

November  
Edition

# Stuff NOW NEXT LOCAL

Research & Insights  
November 2022





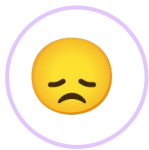
# NOWNEXT LOCAL

Kia ora and welcome to our **latest NowNext Local** report.

**Stuff's mission** is to help **make New Zealand a better place** but in order to do that, we first need to understand Kiwis' concerns and challenges right across Aotearoa and **NowNext Local** does just that - it **investigates key areas that impact how connected Kiwis feel to their region.**

NowNext Local runs three times a year so that we regularly hear back from **more than 5500** NZers and is **nationally representative** of the population.

# Key Findings | With so much uncertainty in our own backyard, New Zealanders' attitudes and intentions have jolted, significantly.



## More Kiwis are becoming unhappy

Stuff has been tracking the mood of the nation since June this year and ever since, reported happiness has declined, and reported unhappiness has significantly increased.



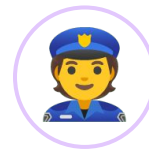
## Auckland is still a place of concern

Aucklanders continue to be least happy with only 2 in 5 saying they are happy. They are also significantly more concerned about the cost of living, housing affordability and crime in their region.



## Cost of living remains the number one concern

As interest / official cash rates increase, it's no surprise that cost of living remains at the top when it comes to Kiwis' concerns and has even increased significantly over the last 3 months. While the government has implemented reduced transport fares and subsidised fuel levies, what else can be done to help NZers?



## Crime concerns have increased significantly in the last 3 months

Three-quarters of Kiwis think crime is serious at the moment yet we remain the second safest country in the world<sup>1</sup>. While it's important to get the right facts out there, the media has a key role to play in providing NZers with a balanced view when it comes to reporting crime without creating sensationalism.



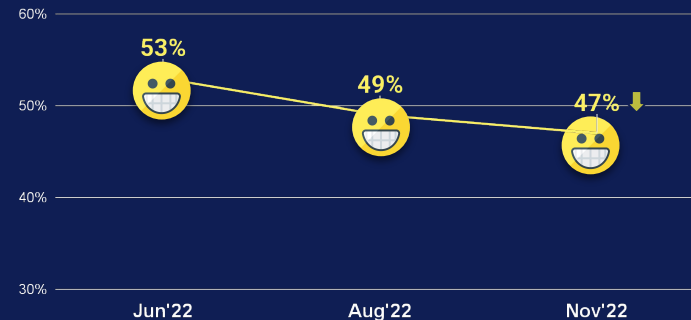
## 1 in 3 New Zealanders live with mould

Mould may have developed over the wetter / colder months so as we head into summer, thoroughly check your place for evidence of mould. While most mould is harmless, it can cause allergic symptoms<sup>2</sup>.

# How is **New Zealand** doing?

NZ might not be in the top 10 for happiest countries in the world for much longer\*. Stuff has been tracking happiness since June this year and unfortunately we have seen a steady decline ever since.

Just less than half of Kiwis say they are happy, mostly because life is good at the moment and they are grateful for their health, job and family.



Q. Taking everything into account, how are you feeling? Base: Total = 6689

Happy = Very happy / happy

Neutral = 28%

\* <https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/happiest-countries-in-the-world>



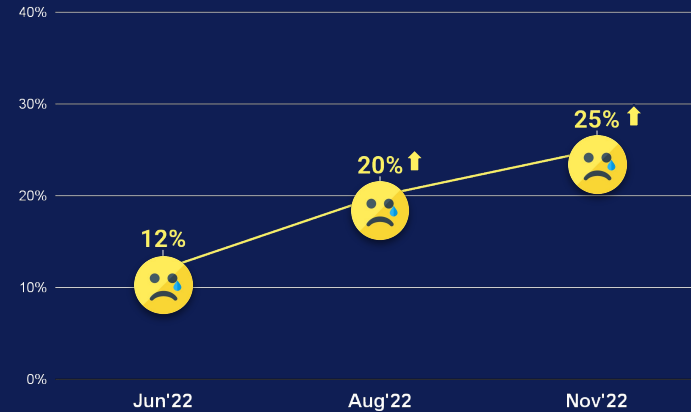
Significantly higher/lower compared to previous time period (95% confidence level)



Those that are **unhappy** continue to **increase**

**1 in 4 Kiwis are now unhappy -  
that's doubled since Jun'22 -  
and it's mainly because of the  
cost of living situation and many  
blame the government for that.**

This has increased significantly every time Stuff measures happiness.



