

Stats NZ's statement of strategic intentions 2025-2029





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Minister's foreword

The Government is focused on helping New Zealanders thrive by growing the economy and investing in services that work for people and communities. To do this, we need to use data and evidence to fund services that improve lives - this is the foundation of our social investment approach.

Using data in this way not only leads to better outcomes, but also builds confidence that public funds are making the greatest impact. Data is central to informed decision-making and a driver of both social and economic growth. Our priority is to use it more effectively to deliver better outcomes for New Zealand.

Stats NZ plays a key role in this by improving access to timely, high quality data. Its focus areas include:

- Investing in the Integrated Data Infrastructure (IDI).
- Measuring what matters in a modern economy.
- Providing the data platform for social investment policy with increasing timeliness and quality statistics.
- Taking a new approach to the census by combining admin data with targeted surveys.

Unlocking the potential of integrated data is essential to improving outcomes. With the right infrastructure, agencies and service providers can design and adjust services more effectively - enabling faster, more targeted responses that align with the Government's social investment priorities.

Economically, we are focused on delivering more timely and relevant data to support stronger fiscal and monetary policy. This will give government, businesses, and researchers better access to accurate, up-to-date economic insights.

The census remains crucial to understanding our population and national needs. But with rising costs and declining response rates, a new approach is needed. The next census will prioritise admin data, reducing the need for lengthy surveys wherever possible.

Greater use of admin data will also support a more modern, stable, and scalable data system that can meet growing demand.

Maintaining trust and confidence that New Zealanders' data is safe and secure will be critical to successfully making this transition. I expect to see a relentless focus on responsible data management and strong legal, privacy, and assurance practices to keep pace with a rapidly changing data environment.

The Government is committed to data-driven decisions that benefit all New Zealanders. This statement of strategic intentions sets out how Stats NZ will continue to deliver quality data and insights for the future.

Statement of responsibility

I am satisfied that the information on strategic intentions prepared by Stats NZ is consistent with the policies and performance expectations of the Government.



Hon Dr Shane Reti
Minister of Statistics

12 June 2025

Date

Chief Executive's foreword

Every day, data and insights play a crucial role in decision-making at both local and national levels, directly affecting people's lives.

Maintaining trust and confidence as a data system leader is critical, especially in the context of a world that is changing faster than ever before. We are facing widespread and long-term social, economic, environmental, and technological change, and people's need for information is growing exponentially. The rise of misinformation and disinformation is reinforcing the importance of the work done by Stats NZ, and its role in ensuring statistics and insights are correct, timely and trusted.

In the context of a changing world, Stats NZ is aspiring to guide, innovate, and shape New Zealand's data system to deliver quality data with equitable access for informed decision-making. This is critical for us to hold true to our vision: 'Data that improves lives today and for generations to come'.

Our vision has three long-term outcomes:

- New Zealand's data system is strengthened.
- Trust and confidence in data and statistics is high and enduring.
- People, the economy, and the environment are enhanced.

Our strategy outlines how we will balance our roles as a data system leader and a producer of data and statistics while adapting and being more responsive to a changing operating context.

The four strategic priorities that support and guide this work are:

- driving better decisions and services with admin data
- powering social investment with integrated data
- better delivering to customer and partner need
- measuring what matters in a modern economy.

We continue to take pride in our role in fostering a more integrated and inclusive data system. We also remain committed to maintaining the trust and confidence of New Zealand, particularly as we transition towards taking an admin data first approach and explore how emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence (AI) could help innovate, lift productivity and manage costs across our work.

It is my pleasure to present our statement of strategic intentions for the period 1 July 2025 to 30 June 2029.

Statement of responsibility

In signing this information, I acknowledge that I am responsible for the information on strategic intentions for Stats NZ. This information has been prepared in accordance with section 38 and section 40 of the Public Finance Act 1989.



12 June 2025

Mary Craig

Acting Chief Executive / Government Statistician

Date

Who we are and what we do

Statistics New Zealand (Stats NZ) is the national statistical office (NSO) and the primary producer of official statistics for New Zealand. Our purpose is to ensure that high quality, impartial, and objective data and statistics are produced about New Zealand to inform the public and inform decision-making. Led by the Government Statistician and Chief Executive, we determine how data is collected, analysed, and presented – a critical foundation for maintaining public trust in the integrity of the data we produce.

We collect information from individuals and organisations to provide data and insights about New Zealand and its people. This data supports decision-making across government, Māori and iwi organisations, businesses, non-government organisations (NGOs), and the public – enabling more effective policy development and resource allocation across social, economic, and environmental matters.

