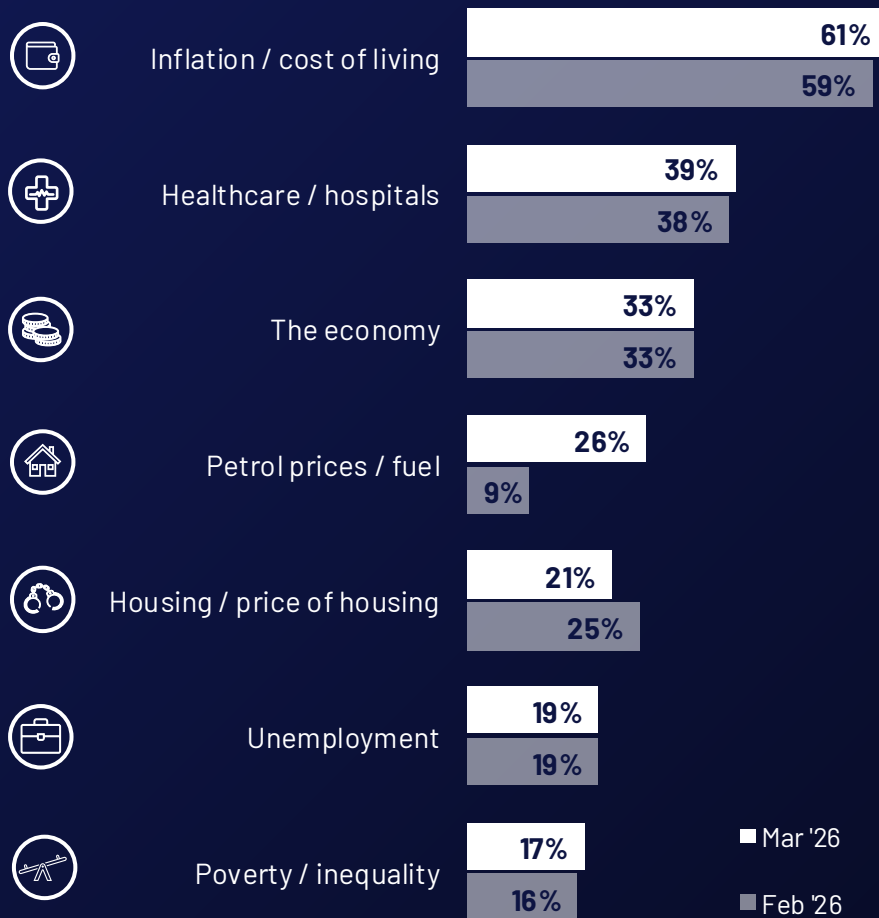


# THE IPSOS NEW ZEALAND ISSUES MONITOR

May 2026

# KEY FINDINGS – May 2026

## TOP ISSUES FACING NEW ZEALAND



## OPINIONS OF GOVERNMENT



**4.2/10**

(vs 4.2 in Feb 2026)

Rating of government has stabilised, with **27%** continuing to rate their performance as **7-10 out of 10**.

## PARTY MOST CAPABLE OF MANAGING TOP 5 ISSUES

**National**

The economy

**Labour**

Inflation / cost of living

Healthcare / hospitals

Petrol prices / fuel

Housing / price of housing

# Overview

## Background Information

**The Ipsos New Zealand Issues Monitor** tracks which issues New Zealanders are most concerned about, who is worried about what and which political parties they believe are best able to manage these issues. During 15 – 20 May 2026 we conducted fieldwork for our 32<sup>nd</sup> Ipsos NZ Issues Monitor report with a total of 1,001 New Zealanders aged 18 and older\*.

**This study did not have any external sponsors or partners.** It was initiated and run by Ipsos because we think it is important for businesses and organisations to understand the challenges that New Zealanders face in the context of their everyday lives.

**At Ipsos we strive to deliver reliable information** for a true understanding of society, markets and people, to help our clients make better decisions.

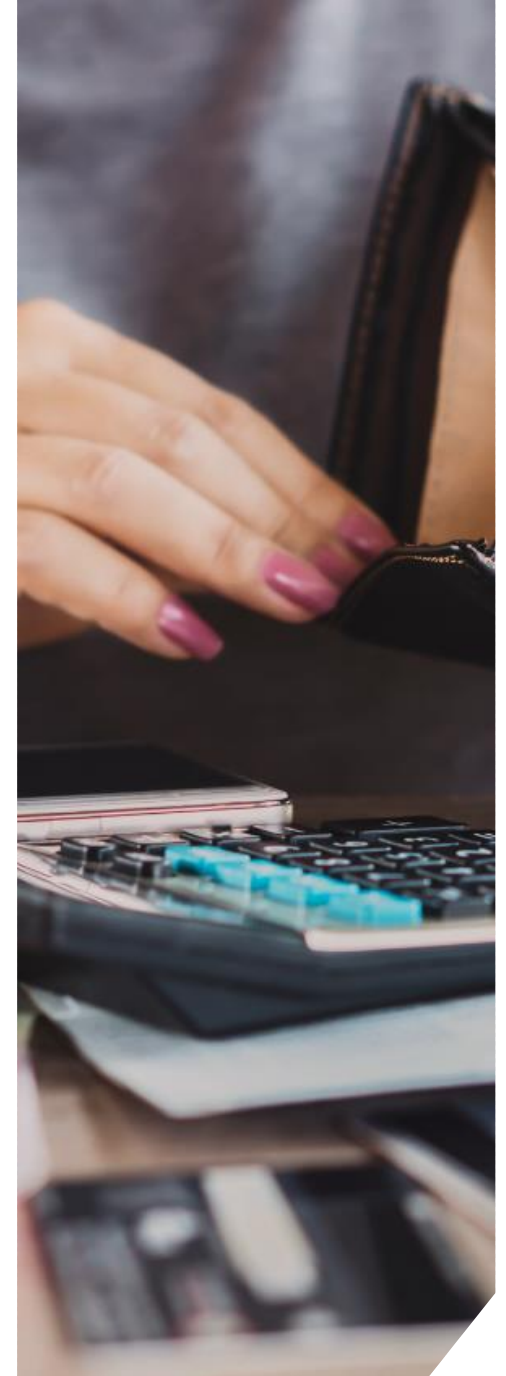
Please direct all queries to Carin Hercock – 021 394 508 | [carin.hercock@ipsos.com](mailto:carin.hercock@ipsos.com) or

Amanda Dudding – 021 612 264 | [amanda.dudding@ipsos.com](mailto:amanda.dudding@ipsos.com)

The precision of Ipsos online survey is calculated with a credibility interval with a sample of **1,004** accurate to + / - 3.5 percentage points.

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

Where results do not add up to 100, this may be due to computer rounding, multiple responses or the exclusion of 'don't know' or 'not stated' responses.



# The media context – What was making New Zealand news during fieldwork?

REGIONS / BUSINESS

## Housing market confidence takes a tumble as interest rates, inflation rise

8:13 am on 20 May 2026

Share this     

 **Gyles Beckford**, Economics correspondent  
[@RNZBusiness](#) [gyles.beckford@rnz.co.nz](mailto:gyles.beckford@rnz.co.nz)

## Heavy vehicle rules loosened as Govt prepares for fuel crunch

By Justin Hu, Digital Reporter - Politics | Wed, May 20

HOME › NEWS › NATIONAL

## 'Survival mode': Kiwi families struggle with costs as child hunger rises

NEWS NATIONAL

Imogene Bedford, Wed, 20 May 2026, 8:52pm

REGIONS / BUSINESS

## 'I dread shopping': Weekly groceries become an ordeal as cost of living bites

7:21 am on 20 May 2026

Share this     

 **Amy Williams**, Senior Reporter  
[amy.williams@rnz.co.nz](mailto:amy.williams@rnz.co.nz)

REGIONS / HEALTH

## One in five specialist referrals declined last year in seven districts, national figures unknown

7:34 am on 19 May 2026

Share this     

Premium Home / Business

## 'Economy is stalling': Business performance data point to zero growth as Iran war oil shock hits jobs and growth outlook