Q. Taking everything into account, how are you feeling? Base: Total = 6689  
Unhappy = Very unhappy / unhappy  
Neutral = 28%



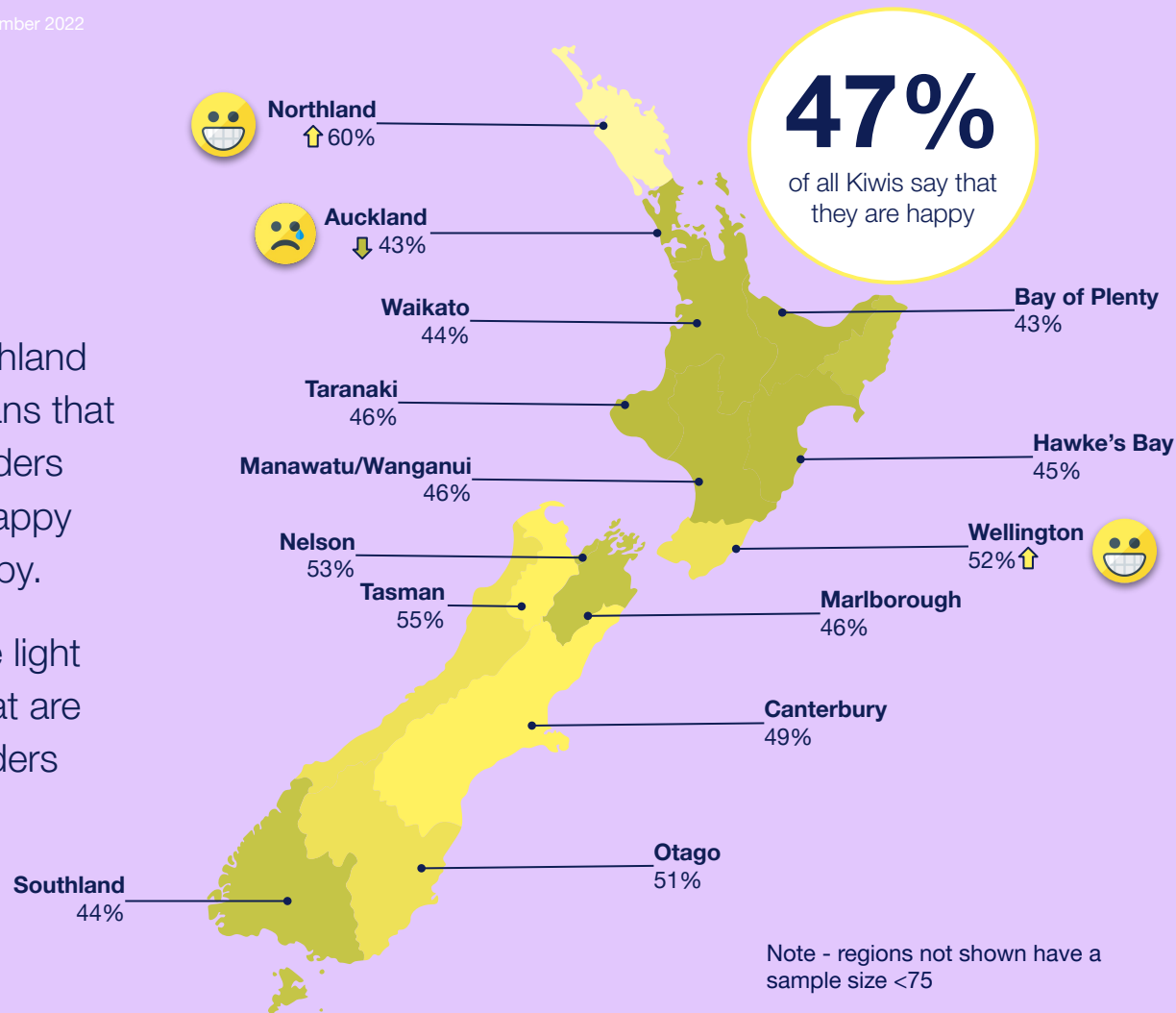
Significantly higher/lower compared to previous time period (95% confidence level)



# Where do the happiest New Zealanders live?

This time around, it's Northland residents and Wellingtonians that are the happiest. Aucklanders continue to be the least happy with only 2 in 5 being happy.

This report will shed some light on the systemic issues that are making so many Aucklanders unhappy.



