

2040 & Beyond

Prepared for: TOKONA TE RAKI

May 2026

About this Research

This research has been designed by The Curiosity Company in partnership with Tokona te Raki to provide insight on what would need to be true of the New Zealand of the future for New Zealanders to want to stay or return.

METHOD

The research was conducted in two phases designed to harness the complementary strengths of qualitative and quantitative insight:



Qualitative

- 4 groups took part in online focus groups
- 1 - 1.5 hr conversations with:
 - **Permanent migrants** – NZ'ers aged 30 – 39 who have moved away and have no plans to return
 - **Temporary migrants** – NZ'ers aged 30 – 39 who have moved away but are planning to return
 - **Planning to leave** – 20 – 29 years olds who intend to leave NZ
 - **Immigrants to NZ** - entered the country aged 30 – 39 and established citizenship / residency

Designed to uncover the emotional and functional relationship with NZ, to understand the factors at play in informing migration decisions, and decisions to stay or return.



Quantitative

- 15-minute online survey
- **n=1,003 New Zealanders**
 - representative of the national population in terms of **age, gender, ethnicity** and **location**
- **n=270** booster of **Māori** participants, to ensure a sufficient number of participants for robust analysis of this group.
- Weighting on age and ethnicity is applied to the total sample of **n=1,273** to maintain national representation.

Quantifying among the broader NZ population their expectations, plans and aspirations for the New Zealand of the future.

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Context

Should I stay or should I go....

The increasing emigration of New Zealand citizens has become a significant policy concern. While New Zealand has historically experienced cyclical migration flows, recent years have seen substantial net losses of citizens despite positive net migration overall due to international arrivals (Statistics New Zealand, 2025). This phenomenon has prompted growing interest in understanding the factors that motivate New Zealanders to leave and the policies that might encourage them to remain. The literature suggests that emigration decisions are driven by a combination of economic, social, and psychological factors, including wage differentials, housing affordability, career opportunities, public service provision, and perceptions of future prospects

Drivers of New Zealand Emigration

- Economic opportunities and wage differentials
- Housing affordability and cost of living
- Career development, labour market size and labour market maturity
- Economic conditions and labour market confidence
- Public services and quality of life
- Social cohesion, trust and future confidence

Economic Opportunities and Wage Differentials

The literature consistently identifies economic opportunity as the primary driver of emigration from New Zealand. Research on migration decision-making suggests that individuals often compare expected lifetime earnings and career trajectories rather than current income alone (Borjas, 1989). Consequently, migration can be viewed less as a rejection of New Zealand and more as a rational response to perceived economic advantages elsewhere.

Australia remains a principal destination for departing New Zealand citizens due to its higher wages, larger labour market, greater career opportunities (Statistics New Zealand, 2025) and active recruitment efforts. The ease of movement between the two countries under the Trans-Tasman Travel Arrangement further reduces the barriers to migration.

Housing Affordability and Cost of Living

Housing affordability emerges as a second major theme within the literature. Rising house prices and rental costs have significantly affected younger New Zealanders' ability to achieve home ownership and financial security, and affect many New Zealanders' ability to get ahead. Studies examining migration intentions have found that housing affordability plays an important role in determining whether individuals perceive a country as offering long-term stability and opportunity (Demographia, 2024).

Qualitative accounts reported by *The Guardian* indicate that many New Zealanders view Australia as offering a superior balance between wages and housing costs despite affordability challenges in Australian cities themselves (The Guardian, 2025a).

Career Development, Labour Market Size & Market Maturity

Another frequently cited factor is the limited scale of New Zealand's labour market. While New Zealand offers high quality of life and attractive lifestyle benefits, researchers have noted that professionals in specialised fields often face a "career ceiling" due to the relatively small size of the economy (Inkson & Myers, 2003).

The literature indicates that highly skilled workers in technology, engineering, science, academia, and creative industries often migrate to larger economies where there are more opportunities for advancement. International evidence suggests that talented workers are particularly responsive to opportunities for professional growth and skill development (Docquier & Rapoport, 2012). This dynamic contributes to concerns regarding the loss of highly skilled workers and the potential for long-term productivity impacts. This is compounded when the ability to draw these people back has to rest on economic transformation (that the opportunities to apply these skills become available).

Economic Conditions and Labour Market Confidence

Macroeconomic conditions also influence migration decisions. Recent increases in unemployment and slowing economic growth have coincided with higher rates of outward migration (Reuters, 2025). Migration research generally finds that individuals are more likely to emigrate during periods of economic uncertainty, particularly when alternative destinations offer stronger labour market conditions (OECD, 2023).

The New Zealand experience appears consistent with this broader pattern. As economic confidence weakens, individuals may become more willing to pursue opportunities abroad, especially when migration pathways are readily accessible.

Public Services and Quality of Life

The quality and accessibility of public services represent another important factor in migration decisions. While economic motivations are often dominant, the literature emphasises that migration decisions are rarely based on financial considerations alone (OECD, 2023). Access to healthcare, education, transport infrastructure, and other public services contributes significantly to perceptions of national wellbeing and quality of life.

Recent qualitative research has highlighted concerns regarding healthcare access, workforce shortages, and pressure on public services as factors influencing some New Zealanders' decisions to leave (The Guardian, 2025a). These findings align with international research demonstrating that public service quality can influence both migration intentions and long-term settlement decisions.

Social Cohesion, Trust, and Future Confidence

Beyond material considerations, several studies highlight the importance of social and psychological factors. The Helen Clark Foundation's research on social cohesion suggests that trust in institutions, perceptions of fairness, and confidence in the future influence individuals' willingness to remain in a country (Helen Clark Foundation, 2026).

Migration scholars increasingly argue that decisions to stay or leave are shaped by perceptions of future opportunity rather than current circumstances alone (Czaika & Reinprecht, 2022).

Individuals may choose to emigrate because they believe their prospects (or those of their children) will be stronger elsewhere. In this regard, confidence in national direction and social progress may be as important as immediate economic conditions. This research looks into future confidence in detail.

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The ‘should I stay or should I go’ debate is well documented in the media. As these recent opinion pieces attest and the migration figures reflect, Aotearoa New Zealand is undergoing a period of uncertainty and precariousness.

This research set to out to look at the problem from a different perspective. What we really need to understand is not why people leave, but:

What would have to be true for young people to come back and build a future in NZ?

What does a good future look like and, how do we get there?

HOME › NEWS › NATIONAL

'10 times better': Why some Kiwis are ditching NZ for Australia

NEWS NATIONAL

NZ Herald, Sun, 19 May 2024, 9:58am

Why a record-high 201 NZers a day are emigrating

Australia chose compulsory savings & strong unions in 80s & 90s, while keeping capital gains tax; NZ did the opposite; Latest widening of wage gap follows tighter RBNZ policy & NZ Govt spending cuts

BERNARD HICKEY
SEP 11, 2025

Politics Migration

68,000 Kiwis left NZ in a year – but there is some good news

Glenn McConnell
January 22, 2026 - 1:31pm

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THE BULLETIN June 13, 2024

‘Brain drain’ déjà vu as New Zealanders leave the country in record numbers

Stewart Sowman-Lund
The Bulletin editor

The Bulletin

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Politics Politics

What’s so wrong with New Zealand that 30,000 people would rather live in Australia?

Glenn McConnell
July 11, 2025 - 5:00am

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'It's not a beat up': Ten Kiwis on the truth about the Australia brain drain

NEWS NATIONAL

Eva de Jong, Sun, 1 Mar 2026, 8:34am

THE BULLETIN September 18, 2025

New Zealand’s bad mood is getting harder to shake

Catherine McGregor
Contributing writer

The Bulletin

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NEW ZEALAND / BUSINESS

Record number of New Zealanders leave country

3:06 pm on 13 November 2025

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New Zealand is broken – and you’re dumb to stay

Verity Johnson

September 16, 2025 - 4:00am

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‘NZ is broken’ is a story we tell ourselves when we’re afraid

Ben Kepes | THE PRESS

September 16, 2025

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Meet the migrants betting their future on an optimistic New Zealand

Mildred Arman

September 17, 2025 - 4:00am

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Home / Money / Personal finance / Kiwis leaving for Australia: Is it really the promised land?

Kiwis leaving for Australia: Is it really the promised land?

17 May 2024



By Chris Schulz
Investigative Journalist | Kaipūrongo Whakatewhatewha

MEDIA RELEASE 12.05.2026

NZ’s migration story “more complex” than brain drain narrative

FUTURE SOCIETY

‘Hollowing out’: New Zealand grapples with an uncertain future as record numbers leave

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Key findings from the research

Key Findings: New Zealanders and change

1 Change for the future of the country is almost universally important for New Zealanders, and critical for many.

2 We have greater confidence in having the skills and capabilities to tackle the challenges of the future, than in our unity to do so.

3 The sense of personal responsibility to create a better future is high; and we believe as citizens we are capable to do so.

4 We are more confident in our knowledge of how to contribute to decision making, than the impact we can have, particularly at a national level.

5 New Zealanders feel we have a voice and that our vote matters but are not always listened to.

6 Among New Zealanders there is more civic trust than mistrust, but civic trust is stronger from a local than national perspective.

Key Findings: New Zealanders' outlook on the future

1 **Economic viability** is the single most consistent factor **shaping migration decisions** (housing, wages and job opportunities).

2 New Zealand is where we **feel at home**, but not always where we think we **can get ahead**. This is coupled with a low optimism for future of the country.

