

Draft Report of a Review of the Official Ethnicity Statistical Standard: Proposals to Address the 'New Zealander' Response Issue

Prepared by Statistics New Zealand for public discussion

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1. Executive summary

- 1.1. This report is a discussion document on issues related to gathering and reporting data on people's ethnicity in New Zealand.
- 1.2. The report details Statistics New Zealand's preliminary views of the issues and includes draft proposals to address them. Interested parties are invited to provide feedback on these views and proposals, which the Government Statistician will consider in making decisions on what, if any, measures or changes are required in future.
- 1.3. Official ethnicity statistics are used to count population groups in New Zealand. The main groupings used for public policy are 'Māori', 'Pacific peoples' and 'Asian'. Others include specific groups within these populations (eg Chinese) as well as other ethnic minority groups.
- 1.4. Ethnicity statistics are used nationally, regionally and by communities to help identify demand for public policies, programmes and services, for tailoring their delivery, and for monitoring the results.
- 1.5. Central government agencies use ethnicity statistics together with other indicators of service demand, such as age, sex and socioeconomic status, for a number of purposes. For example:
 - the health sector uses the statistics to allocate funding, tailor programmes and monitor results across ethnic groups
 - local government agencies use statistics in planning and service delivery, particularly in regions experiencing significant demographic, social and economic change
 - Māori and other ethnic community group service providers rely on official ethnicity statistics in planning and engaging with government agencies.
- 1.6. In the past two decades, Statistics New Zealand has endeavoured to match the way we measure ethnicity in official statistics with the changing nature of ethnicity in our society and the way that the information is used. A persistent challenge has been accommodating people of European ancestry, whose ethnic identity has evolved with the increasing proportion of this population living in New Zealand for two or more generations.
- 1.7. The most recent Census of Population and Dwellings in 2006 resulted in an unprecedented increase in the number of people who reported a 'New Zealander' ethnicity in the 'Other Ethnicity' category. More than 400,000 people chose this response, increasing the 'New Zealander' population proportion from 2.4 percent in 2001 to 11.1 percent in 2006.
- 1.8. This increase was driven in part by a public debate during the census, which questioned the role of ethnicity in public policy and the way in which 'New Zealander' responses in the question were treated.
- 1.9. We are concerned about this public reaction to the ethnicity topic because, as well as indicating possible problems with our measurement process, it has the

potential to undermine trust and confidence in the measure and even the census itself.

- 1.10. Some aspects of the census ethnicity statistics, notably the 'European' and 'Other Ethnicity' categories have now become inconsistent with previous censuses and other sources of ethnicity statistics, such as birth registrations. This is because of:
 - a previous decision by Statistics New Zealand to allocate 'New Zealander' responses to the 'Other Ethnicity' branch of the standard classification (see Appendix 1 for a description of the classification)
 - the large increase in 'New Zealander' responses in the 2006 Census
 - the relatively low level of 'New Zealander' responses in other sources of official statistics.
- 1.11. As a result, we now need to address a number of issues. Section 2 presents our preliminary views of these issues, which were developed through discussions with a range of stakeholders, a review of New Zealand and international literature and a programme of research (which is summarised in section 6). It also covers the actions proposed to address the issues.
- 1.12. Sections 3, 4 and 5 discuss the issues in more detail and the options that we considered in developing the proposals. Section 6 provides a brief description of the methodology we used to undertake this review.
- 1.13. A final report of the review will be published in the fourth quarter of 2009. Its findings will be used:
 - initially in developing the ethnicity measure for the 2011 Census
 - eventually for ethnicity statistics across the entire Official Statistics System.
- 1.14. The Government Statistician invites feedback from interested parties by 25 May 2009. Please send your feedback:
 - by email to ethnicity.review@stats.govt.nz, or
 - by post to: Ethnicity Statistics Review, Statistics New Zealand, PO Box 2922, Wellington 6140.

2. Summary of Statistics New Zealand's preliminary views

2.1. This section summarises Statistics New Zealand's preliminary views on the issues related to gathering and reporting data on ethnicity in New Zealand, and our draft proposals for addressing those issues.

2.2. Our views were developed through discussions with a selection of stakeholders, a review of New Zealand and international literature, and a programme of research. They are preliminary because we'll be considering feedback from a wider range of stakeholders before reaching a final decision.

2.3. Official statistics and public policy

2.3.1 The consultation process has reinforced the vital importance of official ethnicity statistics for public policy in New Zealand.

2.3.2 The statistics are used extensively by central and local government and regional service providers to plan and deliver programmes, particularly in health, social services and education. For example:

- the Government uses ethnic population statistics and information on other known drivers of demand for health services when allocating funding to district health boards
- local authorities use official ethnicity statistics to understand the changing make-up of their communities, so they can consult more effectively with them and plan better for future services
- primary health service providers use community-level ethnicity statistics to tailor their services to meet clients' differing requirements.

2.3.3 The census provides the baseline count for all official ethnic population statistics in New Zealand. Its statistics are also combined with data from other sources, such as hospitals and schools, to monitor trends such as disease, and educational achievement rates.

2.4. The issues and proposals for addressing them

2.4.1 The issues relate to concerns about the ethnicity question in the Census of Population and Dwellings. The 2006 Census resulted in a large increase in the number of people reporting a 'New Zealander' ethnicity in the 'Other Ethnicity' category. This is a development that may affect the statistics for all ethnic groups, because 'New Zealander' also refers to the national identities of most New Zealand citizens.

2.4.2 The current census form has a tick-box for people wishing to make a 'New Zealand European' response; those wishing to record 'New Zealander' need to write it under the 'Other Ethnicity' category (see 4.2.7 for the question and Appendix 1 for a description of the different response categories). At the time of

the 2006 Census, public debate on the form of the ethnicity question included a suggestion that the question contain a tick-box for people wishing to record a 'New Zealander' response, making it easier for them to respond.

- 2.4.3 Given the level of public concern about this issue and the need to ensure the ongoing quality of our statistical information, we're reviewing the ethnicity measure. To date, this has involved consulting a range of experts in New Zealand and undertaking a programme of research.

2.5 The experts' view

- 2.5.1 The experts we consulted expressed a range of views for and against changing the census question. However, the main view is that there should be no change because:

- including a 'New Zealander' tick-box would alter the meaning of the question, making it more about nationality and less about ethnicity
- as most New Zealand citizens are New Zealand nationals, it could artificially reduce the count of ethnic groups such as Māori, Pacific peoples, Asian and other minority groups – and in turn make it difficult for government and public service providers to plan and deliver their services fairly.