Q. Taking everything into account, how are you feeling?  
(Top 2 Box scores: Happy / Very happy)



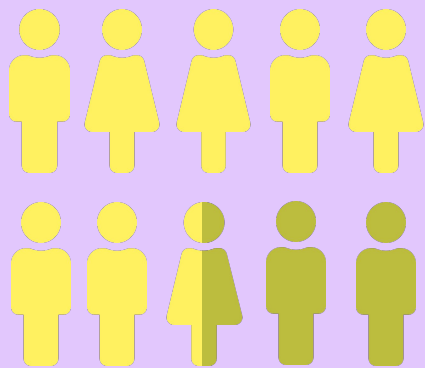
It's no surprise that as the **cost of living** crisis continues here in Aotearoa, **the number of Kiwis concerned about it has grown**. **Affordable housing** is still NZers 2nd highest worry but we have seen a **decline** due to falling house prices. More concerning, those that are worried about **crime have increased by one-and-a-half** in the last 3 months (26% vs. 43%), which also means it's gone from 6th to 3rd position. As Kiwis have more immediate concerns, **climate change** is now only a concern for 1 in 4 and it **drops out of the top 5**.



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 = 6689

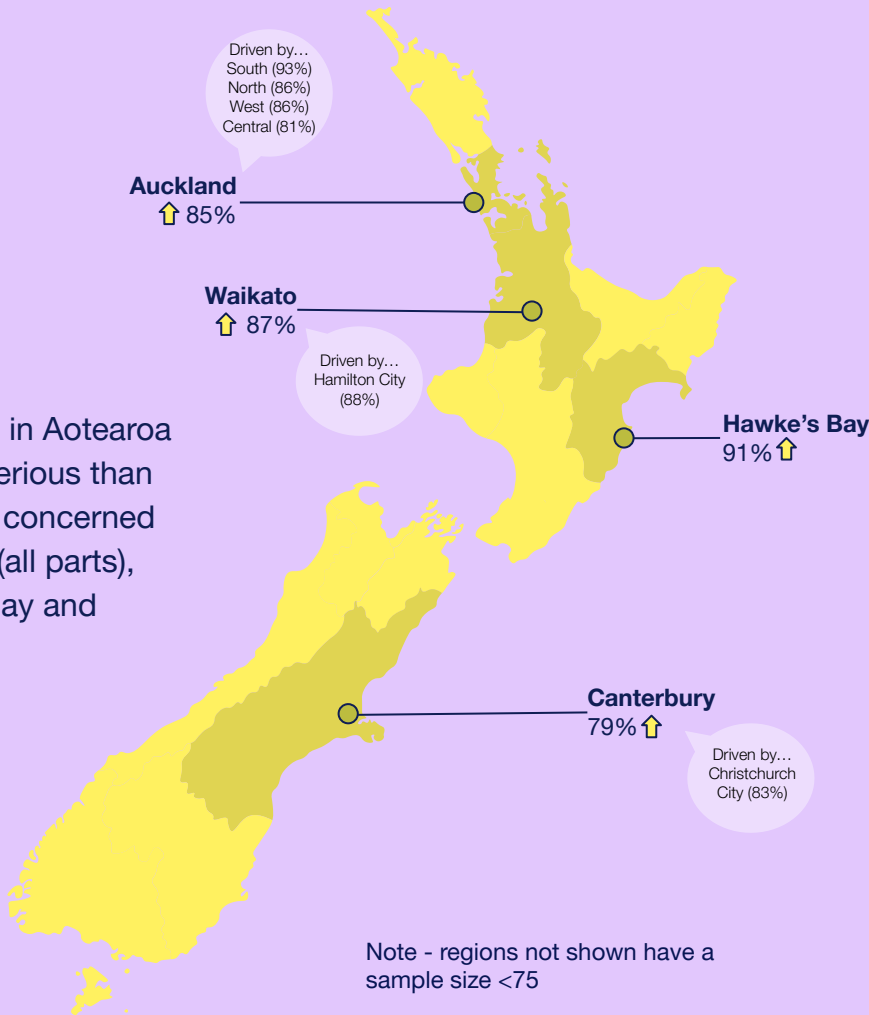
↑ ↓ Significantly higher/lower compared to previous time period (95% confidence level)

While NZ strives to be the safest country\*, three-quarters of Kiwis think crime is serious at the moment.



How serious do you feel the crime is in your region? Scores = very serious / somewhat serious  
Base: Total = 6689  
\*<https://www.police.govt.nz/sites/default/files/publications/annual-report-2021-2022.pdf>

It’s the same places in Aotearoa that think crime is serious than those that are more concerned about it - Auckland (all parts), Waikato, Hawke’s Bay and Canterbury.



