



Census 2018 includes new questions about housing quality and heating

- For the first time, in the 2018 Census everyone in New Zealand was asked if their homes were damp or mouldy. This question was added based on findings from the BRANZ House Condition Survey.
- Prior to the 5th House Condition Survey, a Stats NZ *Review of Housing Statistics Report* found there was little information available on the physical attributes of the housing stock, including dwelling quality. Housing quality was considered a Tier 1 (high-priority) statistic.
- Stats NZ determined that Census content topics need to reflect the changing information needs of New Zealand and be balanced with the ability to compare data over time.
- The consultation highlighted the importance of collecting information on aspects of housing quality that affect health and that the highest priorities were information about mould and dampness. In addition, content was determined on the basis that no specialist knowledge was needed to answer the questions included.



The Census also changed the question on home heating to include types of appliances rather than just fuel types. Different types of appliances that use the same fuel can have different effects on energy demands, heating costs and health.

Collaborators:



How was the Census content consultation conducted?

To determine final Census content, Stats NZ:



Undertook public engagement and consultation



Investigated whether information needs could be met from **other data sources**



Carried out survey development - further research, development of questionnaires and testing



Considered constraints, real-world change, respondent burden, classification reviews and international trends

Mould

Asking about the presence of mould is regarded as one of the easiest types of housing quality questions to answer and one of the best self-assessed measures of housing quality. It is less affected by individual perceptions than other types of housing quality information such as coldness.

The information will tell if the visible mould is greater than an A4 size sheet of paper. This provides a more reliable measure than asking whether mould is a minor or major issue.