

Measuring Public Opinion for over 75 Years

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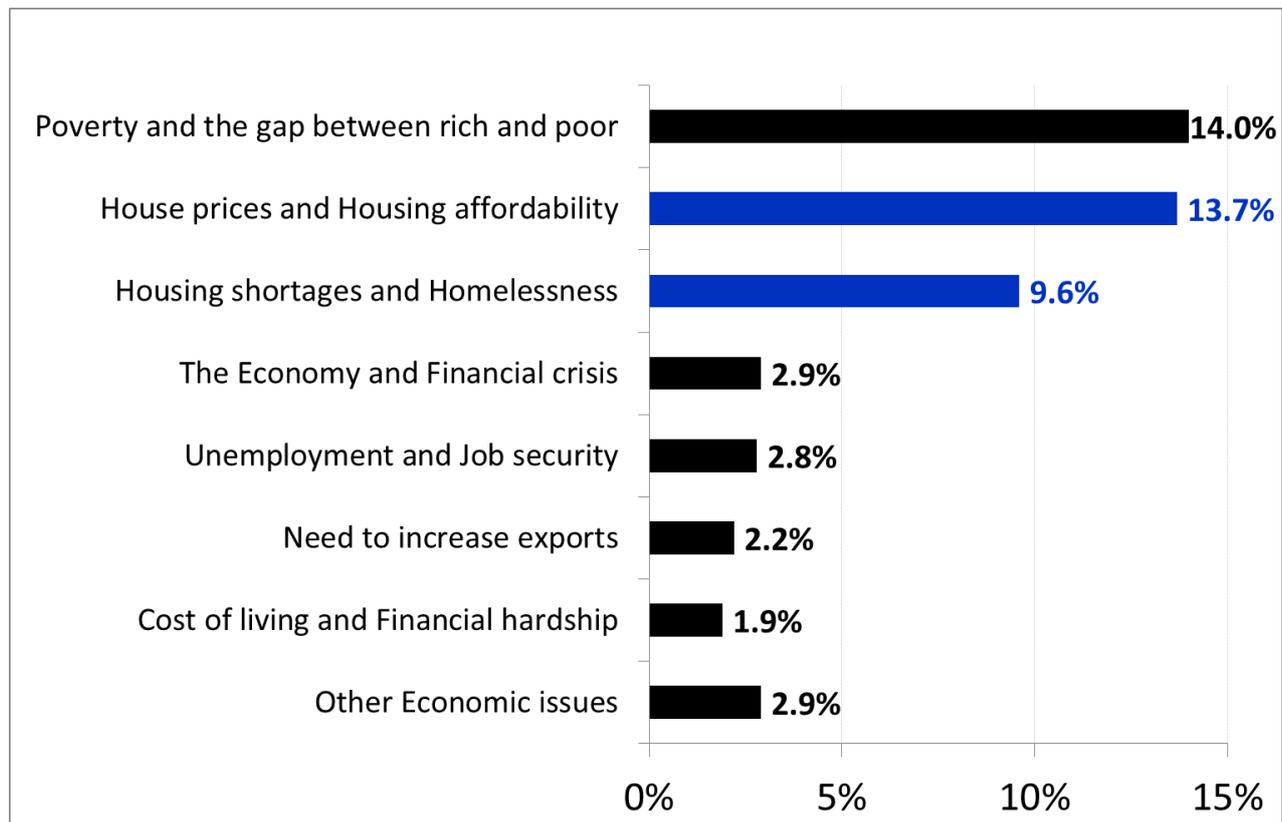
Poverty, gap between rich & poor and Housing affordability, Housing shortage & Homelessness dominate discussion in lead-up to Election

In mid-2017, and only a few months before the upcoming New Zealand Election which according to [Roy Morgan is too close to call*](#), the key Issues for the New Zealand Election are the inter-related issues of Poverty and the gap between rich & poor, House prices & Housing affordability and Housing shortages & Homelessness.

