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Healthcare concern increases while unemployment overtakes housing as New Zealanders' fourth most important issue.

New Zealand / Aotearoa, 25 September 2026 – Ipsos New Zealand has released the 34th edition of the Ipsos Issues Monitor, which tracks the most important issues facing New Zealanders today and which political parties are perceived as best able to manage them. The survey has been running since 2018.

The latest survey of 1,003 New Zealanders shows that **inflation / cost of living** remains the country's most important issue, with 63% identifying it as a top concern. **Healthcare / hospitals** (44%) and **the economy** (34%) continue to rank second and third respectively, maintaining the same top three order that has been in place since February 2025.

A notable shift this wave is concern about **unemployment**, which has risen to become New Zealanders' fourth most important issue, overtaking **housing / price of housing** for only the second time since Ipsos began tracking issues in 2018. Concern about **healthcare** has also increased significantly this wave, returning to levels last seen in August 2025.

New Zealanders' assessment of **government performance** remains stable this wave, with average rating of **4.1 out of 10** unchanged from July 2026. Just over a quarter of New Zealanders (26%) rate the government's performance positively (7-10 out of 10).

Other key findings include:

Issues

- **Inflation / cost of living (63%)** continues to be New Zealanders' number one concern and is now at its highest level since May 2023.
- **Healthcare / hospitals (44%)** remains the country's second most important issue and has increased this wave, returning to levels last seen in August 2025.
- Concern about **the economy (34%)** remains stable and is at levels last seen following the 2020 General Election.
- **Unemployment (21%)** has overtaken housing to become New Zealand's fourth most important issue and has reached its highest level since November 2020.
- Concern about **climate change (13%)** has fallen to its lowest level since Ipsos began tracking the issue in 2020.
- Following the sharp increase recorded in May 2026, concern about **petrol prices / fuel (17%)** has stabilised this wave.

Government performance

- New Zealanders' rating of the Government's performance remains stable at **4.1 out of 10**, unchanged from July 2026
- Labour remains the party perceived as most capable of managing all five of New Zealanders' top concerns: **inflation / cost of living, healthcare / hospitals, the economy, unemployment, and housing / price of housing.**

- While Labour continues to lead on all five issues, the gap between Labour and National has narrowed on four of them – **healthcare / hospitals, the economy, unemployment, and housing / price of housing** – since July 2026.

Taxation Spotlight

- Concern about **taxation (8%)** has trended upward over recent waves and is now at its highest levels since the 2023 General Election.
- New Zealanders are evenly divided on how much tax they currently pay. 44% percent believe they should pay less tax, while 45% believe they pay about the right amount.
- A **Wealth Tax (64%)** receives the strongest support among the tax measures tested. Around half of New Zealanders also support a **Capital Acquisitions Tax (49%)**, **Bed Tax (48%)**, and **Capital Gains Tax (45%)**.
- Support for wealth-based taxes is strongest among voters intending to support the **Green Party** and **Labour Party**. Green Party voters are significantly more likely than the average New Zealander to support a **Wealth Tax (89%)**, **Capital Acquisitions Tax (78%)**, and **Capital Gains Tax (77%)**.
- Voters intending to support **National** and **ACT** are generally less supportive of wealth-based taxes, while support among voters intending to vote for **The Opportunity Party** show above-average support for several proposed tax measures, particularly **Capital Gains Tax (66%)**, **Capital Acquisitions Tax (60%)**, and **Land Value Tax (54%)**.

Carin Hercock, Country Manager, Ipsos New Zealand, said: “While cost of living remains New Zealanders’ dominant concern, this wave shows healthcare moving back up the agenda and unemployment becoming increasingly important. The fact that unemployment has now overtaken housing highlights growing concern about the labour market as New Zealanders continue to navigate a challenging economic environment.”

Amanda Dudding, Executive Director Public Affairs, Ipsos New Zealand, added: “The taxation deep dive reveals an interesting contrast in public opinion. While New Zealanders are divided on whether they personally pay too much tax, there is relatively strong support for taxes focused on wealth and capital gains. These findings suggest New Zealanders continue to distinguish between personal tax burdens and how they believe the overall tax system should operate.”

For a full copy of the 34th Ipsos Issues monitor, New Zealand edition, please visit our website <https://www.ipsos.com/en-nz>

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About the Study

This study did not have any external sponsors or partners. It was initiated and run by Ipsos, because we are curious about the world we live in and how citizens in New Zealand and around the globe think and feel about their world.

The study was conducted using online research panels between 3 and 11 September 2026, with 1,003 New Zealanders aged 18 and older representing the adult New Zealand population. Quotas were set to ensure representativeness.

The precision of Ipsos online surveys is calculated using a credibility interval. Here, the total New Zealand results have a credibility interval of +/-3.5 percentage points. For more information on the Ipsos use of credibility intervals, please visit the Ipsos website.



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“Game Changers” – our tagline – summarizes our ambition to help our 5,000 clients navigate with confidence our rapidly changing world.

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

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