Note - regions not shown have a sample size <75

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





# The majority of Kiwis (7 in 10) feel that crime has increased in their region over the last 3 years.

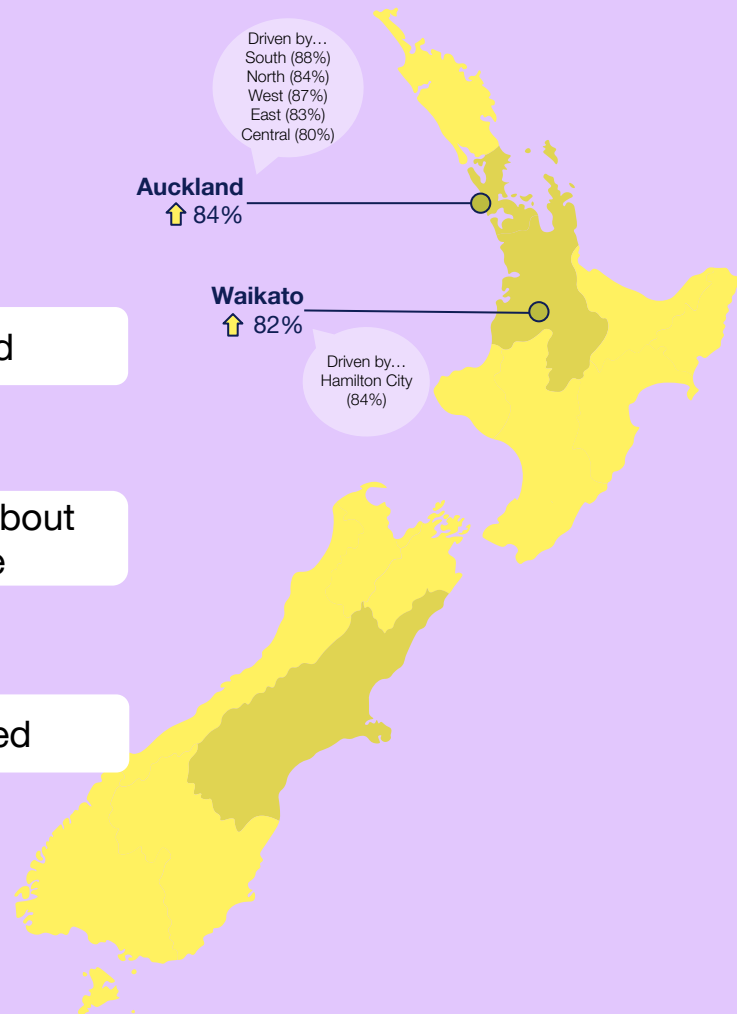
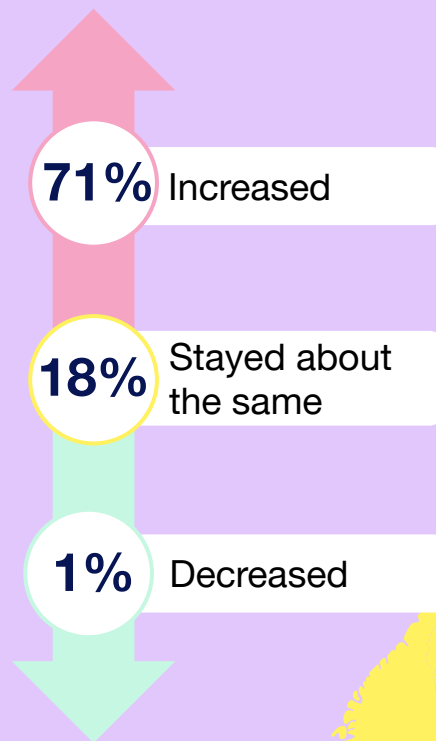
While there has been a 28% increase in crime over the last 3 years\*<sup>1</sup>, New Zealand is still the second safest country in the world\*<sup>2</sup>. Theft, the vast majority of crime reported, has driven the increase in the number of crimes\*<sup>1</sup>.

In the past 3 years, would you say the crime in your region?

