



**HUMAN POTENTIAL CENTRE**  
AN AUT UNIVERSITY RESEARCH CENTRE

# SOVEREIGN WELLBEING INDEX

**2015**

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SOVEREIGN

**AUT**  
UNIVERSITY



## **Sovereign Wellbeing Index: 2015**

Published in April 2015 by the Human Potential Centre, AUT University.

This document and supporting files are available at [www.mywellbeing.co.nz](http://www.mywellbeing.co.nz)

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### **Authors**

Dr Lisa Mackay, Professor Grant Schofield, Dr Aaron Jarden, and Kate Prendergast.

### **Acknowledgements**

Thank you to all the New Zealanders who participated in the first and second rounds of the Sovereign Wellbeing Index.

The authors would like to acknowledge the ongoing support received from Sovereign.

For media inquiries, please contact:

#### **AUT University**

Susannah Dalton, Communications Manager

E: [susannah.dalton@aut.ac.nz](mailto:susannah.dalton@aut.ac.nz)

DDI: 09 921 9688

Mobile: 021 0293 1092

#### **Sovereign**

Rebecca Emery, PR Manager

E: [rebecca.emery@sovereign.co.nz](mailto:rebecca.emery@sovereign.co.nz)

DDI: 09 487 5602

Mobile: 021 776 852

# Foreword

After 25 years being there for customers during their moment of truth, Sovereign wants to help New Zealanders take charge of their health and proactively prevent problems before they need our help to fix them.

Traditionally, the success of a country is measured using economic indicators such as GDP, which fail to give us insights into how people are feeling on a personal and social level. In order to truly understand the challenges we're facing, especially when it comes to mental health and wellbeing, we need to look at what makes us happy, resilient and optimistic.

That's why we teamed up with the AUT Human Potential Centre to produce the Sovereign Wellbeing Index for the first time in 2013 and again in 2015. It's the only survey designed specifically to measure the wellbeing of New Zealanders - an internationally significant piece of research that helps the nation better understand what brings out the best in all of us.

We're proud to be part of such a worthwhile project, which has relevance not only to ourselves as an insurance provider but to government, industry and the broader community.

For me, one of the most compelling insights is our low level of community engagement and how this directly relates to our wellbeing. It encourages me to think about ways that Sovereign can continue to improve its engagement with the community.

I have no doubt, that the Sovereign Wellbeing Index will provide insights into what New Zealanders can do to help make this country an even better and happier place to live.



Symon Brewis-Weston  
Sovereign CEO



# Executive summary

## Wellbeing in New Zealand

Until recently, developed countries have relied on economic metrics as a benchmark for national success. However these metrics fail to capture how well the people of the nation are doing. The Sovereign Wellbeing Index was established in 2012 to provide a comprehensive assessment of wellbeing in New Zealand adults. This index provides important data on how New Zealand is currently doing so that we can have meaningful conversations on what needs to be done to improve wellbeing throughout New Zealand.

This information is intended to be used by individuals to make improvements to their own lives, and the lives of those around them, and by leaders to improve the wellbeing of New Zealand as a whole.

We use the term **Awesome** to classify individuals with optimal wellbeing, those that are doing well, feeling good, and possess positive characteristics that underpin an awesome life. While these individuals face the ups and downs of life, they have resilience to bounce back after challenges, optimism about their future, and feel positive about themselves.

In this report we present the key insights into the wellbeing of New Zealand adults, and the characteristics that are common across those that are doing Awesome. These insights are drawn from data collected from 10,012 adults in 2014. Of these, 4,435 also participated in 2012.

## **25% of New Zealanders are Awesome, with another 21% nearly there.**

There has been no real or big change in New Zealand wellbeing between 2012 and 2014.

### **Around New Zealand, who is doing well?**

- Older people were more likely to be awesome than those aged under 30 years.
- Southland is the region that had the highest prevalence of being Awesome.
- Higher incomes were associated with higher rates of wellbeing, but living comfortably on present income was a stronger predictor of wellbeing.
- Employed and retired adults were more likely to be Awesome than unemployed individuals or those unable to work due to illness or injury.
- Using your strengths and being highly satisfied in your job was strongly associated with wellbeing.
- Health status, along with sleeping well, eating well, and exercising were all associated with higher rates of wellbeing.
- Having positive relationships with people you are close to, and living in supportive communities were important for wellbeing.

### **As a whole, how does New Zealand compare internationally?**

New Zealand is ranked 21<sup>st</sup> compared with 29 other countries participating in the European Social Survey. Only a quarter of New Zealand adults were Awesome, compared with 61% of the top-ranked country, Denmark, and 16% of the bottom-ranked country, Ukraine.

# Take charge

## To be the best we can be

While only 25% of New Zealanders are Awesome, another 21% are almost there. At all levels we can make steps towards improving the wellbeing of our country, whether as individuals or as leaders. It's about helping each other to use our strengths, enhance our relationships, and engage in healthy behaviours that underpin our wellbeing. We can, and should be, working together towards a society that helps one another to achieve greatness.

### What can I do to become more Awesome?

As an individual there are many things within your personal control that you can do to improve your wellbeing. Consciously working to improve your sleep quality, eat well, and exercise will help to build a solid foundation. Connect with others to build positive relationships, both with people you are close to, and with people in your local community. Using your strengths and finding meaningful work is a key pathway to an Awesome life. It's also about spending and living within your means, building wealth and security over time.

### What can we do together to become more Awesome?

Together as family, teams, groups and organisations we can help to improve the wellbeing of others. Work on identifying, using and developing the strengths of employees, volunteers and each other. Support each other to be active; employers can provide work environments that encourage physical activity and healthy eating. Create community in your workplace and neighbourhood, working together to support each other.

### What issues do we need to face as a society?

We need to continue working towards reducing unemployment and moving those on low incomes into higher income brackets. Strategies that encourage people to spend within their means and build wealth are important. City design plays an important role in supporting positive social connections and physical activity behaviours. Designing spaces and creating events where people can meet and help one another will help to build a more connected New Zealand.

