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Economic Issues dominate New Zealanders concerns early in 2018

New in-depth research exploring the concerns of New Zealanders found it is Economic issues that dominate early in 2018 led by concerns about ‘Poverty and the gap between rich and poor’, and ‘House prices & Housing affordability’ and ‘Housing shortages & Homelessness’ on the home front.

Most important problems facing New Zealand

Quantified thematic analysis of the verbatim responses of a nationally representative sample of 999 New Zealanders found the economy and things economic were once again the biggest theme.

Economic issues like poverty and the gap between the rich and poor and housing issues including house prices, housing affordability & housing shortages and the homeless or homelessness are mentioned by the most New Zealanders although housing related issues have fallen significantly since Jacinda Ardern became Prime Minister in October 2017.

Economic Issues were mentioned by 34% of respondents (up 6% since August) with an additional 17% (down 9%) mentioning Housing/Homelessness Issues as the most important problems facing **New Zealand** – totaling just more than half of all respondents.

Three further themes emerged:

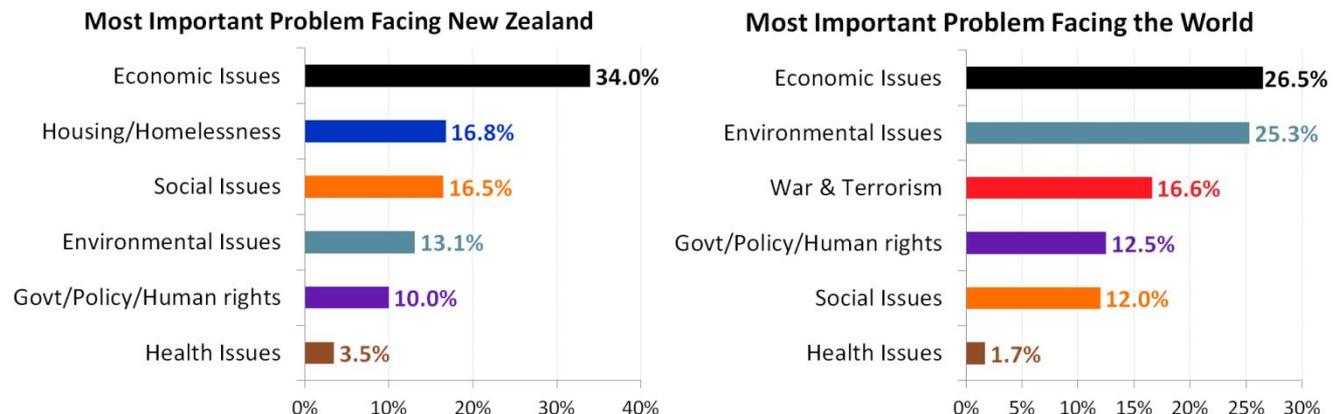
- Social issues like Crime, Social welfare, Youth issues were mentioned by 17% of New Zealanders;
- Environmental issues, such as Environmental pollution, and Climate change, were mentioned by 13%;
- Government, Public Policy and Human rights issues were mentioned by a further 10%.

Most important issues facing the World

When considering the wider **World**, the largest themes to emerge were also Economic, mentioned by almost 27% of New Zealanders. The leading Economic issue was clearly Poverty, the gap between rich and poor and inequality with other prominent Economic issues including Overpopulation and the economy. A further 25% of New Zealanders mentioned Environmental issues – dominated by Climate change/Global warming.

The third biggest theme was War & Terrorism mentioned by nearly 17% of New Zealanders followed by Government/ Public policy/ Human rights mentioned by almost 13% and Social issues on 12% of respondents as the biggest problems facing the **World**.

The charts below show the quantified thematic analysis of New Zealanders’ concerns. Respondents were asked: “What do you think is the most important problem facing the **World** today?” and then “What do you think is the most important problem facing **New Zealand** today?”



Source: Roy Morgan interviewed a representative cross-section of 650 Australians in February 2018.

