



New Zealand in focus

Our younger generation is leading the way on issues of national identity

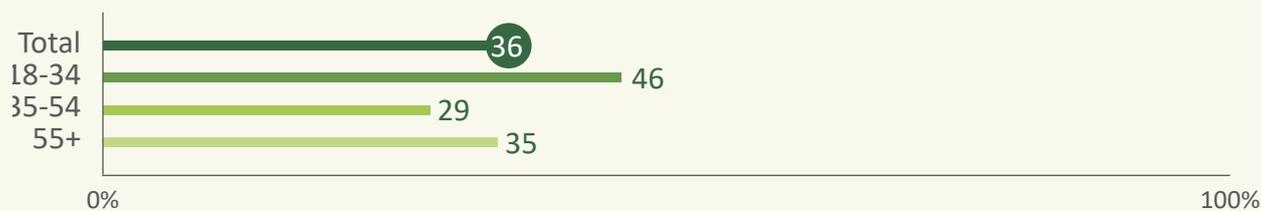


Rangahau Aotearoa

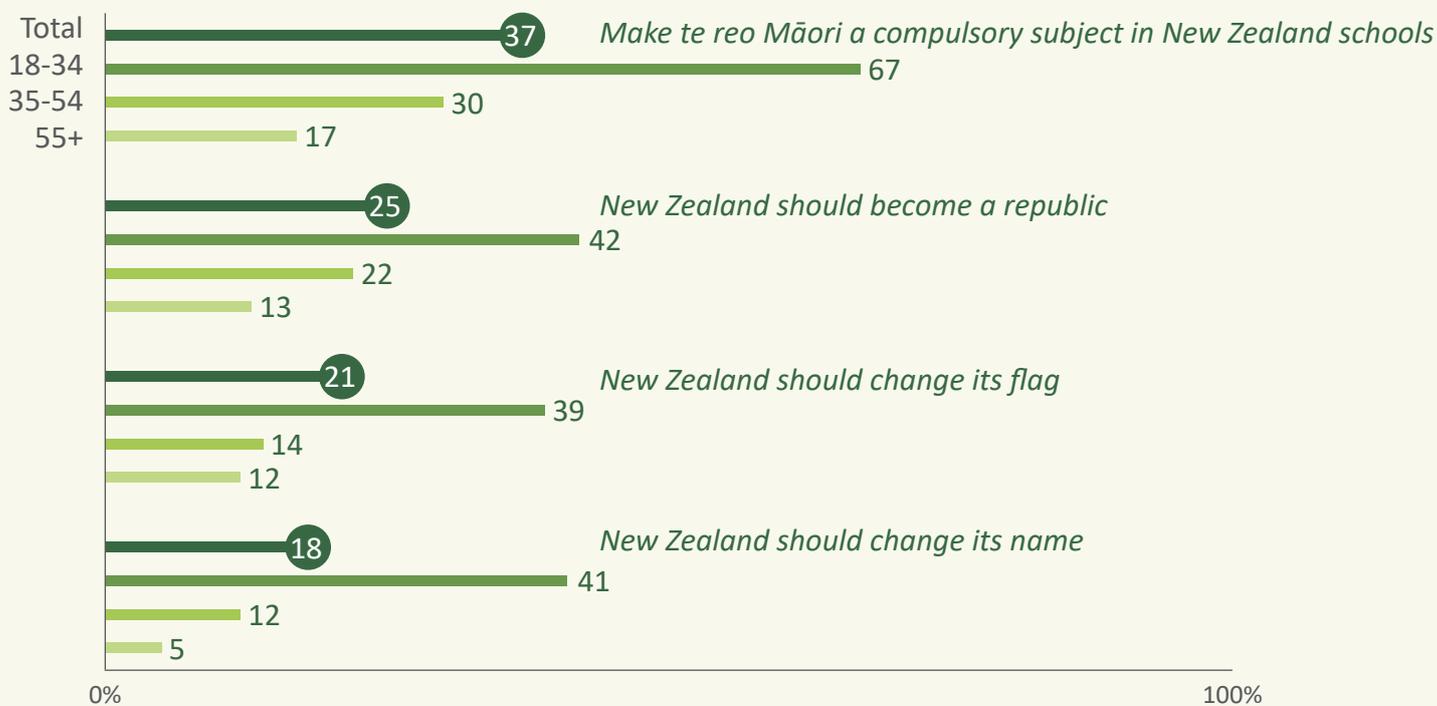
Research New Zealand

We asked New Zealanders a range of questions about support for a referendum on the Treaty of Waitangi, government priorities, tobacco tax, and our national identity.

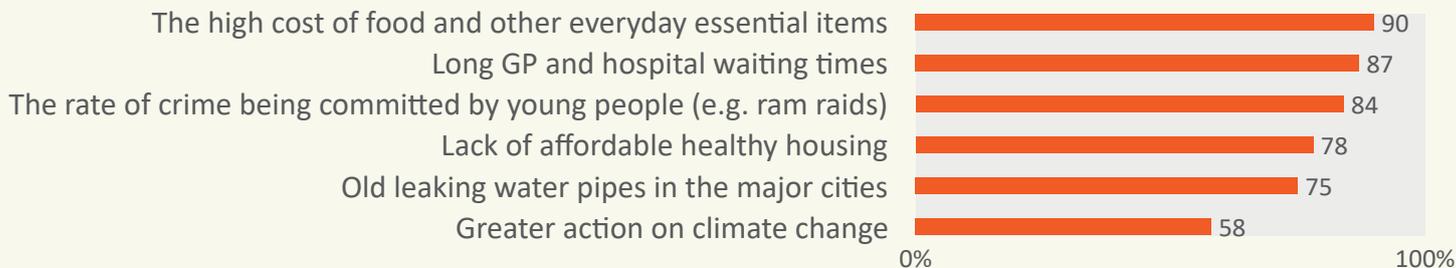
Agreement on whether there should be a referendum on the Treaty of Waitangi



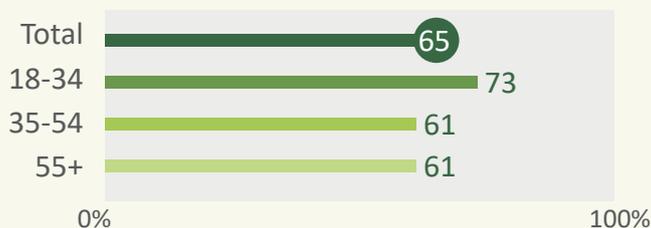
Agreement about the identity of New Zealand



What are the priority issues for the government?



Agreement that the price of tobacco be indexed against the inflation rate?





Rangahau
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MEDIA RELEASE

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New Zealand in focus - Our younger generation is leading the way on issues of national identity

The topic:

We have a new 3-party coalition Government, Parliament has resat, Māori are united and mobilised, inflation shows no signs of abating and, in general, it's still tough for the average New Zealander.

In our first poll for 2024, we decided to ask a nationally-representative sample of 1,000 New Zealanders 18 years plus about a range of short and long-term issues, including:

- what the new Government should **prioritise**;
- whether there should be a **referendum on the Treaty of Waitangi**;
- as well as whether it was **time for New Zealand to become a republic**, change its name, change its flag, etc. (issues we've asked about before).

The timing of the poll is important to note; 02 to 05 February 2024 (i.e. in the lead up and during Waitangi Day weekend).

