

Measuring Public Opinion for over 75 Years

Monday, 18 September 2017

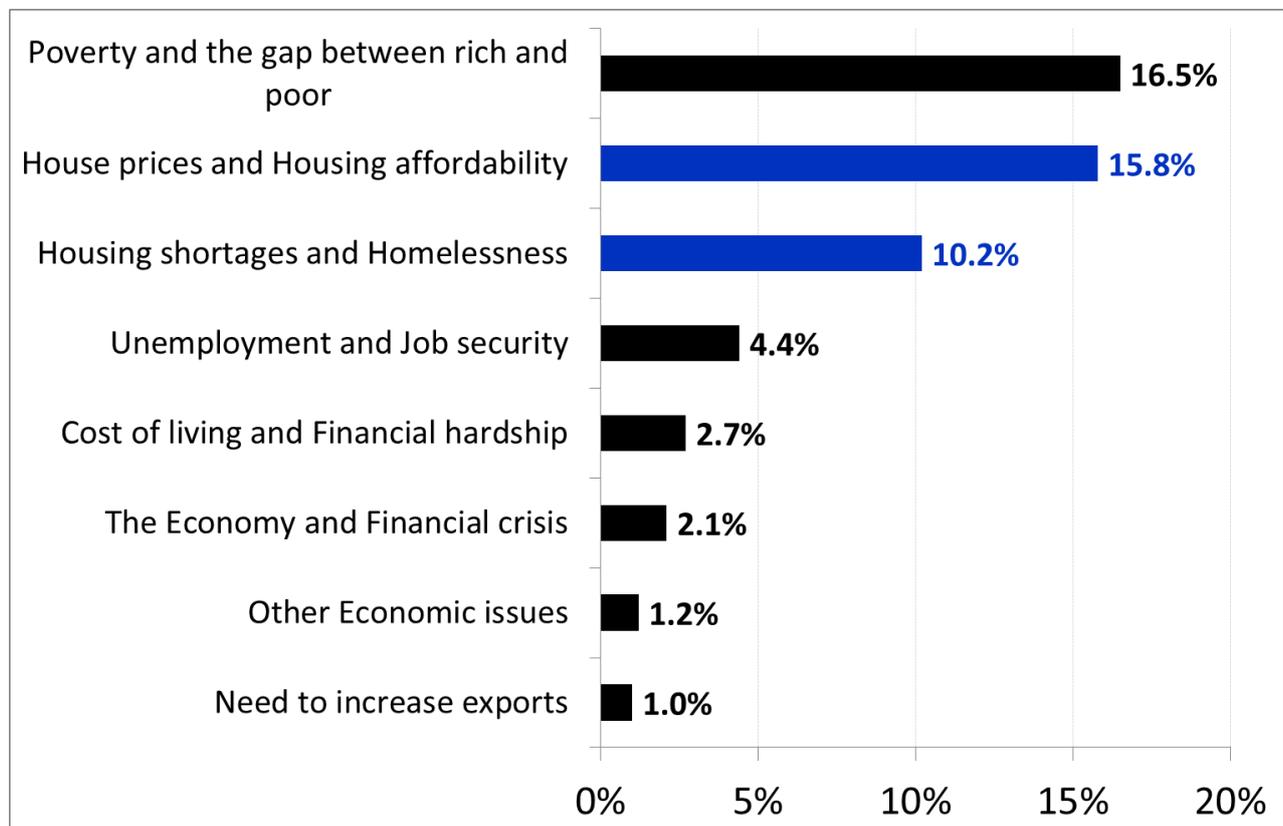
Poverty, gap between rich & poor and Housing affordability, Housing shortage & Homelessness key issues as New Zealand votes in Election

Only a week before New Zealand's Election which according to today's [Roy Morgan New Zealand poll](#) is on a knife's edge marginally favouring a Labour/Greens coalition, the key Issues are again 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 last week and available to view [here](#). We look in this release at the key Economic & Housing-related concerns that look set to see New Zealand elect a new Prime Minister.

Now a majority of New Zealanders say either Economic issues 28% (up 1% since May 2017) or Housing-related issues 26% (up 3%) are the most important problems facing **New Zealand**.

