



Stuff NOWNEXT LOCAL

Research & Insights: September 2022

Key Findings



NZers living in sunny coastal areas are happier

Half of Kiwis say they are happy, with Hawke's Bay and Nelson residents feeling the happiest



Special attention needs to be paid to Auckland

The number of Kiwis that are unhappy have doubled in the last 2 months however it's Aucklanders that are least happy — only 2 in 5 (vs. 3 in 5 for whole of Aotearoa). Financial worries are hitting hard in this region as Aucklanders complain about cost of living and the housing crisis.



More needs to be done to alleviate cost of living crisis

Cost of living is currently the biggest concern for Kiwis, even more so for Aucklanders. Housing affordability, access to good healthcare, climate change and traffic round out the top 5 concerns for NZers.



NZers need to know why they should care about local elections

While 8 in 10 NZers say they are likely to vote in the upcoming local elections, for those that aren't, the main reasons for not are having no one to vote for and a lack of care for politics.



Candidates need to connect better with voters to earn trust

Only 2 in 10 Kiwis trust their local MPs. The majority also do not feel represented by candidates in their areas, main reason being out of touch with everyday Kiwis

How is New Zealand doing?

Half of Kiwis say they are happy.

This is because of their great family and friends, being thankful for their health and life just generally being 'good' at the moment.



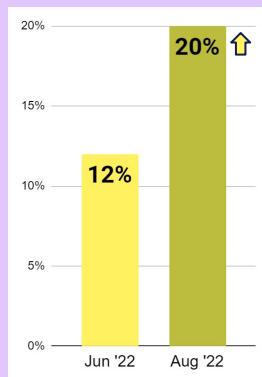
49%
HAPPY



Those that are **unhappy** have **almost doubled** in number since June

For the 1 in 5 that are unhappy, it's mainly because of the current cost of living situation, complaints about the government and rising crime.

This has increased significantly (almost doubled) since Stuff measured the mood of the nation in Jun'22 (12% Jun'22 vs. 20% Aug'22).



