



Open data: Data that can spark and enable new ideas

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.

What is open government data?

Open government data is non-personal, unclassified, and non-confidential government-held data that's easily accessible, openly licensed, and available in a machine-readable format (so it's easily reused by computer programs).

Our collaborative approach to open data means we're engaging with data users and suppliers – such as communities, businesses, and government – to ensure better quality data is released.

Why is open data important?

The government holds a vast amount of data on behalf of New Zealanders. Increasing the availability of open government data will:

- drive innovation and contribute to New Zealand's economic, social, and environmental progress
- support the accountability of government agencies to New Zealanders
- encourage engagement with government.

Stats NZ's role in supporting agencies

Our goal is to accelerate the release of open government-held data by encouraging and supporting agencies to manage and proactively release their open data for reuse, and to engage regularly with data users.

First we're talking to them to find out what support they need to release open data, then we're developing and delivering the required resources, training modules, and guidance.



‘Open by design’

Our focus is on enabling agencies to build an ‘open by design’ approach into their data management and governance. This means the ability to release open data is embedded as an integral part of the process from the beginning.

NZ Open Data Action Plan

Vision

New Zealand is maximising the value of government open data.

The Open Data Action Plan will:

- Increase access to government-held data
- Increase the use of data
- Build an open by design culture.

Innovation through open data: data.govt.nz

The New Zealand Government releases its open data on data.govt.nz. Users can search for, explore, and download thousands of freely usable datasets (collections of data), and find out how to use and release open data effectively.

The website’s purpose is to help people discover and use open data easily. It also empowers and enables informed decision-making and problem-solving for citizens and business.

Currently more than 5,250 open government-held datasets are available at data.govt.nz. And that number is growing steadily.

Case studies are also available on <https://www.data.govt.nz/case-studies/>, demonstrating how open data has led to innovation, including new tools, services, and knowledge.

Examples of case studies

- ANZ Bank combined open data from Customs, and from Alcohol Available for Consumption, and Business Demography statistics to create craft beer industry insight reports.
- MRCagney combined open data and a mapping interface to help people find the most affordable suburbs for housing, for their circumstances.
- Nest Finder combined information from the Department of Conservation and Land Information NZ to develop maps and accommodation information for tourists in New Zealand – with or without internet connection.
- The MarineMate app was developed using open data from multiple sources to show, for example, tide timetables, boat ramps, mooring zones, navigational safety updates, and council bylaws.

Copyright and sharing

The New Zealand Government Open Access and Licensing framework provides guidance on how copyright owners can use Creative Commons licences to allow people to safely reuse the data agencies release.

<https://www.ict.govt.nz/guidance-and-resources/open-government/> has more information.

Contact us

If you’d like more information, have a question, or want to provide feedback, please email opendata@stats.govt.nz.

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