# Table of contents

<b>3</b>	<b>Foreword</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Executive Summary</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>Section 1. Introduction</b>
<b>11</b>	<b>Section 2. New Zealanders Being Awesome</b>
<b>15</b>	<b>Section 3. Wealth</b>
<b>18</b>	<b>Section 4. Jobs</b>
<b>21</b>	<b>Section 5. Vitality</b>
<b>24</b>	<b>Section 6. Social Connections</b>
<b>27</b>	<b>Section 7. Methodology</b>

# 1.

## Introduction

### Wellbeing and being well

Traditionally, the science of wellbeing has been the study of what is wrong with individuals in order to make them well<sup>1</sup>. But 'being well' is so much more than not 'being unwell' and focus has broadened to incorporate what is going right with individuals and in society. This emerging area of positive psychology focusses on wellbeing as being satisfied with life, having frequent positive emotions (like happiness) and fewer negative emotions (like sadness), being resilient, experiencing psychological growth and functioning well in the various areas of life that are important.

Research in this area shows that individuals with high wellbeing not only lead healthier and happier lives, but also contribute positively to society<sup>1</sup>. High wellbeing individuals tend to be more productive, more creative, have higher incomes and achieve more. They have better health, use the health system less and recover from illness faster. They are also more resilient when faced with challenges, volunteer to a greater extent and are more generous with helping others in need<sup>2,3,4</sup>.

All-in-all, high wellbeing is both an individual and societal good. It's good for individuals to feel happy, healthy and function well, and it's good for society to have individuals high in wellbeing who connect and help society function.

<sup>1</sup> Diener, E. (2006). Guidelines for national indicators of well-being and ill-being. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 7, 397-404.

<sup>2</sup> Diener, E. (2000). Subjective well-being: The science of happiness and a proposal for a National index. *American Psychologist*, 55(1), 34-43.

<sup>3</sup> Graham, C. (2009). *The paradox of happy peasants and miserable millionaires*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

<sup>4</sup> Christakis, N. A., & Fowler, J. H. (2009). *Connected: The surprising power of our social networks and how they shape our lives*. New York: Little Brown.

## How Awesome are New Zealanders, really?

There have been various international surveys and polls of happiness and wellbeing undertaken which show New Zealand to be doing fairly well on the international charts<sup>1</sup>. However these surveys generally rely on selective questions that do not capture the multi-dimensional nature of wellbeing.

In order to have meaningful conversations about how well New Zealanders are doing, there is a need for ongoing robust epidemiological monitoring of multi-dimensional wellbeing in New Zealand. It is important for us to accurately understand how New Zealanders are feeling and functioning in their lives so that we can work towards a society where individuals can realise their potential and lead healthier and happier lives.

The Sovereign Wellbeing Index, which began in 2012, is a unique prospective population study of wellbeing, social gradient, health and lifestyle undertaken by the Human Potential Centre of AUT University. This comprehensive survey incorporates the complete personal and social wellbeing module employed in the European Social Survey (Round 6, 2012)<sup>2</sup>, and sampling of the population to ensure a representation of New Zealand as a whole is achieved. This study gives a broad and valid understanding of how well New Zealanders are really doing, what factors contribute to optimal wellbeing and whether this is the same for everyone.

Results from this index provides government, councils, business, non-profits and individuals insights into the gaps that exist and information needed to prioritise interventions to improve wellbeing. This information can be used by leaders to help people thrive and by individuals to make positive improvements to their own lives and the lives of others around them.

### 2014 Sovereign Wellbeing Index

The first Sovereign Wellbeing Index was undertaken in 2012 with **9,962** adults aged 18 years and over and published in 2013. In 2014, we followed up these participants, of which **4,435** participated, along with a further **5,577** new participants.

**10,012 participants in 2014.**

<sup>1</sup> Gallup (2014). State of global wellbeing: Results of the Gallup-Healthways Global Wellbeing Index. Retrieved from <http://www.well-beingindex.com>

<sup>2</sup> European Social Survey (2012). ESS Round 6 Source Questionnaire. London: Centre for Comparative Social Surveys, City University London

# The elements of Being Awesome

## **Being Awesome**

The classification of overall wellbeing is based on a scientifically validated scale of 10 items developed to assess wellbeing as a multi-dimensional construct<sup>1</sup>. To move beyond a risk system where measurement of population health is focussed on symptoms of malfunction, this scale of flourishing measures characteristics that are the mirror opposite to depression and anxiety to represent positive functioning.

### ***Positive emotion***

- Happiness: General positive mood, feeling cheerful and happy.

### ***Positive characteristics***

- Emotional stability: Experiencing balanced emotions and feeling calm and peaceful.
- Vitality: Feeling energetic.
- Optimism: Feeling hopeful or optimistic about your future.
- Resilience: Having the ability to manage challenges and bounce back from adversity.
- Self-esteem: Feeling positive about yourself.

### ***Positive functioning***

- Engagement: Liking what you do and being absorbed in what you do.
- Competence: Having a sense of accomplishment from what you do.
- Meaning: Having a sense of purpose and feel what you do is worthwhile.
- Positive relationships: Have meaningful relationships, receiving support from others.

<sup>1</sup> Huppert, F., & So, T. C. (2013). Flourishing across Europe: Application of a new conceptual framework for defining well-being. *Social Indicators Research*, 110(3), 837-861. doi:10.1007/s11205-011-9966-7

# 2.

## New Zealanders Being Awesome

### **Take charge to be the best that we can be**

There has been no big changes between 2012 and 2014 with regard to New Zealand's level of Awesomeness. In comparison with 29 countries in the European Social Survey, New Zealand still ranks toward the bottom.

We need to think about how we can capitalise on what is going right in order to tackle what is going wrong. New Zealand as a whole does best in the elements: emotional stability, positive relationships and meaning. How can these assets be deployed to assist New Zealanders in becoming more engaged, vital and resilient?

#### **What can I do to become more Awesome?**

Doing things that you are good at, being active, getting a good night's sleep and having supportive networks are all ways to support engagement, vitality and resilience.

#### **What can we do together to become more Awesome?**

Helping one another, giving time to worthwhile causes and connecting with others in our community are all ways that we can support each other to become more Awesome.