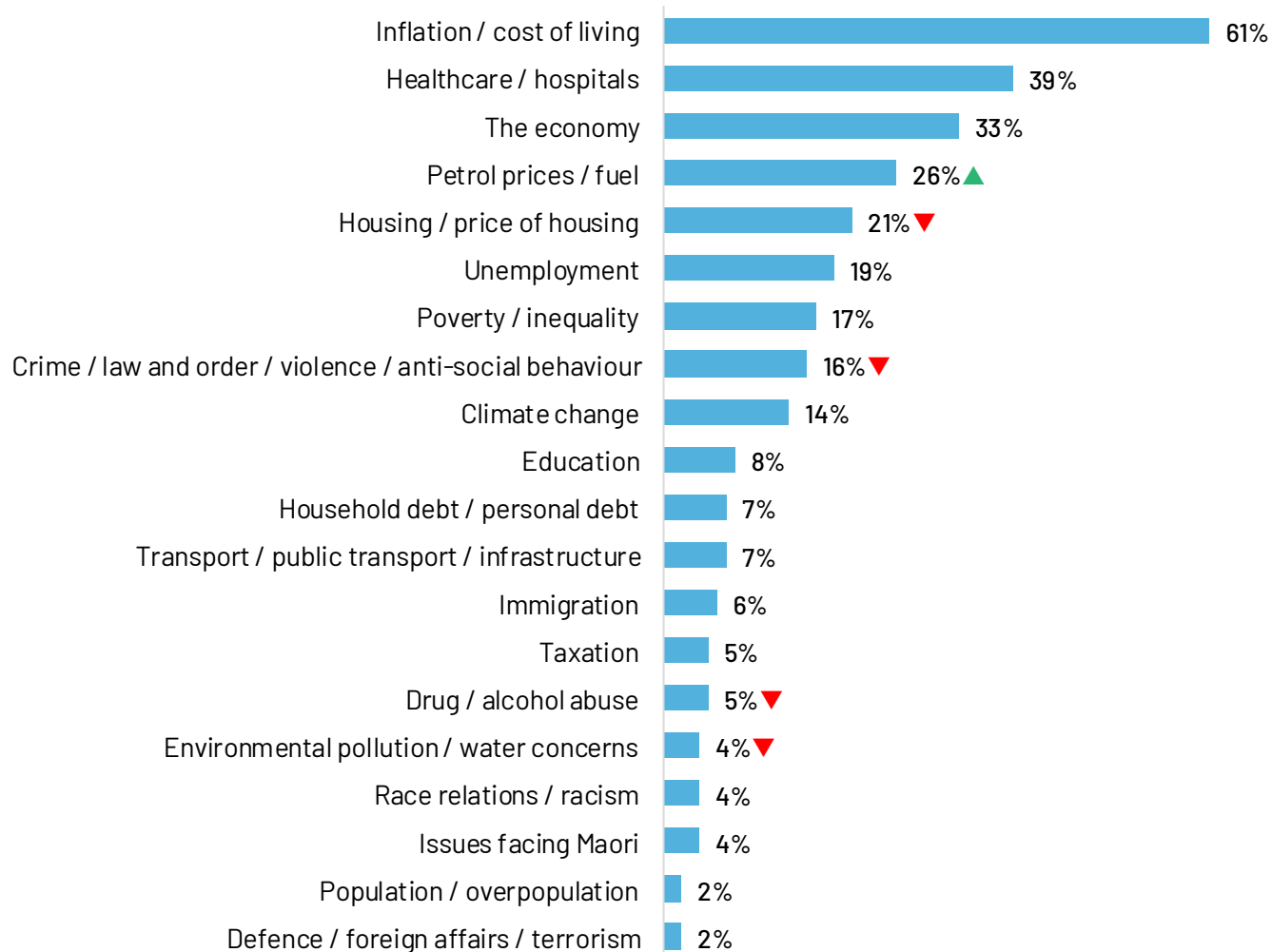


**Liam Dann**

Business Editor at Large - NZ Herald · 18 May, 2026 11:53 AM ⌚ 3 mins to read

# TOP ISSUES FACING AOTEAROA

# The most important issues facing New Zealanders



*Inflation / cost of living* continues to be the most important issue facing New Zealanders; the level of concern has remained stable since August 2025.

The top 3 issues have remained unchanged since February 2025.

*Healthcare / hospitals* (39%) and *the economy* (33%) hold firm as the second and third most pressing issues, and remain comparable to the same time last year.

There has been a significant increase in concern about *petrol prices*, moving from 9% in February to 26% this wave, making it the 4<sup>th</sup> most pressing issue facing the country.

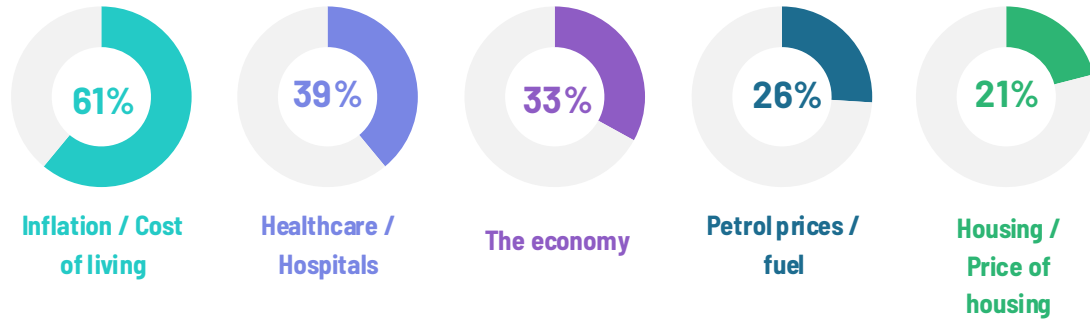
Conversely, concern for *housing / price of housing* has seen a significant decrease (down 4ppts), falling to 5<sup>th</sup> position.

*Crime / law & order* continues to trend downward, dropping significantly (down 4 ppts) compared to February 2025. It has now fallen out of the top 5 issues.

Q: What would you say are the three most important issues facing New Zealand today?  
 ▲ indicates significant increase, / ▼ indicates significant decrease compared to the previous wave  
 Base: May '26 - Total sample (n=1,001)

# Current top 5 issues

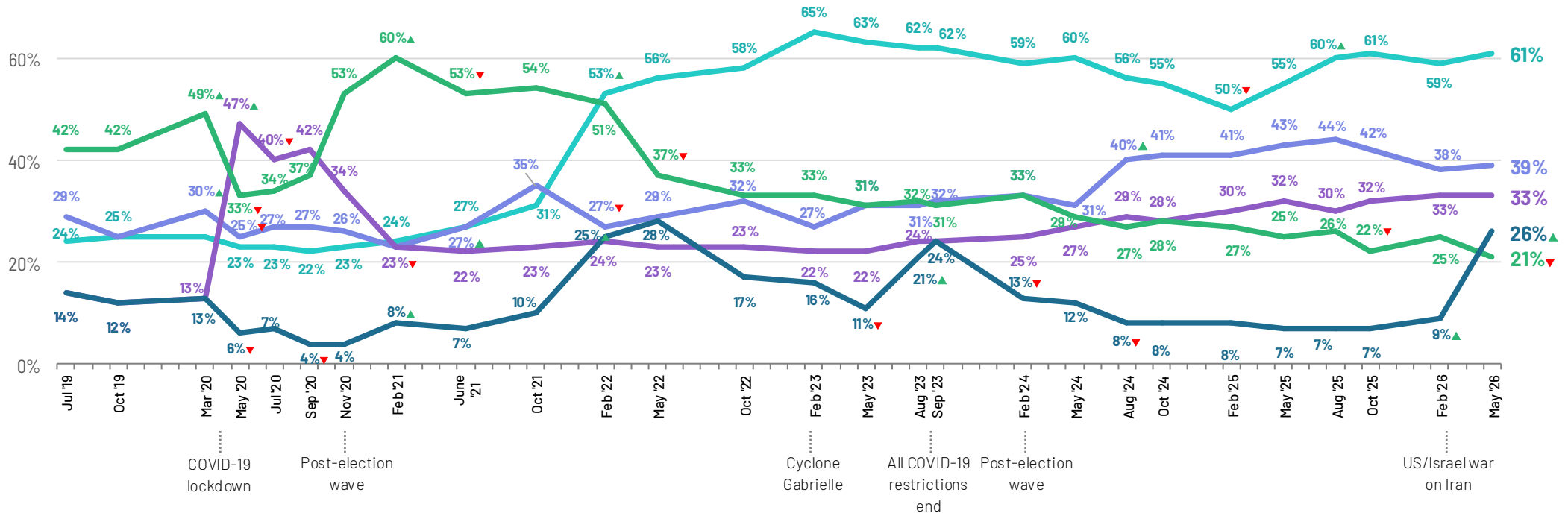
## Spotlight May 2026



Concern for *petrol prices / fuel* has increased significantly (up 17 pts) since February, from 9% to 26%. This increase moves the issue into 4<sup>th</sup> position and pushes *crime / law and order* out of the top five issues for the first time in 3 years.