2.6 Research into the issues

- 2.6.1 Our research shows that the overwhelming majority of the growth in 'New Zealander' responses at the 2006 Census (over 90 percent) came from people who had reported a 'New Zealand European' response in the previous census.
- 2.6.2 However, there is also evidence that the public debate during the census influenced some people from other ethnic groups to change to the 'New Zealander' group. This effect is estimated to have reduced the sizes of these groups (ie Māori, Pacific peoples and Asian) in the range of 0.7 to 2.0 percent over the five year period between the last two censuses.
- 2.6.3 Our research of public understanding of, and attitudes to, the ethnicity topic shows that when people understand the purpose of the information, they are more comfortable about responding to the questions in official surveys and forms. Many people who identify as New Zealanders are more comfortable about selecting more specific ethnic responses like NZ European, Māori, etc. when they have a better understanding of the reason for the question.

2.7 The options for change

- 2.7.1 As part of our research programme, we investigated the possibility of including an additional, separate question on nationality in the next census. Some experts have suggested that this might reduce confusion between ethnicity and nationality, accommodating people who wish to report their national identity and resulting in a more accurate measure of ethnicity. Our investigation tested this

option to find out whether it could achieve these objectives and to see what financial costs it would add to the census.

- 2.7.2 The results initially showed that while it was possible to develop a question that people would be able to answer effectively, there was no obvious or compelling improvement in the way the ethnicity question was answered. We consider that the significant financial cost of adding such a question to the census is not justified by the minimal and uncertain benefits that it might offer.
- 2.7.3 We acknowledge that some people who wish to report a 'New Zealander' response to the ethnicity question would prefer ticking a box to writing it in. However, on balance, we believe that having a specific 'New Zealander' tick-box, in addition to the existing 'New Zealand European' one, risks undermining the counts of other ethnic populations such as Māori, Pacific peoples and Asian. We think that the need for robust official statistics on these populations for public policy purposes might outweigh the case for making the question easier to answer for 'New Zealander' respondents.
- 2.7.4 Another proposed change is to include 'New Zealander' responses in the 'European' branch of the classification that is used to report the statistics. This would ensure that the statistics remain consistent over time, and would address the growing inconsistency between the 'European' and 'Other Ethnicity' categories in the census and other sources of ethnicity statistics (such as birth registrations).
- 2.7.5 Putting 'New Zealander' responses back into the European branch does not mean that only European type people can or should use this response. The official ethnicity standard allows multiple responses, so the New Zealander response can be used by itself, or in combination with others, by any person.

2.8 Other issues raised

- 2.8.1 Importantly, the public debate during the 2006 Census and subsequent feedback from stakeholders and experts highlight the need for more effective communication to the public about the purpose of official ethnicity statistics and the nature of the ethnicity measure.
- 2.8.2 We agree that more effective communication is needed and that we should address this through our communications strategy for the 2011 Census and through improving information available to other agencies collecting official ethnicity data.
- 2.8.3 Stakeholders also raised two issues relating to ethnicity statistics that are outside the scope of this review.
- The need for ethnicity reporting that provides a more detailed breakdown of the 'Asian' group.
 - The need for an easily used classification that allocates individuals to one ethnic category only.
- 2.8.4 We'll be considering these two issues as part of a broader review of cultural identity statistics.

3. What are the issues?

3.1. We believe there are two general issues that need addressing.

1. Public trust and confidence in official statistics.
2. The technical consistency of the ethnicity measure (this issue also affects the first).

3.2. Public trust and confidence

3.2.1 The public reaction to the ethnicity question in the 2006 Census concerns us because it has the potential to undermine trust and confidence in the ethnicity measure and even the census itself. If we're to continue producing robust official statistics, we need significant public support and acceptance of the need for the information and the way in which the data are collected.

3.2.2 The public debate during the census questioned the need to consider ethnicity in public policy and proposed a specific response category (tick-box) for people wishing to report 'New Zealander'. Some people urged respondents to record a 'New Zealander' response instead of any other ethnic response. Had this advice been more influential, the ethnicity results could have been rendered unusable.

3.2.3 Public trust and confidence in official statistics are based on acceptance and support. While at any given time and for any given official statistics topic, the public and users of statistics may have a range of views of the value and acceptability of the information, it's important to have an adequate base of support.

3.2.4 Specific issues on this topic relate to:

- the rationale and need for official ethnicity statistics
- the nature of the ethnicity measure and the labels used to describe ethnic groups
- the relationship of 'national' and 'ethnic' identities.

We discuss these issues in more detail in the next section.

3.3. Statistical consistency

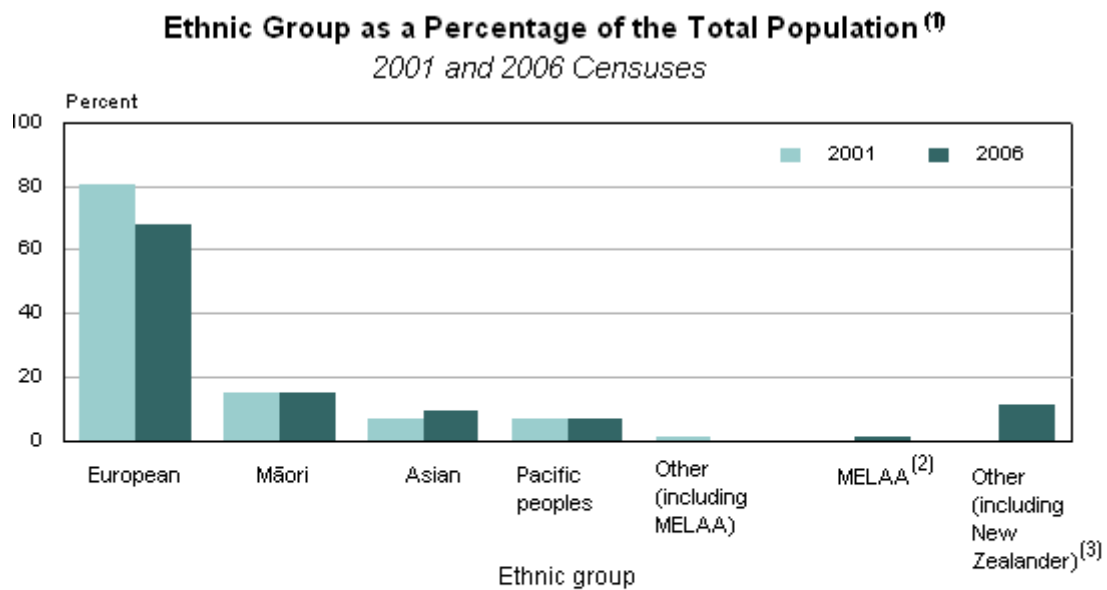
3.3.1 Some aspects of the census ethnicity statistics, notably the 'European' and 'Other Ethnicity' categories, have now become inconsistent with previous censuses and other sources of ethnic statistics. This is because of:

- a previous decision by Statistics New Zealand to allocate 'New Zealander' responses to the 'Other Ethnicity' branch of the standard classification
- the large increase in 'New Zealander' responses in the 2006 Census

- a relatively low level of 'New Zealander' responses in other sources of official statistics.