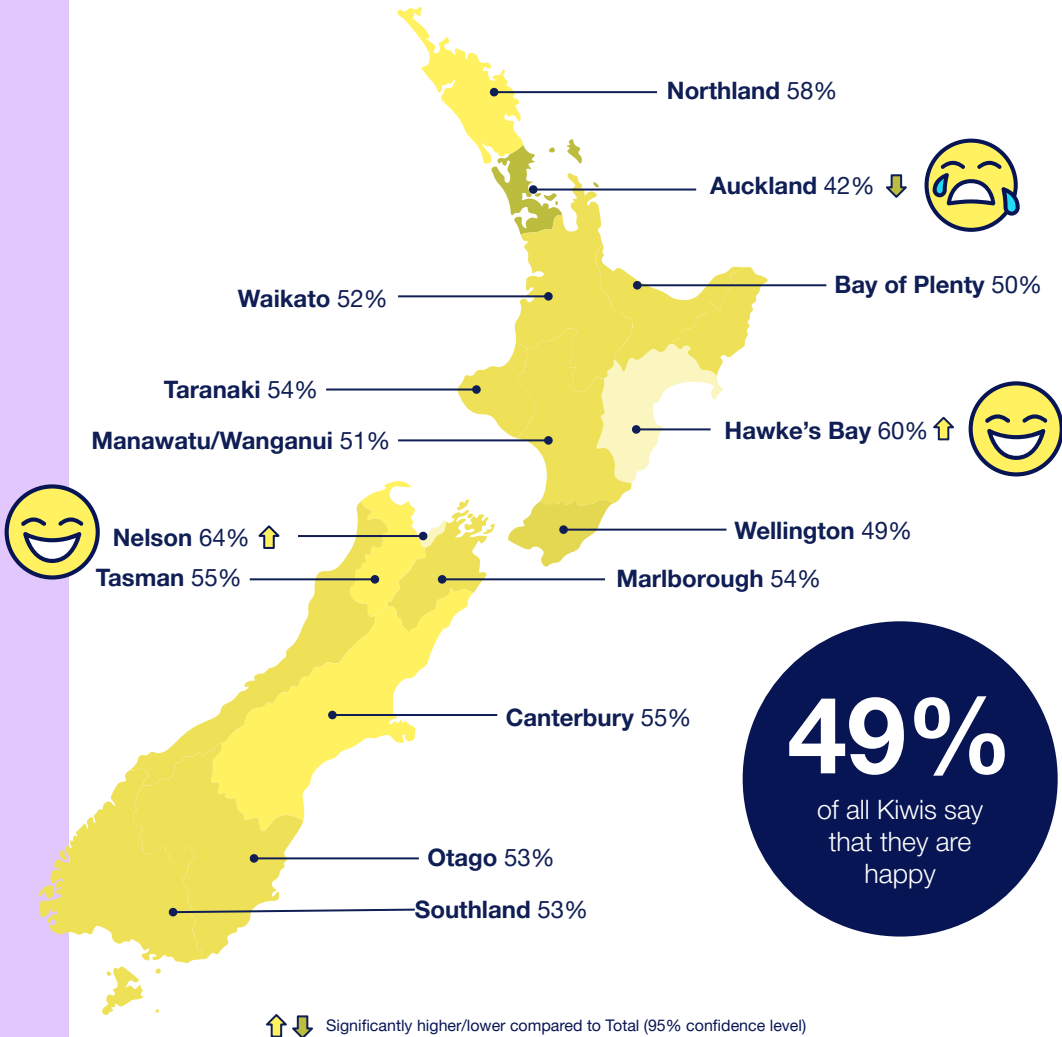
20%
UNHAPPY



Where do the happiest New Zealanders live?

Hawke’s Bay and Nelson residents are the happiest. Oppositely, Aucklanders are least happy – only 2 in 5.

The report will shed some light on the systemic issues Aucklanders are making so many of the population unhappy.



Q. Taking everything into account, how are you feeling?
(Top 2 Box scores: Happy / Very happy)
Note - regions not shown have a sample size <50



What are Aucklanders unhappy about?

Financial worries are hitting hard in this region as Aucklanders complain about cost of living and the housing crisis.

In addition, they are worried about rise in crime. Many blame the government for the current situation they find themselves in.

Q. Taking everything into account, how are you feeling?
Unhappy = very unhappy / unhappy. Base: Aucklanders





Q: Still thinking about [your region], what do you think are the biggest issues in the next 10 years? Choose up to 3

Base: Total = 5833
Source: [illegible] 2023
[illegible] 2023

How many Kiwis are on the move?

1 in 4

Kiwis (aged 18+) are planning to move in the next 5 years

...because it's getting expensive where they live whereas others want to move closer to family.

Q. Do you plan on leaving [REGION] in the next 5 years? Base: Total = 5833
Q. Why do you say that? Base: Those that said yes = 1400



Who is more likely to move in the next 5 years?

18-34 year olds are most likely to move away from their regions in the next 5 years — mostly to either work or travel abroad or to be able to buy a house in NZ where it's less expensive.

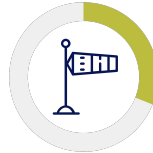
The main population centers Wellington and Auckland don't seem to provide a quality of living that encourages people to stay.



18 - 34 year olds
36% ↑



Aucklanders
32% ↑



Wellingtonians
31% ↑

... more specifically
Wellington City 37%



\$150k+ Household incomes
28% ↑



Migrants
30% ↑

... more specifically
New Migrants 51% (moved to NZ within the last 5 years)



Households of groups flatting together
51% ↑

Q. Do you plan on leaving [REGION] in the next 5 years? Those that said yes = 1400

↑↓ Significantly higher/lower compared to Total (95% confidence level)

NOWNEXT
LOCAL

HOT TOPIC

UPCOMING LOCAL ELECTIONS



How likely are New Zealanders to vote in the upcoming local elections?



8 in 10 (79%)
New Zealanders
say they are
likely to vote.

It seems the intention is there however since the nationwide restructuring of local government in 1989, turnout has declined from 57% to 42.2% in 2019.

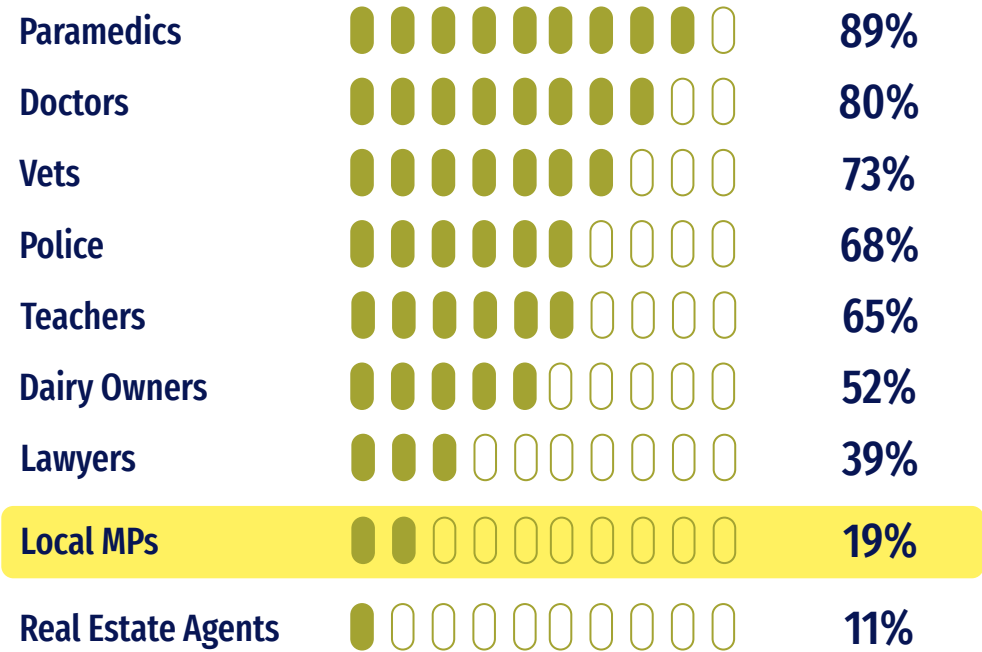
“Local government is our primary level of democracy. It provides a mechanism for people to participate in local public affairs and have a say in the way in which their communities are run and the local public services they receive. It also enables people to learn about democracy through practice and become active citizens in their own right.”
LGNZ