#### **What issues do we need to face as a society?**

While 25% of New Zealanders are doing Awesome, another 21% are almost there. New Zealand has effective systems in place to help those who are struggling, but we can — and should be — working towards a society that helps one another to achieve greatness. How can we create a New Zealand that is Awesome?

# New Zealanders Being Awesome

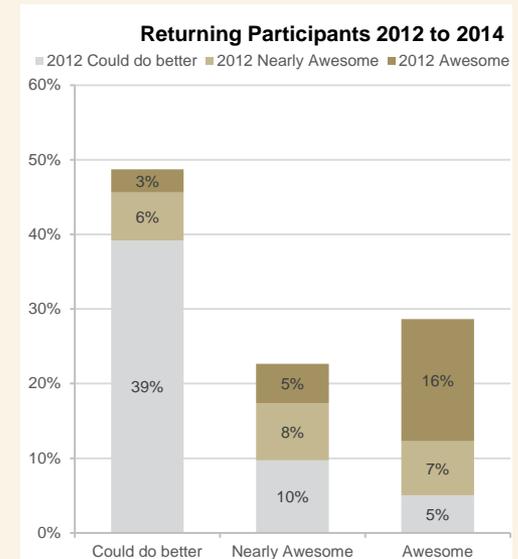
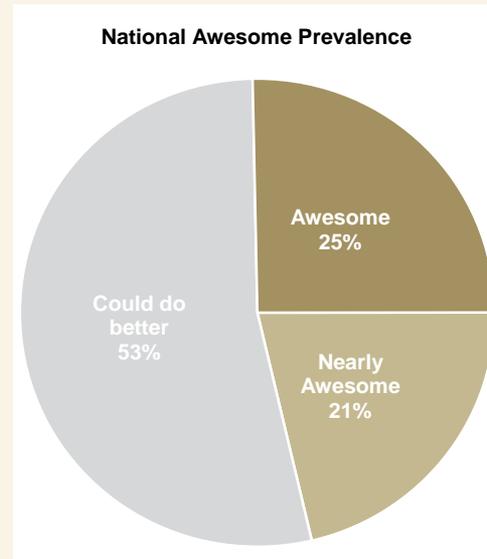
## 25% of New Zealanders are Awesome

21% are Nearly Awesome and 53% Could do Better

Population prevalence of overall wellbeing has remained stable from 2012 to 2014.

# 25%

24% Awesome in 2012



New Zealand ranks 21<sup>st</sup> among 30 countries.

1<sup>st</sup> Denmark 61%

21<sup>st</sup> New Zealand 25%

30<sup>th</sup> Ukraine 16%

# Rank 21

Among returning participants, prevalence of overall wellbeing increased 3.7% from 24.7% in 2012 to 28.4% in 2014

Individual wellbeing stayed the same for 63% of returning participants; wellbeing went up for 22% and down for 15%.

# 28%

25% Awesome in 2012

# New Zealanders Being Awesome

## More older people are Awesome

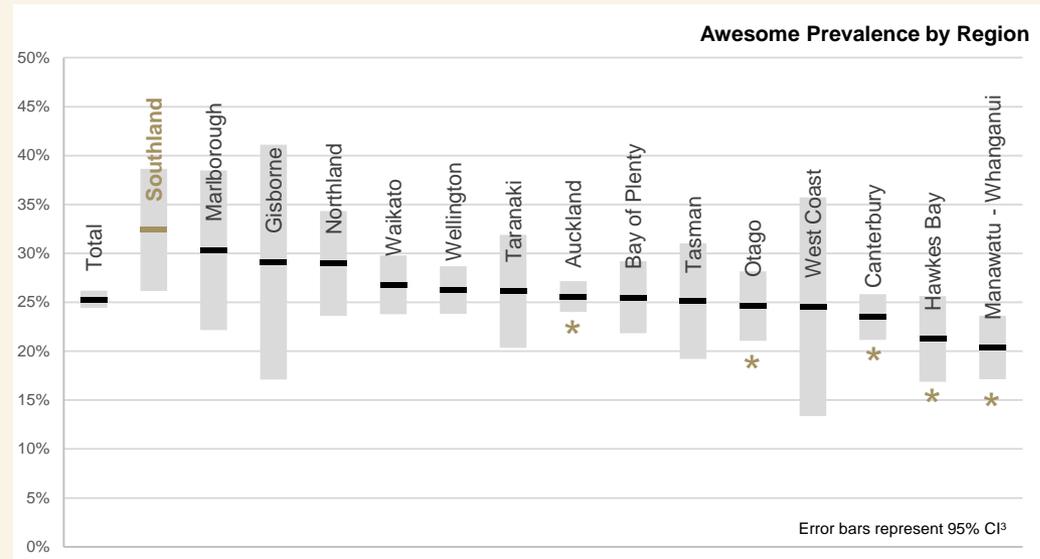
Adults aged 55+ years were 2.2 times more likely to be Awesome than adults aged under 35 years<sup>1</sup>.

There were no differences between genders, ethnic groups, or the size of the city people live in.

# 35%

**Adults 55+ years were Awesome**

Compared with Southland, those living in Auckland, Hawkes Bay, Manawatu-Whanganui, Canterbury, and Otago were less likely to be Awesome<sup>2</sup>.



Prevalence of wellbeing increased 4% from 25% in 2012 to 29% in 2014 among those remaining in the same region.

No change was observed for those reporting living in different regions in 2012 and 2014.