3.3.2 Figures 1 and 2 illustrate the problem. Figure 1 compares census results for 2001 and 2006, showing an apparently significant shift in the 'European' and 'Other' categories between the two censuses, largely because of the factors above (see footnote 3). Figure 2 lists the 'New Zealander' response in a number of official statistical sources, illustrating that it is significant only in the census.

Figure 1



(1) People were able to identify with more than one ethnic group, therefore percentages do not add up to 100.

(2) MELAA, or Middle Eastern, Latin American and African, was introduced as a new category for the 2006 Census. Previously, 'MELAA' responses were allocated to the 'Other ethnicity' category.

(3) 'New Zealander' was introduced as a new response option for the 2006 Census. 'New Zealander' responses form part of the 'Other ethnicity' category. For 2006, 'New Zealander' responses had the largest contribution towards the 'Other ethnicity' category. For 2001, and previous censuses, 'New Zealander' was counted with the 'European' category.

Figure 2

New Zealander Ethnicity Responses from Selected Sources

Source	Percent
2001 Census	2.0
2006 Census	11.0
Birth Registrations (2006-08)	1.0
Death Registrations (2006-08)	1.0
Labour Force Survey (June 2008)	1.0
Housing NZ Applicants (2007/08)	1.4
NZ Crime & Safety Survey, 2006	3.0
NZ Health Survey, 2007	0.9

- 3.3.3 Our discussions with stakeholders revealed a number of other issues relating to the way in which ethnicity statistics are reported, including the 'Asian' group and ways to classify people into unique ethnic categories. We cover these in more detail in the next section.

4. Discussion of the issues

4.1. The rationale and need for official ethnicity statistics

- 4.1.1 A 2004 review of ethnicity statistics confirmed the continued relevance of ethnicity statistics for public policy. It noted that "data on ethnicity is required ... to measure and monitor differences in social well-being, social interaction and social change" (Statistics New Zealand 2004, p6).
- 4.1.2 The underlying rationale for official ethnicity statistics in New Zealand relates to the state's acknowledgement of and desire to address issues of social and economic inequality associated with ethnic group membership. This rationale aligns with that of a number of other countries such as the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom and Australia (Morning 2008, p243).
- 4.1.3 Around the time of the 2004 review, there was a series of vigorous public debates on the role of ethnicity in public policy in New Zealand, leading through to the 2005 General Election. The public debate during the 2006 Census probably echoed aspects of these prior debates.
- 4.1.4 As part of this review, we've reconfirmed the need for robust official ethnic statistics through consultation with central and local government agencies, regionally based social service providers, ethnic community group advocates, and policy researchers.
- 4.1.5 Ethnicity information is used at national, regional and community levels in identifying the demand for public policies, programmes and services and tailoring their delivery to ensure effective results. For example:
- The health sector has long used ethnicity statistics in targeting services for ethnic groups experiencing inequalities in health. Indeed, ethnicity is part of the population-based funding model used in allocating service funding across the health sector. It's also used to monitor health results among ethnic groups when evaluating ethnicity-targeted policies and programmes.
 - Other central government social policy agencies rank ethnicity alongside other key service demand determinants such as age, sex and socioeconomic status, and use it to tailor programmes.
 - Local authorities use ethnicity statistics extensively in their planning and service delivery, particularly in regions experiencing significant demographic, social and economic change. A notable feature of change in the past five years has been the increasing ethnic diversity of the population at regional levels.
 - Māori and other ethnic community service providers rely on official ethnicity statistics for planning and engaging with government agencies.
- 4.1.6 We believe there is a demonstrated need (as established in the 2004 review) for robust and consistent official ethnicity statistics to help in monitoring the social and economic inequalities related to ethnicity.

4.2. The nature of the ethnicity measure and the labels used to describe ethnic groups

4.2.1 Ethnicity has been measured in the New Zealand Census of Population and Dwellings in some form since the middle of the 19th century. There have been changes in the way it is defined and measured – until 1986 for example, the question was based on a race concept and people of mixed race were required to report their 'proportion of blood'. So a member of the indigenous Māori population was classified as 'Māori' if they reported half or more Māori blood.

4.2.2 Following a 1983 Statistics New Zealand research report (Brown 1983), the race-based measure in the 1986 Census was replaced by one reflecting a 'cultural affiliation' concept (see 4.2.4). The 1986 question, while retaining the 'Ethnic Origin' title of the two previous censuses, instead asked respondents to 'tick the box or boxes which apply to you'. This move reflected:

- changing public and user attitudes to the race-based measure
- demographic change (including trends of ethnic intermarriage in New Zealand society)
- an acknowledgment that respondents found it increasingly difficult to answer the question, and were instead effectively self-identifying.

The change was reinforced by two subsequent review reports (Statistics New Zealand 1988, 2004). The 1988 report established the self-identification standard, and the 2004 report, among other things, clarified the conceptual basis of the 'ethnicity' measure and established new standards for classifying multiple responses.

4.2.3 Currently, an ethnic group is defined in official statistics (Statistics New Zealand 2005, p2) as people who have some or all of the following characteristics:

- a common proper name
- one or more elements of common culture, such as religion, customs or language
- a unique community of interests, feelings and actions
- a shared sense of common origins or ancestry
- a common geographic origin.

4.2.4 This definition is based on the 'cultural affiliation' concept of ethnicity, which measures ethnicity in terms of the cultural identity or identities that people themselves choose. This contrasts with other possible measurement methods, such as the way that others might perceive a person rather than the way they perceive themselves; or measures based on apparent objective factors, such as specific ancestry or physical characteristics.