Base: Total = 6689

1: <https://www.police.govt.nz/about-us/publications-statistics/data-and-statistics/policedatanz/victimisation-time-and-place>

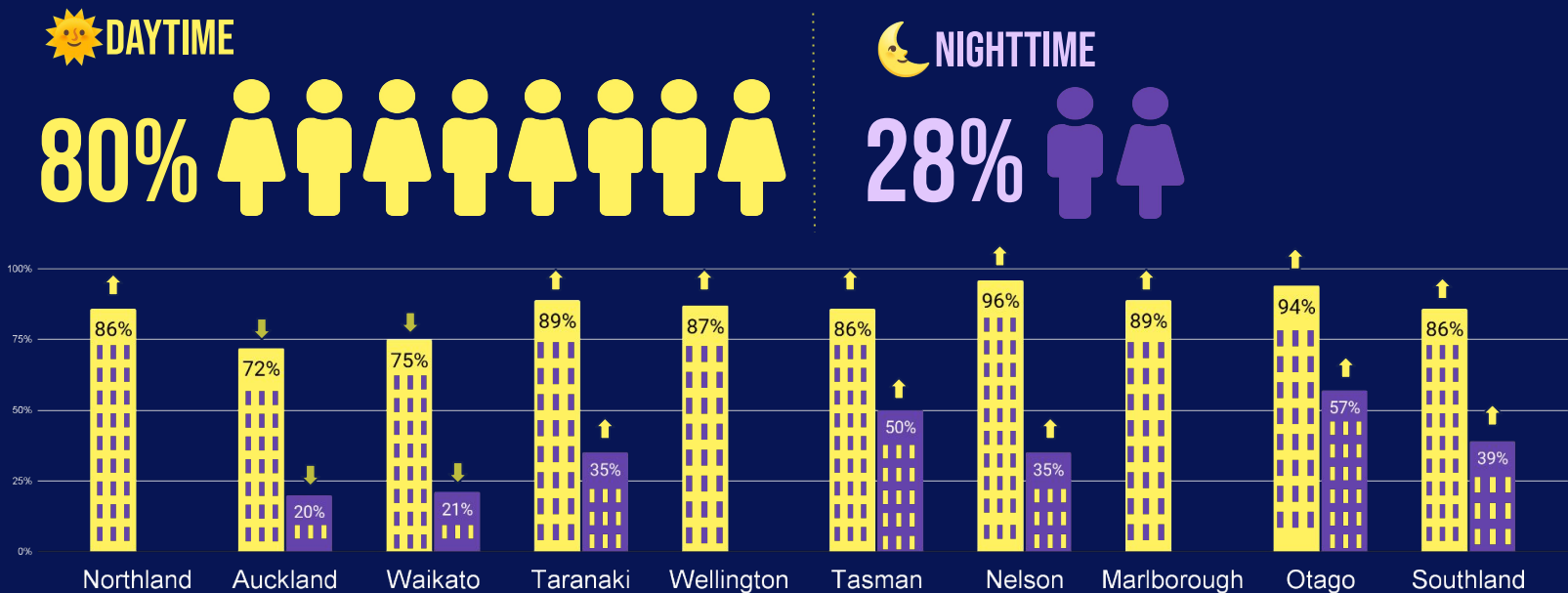
2: <https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/safest-countries-in-the-world>



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

# Most of us (80%) feel that it's **safe** to walk alone **during the day** but **only a quarter (28%)** do so when it's **night time**.

Otago residents feel the safest at night whereas it's Aucklanders and Waikato residents that are least safe - only 1 in 5.



How safe do you feel walking alone in [YOUR REGION] during the {DAY / NIGHT}?

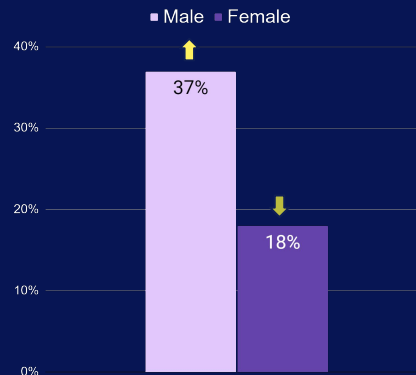
Scores: Top 2 Box for safe = fairly safe / very safe

Base: Total = 6689

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



## Women feel significantly less safe during the night than men



### Some safety tips for walking alone at night\*

- Where possible, always keep to well-lit areas.
- Keep bags containing valuables, wallets, purses etc close to your body
- Keep your cell phone where you can reach it.
- Walk close to the gutter, not beside shop doorways.
- Walk facing the traffic.

