

# Electoral (District Boundaries) Amendment Bill



New Zealand Council Of  
Christian Social Services

**April 2026**

## Tirohanga Whānui | Overview

The New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services (NZCCSS) welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback on the Electoral (District Boundaries) Amendment Bill. While we understand a need to update the timing of boundary reviews should the move to an administrative data-led census proceed, due to concerns regarding the data quality of this new census approach and the continued need for this data to be used in electoral boundary reviews we strongly oppose the proposed amendment.

## Taunakitanga | Recommendations

Our main points are:

### Item One:

While this amendment is being proposed to allow for the modernisation of the census, the review of electoral boundaries will still require census data to be used. There are considerable issues that have been highlighted by StatsNZ and other organisations regarding the quality of data collection through this new census approach (Science Media Centre, June 2025; Stats NZ, 2025a; Stats NZ, 2025b). The Regulatory Impact Statement suggests that the quality of data collection from the new census is outside the scope of the analysis, however, given the significant role that this data will continue to play in boundary reviews it is impossible to assess how boundary reviews will be conducted in isolation.

#### *Ongoing use of census data*

We have assumed that, in all scenarios for Issue 1, the census data produced by Stats NZ will continue to be used to calculate the electorate populations. To the extent to which there are concerns about the quality of data under the census modernisation program, this could undermine trust in the boundary review process. This issue is out of scope of the current analysis.

(Ministry of Justice, 2025)

While this Bill needs to pass in order for the census modernisation to proceed, it is essential that concerns regarding data quality of the census modernisation approach are addressed to ensure that the boundary review process is not negatively impacted.

**Recommendation One:** We would recommend that this Bill not proceed until concerns raised regarding quality of data collection under the new modernised census are addressed.

### Item Two:

The Bill proposes amending section 35 of the principal Act so that boundary reviews will take place every second parliamentary term instead of every 5 years following the census. The Independent Electoral Review Panel highlighted concerns regarding this approach as a move to a four-year Parliamentary term which has been proposed would result in the boundary review only taking place

once every 8 years (Ministry of Justice, 2025). We do not oppose an update on required timings of electoral boundary reviews, given that the existing wording risks more than one boundary review being required every electoral cycle, resulting in unnecessary cost. However, we strongly feel that should a move to a four-year Parliamentary term occur, 8 years between boundary reviews is too great. We would therefore propose amending the Clause to ensure that there is a maximum timeframe between boundary reviews should a move to a four-year term occur in future, for example 6 years. This would prevent a need to update this legislation again should parliamentary terms increase to four years.

**Recommendation Two:** We would recommend amending Clause 5 (which amends section 35 of the principal Act) to include a maximum timeframe between boundary reviews in case of a move to a four-year Parliamentary term.

### Ngā Tohutoro | References

Ministry of Justice. (2025). Regulatory Impact Statement: Census Modernisation and its impact on the Electoral Act 1993. <https://www.regulation.govt.nz/assets/RIS-Documents/Regulatory-Impact-Statement-Census-Modernisation-and-the-Electoral-Act-1993.pdf>

Science Media (June 2025). *Nationwide census scrapped – Expert Reaction*. <https://www.sciencemediacentre.co.nz/2025/06/18/nationwide-census-scrapped-expert-reaction/>

Stats NZ (2025a). Modernising our approach to the 2028 Census: Summary of submissions. <https://www.stats.govt.nz/reports/modernising-our-approach-to-the-2028-census-summary-of-submissions/>

Stats NZ (2025). Response to the Future Census Independent Evaluation Panel report: Evaluation of New Zealand’s future census options for 2028 and beyond. <https://www.stats.govt.nz/assets/Reports/Evaluation-of-New-Zealands-future-census-options-for-2028-and-beyond/Response-to-the-Future-Census-Independent-Evaluation-Panel-Report-Evaluation-of-New-Zealands-future-census-options-for-2028-and-beyond.pdf>

### Ko wai tātou | Who we are

NZCCSS has six foundation members; the Anglican Care Network, Baptist Churches of New Zealand, Catholic Social Services, Presbyterian Support and the Methodist and Salvation Army Churches.

Through this membership, NZCCSS represents over 100 organisations providing a range of social support services across Aotearoa. Our mission is to call forth a just and compassionate society for Aotearoa, through our commitment to our faith and Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

Further details on NZCCSS can be found on our website - [www.nzccss.org.nz](http://www.nzccss.org.nz).

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