In addition to our statistical role, Stats NZ's Chief Executive serves as the Government Chief Data Steward (GCDS). The GCDS leads work to build a more integrated and inclusive government data system, protecting people's information and maintaining public trust and confidence in its use. This includes advising on data investment planning, raising data capability across government, implementing data standards, and embedding tools to keep data safe.

Our functions

Our legislated functions under the Data and Statistics Act 2022 are to:

- collect (or authorise the collection of) information from individuals, public sector agencies, or organisations to produce official statistics
- manage data, including linking data to form integrated datasets, to produce official statistics and research
- establish and maintain a cross-government multiyear data and statistical programme to identify and prioritise data and statistics
- produce and communicate official statistics, and guide and direct best practice in producing and communicating official statistics
- authorise access to data held by Stats NZ for research that is in the public interest
- set data standards – the rules used to standardise the way data is collected – so that meaningful insights can be drawn from the data
- collaborate with statistics offices or agencies outside New Zealand to produce globally comparable statistics.

Our services

Our core services derive from our legislated functions set out in the Data and Statistics Act 2022, and Government Chief Data Steward mandate assigned by the Public Services Commissioner.

They include:

- delivering economic and business data and statistical information services
- delivering population, social, and labour market data and statistical information services
- leading the Official Statistics System – the whole-of-government system that underpins the production of official statistics

- stewarding the Government Data System – the government-wide set of policies, practices, processes, and people involved in collecting, managing, and using government-held data
- delivering an ongoing census programme.

Our operating environment

Stats NZ is operating in an environment of rapid technological, social, and economic change. The increasing digitisation of society, growing reliance on data to inform decision-making, and shifting public expectations are reshaping how data is collected and used within New Zealand.

We need to ensure New Zealand continues to have the data it needs to drive economic and social progress by making data accessible for a diverse range of customers. Government, businesses, communities, and Māori and iwi organisations use data to inform decision-making and achieve development goals. They also use it to take risks that generate innovation and economic growth and hold policymakers accountable.

The rise of misinformation and disinformation has reinforced the importance of national statistical offices (NSO) as providers of accessible and impartial, quality information. Meanwhile, geopolitical and climate risks are driving greater demand for a resilient data system that supports economic stability, emergency response, and long-term sustainability.

New Zealand must also align with international statistical standards, including updated frameworks for measuring the economy and our relationship with the rest of the world, by 2030, allowing us to attract investment, grow the economy, and adapt to global challenges.

Internationally, the data landscape is evolving, with new approaches emerging in how data is collected, processed, and shared. Innovation spans not just technological advancements, such as AI and automation, but also new analytical methods, governance models, and data-sharing frameworks. Each of these developments present opportunities to improve efficiency, enhance insights, and strengthen decision-making, while also requiring careful consideration of risks, costs, and capability needs.

Within this shifting landscape, Stats NZ must navigate a critical moment of transition. The demand for more frequent, more granular, and more accessible data, statistics, and insights is increasing. Equally, the costs of collecting, managing, and maintaining the relevance of official data and statistics are growing. Declining public trust in government and key institutions makes it more important than ever to build the right protections for data and information and to demonstrate our trustworthiness. Evolving digital government and low system interoperability hinder efficient data sharing across agencies and sectors.

The data system is at a crossroads, requiring a new ambition and decisive strategy to maintain the position of official statistics and insights as trusted, relevant, and high-value national assets. To deliver well on our core NSO and data system steward roles, Stats NZ must strengthen New Zealand's data system, so it is networked, trusted, and able to meet national and global expectations.

Strategic investment in the infrastructure that supports use and reuse of data that has already been collected by government and others – administrative data (admin data), is key to a sustainable solution. While surveys remain essential, admin data enhances efficiency, reduces respondent burden, and provides more detailed, timely insights.

The data collected through the census underpins critical government functions, from funding models to long-term infrastructure and transport planning. Our shift towards an admin data first approach is central to modernising data collection and use, and has been underway since 2011 when the rising cost of the census triggered discussions on the sustainability of the current model.

Cabinet's endorsement of the Government Statistician's decision to transform census provides fresh impetus for this shift. The work to transform census will drive the system changes needed to implement the admin data first approach and support key government priorities such as digitising government, enabling social investment, and measuring progress on government targets.

Achieving system-wide change requires strong partnerships across the data system – including government agencies, iwi, businesses, and communities – to improve data quality and accessibility.

Stats NZ must take a stronger data system leadership role, working across government and the wider data system to support secure data-sharing arrangements, improve interoperability, and uphold statistical integrity. This transition also requires focused investment and capability building across government, business, and communities to enhance the quality, accessibility, security, and governance of admin data.

Public trust underpins the success of the admin data first model and remains a key outcome for Stats NZ. Our ability to lead this system change, which is fundamental to our ability to deliver quality, accessible data, statistics, and insights, requires New Zealanders' confidence that the data they provide is used responsibly, and in ways that improve their lives.

