

## Living arrangements, household relationships and absentees

### 2001 Census questions

#### Living arrangements (Individual form)

**19** Mark as many spaces as you need to show all the people who live in the same household as you. ■

my legal husband or wife  
 my partner or de facto, boyfriend or girlfriend  
 my son(s) and/or daughter(s)  
 my mother and/or father  
 my sister(s) and/or brother(s)  
 my flatmate(s)  
 other. Please state: eg *MY GRANDMOTHER, MY MOTHER-IN-LAW, MY PARTNER'S FATHER, etc, OT BOARDER etc*

or

none of the above - I live alone

#### Household relationships / absentees (Dwelling form)

Person 2	Person 3
This person's full name is:	This person's full name is:
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
This person's age on their last birthday? <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>	This person's age on their last birthday? <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>
Person 2 is:	Person 3 is:
<input type="radio"/> <i>my wife / husband / partner / de facto</i> <input type="radio"/> <i>my mother / father</i> <input type="radio"/> <i>my son / daughter</i> <input type="radio"/> <i>my brother / sister</i> <input type="radio"/> <i>my flatmate</i> <input type="radio"/> <i>other (eg GRANDCHILD, VISITOR). Please state:</i>	<input type="radio"/> <i>my wife / husband / partner / de facto</i> <input type="radio"/> <i>my mother / father</i> <input type="radio"/> <i>my son / daughter</i> <input type="radio"/> <i>my brother / sister</i> <input type="radio"/> <i>my flatmate</i> <input type="radio"/> <i>other (eg GRANDCHILD, VISITOR). Please state:</i>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

### Background

In the public consultation process it was noted that the way in which families were classified and measured in the census was dated and no longer sufficient to provide an accurate picture of family circumstances in New Zealand. In particular there was strong interest in the ability to transparently collect information on same-sex and opposite-sex partnerships.

Adding extra categories to collect information about civil union partnerships was also investigated and a discussion of the testing results for legal relationships can be found on page 20 under the 'legal marital status' topic.

### Development objectives/plan

The primary objective for redeveloping the relationship categories in the census was to add options to collect information about same-sex and opposite-sex partnerships, while also retaining a good standard of data quality for other relationship information.

To meet these objectives a comprehensive programme of testing was conducted including cognitive testing, analysis of data from field tests and consultation with key stakeholders, and the dress rehearsal follow-up survey results also helped determine public acceptance of the new same-sex/opposite-sex categories.

## **Cognitive testing**

The cognitive testing programme was conducted between April 2003 and May 2005 with respondents of varied age, gender and ethnicity. Interviewers observed respondent form-filling behaviour and asked a series of follow-up questions. For these particular topics the forms development team also included some additional targeted testing with groups such as young heterosexual males, older respondents, gay and lesbian respondents, minority cultures and respondents with various religious beliefs.

Identical options were tested in all rounds of cognitive testing with similar results, therefore, results are discussed jointly.

## **Cognitive testing results**

### **All four rounds: April 2003 to May 2005**

Although some respondents made remarks during testing that suggested they were uncomfortable with the same-sex and opposite-sex options, testing confirmed that the clear majority of respondents were happy to provide an answer and found the categories acceptable.

Commonly, respondents would skim the answers to find their option and marked the first partner category in the list, without noticing the same-sex and opposite-sex distinctions. Occasionally respondents made mistakes and marked a category which did not accurately describe their relationship, for example marked the same-sex option instead of the opposite-sex option.

## **Field test results**

### **Field test: June 2004**

Data from the June test recorded very few same-sex couples. Of those same-sex couples, one was identified as an error when compared against other information collected on the forms.

The June test follow-up survey of 83 respondents indicated that 53 percent thought the option to identify as having a same-sex or opposite-sex partner should be included in the census, compared with 12 percent who disagreed and 35 percent who held no opinion or did not know.

### **Dress rehearsal: 8 March 2005**

Data from the dress rehearsal was not analysed for this topic.

In the follow-up survey to the dress rehearsal, 271 respondents were asked whether same-sex options should be included in census. The following results were achieved:

- 75 percent agreed that the question should be included in the census
- 11 percent disagreed that the question should be included in the census
- 10 percent held no opinion or did not know
- 4 percent thought the question should be included in the census, but should not be compulsory.