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



Source: Roy Morgan interviewed a representative cross-section of 1,003 New Zealanders in August 2017.

*New Zealand Election on September 23, 2017 is on a knife's edge entering the final week

The latest [Roy Morgan New Zealand Poll](#) released today shows leading parties National (40%) neck-and-neck with Labour (39.5%) although the higher support for the Greens (9%) over New Zealand First (6%) likely gives Labour the edge in forming a Government. Early voting has already begun and projections from past New Zealand elections suggest close to half of all ballots will be cast before election day.

The close nature of the election suggests the Maori Party, who should retain their 2 seats, are in a good position to determine whether Jacinda Ardern or Bill English is New Zealand's PM post-election.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NZ Election to be won by party which electors believe can solve the 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 just under 17% 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 16% 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 over 2% of respondents included Unemployment & Job security on 4%, Cost of living & Financial hardship on just under 3% and The Economy & Financial crisis on 2%.

Some 2% of respondents mentioned other economic issues including the need to increase New Zealand's exports, Low wages and Foreign ownership and Selling of our assets.

In Australia [Economic issues also dominate with 38% of respondents mentioning an Economic problem as the biggest problem facing Australia](#) – however, the leading issues are Unemployment (9%), The Economy/ Interest rates (8%) and Housing affordability (6%) - less than half the figure for New Zealand.

Analysis of Economic & Housing-related Concerns by Voting Intention

Analysing the question by voting intention shows supporters of National are most concerned about House prices & Housing affordability (16%) ahead of Poverty and the gap between rich & poor (13%).

In contrast, Poverty and the gap between rich and poor is the leading issue for both Labour supporters (21%) and Greens supporters (30%). However, Labour supporters are also very concerned about the related issues of House prices and Housing affordability (18%) and Housing shortages and Homelessness (12%).

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

| | Aug 2017 % | VOTING INTENTION | | | | | GENDER | |
|--|-------------|------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| | | National % | Labour % | Greens % | NZ First % | Others % | Women % | Men % |
| Poverty, the gap between rich & poor | 16.5 | 12.6 | 20.6 | 29.9 | 14.0 | 16.0 | 21.8 | 11.0 |
| Unemployment and Job security | 4.4 | 3.1 | 5.7 | 3.2 | 7.1 | 3.2 | 4.2 | 4.5 |
| Cost of living and Financial hardship | 2.7 | 0.9 | 1.8 | 2.3 | - | 14.5 | 2.7 | 2.7 |
| The Economy and Financial crisis | 2.1 | 1.8 | 1.9 | 1.9 | 1.1 | 4.0 | 1.5 | 2.7 |
| Need to increase exports | 1.0 | 1.4 | 1.0 | 1.2 | 1.2 | - | 0.8 | 1.3 |
| Low wages | 0.8 | 1.0 | - | 0.7 | - | 4.0 | 0.9 | 0.8 |
| Foreign ownership & Selling our assets | 0.2 | - | 0.4 | - | 0.7 | - | - | 0.5 |
| Christchurch recovery and rebuilding | 0.1 | 0.2 | - | - | - | - | 0.2 | - |
| TOTAL ECONOMIC ISSUES | 27.9 | 21.1 | 31.5 | 39.2 | 24.0 | 41.6 | 32.0 | 23.5 |
| House prices and Housing affordability | 15.8 | 16.1 | 18.7 | 9.7 | 19.1 | 11.9 | 14.5 | 17.1 |
| Housing shortages and Homelessness | 10.2 | 9.4 | 12.0 | 5.8 | 8.9 | 13.5 | 10.6 | 9.8 |
| TOTAL HOUSING RELATED ISSUES | 26.0 | 25.5 | 30.7 | 15.5 | 28.0 | 25.4 | 25.1 | 26.9 |

Supporters of New Zealand's fourth largest party, NZ First, once again regard Unemployment and Job security (7%) as one of the biggest problems facing **New Zealand** second only to Housing related issues (28%). NZ First has a pivotal role to play if the incumbent National-led Government is to have any chance of retaining Government according to today's final [Roy Morgan New Zealand poll](#).