As Stats NZ navigates this landscape, balancing our roles as a data system leader and a producer of quality data, insights, and official statistics will be critical. Our strategic priorities are designed to respond to these challenges and deliver on our outcomes by strengthening the data system and aligning with government priorities to enhance equitable access to data, reduce compliance burdens, and support data-driven decision-making.

Our outcomes

Our outcomes represent the enduring impact we have on New Zealand, reflecting our legislative mandate and shared responsibilities with other agencies.

New Zealand's data system is strengthened

We aim to guide and shape a networked data system that New Zealanders trust, with strong, sustainable admin data quality and supply. We produce and empower others to produce statistics, and we enable and support community-led data collection and use. We collaborate and partner to deliver customer-centred data and insights that serve the evolving needs of New Zealanders.

Trust and confidence in data and statistics is high and enduring

The trust and confidence of the public, our customers, and our partners underpins everything we do. We aim to have strong legal, privacy, and assurance functions to keep pace with a changing data environment and ensure we protect and use data responsibly. As we expand the use of admin data across the data system to support better decisions and services, we support responsible data-management practices across government to strengthen public trust and confidence.

People, the economy, and the environment are enhanced

Stats NZ's contribution to enhancing outcomes for people, the economy, and the environment is to drive methodological, analytical, and technological innovation through timely, robust data. We aim to build enduring, reciprocal partnerships, and a future-ready workforce. We also aim to have integrated systems and cross-functional ways of working that support data and statistics for decision-makers.

Our strategic ambition

Our strategic ambition defines the long-term change we seek, informing how we will deliver on our shared outcomes for New Zealanders. It builds on our past strategic direction while sharpening its focus. Our strategic priorities focus our efforts towards achieving this ambition.

Our strategic ambition is 'To guide, innovate, and shape New Zealand's data system.'

Our strategic priorities

By focusing on our strategic priorities as we deliver our core business, as shown in the table below, we will work towards our three outcomes. These strategic priorities have evolved from our previous ones to have a more specific focus, refined by our strategic ambition.

The two roles delivering on our core business are:

- Government Statistician
- Government Chief Data Steward.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

CORE BUSINESS

	Driving better decisions and services with admin data	Powering social investment with integrated data	Better delivering to customer and partner need	Measuring what matters in a modern economy
Statistical production (Government Statistician role)	We provide official statistics for decision-makers that support the wellbeing of people, the economy, and the environment, using admin data first and/or integrated data where possible.		We will build and maintain enduring reciprocal partnerships using our strategic engagement model. We will continue to engage regularly on the benefits of admin data and how we use data responsibly to build trust and confidence in official data and statistics. These relationships and engagements will inform faster delivery of relevant products and services and support public willingness to provide data.	We will implement new international standards and lift our suite of current indicators so government and businesses can continue to navigate global challenges, attract investment, innovate, and grow the economy.
Stewardship of the data system (Government Chief Data Steward role)	We will continue to lead the development of a networked data system across government, and with iwi partners and data suppliers, including: - developing and maintaining the Integrated Statistical Data System (ISDS), which integrates data on population, places, and businesses - investment advice to Cabinet on New Zealand's data infrastructure - providing tools, advice, guidance, and standards on data quality and governance.	Working with others to improve the quality, governance and accessibility of integrated data, including: - developing and maintaining the Integrated Statistical Data System (ISDS), which integrates data on population, places, and businesses - identifying the highest-priority data needs for social investment within the context of our wider data-collection programme.	We will engage with customers and partners to understand the state of the data system. This will inform our investment and capability advice, and where to target these.	We will integrate environmental and economic indicators using the ISDS so decision-makers have a more holistic view of the economy.

How we show progress

Stats NZ maintains an ongoing programme of work to strengthen the systems, processes, and controls that underpin our performance reporting. This programme aims to demonstrate progress to New Zealanders in a way that is relevant and meaningful, in our annual reports.

Our Performance Measurement Framework (PMF) shown below, sets out how we will show progress over time.

We show progress for each strategic priority using both qualitative and quantitative reporting. The 'What we will do' sections outline planned actions and initiatives, which are typically tracked using milestones and described qualitatively. The corresponding 'How we will show progress' sections describe the outputs, impacts, or outcomes we would expect to see if those actions are effective, based on underlying logic models. This structure allows us to connect activity to results and report on performance in a way that reflects both delivery and impact.

