

Friday, 8 September 2017

New Zealanders' concerns dominated by 'Poverty and the gap between the rich and poor', 'House prices & Housing affordability' and 'Housing shortages & Homelessness' as New Zealanders get set to vote in NZ Election

New in-depth research exploring the concerns of New Zealanders found in the run-up to the election concerns about 'Poverty and the gap between the rich and poor', 'House prices & Housing affordability' and 'Housing shortages & Homelessness' have grown on the home front in recent months although the key global issues remain war, terrorism and poverty.

Most important problems facing New Zealand

Quantified thematic analysis of the verbatim responses of a nationally representative sample of 1,003 New Zealanders found the economy and things economic were once again the biggest theme to emerge.

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 have all grown in importance for respondents over the past few months and dominate the issues facing **New Zealand** with early voting for the election starting next week on Monday September 11, 2017.

Economic Issues were mentioned by just under 28% of respondents (up 1% since May) with an additional 26% (up 3%) mentioning Housing/Homelessness Issues as the most important problems facing **New Zealand** – again totalling more than half of all respondents.

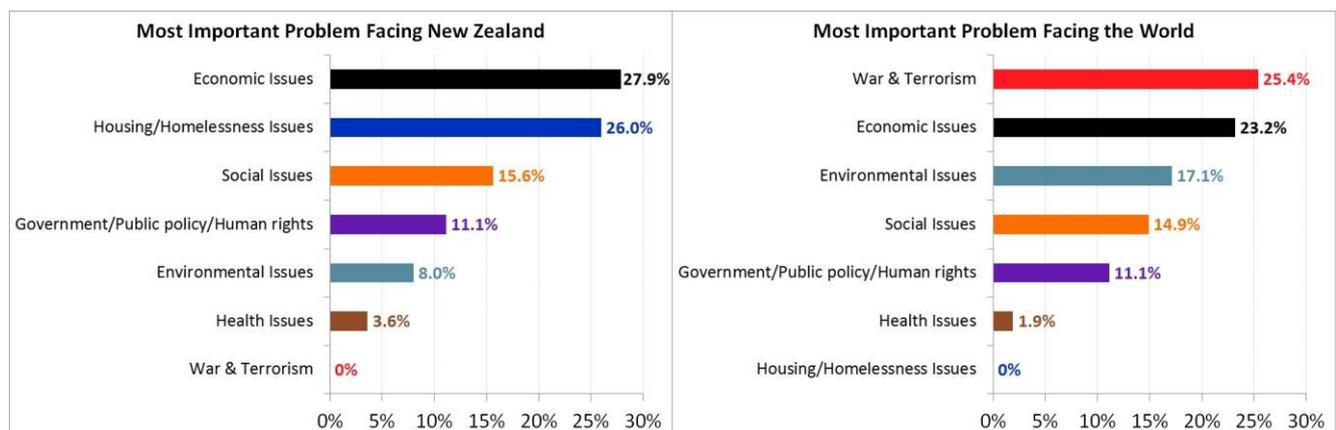
Three further themes emerged:

- Social issues like Crime, Social welfare, Youth issues were mentioned by 16% of New Zealanders;
- Government, Public Policy and Human rights issues were mentioned by a further 11%; and
- Environmental issues, dominated by Climate change, were mentioned by 8% of New Zealanders.

Most important issues facing the World

When considering the wider **World**, the largest themes to emerge were concerns related to War & Terrorism. These issues including Terrorism, War and Conflicts, Religious conflict and Lack of World peace were mentioned by just over 25% of New Zealanders and a further 23% mentioned Economic issues – these figures were virtually unchanged from earlier in the year in May.

The third biggest theme was Environmental issues mentioned by over 17% of New Zealanders followed by Social issues on just under 15% and Government/Public policy/ Human rights issues mentioned by 11% of respondents as the biggest problems facing the **World**.



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

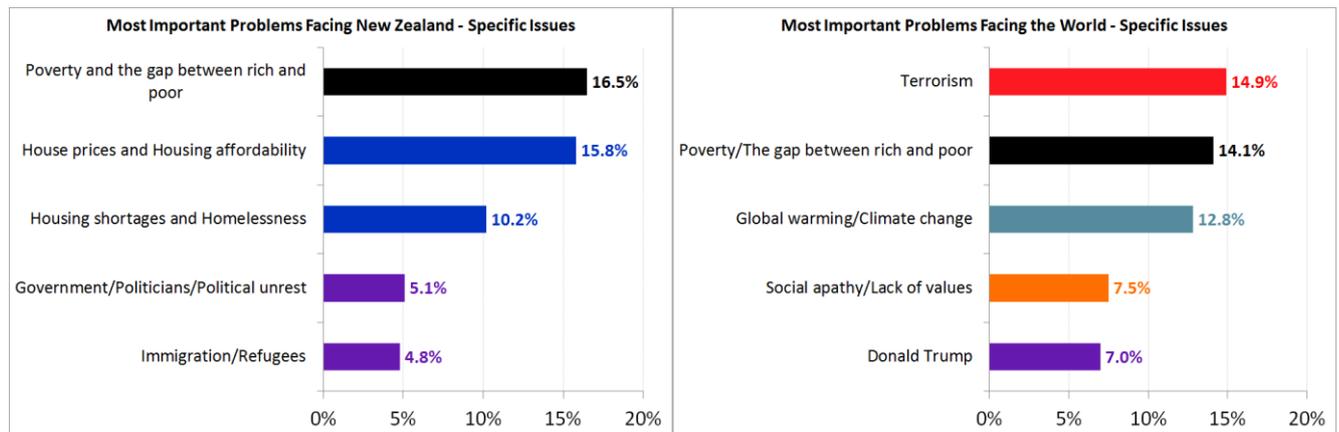
The previous charts above show the quantified thematic analysis of New Zealanders' concerns. Respondents were asked: "What do you think is the most important problem facing the **World** today?" and then "What do you think is the most important problem facing **New Zealand** today?"