3 Yet, the reality is that most, whether by choice or personal constraints, **intend to stay in NZ** or, if we leave, to return permanently to live – likely driving a **high vested interest in change for the future**.

4 Our aspirations for the New Zealand of the future tend towards the modest – **security** (financial, employment and housing), **access to good quality healthcare and education**, **family wellbeing and connection**, and a **safe, green and more equitable society**.

5 New Zealanders see the route to change as an individual through **community engagement**, **civic participation** (ensuring our voices are heard) and **environmental safeguarding actions**.

6 Through a national lens there are calls for change to **address financial concerns** (the cost of living and job opportunities), focus on a **longer-term national vision** through political change and ensuring **healthcare and education** are a priority.

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The importance of change

**“If we just keep going the way we're going,
we will lose more and more... people do
need to step in.”**

There is a recurring tension evident that New Zealand is where people **feel at home** but not always where they can **get ahead**.



Emotionally valued

- Safety (in a local and global context).
- Natural beauty – and access to it .
- Community orientated
- A place of belonging



Economically constrained

- Economic realities create pressure to migrate or consider leaving, particularly:
 - Housing
 - Wages
 - Career opportunities

Economic viability is the single most consistent factor shaping **migration decisions** and **future expectations**.

Different groups experience this tension differently.



Migrants to NZ

Struggle with immigration and settlement overseas



Kiwis overseas

Wrestle with identity and distance from family



Young New Zealanders

See overseas experience as necessary for advancement

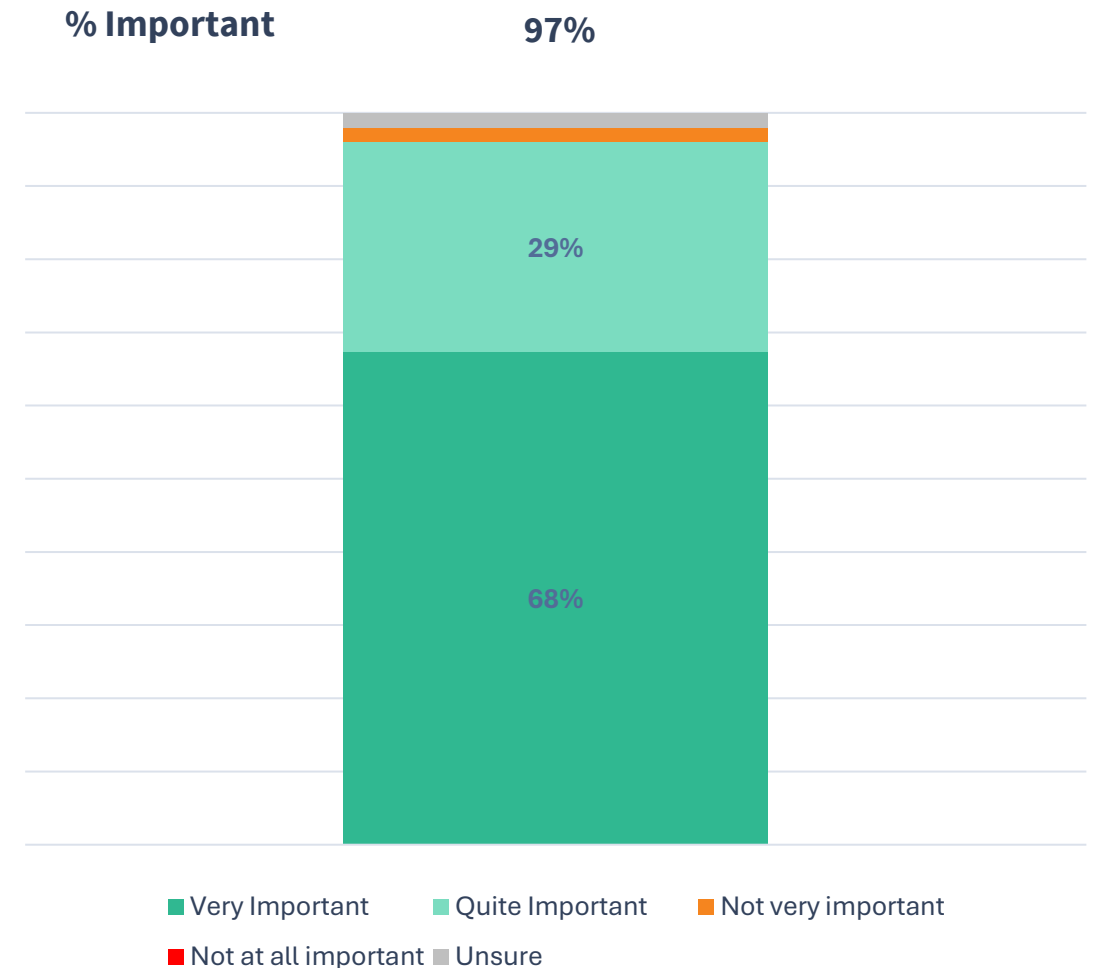


Those who remain value lifestyle but worry about affordability and national direction.



Nearly all New Zealanders see change as key for New Zealand's future – and for around two thirds, it is critical.

The importance of change



Q. How important is it for New Zealand to make changes for its future?

Base: Total sample n=1,271 (weighted)

Change is seen to be particularly important for females, Māori and those who plan to leave New Zealand for good.

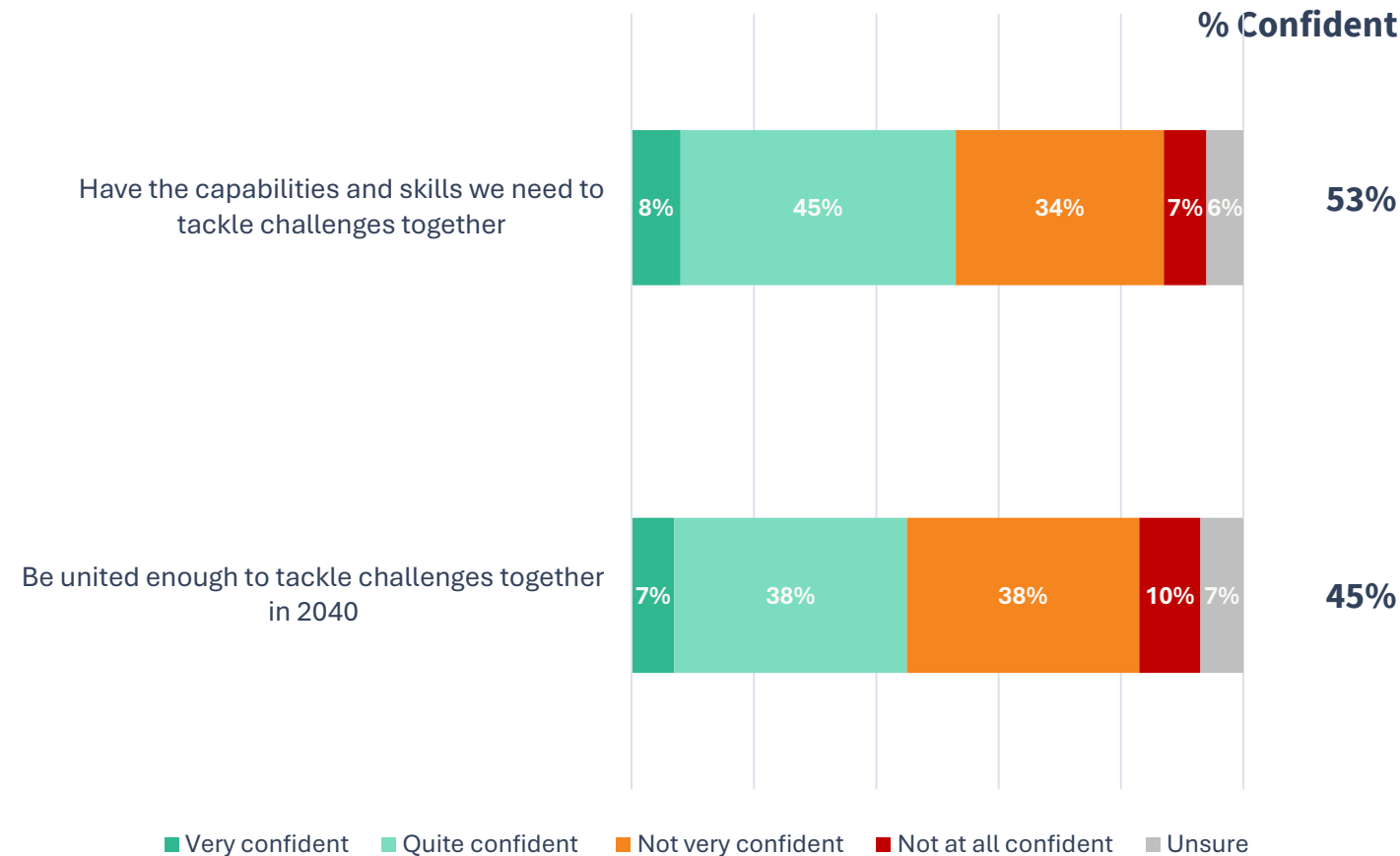
Significantly higher (% very important) Significantly lower (% very important)							
Males	Female	Māori	Intend to leave NZ permanently	16 - 34	35 - 64	65+	TOTAL
63%	72%	76%	89%	64%	69%	72%	68%

Q. How important is it for New Zealand to make changes for its future?
Base: Total sample n=1,271 (weighted)



New Zealanders have more confidence in our future capabilities and skills, than our ability to be united enough to tackle the challenges of the future.