[www.police.govt.nz/advice/personal-community/keeping-safe/out-about](https://www.police.govt.nz/advice/personal-community/keeping-safe/out-about)

How safe do you feel walking alone in [YOUR REGION] during the [DAY / NIGHT]?  
Scores: Top 2 Box for safe = fairly safe / very safe

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







NOW NEXT  
**LOCAL** HOT TOPIC

**HOUSING**

HOME  
OWNERSHIP

RENTING



# HOME OWNERSHIP



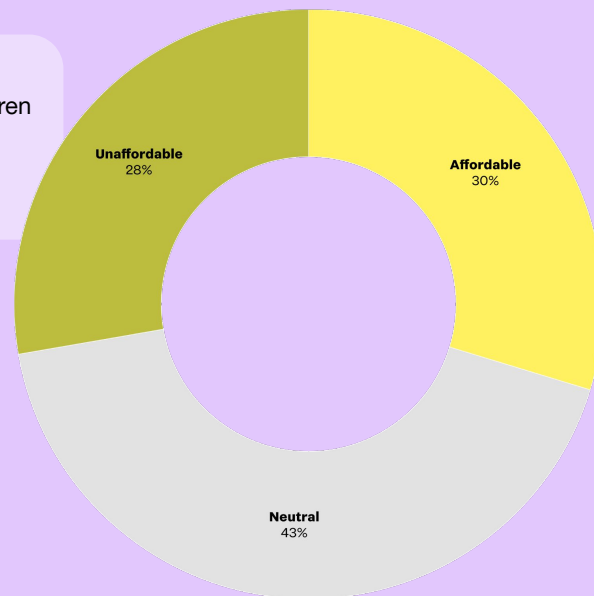
# Homeowners with a mortgage spend on average **37% of their income on payments** and **nearly a third (28%) find their payments unaffordable.**

Finding mortgage payments unaffordable may be a factor in wanting to leave your region, with 32% of those who are planning to leave saying they find their mortgage unaffordable.

Homeowners seem to spend proportionately less on their housing than renters (41%, see slide 44 about renters).

% mortgaged home owners who find payments affordable vs. unaffordable

- ↑ 25-34 year olds (38%)
- ↑ Family households with children under 5 (32%)
- ↓ NZ European / Pākehā (23%)
- ↓ Born in NZ (25%)





# 1 in 6 with a mortgage say they couldn't afford any further increases in payments

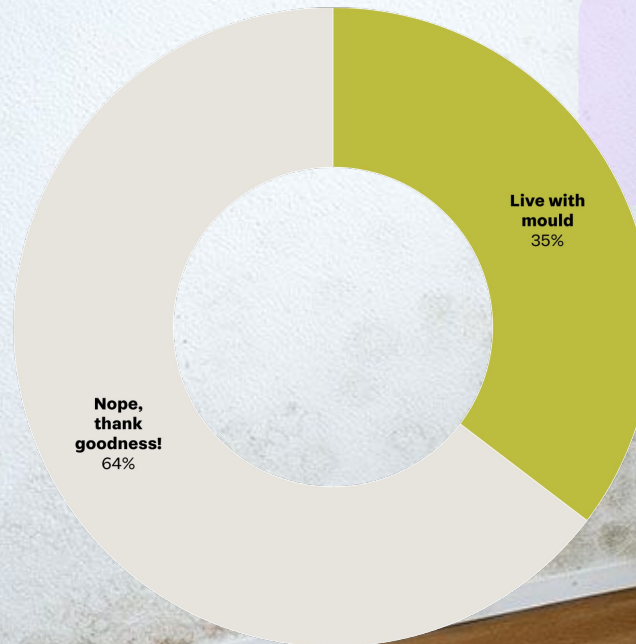
There is a **strong relationship between feeling unhappy and the prospect of not being able to afford your home**: 46% of people in this situation say they are unhappy against the population average of 25%.



# 1 in 3 New Zealanders live with mould

Mouldy homes are affecting **renters** disproportionately. Since there are more renters in population centres such as Auckland and Wellington, among Māori, and renters are more likely living in group households, these demographics are significantly more likely to live with mould.

