



## Legislative review: Flexible, future-focused data and statistics legislation

**Data is a valuable asset and can produce meaningful insights and evidence to inform policy and decision-making. As with any asset, the way it's looked after and managed is critical.**

Stats NZ is supporting and empowering agencies to use data more effectively – by creating the tools and resources to increase their capability, removing roadblocks to accessing data, and reducing costs – so they can deliver better outcomes for New Zealand.

At the heart of this work is transparency, trust, and integrity around the use of data the government holds on behalf of New Zealanders.

To support the government's priority to get more value from data to help inform decisions, shape policy, and improve service delivery decisions, the State Services Commissioner designated Stats NZ as the lead agency for government-held data. Government Statistician and Chief Executive Liz MacPherson was appointed to the newly-created role of Government Chief Data Steward (GCDS).

The GCDS is responsible for overseeing the development of policy, infrastructure, strategy, and planning, to develop capability and the use of data across government.

Recognising that data is a taonga for Māori, Stats NZ will ensure we steward data responsibly with, and for, future generations. We're also working with Māori to help build their data capability, access more of their data, and use it as a strategic asset.

### Why change is needed

The world of data is changing quickly and it's expected to continue to do so as new technologies are adopted, the capabilities of data users increase, and new data sources are created. Improved access and better use of data can help prevent problems and identify opportunities to create better outcomes for New Zealanders.

The catalyst for the review of the current legislation – the Statistics Act 1975 – was to ensure there was clear accountability for the way data is collected, managed, and used.

The Statistics Act 1975 has a narrow purpose: to produce national statistics. More than 40 years on, it's no longer fit-for-purpose, and was designed before other key legislation was enacted – for example the Official Information Act 1982, the Privacy Act 1993, and the Public Records Act 2005.

The current Act doesn't even refer to 'data'. When it was enacted, the modern concept of privacy hadn't been developed and statistics were produced in hard copy.



## New legislation

New data and statistics legislation can reflect the modern and future-focused data environment. It can shape how we'll work in the future by keeping pace with the increasing capabilities of data users, and the creation of new data sources.

It can ensure the right safeguards and protections are in place to guarantee New Zealand's data is used appropriately. New legislation can also help increase the economic, social, and environmental benefits that can be derived from data.

While recognising data as a strategic asset, new legislation will need the flexibility to keep pace with change, and respond to the current environment and to a future which can't be fully envisaged.



Ahead of the game:  
modern and future focused



Treaty partnership reflected



Data recognised as a  
strategic and precious asset



Safeguards and protections  
in place

## Benefits

Benefits of the new legislation can include:

- enabling the production of trustworthy official statistics, data, and analysis
- creating faster and easier access to a greater range of data services and products for data users
- contributing to better evidence-based policy and decision-making
- supporting the Crown's Treaty partnership with Māori in relation to data and statistics
- increasing administrative efficiency
- reducing compliance costs for data suppliers
- supporting the outcomes sought from government data initiatives.

## Who we're working with

We're taking a collaborative approach to the review, ensuring a wide range of key stakeholders – including government agencies, iwi and Māori, business, data innovation companies, NGOs, as well as the research and academic sectors – have active input.

## When will the new legislation be in place?

New data and statistics legislation is expected to be enacted in 2019/20.

## Contact us

If you'd like more information, have a question, or want to provide feedback, please email [opendata@stats.govt.nz](mailto:opendata@stats.govt.nz).

## Connect with us