Confidence in the face of challenges



New Zealand will continue to face challenges.

Q. How confident are you that New Zealanders will.....?

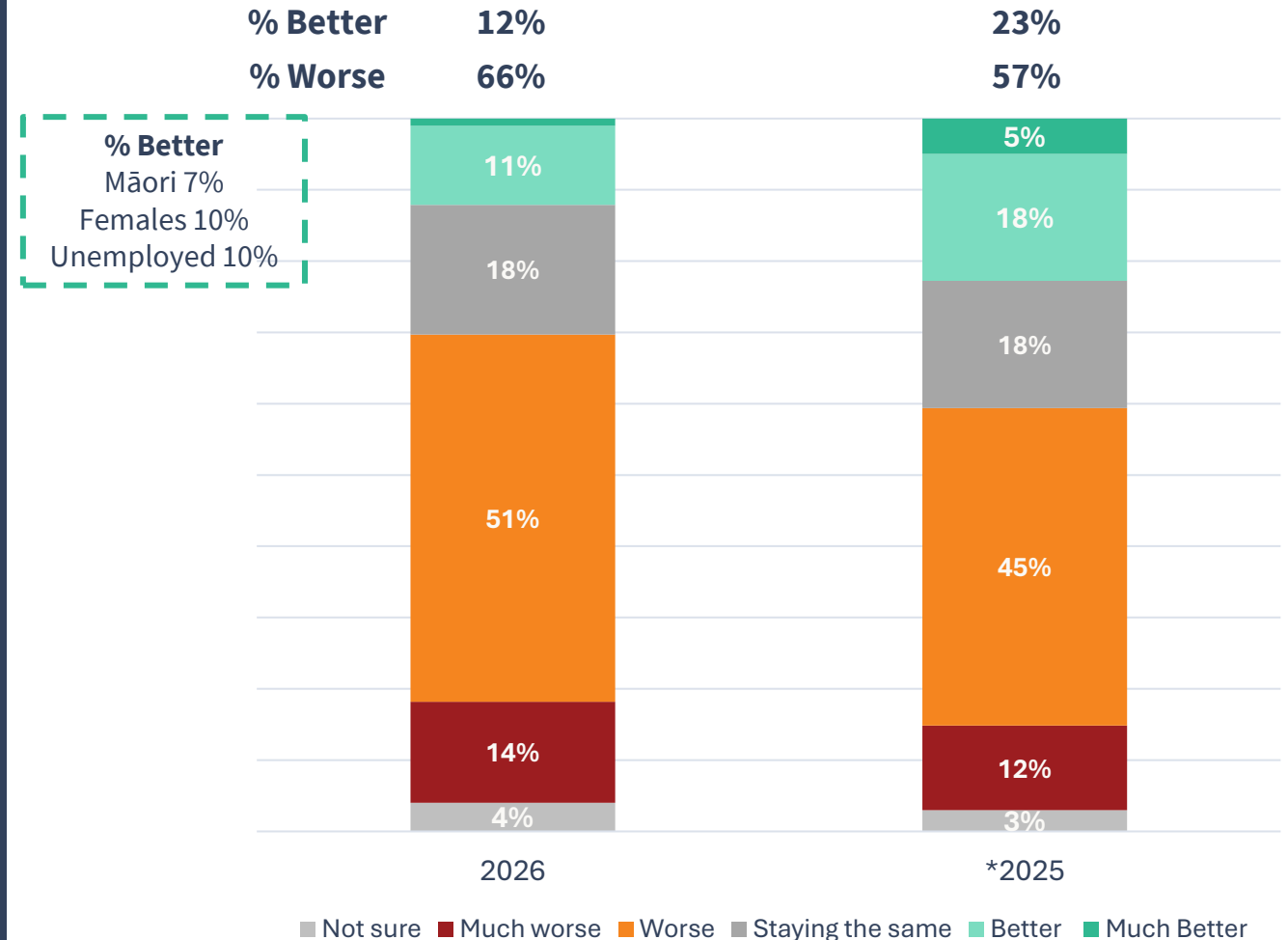
Base: Total sample n=1,271 (weighted)



It is unsurprising that the call for change is so strong – New Zealanders’ optimism for the country’s future is low (and shrinking compared to a year ago).

Māori, females and the unemployed have the lowest levels of optimism.

Optimism for New Zealand’s future



Q. When you think about New Zealand’s future, do you feel it’s getting better or worse?

Base: Total sample 2026 n=1,271, 2025 n=1,628 (weighted)

*Source: Futures Barometer 2025

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Empowering change

“Even just asking the question is a good start.”

“I think there's quite a lot of an apathy problem in New Zealand where people just kind of have a ‘she'll be right’ or a ‘I can't do anything’ type attitude...

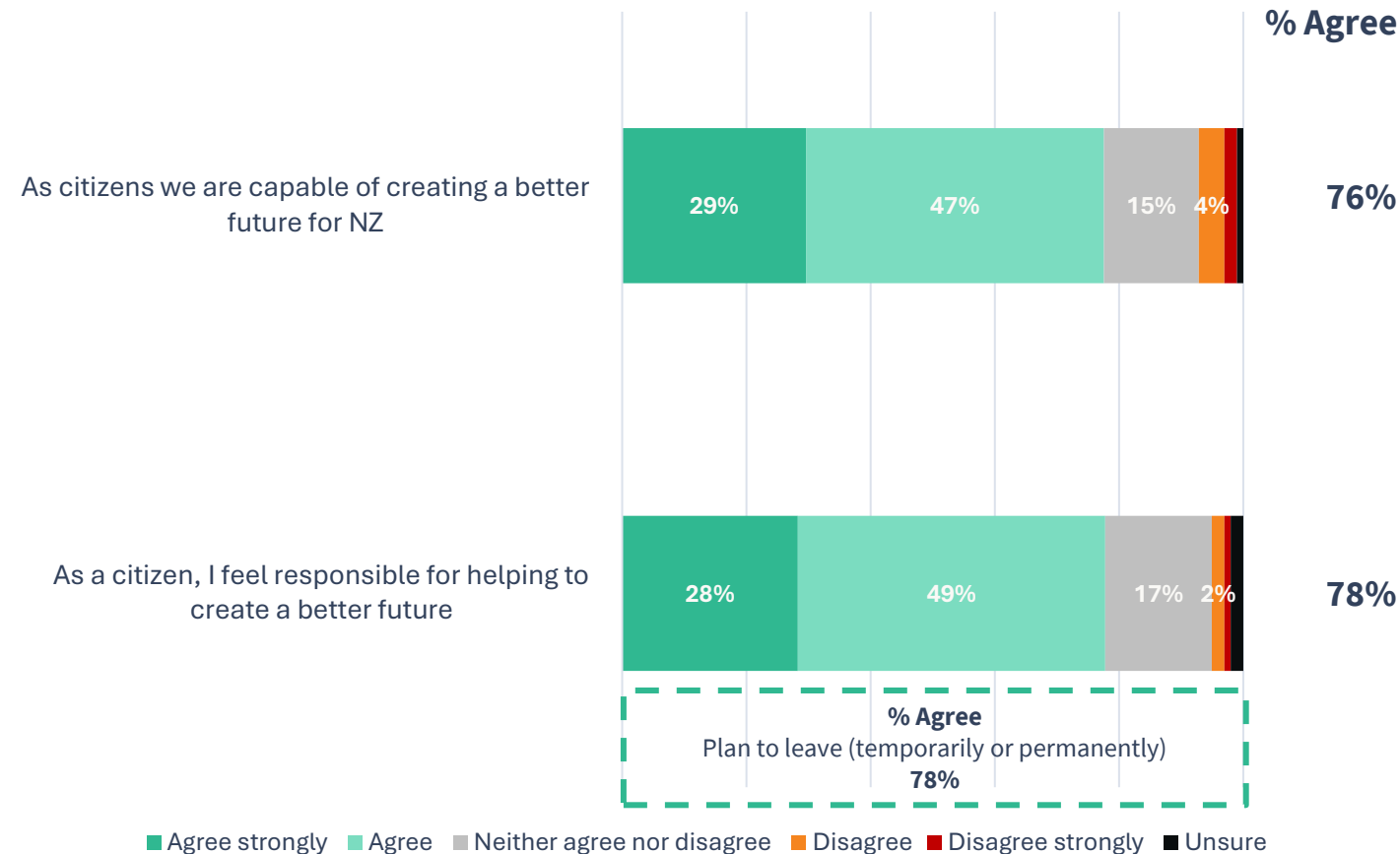
That kind of extends to a lot of areas and that's something that I think if we can invest more in: Hey, actually everyone can make a difference.”



New Zealanders for the most part feel responsible for and capable of creating a better future for New Zealand.

Even those who plan to leave, feel this sense of responsibility – although most of this group of leavers (nearly 8 out of 10) do intend to return to New Zealand permanently at some point.