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

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 just under 17% of New Zealanders. This is more than any other single issue and up nearly 3% on the figure in May.

The next two most often mentioned single issues were:

- House prices/Housing affordability – mentioned by 16% (up 2%) of New Zealanders; and
- Housing shortages/Homelessness – mentioned by just over 10% (up 1%) of New Zealanders;
- Once again a key difference between New Zealand and Australia is that Unemployment is mentioned by only 1% of New Zealanders compared to 9% of Australians asked the same question in May.



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

Terrorism, Poverty/ The gap between rich and poor, and Climate change the top World problems

The single biggest **World** problem is Terrorism which was mentioned by just under 15% (up 4%) of respondents ahead of Poverty and the gap between rich and poor which was mentioned by over 14% (up 1%) of respondents and Global warming/Climate change – mentioned by just under 13% (up 4%) of respondents.

The largest Social problem facing the **World** is Social apathy/Lack of values which was mentioned by just under 8% (up 2%) of respondents while concerns have lessened about US President Donald Trump – now mentioned by 7% of respondents (down 4%) as the single biggest problem the **World** faces.

Michele Levine, CEO Roy Morgan, says New Zealand's Election is a contest between the fresh ideas provided by new Labour Leader Jacinda Ardern and the steady hand of a National Government which has presided over nine years of relatively strong growth:

*"New Zealanders head to the polls in under two weeks to elect a new Government and the key issues for electors are once again 'Poverty and the gap between the rich and poor' – mentioned by just under 17% of respondents as the biggest problem facing **New Zealand** and the related Housing issues of 'House prices & Housing affordability' (16%) and 'Housing shortages & Homelessness' (10%).*

"The latest [Roy Morgan New Zealand poll released in mid-August](#) showed new Labour leader Jacinda Ardern has revitalised the Opposition and given Labour a real chance of defeating the incumbent National Government led by new Prime Minister Bill English.

"Jacinda Ardern has reiterated Labour's commitment to tackling New Zealand's housing issues by building 10,000 houses a year; Housing remains a huge issue in New Zealand's largest cities of Auckland (where House prices 21% is more of an issue than Homelessness 9%) and capital city Wellington (where House prices is actually less of an issue than the national average at 14% and Homelessness at 14% is a great concern).

“In addition Jacinda Ardern has emphasised the importance of improving the economy’s productivity and reducing poverty and inequality by investing in people; Labour’s pledge to provide free tertiary education is a key plank of this policy.

“In contrast, the incumbent National-led Government led by Bill English has emphasised the strong period of economic growth it has presided over – New Zealand has consistently been one of the world’s fastest growing developed economies in recent years. At a recent election debate Bill English described the choice at this election as being between the vagueness and uncertainty of a Labour-led Government or ‘building on our economic strength’ under National.

*“When it comes to the **World**, War & Terrorism mentioned by over 25% of respondents, remains the biggest problem with New Zealanders worried most about Terrorism (15%) following a spate of terrorist attacks earlier this year and Wars & Conflicts (6%) are also a huge problem with the rising tensions on the Korean Peninsula a big concern for many.*

*“Other prominent issues include Poverty and the gap between rich and poor mentioned by 15% of New Zealanders as the biggest problem facing the **World** and Global warming /Climate change which is mentioned by 13% of New Zealanders – up from 9% in May. In contrast only 2% (unchanged) of respondents mention the issue as the most important problem facing **New Zealand**.*

“Before New Zealanders head to the polls in just over two weeks Roy Morgan will be undertaking a more detailed analysis of this important survey – particularly as it relates to the key issues in New Zealand analysed by political affiliation – an important resource for understanding what is driving voters to decide who to vote for.”

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).

A comprehensive qualitative report including detailed breakdowns by Voting Intention, Age, Gender, Region, Income and more along with a full list of verbatim answers is available for purchase for \$2,800 NZD now.

To purchase this comprehensive report 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%
500	±4.5	±3.9	±2.7	±1.9
1,000	±3.2	±2.7	±1.9	±1.4
1,500	±2.6	±2.2	±1.5	±1.1
2,000	±2.2	±1.9	±1.3	±1.0