The overall picture across all issues was covered extensively in our release on broader New Zealand Concerns released a fortnight ago and available to view [here](#). We look in this release at Economic & Housing-related concerns in greater detail.

A significant 50% of New Zealanders believe Economic issues (27%) or Housing-related issues (23%) are the most important problems facing **New Zealand**.

Most Important Problems Facing New Zealand: Focus on Economic & Housing-related Problems



Source: Roy Morgan interviewed a representative cross-section of 1,000 New Zealanders in May 2017.

*New Zealand Election on September 23, 2017 is 'Too close to call'

The latest [Roy Morgan New Zealand Poll conducted in early July](#) shows governing National (43%) now just behind a potential Labour/Greens alliance (44%) with New Zealand First (8%) put once again in the position to determine which side of politics forms Government after the election. New Zealand First has previously entered coalition Governments with National (1996-98) and also with Labour (2005-08).

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Key Issues for the New Zealand Election are the inter-related issues of Poverty and the gap between rich & poor, House prices & Housing affordability and Housing shortages & Homelessness

Within the group of Economic & Housing-related issues the most important issues are:

- **Poverty and the gap between rich & poor** mentioned by 14% of respondents: Themes that came up repeatedly were the inequality between different sectors of society and the income gap, the widening gulf between 'haves' and 'have nots', just general growing poverty and in particular child poverty was mentioned by many respondents;
- **House prices & Housing affordability** mentioned by 14% of respondents: Housing prices, the affordability of houses and housing, house prices being too high for the younger generation, the ever increasing house prices, and the housing market being in a bubble and reducing the access to affordable housing – it's just too expensive were constant themes;
- **Housing shortages & Homelessness** mentioned by 10% of respondents: The related issue was brought up constantly with mentions of the lack of housing, the housing crisis/ problem, the lack of houses causing homelessness for many people, the shortfall of housing especially with New Zealand's elevated immigration program and just not enough house building going on.

Other Economic issues mentioned by 2% - 3% of respondents included The Economy and Financial crisis on 3%, Unemployment and Job security on 3% (A key difference between New Zealand and Australia is that Unemployment is mentioned by only 3% of New Zealanders compared to 9% of Australians), Need to increase exports on 2% and the Cost of living and Financial hardship on 2%.

Some 3% of respondents gave a broad range of economically related issues including Low wages, Christchurch recovery and rebuilding, Foreign ownership and Selling of our assets. None of these issues were mentioned by more than around 1% of people.

Analysis of Economic & Housing-related Concerns by Voting Intention

Analysing the question by voting intention in the lead-up to the election shows supporters of National are almost equally concerned about Poverty and the gap between rich and poor (14%) and House prices and Housing affordability (13%).

In contrast, supporters of Labour (20%) and even more so the Greens (24%) are clearly more concerned about Poverty and the gap between rich and poor than they are about other issues – although House prices and Housing affordability is also a huge issue for both Labour supporters (15%) and Greens supporters (19%).

Most Important Problem Facing NZ – Economic & Housing-related Issues by Voting Intention

	May 2017 %	VOTING INTENTION				
		National %	Labour %	Greens %	NZ First %	Others %
Poverty and the gap between rich and poor	14.0	13.8	19.7	24.1	2.8	10.5
The Economy and Financial crisis	2.9	3.4	2.2	2.6	-	5.9
Unemployment and Job security	2.8	1.3	3.5	1.0	8.0	4.6
Need to increase exports	2.2	3.2	2.1	2.7	-	2.6
Cost of living and Financial hardship	1.9	0.5	4.5	-	2.2	4.5
Low wages	1.4	0.4	1.1	1.7	5.7	5.2
Foreign ownership and Selling of our assets	1.1	1.3	-	1.8	2.4	4.4
Christchurch recovery and rebuilding	0.3	0.6	0.2	-	-	-
TOTAL ECONOMIC ISSUES	26.7	24.5	33.3	33.8	21.1	36.6
House prices and Housing affordability	13.7	12.9	14.9	18.8	14.6	9.2
Housing shortages and Homelessness	9.6	9.4	8.3	7.2	7.7	3.3
TOTAL HOUSING RELATED ISSUES	23.3	22.3	23.2	26.0	22.3	12.5