Responsibility and capability for change



Q. How far do you agree or disagree with the following statements.....

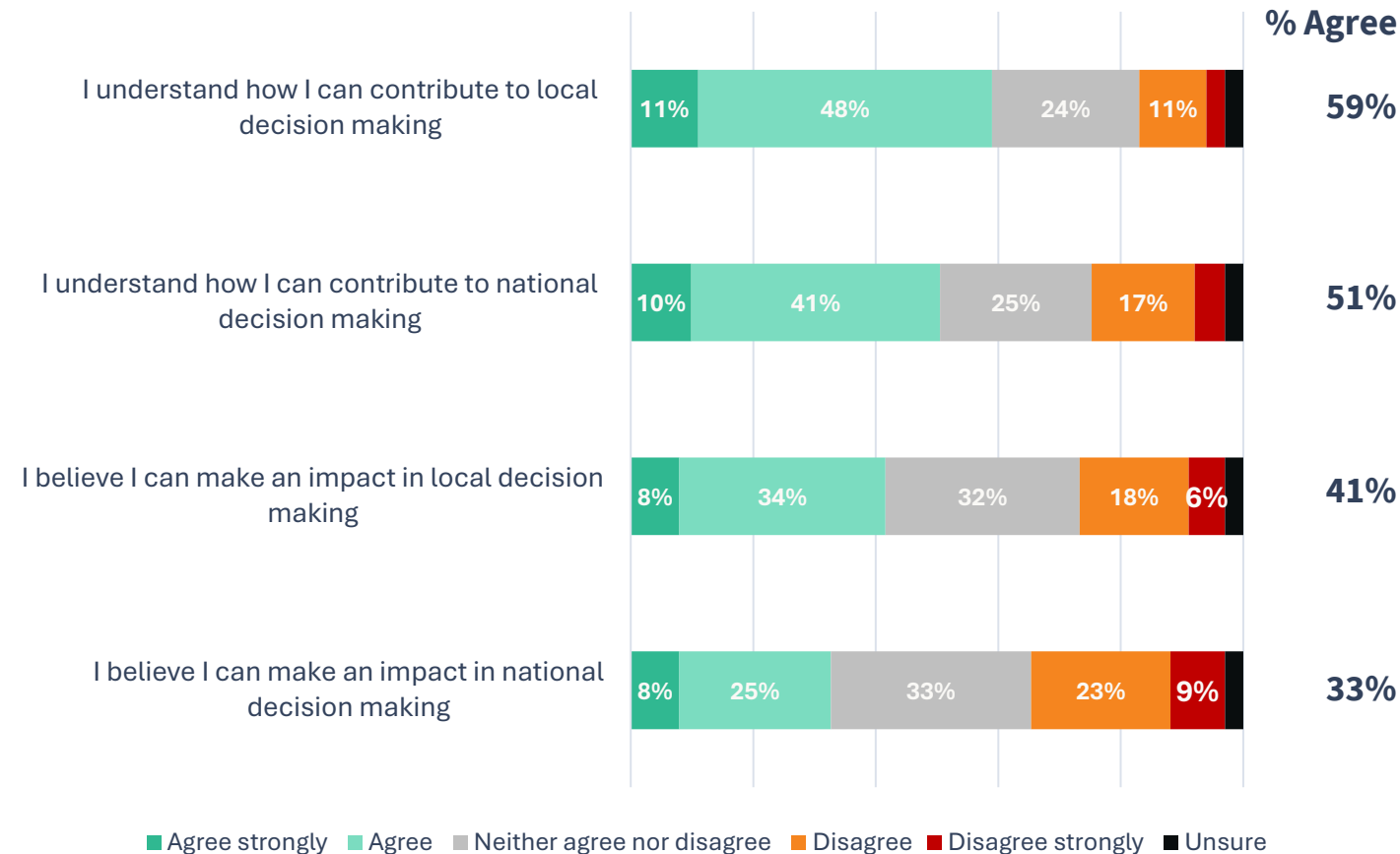
Base: Total sample n=1,271 (weighted)



Around half of New Zealanders understand how they can contribute to national and local decision making but are less confident in having an impact with their contribution – particularly at a national level.

“New Zealanders have a good strong voice....it’s just whether or not they’re listened to.”

Contribution and impact in decision making



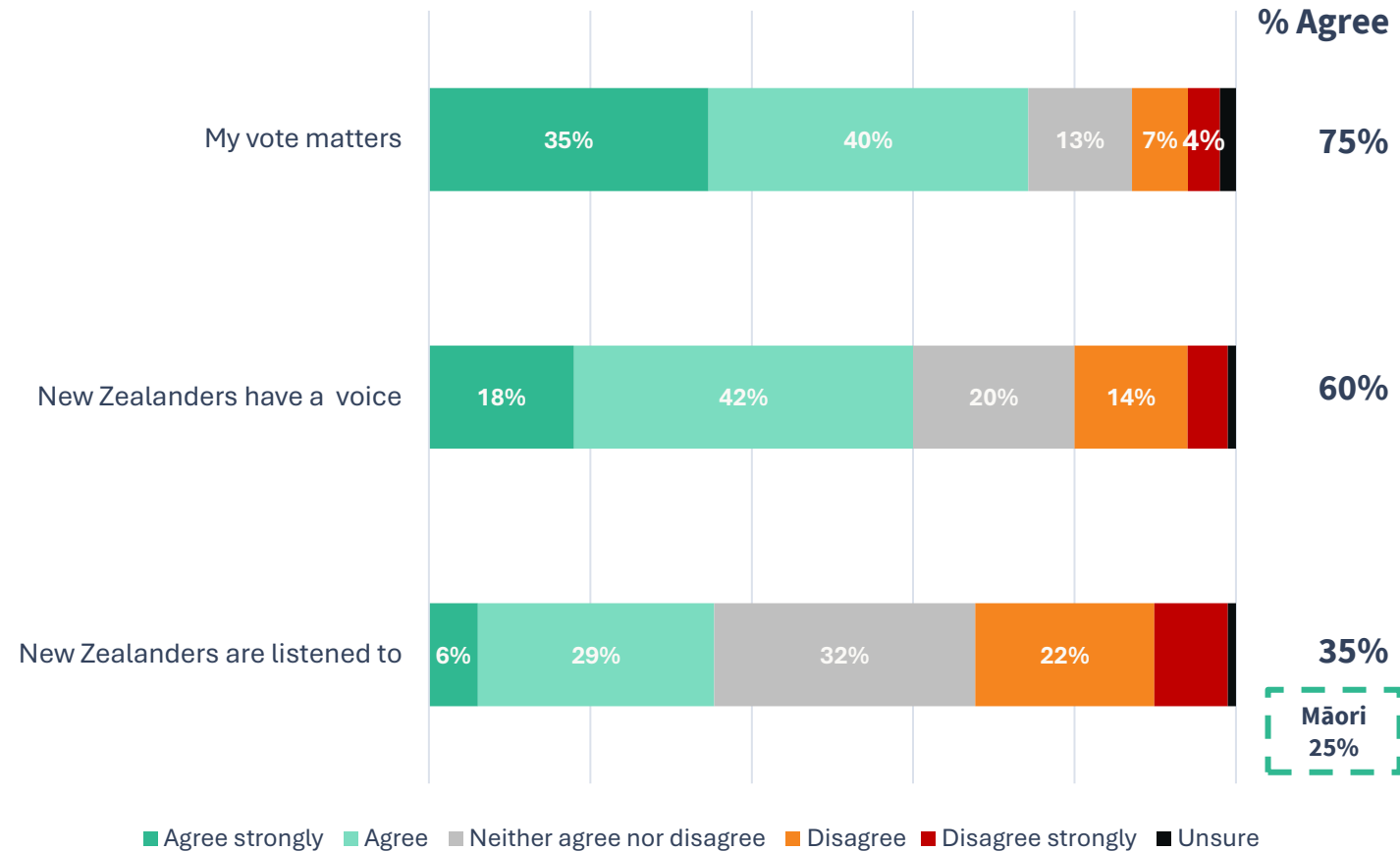
Q. How far do you agree or disagree with the following statements.....

Base: Total sample n=1,271 (weighted)



New Zealanders feel they have a voice and their vote matters but question whether they are listened to – particularly Māori.

Voices that matter



Q. How far do you agree or disagree with the following statements.....

Base: Total sample n=1,271 (weighted)



There is more civic trust than mistrust – but this does differ depending on whether a local or a national perspective is taken on the matter. Those with a local lens have stronger levels of civic trust.

Civic Trust

64% Trust

36% Little / no trust



■ A great deal of trust ■ Some trust ■ Little trust ■ No trust at all

Answered from	Trust	Little / no trust
A national perspective only	63%	37%
A local perspective only	77%	23%
Both a national and local perspective	54%	46%

Q. Overall how much trust do you have in the way your community is led and supported?

Q. When you were answering this question, did you answer from.....?

Base: Total sample n=1,271 (weighted)

What is the change New Zealanders want to see?



“What is one change you could make yourself to make the future New Zealand a place you want to be?”

When asked this question, people struggled to differentiate changes that could be made as an individual vs those made at a level outside of an individual’s control and, therefore, themes emerge from both perspectives.

Individual themes

Community engagement
Civic participation
Environmental action

National lens

Economic concerns
Political change
Health and education

Nearly one in five were not able to provide an answer and a small proportion stated change was out of their hands:

“There is nothing I can do in my position to contribute to NZ being a place I want to be as it is all government issues.”

“My voice is not heard, no matter how loud I am. We are stuck on a rut.”

An individual lens on change

Community Engagement / Social cohesion

“Be involved in community events and activities.”

“Be kinder to everyone.”

“Be more open to finding common ground with people.”

“Be more of a community orientated person.”

“Become more integrated and connected with my local community.”

“Treat everyone equally and with kindness and respect.”

Civic Participation

“Advocate for change.”

“Be a tidy kiwi and vote for our voices to be heard.”

“Be better informed politically about which parties and which individual politicians are working towards worthwhile goals.”

“Be more involved in local and national issues so my voice can be heard.”

“Become more actively engaged in decisions that affect NZ.”