# 23%

**Adults who migrated regions were Awesome**

<sup>1</sup> age, income security, and employment entered in the logistic regression model  
<sup>2</sup> age, income security, employment, and region entered in the logistic regression model  
<sup>3</sup> 95% CI (confidence interval) represents the statistical margin of error around prevalence estimates

# Elements of Being Awesome

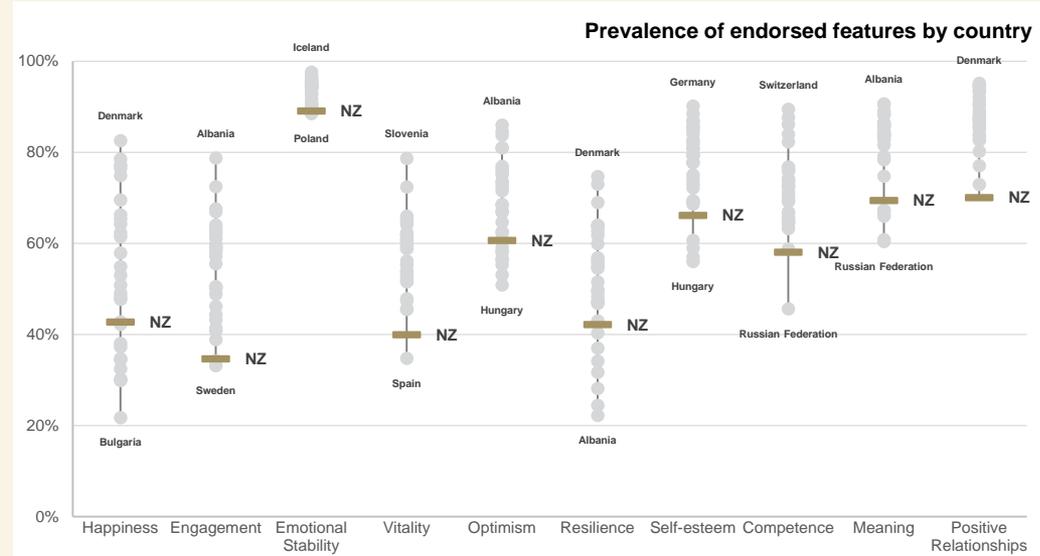
Classification of wellbeing is based on a scale of 10 items.

Less than 50% of New Zealanders endorse happiness, engagement, vitality and resilience.

Responses for each element were categorised as endorsed or not endorsed based on pre-determined cut-points<sup>1</sup>.

**35%**  
Endorse Engagement

Compared with 29 other countries, New Zealand ranks in the bottom 10 across all scale items.



New Zealand's highest ranking was 20<sup>th</sup> for Happiness, followed by 22<sup>nd</sup> for Optimism, and 23<sup>rd</sup> for Resilience.

**Rank 20-30**

Among returning participants, improvements were seen in:

Happiness	Engagement	Self-esteem	Competence	Positive Relationships
<b>47%</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>69%</b>	<b>62%</b>	<b>73%</b>
42% in 2012	36% in 2012	67% in 2012	59% in 2012	69% in 2012

<sup>1</sup> Hone, L.C., Jarden, A., Schofield, G.M., & Duncan, S. (2014). Measuring flourishing: The impact of operational definitions on the prevalence of high levels of wellbeing. International Journal of Wellbeing, 4(1), 62-90. doi:10.5502/ijw.v4i1.4

# 3.

## Wealth

### **Take charge to be the best we can be**

Income is associated with wellbeing. As you would expect, higher incomes are associated with higher wellbeing, but more interesting is our ability to cope on our income. Those that are living comfortably on their present income were 12 times more likely to be Awesome than those finding it very difficult on present income, even after adjusting for combined household income.

#### **What can I do to become more Awesome?**

While earning more money isn't always a realistic option, evaluating how you are living within your means is an important consideration for your wellbeing.

#### **What issues do we need to face as a society?**

As a society we need to continue working to move those with low incomes into higher income brackets where they can feel more comfortable living on their income. Programmes that encourage individuals to spend within their means and build wealth and security over time may be a strategy for improving wellbeing in the long term.

# Wealth

**Prevalence of wellbeing increases with increased household income.**

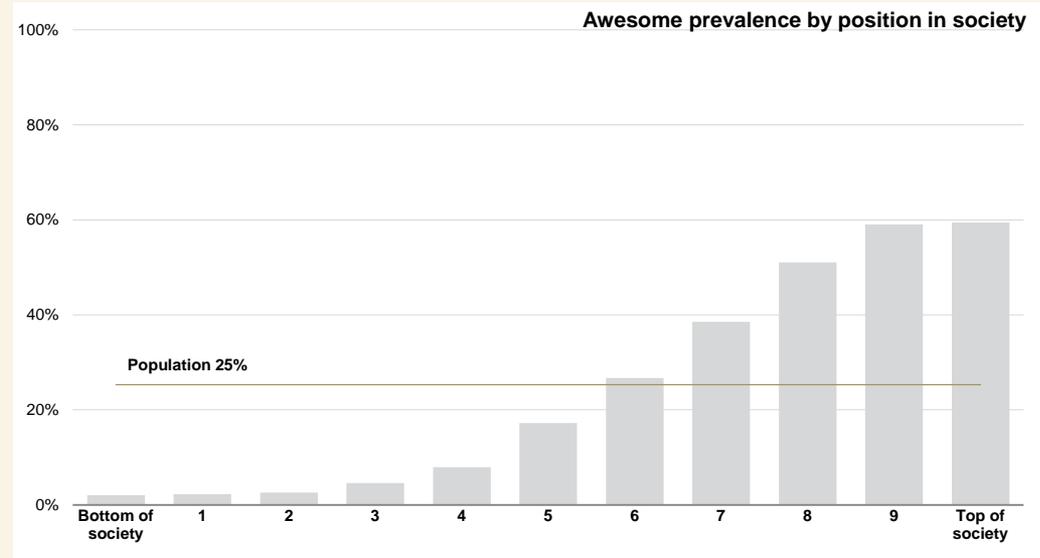
17% of adults in lowest income quintile were Awesome.

Those with household income over \$100,000 were 2.8 times more likely to be Awesome than those with combined income of up to \$30,000<sup>1</sup>.

# 36%

**Adults with household income over \$100,000 were Awesome**

**Awesome prevalence increases as rating of position in society increases.**



**International prevalence of population rating themselves towards 'Top of Society' (≥8)**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Netherlands 60%
- 13<sup>th</sup> New Zealand 34%
- 30<sup>th</sup> Ukraine 6%

**Rank 13**

**Between 2012 and 2014, the prevalence of wellbeing increased the most for those with the highest household incomes (↑8%).**

Among returning participants, household income stayed the same for 64% of returning participants, income went up for 21% and income went down for 15%.