Although only 3% of New Zealanders mention Unemployment and Job security as the biggest problem facing **New Zealand** 8% of supporters of New Zealand First regard this as the biggest problem placing it second only to House prices and Housing affordability (15%) for the party which is in the box seat to decide who forms New Zealand's next Government according to the latest [Roy Morgan New Zealand Poll](#).

Poverty and the gap between rich & poor mentioned by 14% of respondents: Themes that came up repeatedly were the inequality between different sectors of society and the income gap, the widening gulf between 'haves' and 'have nots', just general growing poverty and in particular child poverty was mentioned by many respondents.

National supporters on Poverty and the gap between rich & poor

The 13.8% of National supporters who mentioned Poverty and the gap between rich and poor brought up the extent of poverty, families and children in particular facing poverty, wealth inequality and the poverty line and the inter-relationship of poverty and abuse.

"The struggling and poorer quality of life experienced by low income families"

"Growing poverty – the Government isn't doing enough to help those in need"

"Socio-economics are creating an underclass. The working class is poor and getting poorer"

"The poverty for our disenfranchised people which increases social issues, child abuse and neglect"

"The widening wealth gaps"

"The inequality of haves and have nots"

"The inequality – there's some doing really well and there's more and more slipping through the gaps"

"The lower end of the financial ladder, lower income families and giving them the support they need"

"Child poverty – kids living below the breadline and can't afford basic necessities"

"Child poverty" (Multiple responses)

"Child poverty and its connection to domestic and child violence"

"The disadvantaged of society"

Labour supporters on Poverty and the gap between rich & poor

The 19.7% of Labour supporters who mentioned Poverty and the gap between rich and poor mentioned the growing gap between sectors of society, the wealth inequality has never been this bad before and seems to be growing, the income inequality feeds the issue and child poverty was again prominent.

"The gap between rich and poor in New Zealand. It never used to be this bad"

"The wage gaps between rich and the poor are growing"

"Inequality of income"

"Wealth inequality is leading to a divided society"

"The difference between the haves and have nots, between the rich and the poor, it's growing"

"I think the increasing divide between rich and poor"

"Poverty – there seem to be more and more people living below the poverty line – and this includes youth poverty"

"Same thing – income inequality – I feel that this is the root of a lot of other problems like political instability that we are currently experiencing"

"Financial gap between rich and poor"

"Poverty and wealth inequality are huge problems"

"Inequality. Economic inequality. Not everyone has the same opportunities as each other. For instance with access to job prospects and education"

"Child poverty. All the kids going to school hungry that don't have clothes. It's probably because their parents don't have enough money"

"Childhood poverty"

House prices & Housing affordability mentioned by 14% of respondents: Housing prices, the affordability of houses and housing, house prices being too high for the younger generation, the ever increasing house prices, and the housing market being in a bubble and reducing the access to affordable housing – it's just too expensive were constant themes.

National supporters on House prices and Housing affordability

The 12.9% of National supporters who mentioned House prices and Housing affordability continually brought up increasing house prices leaving people unable to buy homes – particularly younger people, prices being too high, the high ratio of housing prices to income and the Housing crisis in general.

"Home affordability – prices are too high!"

"House prices – there're lots of people, especially young people who can't afford to buy their own homes"

"The price of housing for young people who are trying to get a house in this country."