Kiwis have trust issues when it comes to their local MPs

Political trust has been linked to voter turnout — this may explain why voting turnout is much lower than intention.

Local MP’s should look to build trust within the regions — however recent allegations of bullying from both Labour and National is hindering that.

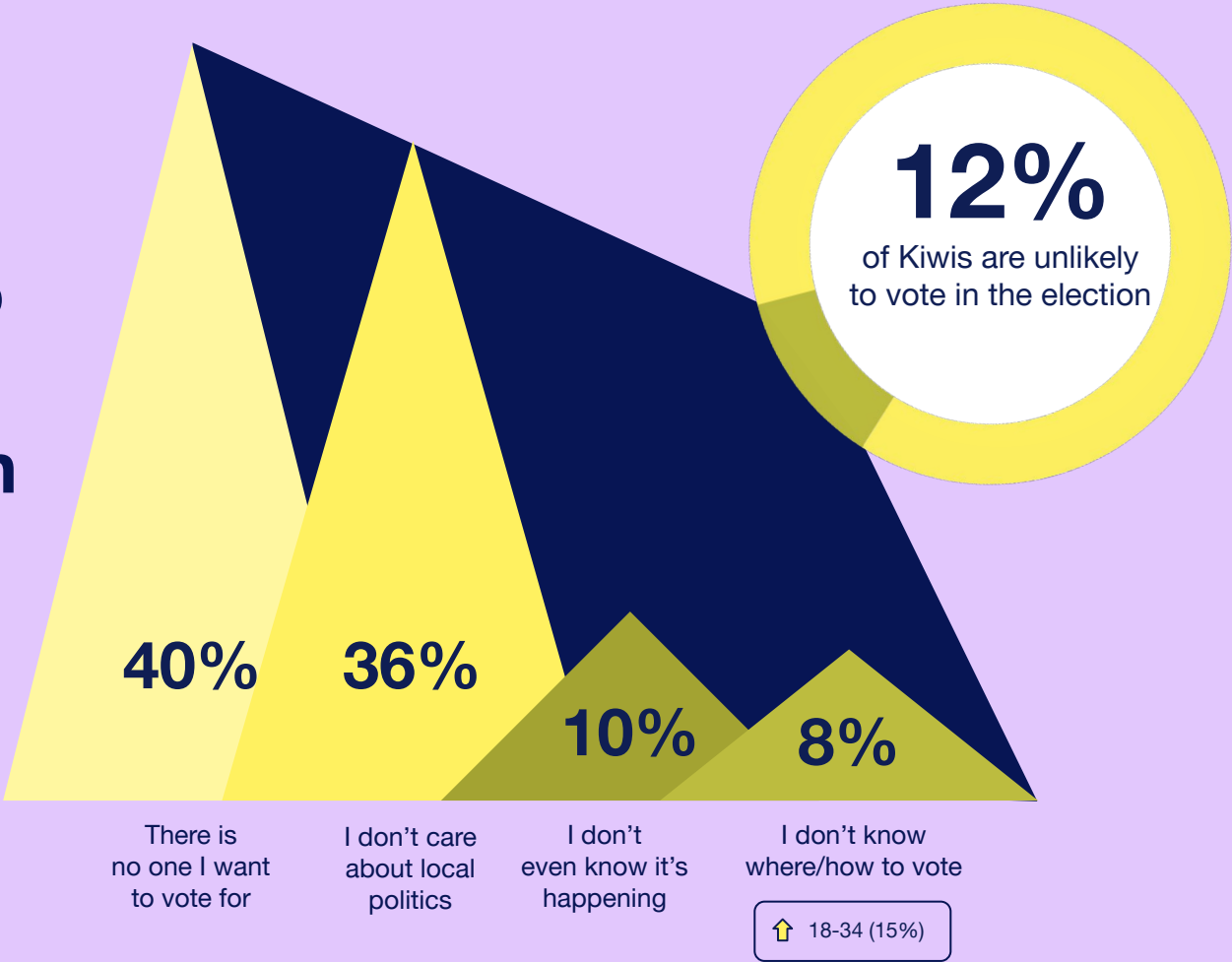


How much do you trust the following groups of people in [REGION]?; 5 pt scale from don't trust them at all to completely trust them. Score = Top 2 Box (4's and 5's). Base: Total=5833
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/31960520_Political_Trust_Satisfaction_and_Voter_Turnout



Local candidates don't seem to inspire and break through the barrier of indifference.