“Continue to be as informed and engaged as I currently am, if not more so and be empowered and able to advocate for others in a way that empowers them to advocate for themselves. “

Environmental Action

“Solar power, electric vehicle, grow own vegetables, take public transport..”

“Be more environmentally aware and act accordingly.”

“By doing my part in recycling and cleaning up the environment when I can, caring for the planet will do a lot in the long run :).”

“Think about how me and my household can reduce our carbon footprint.”

A national lens on change

Economic concerns

“Bring living costs down so people can afford even the basics.”

“Cheaper living costs, healthcare and groceries and fuel”

“The living wage should be paid to everyone.”

“More job opportunities so that I didn’t have to even consider leaving my family behind to chase job opportunities overseas to utilise a degree I worked really hard to achieve.”

Political change

“Change the election terms to longer than 3 years. The cycles are so short that we can never carry on with any long term plannings or strategies.”

“Leaders who speak for their people and not the ideal.”

“Where working and doing the right thing is rewarded. A country with a plan not just 3-year political cycles.”

“No one in power listens, everyone is out for themselves.”

“Scrap two party system ruling through MMP.”

Health and education

“Better healthcare system.”

“More support in schools for all kids - they are the future.”

“Investing in education, better, higher skilled and higher paying jobs to keep Kiwis here in New Zealand.”

“Our access to health care is shocking as you basically need to plead severe pain before you can even get a doctor’s appointment.”

“Health and education is a priority.”

“Education at an early age on how social and financial systems operate. What mechanisms are in place for the average person to navigate them.”

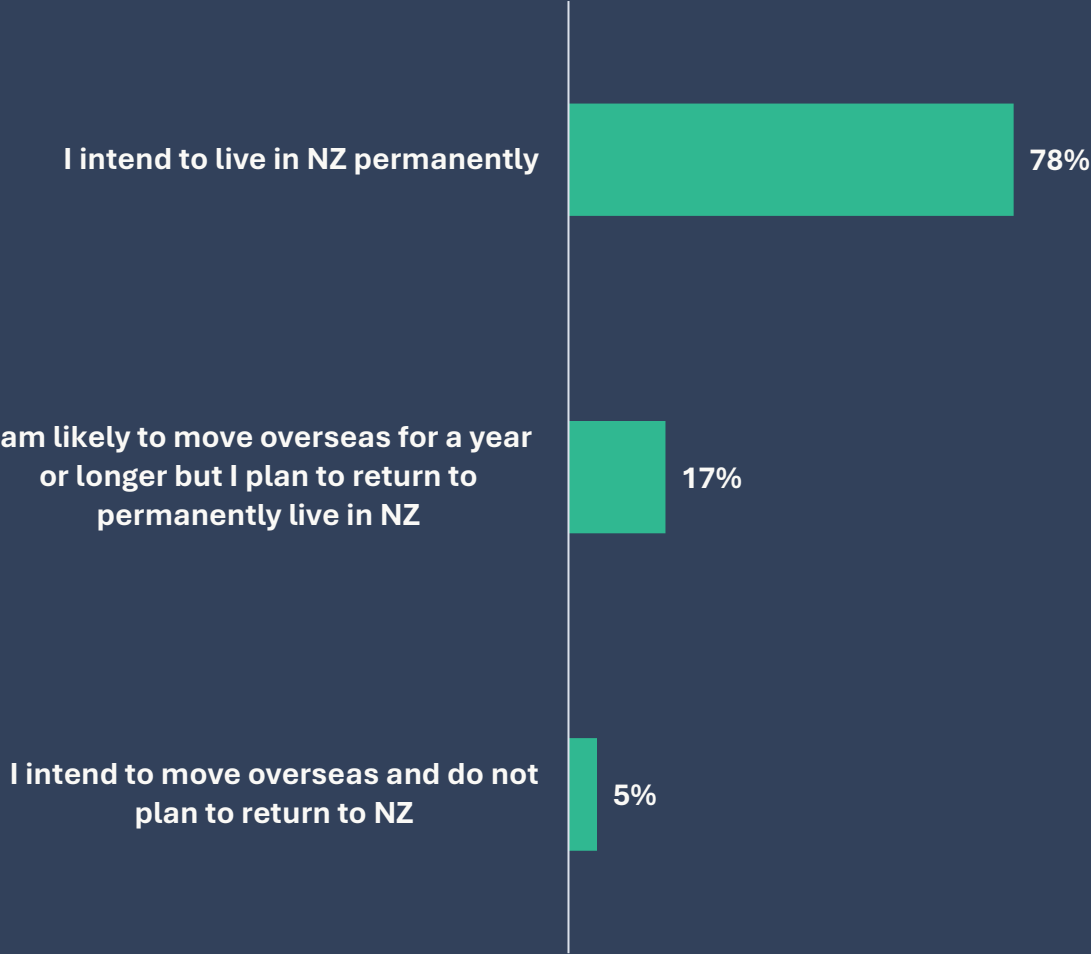
Q. What is one change you could make yourself to make the future New Zealand a place you want to be?

Base: Total sample n=1,271 (weighted)

“Alone I cannot do anything to change the future of New Zealand. It needs to be a combined effort with all peoples agreeing the way forward.”

What does the best possible New Zealand of the future look like as individuals and as citizens?

Migration concerns are well documented, but the reality is that most New Zealanders intend to stay or, even if they leave, return to NZ permanently – likely driving the vested interest in change for a better future.



Q. What best describes your feelings about remaining in NZ?

Base: Total sample n=1,271 (weighted)

NEW ZEALAND / BUSINESS

Record number of New Zealanders leave country

3:06 pm on 13 November 2025

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THE BULLETIN June 13, 2024

'Brain drain' déjà vu as New Zealanders leave the country in record numbers

 Stewart Sowman-Lund
The Bulletin editor

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Politics Politics

What's so wrong with New Zealand that 30,000 people would rather live in Australia?

 Glenn McConnell
July 11, 2025 - 5:00am

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'10 times better': Why some Kiwis are ditching NZ for Australia

NEWS NATIONAL

NZ Herald, Sun, 19 May 2024, 9:58am

“What does the best possible New Zealand of 2040 look like?”

New Zealanders’ personal aspirations tended towards the modest – security rather than prosperity, stability over getting ahead and economic relief over advancement.

Similarly, their vision for the nation was one of repair and restoration and echoes personal aspirations.

For you and your family

Financial / employment security and affordability
Housing security
Good health and healthcare access
Family wellbeing and connection
Safe, cohesive society
Environmental sustainability

For citizens as a whole

Fixing affordability – cost of living
Economic improvement
Fairness and equality
Quality healthcare and education
Safe society, reduced crime
Affordable, secure housing

Best possible New Zealand of 2040 - Personal lens

Financial / employment security and affordability

"Home ownership, steady jobs for me and my wife, some disposable income."

"That we have enough income for food, shelter and some pleasure without worrying."

"Being able to afford the necessities and not have to stress about incoming bills."

"Job security being able to afford the basics in life."

"Not paying someone else's mortgage and struggling between how much to spend on groceries and gas every week"

"Being able to afford the necessities on an average income. Not struggling from week to week to have or do nice things. Having savings in the bank."

Housing Security

"Warm, dry, comfortable home in a friendly and supportive community."

"My family can afford to buy their own house instead of renting and I am making enough money to support them in their older age."

"Me and my family are happy with a reliable income and safe housing, as long as we have that and freedom of belief, we will be fine."

"We are all in NZ and living in quality housing with our health good."

"Affordable housing and healthcare for all."

Good health and healthcare access

"Free, high-quality healthcare and education for all, so my family can thrive without financial stress."

"Better health care and access to it, better education, cost of living lower along with petrol prices."

"Dental and health care are free and accessible to all with workable waitlists."

"Affordable, multi-cultural, good standard of living and health care."

"A place where everybody gets a fair go, where equality of life for all people is more fair, where health care and education are appropriately funded and free for all."

Q. What does the best possible New Zealand of 2040 look like? Firstly, what does this look like for you and your family?

Base: Total sample n=1,271 (weighted)

Best possible New Zealand of 2040 - Personal lens (continued)

Family wellbeing and connection

"...all my family are healthy and still close together."

"Me owning my own house. Happily partnered with kids who are happy and healthy. And a clean New Zealand. Where it is financially stable."

"For me and my family, the best New Zealand in 2040 is affordable, safe, and balanced—where we have a stable income, a good home, and time to enjoy life together."

"Moving out of my family home. Owning a house with my partner and possibly having a family of my own. Living in New Zealand close to friends and family."

"My children being in secure employment, warm home, full bellies and their children in good quality education."

Q. What does the best possible New Zealand of 2040 look like? Firstly, what does this look like for you and your family?

Base: Total sample n=1,271 (weighted)

Safe, cohesive society

"A safe society where our family is able to get a good education and have good employment opportunities in the long-run."

"Enough money to live comfortably. Community spaces that promote intergenerational living. An end to discrimination based on ethnicity, gender, sexuality, disability, etc."

"Everyone getting fair and equal treatment and no homelessness and poverty and better mental and health services"

"It goes back to being a more caring society and one that is more equitable. The worse off are better looked after and the health service is properly funded. "

"Back to being a country of one again without racial tensions."

Environmental sustainability

"A cleaner environment and a happy community would be great."

"We still have the clean green NZ we have now. We can afford to live, not just week to week survival."

"Environmental issues are dealt with seriously and collectively."

"Lots of nature, safe and eco-friendly."

