

11 December 2025

Via email: consultation@stats.govt.nz

Tēnā koe

DUNEDIN CITY COUNCIL SUBMISSION ON PROPOSED DATA COLLECTION APPROACH AND CONTENT FOR THE CENSUS

1. Thank you for the opportunity to submit on the proposed data collection approach and content for the census.
2. The Dunedin City Council (DCC) uses census data in its strategic and operational planning, particularly for housing, transport planning, and community insights.

Submission

3. Overall, the DCC welcomes the proposed changes as detailed in the consultation document which will further inform its city planning and community development work.
4. The DCC supports the collection of any robust data that enhances its own data collection methods, such as the Residents Opinion Survey (ROS), Quality of Life (QoL) survey, and Levels of Services in its long-term plan, that will contribute to improving life for residents of Ōtepoti Dunedin.
5. The DCC supports delaying the full census until 2030 so that the new approach can be introduced in stages while the data collection approach is strengthened.
6. The DCC would appreciate being provided with any updates about the implementation of the new data collection approach, including data safety measures.
7. In principle, the DCC welcomes the proposed introduction of tailored solutions that will inform and enhance its ongoing engagement with priority communities in Ōtepoti Dunedin, and looks forward to working with Stats NZ on developing these solutions.
8. The DCC notes the introduction of the Census Attribute Survey (survey) in 2027. It notes that the proposed sample size is small (60,000 households per year) and seeks more information from Stats NZ about how it will ensure that Ōtepoti Dunedin, as the largest city in the lower South Island, is included in these surveys.
9. The DCC has concerns about the spatial resolution of the data collected using the new approach. Based on the 2023 census, it can be assumed that, in future, much of the data sourced from admin datasets would be available at a fine scale, Statistics Area 1 (SA1).
10. The DCC is concerned that information collected from the annual surveys and tailored solutions will result in reliable statistics at a Territorial Authority level (TA), which measures the total population of the city. Without this data available at SA1 level, which measures at a scale of 100-200 people, there is a risk that important data will be missed.

11. The DCC uses SA1 data, such as languages, health indicators, and dwelling quality indicators, to inform its city development and community development work. It seeks assurance that this important data will not be missed through the new data collection approach, and would like clarification about how this will be addressed and managed.
12. Through the new data collection approach, the DCC requests that Stats NZ consider providing it with statistics about the student population of Ōtepoti Dunedin. This data has not previously been available through the census, and the DCC sees this as an opportunity to capture information about University and Polytechnic students, who comprise approximately 20% of the city's population and are an important factor in its strategic planning.
13. The DCC notes that it would be useful for its work if the data released in the new approach included a count of all students at the primary, secondary, and tertiary level, and their spatial distribution at SA1 level. The DCC requests that Stats NZ considers providing it with this information through the new approach.

Iwi Māori

14. Through Te Taki Haruru, it's Māori Strategic Framework, the DCC demonstrates its commitment to iwi Māori and to the Treaty of Waitangi. The DCC supports Stats NZ in its work collecting information to provide insights into needs and outcomes for Māori.
15. In regard to question four in the consultation document about collection data on iwi affiliation, the DCC recommends contacting rūnaka/hapū or iwi whakapapa/registration teams to uncover the number of registered members.
16. The DCC notes that while its recommended approach will not encompass all Māori who affiliate to that iwi, iwi may be able to provide a more accurate approximate or expected number of all iwi members.
17. The DCC notes the Te Kupenga I Māori Wellbeing Survey proposed for 2028. The DCC welcomes any opportunity to be involved in the development and dissemination of this survey.

Housing and Dwellings

18. The DCC's work in housing, including with Ōtepoti Dunedin's homeless whānau, is underpinned by its Housing Plan 2022.
19. The DCC already uses data provided by the census to inform the implementation of its Housing Plan, and welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback on proposed changes on data collection in regard to housing and dwellings.
20. In response to question seven, the DCC welcomes any extra data about homelessness. It suggests separating it into subcategories, such as "without shelter" and "temporary accommodation". The DCC also suggests including a further question around the time spent being homeless.