Candidates have to show their voters why they should care.



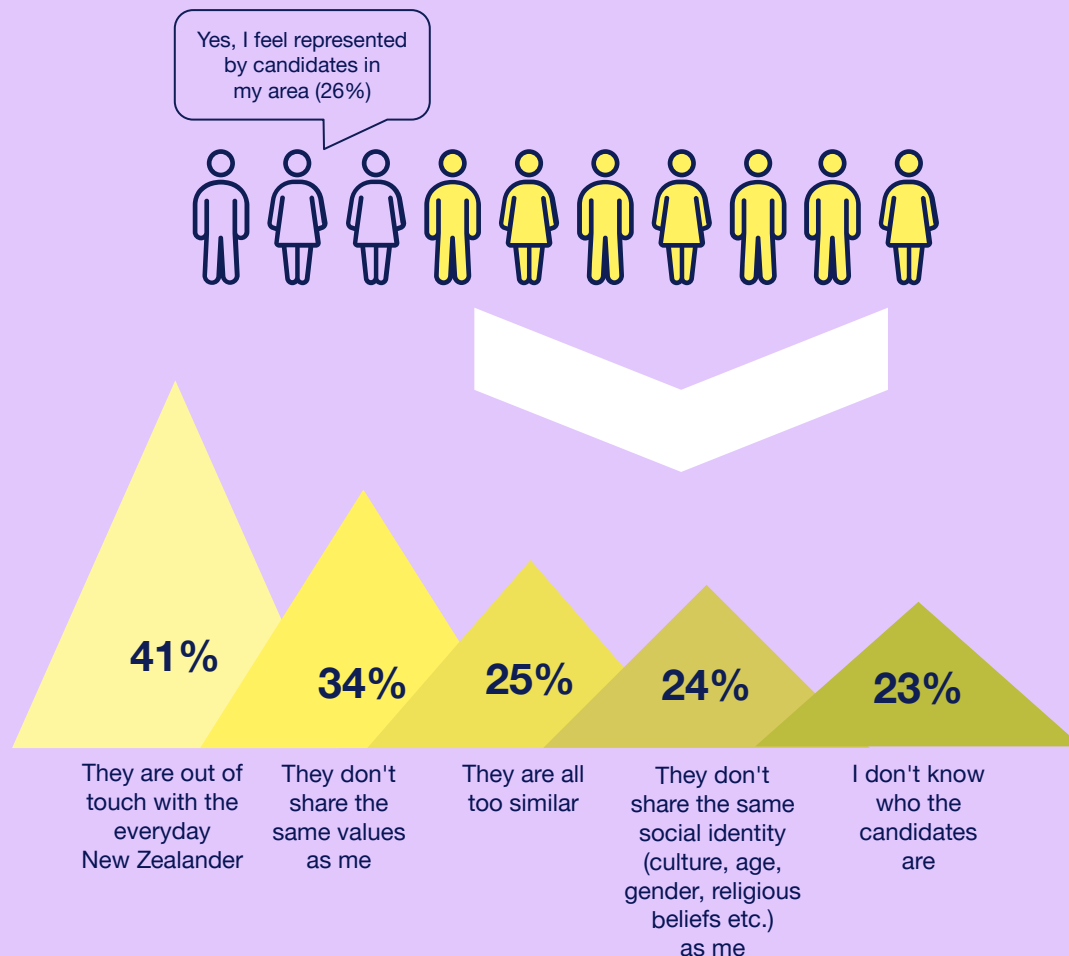
How likely are you to vote in this upcoming local election?
Base: Unlikely / Very unlikely = 512

↑ ↓ Significantly higher/lower compared to Jun'22 (95% confidence level)



Not many New Zealanders feel represented by candidates in Aotearoa.

Candidates need to
get in touch with
reality — this is the
main barrier of why
NZers don't feel
represented.



What did we do?



We designed a **5 minute online survey** that was advertised via Stuff's and The Spinoff's channels (website, eDM etc.)



The survey was live **12th – 28th of August.**



We spoke to more than **5,500 New Zealanders** and weighted the data to reflect **nationally representative** samples for gender, age and region.

Have questions or want more information?

Feel free to contact Stuff's Research and Insights team.
Email research@stuff.co.nz

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