PROPORTION OF NEW ZEALANDERS LIVING WITH MOULD



- ⬆ Auckland 39%
- ⬆ Wellington 42%
- ⬆ Renters 51%
- ⬆ Māori 40%
- ⬆ Groups flatting together 59%



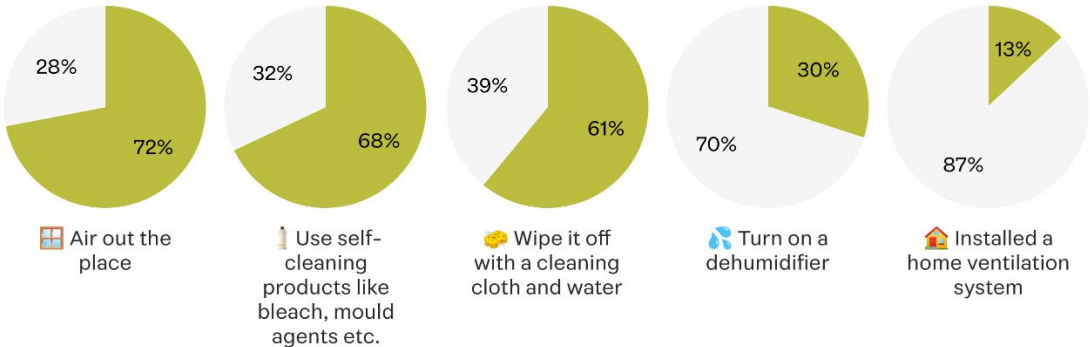
# What are New Zealanders doing about mould?

Practically everyone is actively trying to get rid of mould in their home. The majority of affected New Zealanders are managing it with low-cost and temporary solutions such as airing out the home, using cleaning products such as bleach, and wiping.

 I do nothing 1%



## What do you do to get rid of the mould?



Q. What do you do to get rid of the mould? Please select all that apply.  
Base: Total = 1,990

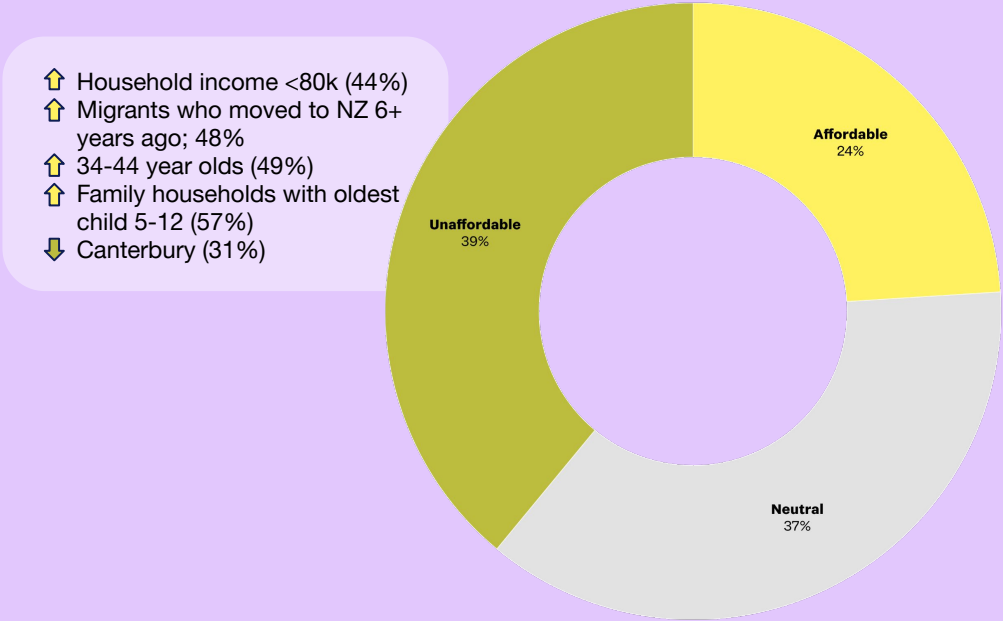
# RENTING

taking everything into account, how are you feeling?

Renters spend on average **41% of their income on rent - a larger average proportion than mortgage payments -** and **more than a third (39%) find their rent unaffordable.**

34-44 years olds with children over 5 - likely needing additional room as their kids grow up - find rent particularly unaffordable and may be highly motivated to get into their own home.

% renters who find rent affordable vs. unaffordable



And thinking about how much you spend on your mortgage, how affordable do you feel it is?  
Base Total = 2988