# 38%

**Returning adults with income over \$100,000 were awesome.**

<sup>1</sup> age, household income, and employment entered in the logistic regression model

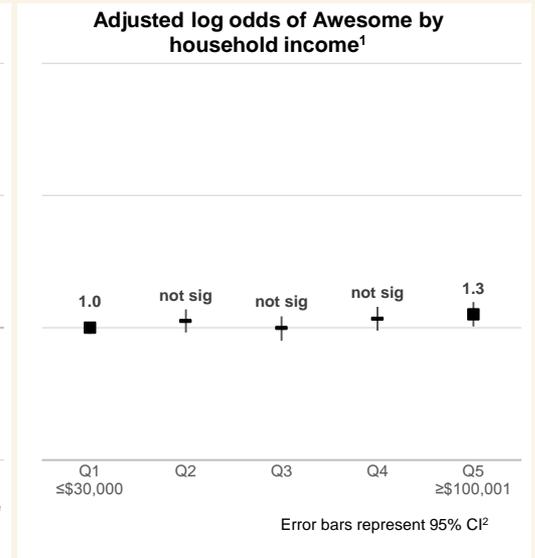
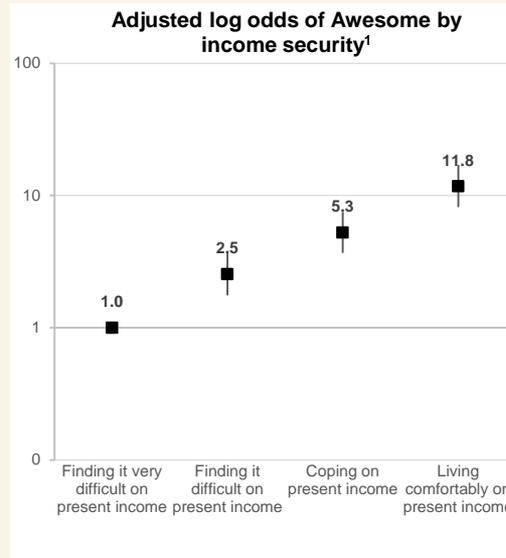
# Income security

Living comfortably on present income was a significant predictor of wellbeing, even after adjusting for household income, age and employment.

44% of adults living comfortably on present income were Awesome, compared with just 5% of adults finding it very difficult on present income.

**12x**  
 More likely to be Awesome than those finding it very difficult<sup>1</sup>

Income security was a greater predictor of being Awesome than household income<sup>1</sup>.



Between 2012 and 2014, prevalence of wellbeing increased the most for those living comfortably on present income (↑10%).

No significant differences were observed for those finding it difficult or very difficult on present income.

**48%**  
 Returning adults living comfortably on present income were Awesome

<sup>1</sup> age, household income, income security, and employment entered in the logistic regression model

<sup>2</sup> 95% CI (confidence interval) represents the statistical margin of error around prevalence estimates

# 4.

## Jobs

### **Take charge to be the best we can be**

Being employed is good for your wellbeing, even after adjusting for age and income security. But those who are retired are doing even better. Managers and professionals have higher rates of being Awesome compared with sales workers, administrative workers and labourers. Regardless of your employment status or occupation, previous research strongly indicates that using your strengths is a key path to engagement at work. We found that those who try to always use their strengths were more likely to be Awesome and more likely to be highly satisfied in their jobs.

#### **What can I do to become more Awesome?**

The most important thing is to find meaningful and purposeful work doing something that you are good at. Aim to put your organisation into a better place than you found it. If you are not in the workforce, find ways to use your strengths in your daily life. Utilising your personal strengths is the best recipe for being Awesome.

#### **What can we do together to become more Awesome?**

To engage employees and volunteers, focus on identifying, using and developing their strengths. This will benefit both the individual and the organisation.

#### **What issues do we need to face as a society?**

Unemployed people and those doing unpaid household or caring duties were among the least likely to be Awesome. Alongside strategies to reduce unemployment, finding ways to remain engaged in meaningful activities while not employed is also important for these groups.

# Employment

Being employed is good for wellbeing, but being retired is even better.

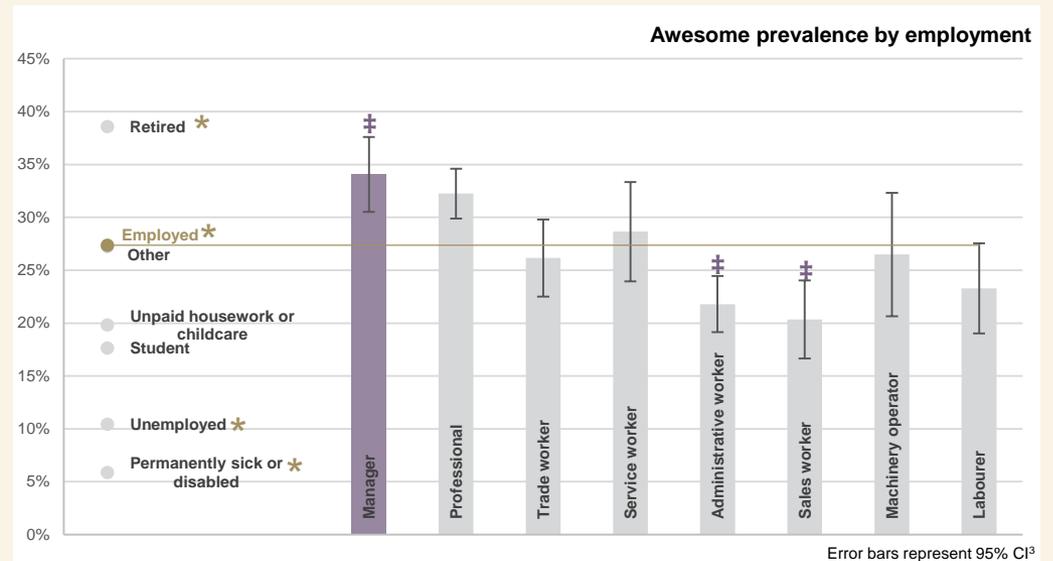
27% of employed adults were Awesome, compared with 39% of retirees and just 10% of unemployed adults.