High-level findings

1. Opinion was **polarised** in terms of whether or not there should be a referendum on the Treaty of Waitangi. One third of respondents stated there should be a referendum (36%), while 35% disagreed. The balance neither agreed nor disagreed (28%).
 - Interestingly, younger respondents (18-34) were more likely to agree than older respondents that there should be a referendum (46% compared with 35% with those aged 55+, for example).
2. Most respondents stated they were **in favour** of the price of tobacco being indexed against the inflation rate. Roughly four times as many agreed that this should be the case compared with the percentage disagreeing (65% compared with 17%).
 - Younger respondents (73%) and males were more likely to agree (69%).
3. Three issues were **universally prioritised by the large majority of respondents** as being important to address:
 - 'The high cost of food and other everyday essential items' (90% of respondents rated this issue with a 'high' or 'very high' priority).
 - 'Long GP and hospital waiting times' (87%).
 - 'The rate of crime committed by young people' (84%).

4. While the appetite for New Zealand to become a republic, change its flag and name has remained static in the last 2022 (after significant change prior), agreement that that **‘te reo Māori should be a compulsory subject in New Zealand schools’ continues** to increase (37% agreement compared with 28% in 2014).
- Having said this, younger respondents (18-34) were more likely to agree than all other age groups that ‘te reo Māori should be a compulsory subject in New Zealand schools’, ‘become a republic’, ‘change its flag’ and ‘change its name’. For example, 67% agreed that ‘te reo Māori should be a compulsory subject in New Zealand schools’ compared with 17% of respondents aged 55+, for example).

Key findings – Opinions about the key areas of priority for the new Government

Of the six areas listed, all but one were prioritised by the large majority of respondents as being important to address.

However, **three** issues stood head and shoulders above all others; namely:

- ‘The high cost of food and other everyday essential items’ (90% of respondents rated this issue with a ‘high’ or ‘very high’ priority).
- ‘Long GP and hospital waiting times’ (87%).
- ‘The rate of crime committed by young people’ (84%).

Note that these three issues were universally rated as priorities by all respondents, irrespective of age, their gender or where they lived.

While rated as a priority by over one-half the total sample of respondents, ‘greater action on climate change’ was rated with a ‘high’ or ‘very high’ priority by significantly fewer in comparison (54%). Compared to other age groups, younger respondents (aged 18-34) were more likely to rate/prioritise this issue (68% compared with 49% with those aged 55+, for example).

Table 1: Issues prioritisation – by age

	Unweighted base =	Total	18-34	35-54	55+
		1004	288	373	343
		%	%	%	%
Issues rated as being of ‘high’/‘very high’ priority to address					
Long GP and hospital waiting times	87		83	89	90
Old leaking water pipes in the major cities	75		67	72	82
The rate of crime being committed by young people (e.g. ram raids)	84		80	87	86
The high cost of food and other everyday essential items	90		88	94	89
Greater action on climate change	58		68	58	49
Lack of affordable healthy housing	78		84	77	75

Key findings – Agreement that there should be a Referendum on the Treaty of Waitangi

Opinion was **polarised** in terms of whether or not there should be a referendum on the Treaty of Waitangi. One third of respondents stated there should be a referendum (36%), while 35% disagreed. The balance neither agreed nor disagreed (28%).

Opinion differed by age, gender and where respondents lived:

- Younger respondents (18-34) were more likely to agree than older respondents that there should be a referendum (46% compared with 35% with those aged 55+, for example).
- Male respondents were also more likely than female respondents to agree (48% compared with 25%).
- Similarly respondents living in the North North Island were more likely to agree (40% compared with 31% of respondents living in the South Island, for example).

Table 2: Opinions about whether there should be a referendum on the Treaty of Waitangi - by age

Unweighted base =	Total 1004 %	18-34 288 %	35-54 373 %	55+ 343 %
Disagree (0-3)	35	26	38	41
Neither agree not disagree (4-6)	28	27	33	24
Agree (7-10)	36	46	29	35
Don't know	0	0	0	0
Total	100	100	100	100

Key findings – Agreement that tobacco pricing should be inflation indexed

Most respondents stated they were **in favour** of the price of tobacco being indexed against the inflation rate. Roughly four times as many agreed that this should be the case compared with the percentage disagreeing (65% compared with 17%).