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

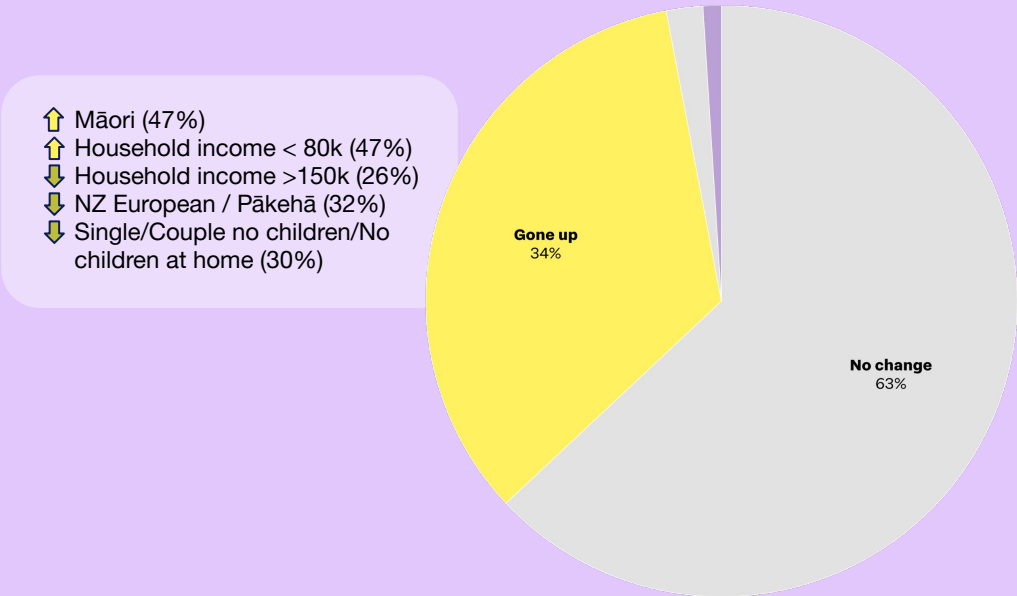


# 1 in 3 renters say their rent has gone up in the past 6 months

There are no major regional differences, but Māori and lower income households seem to be disproportionately affected compared to Pākehā and higher income households.

% of renters indicating their rent changed in the past 6 months

No change    Gone up    Don't know    Gone down



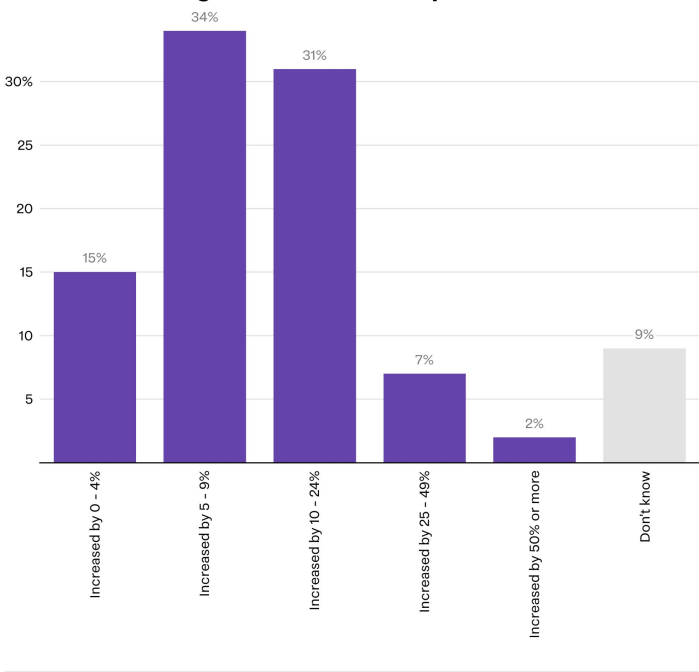


Of those, who have seen their rent change, **40% indicate** their rent has gone up **by 10% or more.**

Māori are significantly more likely to report rent increases of more than 10% (59%).

Rent decreases have been exceedingly rare (2%).

% renters indicating increase in rent over past 6 months



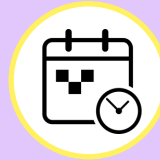
Q. About how much did rent change by?  
Base Total = 492; Rent decreased = 2%



# What did we do?



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



The survey was live **14<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> of November.**



We spoke to more than **6,500** New Zealanders and weighted the data to reflect **nationally representative** samples for gender, age and region.

# WE SURVEYED A NATIONALLY REPRESENTATIVE SAMPLE OF NEW ZEALANDERS

By gender

Female  
**52%**

Male  
**48%**

Gender Diverse  
**1%**

By age

18-34  
**30%**

35-54  
**38%**

55+  
**32%**

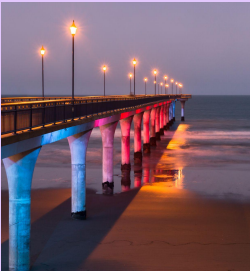
By region



Auckland  
**33%**



Wellington  
**11%**



Christchurch  
**13%**



Regional NZ  
**43%**



## Nga Mihi

Research and Insights

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