Long term (Data and Statistics Act 2022)		Medium term (Four years: Statement of strategic intentions)	Short term (One year: Vote Statistics estimates)
Vision	Outcomes	Strategic priorities	Products and services
	Our outcomes describe, at a high level, what we are delivering to contribute to improving lives today, and for generations to come.	Our priorities reflect where we will concentrate our efforts to deliver to our purpose, outcomes, and the Government's priorities for Stats NZ. We also have a focus on our foundations – the organisational health and capability of Stats NZ, which includes our capital expenditure appropriation. 10 impact indicators for 2025/2026	We aim to achieve the best possible delivery of our products and services through two appropriations that represent our core activities.
Data and statistics that improve lives today and for generations to come.	New Zealand's data system is strengthened.	Driving better decisions and services with admin data More granular, flexible, accessible, and trusted admin data and admin-based outputs are available to decision-makers.	32 measures for 2025/2026
	Trust and confidence in data and statistics is high and enduring.	Powering social investment with integrated data Integrated data is available to inform social service decisions and data use, and reuse is maximised.	Official statistics Ensure the availability of, and promote the use of, the highest-priority data and official statistical information to add value to decision-making both in New Zealand and overseas jurisdictions, including: • economic and business data and statistical information services • population, social, and labour market data and statistical information releases • stewardship of government data and statistical leadership.
	People, the economy, and the environment are enhanced.	Better deliver to customer and partner need Faster and more accessible delivery of trusted, relevant products and services to market. Measuring what matters in a modern economy NZ's macroeconomic statistics align with international best practice, and more frequent macroeconomic data is available to inform monetary and fiscal policy formulation and evaluation of decisions.	Delivery of population and social statistics (census) Deliver population and social statistics in accordance with the requirement for the delivery of a census in line with New Zealand and international obligations.
		Foundations: Organisational health and capability Our people – Build a future-ready workforce that is digitally capable, diverse, and able to be mobilised to drive innovation. Our customers and partners – Embed early and meaningful reciprocal engagement, ensuring customers, iwi partners, and other partners are actively involved in shaping how data is collected, used, and shared. Our resources – Invest in foundational digital platforms to standardise processes, enhance interoperability, and make better use of data across government. Our systems and processes – Standardise statistical processes, strengthening governance, and improving data-management practices.	

Driving better decisions and services with admin data

The demand for detailed, timely, and quality data is increasing, while more resource-intensive methods of survey-based data collection are becoming less sustainable. Declining response rates, rising costs, and shifting public attitudes have made it harder to collect reliable, representative data. At the same time, inflationary pressures, natural disasters, and pandemics have disrupted data collection efforts, making it difficult to provide consistent, high quality insights.

Admin data - information already collected by government agencies and other organisations as part of their operations – offers a solution. By tapping into information New Zealanders have already provided, Stats NZ will deliver more relevant, useful, and timely data to help inform quality planning and decision-making, whilst also reducing the burden on respondents. However, surveys and other methods of collection will remain important, particularly to gather information on people's perspectives and experiences of their own circumstances. Where possible surveys will be set up to be highly flexible, with opportunities to change content and topics much more frequently.

Agencies collect data primarily for their own operational needs, often with limited consideration for wider use or integration. Interoperability challenges, inconsistent data standards, and limited data-sharing frameworks restrict the potential of admin data to support better outcomes for New Zealand. We have made progress in shifting Stats NZ toward an admin data first approach, as outlined in our 2023–2028 strategic intentions. We are now expanding our focus to guiding and shaping a data system that better supports decision-making and public-service delivery.

The next census will be delivered using admin data combined with annual sample¹ and targeted surveys, replacing the previous model where a census day was held every five years. As part of our transition to a new census model that is more integrated with how we deliver other statistics, we will shape a more networked data system. This will allow us to use a greater proportion of admin data, complemented by targeted surveys.

Developing a stronger admin data pipeline also requires investment and responsibility beyond Stats NZ. As we move forward, other agencies must take on new responsibilities and invest funding, effort, and resources to grow the data system as a shared national asset. By improving the availability and usability of admin data, agencies will not only benefit their own operations but also contribute to a stronger data system that enables informed decision-making.

What we will do

Strengthen the admin data pipeline and improve data flows

- Develop, communicate, and implement admin data quality standards for key census variables and integrated data with partners, and support improved data collection practices so admin data is fit for broader, system-wide use.
- Direct key data-supply agencies to collect data that supports more frequent delivery of priority data through our work to transform and deliver a successful, modern, and cost-effective census.

¹ A sample survey is a method of data collection where information is gathered from a subset (a sample) of a larger population, rather than the entire population, to estimate characteristics of the whole.

- Increase interoperability by promoting standardised data formats and metadata practices.

Modernise infrastructure for admin data integration, storage, and access

- Develop ways to measure and manage the quality of integrated files so they are useful and reuseable.
- Build the Integrated Statistical Data System (ISDS), which enables us to link and update data so it can be used in different ways by different users across the data system.
- Procure and implement a new data-ingestion platform to streamline how admin data is processed.
- Upgrade storage and processing systems to support scalable and efficient admin data use.
- Develop new tools and workflows to improve the accessibility and usability of admin data.