Unemployed adults were 1.6 times less likely to be Awesome than employed adults<sup>1</sup>.

# 27%

**Employed adults were Awesome**

Sales workers and administrative workers were less likely to be Awesome than managers<sup>2</sup>.



Between 2012 and 2014, prevalence of wellbeing increased for returning adults who were employed (↑5%) and retired (↑4%).

Prevalence of wellbeing was unchanged for returning adults who remained unemployed or became unemployed.

# 91%

**Returning adults in labour force remained employed.**

<sup>1</sup> age, income security and **employment** entered in model

<sup>2</sup> age, income security and **occupational category** entered in model

<sup>3</sup> 95% CI (confidence interval) represents the statistical margin of error around prevalence estimates

# Job satisfaction

Prevalence of wellbeing is greater among adults who are highly satisfied with their jobs ( $\geq 8/10$ ).

49% of adults who were highly satisfied with their jobs were Awesome, compared with just 14% of adults who were less satisfied with their job.

# 49%

Adults highly satisfied with their job were Awesome

	Job satisfaction		AOR <sup>1</sup>
	Sample (%)	Awesome (%)	
Extremely dissatisfied	1	1	1.0
1	3	5	
2	3	5	
3	5	5	
4	6	11	
5	11	10	
6	13	14	
7	19	24	
8	20	43	5.0
9	12	54	
Extremely satisfied	6	59	

	Try to always use strengths		
	Sample (%)	Awesome (%)	AOR <sup>2</sup>
Strongly disagree	1	2	1.0
Disagree	5	3	
Neither agree nor disagree	20	7	
Agree	59	27	5.0
Strongly agree	16	53	15.8

International prevalence of Job satisfaction ( $\geq 8/10$ )

1<sup>st</sup> Denmark 77%

30<sup>th</sup> New Zealand 38%



Whether employed or not, those who strongly agreed that they try to always use their strengths were more 15.8 times more likely to be awesome than those who did not agree<sup>2</sup>.

Employed adults who try to always use their strengths were 6.0 times more likely to be highly satisfied in their job<sup>3</sup>.

# 53%

Adults who always try to use strengths were Awesome

<sup>1</sup> age, income security and **job satisfaction** entered in the logistic regression model

<sup>2</sup> age, income security and **strengths use** entered in the logistic regression model.

<sup>3</sup> age, income security and **strengths use** entered in the logistic regression model (Job Satisfaction as outcome).

# 5.

## Vitality

### **Take charge to be the best we can be**

Health underpins wellbeing; it is hard to be Awesome when suffering from chronic conditions. Getting a good night sleep, engaging in a variety of exercise types, and eating well are all essential for maintaining and improving physical health, but they are also important foundations for living an Awesome life.

#### **What can I do to become more Awesome?**

Engage in a variety of physical activities on your own and with others, getting outdoors as often as possible. Fuel your bodies with real nutritious foods, including plenty of vegetables. Avoid highly processed foods. Go to bed early enough to get a good night's sleep.

#### **What can we do together to become more Awesome?**

Support each other to be active and eat well, whether it be in your family, among your friends or at your workplace. Employers can support active and healthy eating environments that encourage a solid foundation for employees to be Awesome.

#### **What issues do we need to face as a society?**

Well-designed cities can encourage physical activity and active transport. Promotion of physical activity and healthy eating should include the significant benefits for mental wellbeing as well as the physical health benefits.

# Health and sleep

**Being in good health is fundamental for high wellbeing.**

Less than 5% of those in bad or very bad health were Awesome, compared with 29% of those in good health and 45% in very good health.

Adults in very good health were 6.2 times more likely to be Awesome than those in fair health<sup>1</sup>.

# 45%

**Adults in very good health were Awesome**

	Subjective health		AOR <sup>1</sup>
	Sample (%)	Awesome (%)	
Very bad	2	4	0.1
Bad	7	4	0.1
Fair	26	12	0.2
Good	46	29	0.5
Very good	19	45	1.0

	Enough sleep to feel rested in the morning		AOR <sup>2</sup>
	Sample (%)	Awesome (%)	
None of the time	10	7	1.8
2	19	10	
3	28	21	
4	32	37	
All of the time	12	47	

**Getting a good night sleep is important for wellbeing.**

47% of those who reported they always get enough sleep to feel rested in the morning were Awesome, compared with just 7% of those who never get enough sleep.

For each increment on the sleep quality scale, the odds of being Awesome increase by factor of 1.8<sup>2</sup>.

# 47%

**Adults who get enough sleep to feel rested all the time were Awesome**

<sup>1</sup> age, income security, employment and **subjective health** entered in the logistic regression model.

<sup>2</sup> age, income security, employment and **sleep quality** entered in the logistic regression model (adjusted odds of wellbeing for each increment in scale).

# Eat well and exercise

**Prevalence of wellbeing is greater among those who engage in exercise.**

Those engaging in both moderate and vigorous exercise (36% of sample) were 2.0 times more likely to be Awesome than those not engaging in any form of exercise (16% of sample)<sup>1</sup>.

# 30%

**Adults who engage in moderate and vigorous exercise were Awesome**

	Exercise participation		AOR
	Sample (%)	Awesome (%)	
No exercise	16	17	1.0
Moderate only	42	25	1.6
Vigorous only	6	27	1.7
Moderate and vigorous	36	30	2.0

*Participation at least once per week*

	Junk food consumption		AOR <sup>2</sup>
	Sample (%)	Awesome (%)	
Regular	23	21	1.0
Occasional	39	24	not sig
Avoid	38	30	1.4

*Regular consumption: Most days  
Avoid: Monthly or less*

**Those who avoid consumption of sugary drinks, confectionary and takeaways are more likely to be Awesome.**

Compared with regular consumers of junk food, those who avoid junk food were 1.4 times more likely to be Awesome<sup>2</sup>.