"...a green, environmentally friendly, carbon neutral society."

"Where everyone lives comfortably and peaceably in a green environment."

"Clean, sustainable environment and reliable public services."

Best possible New Zealand of 2040 – Citizenship lens

Fixing affordability – cost of living

“Improved quality of life through improved cost of living. Not living paycheck to paycheck and having to decide which bills to pay. Children and elderly being cared for.”

“Cost of living crisis abated and reversed.”

“Cost of living not being so high and hopefully everyone can at minimum afford to eat and live somewhere”

“Incomes that meet cost of living.”

“Wages have caught up with the cost of living, and fewer people feel the need to leave for places like Australia just to get ahead.”

“...a wage that covers the cost of living with a little more to save”

Economic improvement

“A stronger economy. Affordable housing and affordability to see a GP.”

“The economy is organised around wellbeing rather than profit. Everyone has what they need to live a good life.”

“A thriving economy, less social deprivation, a functioning healthcare, justice and education system, less social inequality, a thriving arts and multi-cultural society.”

“A stronger economy and the younger can afford a house.”

“Overseas kiwis come back home to a booming economy. Local products are cheaper here than overseas. Cost of living isn't too high

“Hopefully the economy will be better. More job opportunities.”

Fairness and equality

“Wealth distributed more evenly. The poor and homeless are helped more.”

“Robust social programs and support networks, less wealth inequality, access to healthcare (including dentistry), affordable housing, improved attitudes towards inclusivity.”

“Citizens will feel safe, valued members of NZ regardless of their standing in society, their race or beliefs. Having a sense of equality and fairness about our country where everyone can live comfortable lives with enough money and facilities to achieve this.”

“Better economic growth and more income equality

Q. And what does the best possible New Zealand of 2040 look like for citizens as a whole?

Base: Total sample n=1,271 (weighted)

Best possible New Zealand of 2040 – Citizenship lens (continued)

Quality healthcare and education

“I feel access to quality healthcare and education would be reliable and equitable, so everyone has a fair chance to do well.”

“Good education and healthcare, as well as safety and a degree of equality across the population.”

“...a healthcare system that pays well so there are no longer staff shortages.”

“Access to free healthcare with reasonable wait times...”

“Better health and education as a nation leading to better standards of living for everyone.”

“Health system that is working for all, everyone can get an education to suit their needs....”

Q. And what does the best possible New Zealand of 2040 look like for citizens as a whole?

Base: Total sample n=1,271 (weighted)

Safe society and reduced crime

“...reduced crime rate...more stringent justice system.”

“Hopefully less crime, more educated children.”

“It looks like a better sense of safety, economy, and cost of living.”

“A safe, connected community where neighbours look out for each other, and our kids grow up in a clean, green environment.”

“Safe. Secure. Tolerant. Positive and free from activism and division..”

“Safe community, inclusive, growing economy.”

“Safe, inclusive communities with strong social cohesion for all family members.”

Affordable, secure housing

“Affordable, warm homes for every whānau, no child grows up in poverty.”

“Everyone has basic access to safe comfortable housing, food, education. So many other things that unfortunately is probably not gonna happen.”

“...widespread high-quality public housing...”

“Affordable and manageable access to housing, food and health care for everyone at the same standard.”

“A place where people can live safely, have sufficient housing to meet their needs, where old age care, health, education and childcare are available for all who need these services.”

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Appendix:

Extra analysis

Optimism and pessimism for New Zealand's future – by demographics

■ Significantly higher
 ■ Significantly lower

Getting better

Females	Males	Māori	Intend stay in NZ permanently	Immigrant to NZ	NZ permanent resident	Hold a Bachelor's degree	TOTAL
10%	15%	7%	15%	19%	21%	19%	12%

Getting worse

Males	Female	Māori	Intend to leave NZ permanently	Intend to stay in NZ permanently	Intend to leave NZ temporarily	HHI \$130K +	TOTAL
58%	73%	78%	87%	62%	78%	56%	66%

Q. When you think about New Zealand's future, do you feel it is getting better or worse?

Base: Total sample n=1,271 (weighted)

Responsibility and capability for change – by demographics

Significantly higher (% Total agree) Significantly lower (% Total agree)

As a citizen, I feel responsible for helping create a better future

Intend leave NZ permanently	TOTAL
56%	78%

As citizens we are capable of creating a better future for NZ

65+	Intend leave NZ permanently	TOTAL
86%	51%	76%

Q. How far do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Base: Total sample n=1,271 (weighted)

Contribution to decision making – by demographics

Significantly higher (% Total agree) Significantly lower (% Total agree)

I understand how I
can contribute to
local decision
making

65+	Intend to stay in NZ permanently	TOTAL
69%	61%	59%

I understand how I
can contribute to
national decision
making

Male	Female	Intend to leave NZ permanently	TOTAL
55%	47%	28%	51%

Q. How far do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Base: Total sample n=1,271 (weighted)

Impact on decision making – by demographics

Significantly higher (% Total agree) Significantly lower (% Total agree)

I believe I can
make an impact in
local decision
making

Intend to leave NZ permanently	TOTAL
25%	41%

I believe I can
make an impact in
national decision
making

Male	Female	NZ European	Intend to stay in NZ permanently	Intend to leave NZ permanently	TOTAL
37%	29%	29%	34%	14%	33%

Q. How far do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Base: Total sample n=1,271 (weighted)

Voices that matter – by demographics



Significantly higher (% Total agree)



Significantly lower (% Total agree)

My vote matters

65+	35 - 44	Intend to stay in NZ permanently	Intend to leave NZ permanently	Unemployed	Retired	Single	TOTAL
91%	65%	78%	41%	58%	87%	65%	75%

New Zealanders have a voice

Intend to stay in NZ permanently	Intend to leave NZ permanently	TOTAL
62%	31%	60%

New Zealanders are listened to

Māori	Intend to stay in NZ permanently	Intend to leave NZ permanently	NZ Citizen	Hold a Bachelor's degree	TOTAL
25%	38%	11%	34%	44%	35%

Q. How far do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Base: Total sample n=1,271 (weighted)



Intentions to stay or leave NZ – by demographics

Significantly higher

Significantly lower

I intend to live in NZ permanently

16 - 34	45-65+	NZ European	Asian	Auckland	RoNZ	NZ Born	Immigrant*	HHI less than \$60K	Single	TOTAL
62%	91%	82%	63%	71%	81%	81%	71%	86%	65%	78%

I am likely to move overseas for a year or longer, but I plan to return to permanently live in NZ

16 - 34	55-65+	Asian	NZ European	Auckland	HHI less than \$60K	Single	TOTAL
32%	5%	25%	14%	23%	11%	27%	17%

I intend to move overseas and do not plan to return to NZ

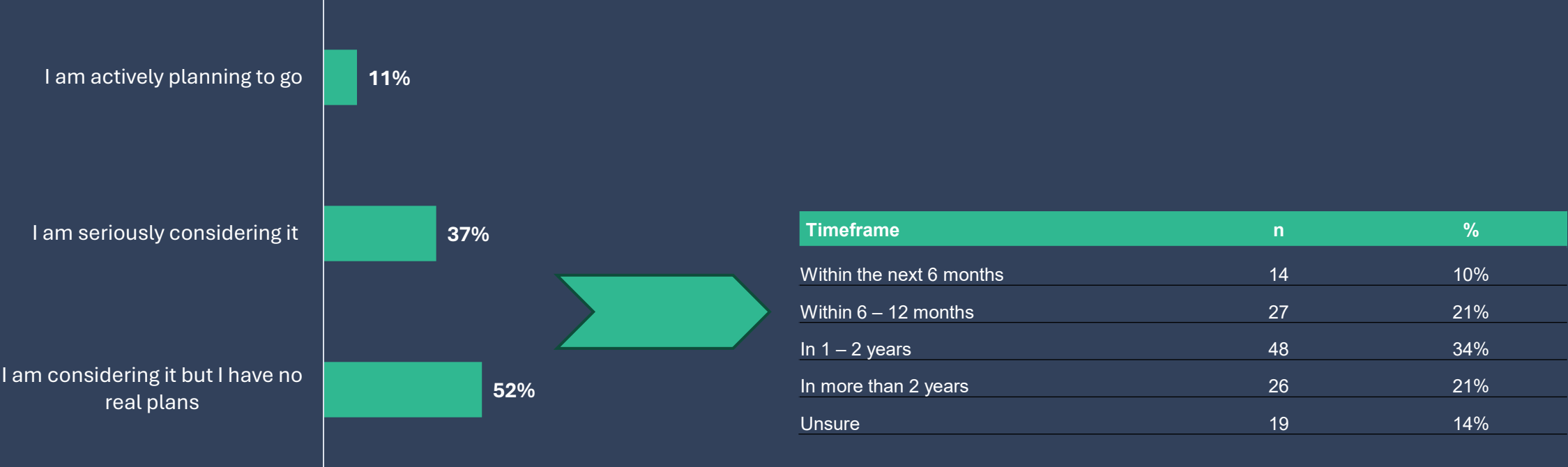
16-24	35 - 44	55-65+	Asian	NZ European	Immigrant*	Unemployed	Single	TOTAL
9%	10%	2%	12%	3%	9%	11%	9%	5%

Q. What best describes your feelings about remaining in NZ?

Base: Total sample n=1,271 (weighted)

*Defined as self and parents born outside of NZ

Those who intend to leave – stage of planning and time frame for leaving



Q. Where are you in your planning to move overseas?

Base: Intend to leave NZ permanently or temporarily n=272 (weighted)

Q. When do you plan to leave New Zealand?

Base: Actively planning or seriously considering leaving NZ n=134 (weighted)

Qualitative and Quantitative insight reveals that a deep emotional connection to New Zealand creates a desire to stay, despite economic frustrations.