Enhance public trust in admin data use

- Ensure Stats NZ's physical and cyber security measures continue to keep data safe through regular audits of security standards relating to storage and controlled access to sensitive information.
- Ensure the future management of census is operated within Stats NZ's corporate rules and guidelines.
- Support government data ethics practices through guidance, communities of practice, and the Data Ethics Advisory Group to strengthen trust in government data use.
- Communicate the benefits of and safeguards in place for using admin data to increase public trust and confidence.

Reduce the burden on businesses and the public

- Identify the best ways to integrate admin and survey data so that we can make the best use of the data that is already available.
- Work with agencies to minimise duplicate data requests and improve data-sharing practices.
- Increase the use of admin data to reduce reliance on direct survey collection.

Improve accessibility and usability of admin data

- Support agencies in sharing high quality admin data safely and effectively with Stats NZ.
- Provide admin data outputs for customers with varying data-capability levels.
- Develop new admin data-based outputs to provide more flexible, frequent, and granular insights.
- Streamline customer-facing digital tools for greater accessibility.

What success looks like for Stats NZ

- A modernised admin data infrastructure supports faster, more efficient data processing and integration.
- Clear data quality standards improve the consistency and usability of admin data across government.
- Public trust is lifted through clear communication of the benefits, responsible use and safeguards of admin data.

What success looks like in the wider context

- Customers and partners experience reduced data collection burden as admin data replaces or reduces the length of surveys where possible.
- Government agencies have more timely, granular, and accessible insights for policy and service design.
- Admin data is used effectively to support social investment, economic measurement, improved public services, and the aspirations of communities and iwi Māori.

How we will show progress

Stats NZ will show progress through the following impact indicators:

- increased use of admin data in statistical production
- reduced respondent burden
- improvement in the interoperability of data supplied by agencies.

Powering social investment with integrated data

Effective social investment relies on high quality, accessible, and well-integrated data to drive decision-making. Integrated data enables policymakers, agencies, and service providers to assess what works, for whom, and why, helping to design more effective and efficient social services.

To support this, Stats NZ is modernising its admin data pipeline to improve data quality, accessibility, and interoperability. This work is being prioritised as part of the transformation of census but also strengthens the foundation for integrated data, ensuring it is timely, structured, and fit for purpose. As demand for integrated data increases – particularly for social investment initiatives – the ability to securely link and analyse data from multiple sources will be critical for delivering meaningful insights.

Our previous focus on improving the overall health of the government data system has evolved into a more targeted approach. A strong data system supports informed decision-making, particularly in social investment, where linked and high quality data can drive more effective and targeted interventions. While progress on data system health has been made, challenges around governance, interoperability, and data quality remain, requiring continued attention. This shift better reflects a recognition that a strong data system is key to better public services and investment decisions.

Stats NZ is working with government agencies including the Social Investment Agency to improve the quality, governance, and accessibility of integrated data, while maintaining appropriate safeguards for privacy and safe and responsible use.

What we will do

Collect the right information

- Work with groups including the Social Investment Agency, non-government organisations (NGOs), and iwi Māori to identify and prioritise key areas of focus for Stats NZ.

- Identify the highest-priority data needs for social investment within the context of our wider data collection programme.

Purposeful and safe data sharing

- Support agencies, NGOs, and iwi Māori in securely supplying their own data into the Integrated Data Infrastructure (IDI).
- Improve timeliness of data supplies from more providers, enabling faster insights.
- Improve accessibility of data and insights to support social investment analysis by agencies, NGOs, and iwi Māori.
- Strengthen data security, privacy protections, and system tools to keep data safe as we improve data-sharing processes.

Create an integrated and interoperable data system

- Increase automation and streamlining of data ingestion, data processing, and access processes in the IDI.
- Reduce administrative barriers for approved users to access and use integrated data.

Improve access to data

- Expand data-server capacity to prevent system failures and improve processing speeds.
- Develop more tools to reduce technical barriers so a wider range of users have improved access to integrated data.

Improve system capability

- Support capability building for users of integrated data, including decision-makers, analysts, policymakers, and iwi Māori.

What success looks like for Stats NZ

- Modernised, stable, and scalable IDI meets increasing demand with a high level of service availability.
- Relevant, well-governed data enables greater usability and trust across government agencies and other customers and partners.
- Faster processing, more data, and easier access to integrated data improve its value for social investment.

What success looks like in the wider context

- Government agencies and service providers use integrated data to design and adjust social services more efficiently.
- Faster, more targeted policy interventions improve social outcomes.
- Integrated data becomes a core driver of the Government's social investment approach.