21. In response to questions 11 and 12, the age of the dwelling is the more useful information for the DCC in its work, rather than the size of the dwelling.
22. In response to question 13, the DCC would use responses to questions about “dwelling coldness” to inform longer-term planning for the provision of increased insulation in housing and dwellings. It suggests that a related question about the availability of heating would also be useful for this work.
23. Regarding the number of rooms (question 17), the DCC’s District Plan identifies ‘rooms’ in houses as being bedrooms and this is the basis for planning decisions. The DCC notes some continuity with the census definition and data collected accordingly would be useful.
24. The DCC notes that there are proposed data releases scheduled for transitional population measures (in late 2026 and 2027) and official population and dwelling measures in late 2028. The DCC welcomes the opportunity to be involved in the development and dissemination of these measures.

Priority Communities

25. The DCC welcomes the proposed approach to develop tailored solutions for priority communities, to better reflect the community and lived experience.
26. The DCC notes that these priority communities align with the priority groups in the DCC’s strategies and approach to community engagement, and looks forward to working with Stats NZ to ensure census data and content include the uniqueness and diversity of Ōtepoti Dunedin’s population. For example:
 - DCC staff are already working with Stats NZ on ethnicity data, and look forward to continuing this discussion
 - the DCC’s Disability Issues Advisory Group is a well-established and well-respected group which is actively involved in Council and community-decision making to enhance the lives of disabled people in Ōtepoti Dunedin. The DCC encourages Stats NZ to engage with this group in developing the new data collection approach and how it can be utilised in the city.
27. The DCC notes that the next Household Disability Survey is scheduled for 2033. The DCC agrees with the Future Census Independent Evaluation Panel’s recommendation to run this survey more frequently.

Quality of Life Indicators

28. The DCC participates in a long-standing joint research project with six other territorial local authorities to undertake a Quality of Life survey in each city every two years (QoL survey).
29. The DCC recommends that Stats NZ work with the QoL survey project team on a co-design approach for the census quality of life indicators. This will address potential issues such as

duplication of questions/data, and ensure that the resulting statistics are reliable at a TLA level.

Cigarette smoking behaviour

30. The DCC is currently undertaking a review of Dunedin's Smokefree Policy. In the review process, the DCC is using census data to inform the content of the refreshed policy, including expanding it to include products and devices beyond tobacco.
31. The consultation document notes that vaping is included in the annual NZ Health Survey, which provides data at a national level. The DCC requests that vaping be included in the census, so that this data can be collected at a local level to inform approaches to behaviour change around both smoking and vaping in Ōtepoti Dunedin.
32. The DCC works with the local offices of Health NZ and the Cancer Society on approaches to making the city smokefree. More extensive data from the census would be useful in informing this work.

Access to telecommunication systems

33. The DCC supports the proposal to collecting information on access to a cellphone at the individual level, rather than only at the household level.
34. Through its engagement across communities in Ōtepoti Dunedin, the DCC is aware of the barriers to digital inclusion, and the difficulties this can cause our residents. People on lower incomes and young people, of which the city has a significant number, are disproportionately affected by lack of access to technology as it can impede their ability to engage with businesses and others in the community.
35. The DCC welcomes the opportunity to work with Stats NZ on how information gathered about access to telecommunications systems can be utilised to address barriers to digital inclusion.
36. Going forward, the DCC sees technology being used more for local and central government processes, including voting, and information on cellphone access will assist the DCC in including more of its residents in democratic processes.

Main means of travel to work and workplace address

37. Census journey to work data and education data is one of the key components informing DCC's transport modelling.
38. The DCC notes that access to specific census data variables at detailed geographic level on request (SA1 or Meshblock) informs critical decisions about infrastructure development, assessing land use development, and demographic and urban planning.

39. The impact of residents' travel choices has a significant impact on infrastructure planning, and the DCC supports continuing to ask questions on this topic, including around working from home, and the potential to expand on these questions.
40. The DCC welcomes any opportunity to work with Stats NZ on ways it can request certain data, such as 'journey to work' and information at a detailed geographic level to inform transport planning and modelling in Ōtepoti Dunedin.

Conclusion

41. Thank you again for the opportunity to provide feedback on this consultation.
42. The DCC is available to be involved in the development of proposed data collection approach and content for the census, as it progresses.

Nāku noa, nā



Sophie Barker
MAYOR OF DUNEDIN
TE KOROMATUA O ŌTEPOTI