Opinion differed by age and gender, but not where respondents lived:

- Younger respondents (18-34) were more likely to agree than older respondents that tobacco pricing should be inflation indexed (73% compared with 61% with those aged 55+, for example).
- Male respondents were also more likely than female respondents to agree (69% compared with 61%).

Table 3: Opinions about whether tobacco pricing should be inflation indexed - by age

Unweighted base =	Total 1004 %	18-34 288 %	35-54 373 %	55+ 343 %
Disagree (0-3)	17	9	17	23
Neither agree not disagree (4-6)	19	18	22	16
Agree (7-10)	65	73	61	61
Don't know	0	0	0	0
Total	100	100	100	100

Key findings – Agreement that Aotearoa should make fundamental identity changes

Over one-third of respondents agreed that ‘te reo Māori should be a compulsory subject in New Zealand schools’ (37%). Compared with the rate of agreement in 2014, 2020 and 2022, the percentage agreeing has steadily increased in the last decade. As a point of reference, the percentage agreeing in 2014 was 28%.

In comparison, agreement with all other changes has **not** increased in the last two years, whereas there was positive movement in the earlier years of the decade. For example, whereas almost three times the percentage of respondents agreed that ‘New Zealand should become a republic’ between 2014 and 2022 (11% compared with 30%), this is currently 25% (i.e., statistically similar to the percentage in 2022).

Having said this, younger respondents (18-34) were more likely to agree than all other age groups that ‘te reo Māori should be a compulsory subject in New Zealand schools’, ‘become a republic’, ‘change its flag’ and ‘change its name’. For example, 67% agreed that ‘te reo Māori should be a compulsory subject in New Zealand schools’ compared with 17% of respondents aged 55+, for example).

Table 4: Opinions about whether identity changes should be made to Aotearoa New Zealand (its status, name, flag, etc.) – by year

Unweighted base =	Total 2024 1004 %	Total 2022 1000 %	Total 2020 1003 %	Total 2014 500 %
‘Agree’/‘Strongly agree’ that ...				
New Zealand should become a republic	25	30	20	11
New Zealand should change its flag	21	27	19	19
New Zealand should change its name	18	22	10	NM
Make te reo Māori a compulsory subject in New Zealand schools	37	33	33	28

Table 5: Opinions about whether identity changes should be made to Aotearoa New Zealand (its status, name, flag, etc.) – 2024 - by age

Unweighted base =	Total 1004 %	18-34 288 %	35-54 373 %	55+ 343 %
'Agree'/'Strongly agree' that ...				
New Zealand should become a republic	25	42	22	13
New Zealand should change its flag	21	39	14	12
New Zealand should change its name	18	41	12	5
Make te reo Māori a compulsory subject in New Zealand schools	37	67	30	17

Comment:

“We think this poll shows that opinion about what Aotearoa New Zealand is and who we are as people is maturing; particularly amongst the young, 18-34.

Younger respondents were more likely than older age groups to support Aotearoa New Zealand becoming a republic, changing its flag, changing its name and the teaching of te reo becoming compulsory in schools.

They were also more likely to support a referendum on the Treaty.

Hindsight is a wonderful thing and we didn't have the foresight to ask respondents why they supported or did not support the referendum, but it's a fair bet that support for the referendum was because they see the importance of such a referendum 'clearing the air' and 'setting the way forward'.

Equally important are some of the more important issues that we believe should be immediately prioritised; the cost of living, GP and hospital waiting queues, and crime amongst the young.”

Research New Zealand Managing Partner, Emanuel Kalafatelis.

This survey of 1,004 respondents aged 18 years and over was conducted online, between 02 to 05 February 2024. The maximum margin of error is +/- 3.3 percent (at the 95 percent confidence level).

*The sample has been weighted by gender and age to ensure the results are representative of the population 18 years plus based on these demographic criteria. The survey was **not** undertaken on behalf of any organisation, but as part of Research New Zealand's social poll of New Zealanders' opinions about topical issues.*

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