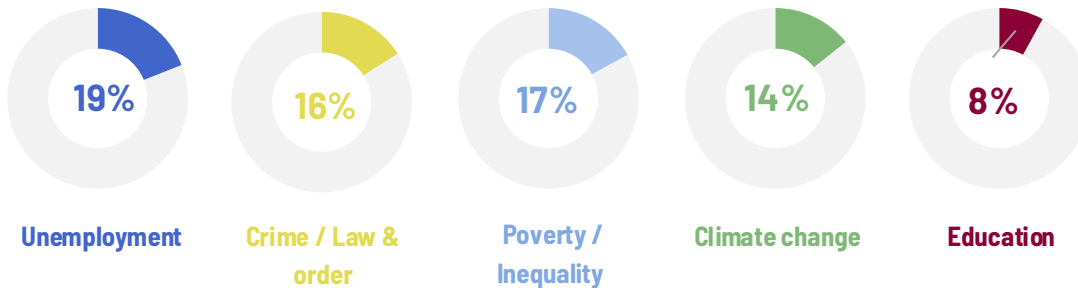
*Inflation / cost of living* (61%), *healthcare / hospitals* (39%), and *the economy* (33%) remain the top three issues for New Zealanders, holding relatively stable since the last wave.

Meanwhile, concern for *housing / price of housing* continues to trend downward, significantly decreasing this wave and reaching its lowest levels since reporting began while remaining in 5<sup>th</sup> position.



# Noteworthy issues

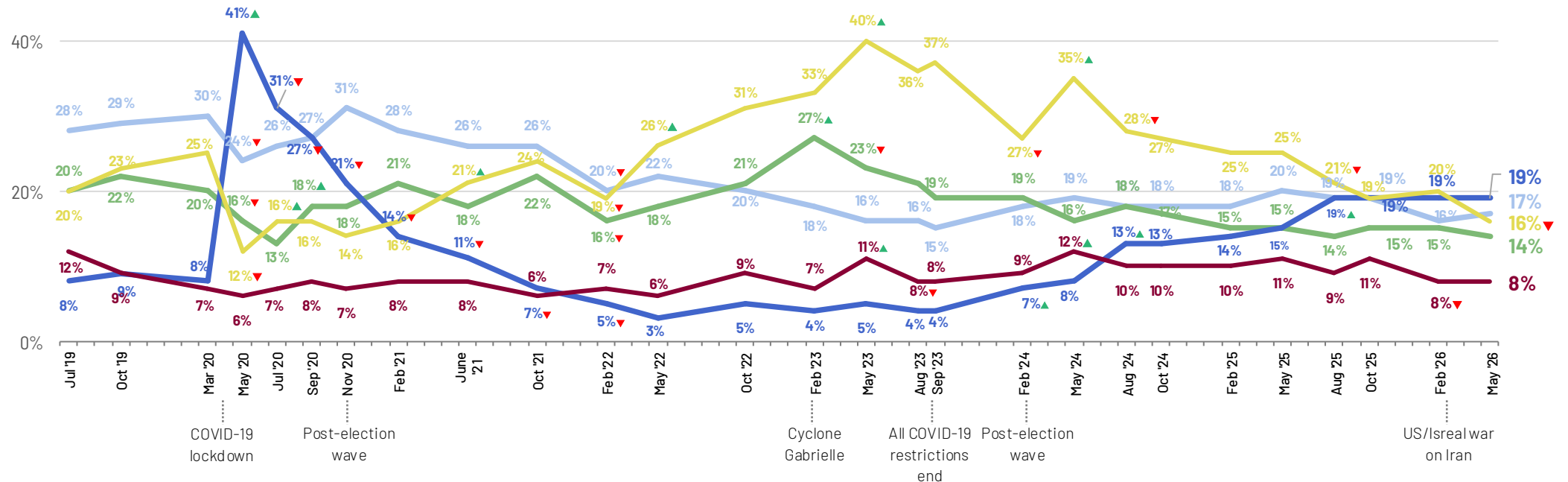
## Spotlight May 2026



The remaining issues in the top 10 have remained largely stable compared to February 2025.

Notably *crime / law & order* has seen a significant decrease (down 4 pts). This decline sees it fall out of the top five to become the 8th most important issue facing New Zealanders.

*Unemployment* remains a steady concern for a fifth (19%) of New Zealanders. Similarly, concern for *poverty / inequality* (17%) and *climate change* (14%) has seen minimal shift in the last several waves.



Q: What would you say are the three most important issues facing New Zealand today?  
 ▲ indicates significant increase, ▼ indicates significant decrease compared to the previous wave

Base: May '26 - Total sample (n=1,001)

# Top current issues by generation

	Aged 18-34 (n=262)	Aged 35-49 (n=297)	Aged 50-64 (n=225)	Aged 65+ (n=217)
1	Inflation / cost of living <b>62%</b>	Inflation / cost of living <b>65%</b>	Inflation / cost of living <b>64%</b>	Healthcare / Hospitals <b>60%</b> ▲
2	Petrol prices / Fuel <b>35%</b> ▲	The economy <b>34%</b>	Healthcare / hospitals <b>44%</b>	Inflation / cost of living <b>52%</b> ▼
3	Housing / Price of housing <b>34%</b> ▲	Healthcare / Hospitals <b>33%</b>	The economy <b>40%</b>	The economy <b>39%</b>
4	Unemployment <b>29%</b> ▲	Petrol prices / Fuel <b>22%</b>	Petrol prices / Fuel <b>23%</b>	Petrol prices / Fuel <b>23%</b>
5	Healthcare / hospitals <b>25%</b> ▼	Housing / Price of housing <b>21%</b>	Crime / Law & Order <b>20%</b>	Crime / Law & Order <b>20%</b> = Poverty / Inequality <b>20%</b>

## Financial and housing pressures dominate for younger New Zealanders

For those aged 18-34, immediate financial concerns continue to dominate. They are significantly more concerned than the average New Zealander about *petrol prices / fuel* (35%), *housing / price of housing* (34%), and *Unemployment* (29%). In contrast, their concern for *healthcare / hospitals* (25%) is significantly lower than the national average, highlighting a clear focus on economic issues.

## Healthcare remains the primary concern for older generations

*Healthcare / hospitals* continues to be the number one issue for New Zealanders aged 65 and over, with 60% citing it as a top concern—a figure significantly higher than the national average. While *inflation / cost of living* is their second-most pressing issue, this older cohort is significantly less likely to be concerned about it (52%) than the general population.

## Petrol prices emerge as a top 5 concern for all ages

The recent surge in concern for *petrol prices / fuel* is a unifying issue, placing it in the top five concerns for every generation this wave.

Q: What would you say are the three most important issues facing New Zealand today?

▲ indicates significantly higher / ▼ indicates significantly lower compared to the total sample

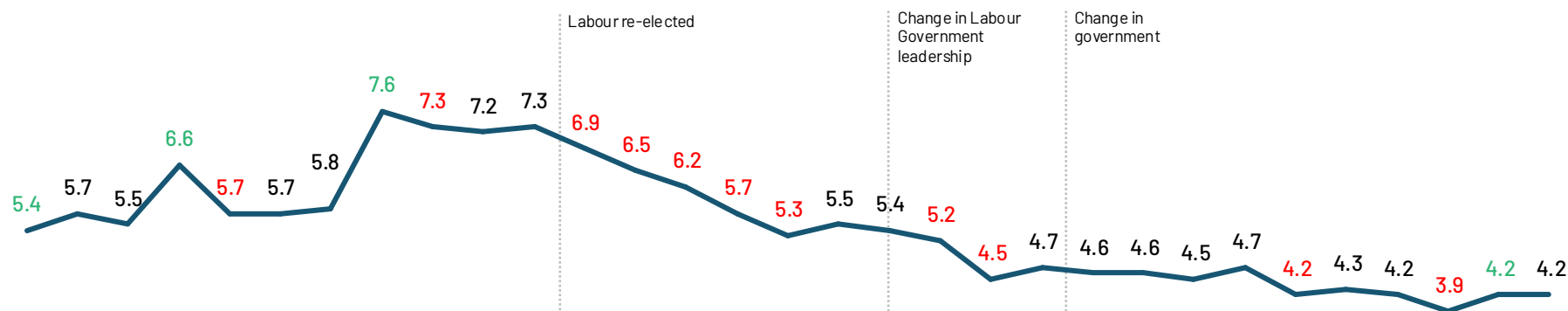
Base: May '26 - Total sample (n=1,001)

# CURRENT GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE

New Zealanders' rating of how they perceive the current government

# Rating of government performance over the 6 months

The government's performance rating has stabilised following a period of decline, with a mean score of 4.2 out of 10, unchanged from February 2026. The proportion of New Zealanders rating the government's performance positively (a score of 7-10) has also held steady at 27%, while 40% gave a rating 0-4 out of 10.



