MIND AND MOOD OF NEW ZEALANDERS:

THE ARRIVAL OF OMICRON

An Ipsos Survey – February 2022

21 February, 2022
BACKGROUND & METHODOLOGY
BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

Two years into the pandemic, the world continues to deal with COVID-19 and its impact on people and society. Globally, many countries have moved to a ‘live with the virus’ approach, re-opening their borders and loosening or removing restrictions.

In New Zealand, we are currently in the early stages of experiencing the Omicron wave.

During the early stages of the pandemic, New Zealand adopted an alert level system to help stop the spread of the virus. With the arrival of the Delta and Omicron variants in New Zealand, the Government introduced the COVID Protection Framework (‘traffic lights’) and a three phase approach to dealing with Omicron.

Ipsos has tracked public reaction and attitudes towards the state of the virus and perception of management since February 2020.

THIS REPORT

This report looks at the attitudes and behaviours of New Zealanders, including:

- Perceived threat of COVID-19
- Performance of the Government, businesses and employers in managing COVID-19
- Views on the current COVID-19 Protection Framework
- Emotional state of New Zealanders
- Views on face masks
METHODOLOGY

Sample size

1,004

Fieldwork dates

- 27–30 March, 2020
- 3–6 April, 2020
- 8–11 May, 2020
- 3–6 July, 2020
- 11–14 Sept, 2020
- 16–19 Oct, 2020
- 13–17 Nov, 2020
- 8–14 Dec, 2020
- 10–15 Feb, 2021
- 4–11 Feb, 2022

Methodology

Interviews were conducted online (self-completion). Respondents were recruited from Ipsos & Ipsos partner panels.

OTHER NOTES

- Significantly higher / lower figures are reported at 95% confidence.

- The precision of Ipsos online polls is calculated using a credibility interval with a poll of 1,000 accurate to +/- 3.5 percentage points.

- Where results do not sum to 100 or the ‘difference’ appears to be +/- 1 more/less than the actual, this may be due to rounding, multiple responses or the exclusion of ‘don't know’ or ‘not stated’ responses.
SAMPLE PROFILE

TOTAL SAMPLE
1,004

GENDER
Male 433
Female 565
Another gender 6

AGE
18–34 years 278
35–54 years 353
55+ years 373

ETHNICITY
NETT European 732
NETT Māori 161
NETT Pacific 68
NETT Asian 97
NETT Other 64

EMPLOYMENT STATUS
Full time 418
Part time 134
Self-employed 67
Student 51
Retired 182
Not in paid work, not seeking work 83
Not in paid work, seeking work 69

REGION
Northland 35
Auckland 324
Waikato 97
Bay of Plenty 59
Gisborne 8
Hawke's Bay 37
Manawatu / Whanganui 63
Taranaki 24
Wellington 113
Nelson / Marlborough/ Tasman 18
West Coast 6
Canterbury 151
Otago 51
Southland 18
SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

Omicron changes New Zealanders’ views of COVID

- There are high levels of concern around what Omicron will bring over the next month, with only 15% not worried at all.
- New Zealanders are much more likely to believe either themselves or close friends / family will catch the virus than when before Omicron arrived.
- There is now less concern from New Zealanders about how COVID affects the rest of the world and more concern around our own country, communities, whanau, and ourselves.
- While there is increased feelings of impatience around getting back to normal life, there is also increased concern for those who are weak or vulnerable.
- The majority of New Zealanders would not feel comfortable leaving their house without a mask now – significantly more than during previous COVID waves.
Half of all New Zealanders believe the red traffic light setting has the right balance between restrictions and freedom. A quarter would like to see restrictions tightened and a further quarter loosened.

- Those who would like **tighter restrictions** would like greater use of lockdowns, masks, border closures, and online learning for schools
- Those who would like **looser restrictions** would like to see the removal of border restrictions, masks in schools, hospitality limits and vaccine mandates. They are keen to see a full return to normal with no restrictions.

Nearly two-thirds of New Zealanders would like to see restrictions on how businesses operate removed.

While 63% of New Zealanders currently rate the performance of the government positively, this has reduced from high levels of 80’s and 90’s over the last two years.
Nearly half of all New Zealanders are very concerned about what the Omicron wave will bring within the next month. Those of Asian ethnicity are more likely to be concerned. Just 15% are not worried.

Aucklanders (24%) and Māori (28%) are significantly more likely to be extremely concerned. Those in the Canterbury (12%) and Waikato (10%) regions are significantly less likely to feel the same.