"Rising house prices brings more homelessness and poverty. A lot of young families are struggling"

"Probably housing at the moment – the affordability"

"I think the housing market is one of the biggest problems"

"The high ratio of house prices to income"

"Housing not being available enough for people who aren't able to buy houses, due to high prices and lower wages. People aren't able to afford deposits for houses and can't turn to renting either because of the horrendous renting costs"

"Housing – it's becoming absolutely unaffordable"

"Housing – the affordability of housing to the medium income is totally out of proportion"

"House prices are unaffordable for the lower and middle classes"

"Cost of housing"

"Housing crisis – the younger people can't afford first homes and there is a lack of availability for affordable and suitable homes"

Labour supporters on House prices and Housing affordability

The 14.9% of Labour supporters who mentioned House prices and Housing affordability mentioned the unaffordability of Housing for many New Zealanders, the connection between high house prices and rising poverty and its attendant social impacts, and the foreign investment in the local housing market taking housing out of the reach of locals and first home buyers.

"In social terms I think it is affordable housing. Affordable housing not only impacts the younger generation, but even those of other generations that had an opportunity but let it slip away"

"House prices going through the roof too quickly and putting everything out of balance. The Government is not dealing with it. It only benefits those already invested as they can afford them"

"I would say a mixture of housing and poverty. The two are inter-related. I guess with increasing population and not enough houses, and investors buying lots of rentals people can't get a home"

"Housing affordability – it's just too expensive to live"

"The inaffordability of housing"

"House prices are quite high and many people can't afford to buy houses and jobs don't provide enough income to buy houses"

"The younger generation don't have a hope of buying a house"

"The lack of a number of affordable housing"

"First home buyers. It's a big problem for them not being able to buy a home. Especially people from New Zealand as anyone from overseas can come and buy so the foreign investment in New Zealand is making it harder for New Zealanders to get into the property market"

"The housing market obviously – people can't afford new homes"

"The housing crisis and the cost of housing. If you're a first time home buyer it's really impossible to save up to be able to buy a house"

"Housing is unaffordable mostly due to older generations purchasing additional homes that remain empty"

Michele Levine, CEO Roy Morgan, says:

“New Zealanders face an election in just over two months and the latest [Roy Morgan New Zealand poll released in mid-July](#) shows that governing National (43%) is now just behind a potential Labour/Greens alliance (44%) with New Zealand First on 8% support in the box seat to decide who will form New Zealand’s next Government.

*“In the lead-up to September’s election the parties must appeal to undecided and wavering voters and there is no better way of doing it than by discussing the most important problems regular New Zealanders tell us are facing **New Zealand**.*

*“A staggering 50% of New Zealanders mention an Economic (27%) or Housing-related (23%) issue when asked unprompted what the most important problem facing **New Zealand** is. There are clear regional differences that stand out with residents of New Zealand’s biggest cities clearly the most likely to bring up Housing-related issues: Auckland (House prices 17% cf. Homelessness 12%) and capital city Wellington (House prices 12% cf. Homelessness 17%).*

“Importantly, there are also key differences between supporters of the major parties. Supporters of National bring up Poverty and the gap between rich and poor (14%) and House prices and Housing affordability (13%) at about the same rate, however Labour supporters are far more likely to bring up Poverty and the gap between rich and poor (20%) than House prices and Housing affordability (13%) – although both are important issues.

“In addition, Greens supporters (24%) are far more likely to bring up Poverty and the gap between rich and poor than any supporters of any other party while Unemployment and Job security is a major issue for New Zealand First supporters (8%) while it rates further down the pecking order for others.”

The research was conducted in New Zealand, during May 2017 with a representative sample of 1,000 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?”

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).

To gain access to greater depth and analysis of the results – with Demographic splits including Age, Gender, Party affiliation, Income, Work status, Education, Location – City/ Country, Region, and more please contact Julian McCrann at +61 3 9224 5365 or Julian.McCrann@RoyMorgan.com.

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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. The following table 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. The figures are approximate and for general guidance only, and assume a simple random sample. 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%
1,000	±3.2	±2.7	±1.9	±1.4
2,000	±2.2	±1.9	±1.3	±1.0