How we will show progress

Stats NZ will show progress through the following impact indicators:

- an increase in integrated data to support social investment research
- faster, more accessible integrated data for social investment research.

Better delivering to customer and partner need

The lives and expectations of New Zealanders are evolving, increasing demand for timely and trusted data and statistics. Businesses, NGOs, iwi, and community organisations are playing growing roles in delivering services such as education and healthcare and need better access to relevant data and insights to inform their decisions.

At the same time, there is a growing desire for data to drive iwi Māori economies, supporting whānau outcomes and iwi data capability. This priority builds on our existing commitment to working with Māori, iwi, and hapū, while expanding our focus to better serve all customers and partners across government, business, and communities.

Quality data and statistics play a critical role in supporting targeted interventions, informing policy, and improving service delivery. However, data gaps exist for some groups, including iwi, Māori, Pacific populations, people with disabilities, and those experiencing homelessness. Addressing these gaps and providing data in more accessible formats aims to improve data quality, accessibility, and help decision-makers allocate resources more effectively.

Building reciprocal relationships with customers and partners supports trust and confidence in data and statistics. For high-capability users, access to metadata, methods, and transparent processes helps demonstrate data quality and usability. Clear and transparent communication about the benefits and risks of admin data and the safeguards in place to protect it reinforces confidence in its responsible use. Strengthening these relationships will make data more relevant, trusted, and impactful across sectors.

By strengthening partnerships and maintaining enduring relationships, Stats NZ will increase data relevance and accessibility, and support decision-makers across government, iwi Māori, businesses, and priority communities to drive improved economic and social outcomes.

What we will do

Implement our strategic engagement approach

- Implement a strategic engagement model to build and maintain reciprocal relationships with customers and partners.
- Establish different engagement modes to enable broad participation from diverse user groups.
- Strengthen two-way engagement and feedback mechanisms to continuously improve data and statistics offerings.

Improve transparency to build trust and confidence

- Provide greater transparency and accessibility for high-capability users through metadata, documentation, and quality standards.
- Increase public understanding of the benefits of admin and integrated data use and how data is used responsibly, emphasising privacy safeguards.

Address key data gaps, improve accessibility, and reduce compliance burden

- Identify and prioritise data gaps as part of our wider data collection programme.
- Form data partnerships with businesses, iwi, and community organisations to expand data coverage and relevance.
- Upgrade Stats NZ's digital tools and communication channels to provide a more seamless user experience.
- Collaborate with MBIE and other agencies to reduce business survey duplication and simplify data collection.

Strengthen partnerships with iwi and Māori

- Support iwi and Māori to foster data capability to collect and use data for the production of statistics, and partner with iwi Māori on initiatives that enable self-determined data use.
- Enable data-driven, community-led services through our partnerships with iwi and Māori organisations.

Expand partnerships for data sharing and access

- Work with new data suppliers, including businesses, iwi Māori, and NGOs, to improve the range and availability of datasets.
- Explore the potential for AI to make our data more accessible to a much wider range of audiences.
- Continue to build partnerships that increase public access to key datasets.

What success looks like for Stats NZ

- A modernised strategic engagement approach lifts the value of, and strengthens trust, transparency, and confidence in, data and statistics for customers and partners.
- We have the ability to deliver more relevant data products, more quickly, optimised to meet customer and partner needs.

What success looks like in the wider context

- Customers and partners can access and apply data with continued confidence, knowing it has been shaped by their input, reflects their needs, and is supported by clear documentation and robust methods.
- Data coverage is more comprehensive, including bridging the existing data gaps to enable better data-driven decision-making.
- Māori have improved access to data and the capability to use it in decision-making.

- Public trust in data and statistics grows, supported by clear communication on benefits, responsible use, and safeguards.

How we will show progress

Stats NZ will show progress through the following impact indicators:

- increased customer and partner satisfaction with data accessibility and usability
- increased data use across key user groups
- increased public confidence in Stats NZ's data practices.

Measuring what matters in a modern economy

High quality, accurate, and timely economic data is fundamental to effective policymaking, business investment, and public trust in decision-making. As New Zealand's economy becomes more complex, existing data gaps, changing international measurement standards, and the need for more frequent, integrated statistics present growing challenges. This priority builds on our previous focus on measuring what matters and addressing system risks, with a sharper emphasis on ensuring economic statistics remain fit for purpose in a modern, dynamic economy.

Stronger economic data is critical for decision-making under uncertainty. Infrequent, incomplete, or delayed data is problematic. It means policymakers have to rely on judgment rather than evidence, increasing economic risks. The Reserve Bank, Treasury, and international organisations such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) have noted the importance of producing robust, timely, and internationally comparable macroeconomic statistics to support economic stability.

