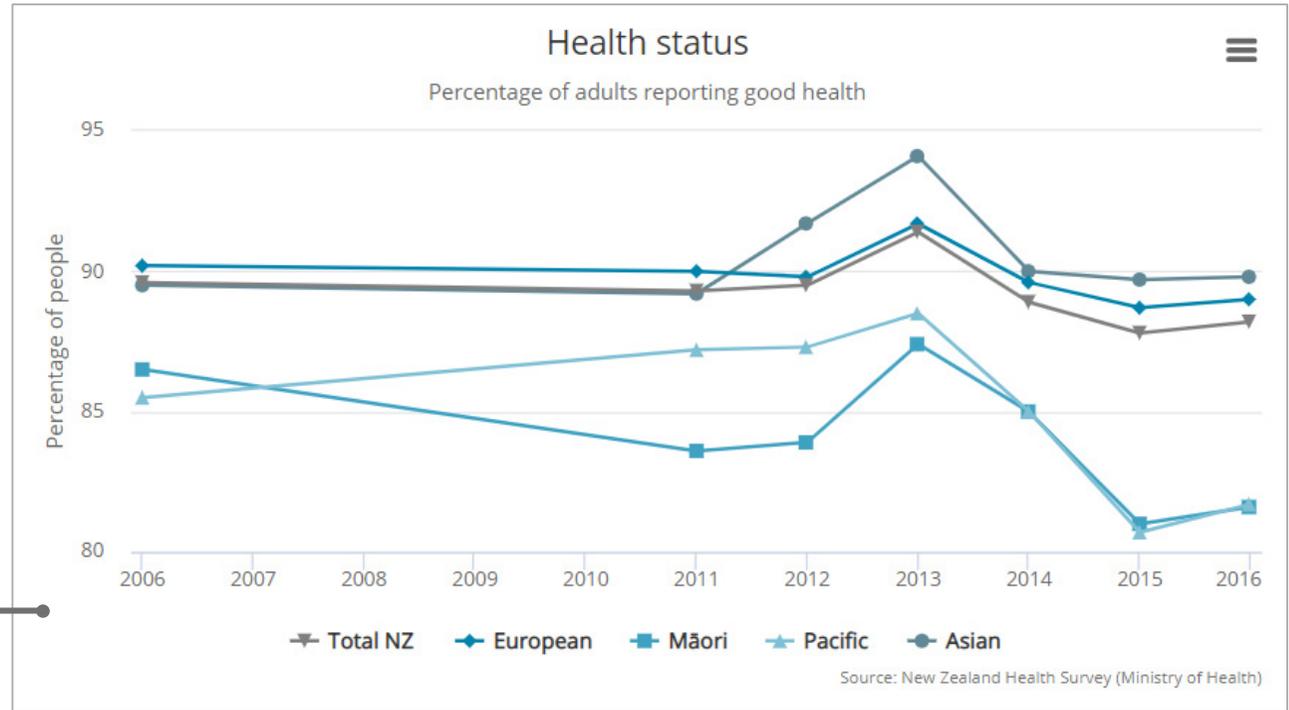
- Subgroup
- Age distribution
- Ethnic distribution
- Regional distribution
- Sex distribution

*You can choose from a number of different population groups to see trends in wellbeing over time for all of the groups that make up that segment.*



*You can export any graph through the menu in the top-right corner of that graph.*

*From the Home Page, you can also access and download an aggregated summary of the data used in the LSF Dashboard.*



**Example:** Health: Health status, Ethnic group distribution

### New Zealand Population Subgroup Comparison

Population subgroup comparisons can be extremely helpful in informing policy, as they allow us to pinpoint where our efforts can have the most impact. More people identifying as Asian or European report good health than the national average in all years, while fewer people identifying as Pacific or Māori report good health. We might decide that a greater portion of our attention is best focused on these latter subgroups; because they are tracking below the average and we know that a higher standard of health is achievable.

All ethnicities reported better health in 2013 than in any other year. While it is possible that this is just an outlier, it also might lead us to look back to 2013 and try to isolate some causes for the substantial jump. We might also look to understand the factors behind the subsequent sharp decline in 2014 and 2015. However, we have to be very careful about any inferences we might make, and cognisant of the possibility that we may just be creating a story to fit the data.