



## National Council of Women of New Zealand

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Wahine O Aotearoa

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### **Submission to Statistics New Zealand on the Census Advisory: 2006 Census Content**

The National Council of Women of New Zealand (NCWNZ) is an umbrella organisation representing 42 nationally organised societies. It has 34 branches spread throughout the country to which women from some 150 societies are affiliated. The Council's function is to serve women, the family and the community at local, national and international level through research, study, discussion and action.

Our organisation takes a close interest in data collection and analysis of social statistics and made submissions on Census content in 1988, 1991 and 1993. One of our major concerns has been the measurement of unpaid work and we also participated in consultations about the Time Use Survey.

The Public Issues Standing Committee of NCWNZ has examined the "2006 Census of Population and Dwellings: Preliminary views on Content" document, taking note of the limited scope for any changes and the focus on continuity and quality of information while minimising respondent burden.

We would like to make the comments on the following sections:

#### **Population Structure**

1. Legal marital status. Re Question 21 (on 2001 Census paper)

We question the ranking of the options in this section and suggest that

"I am legally married" should be the first tick box and it more adequately reflects the structure of Question 19 and the most commonly perceived status for the topic "legal marital status"

2. Fertility. We are aware that this is a question which can potentially cause pain and distress for some people and it may not be answered accurately. However, we consider that it is essential that the issue of fertility is covered in the census, as the data is vital to many areas of research and predictions on population and health.

#### **Location**

For dwellings that are unoccupied on the night of the census, we suggest that the Dwelling Questionnaire is published in a separate colour and filled in by the dwelling owner/occupier. The colour would mark the dwelling was empty, to prevent loss of such important information.

#### **Ethnicity and Culture**

1. Devising satisfactory questions relating to ethnicity is increasing complex as there is an ongoing concern about the use of such terms as "New Zealand European". People who are several generations removed from their European/Chinese/or other areas of ethnic origins, may prefer to be known as 'New Zealanders' in the first instance with an opportunity to acknowledge other ethnicity

While aware of the need for compatibility of data with earlier censuses and with Question 9 (on 2001 Census paper), we believe that an appropriate rewording of Question 11 (on 2001 Census paper) question is

"How would you like to define your ethnicity? Mark the space or spaces which apply to you:





New Zealander  
Maori  
European  
Chinese.

2. For Maori respondents, we feel there should be a category for those urban Maori who do not identify with a traditional Iwi and who would like to be recognised as 'urban Maori'.

3. We recommend the addition of a question asking whether a person who was not born here has NZ citizenship or permanent residency status. This is particularly helpful within the Health sector.

### **Health**

NCWNZ agrees that cigarette smoking should be included in the census as it will give an indication of the target groups for education and anticipated health impacts.

The inclusion of disability questions provides useful data for local councils in their planning with housing, transport and needs assessment for community-care.

### **Education and Training**

NCWNZ recommends the inclusion of a question relating to access to pre-school education. Current thinking is that access to pre-school education is of major benefit, so that data on this issue is vital for research purposes. This may also highlight rural areas which could be served in other ways.

### **Work**

1. NCWNZ sees the need for the topics on paid employment to remain consistent with the ILO in order to facilitate comparisons. We reiterate that it is vital to collect information on unpaid work, and especially where unpaid work could eventually become part of the national accounting systems.

2. Re means of travel to work topic (Question 36 on 2001 Census paper). We support the retention of this question but recommend that it is extended to cover travel to study, and travel to unpaid work. Traffic congestion is increasing in all urban centres, but patterns indicate distinct changes in school holidays so more information is required for accurate planning. Perhaps also include something on ones usual travel to work. The question relates to travel taken on a specified day an example given was the day asked for the writer travelled by plane to Wellington and we would be concerned that this would not be an isolated case.

### **Income**

Re Questions 25 (on 2001 Census paper) we recommend that the explanatory note for 'other sources' include occasional cash income. There is increasingly casualisation of (usually) low paid employment and more information is required about this. We suggest that in training the census distributors it is important to that the information will not impinge on confidentiality.

### **Families and Households**

NCWNZ agrees that there is a need to gather accurate information on families where children are nurtured by each parent at a separate location but on a regular basis. Again this information is useful to local authorities is assessing housing requirements and to a wide range of government departments concerned with social and educational planning.

### **Housing**

NCWNZ agrees with the inclusions as listed in the last paragraph on page 36 of the document, including the topic of tenure holder. We suggest that information on the number of bathrooms and



toilets could be useful information, given that many newer houses have more than one. This increased water use and waste disposal must impact on infrastructural needs in the community.

Re Dwelling Form Question 6 (in 2001 Census paper), we suggest that there should be a separation between cell phone and land-line phone access.

**Conclusion**

NCWNZ members agree that although it is preferable not to lengthen the census, the census is a vital tool and it may be necessary to do so in order to maintain high standards of accurate data collection. Public education prior to census night, plus very clear notes and well trained census distributors should result in a good outcome.

We thank you for the opportunity to be included in this consultation process.

Beryl Anderson  
**National President**

Mary Gavin  
**Convener, Public Issues Standing Committee**