**Q9D. Thinking one month from now, how concerned are you about each of the following?**

*Base: total sample*
COVID-19 – CONCERN ABOUT GETTING INFECTED WITH COVID-19

Concern about catching the virus is highest since the pandemic began, with a third of all New Zealanders feeling concern they will be diagnosed in the next month.

Thinking one month from now, how concerned are you about each of the following?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% extremely concerned + very concerned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I will be diagnosed with COVID-19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A close friend or family member will</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key demographic differences

- **I will be diagnosed with COVID-19**
  - 57% NETT Asian
  - 45% Auckland
  - 40% Full-time worker
  - 29% NETT European
  - 28% 55+ years
  - 22% Retired

- **A close friend or family member will**
  - 61% NETT Asian
  - 53% Under 35 years
  - 53% Auckland
  - 52% Full-time worker
  - 41% NETT European
  - 36% 55+ years
  - 30% Retired

Q9D. Thinking one month from now, how concerned are you about each of the following?

Base: total sample

↑/↓ indicates significantly higher / lower than total

© Ipsos | COVID-19: Mind & Mood of New Zealanders
COVID-19 – PERCEIVED THREAT OF COVID-19

With the arrival of Omicron in New Zealand, there is less concern about how COVID affects the rest of the world and more concern around our own country, our community, whānau and ourselves.

What level of threat do you think the coronavirus or COVID-19 poses to each of the following?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>You personally</th>
<th>Your family</th>
<th>Your local community</th>
<th>Your job or business*</th>
<th>Your country</th>
<th>The world</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mar-20 (n=1,000)</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr-20 (n=1,000)</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May-20 (n=1,000)</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jul-20 (n=1,000)</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep-20 (n=1,000)</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct-20 (n=1,000)</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov-20 (n=1,003)</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec-20 (n=1,000)</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb-21 (n=1,000)</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb-22 (n=1,004)</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q2: What level of threat do you think the coronavirus or COVID-19 poses to each of the following?
Base: total sample. *Note: only asked of those who are employed / self-employed – Mar-20 (n=691), Apr-20 (n=668), May-20 (n=668), Jul-20 (n=636), Sep-20 (n=639), Oct-20 (n=667), Nov-20 (n=598), Dec-20 (n=598), Feb-21 (n=665), Feb-22 (n=645)
Half of New Zealanders say they are happy with the balance between restrictions and freedom of the red traffic light system. A quarter think restrictions are too loose and a further quarter think they are too tight. People living in the South Island are more likely to think restrictions are too tight, while those of Asian ethnicity would prefer tighter restrictions.

Q. Which statement do you most agree with when it comes to the red alert level of the COVID-19 Protection Framework (traffic lights)?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Too restrictive / NZ should loosen restrictions</th>
<th>Good balance between controlling the outbreak &amp; allowing our daily lives to continue</th>
<th>Not restrictive enough / should have more restrictions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>26%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- 33% Canterbury
- 20% Auckland
- 9% Asian

- 60% Retired

- 36% Asian
- 18% 55+ years
- 14% Retired

Green / red indicates significantly higher / lower than total
Common themes include:
- Lockdowns
- Wider use of masks
- Closing of borders
- Restrictions of regional channels
- Online learning for schools

“"I don't think it's restrictions we need I think we just need a full lockdown and a complete ban on travel via planes etc.”
Female, under 35 years, Canterbury

“"No one entering the country. There are far too many positive cases at the border when they should have had a negative test before entering.”
Female, 35–54 years, Manawatu-Whanganui

“I would like to see enforcement of mandated mask wearing. I went to two supermarkets yesterday and both had several unmasked people - they walked in - no-one asked for proof of exemption. Several people only had mouth coverings. I caught the bus same scenario. Really frightening!”
Female, 55+ years, West Coast

“I think all businesses including cafes, restaurants, non-drive through takeaways, public transports, airports and flights should be closed until there are no reported cases of Omicron, Delta and COVID. I think there is too much risk as those variants are currently active in the NZ climate. Allowing businesses to open when they are ready to is a good idea but I think this should be in line with what variants and strains of COVID are currently active.”
Female, 35–54 years, Waikato

“I don't think people should gather in big groups for anything; 100 people is still a lot.”
Male, under 35 years, Waikato

“Back to regional lockdown to stop spreading it. People who have come into the country with the virus are known to escape from MIQ. How many people who have caught the virus are going to be honest and self isolate?”
Male, 35–54, Manawatu-Whanganui

There is increasing level of risk from children passing the virus on to adults. There is no mandate for children at school to be vaccinated; therefore; putting the adults they are around at risk. There needs to be Red 1; Red 2; and Red 3 restrictions.
Female, 35–54 years, Nelson / Tasman

“People still have the freedom to move around the community and in between cities as they please; and some treat it as if the country is back to normal. There should be more restrictions similar to the lockdown settings.”
Female, 35–54 years, Auckland

Q. You have indicated that you agree most with the statement ‘The red alert level is not restrictive enough to control the outbreak and should have more restriction’. What further restrictions would you like to see?
Base: those who believe we should have more restrictions (n=238)
Q. You have indicated that you agree most with the statement ‘The red alert level is too restrictive on our daily lives and New Zealand should loosen restrictions more’. What restrictions would you like to see loosened?