4.2.5 The cultural affiliation measure is, by its nature, based on the survey subject's own evaluation (self-identification) – so changes in their preferences will mean variations in statistical measurement over time. This phenomenon is not limited to subjective cultural affiliation measures; it is also found in more apparently objective race- and ancestry-based measures (Brown 1983; Simpson & Akinwale 2007).

to span the elements of the definition in 4.2.3, and often use different combinations of the elements.

- 4.2.11 Generally, people view these elements as markers of ethnicity rather than as direct measures of the concept. Of all the elements, ancestry appears to be the one most commonly employed. However, it is employed selectively, in the sense that they report only those aspects of their ancestry they know about and which they consider are central to their ethnic identity. These aspects are likely to reflect their socialisation experience as children (what their parents told them), but possibly are also modified by subsequent life experiences (eg school, work, marriage).
- 4.2.12 Since the 1916 Census, respondents have been able to report more than one ethnicity. New Zealand's long history of relatively high rates of intermarriage between ethnic groups was reflected in response patterns before 1986 and continues to be reflected in today's cultural affiliation-based measure. The proportion of people reporting multiple ethnicities in New Zealand rose from 4.3 percent in 1986 to 5 percent in 1991, 9 percent in 2001 and 10.4 percent in 2006.
- 4.2.13 Research we've done on the 'New Zealander' response group indicates its members overwhelmingly come from the 'New Zealand European' group. Over 90 percent of the growth of people who identified as 'New Zealander' only at the 2006 Census came from people who identified as 'New Zealand European' only at the 2001 Census. It's not clear what motivates this apparent change of label, but analysis of 2006 Census data indicates that when the group who identify as New Zealanders (by itself or in combination with other ethnic labels) is compared to the total population, they are, on average, a little older, more likely to be male, more likely to be born in New Zealand, have higher incomes and education levels, and are more prevalent in the South Island. The geographic element may also reflect a higher prevalence of families who have lived in New Zealand over many generations. (Statistics New Zealand 2007a).
- 4.2.14 Some researchers have suggested that a hybrid ethnic group or identity has evolved or emerged (King 2001; Callister 2004). Certainly we've seen a growing ethnic diversity within New Zealand and a changing sense of national identity owing to major historical events and trends such as:
- New Zealand's participation in two world wars in the 1910s and 1940s
 - changes in New Zealand's trading relationships with Britain and the European Community in the 1970s
 - the evolving political relationship between the indigenous Māori population and the state
 - changes in immigration policy in the 1980s
 - increased overseas travel by New Zealanders since the 1980s.
- 4.2.15 Research we commissioned for this review and our cognitive testing of the census ethnicity question suggest a number of different types of 'New Zealander' response. These can be characterised by three broad groupings: one relating to how people understand their own ethnicity, another to how people relate to the

response categories they are offered in the question, and another to how they perceive the purpose and use of ethnicity statistics.

4.2.16 In the first group, people tend to identify strongly as 'New Zealander', considering it to represent a unique national and ethnic identity. In the second group, some people think that none of the response categories offered describe them well enough. In particular, the 'European' element of the 'New Zealand European' category is not sufficiently relevant to them because their family has lived in New Zealand for several generations and they consider that their roots are now here. Some others in this group consider that the 'New Zealand European' and other categories imply an underlying racist tenor to the question that they are uncomfortable with. In the third group, some people think that drawing attention to ethnic diversity in official statistics can be socially divisive and prefer a 'one people' approach. Some others in this group consider that ethnicity-targeted public policy is unfair, benefiting the recipient minority groups at the expense of their group.

4.2.17 This typology is tentative, as the research is still in progress. However, it helps to illustrate the variety of understandings and motivators that underlie the 'New Zealander' response.

4.2.18 We believe that New Zealanders' ethnic identities and the way in which they choose to represent themselves in official statistics will continue to evolve as a result of:

- continued immigration
- intermarriage between ethnic groups
- increasing generational attachment to New Zealand
- the way that groups participate in society and how society accommodates them.

4.2.19 In turn, the labels that New Zealand people of European descent choose to describe their ethnic identities will also continue to evolve.

4.3. The relationship of 'national' and 'ethnic' identities

4.3.1 It's common practice to connect the terms 'race', 'nationality' and 'ethnicity'. For example, dictionary definitions often use one or two of the terms when defining the third. However, academics and statisticians try to distinguish between them, generally associating:

- ethnicity with cultural practices and beliefs
- race with perceived physical traits
- nationality with geographic location.

Other distinctions associate race as a characteristic imposed by others and ethnicity as a voluntarily chosen characteristic. Common to all three is the notion of ancestry or community of descent (Hollinger, 1998).

- 4.3.2 The ethnicity definition used in New Zealand's official statistics (see 4.2.3) derives from Smith (1986). While it does not explicitly refer to national identity, none of the elements precludes the use of a national identity type label as a label of ethnic identity. Indeed, the element referring to 'common geographic origin' tends to support such labels – and many of the ethnic categories used for reporting at the second and subsequent levels of the measure (see Appendix 1) are, in fact, labels of national identity in their countries of origin (eg Pakistani, Bangladeshi).
- 4.3.3 Nevertheless, a 'New Zealander' response to an ethnicity question is problematic in New Zealand because it's ambiguous and its use could negatively affect others who wouldn't normally use it in this context. It is ambiguous, because it can refer to either an ethnic identity or the national identity of all citizens of this country. So, when it's presented as a response to an ethnicity question, it's not clear if it represents the respondent's ethnicity or nationality. This means it's not possible for the statistician to decide on the weight to give the response or how it relates to other groupings of interest.
- 4.3.4 Because of this ambiguity, the explicit use of 'New Zealander' in a survey may also confuse or offend respondents who wouldn't normally use it to describe their ethnicity. For example, recent migrants could see it as a test of their loyalty, and indigenous Māori and other settled groups could consider it an unjustified use of a label that applies equally to them, but not in ethnicity terms.
- 4.3.5 Some Māori stakeholders have strong concerns about using 'New Zealander' as either a response or a reporting label in the ethnicity standard (as they did in the 2004 review). They consider that, in addition to the issues above, use of the 'New Zealander' label to report ethnicity raises issues about citizenship and sovereignty.
- 4.3.6 Many other countries have similar problems in accommodating their national identity labels in measuring ethnicity. For example:
- labels such as 'British', 'Scottish', 'Welsh' and 'Irish' are problematic in the UK and the specific countries that comprise it
 - the 'Canadian' label has also posed problems in Canada. A public debate during Canada's 1991 Census had a similar statistical impact to the one that occurred during the New Zealand 2006 Census.
- 4.3.7 We believe that the 'New Zealander' response to the ethnicity measure is problematic because it also denotes the national identity of all New Zealand citizens. However, given that it is a preferred response to the census ethnicity question for a significant portion of the population, we also recognise that it needs to be accommodated adequately in both statistical measurement and reporting.