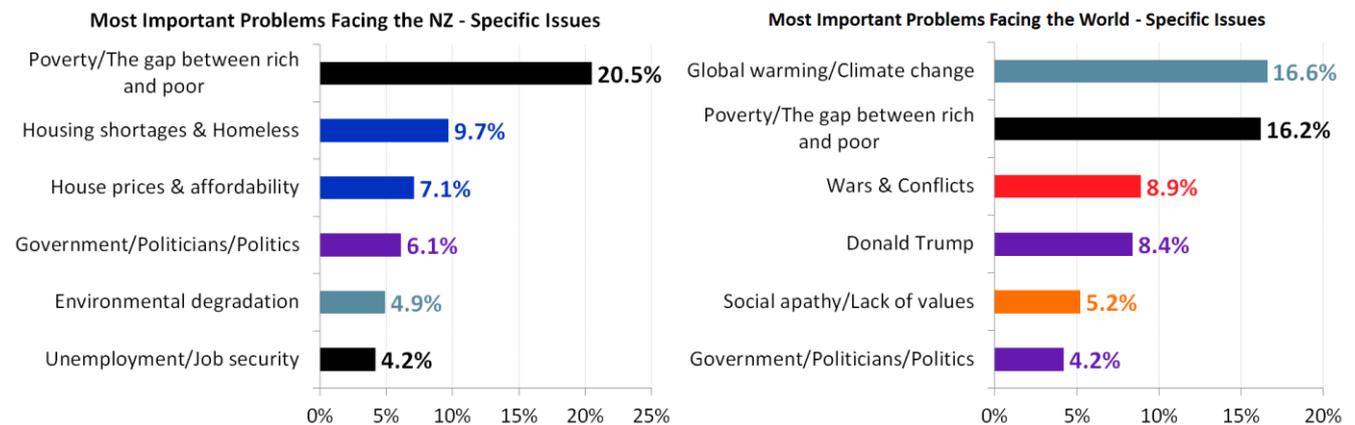
A full breakdown of what each broad category comprises can be viewed below.

Poverty/The gap between rich and poor is again the single biggest issue facing NZ

Single issue analysis of the responses shows the specific issue of greatest concern for New Zealand is Poverty and the gap between rich and poor, mentioned by over 20% of New Zealanders. This is more than any other single issue and up more than 3% since August 2017.

The next two most often mentioned single issues were:

- Housing shortages/Homelessness – mentioned by just under 10% (unchanged) of New Zealanders;
- House prices/Housing affordability – mentioned by 7% (down 9%) of New Zealanders; and
- The prominence of these two issues in New Zealand continues to far exceed their level in Australia where less than 5% of respondents mentioned either issue.



Source: Roy Morgan interviewed a representative cross-section of 999 New Zealanders in February 2018.

Global warming/Climate change, Poverty and gap between rich and poor the top World issues

The single biggest **World** problem is Global warming/Climate change mentioned by just under 17% of respondents (up 4%) just ahead of Poverty and the gap between rich and poor which was mentioned by over 16% (up 2%) of respondents while Wars & Conflicts were mentioned by almost 9% (up 3%) of respondents.

The largest political issue New Zealanders identified was US President Donald Trump – now mentioned by 8% of respondents, up 1% since late 2017 while the leading Social problem facing the **World** is Social apathy/Lack of values which was mentioned by 5% (down 3%) of respondents as the single biggest problem the **World** faces.

Michele Levine, CEO Roy Morgan, says new Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern has come to power promising to tackle New Zealand's largest problems including poverty, inequality, housing affordability & prices and homelessness – early indicators on housing are positive:

“New Zealanders elected Jacinda Ardern as Prime Minister at last year’s election on Ardern’s vow to deal effectively with increasing poverty and inequality and a rising gap between the rich and poor. Ardern’s policy priorities also include increasing housing affordability and providing housing for those currently homeless via sensible migration policies and by amending the tax incentives for housing investment.

*“The fact is that poverty and inequality remain a huge issue for New Zealanders – a record high 20.5% of New Zealanders say the issue is the biggest facing **New Zealand** – up 3% on pre-election levels. Ardern’s recent vow to cut child poverty in half in the next ten years via the Child Poverty Reduction Bill is a signature policy squarely aimed at reducing the poverty New Zealanders regard as the most pressing.*

“The signs are even more positive on the housing front with a substantial reduction in the quotient of New Zealanders mentioning house prices and housing affordability – now at 7%, down 9% since the election. House price growth has levelled off in Auckland as the policies of the Labour-New Zealand First coalition of reducing migration, ending taxation incentives for housing investment and banning foreigners from buying existing homes are beginning to impact the market which had soared over 90% in the last ten years.

“The strong policy response from the new government – which includes reducing housing shortages by building 10,000 houses a year – indicates Jacinda Ardern is serious about following through on the pre-election promises that won her election and bodes well for the Government early in its term.

*“When it comes to the **World**, Economic issues, mentioned by 27% of respondents, and Environmental issues, mentioned by 25% of respondents, are the two biggest themes – over half of all respondents.*

“The two big issues that lead these themes are the Environmental issue of Global warming/Climate change mentioned by nearly 17% of respondents and the Economic issue of Poverty, the gap between rich and poor and inequality is mentioned by over 16% of respondents.