Base: those who believe we should have more restrictions (n=257)

Common themes include:
- Removal of MIQ and border controls
- Full return to normal – no restrictions
- Removal of masks in schools
- Removal of limits in hospitality
- Removal of vaccine mandates

Loosen in areas without a problem. Keep it stronger in areas with a problem. Don’t treat the whole country as if it is Auckland.”

Male, 55+ years, Canterbury

“Everything back to normal. Containing it is all about using common sense. Its not a matter of “if” we catch COVID, it’s a matter of “when”. This is our new normal. The sooner we live how we were, the sooner we can get on with everything and build our own immunity to it.”

Female, 35–54 years, Auckland

“Everything. Overseas data has proven that the Omicron variant although highly contagious has very little to no side effects and if anything the restrictions and mandates are worsening the mental emotional and physical well being for everyone. The vaccine is useless against this variant and it has been scientifically proven overseas yet our PM is still pushing for mandates vaccines that do not work.”

Female, 35–54 years, Bay of Plenty

“Remove masks so that we can see people smile again; and see their lips move when they speak. This week somebody said hello to me in the local hardware store; and I could not recognise my next door neighbour because his face was covered and his speech was muffled.”

Male, 55+ years, West Coast

“I don’t think unvaccinated people should have different restrictions from vaccinated people as the virus spreads through both. I don’t like the vaccine passport and don’t think it should be part of any New Zealand system.”

Female, 55+ years, Auckland

“Remove all masking requirements for people who have a 99% chance of recovery from the virus. Remove all work mandates since Omicron is a mild disease which 99% of the population will recover from.”

Female, 35–54 years, Auckland

“I don’t think unvaccinated people shouldn’t be allowed in hospitality. Every single hospitality business is struggling very hard because of this. It should be up to businesses to decide whether they allow unvaccinated people in or not.”

Female, under 35 years, Canterbury

“You should be able to get on with your daily living without a vaccine passport.”

Female, 35–54 years, Otago

Common themes include:
- Removal of MIQ and border controls
- Full return to normal – no restrictions
- Removal of masks in schools
- Removal of limits in hospitality
- Removal of vaccine mandates
Nearly two-thirds of New Zealanders are in favour of focusing on the economy and allowing businesses to operate as they choose.

We should restart the economy and allow businesses to open or operate as they choose

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Percent Agreement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May-20</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jul-20</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep-20</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct-20</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov-20</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec-20</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb-21</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb-22</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q5. Do you agree or disagree with the following:

Base: total sample

© Ipsos | COVID-19: Mind & Mood of New Zealanders
Perception of the Government’s performance in containing and dealing with virus recovery has decreased significantly from this time last year, with a drop of 20 percentage-points. However, those who live in Wellington have stronger ratings of performance.

How good a job is the NZ Government doing to help NZ contain the spread of the virus and deal with recovery?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>% very good + good job</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mar-20</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr-20</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May-20</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jul-20</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep-20</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct-20</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov-20</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec-20</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb-21</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb-22</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Green/red indicates significantly higher/lower than previous time period.

Q3. How good or poor a job is each of the following doing to help your country contain the spread of the virus and deal with recovery?
Base: total sample
Perceptions of NZ businesses’ performance in helping contain the spread of the virus and deal with recovery has also reached a historical low. However ratings of their own employer remain high.

How good a job are NZ businesses and your employer doing to help NZ contain the spread of the virus and deal with recovery?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>July-20</th>
<th>Sep-20</th>
<th>Oct-20</th>
<th>Nov-20</th>
<th>Dec-20</th>
<th>Feb-21</th>
<th>Feb-22</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sample</td>
<td>n=1,000</td>
<td>n=1,000</td>
<td>n=1,000</td>
<td>n=1,000</td>
<td>n=1,003</td>
<td>n=1,000</td>
<td>n=1,004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NZ Businesses</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your Employer</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q3. How good or poor a job is each of the following doing to help your country contain the spread of the virus and deal with recovery?