4.4. Statistical consistency

- 4.4.1 All stakeholders consulted during this review expressed the need to maintain statistical consistency, so that information is both comparable over time (eg in monitoring trends) and comparable between different sources (eg population

base, health, education, housing). A similar view was expressed in the 2004 review.

- 4.4.2 In response to the statistical discontinuity that resulted from the 'European' and 'Other Ethnicity' categories in the 2006 Census (see Figure 1) we published some recommended interim guidelines for managing the discontinuity in anticipation of this review (Statistics New Zealand 2007b). The main recommendation was that the 'European' and 'Other Ethnicity' categories at level 1 of the classification (see Appendix 1) be combined for 2006 Census results. This would enable an adequate comparability of 2006 Census results with those of previous censuses and other sources.
- 4.4.3 The interim guidelines have been adopted by a number of users and have provided an adequate 'work-around' measure, despite being non-standard and ad hoc. However, other, more statistically sound and durable options can and should now be considered in the context of this review.
- 4.4.4 Given that New Zealand policy-makers mainly use official ethnicity statistics to address issues of inequality among the Māori, Pacific peoples and Asian groups, we could ask why we need to consider the 'New Zealander' group. The reason is that this group, along with the 'New Zealand European' and 'Other European' groups, forms the main comparative group for ethnicity-related inequality analysis and monitoring (eg Ministry of Health 2007, p3).
- 4.4.5 We believe there is a need to improve the consistency of ethnicity reporting at the highest level of the standard classification, as it relates to the 'European' and 'Other Ethnicity' categories.

4.5. Public understanding and communication

- 4.5.1 The public debate on ethnicity during the 2006 Census indicated that at least some groups had misgivings about the purpose of the topic or the way it was being measured.
- 4.5.2 It's important for this review that we separate the issues that are relevant to the statistical measurement in official statistics and those that relate to healthy public debate in a democracy. While official statistics must be relevant and useful to such debate, the nature of how they are measured should not become an issue of ongoing controversy. Failure to address such controversy promptly and effectively risks undermining public trust in official statistics.
- 4.5.3 The current 'New Zealander' response issue is mainly confined to the census (see 3.3). It doesn't feature to any great extent in other official statistics that measure ethnicity. Why, is not clear, as in collections where a 'New Zealander' response is accepted, the volume remains low or negligible. This suggests that the census itself may be a factor.
- 4.5.4 We know from previous experience that the census can act as a lightning rod for public policy issues. Recent examples include debates about the 'Children ever born' question in the 1981 Census, the 'Unpaid work' question in the 1986 Census and the 'Jedi' response to the 'Religion' question in the 2001 Census.

- 4.5.5 Some of the public debate about ethnicity measurement in the census may also reflect interest and concern about the state's role in framing the scope of public policy through official statistics. This is certainly an issue debated vigorously by academics and researchers (eg Robson & Reid 2001; Bromell 2008). Official statistics, by their nature and design, reflect a selective and apparently unwavering picture of the object of their view. If this object is dynamic and fluid, as is ethnicity, the light cast by official statistics may be considered a hindrance as well as a help. In particular, official ethnic statistics may be seen to make into 'concrete' categories that are fluid and subject to continued political negotiation.
- 4.5.6 While the stakeholders consulted had differing views on how specific issues should be addressed, there was universal agreement that effective communication is needed with users, data collectors and respondents about the purposes and rationale of the ethnicity measure to support the objective of producing robust and consistent statistics.
- 4.5.7 We believe there is a need to communicate more effectively to the public the purpose and nature of the standard ethnicity measure.

4.6. Some other issues

- 4.6.1 Stakeholders raised two other issues relating to ethnicity statistics that fall outside the scope of this review. We'll be considering them as part of a broader review of cultural identity statistics.
- 4.6.2 The two issues were:
- the need for ethnicity reporting that provides a more detailed breakdown of the 'Asian' group
 - the need for an easily used classification that allocates individuals to one ethnic category only.
- 4.6.3 A number of stakeholders were concerned that the 'Asian' category at level 1 of the classification is too broad for some uses and needs to be broken down into more meaningful groups. For example, some health sector service providers noted the significant differences in health needs and service expectations within the 'Asian' category, particularly for recent migrants.
- 4.6.4 The second level of the standard classification (see Appendix 1) probably provides much of the detail needed to meet this need. This information is collected in the population census and in most health sector systems, so the issue, for most of the health sector at least, relates mainly to analysis and reporting.
- 4.6.5 A number of stakeholders were concerned about their desire and need to be able to report ethnic statistics in a classification that allocates people to a unique category, so that across the population people are counted only once. There are two broad reasons for this:
- The need to be able to compare and contrast different ethnic groups, which requires the respective populations to be partitioned.

- The need for general fairness, particularly in allocating resources where perceptions of possible double-counting can undermine the credibility of the allocation models, even if it's not statistically or financially significant.
- 4.6.6 If there is a significant overlap between two populations being compared (ie where some are members of both populations), it may be difficult to draw conclusions about the apparent statistical differences between them. Including the overlap members in both or one of the populations may diminish or over-exaggerate apparent differences, depending on how the issues under comparison are distributed across the three groups (ie each of the two non-overlap groups and the overlap group).
- 4.6.7 The current ethnicity standard enables individuals to report multiple ethnic identities. This practice acknowledges the fluid nature of ethnicity and the cultural identity concept that underpins the measure.
- 4.6.8 The overwhelming majority of New Zealand's population reports a single ethnicity (90 percent at the 2006 Census). About 9 percent report two ethnicities and 1 percent three or more. However, significant numbers of Māori, Pacific peoples and others who have historical and continuing high intermarriage rates provide multiple responses. For example, 50 percent of the Māori population report two or more ethnic identities as do 35 percent of Pacific peoples.
- 4.6.9 The current standard uses two classifications:
- The 'Total response' classification counts the number of people who have reported each ethnic category, no matter how many they reported.
 - The 'Single and combined response' classification allocates individuals to unique ethnic categories, reflecting the mix of responses they reported, if more than one.
- 4.6.10 After the 2004 review, a 'Prioritised' classification was removed from the standard. It allocated those individuals who reported multiple ethnicities to a unique category based on an arbitrary ranking of the ethnic responses. The classification was considered to lack an adequate theoretical basis and it increasingly under-counted Pacific peoples and other minority groups, as multiple reporting increased.
- 4.6.11 While there has been good take-up among users of the 'Total' response classification, the take-up of the 'Single' and combined one has not been so marked, and a number of agencies still use the now non-standard 'Prioritised' classification. The reasons appear to relate to both entrenched practice and difficulties in fitting the 'Single' and combined one to established information needs (eg consistent monitoring of health trends).