	Labour-led coalition											Labour Government								National-led coalition											
	Jul '18	Oct '18	Mar '19	Apr '19	Jul '19	Nov '19	Mar '20	May '20	Jul '20	Sep '20	Nov '20	Feb '21	Jun '21	Oct '21	Feb '22	May '22	Sep '22	Feb '23	May '23	Aug '23	Sep '23	Feb '24	May '24	Aug '24	Oct '24	Feb '25	May '25	Aug '25	Oct '25	Feb '26	May '26
Mean score	5.4	5.7	5.5	6.6	5.7	5.7	5.8	7.6	7.3	7.2	7.3	6.9	6.5	6.2	5.7	5.3	5.5	5.4	5.2	4.5	4.7	4.6	4.6	4.5	4.7	4.2	4.3	4.2	3.9	4.2	4.2
Top 4 (7-10)	38%	42%	41%	60%	43%	44%	45%	75%	72%	70%	70%	63%	58%	54%	47%	41%	42%	44%	35%	28%	31%	30%	31%	31%	31%	25%	28%	26%	23%	27%	27%
Neutral (4-6)	36%	35%	32%	24%	34%	35%	34%	17%	17%	19%	18%	23%	24%	25%	27%	29%	29%	28%	39%	34%	33%	29%	29%	32%	30%	33%	31%	30%	31%	32%	31%
Bottom 4 (0-3)	22%	20%	23%	12%	19%	18%	18%	6%	8%	9%	8%	10%	15%	18%	24%	28%	27%	27%	25%	34%	32%	37%	38%	38%	36%	41%	39%	41%	45%	39%	40%
Don't know	4%	4%	4%	4%	4%	4%	4%	2%	3%	2%	4%	3%	3%	2%	2%	1%	3%	2%	3%	3%	3%	4%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%

Q: Overall, how would you rate the government for its job in the last 6 months from 0 to 10, where 0 means 'abysmal' and 10 means 'outstanding'? **NOTE:** This was reworded in Feb 24 to last 4 months (the period post election)

**Base:** Total sample - May '26 (n=1,001), Feb '26 (n=1,000), Oct '25 (n=1,000), Aug '25 (n=1,004), May '25 (n=1,002), Feb '25 (n=1,002), Oct '24 (n=1,003), Aug '24 (n=1,005), May '24 (n=1,001), Feb '24 (n=1,001), Sep '23 (n=1,000), Aug '23 (n=1,148), May '23 (n=1,002), Feb '23 (n=1,002), Sep '22 (n=1,000), May '22 (n=1,000), Feb '22 (n=1,004), Oct '21 (n=1,003), Jun '21 (n=1,003), Feb '21 (n=1,000), Nov '20 (n=1,001), Sep '20 (n=1,000), Jul '20 (n=1,000), May '20 (n=1,000), Mar '20 (n=610), Nov '19 (n=610), Jul '19 (n=610), Apr '19 (n=615), Mar '19 (n=614), Oct '18 (n=610), Jul '18 (n=611)






# MANAGING THE ISSUES

The political parties perceived as most capable of managing key issues

# Political party most capable of managing Top 5 issues

Labour is seen as the party most capable of managing 4 of the top 5 issues facing New Zealanders including *inflation / cost of living, healthcare / hospitals, housing / price of housing* and the fast-rising issue of *petrol prices / fuel*.

After being seen as equally capable in February 2026, National is now solely perceived as being most capable of managing issues related to the *economy*, with a 5ppt difference over Labour.

	Issue	Political party most capable of managing issue
1	Inflation / cost of living	 Labour
2	Healthcare / hospitals	 Labour
3	The economy	 National
4	Petrol prices / Fuel	 Labour
5	Housing / Price of housing	 Labour




















Q: Please select the political party that you believe is most capable of managing each of the following issues...?

Base: May '26 - Total sample (n=1,001)

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# Political party most capable of managing other issues

Beyond the top five issues, perceptions of capability are spread across the political spectrum. Labour is perceived as the most capable party to manage 9 of the 15 other issues – down from 11 in February. National is seen as most capable on 5 issues, jointly with Labour on *drug/alcohol abuse* and *population / over population*. The Green Party remains the most capable party for managing both *climate change* and *environmental pollution / water concerns*, while Te Pāti Māori remains as the leader on *issues facing Māori*.

	Issue	Political party most capable of managing issue		Issue	Political party most capable of managing issue
6	Unemployment		13	Immigration	
7	Poverty / inequality		=14	Taxation	
8	Crime / Law & order			Drug / Alcohol abuse	  
9	Climate change			Environmental pollution / Water concerns	
10	Education		=16	Race relations / Racism	
=11	Household debt / Personal debt			Issues facing Māori	
	Transport / Public transport / Infrastructure		=19	Population / overpopulation	  
				Defence / foreign affairs / terrorism	

Q: Please select the political party that you believe is most capable of managing each of the following issues...?

Base: May '26 - Total sample (n=1,001)

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# #1 issue – Inflation / cost of living

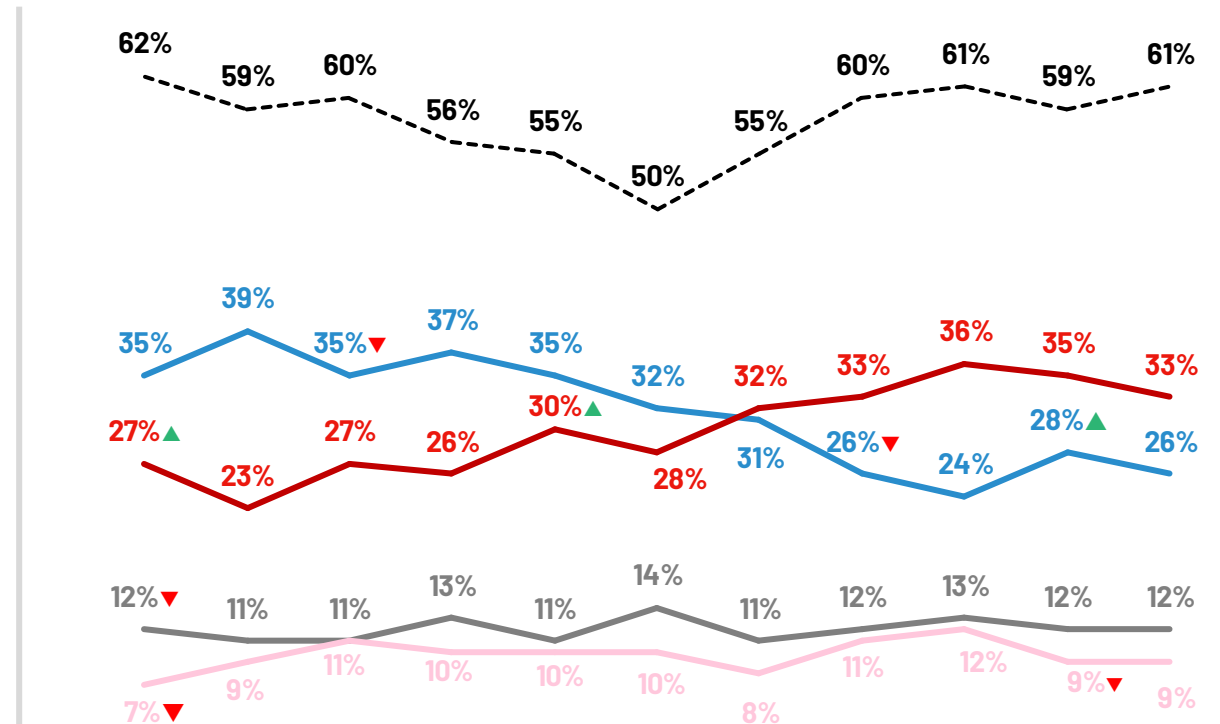


Inflation / cost of living remains the number one issue facing New Zealanders.

Labour remains the party perceived as most capable of managing the issue, although its perceived capability has slowly trended down over the last two waves.

Perceptions of National's ability to handle the issue has also slightly declined slightly after a significant increase in February 2026.

The 7-point gap in perceived capability between Labour and National remains unchanged from the February wave.



