THE SOVEREIGN NEW ZEALAND WELLBEING INDEX: SUPER WELLBEING, FIVE WAYS TO WELLBEING, AND INTERNATIONAL COMPARISONS

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SOVEREIGN

HUMAN POTENTIAL CENTRE
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ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Thank you to the 10,000+ New Zealanders who participated in the first round of the Sovereign Wellbeing Index

SOVEREIGN WELLBEING INDEX WEBSITE

www.mywellbeing.co.nz
STUDY DETAILS

**PURPOSE:** To better understand the wellbeing of New Zealanders and how this is changing

**SPECIFIC AIMS:**

- Develop an overall index of New Zealanders' wellbeing
- Determine the prevalence of wellbeing among different geographic locations and various demographic groups
- Investigating the predictors and moderators of wellbeing among New Zealanders, and how these compare to internationally comparable samples
STUDY DETAILS

- **Outline:**
  - A six year longitudinal study – three assessment points
  - September 2012 - a nationally representative sample of 10,009 (18+ years) individuals completed the survey
  - Online survey
  - 130 questions, about 19 minutes (median)
  - Assesses psychological wellbeing, health and lifestyle, and socio-demographics
    - "The particular strength of the SWI is its capturing of how society is functioning as a whole, overtime, by focusing on the relationship between psychological wellbeing, and on health and lifestyle factors and outcomes"
  - Questions were primarily drawn from Round 6 of the European Social Survey Personal and Social Wellbeing module, but additionally included scales such as the Flourishing Scale and Strengths Use Scale
DEVELOPMENT

SOVEREIGN WELLBEING INDEX

All things considered, how satisfied are you with your life as a whole nowadays?

[Scale from 1 to 10]

EXTREMELY SATISFIED
EXTREMELY DISSATISFIED

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Continue

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WELLBEING INDEX

Below are eight statements with which you may agree or disagree.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Slightly disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Slightly agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>I lead a purposeful and meaningful life</td>
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<td>My social relationships are supportive and rewarding</td>
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<td>I am engaged and interested in my daily activities</td>
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<td>I actively contribute to the happiness and wellbeing of others</td>
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<td>I am competent and capable in the activities that are important to me</td>
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<td>I am a good person and lead a good life</td>
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<td>I am optimistic about my future</td>
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<tr>
<td>People respect me</td>
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CHALLENGES / STRENGTHS

• Funding
• Team
• Design
• Sample
• Ambition
INITIAL FINDINGS

- **The SWI** is currently the largest, most detailed, and wholly representative wellbeing dataset on the New Zealand population.

- We only have time 1 data at this stage so results only provide a snapshot of relationships.

- The initial executive overview report is available.
INITIAL FINDINGS: WELLBEING AROUND NZ

- Using flourishing as a measure of wellbeing:
  - Older, female and wealthier New Zealanders had higher flourishing scores.
  - No real differences for ethnic groups or regions.
  - Perceived social position was a powerful indicator of wellbeing – higher on the social ladder = higher wellbeing.

![Figure 13: Social position and flourishing](image-url)
INITIAL FINDINGS: FIVE WAYS TO WELLBEING

• **The five Winning Ways to Wellbeing were all strongly associated with higher wellbeing.**

• **People who socially connected with others (CONNECT), gave time and resources to others (GIVE), were able to appreciate and take notice of things around them (TAKE NOTICE), were learning new things in their life (KEEP LEARNING), and were physically active (BE ACTIVE) experienced higher levels of flourishing, life satisfaction, and happiness, and less depressed mood.**
Figure 19: Proportion of New Zealanders who give often, by age and gender

Figure 23: Giving and flourishing
Figure 31: Proportion of New Zealanders who are learning a great deal, by ethnicity

Figure 33: Learning and flourishing
BE ACTIVE

Figure 34: Proportion of New Zealanders who are active, by age and gender

Figure 37: Proportion of New Zealanders who are active, by region
INITIAL FINDINGS: SUPER WELLBEING

• We looked at the 25% of the population with the highest wellbeing scores and examined what factors defined this group from the rest of the population.

• This underpins the idea that psychological wealth and resources can be identified and public policy and action, and personal resources utilised to improve these determinants.

  • Females were 1.4 times more likely to be in the super wellbeing group than males.
  • More older, higher income, and higher social position New Zealanders were in the super wellbeing group.
  • Connecting, Giving, Taking notice, Keeping learning, and Being active were all strongly associated with super wellbeing.
  • Other health measures were also strongly associated with super wellbeing. These included better overall general health, non-smokers, exercisers and those with healthier diets and weights were all more likely to experience super wellbeing.
INITIAL FINDINGS: SUPER WELLBEING

Figure 50: Odds of having Super Wellbeing based on vegetable consumption
- 4 or more servings per day
- 3 servings per day
- 2 servings per day
- 1 serving per day
- <1 serving per day
- I don't eat vegetables

Figure 51: Odds of having Super Wellbeing based on fruit consumption
- 4 or more servings per day
- 3 servings per day
- 2 servings per day
- 1 serving per day
- <1 serving per day
- I don't eat fruit
INITIAL FINDINGS: INTERNATIONAL COMPARISONS

• When compared with 24 European countries using the same population measures, New Zealand consistently ranks near the bottom of the ranking in both Personal and Social Wellbeing.
INITIAL FINDINGS: INTERNATIONAL COMPARISONS

• New Zealand ranks 17th in Personal Wellbeing. Personal Wellbeing is made up of the measures of Emotional Wellbeing (rank 16th), Satisfying Life (rank 16th), Vitality (rank 16th), Resilience and Self-esteem (rank 19th), and Positive Functioning (rank 23rd).

• New Zealanders did however rank above the mean for happiness, absence of negative feelings and enjoyment of life.
INITIAL FINDINGS: INTERNATIONAL COMPARISONS

• NEW ZEALAND RANKS 22ND IN SOCIAL WELLBEING. SOCIAL WELLBEING IS MADE UP OF THE DIMENSIONS OF SUPPORTIVE RELATIONS (RANK 21ST), FELT LONELY (RANK 20TH), MEET SOCIALLY (RANK 21ST), TRUST AND BELONGING (RANK 23RD), PEOPLE IN LOCAL AREA HELP ONE ANOTHER (RANK 21ST), TREATED WITH RESPECT (RANK 22ND), FEEL close to people in local area (RANK 23RD), AND MOST PEOPLE CAN BE TRUSTED (RANK 11TH).

• FURTHER EXPLORATION OF OUR WORST-RANKED SOCIAL WELLBEING INDICATOR ‘FEELING close to people in local area’ SHOWED CONSIDERABLE VARIATION ACROSS THE COUNTRY WITH THE MAJOR CITIES SCORING WORST WITH AUCKLAND AT THE TOP. REGIONAL AREAS FARED SOMEWHAT BETTER.
FUTURE DIRECTIONS

- **New Zealanders make choices everyday about their wellbeing. These are both personal choices as well as democratic choices about public policy and action at local and national levels. It is our vision that this index can help frame both personal choices and public policy and action in New Zealand.**

- **If it isn’t wellbeing for ourselves and others we are ultimately striving for, then what is it?**
THANK YOU

PROFESSOR GRANT SCHOFIELD, DR AARON JARDEN AND THE SWI RESEARCH TEAM