5. Options to address the issues

- 5.1. In this section we review the options for addressing the issues identified in the previous section, and identify those that we prefer.
- 5.2. When addressing and evaluating official statistical issues like these, we take into account three principles to ensure that the statistics are both fit for use and sustainable. These are:
 - relevancy (measuring the right thing)
 - robustness (consistency and accuracy over time and between sources)
 - minimising the burden of compliance (measurement that is acceptable to the public and does not place an unreasonable burden on respondents).
- 5.3. These principles help us to assess the benefits associated with any proposed change or improvement. However, decisions to make changes must also look at other factors such as financial costs and the risks of unforeseen outcomes. Our previous experience shows that changes often also have unintended consequences that negate the intended improvements. Consequently, the cost-benefit evaluation for change must be compelling.
- 5.4. In applying the relevancy and robustness principles, this report considers the specific uses of official ethnicity statistics in New Zealand – particularly the need for useful statistics on the main policy-relevant ethnic groups (Māori, Pacific peoples and Asian).

5.5. Maintaining statistical consistency

- 5.5.1 In the 2006 Census, the root cause of the statistical inconsistency in the 'European' and 'Other Ethnicity' categories was a decision we'd made after the previous review to move the 'New Zealander' response from the 'European' to the 'Other Ethnicity' branch of the classification. The decision was based on a view that the 'New Zealander' category did not appear to fit well enough with any of the existing major level 1 categories (Statistics New Zealand 2004, p10).
- 5.5.2 There are two main options for addressing the issue of maintaining statistical consistency.
 - Do nothing.
 - Modify the standard classification.
- 5.5.3 The 'do nothing' option means accepting the 'work-around' measure described in 4.4. The problem with this is that it requires all users to apply an additional non-standard procedure to census-sourced statistics before they use them.
- 5.5.4 The 'modify' option would require the 'New Zealander' response to be returned from the 'Other Ethnicity' branch to the 'European' branch of the standard classification. Before the 2004 review, 'New Zealander' responses were included in the 'New Zealand European' category, along with other related responses such as 'Pakeha' and 'Kiwi'.

- 5.5.5 As we believe the 'New Zealander' response group has much in common with the 'New Zealand European' group, it could be usefully located in the European branch of the classification. This would restore statistical consistency to the 'European' and 'Other Ethnicity' categories at level 1 and lower levels of the classification, and reduce the need for the 'work-around' measure in the first option.
- 5.5.6 We acknowledge that some sole 'New Zealander' responses represent people who in previous censuses reported non-European responses with or without European-type responses (eg NZ European and Māori). However, our research suggests that the numbers are relatively low and we believe that, given the weight of the 'European' component of this group, a better argument can be made for including it in the European branch of the classification (with the NZ European category), than including it in any other branch of the classification.
- 5.5.7 The proposed modification involves moving the 'New Zealander' response from level 4 of the classification's 'Other Ethnicity' branch to level 3 in the 'European' branch (see Appendix 1). This has the advantage of restoring statistical consistency over time and between sources. In addition, future changes in the relative response levels of both 'New Zealanders' and 'New Zealand Europeans' in the census and other sources will not affect the consistency of levels 1 and 2 of the classification.
- 5.5.8 This option also has the advantage of maintaining the visibility of the 'New Zealander' response at a level of the classification appropriate to the size of the group. Some stakeholders, particularly those in the Māori and health sectors, are concerned that giving undue attention to reporting 'New Zealander' responses in official publications will undermine the integrity of 'Māori', 'Pacific peoples' and 'Asian' responses when the data are being collected. On the other hand, other stakeholders expect more visibility for such a large response group. The proposed option presents a compromise.

5.5.9 We propose modifying the ethnicity statistical classification by moving the 'New Zealander' category from level 4 in the 'Other Ethnicity' branch to level 3 in the 'European' branch (see Appendix 1).

5.6. Treatment of the 'New Zealander' response in the census question and other sources

- 5.6.1 A significant group of respondents in the 2006 Census voiced concern about the format of the ethnicity question in relation to their response preferences. Options to deal with this issue are to:
- modify the ethnicity question (eg introduce a tick-box for 'New Zealander' responses)
 - introduce other changes to the questionnaire to address the issue
 - make no changes to the ethnicity question.
- 5.6.2 Most stakeholders consulted in this review were opposed to any change to the ethnicity question on the grounds that doing so would probably have unintended and unacceptable effects on the statistical results. As these effects have been observed and documented at previous censuses, we tend to support this view.

Any changes need to be rigorously tested to determine both their effectiveness as instruments and their statistical impacts.

- 5.6.3 The initial results of our research of public attitudes and of respondent behaviour when completing the census question suggest that there is a significant degree of support for a 'New Zealander' response category. This is particularly so among people of European descent, but not limited to them. This is also reflected in results of our study that compared individual responses to the 2001 and 2006 Censuses.
- 5.6.4 However, the research also indicates that people generally agree that the way that the statistic is measured should be relevant to the purpose of the information. Research subjects of European descent who preferred a New Zealander response generally agreed that this response was probably not as relevant to the purpose of the information as a New Zealand European response.
- 5.6.5 Our current preference is to keep the ethnicity question as it is on the basis that the proposed change would have unintended and unacceptable statistical impacts on the measurement of the Māori, Pacific peoples and Asian groups. We consider that our research indicates that the inclusion of a 'New Zealander' tick-box in the census ethnicity question would cause a significant number of people to report a sole New Zealander response, who would have otherwise reported a non-European response, with or without a New Zealand European response. The effect of this would be distort the existing series of official ethnic statistics in ways that would detract from their usefulness for the public policy purposes they were designed for.
- 5.6.6 No change to the current ethnic question will not prohibit the recording of a 'New Zealander' response, but means it will continue to be recorded via a specific write-in response, rather than a tick-box.