	Sep '23	Feb '24	May '24	Aug '24	Oct '24	Feb '25	May '25	Aug '25	Oct '25	Feb '26	May '26
New Zealand First	4%	2% ▼	4% ▲	3%	2%	5% ▲	4%	6% ▲	4%	5%	6%
Green Party	7% ▲	9%	6% ▼	5%	5%	5%	6%	5%	5%	6%	8%
ACT	6%	3% ▼	4%	3%	3%	3%	4%	5%	4%	4%	4%
Te Pāti Māori	2%	2%	2%	1% ▼	2% ▲	2%	3%	2%	1%	1%	1%
Other	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%

Q: What would you say are the three most important issues facing New Zealand today? / Please select the political party that you believe is most capable of managing each of the following issues...

▲ indicates significant increase, / ▼ indicates significant decrease compared to the previous wave

Base: May '26 - Total sample (n=1,001)

--- Issue    — National Party    — Labour Party    — Don't know    — None

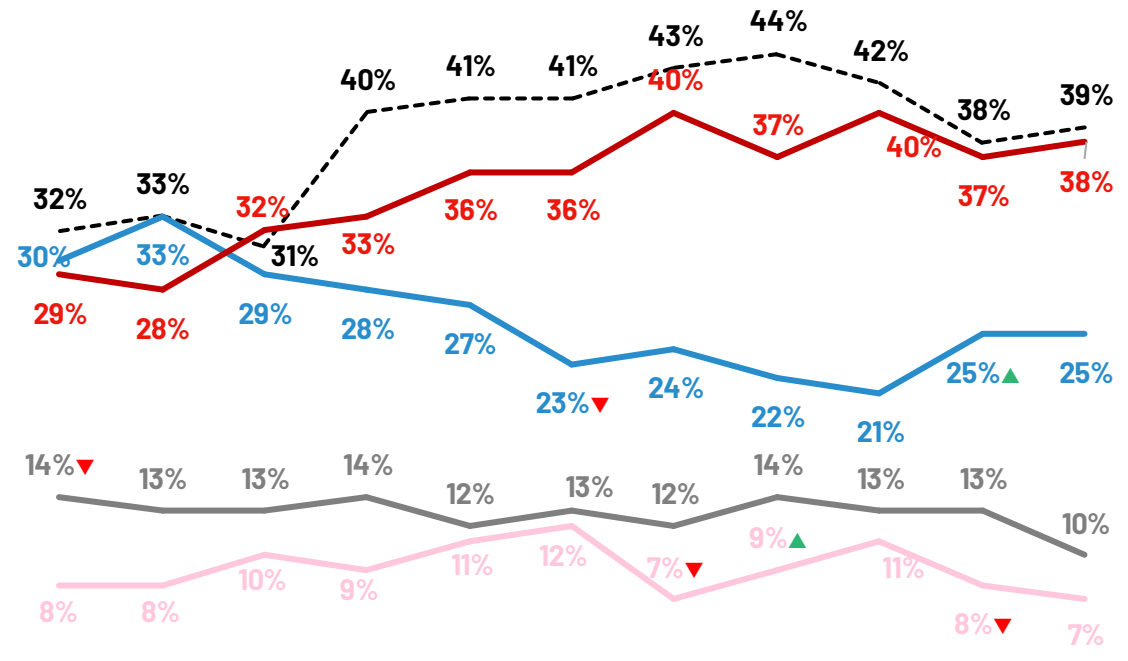
# #2 issue – Healthcare / hospitals



Concern for *healthcare / hospitals* remains stable this wave, holding its position as the second most important issue facing the country.

Labour continues to be seen as the party most capable of managing the issue, with an 18 ppt lead over National.

Perceptions of both National and Labour’s ability to manage the issues have stabilised in the last two waves.



	Sep '23	Feb '24	May '24	Aug '24	Oct '24	Feb '25	May '25	Aug '25	Oct '25	Feb '26	May '26
New Zealand First	5% ▲	3% ▼	4%	3%	3%	4% ▲	4%	5%	4%	5%	6%
Green Party	7%	8%	6%	6%	5%	4%	5%	7%	5%	6%	8%
ACT	4%	4%	4%	4%	2%	4% ▲	4%	3%	4%	4%	4%
Te Pāti Māori	2%	3%	2%	1%	3% ▲	3%	3%	3%	2%	1%	1%
Other	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%

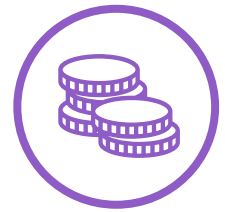
Q: What would you say are the three most important issues facing New Zealand today? / Please select the political party that you believe is most capable of managing each of the following issues...

▲ indicates significant increase, / ▼ indicates significant decrease compared to the previous wave

Base: May '26 - Total sample (n=1,001)

--- Issue    — National Party    — Labour Party    — Don't know    — None

# #3 issue – The economy



Concern for *the economy* continues to remain stable this wave.

National's perceived ability in managing the issue continues its upward trend beginning in October 2025. Conversely, Labour's perceived capability has dropped for the second wave in a row.

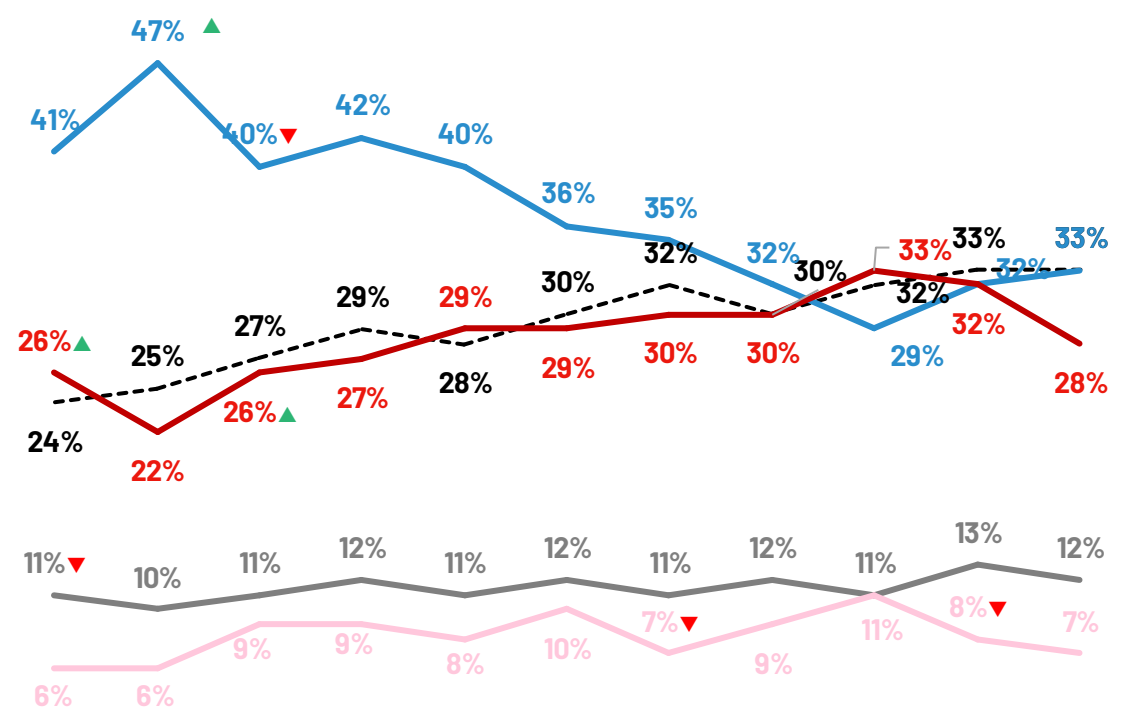
After being neck-and-neck in February, National now has a 5-point lead on this issue.

The Green Party has seen a significant increase in perceived ability to manage the economy this wave.

Q: What would you say are the three most important issues facing New Zealand today? / Please select the political party that you believe is most capable of managing each of the following issues...