Attachment centres on

Family / social connection
Cultural familiarity
Personal identity
Lifestyle and environment – natural beauty, pace of life, outdoor lifestyle
Sense of safety and peace (in a local and global context)



The intent to stay, however, is not always an active choice – some are bound by circumstance such as familial responsibilities, life stage and economic viability.

Qualitatively, across nearly all groups, economic considerations dominate decisions about staying, leaving or migrating.



Common concerns include:

High cost of living in New Zealand

Housing affordability

Wage difference with Australia

Limited career progression or job availability



Kiwis overseas emphasise the psychological impact of migration, including:

Loneliness

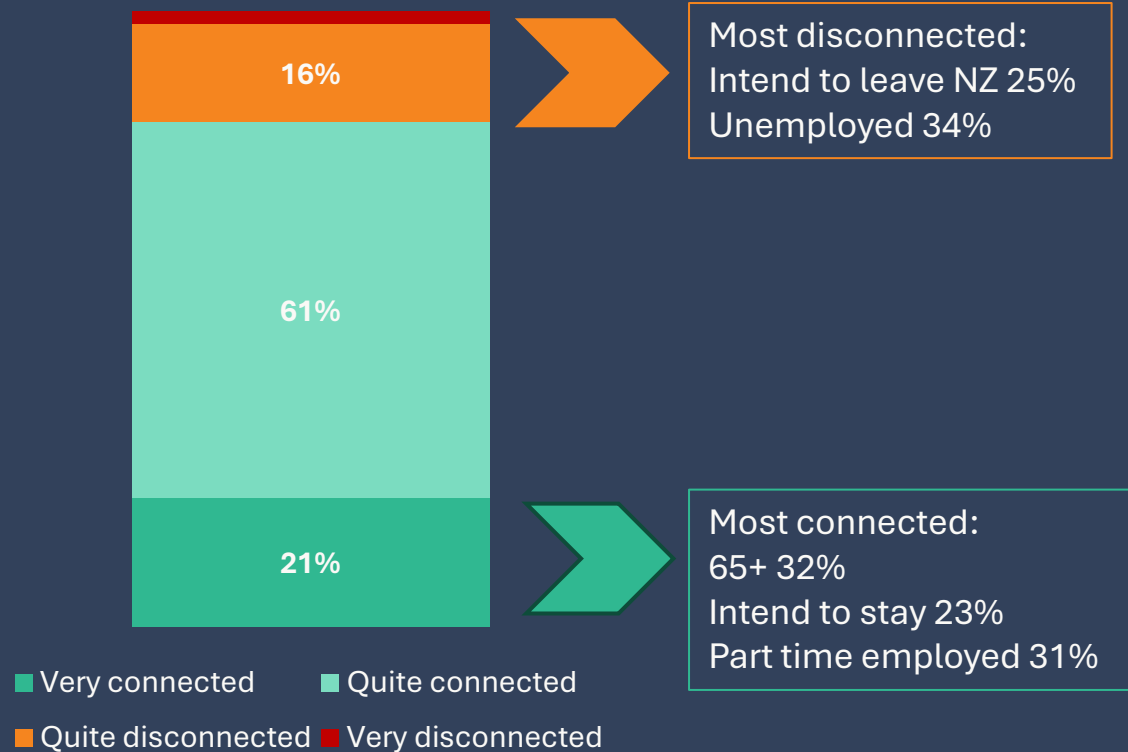
Cultural dislocation

Difficulty forming friendships

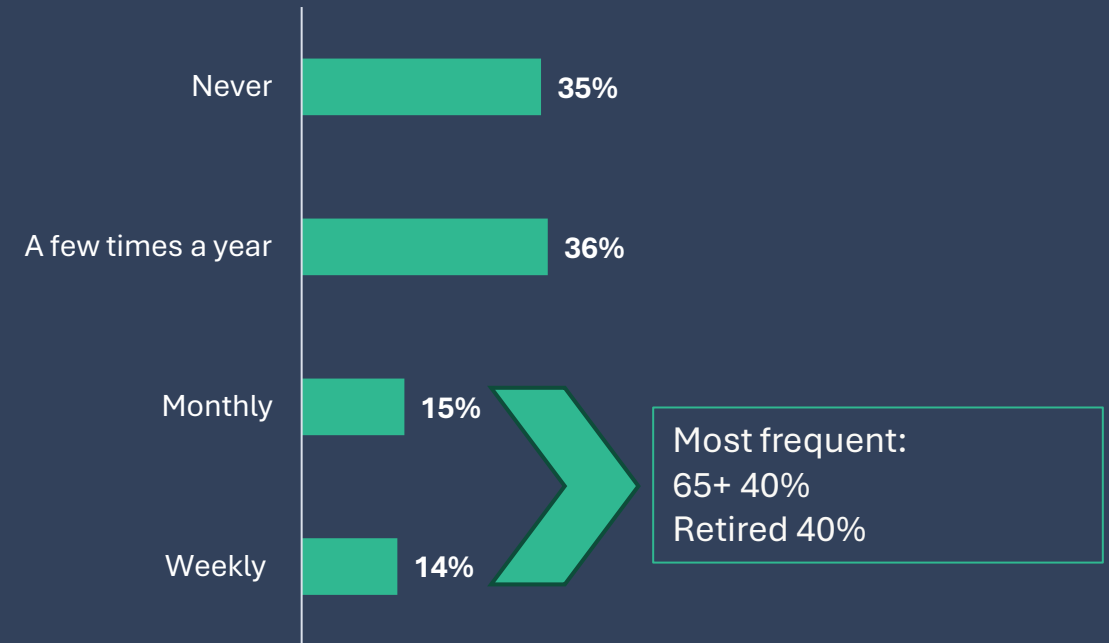
Feeling “between identities”

Connection and community event participation

How connected do you feel to the area where you live?



How frequently do you participate in community events or groups?



58% agree there are enough opportunities for them to engage with others in their community.

43% agree they feel encouraged to get involved or contribute to their community.

Community involvement – by demographics

■ Significantly higher (% Total agree)
 ■ Significantly lower (% Total agree)

There are enough opportunities for me to engage with others in my community

16-24	35-44	65+	Intend to stay in NZ permanently	Intend to leave NZ - total	Retired	Unemployed	Single	TOTAL
46%	49%	76%	61%	48%	74%	39%	45%	58%

I feel encouraged to get involved or contribute to my community

65+	Intend to leave NZ- permanently	Retired	Single	TOTAL
57%	19%	56%	32%	43%

Q. How far do you agree or disagree that...
 Base: total sample n=1,271 (weighted)

Cantrill's ladder



Q. Please imagine a ladder with steps numbered from 0 at the bottom to 10 at the top. The top of the ladder represents the best possible life for you and bottom of the ladder represents the worst possible life for you. On which step of the ladder do you feel personally stand at the **present time**?

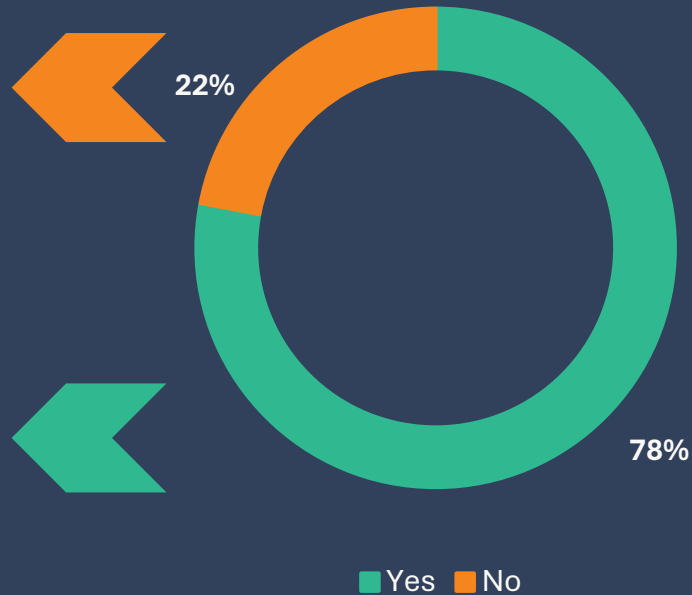
Using the same scale, on which step of the ladder do you think you will stand 5 years from now, if you stay in New Zealand?

Base: total sample n=1,271 (weighted)

Meaning and purpose

No:
Intend to leave NZ permanently 45%
Unemployed 37%

Yes:
Intend to stay in NZ 80%
65+ 86%



Key themes for those who do not feel their life has important purpose or meaning:

- Unemployment, redundancy and inability to find work
"I was made redundant twice in 12 months, and now 8 months on, I still don't have a job. I have a beautiful young family, but life is hard."
- Financial hardship
"Just surviving paycheck to paycheck"
- Health issues
"My increasing medical needs have removed my access to engagement in the current socioeconomic world."

But, for some who answered "no" their answer was driven by a modest outlook on themselves

"I'm just an average person like most. Go to work, come home to family etc."