*“Although Poverty and its related issues are considered a huge problem for both **New Zealand** and the **World**, New Zealanders aren’t too worried about Climate change/Global warming on the local front with under 4% mentioning the issue as a problem facing **New Zealand**.*

*“Other prominent issues mentioned as the biggest problem facing the **World** include Wars & Terrorism mentioned by almost 17% of respondents led by Wars & Conflicts (9%) and issues relating to Global politics/Government/Politics/Political leaders mentioned by almost 13% of respondents. Once again, New Zealanders continue to hold special concern about US President Donald Trump mentioned by over 8% of respondents.*

“The recent initiative by President Trump to meet with the North Korean leader Kim Jong-Un to seek a peaceful resolution to the problems on the Korean Peninsula – announced after this survey was conducted – may go some way to answering the concerns of New Zealanders – especially if the meeting between the two leaders proves successful.”

These findings come from a special Roy Morgan study of New Zealanders’ attitudes towards issues facing **New Zealand** and the **World** in the future. The research conducted was both **qualitative** (in that people were asked to use their own words) and **quantitative** (in that the ‘open-ended’ responses were analysed and ‘coded’ so that the results could be counted and reported as percentages).

The research was conducted in New Zealand, during February 2018 with a representative sample of 999 men and women aged 14 or over. Respondents were asked: *“What do you think is the most important problem facing the **World** today?”* and *“What do you think is the most important problem facing **New Zealand** today?”*

The main themes highlighted cover a wide range of specific issues listed here.

Economic Issues: Financial problems, Cost of living, Rising prices, Money issues, Unemployment, Taxation (General), Poverty, The gap between rich and poor, Economic problems, Housing affordability, Homelessness/Lack of housing, Over-population, Globalisation, Fairer world trade etc.

Government Policy/Politics/Human rights: Government, Politics, Leadership, Political system, Government spending, Courage to lead, Lack of vision, Politicians, Jacinda Ardern, Bill English, Winston Peters, Donald Trump, Human rights, Religion, Religious fundamentalism, Refugees Immigration/Immigration policy, Racism, Maori issues/health/rights, Multiculturalism and Integration.

Social Issues: Social apathy, Family breakdowns, Selfishness, Moral decline, Social welfare, Welfare dependency, Youth issues – Homelessness, apathy, discipline, Drugs and drug abuse, Education, Crime, Law and order, Anger, Violence, Aggression and others.

Environmental Issues: Global warming, Climate change, Water conservation, Environmental degradation and pollution, Rubbish, Famine, Food shortages, Cutting down rainforests, Desertification, Natural disasters and other Environmental issues.

Energy/Fuel/Power: Energy crisis, Energy infrastructure, Power stations, Power supply Energy supply, Power crisis, Renewable energy, Wind-power, Electricity prices, Sustainable management of natural resources, Depletion of Fossil fuels, Petrol prices.

Terrorism/Wars: Wars, Conflicts, Middle East, North Korea, Iraq,, Syria, Africa, Afghanistan, Ukraine, ISIS, Terrorism, Terrorists, Al-Qaeda, Bombings, Shootings, Security, Safety, World peace, UN.

Health Issues: Hospitals, Private health insurance (PHI), Health cover, Aged care, Disability care, Health system, General Health services and other Health-related issues.

More information about the breakdown of these issues amongst different age groups, genders, regions, generations and Roy Morgan’s leading market segmentation tools are available for purchase.

For comments or more information about Roy Morgan’s data, please contact:

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About Roy Morgan

Roy Morgan is the largest independent Australian research company, with offices in each state of Australia, as well as in the United States and the United Kingdom. A full service research organisation specialising in omnibus and syndicated data, Roy Morgan has over 75 years’ experience in collecting objective, independent information on consumers.

Margin of Error

The margin of error to be allowed for in any estimate depends mainly on the number of interviews on which it is based. Margin of error gives indications of the likely range within which estimates would be 95% likely to fall, expressed as the number of percentage points above or below the actual estimate. Allowance for design effects (such as stratification and weighting) should be made as appropriate.

Sample Size	Percentage Estimate			
	40%-60%	25% or 75%	10% or 90%	5% or 95%
5,000	±1.4	±1.2	±0.8	±0.6
20,000	±0.7	±0.6	±0.4	±0.3
50,000	±0.4	±0.4	±0.3	±0.2