▲ indicates significant increase, / ▼ indicates significant decrease compared to the previous wave

Base: May '26 - Total sample (n=1,001)



	Sep '23	Feb '24	May '24	Aug '24	Oct '24	Feb '25	May '25	Aug '25	Oct '25	Feb '26	May '26
New Zealand First	4%	2%	3%	2%	3%	4%	4%	5%	4%	5%	6%
Green Party	5%	6%	5%	5%	4%	3%	5%	5%	5%	4%	7% ▲
ACT	4%	3%	4%	3%	3%	4%	4%	3%	4%	4%	4%
Te Pāti Māori	2%	2%	2%	0% ▼	1% ▲	2%	3%	2%	1%	1%	1%
Other	1%	1%	1%	0%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%

--- Issue    — National Party    — Labour Party    — Don't know    — None

# #4 issue – Petrol prices / Fuel

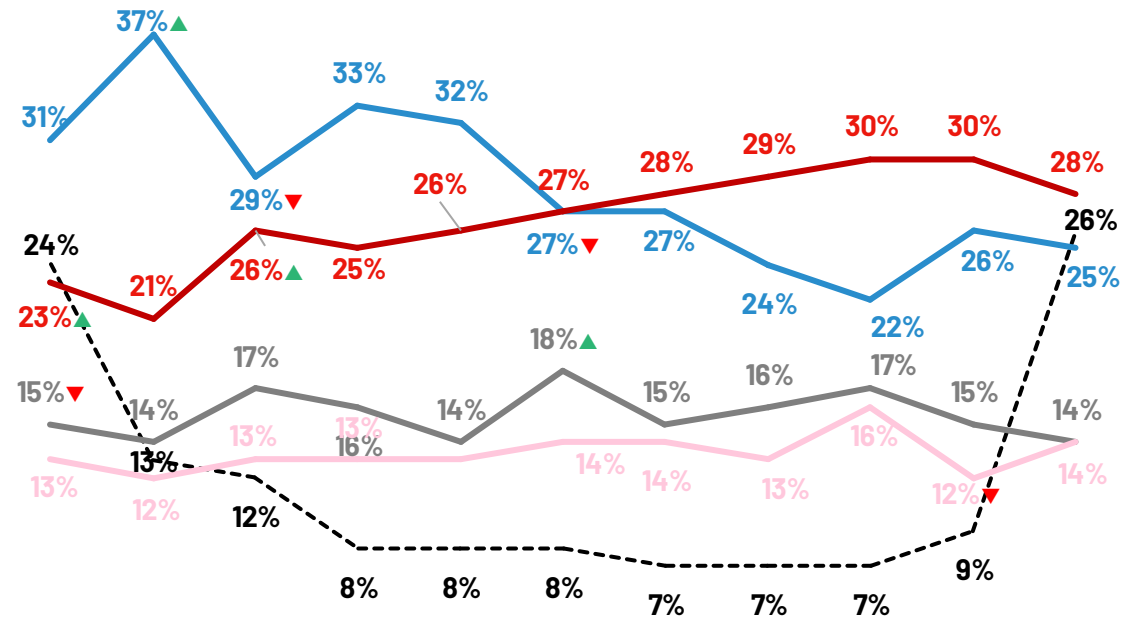


Following nearly 2 years of relative stability, concern for petrol prices / fuel has surged significantly, (up 17 pts) compared to February 2026.

This increase has propelled the issue from 9<sup>th</sup> position to the #4 most pressing issue facing New Zealanders.

Despite the heightened public concern, neither major party has increased their share of confidence with New Zealanders to manage this issue. Labour remains the party perceived as most capable of managing the issue.

National's perceived capability has remained stable after a period of decline, leaving a 3 ppt gap between the parties.



	Sep '23	Feb '24	May '24	Aug '24	Oct '24	Feb '25	May '25	Aug '25	Oct '25	Feb '26	May '26
New Zealand First	3%	3%	4%	3%	3%	4%	4%	5%	4%	6%	6%
Green Party	7%	7%	6%	7%	7%	5%	6%	5%	5%	7%	8%
ACT	5%	3%	4%	3%	3%	3%	3%	4%	4%	3%	3%
Te Pāti Māori	1%	2%	1%	1%	1%	2%	2%	2%	1%	1%	1%
Other	1%	1%	0%	1%	1%	0%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%

--- Issue    — National Party    — Labour Party    — Don't know    — None

Q: What would you say are the three most important issues facing New Zealand today? / Please select the political party that you believe is most capable of managing each of the following issues...

▲ indicates significant increase, / ▼ indicates significant decrease compared to the previous wave

Base: May '26 - Total sample (n=1,001)

# #5 issue – Housing / Price of housing

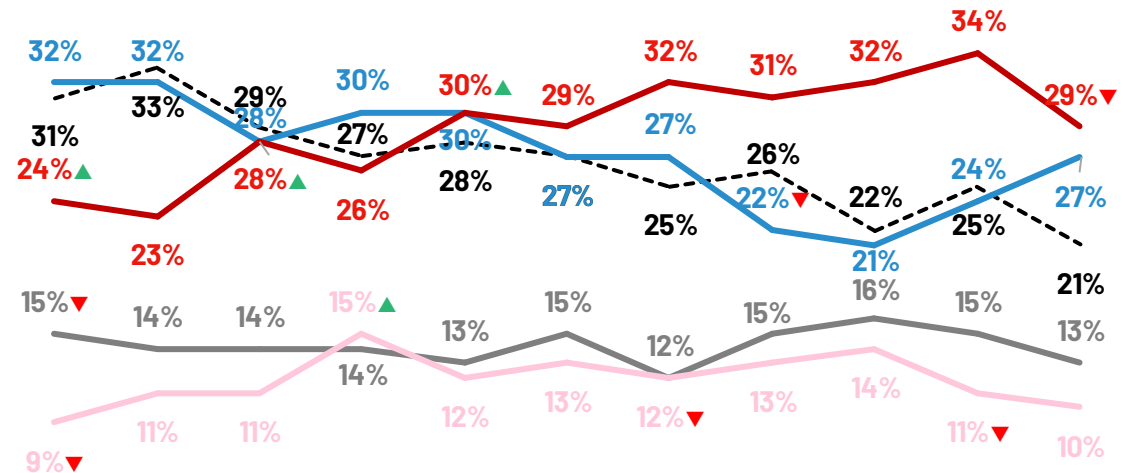


Concern for *housing / price of housing* has seen a significant decrease this wave, continuing a long-term downward trend.

While Labour remains the party perceived as most capable of managing the issue, it has seen a significant decline this wave.

Conversely, National's perceived ability has increased in the last 2 waves, narrowing the gap with Labour to 2 ppt.

Among the smaller parties, the Green Party has also seen a significant increase in perceived ability on this issue.



	Sep '23	Feb '24	May '24	Aug '24	Oct '24	Feb '25	May '25	Aug '25	Oct '25	Feb '26	May '26
New Zealand First	4%	4%	3%	3%	4%	3%	4%	5%	4%	5%	6%
Green Party	8% ▲	8%	8%	8%	6%	5%	6%	7%	7%	5%	9% ▲
ACT	5%	5%	4%	3%	3%	4%	4%	4%	4%	4%	3%
Te Pāti Māori	2%	2%	3%	1%	2%	3%	3%	3%	2%	1%	1%
Other	1%	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%	2% ▲	2%

Q: What would you say are the three most important issues facing New Zealand today? / Please select the political party that you believe is most capable of managing each of the following issues...

▲ indicates significant increase, / ▼ indicates significant decrease compared to the previous wave

Base: May '26 - Total sample (n=1,001)

--- Issue    — National Party    — Labour Party    — Don't know    — None

# Issue spotlight – Unemployment

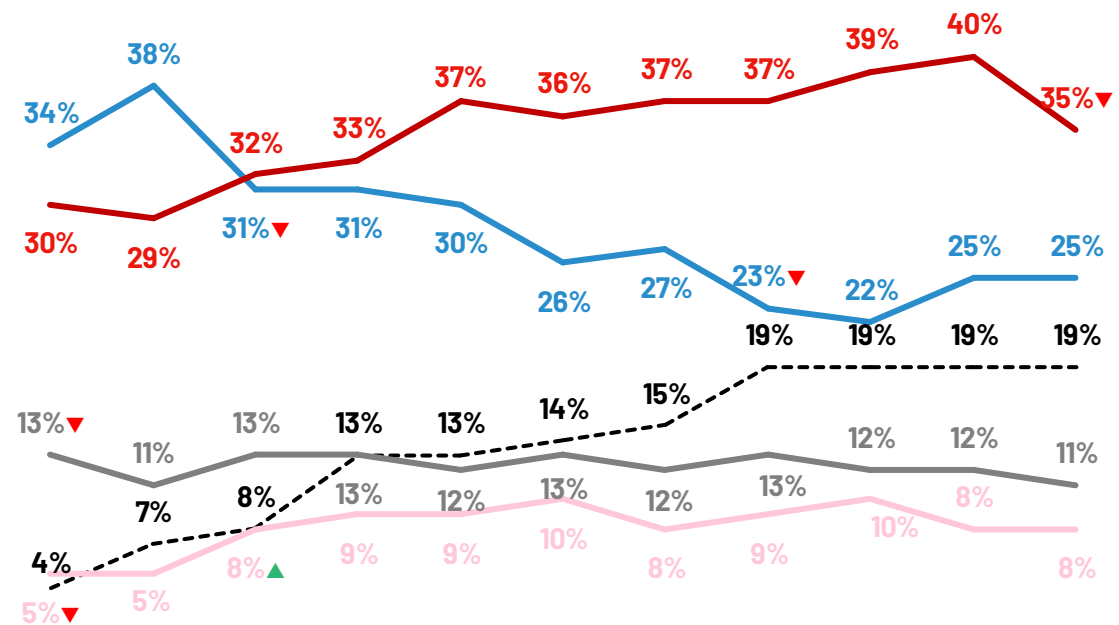


Concern for *unemployment* has remained steady for the third consecutive wave. It is the 6<sup>th</sup> most important issue facing New Zealanders this wave.