# 30%

**Adults who avoid junk food were Awesome**

<sup>1</sup> age, income security, employment and **exercise** entered in model.

<sup>2</sup> age, income security, employment and **junk food** entered in model (junk food includes sugary drinks, confectionary, and takeaways).

# 6.

## Social connections

### Take charge to be the best we can be

Living in a family situation (with or without children), feeling appreciated by people you are a close to and meeting socially with others on a regular basis were all associated with higher rates of being Awesome.

Living in connected communities is also important for wellbeing; those who feel close to people in their local community and live in supportive communities were more likely to be Awesome than those in less connected communities.

#### What can I do to become more Awesome?

Connect with all the people around you; with family, friends, colleagues and neighbours. Volunteering your time, joining community or work groups and meeting socially with others are all important ways to build positive relationships that support your wellbeing. Think of these connections as the cornerstones of your life and invest time in developing them; these connections will support and enrich you every day.

#### What can we do together to become more Awesome?

Reach out to others in your workplace, community groups. and social networks. Work together to support each other. Create community in your workplace, developing teams that support and build up one another.

#### What issues do we need to face as a society?

The design of our cities plays an important part in developing closer communities. As a society we need to consider how best to enable social situations where people can regularly meet and help one another.

# Close relationships

Adults who live as a couple with no children had the highest prevalence of wellbeing.

Couples with no children were more likely to be Awesome than those living in households of related people, one-person households and households of unrelated people<sup>1</sup>.

# 32%

Couples with no children were Awesome

	Household composition		AOR <sup>1</sup>
	Sample (%)	Awesome (%)	
Couple	36	32	1.0
Couple parent	23	27	not sig.
Solo parent	8	18	not sig.
Related	11	16	0.6
Single	15	21	0.7
Unrelated	7	18	0.7

	Meet socially with friends, relatives or colleagues		
	Sample (%)	Awesome (%)	AOR <sup>2</sup>
Never	5	5	0.1
Less than once a month	19	12	0.2
Once a month	13	21	0.4
Several times a month	20	27	0.5
Once a week	19	28	0.5
Several times a week	20	39	not sig.
Every day	5	40	1.0

36% of New Zealanders feel appreciated by people they are close to (≥8/10).

1<sup>st</sup> Denmark 83%

30<sup>th</sup> New Zealand 36%

# Rank 30

Meeting socially with friends relatives, and colleagues at least a few times a week is important for wellbeing.

Adults who connect socially with others once a week were 2 times less likely to be Awesome than those meeting others every day<sup>2</sup>.

# 39%

Adults who regularly meet socially with others were Awesome

<sup>1</sup> age, income security, employment and household composition entered in the logistic regression model.

<sup>2</sup> age, income security, employment and meeting socially with others entered in the logistic regression model

# Community connections

**Wellbeing is higher among those that feel they live in close communities.**

Those who agreed that they feel close to people in their local area were 2.6 times more likely to be Awesome than those who did not agree<sup>1</sup>. Those who strongly agreed were 7 times more likely to be Awesome than those who did not agree<sup>1</sup>.

# 62%

**Adults who feel close to people in their local area were Awesome**

Feel close to people in local area			
	Sample (%)	Awesome (%)	AOR <sup>1</sup>
Strongly disagree	8	9	
Disagree	27	13	1
Neutral	39	25	
Agree	23	40	2.6
Strongly agree	4	62	7.7
<i>Strongly Agree: New Zealand Rank 30<sup>th</sup></i>			

Feel people in local area help one another			
	Sample (%)	Awesome (%)	AOR <sup>2</sup>
Not at all	4	7	
1	8	7	
2	14	13	1.0
3	25	20	
4	24	29	
5	17	41	3.0
A great deal	7	53	
<i>Score 5-6: New Zealand Rank 26<sup>th</sup></i>			

**Only 4% of New Zealanders strongly agree that they feel close to people in their local area.**

1<sup>st</sup> Kosovo 39%  
30<sup>th</sup> New Zealand 4%



**Living in communities where people help one another is associated with higher wellbeing.**

Those that feel that people in their local area help one another a great deal ( $\geq 5/6$ ) were 3.0 times more likely to be Awesome than those who live in communities that are less supportive ( $< 5/6$ ).

# 44%

**Adults living in supportive communities were Awesome**

<sup>1</sup> age, income security, employment and **feel close to people to people in local area** entered in the logistic regression model.

<sup>2</sup> age, income security, employment and **people in local area help one another** entered in the logistic regression model

# 7.

## Methodology

# Sovereign Wellbeing Index methodology

For more complete methodology, statistical analysis and survey questions please refer to the methodology report at [www.mywellbeing.co.nz](http://www.mywellbeing.co.nz)

## Sample

The sample is nationally representative of the adult population aged 18 years and older. The coverage area is the entire country including rural areas. Participants were recruited from one of New Zealand's largest online research panels<sup>1</sup>.

The 2014 repeat includes 10,012 individuals, of which 4,435 also participated in the 2013 Sovereign Wellbeing Index.

## Recruitment

Recruitment of participants for the 2014 survey was a two-stage process.

First, individuals who participated in 2012 were invited to participate in the repeat 2014.

Second, new participants were recruited from the remaining eligible members on the research panel<sup>1</sup>. To achieve a nationally representative sample, those aged under 40 years were oversampled. Recruitment continued until a total of 10,000 responses had been completed.

The New Zealand branch of TNS Global carried out the recruitment and data collection.

## Questions

The core wellbeing questions were drawn from the European Social Survey (Round 6, 2012)<sup>2</sup>. Additional demographic, health and lifestyle questions were included to provide information on who is doing well, and what behaviours are associated with high/low wellbeing.

## Survey mode

Participants completed the web-based survey using a typical point-and-click interface that is visually and functionally similar to a paper-based survey. The median time for survey completion was 21 minutes.

## Survey period

Survey responses were collected between 1 October 2014 to 3 November 2014 (33 days).

## Statistical analysis

95% confidence intervals (CI) are used to indicate statistical margin of error around prevalence estimates.