Poverty and the gap between rich & poor mentioned by just under 17% of respondents: Themes that came up repeatedly were the wealth inequality between different sectors of society and how the widening gulf in society is leading to problems with increasing child poverty a huge concern, also mentioned was the inter-relation between poor education and health, poverty and domestic violence.

Labour supporters on Poverty and the gap between rich & poor

The 20.6% of Labour supporters who mentioned Poverty and the gap between rich and poor frequently mentioned wealth inequality, and the imbalance of wealth between rich and poor, and these problems feed into increasing poverty, and particularly child poverty and blamed the Government for not doing anything to really address these problems.

"The growing gap between rich and poor"

"The imbalance of wealth"

"Wealth inequality is leading to a divided society"

"Poverty – people don't have enough money to afford even the basics. There's certainly a rising gap between rich and poor"

"All forms of inequality"

"The lack of equality in the population"

"Poverty and the cost of living and people that don't earn enough"

"Child poverty"

"Poverty and not having enough to eat and the wages are not high enough to combat poverty"

"I think poverty is the issue, not just for us in New Zealand, but also for everybody else on the globe. There must be enough people or organisations around that have the power to be able to harness better ways of funding and tackling the issue of poverty worldwide."

"Poverty signified by famine and hunger"

"The widening gap between rich and poor driven by greed. Can't Labour get their act together and win this election?"

"The inequality between the wealthy and the impoverished in the population and the policies of the Government has done nothing to address it"

National supporters on Poverty and the gap between rich & poor

The 12.6% of National supporters who mentioned Poverty and the gap between rich and poor brought up the extent of poverty, mentioning children in poverty, the problems for families with young kids living below the poverty line, wealth inequality and its relationship to poverty, the economic disparity in New Zealand, and how poverty, poor education and health and domestic violence go together.

"Poverty – the difference between rich and poor has become way too big and there's only a few rich people and a lot of poor people"

"The gap between the very wealthy and the very poor is getting larger and larger"

"The gap between rich and poor is on a smaller scale than the world, but still apparent in New Zealand"

"The inequality of wealth"

"The widening gap between the rich and poor"

"Socio-economic issues like poverty are exacerbated by unemployment, not enough to feed the children"

"Probably like poverty. Just people like with young kids and stuff living below the poverty line"

"The amount of families that probably don't have enough to live on, to eat would be one of the bigger problems we have – just extreme poverty like that creating hunger"

"Child poverty" (Multiple responses)

"Our children; there's widespread poverty, poor education, poor health access and domestic violence – they're all related issues"

"Economic disparity"

"Poverty and inequality. The rich and the poor"

"Poverty and access to things like clean water"

House prices & Housing affordability mentioned by just under 16% 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 driven higher by uncontrolled and excessive immigration into New Zealand, and particularly Auckland, were constant themes

Labour supporters on House prices and Housing affordability

The 18.7% of Labour supporters who mentioned House prices and Housing affordability mentioned house prices rising out of control and being unaffordable – particularly for younger people, and bringing with them problems with traffic congestion, over-use of roads, and rising poverty. Many pinned the blame for the huge increases in house prices on uncontrolled immigration, which mainly goes to Auckland.

“The availability of low cost housing”

“High house prices”

“Housing affordability – especially for younger people”

“Housing affordability – but I actually think house prices have reached their peak now”

“The amount it costs to buy a house within 50kms of a major city is crazy. It’s a huge problem”

“Housing – a lot of people can’t afford houses so I know a lot of people moving back overseas because they can’t afford to buy a house. If people are leaving that’s not great. I think the housing crisis goes hand-in-hand with poverty”

“Housing problems – renting a house now is very expensive”

“The cost of housing is soaring in New Zealand due to things like low interest rates and immigration”

“House prices are being pushed up and up by high immigration”

“There’s not enough accommodation and housing for New Zealand and the immigration policy we have and this pushes house prices out of the reach of first home buyers”

“House prices are out of control in Auckland which has created huge traffic and road problems – and all these problems are made worse by high immigration – which mainly goes to Auckland”

“House prices in Auckland are crazy because everyone that needs a job goes to Auckland. People should go and live anywhere but Auckland. I’m not saying don’t come, I’m just saying don’t come to Auckland”

National supporters on House prices and Housing affordability

The 16.1% of National supporters who mentioned House prices and Housing affordability continually brought up increasing house prices taking housing out of the reach of young people, and the problems high house prices cause for the poor who often end up on the street after losing their houses, and also mentioning the housing market being bad for the overall economy of New Zealand.

