

## Fact sheet: Local Authority Census

### Census at a glance:

<b>Purpose:</b>	To collect statistics on the annual financial performance of local authorities
<b>Census coverage:</b>	All local authorities in New Zealand are selected for the census
<b>Frequency:</b>	Annually
<b>Results:</b>	Local authority statistics

### About the census

#### What is the purpose of the Local Authority Census?

The Local Authority Census collects detailed financial information from local authorities for publication in their own right and as an important data source used in producing New Zealand's gross domestic product (GDP) statistics, which are part of the nation's national accounts.

#### Who is included in the census?

All local authorities are included in the census, that is, city councils, district councils, unitary authorities, and regional councils.

#### Who uses the information?

Local authority statistics are used by:

- individual local authorities
- the local government sector through the representative body for councils (Local Government New Zealand)
- government bodies charged with monitoring local government (Department of Internal Affairs)
- international organisations such as the International Monetary Fund require Statistics New Zealand to produce statistics about government financial operations
- the national accounts of New Zealand (GDP and Expenditure on GDP in current and constant prices).

#### What information is released?

Statistics New Zealand and the Department of Internal Affairs make the results of the Local Authority Census available at unit record level on their respective websites.

Only a limited range of unit record annual financial data is released annually. You'll find it on Statistics New Zealand's website:

[http://www.stats.govt.nz/methods\\_and\\_services/access-data/tables/local-authority-financial-statistics-by-council.aspx](http://www.stats.govt.nz/methods_and_services/access-data/tables/local-authority-financial-statistics-by-council.aspx).

The Department of Internal Affairs collate this and other local government data into a single database that they release from their website as part of their work for the Local Government Information Project. See: <http://www.localcouncils.govt.nz/lqip.nsf>.

## Changes to the Local Authority Census

### What's changed?

#### We've redesigned the census questionnaire

The Local Authority Census now provides for electronic data collection (it used to be paper-based and caused councils a lot of trouble) and we're asking for more detailed activity-based level than before.

### What's improved?

- providing your data should be easier and so should our data processing
- you should see a clearer link between what we are asking about and what you do.

#### The electronic questionnaire should:

- better align with your accounting systems
- provide more clarity on what to include where
- be quicker and easier to complete (despite the increased detail requested)
- allow pasting of financial data across columns and rows lessening individual data entry.

### How do I get help with completing the new questionnaire?

The electronic questionnaire provides help at your fingertips with useful pop-up boxes of information including a guide map to activities and detailed explanations of data items (look for the small red triangles).

We've also produced an information booklet about the redeveloped questionnaire that gives lots of background information on the different aspects of the survey and the electronic questionnaire, including definitions of individual data items.

## What other information do you have that could help me?

### The Regional Stocktake

The Regional Stocktake is an extremely useful first port-of-call for anyone who wants sub-national information from central government datasets.

<http://www.stats.govt.nz/publications/businessindicators/regional-stocktake.aspx>

### Census 2006 regional summary table

The Census 2006 regional summary tables give data by regional council and territorial authority.

<http://www.stats.govt.nz/census/2006-census-data/2006-census-reports/regional-summary-tables.aspx>

### The Building Consents Issued data

Building consents issued data is obtained monthly from all territorial authorities.

[http://www.stats.govt.nz/browse\\_for\\_stats/industry\\_sectors/construction/buildingconsentsissued\\_hotpjun09.aspx](http://www.stats.govt.nz/browse_for_stats/industry_sectors/construction/buildingconsentsissued_hotpjun09.aspx)