Logistic regression models are used to test the relationship between wellbeing and a group of predictor variables. Adjusted odds ratios represent the odds of wellbeing for the group of interest, compared with the reference group.

<sup>1</sup> Smile City Ltd (2012). ESOMAR: 27 Questions.

<sup>2</sup> European Social Survey (2012). ESS Round 6 Source Questionnaire. London: Centre for Comparative Social Surveys, City University London.

# 2014 sample characteristics

	Male		Female		Total		Returning Participants <sup>1</sup>	
	n	%	n	%	N	%	N	%
<b>Gender</b>	<b>4797</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>5107</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>10012</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>4435</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Age</b>	<b>4192</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>4403</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>8614</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>3846</b>	<b>100</b>
under 20 years	119	44	149	56	270	3	12	0
20-29 years	689	41	993	59	1692	20	522	14
30-39 years	692	43	908	57	1602	19	647	17
40-49 years	716	43	936	57	1655	19	665	17
50-59 years	833	49	861	51	1694	20	693	18
60 years and over	1143	67	556	33	1701	20	1307	34
<b>Ethnicity<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>4797</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>5107</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>10012</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>4435</b>	<b>100</b>
Maori and Pacific peoples	524	43	687	57	1219	12	399	9
Asian	679	56	536	44	1221	12	467	11
European	3486	48	3785	52	7291	73	3442	78
Missing	108	52	99	48	281	3	127	3
<b>Marital Status</b>	<b>4675</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>4939</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>9639</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>4288</b>	<b>100</b>
Single and never married	1280	49	1316	51	2612	27	913	21
Married or living with a partner	2864	50	2869	50	5739	60	2682	63
Permanently separated or divorced	426	41	614	59	1043	11	534	12
Widowed	105	43	140	57	245	3	159	4
<b>Employment Status</b>	<b>4635</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>4953</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>9613</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>4277</b>	<b>100</b>
Employed	2731	50	2759	50	5503	57	2380	56
Unemployed	351	49	359	51	714	7	228	5
Student	290	46	340	54	635	7	171	4
Permanently sick or disabled	190	48	203	52	393	4	167	4
Retired	763	66	392	34	1155	12	865	20
Unpaid housework or childcare	55	9	582	91	639	7	218	5
Other	255	45	318	56	574	6	248	6
<b>Household Income Quintiles</b>	<b>3880</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>3751</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>7654</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>3401</b>	<b>100</b>
Q1. <= \$30,000	901	50	909	50	1821	24	827	24
Q2. \$30,001-\$50,000	726	50	727	50	1456	19	672	20
Q3. \$50,001-\$70,000	657	51	644	50	1305	17	534	16
Q4. \$70,001-\$100,000	760	50	772	50	1535	20	681	20
Q5. >=\$100,001	836	55	699	46	1537	20	687	20

Notes.

1. Participants completing both 2012 and 2014 surveys.

2. Prioritised ethnicity, whereby individuals who identify with more than one ethnic group are assigned to a single mutually exclusive group based on a pre-determined hierarchy: 1- Maori and Pacific Peoples; 2- Asian; 3- European and Other.

More data tables are available at  
[www.mywellbeing.co.nz](http://www.mywellbeing.co.nz)

continued...

...continued

# 2014 sample characteristics

Region	Male		Female		Total		Returning Participants	
	n	%	n	%	N	%	N	%
	<b>4744</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>5075</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>9860</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>4373</b>	<b>100</b>
Northland	129	45	157	55	286	3	121	3
Auckland	1571	51	1487	49	3072	31	1279	29
Waikato	400	46	469	54	874	9	373	9
Bay of Plenty	262	47	293	53	555	6	258	6
Gisborne	19	35	35	65	57	1	28	1
Hawkes Bay	174	49	178	51	353	4	143	3
Taranaki	106	46	123	54	229	2	100	2
Manawatu - Whanganui	296	49	314	52	611	6	283	6
Wellington	623	48	666	52	1295	13	567	13
Tasman	95	44	119	56	217	2	95	2
Marlborough	67	50	68	50	136	1	68	2
West Coast	28	47	32	53	60	1	28	1
Canterbury	623	48	683	52	1308	13	647	15
Otago	262	46	313	54	579	6	287	7
Southland	89	39	138	61	228	2	96	2

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The Human Potential Centre (HPC) is a multi-disciplinary health research group of AUT University. Led by Professor Grant Schofield, HPC comprises a group of multi-talented researchers specialising in positive psychology, nutrition, wellbeing, public health, physical activity and the built environment. Under the mantra of 'Be the best you can be', our mission is to enhance the physical health and mental wellbeing of our communities through high quality and innovative research. Our research is built on a platform of positive health and wellbeing and we believe that health promotion and delivery should extend to all sectors of the community.

HPC has an excellent track record of postgraduate student success, external competitive funding, published research and national and international recognition for our work. Our researchers are well respected within the New Zealand health research community, as well as with their international research peers. Professor Grant Schofield is on the board of the Health Promotion Agency and is a member of the Public Health Research Committee, advising on public health research funding, career development for public health researchers and public health-related priorities.

## **Sovereign Wellbeing Index**

### **Project Lead**

Professor Grant Schofield

### **Research Team**

Dr Lisa Mackay

Dr Aaron Jarden

Kate Prendergast

Lucy Hone

Dee Holdsworth-Perks

### **The Sovereign Wellbeing Index**

In 2012, we teamed up with Sovereign so that we could better understand what helps bring out the best in New Zealanders and how a constantly changing society can adjust to keep striving towards the goal of wellbeing for everyone. Sovereign provides insurance products in New Zealand, protecting the health, livelihoods and lifestyles of New Zealanders. Their goal of helping New Zealanders live healthier and happier lives aligns with one of our fundamental aims to improve the wellbeing of New Zealanders through positive health. This partnership has led to the establishment of the Sovereign Wellbeing Index to monitor wellbeing at a national level and to monitor how it changes over time.

This research project brings together HPC's diverse expertise in nutrition, physical activity, play, built environment and positive psychology to understand more about New Zealanders wellbeing.

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