“Housing – it’s unaffordable!”

“Getting the housing market under control”

“The housing market is a massive problem – it’s increasingly unaffordable for first home buyers”

“Housing – I know that I’ve got a very little chance of getting a home. It’s just so expensive for a student. If you have a student loan, getting a home loan is next to impossible”

“Everything is expensive – the cost of houses and cost of living. Lower income people can’t buy first homes.”

“First home buyers are struggling – housing prices in the big cities are too expensive”

“Housing inflation. Trying to buy your own first home is only getting harder and harder, it’s not going to get any easier for first home buyers anytime soon”

“House prices – how quickly they’re rising and just the availability of affordable housing”

“Affordable housing – it’s about getting a roof over people’s heads”

“Housing – people not able to afford housing; people losing their houses – it’s a big problem”

“Housing – there’s a whole sector of disenfranchised New Zealanders who can’t get housing”

“Housing costs are too high which is causing poverty. The homeless can’t afford homes so live in cars”

“There aren’t enough restrictions on foreigners being allowed to buy in New Zealand. Not enough restrictions on immigrants in terms of buying property and land in New Zealand”

“The housing market. Because it’s a non-sustainable form of economy for New Zealand”

Michele Levine, CEO Roy Morgan, says:

“New Zealand’s election next Saturday is on a knife edge with the final [Roy Morgan New Zealand poll](#) released today showing National on 40% just ahead of Labour on 39.5%, but when paired with likely Coalition partners Labour/Greens is on 48.5% cf. National/New Zealand First 46% - meaning Labour are favoured to form a Government with the help of Maori Party support – and their 2 crucial seats.

*“Labour Party Leader Jacinda Ardern’s strong focus on dealing with issues surrounding Housing affordability and the housing shortage and homelessness appear to have struck a chord with the electorate which has continually rated the issues of House prices & Housing affordability (16%), Housing shortages & Homelessness (10%) and also Poverty and the gap between the rich and poor (17%) as the most important problems facing **New Zealand**.*

“Ardern has vowed to address the housing issues with several measures including removing ‘speculators unfair tax advantages’, ‘stopping foreign buyers who have no interest in New Zealand buying existing homes’, ‘getting on and building more houses’ as well as cutting net annual immigration by up to 30,000 people per year.

“These measures are designed to tackle the three key issues – and strike at the larger concerns expressed by supporters of rival parties. Since Ardern became leader at the start of August Labour’s vote has increased to 39.5% (up 9%), taking support from National – now on 40% (down 3%) and biggest issue is House prices & Housing affordability, the Greens on 9% (down 4.5%) and a biggest issue of Poverty and wealth inequality which drives Homelessness and NZ First on 6% (down 2%) who’s biggest issues are Poverty, House prices and Immigration.

“In contrast, the message of the incumbent National Government of Prime Minister Bill English has been to emphasise the strong period of economic growth the Government has presided over and steady hand provided by National to nurture one of the world’s fastest growing developed economies. English described the election choice as being between the vagueness and uncertainty of a Labour-led Government or ‘building on our economic strength’ under National.

“In our last [New Zealand issues poll in May](#) we emphasised how important it was for New Zealand’s political parties heading towards the election to listen seriously to real concerns mentioned by New Zealand electors. The evidence of the last few weeks is that the Labour Party under Ardern has clearly won the campaign and has the momentum to win an unexpected election victory.”

The research was conducted in New Zealand, during August 2017 with a representative sample of 1,003 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.

For further information:

| Contact | Office | Mobile |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Gary Morgan: | +61 3 9224 5213 | +61 411 129 094 |
| Michele Levine: | +61 3 9224 5215 | +61 411 129 093 |

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 |

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