Base: total sample. *Note: asked only to those who are employed: Mar-20 (n=628), Apr-20 (n=597), May-20 (n=593), Jul-20 (n=595), Sep-20 (n=566), Oct-20 (n=566), Nov-20 (n=592), Dec-20 (n=546), Feb-21 (n=593), Feb-22 (n=578)

Green / red indicates significantly higher / lower than previous time period

78% 55+ years
60% Part-time workers
56% NETT Asian

17 – © Ipsos | COVID-19: Mind & Mood of New Zealanders
Despite Omicron becoming more prevalent in the community and at our borders, less than half of New Zealanders want our borders to remain closed.

We should keep the borders closed, and not allow anyone in or out until the virus is proven to be contained
Confidence in the management of borders had dropped significantly since this time last year, with those not feeling confident rising from 31% to nearly half (48%).

What are New Zealanders saying?

“If NZ had shut the borders properly in the first instant we wouldn’t have any problems. Now Government has let in virus but not the workers [or their families], it is too late to make much difference. The red light should let NZ be open within but keep people out unless they are prepared to isolate for 21 days; either in government facility or at home with monitoring bracelet or similar.”

Female, 55+ years, Bay of Plenty

“Strong controls at borders and higher penalties for transgressing any restrictions.”

Male, 55+ years, Northland

“Close the borders to everybody but NZ citizens.”

Male, 35–54 years, Wellington

“Open the borders and we just need to live and catch up on the rest of the world.”

Female, 55+ years, Canterbury

Q5. Do you agree or disagree with the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Don't know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feb-21 (n=1,000)</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb-22 (n=1,004)</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: total sample
Over a quarter of New Zealanders are feeling impatient to get back to normal life, with a similar level feeling concerned about vulnerable people. The novelty factor of the virus driving feelings being happy to spend more time with family, being curious about how the virus affects the world, feeling inspired from adaption and hopefulness around environmental are steadily decreasing. There is also less concern about jobs and security than in the earlier days of the pandemic.

Which best describes how you are feeling today?
New Zealanders’ level of comfort with leaving home without a face mask has dropped significantly since the arrival of Omicron.

How comfortable would you be leaving your home without a face mask in the next few weeks?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>% Very comfortable + Somewhat comfortable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May-20 (n=1,000)</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jul-20 (n=1,000)</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep-20 (n=1,000)</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct-20 (n=1,000)</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov-20 (n=1,000)</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec-20 (n=1,003)</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb-21 (n=1,000)</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb-22 (n=1,004)</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

19NEW. How comfortable would you be leaving your home without a face mask in the next few weeks?  
Base: total sample
There has been a small increase in the number of people who are nervous about leaving their home since Omicron has arrived, however this is still lower than when COVID-19 first peaked in early 2020.

Even if businesses are allowed to open, I am going to be very nervous about leaving my home

- May-20 (n=1,000): 55%
- Jul-20 (n=1,000): 44%
- Sep-20 (n=1,000): 46%
- Oct-20 (n=1,000): 41%
- Nov-20 (n=1,000): 44%
- Dec-20 (n=1,003): 43%
- Feb-21 (n=1,000): 41%
- Feb-22 (n=1,004): 47%

Q5. Do you agree or disagree with the following:
Base: total sample
ABOUT IPSOS

Ipsos is the third largest market research company in the world, present in 90 markets and employing more than 18,000 people.

Our research professionals, analysts and scientists have built unique multi-specialist capabilities that provide powerful insights into the actions, opinions and motivations of citizens, consumers, patients, customers or employees. Our 75 business solutions are based on primary data coming from our surveys, social media monitoring, and qualitative or observational techniques.

“Game Changers” – our tagline – summarises our ambition to help our 5,000 clients to navigate more easily our deeply changing world.

Founded in France in 1975, Ipsos is listed on the Euronext Paris since July 1st, 1999. The company is part of the SBF 120 and the Mid-60 index and is eligible for the Deferred Settlement Service (SRD).

ISIN code FR0000073298, Reuters ISOS.PA, Bloomberg IPS:FP
www.ipsos.com

GAME CHANGERS

In our world of rapid change, the need for reliable information to make confident decisions has never been greater.

At Ipsos we believe our clients need more than a data supplier, they need a partner who can produce accurate and relevant information and turn it into actionable truth.

This is why our passionately curious experts not only provide the most precise measurement, but shape it to provide True Understanding of Society, Markets and People.

To do this we use the best of science, technology and know-how and apply the principles of security, simplicity, speed and substance to everything we do.

So that our clients can act faster, smarter and bolder. Ultimately, success comes down to a simple truth:
You act better when you are sure.
THANK YOU