New Zealand's official statistics must evolve to remain relevant in a fast-changing economy. The updated international economic standards will significantly reshape how economic activity and the relationship between countries and the rest of the world are measured globally. We need to meet these new standards to maintain New Zealand's standing with global financial and economic organisations, and in international markets more generally. Failing to do so risks impacting our credit rating, borrowing costs, and access to capital markets. At the same time, new economic dynamics – including the rise of digital services, environmental factors, and the need for higher frequency indicators – demand better integration of data sources and a modernised statistical system.

By investing in more frequent, granular, and integrated economic measurement, Stats NZ will deliver government, businesses, and the public with the data they need to navigate economic challenges, make and evaluate good decisions, attract investment, and sustain long-term growth.

What we will do

Modernise core macroeconomic statistics

- Work towards the adoption of updated international standards for the measurement of economic activity and our relationship to the rest of the world.
- Transition legacy systems to a platform-system approach to improve flexibility and responsiveness to future needs.

- Expand monthly economic activity indicators to enhance short-term economic visibility.
- Strengthen the relationship between economic and environmental indicators using the ISDS, which links people, businesses, and places.

Improve the frequency and granularity of inflation data

- Continue to increase coverage of the consumers price index (CPI) with monthly selected price indexes as we work to upgrade the CPI platform to enable monthly reporting, bringing New Zealand in line with OECD economies.
- Continue to update the CPI basket to ensure it reflects current household purchasing patterns.

Close data gaps and enhance economic insights

- Expand the scope of economic measurement to include new and emerging economic trends.
- Strengthen integration between admin and survey data for more comprehensive economic statistics.
- Explore how we can optimise the value of our suite of official statistics to make data available faster and more regularly.

Engage internationally to shape and implement new standards

- Participate in the OECD, IMF, and United Nations (UN) forums to help shape global economic measurement approaches.
- Conduct environmental scanning to identify existing data sources that allow us to align with new standards.
- Develop a structured transition plan to adopt international reporting updates without disrupting data continuity.

Strengthen customer and partner engagement

- Work closely with policymakers, businesses, and economic analysts to ensure data meets real-world needs.
- Provide advisory services to help customers and partners interpret and apply economic data effectively.
- Build partnerships with academia and industry to improve economic modelling and forecasting capabilities.

What success looks like for Stats NZ

- New Zealand's macroeconomic statistics align with international best practice, maintaining global credibility and investor confidence.
- Modernised systems allow Stats NZ to respond more flexibly to the data requirements of emerging economic trends and challenges.

What success looks like in the wider context

- More frequent, relevant economic data enables stronger fiscal and monetary policy decisions.
- Businesses, government, and researchers have greater access to timely, accurate, and comprehensive economic insights.
- Better integration of environmental and economic data supports sustainable policymaking and investment.

How we will show progress

Stats NZ will show progress through the following impact indicators:

- expansion of high-frequency economic indicators
- enhanced access and use of economic data by key stakeholders.

Organisational health and capability

Our four strategic priorities are distinct in focus but are all enabled by the focus areas outlined below. Over time, we will build the organisational capabilities outlined in the focus areas to enable us to achieve our 2040 strategic ambition.

As we begin implementation, we will develop a suite of performance measures to track progress. These measures will be incorporated into our performance framework. In the interim, we will use qualitative reporting to describe early shifts in how we operate and deliver, and we will update our performance reporting in future annual reports as these measurement approaches mature.

Streamlined, sustainable flow of customer value

This focus area enables the delivery of products and services to customers from start to finish. Capabilities include coordinating work across different business areas, sharing and connecting data from different sources, integrating and linking data, and making sure our products meet customer needs and deliver real value.

Open and trustworthy engagement

This focus area enables the maintenance and strengthening of key relationships inside and outside the organisation, which helps build trust as we work together and adapt to change. Capabilities include engaging meaningfully and consistently at scale, managing our enabling legislation and policy settings, and building reciprocal relationships with customers and partners in the New Zealand data system.

Prioritisation, informed governance, and decision-making

This focus area enables the use of evidence and performance information to prioritise work and manage resources effectively, balancing risk, cost, and the value of changes. Capabilities include strengthening our governance capability, planning capability shifts that support delivery of our strategic ambition, and implementing a prioritisation framework to allocate resources more effectively.

Integrated business and digital-led innovation

This focus area enables us to become an agile and customer-focused organisation by streamlining processes, technology, and people's skills to create a smooth and resilient way of working. Capabilities include aligning people's skills and roles with the organisation's future way of working, expanding cloud technology and automation to improve and streamline digital processes, and enabling teams from different areas to work together to deliver projects and activities.