5.6.7 We propose retaining unchanged the format of the standard ethnicity question in surveys, including the census.

- 5.6.8 The current standard does not enable 'New Zealander' responses to be collected in administrative environments (eg hospital admissions), unless a write-in response is allowed, as in the census. For the above reasons, we again prefer to keep these arrangements unchanged.

5.6.9 We propose retaining unchanged the format of the standard ethnicity question in administrative environments.

- 5.6.10 A number of stakeholders have suggested that the issue might be better resolved by two other options:
- Providing more effective guidance to survey respondents and data collectors on the nature and purpose of the ethnicity question.
 - Including in the census a question on a national identity-related topic to help respondents distinguish the ethnicity topic.
- 5.6.11 We strongly support the first suggestion, which has also been raised in our research of public attitudes to the census question. Research subjects generally

indicated a high level of support for the collection of official statistics in surveys like the census, but said they would be more comfortable about answering the ethnicity question if they had a better understanding of what it was used for.

5.6.12 As part of our 2011 Census question development programme we have investigated the feasibility and effect of adding a question on national identity before the ethnicity question. The initial results show that while it is probably possible to develop a question that people could answer effectively, there was no compelling evidence that it improves the way the ethnicity question is answered. We consider that the significant financial cost of adding such a question to the census would not be justified by the minimal and uncertain potential benefits.

5.6.13 We propose improving the explanatory information about the ethnicity question for survey respondents and data collectors.

5.6.14 We do not propose to add to the census a national identity-related measure.

5.7. Improving public understanding and acceptability

5.7.1 This issue is not just about understanding the 'New Zealander' response, it's about the role of the ethnicity measure itself in public policy. We can take steps to improve public understanding and acceptance of the measure itself, but to achieve wider acceptance and understanding of the use of ethnicity statistics, key stakeholders need to support the uses both proactively and reactively when they are the subject of public debate.

5.7.2 We appreciate that the public coverage of the 2011 Census of Population and Dwellings provides an opportunity to showcase official social and population statistics. With this in mind, we'll ensure that the ethnicity measure gets due attention in the associated publicity programme. This will include explaining how the information is used and encouraging the public to respond to the measure. A key element will be effective communication with respondents who might echo the concerns expressed at the 2006 Census.

5.7.3 As part of implementing any changes to the standard resulting from this review, we'll work with other partners in the Official Statistics System to review the systems supporting agents who collect ethnicity data in administrative environments. We appreciate the importance of providing adequate information and the right messages in these situations to ensure that data collectors are properly supported in their tasks and members of the responding public have the information they need to comply.

5.7.4 We propose that agencies that collect official ethnicity statistics build on established communities of practice and good practice models, which function to coordinate data collection and information production effectively and efficiently. This includes a focus on the business processes that support the agents who collect the data.

5.7.5 We propose communicating more effectively to the public the purpose and nature of the ethnicity measure.

6. Review methodology

6.1. In conducting this review, we consulted a range of stakeholders, reviewed New Zealand and international literature and undertook a programme of research. The scope of literature review is reflected to some extent in section 7, although it represents only sources directly referred to in the report.

6.2. Stakeholder consultation

6.2.1 An ad hoc committee was convened to guide and support this review and a wider review of cultural identity statistics. The Review of Cultural Identity Official Statistics Steering and Working Group comprises representatives of the Ministries of Social Development, Health, Education, Justice, Pacific Island Affairs, Culture and Heritage, the Department of Labour, the Department of Internal Affairs, New Zealand Police and Te Puni Kōkiri.

Its terms of reference are described in Appendix 2.

6.2.2 We also sought advice and guidance from two expert standing committees that provide advice to Statistics New Zealand: the Māori Statistics Advisory Committee and the Programme of Official Social Statistics Advisory Group.

6.2.3 We sought broader stakeholder contributions and feedback in two stages.

- The first stage comprised discussions with a group of about 20 stakeholders selected on the basis of the range of views they represented and their known expertise. They helped us to scope the issues that are the basis of this review and to identify a range of options to address the issues. Appendix 3 has a list of these stakeholders, and we thank them for their input and advice.
- The second stage will involve considering the feedback to this report (published as a discussion paper). The report has been published on Statistics New Zealand's website (www.stats.govt.nz) with a public invitation to provide feedback. We'll also advise known key stakeholders of the report and our invitation to provide feedback.

6.2.4 Once we've evaluated the feedback in the second and third quarters of 2009, we propose publishing a final report in the fourth quarter of 2009.

6.3. Research programme

6.3.1 The 2004 review contained a recommendation that a programme of research be undertaken to:

- assess the impact of the change in the treatment of the 'New Zealander' response
- assess the impact of a tick-box on the consistency of data

- examine other potential questions that might be used in the collection of ethnicity data (Statistics New Zealand 2004, p8).

6.3.2 Since then, we've undertaken and supported a number of projects to address this recommendation and are currently undertaking others in support of this review.

Three important research projects that have informed this review include:

Our 2011 Census question development programme which has included the testing of a 'New Zealander' tick-box for the ethnicity question and a question on national identity to precede the ethnicity question. This research also explored respondents' understanding of the ethnicity question. Findings from this and the other research projects are cited throughout this report and a more detailed description of the research will be included in the final report of this review.

A study of public understanding of and attitudes to the ethnicity topic, which we commissioned an independent research company, UMR Research Limited, to do. This study used qualitative research techniques to explore public understandings and attitudes. Initial findings are cited in this report. A final report prepared by UMR will be made available when the final report of this review is published.

A study of ethnic mobility between the 2001 and 2006 Censuses that we undertook specifically for this review. This study involved linking individual records between the two censuses so that respective responses to the ethnicity question could be compared. This provided a basis to describe quantitatively the degree to which people changed their responses to the ethnicity question between the censuses and to examine the source and impact of the increased reporting of the 'New Zealander' response at the 2006 Census. A more detailed description of this study and its findings will be published when the final report of this review is published.

6.3.3 Other research completed or supported after the 2004 review includes:

Statistics New Zealand, (2007). *Profile of New Zealand Responses, Ethnicity Question: 2006 Census*, Statistics New Zealand, Wellington. This analyses the socio-demographic characteristics of 'New Zealander' respondents and compares them with the total population. It concludes that while there are some minor differences (median age, income, sex, region), the 'New Zealander' population looks very much like the 'New Zealand European' one.

Callister, P., Didham, R., Newell, J., & Potter, D. (2008). *Family Ethnicity: Is it a useful concept and, if so, can we develop meaningful measures?*, *Official Statistics Research Series*, Vol 3, Statistics New Zealand, Wellington. This examines ways of assigning ethnicity to families, as opposed to individuals.