Labour’s perceived ability in the managing the issue has dropped significantly this wave (down 5ppt), after several waves of trending upward.

Perceptions of National’s ability in managing the issue remains steady, with the gap narrowing with Labour to 10ppt (down 5ppt from February 026)

Among the smaller parties, New Zealand First has seen a significant increase in perceived capability to manage unemployment.



	Sep '23	Feb '24	May '24	Aug '24	Oct '24	Feb '25	May '25	Aug '25	Oct '25	Feb '26	May '26
New Zealand First	4%	2%	5% ▲	3%	2%	3%	4%	5%	4%	5%	7%
Green Party	0%	7%	5%	5%	5%	5%	4%	5%	5%	5%	7% ▲
ACT	5%	4%	4%	3%	3%	4%	4%	4%	4%	4%	4%
Te Pāti Māori	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	3%	2%	1%	1%	1%
Other	1%	1%	1%	0%	0%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%

Q: What would you say are the three most important issues facing New Zealand today? / Please select the political party that you believe is most capable of managing each of the following issues...

▲ indicates significant increase, / ▼ indicates significant decrease compared to the previous wave

Base: May '26 - Total sample (n=1,001)

--- Issue    — National Party    — Labour Party    — Don't know    — None

# Issue spotlight – Poverty / Inequality

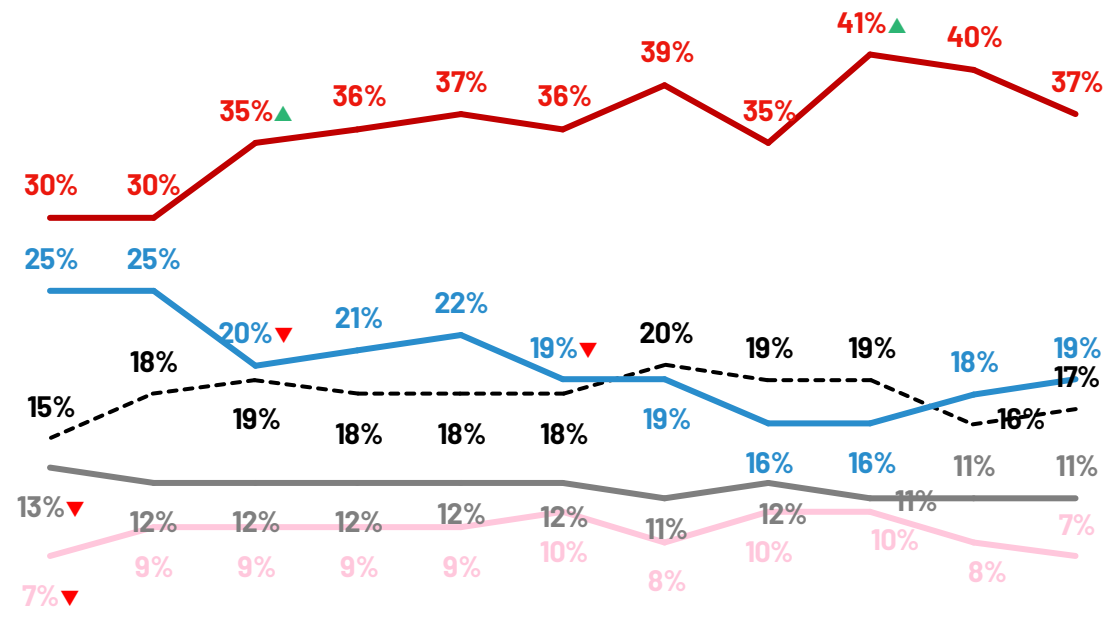


Concern for *poverty / inequality* has remained relatively stable over the last several waves.

Labour continues to hold a commanding lead as the party perceived most capable of managing this issue.

National's perceived ability shows signs of recovery after a period of decline through 2025. This has narrowed the gap between the two parties to 18 ppts.

Notably, the Green Party has also gained ground on this issue, with a significant increase in their perceived ability to manage this issue.



	Sep '23	Feb '24	May '24	Aug '24	Oct '24	Feb '25	May '25	Aug '25	Oct '25	Feb '26	May '26
New Zealand First	5% ▲	4%	5%	4%	3%	4%	5%	5%	5%	5%	6%
Green Party	10%	11%	9%	12% ▲	10%	10%	8%	11% ▲	11%	9%	12% ▲
ACT	5%	3% ▼	4%	3%	3%	5% ▲	4%	4%	4%	4%	4%
Te Pāti Māori	4%	5%	5%	3% ▼	4%	4%	5%	4%	2% ▼	2%	2%
Other	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%	2% ▲	1%

Q: What would you say are the three most important issues facing New Zealand today? / Please select the political party that you believe is most capable of managing each of the following issues...

▲ indicates significant increase, / ▼ indicates significant decrease compared to the previous wave

Base: May '26 - Total sample (n=1,001)

--- Issue    — National Party    — Labour Party    — Don't know    — None

# Issue spotlight – Education

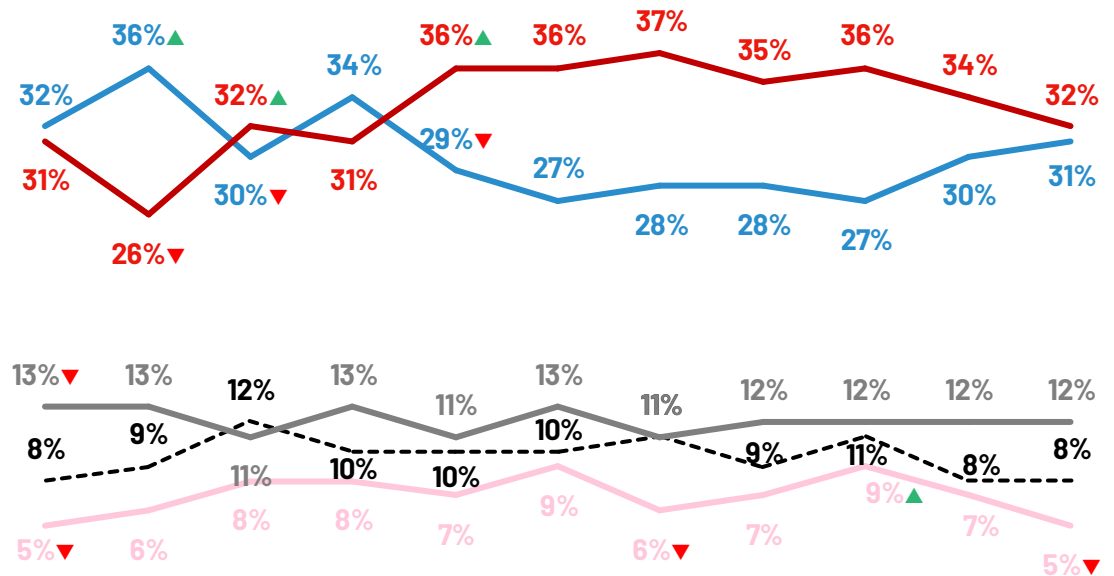


Concern for *education* remains stable and outside the top issues.

Labour’s perceived ability in managing the issue has trended downward since May 2025 while, National’s perceived ability has recovered in the same period.

The gap between the two parties is the narrowest (2 pts) since they diverged in October 2024 (7 pts), with Labour leading.

The proportion of New Zealanders who believe no party is capable has dropped significantly this wave.