Our foundations

Over the next three years, we will realign our people, resources, systems and processes to the focus areas that support our long-term strategic ambition, while seeking more efficient, innovative ways of working to deliver within existing funding.

Our people

We are building a future-ready workforce that is digitally capable, diverse, and able to be mobilised to drive innovation.

To strengthen our workforce, we will:

- **expand digital and analytical skills**, embedding expertise in AI, automation, and data integration to enhance how we collect, process, and analyse information
- **improve our business processes** with more robust contract management practices, and updated conflict-of-interest policies, accountability, and complaints management processes
- **continue to roll out our shared leadership model**, which recognises different types of leaders, especially technical experts, leveraging their unique value and developing their influencing and decision-making skills
- **foster a culture of inclusion and equity**, expanding leadership pathways for underrepresented groups and embedding fair, bias-free recruitment and pay-setting practices
- **deliver to our te reo Māori language plan** in line with the Māori Language Act 2016
- **prioritise health, safety, and wellbeing**, strengthening risk management and workplace accessibility.

Our customers and partners

Stats NZ is moving beyond transactional relationships to build enduring, trusted partnerships that support the safe and effective use of data across New Zealand. We are embedding early and meaningful reciprocal engagement, ensuring customers, iwi partners, and other partners are actively involved in shaping how data is collected, used, and shared.

To strengthen our partnerships and customer engagement, we will:

- **build confidence in data stewardship**, ensuring transparency and strong governance in how data is collected, stored, and used to improve outcomes for New Zealanders
- **implement enduring early and meaningful engagement**, supporting delivery of outcomes we agree on with our partners
- **enhance system-wide collaboration**, working across government and the private sector to align data practices and reduce duplication
- **expand accessibility and engagement**, making it easier for businesses, communities, and individuals to work with us and provide and access data to support decision-making that benefits New Zealanders.

Our resources

Stats NZ is shifting to a platform-based model that reduces system fragmentation, improves efficiency, and enables digital innovation. We are investing in foundational digital platforms to standardise processes, enhance interoperability, and make better use of data across government.

To use our resources efficiently, we will:

- **modernise our technology landscape**, reducing reliance on multiple bespoke systems and embedding multi-functional digital platforms
- **enhance automation and AI capabilities**, streamlining data collection, processing, and analysis to reduce manual effort, improve scalability and productivity and reduce costs
- **optimise data infrastructure** for secure, efficient ingestion and management of admin, survey, and integrated data assets and to allow faster delivery of new data products

- **embed sustainability in operations**, aligning with the Carbon Neutral Government Programme to reduce our environmental impact.

Our systems and processes

To operate with greater speed, efficiency, and consistency, Stats NZ is embedding integrated systems and cross-functional ways of working.

To integrate our systems and work better together, we will:

- **enhance risk and security frameworks** to keep data safe
- **improve governance and decision-making**, using performance information and evidence to prioritise investment and streamline processes
- **embed enterprise-wide prioritisation**, ensuring resources are allocated effectively to maximise public value
- **leverage integrated statistical and responsible data-management frameworks**, moving towards admin data first while ensuring quality data and insights, for the benefit of New Zealanders
- **build process automation and digital workflows** in alignment with algorithm best practice, reducing reliance on manual interventions and improving data timeliness.

Risk and assurance

We are improving and strengthening Stats NZ's essential assurance functions and capability as part of the Misuse of Data Remediation Programme. Areas being improved and strengthened include legal and privacy, assurance and risk management, governance, and policies. We will also be improving systems, processes, and training.

These elements are part of informed governance and decision-making, which help enable and safeguard our work and support achievement of our strategic priorities.

This activity will be supported through a culture of transparency, continuous review, and improvement.

Stats NZ's executive governance framework

Stats NZ's executive governance system is led by the Strategic Governance Board (SGB). SGB is made up of the Chief Executive (Chair) and the executive leadership team. SGB oversees our strategic direction and strategic risks, and acts as the organisation's conscience. It decides what we want to achieve, by when, and what is important to us along the way.

SGB is a forum for testing and pushing our thinking on how we are evolving to meet the challenges of our operating context. It ensures all the elements of our strategy come together as a whole, and it makes decisions on where we need to speed up or slow down. It looks to the external environment to understand what that may mean for the landscape that we operate in and our plans to deliver for New Zealanders.

The **Risk and Assurance Committee** provides strategic and operational advice, challenge, and insight to the Chief Executive about the effectiveness and adequacy of risk and assurance in relation

to functions, processes, and activities across Stats NZ and the wider system. As an external advisory committee, it has no management responsibility.

The **executive governance committees** govern our performance, delivery, and capability, which include our people, in-year budgets, risks, systems and standards, and technology infrastructure, with an enterprise lens.