Kukutai, T., (2008). *Ethnic Self-prioritisation of Dual and Multi-ethnic Youth in New Zealand*, Statistics New Zealand, Wellington. This study evaluates the use of an ethnicity self-prioritising question in a youth survey. Results show that 20 percent of the survey population were unable or unwilling to select a single prioritised ethnic identity. This is a significant group, particularly among Māori and Pacific peoples, and illustrates the difficulty of putting people into one box.

Callister, P., Didham, R., & Kivi, A. (2009) (*forthcoming*), *Who are we? The conceptualisation and expression of ethnicity*, *Official Statistics Research Series*,

Vol 4, Statistics New Zealand, Wellington. This report is based on a literature review of New Zealand and international research and theory on the conceptualisation and expression of ethnicity. It traverses topics such as official construction of ethnicity by the state, ethnogenesis, transmission, mobility, indigeneity, genetics and the 'New Zealander' response phenomenon. It concludes that there is a continuing and vigorous worldwide debate on the nature of ethnic identity and how it should be measured, noting that there is little research on New Zealanders and what motivates the response.

7. References

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Appendix 1: Total response output classification: first three levels

Current Classification (Ethnic05)	Proposed Modification
<p>1. European</p> <p>10 European nfd*</p> <p>11 New Zealand European</p> <p>12 Other European</p> <p> 121 British & Irish</p> <p> 122 Dutch</p> <p> 123 Greek</p> <p> 124 Polish</p> <p> 125 South Slav</p> <p> 126 Italian</p> <p> 127 German</p> <p> 128 Australian</p> <p> 129 Other European</p> <p>2. Māori</p> <p>3. Pacific Peoples</p> <p> 30 Pacific Peoples nfd*</p> <p> 31 Samoan</p> <p> 32 Cook Islands Maori</p> <p> 33 Tongan</p> <p> 34 Niuean</p> <p> 35 Tokelauan</p> <p> 36 Fijian</p> <p> 37 Other Pacific Peoples</p> <p>4. Asian</p> <p> 40 Asian nfd*</p> <p> 41 Southeast Asian</p> <p> 410 Southeast Asian nfd*</p> <p> 411 Filipino</p> <p> 412 Cambodian</p> <p> 413 Vietnamese</p> <p> 414 Other Southeast Asian</p> <p> 42 Chinese</p> <p> 43 Indian</p> <p> 44 Other Asian</p> <p> 441 Sri Lankan</p> <p> 442 Japanese</p> <p> 443 Korean</p> <p> 444 Other Asian</p> <p>5. Middle Eastern, Latin American & African</p> <p> 51 Middle Eastern</p> <p> 52 Latin American</p> <p> 53 African</p> <p>6. Other Ethnicity</p> <p> 6118 New Zealander</p> <p>9. Residual categories</p> <p> 94 Don't know</p> <p> 95 Refused to answer</p> <p> 96 Repeated value</p> <p> 97 Response unidentifiable</p> <p> 98 Response outside scope</p> <p> 99 Not stated</p>	<p>1. European</p> <p>10 European nfd*</p> <p>11 New Zealand European & New Zealander</p> <p> 111 NZ European</p> <p> 112 New Zealander</p> <p>12 Other European</p> <p> 121 British & Irish</p> <p> 122 Dutch</p> <p> 123 Greek</p> <p> 124 Polish</p> <p> 125 South Slav</p> <p> 126 Italian</p> <p> 127 German</p> <p> 128 Australian</p> <p> 129 Other European</p> <p>2. Māori</p> <p>3. Pacific Peoples</p> <p> 30 Pacific Peoples nfd*</p> <p> 31 Samoan</p> <p> 32 Cook Islands Maori</p> <p> 33 Tongan</p> <p> 34 Niuean</p> <p> 36 Fijian</p> <p> 37 Other Pacific Peoples</p> <p>4. Asian</p> <p> 40 Asian nfd*</p> <p> 41 Southeast Asian</p> <p> 410 Southeast Asian nfd*</p> <p> 411 Filipino</p> <p> 412 Cambodian</p> <p> 413 Vietnamese</p> <p> 414 Other Southeast Asian</p> <p> 42 Chinese</p> <p> 43 Indian</p> <p> 44 Other Asian</p> <p> 441 Sri Lankan</p> <p> 442 Japanese</p> <p> 443 Korean</p> <p> 444 Other Asian</p> <p>5. Middle Eastern, Latin American & African</p> <p> 51 Middle Eastern</p> <p> 52 Latin American</p> <p> 53 African</p> <p>6. Other Ethnicity</p> <p>9. Residual categories</p> <p> 94 Don't know</p> <p> 95 Refused to answer</p> <p> 96 Repeated value</p> <p> 97 Response unidentifiable</p> <p> 98 Response outside scope</p> <p> 99 Not stated</p>

nfd* = not further defined

Appendix 2: Terms of reference and consultation

A) Extract from the Terms of Reference of the Review of Cultural Identity Official Statistics, Relating to the Ethnicity Statistical Standard Review

A secondary objective of the review is to complete a revision of the official ethnicity statistical standard. The revision will be limited to the treatment of the 'European', 'New Zealand European' and 'New Zealander' categories in the standard. This reflects an outstanding issue from a previous review completed in 2004 and needs to be dealt with immediately, so that any changes can be included in the 2011 population census. Any other substantive issues relating to ethnicity that arise will be managed within the general context of the cultural identity review. Submissions pertaining to ethnicity will be considered in relation to the technical aspects of the current standard and its operational requirements. The revision will aim to produce a solution to problems thought to exist with current ethnicity measurement practice capable of enduring beyond the 2011 Census.

B) Targeted stakeholder discussions

Meetings were held with individuals from:

- Auckland University Centre of Methods and Policy Applications in the Social Sciences
- Auckland University of Technology
- Department of Internal Affairs' Office of Ethnic Affairs
- Local Government New Zealand
- Manukau City Council
- Massey University, Albany, Sociology
- Ministry of Education
- Ministry of Health
- Ministry of Social Development
- New Zealand Federation of Ethnic Councils
- New Zealand Federation of Islamic Associations
- Northern District Health Boards Support Agency
- Otago University Wellington School of Medicine
- Partnership Health Canterbury
- Race Relations Commissioner
- Southland District Council
- Venture Southland
- Victoria University of Wellington Institute of Policy Studies
- Waikato University Population Studies Centre
- Waipareira Trust