Q. Do you feel your life has an important purpose or meaning?

Base: total sample n=1,271 (weighted)

TOKONA
TE RAKI

Appendix:

Sample Profile

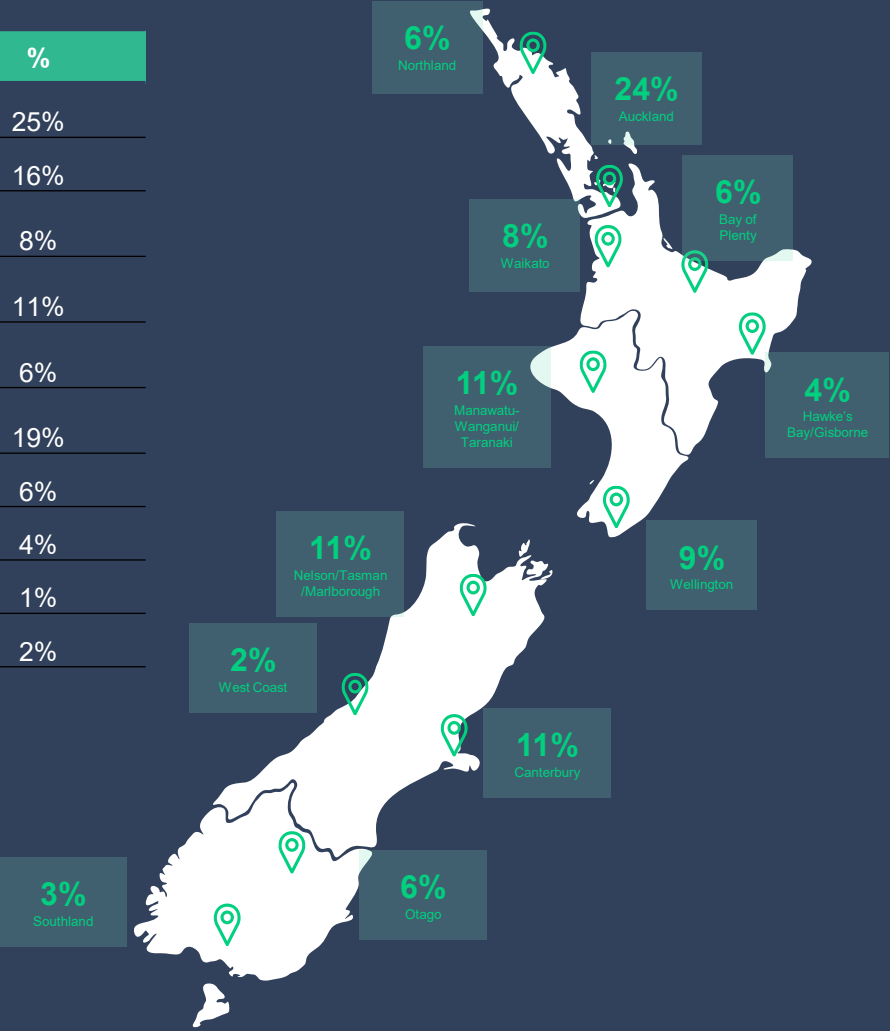
Sample Profile – demographics

Age	n	%
16-24	178	15%
25-34	246	18%
35-44	226	17%
45-54	178	15%
55-64	211	14%
65+	232	20%

Gender	n	%
Male	653	49%
Female	611	50%
Gender diverse	6	0%

Ethnicity	n	%
NZ European	884	71%
Māori	423	16%
Asian	159	15%
Pacific Peoples	101	9%
MELAA	17	2%
Cook Island Māori	15	1%
Prefer not to say	1	0%
Other ethnicity	40	3%

Lifestage	n	%
Single	317	25%
Couple without children	201	16%
Young family (youngest child is under 5)	101	8%
Older family (youngest child is aged 5-15)	149	11%
Mature family (youngest child living at home is aged 16 or over)	75	6%
Older couple with no children at home	220	19%
Older single with no children at home	79	6%
Multi-generational family	58	4%
Empty nester	18	1%
Other	33	2%



Base: total sample n=1,271 (weighted)

Sample Profile – education, income and employment status

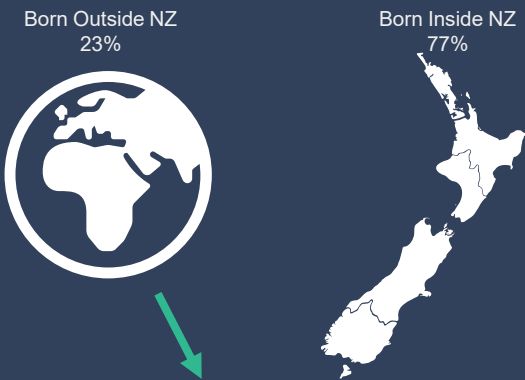
Highest level of education achieved	n	%
No formal qualification	94	6%
High school qualification e.g. NCEA	338	27%
Trade or vocational Certificate/Diploma	341	26%
Bachelor's degree	333	27%
Postgraduate degree	150	12%

Household Income	n	%
Under \$30,000	97	7%
\$30,000 - \$59,999	225	17%
\$60,000 - \$89,999	217	17%
\$90,000 - \$109,999	138	10%
\$110,000 - \$129,999	105	8%
\$130,000 and above	316	25%
Prefer not to say	173	14%

Employment status	n	%
Full-time employment	563	45%
Part-time employment	126	10%
Self-employed/Freelancer	86	7%
Unemployed (actively seeking work)	51	4%
Unemployed (not actively seeking work)	43	3%
Jobseeker	19	1%
Retired	200	17%
Homemaker/ domestic	52	3%
Secondary school student	26	2%
Tertiary student	65	6%
Other (please specify)	31	2%

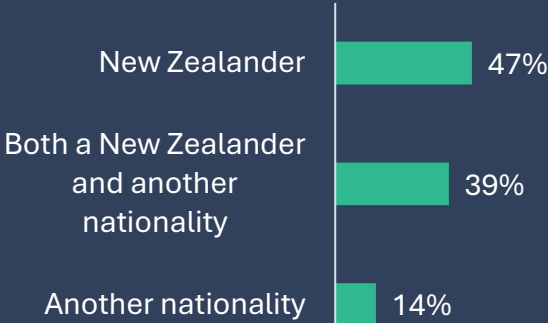
Sample Profile – Nationality, residency and identity

Self



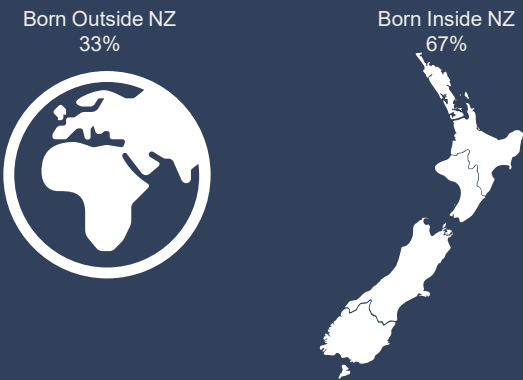
Years in NZ	Achieved n	Achieved %
1-2 years	4	1%
3-5 years	12	5%
6-10 years	31	13%
More than 10	195	81%

Do you consider yourself to be..



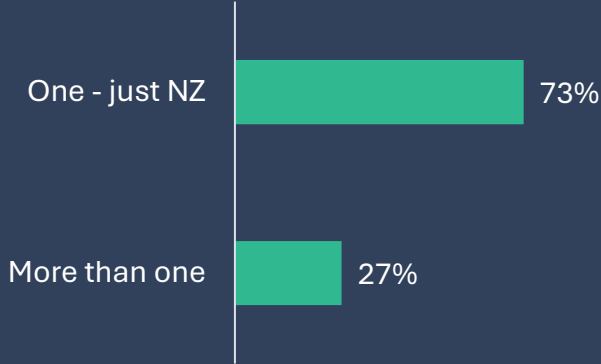
Base: Born outside NZ n=242 (weighted)

Parents



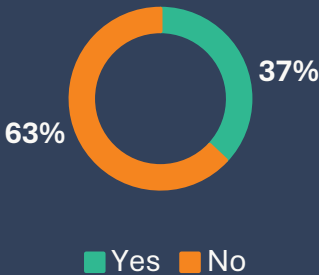
Visa / residency status	n	%
NZ Citizen	1151	90%
NZ Permanent Resident	109	9%
Resident visa holder	7	1%
Work-to-residence / straight to residence visa	4	0%

How many countries have you been / are a resident or citizen of?



Base: total sample n=1,273 (weighted)

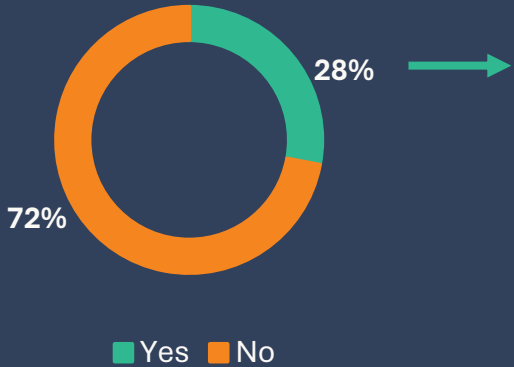
Do you refer to more than one country as home?



Base: Resident / citizen of more than one country n=313 (weighted)

Sample Profile – New Zealanders and migration

Have you ever lived outside of NZ for more than 6 months?



Base: Born inside NZ n=1,029

Length of time lived overseas	n	%
6 – 11 months	52	17%
1 – 2 years	103	36%
3 – 5 years	61	20%
More than 5 years	75	27%

Purpose	n	%
OE / Working holiday	142	49%
Long-term migration	79	26%
Other	70	24%