



Public Health Observatory
New Zealand Inc
Te Rōpū Mātai Hauora Pāpori
O Aotearoa

Panel Discussion

Census changes: matching the winners and losers in policy and research

12.00 pm – 1.30 pm
Wednesday
27 August 2025

Via Zoom: <https://massey.zoom.us/j/86327801991>
Zoom passcode: PHONZ

The Panellists



**Associate Professor
Polly Atatoa Carr**

Dr Polly Atatoa Carr is an Associate Professor at Te Ngira, Institute for Population Research at the University of Waikato and a Public Health Physician in Child and Youth Health at Te Whatu Ora Waikato. Polly's research, community work and clinical practice are focused on child and youth wellbeing and achieving health equity, and she has expertise in: longitudinal research and life course epidemiology; the research-policy interface; and cross-sector action to address the broader determinants of health. A current focus of her research and advocacy work is critical understanding of data systems in Aotearoa, including Census and administrative data, for the monitoring of health equity and the ethical and data sovereignty implications of census transformation.



Len Cook

Len Cook was the Government Statistician of New Zealand from 1992 to 2000. From 2000 to 2005, he was National Statistician of the United Kingdom and Registrar-General of England and Wales.

Len was a secretariat member of the Ministerial Task Force on Tax Reform (1981) and a member of the NZ Royal Commission on Social Policy (1987-88). Between 2015 and 2018, he was Families Commissioner and Chair of the board of the Superu evaluation agency.

Some recent professional roles include Vice-President, International Statistics Institute (2005-2009), President, Institute of Public Administration NZ (2009-13), and Elected Companion of the Royal Society of New Zealand.

Len's long-standing interests are in the areas of population change and public policy, public administration, retirement provision, imprisonment patterns, official statistics, and the place of science in policy.



Dr Florian Flueggen

Dr Florian Flueggen is a research manager at Scarlatti Ltd, an NZ-based data-driven consultancy. He found his passion for statistics and recognised the power – and importance – of public data during his studies at Victoria University of Wellington in the fields of education and wellbeing. His areas of expertise are in methodology – finding or developing approaches that are suitable and appropriate for the data available and that work for answering the questions and dealing with the challenges at hand – and in researching the NZ workforce.

Over the past decade, he has experienced the NZ census from all four sides: as a resident completing the census; as a methodologist for Stats NZ contributing to mitigating the effect of non-response to the census; as researcher analysing the data output from the census; and as a project manager having to use the outputs of the analyses to make recommendations based on incomplete data that could impact large groups of the population.

Naturally, the decisions around the future of the NZ census have been a topic of great interest for him, and he is looking forward to discussing the likely effects of the decisions made (and those still to come) on data quality, research and policy, and – most importantly – the people and communities of Aotearoa New Zealand.



Alistair Gray

Alistair Gray is currently a Director of Statistics Research Associates Limited (SRA), a private statistical research and consulting company. He spent 15 years at StatsNZ, interspersed with 6 years at the Institute of Statistics and Operations Research (ISOR) at VUW. He joined SRA in 2000 after it was founded by colleagues from ISOR and the Applied Mathematics Division at DSIR.

One of his principal interests is statistical methodology underpinning Official Statistics especially probability based sampling, imputation, and matching. He was on the Australian Bureau of Statistics Methodology Advisory Committee for 15 years from 2000.

During COVID-19 he was on the Statistical Advisory Group set up by Ministry of Health and later on 2020 joined the COVID-19 Expert Advisory Network. In the last couple of years, he has been working with Len Cook on retaining the Census in its 2013 and earlier forms, among other quality issues with Government data collection and analysis.



Dr James Greenwell

Dr James Greenwell is Acting Deputy Secretary, Policy & Insights, Ministry for Pacific Peoples. James has a background in epidemiology and a focus on data equity to promote greater transparency and accountability across the health system. As Acting Deputy Secretary at the Ministry for Pacific Peoples, he works with government agencies to strengthen Pacific representation in official statistics and improve the quality and cultural relevance of population data. James's work also supports public health by reinforcing the data foundations used in health intelligence, surveillance, and decision-making.



Kylie Mason

Kylie Mason is a Principal Analyst in the Environmental Health Intelligence NZ (EHINZ) team at Massey University (Wellington). She has been involved in a variety of projects, including leading the development of New Zealand's first social vulnerability indicators for natural hazards using census data, and a number of environmental burden of disease studies. Kylie has a Master's degree in Applied Statistics and a postgraduate certificate in public health (environmental health), and has previously worked at the Ministry of Health.



Professor Colin Simpson

Professor Colin Simpson is an epidemiologist and Professor of Population Health at Te Herenga Waka - Victoria University of Wellington. He is a public health expert with research focusing on the epidemiology of respiratory and infectious disease, vaccine evaluation and the improvement of the health and wellbeing of populations. Prof. Simpson's methodological expertise is in real-world observational effectiveness and safety studies, longitudinal studies, and quality and safety in healthcare. Prof. Simpson has a long-standing interest in Data Ethics and is the Chair of the New Zealand Government's Chief Data Steward's (GCDS) Data Ethics Advisory Group. This group assesses new and emerging uses of data by government agencies and provides independent advice to the GCDS.



Dr Nichola Shackleton

Dr Nichola Shackleton is a quantitative social scientist with experience using Census and administrative data to address social policy issues. Her research has focused on child wellbeing, socioeconomic inequalities, and the use of linked data to inform policy. She is currently Lead Analyst at Muka Tangata, where she applies these approaches to workforce development in the food and fibre sector.



Dr Helen Viggers

Dr Helen Viggers is a researcher with He Kāinga Oranga/The Housing and Health Research Programme at the University of Otago in New Zealand. She was a named member of the research team awarded the 2014 Prime Minister's Science Prize, and the 2021 Rutherford medal. Her work is primarily quantitative and interdisciplinary. The central focus of her research is the interaction of New Zealand's housing standards with energy policy, and the subsequent effects on the health of New Zealanders. She has used Census data to estimate the number of people in uninhabitable housing in New Zealand. She worked on the NZDep2023 deprivation index. Her research has been instrumental in informing government policy.