	Sep '23	Feb '24	May '24	Aug '24	Oct '24	Feb '25	May '25	Aug '25	Oct '25	Feb '26	May '26
New Zealand First	4%	3%	4%	2%	3%	3%	4%	4%	3%	5%	5%
Green Party	7%▲	8%	5%▼	6%	4%	4%	5%	5%	5%	6%	7%
ACT	6%	5%	6%	4%▼	5%	6%	6%	5%	5%	4%	5%
Te Pāti Māori	2%	3%	3%	1%▼	3%▲	2%	3%	2%	2%	1%	2%
Other	1%	0%	0%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%

--- Issue    — National Party    — Labour Party    — Don't know    — None

Q: What would you say are the three most important issues facing New Zealand today? / Please select the political party that you believe is most capable of managing each of the following issues...

▲ indicates significant increase, / ▼ indicates significant decrease compared to the previous wave

Base: May '26 - Total sample (n=1,001)

# Issue spotlight – Immigration



Concern for *immigration* has slowly grown over the past 2 years, however it remains low as a priority issue for New Zealanders.

National’s perceived ability in managing the issue continues to remain stable, while Labour’s perceived ability continues to trend downward.

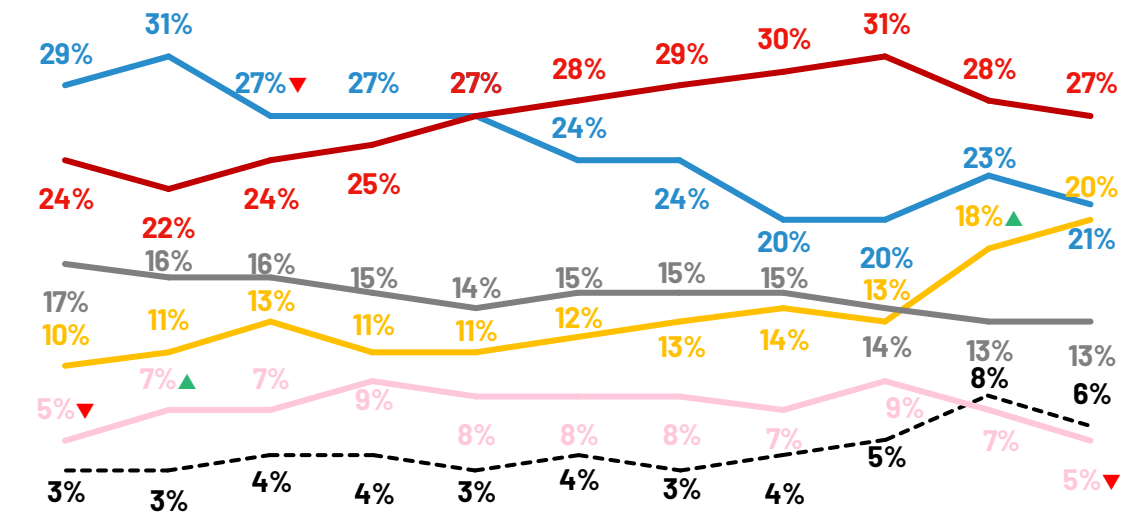
However, Labour maintains a 6ppt lead on National in this regard.

Among the smaller parties, the Green Party saw a significant increase in its perceived ability this wave, while New Zealand First continues to close the gap with National (1ppt, down from 5ppt in February 2026)

Q: What would you say are the three most important issues facing New Zealand today? / Please select the political party that you believe is most capable of managing each of the following issues...

▲ indicates significant increase, / ▼ indicates significant decrease compared to the previous wave

Base: May '26 - Total sample (n=1,001)





	Sep '23	Feb '24	May '24	Aug '24	Oct '24	Feb '25	May '25	Aug '25	Oct '25	Feb '26	May '26
Green Party	7%	6%	6%	6%	5%	5%	4%	5%	5%	4%	7% ▲
ACT	6%	4%	4%	4%	4%	4%	4%	4%	5%	4%	5%
Te Pāti Māori	2%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	1%	2%	2%
Other	1%	0% ▲	0%	0%	1%	1%	0%	1%	0% ▼	1%	1%

--- Issue      — NZ First      — National Party      — Labour Party      — Don't know      — None

# COMPARISONS WITH AUSTRALIA

Comparing New Zealand's issues to  
Australia's

# Top 10 issues – New Zealand vs. Australia

	 <b>New Zealand</b>	 <b>Australia</b>
<b>1</b>	Inflation / cost of living - <b>61%</b>	Inflation / cost of living - <b>63%</b>
<b>2</b>	Healthcare / hospitals - <b>39%</b>	Housing - <b>40%</b>
<b>3</b>	The economy - <b>33%</b>	Petrol prices - <b>32%</b>
<b>4</b>	Petrol prices / fuel - <b>26%</b>	The economy - <b>25%</b>
<b>5</b>	Housing / price of housing - <b>21%</b>	Immigration - <b>23%</b>
<b>6</b>	Unemployment - <b>19%</b>	Crime - <b>21%</b>
<b>7</b>	Poverty / Inequality - <b>17%</b>	Healthcare - <b>20%</b>
<b>8</b>	Crime / law & order - <b>16%</b>	Poverty - <b>11%</b>
<b>9</b>	Climate change - <b>14%</b>	Environment - <b>10%</b>
<b>10</b>	Education - <b>8%</b>	Taxation - <b>9%</b>

While New Zealanders and Australians share top concerns around the *cost of living*, priorities diverge on other key issues, particularly healthcare and housing.

Australians are more likely to be concerned about *housing* (40%) than their New Zealand counterparts (21%). Conversely, *Healthcare* is a much more prominent issue in New Zealand (39%), ranking 2nd, while it is a 7th-ranked issue in Australia (20%).

*Petrol prices / fuel* is a top-four issue in both countries, ranking 3rd in Australia (32%) and 4th in New Zealand (26%).

*The economy* is also a more prominent issue among New Zealanders (ranking 3rd at 33%) than it is for Australians (ranking 4th at 25%).

*Unemployment* is a more top of mind concern for New Zealanders (19%), while it does not make the top 10 issues facing Australians, who are more likely to be concerned about *immigration* (23%).

Australians are also more likely to be concerned about *Crime* (21% vs 16% New Zealand), while New Zealanders show higher concern for *Climate change* (14% vs 10% Australia)

# Sample demographics – May 2026

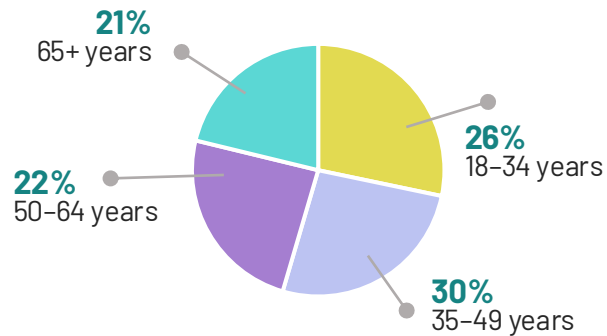


**1,001 respondents**  
were interviewed online in May via  
online panels



The precision of Ipsos online polls is calculated with a credibility interval with a poll of 1,000 accurate to  $\pm 3.5$  percentage points

Results are weighted by age, gender and region to ensure they reflect the New Zealand population



## Employment status



- 47%** Full-time
- 18%** Retired
- 12%** Part-time
- 6%** Self-employed
- 6%** Not in paid work but seeking work
- 6%** Not in paid work & not seeking work
- 4%** Student

## Sample sizes over time

- Feb '18 (n=610)
- Jul '18 (n=611)
- Oct '18 (n=610)
- Mar '19 (n=614)
- Apr '19 (n=615)
- Jul '19 (n=610)
- Nov '19 (n=610)
- Mar '20 (n=610)
- May '20 (n=1,000)
- Jul '20 (n=1,000)
- Sep '20 (n=1,000)
- Nov '20 (n=1,001)
- Feb '21 (n=1,000)
- Jun '21 (n=1,003)
- Oct '21 (n=1,003)
- Feb '22 (n=1,004)
- May '22 (n=1,000)
- Sep '22 (n=1,000)
- Feb '23 (n=1,002)
- May '23 (n=1,002)
- Aug '23 (n=1,148)
- Sep '23 (n=1,000)
- Feb '24 (n=1,001)
- May '24 (n=1,001)
- Aug '24 (n=1,005)
- Oct '24 (n=1,003)
- Feb '25 (n=1,002)
- May '25 (n=1,002)
- Aug '25 (n=1,002)
- Oct '25 (n=1,004)
- Feb '26 (n=1,000)
- May '26 (n=1,001)

# About Ipsos

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# Game Changers

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**You act better when you are sure.**

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