

Cost of living, healthcare and education top the list of Kiwi Concerns ahead of election

New research sheds light on public sentiment towards the incumbent government, including widespread concerns regarding its management of the economy and New Zealand's future.

Auckland, September 2023 – The economy, healthcare and education will be at the centre of the national agenda this upcoming election, with new data suggesting most Kiwis are on the same page when it comes to their concerns and frustrations.

Commissioned by OneChoice in partnership with consumer research group CoreData, the *Kiwi Concerns 2023 Report* surveyed more than 1,000 Kiwis. Respondents were asked a range of questions about their concerns and frustrations revealing widespread concerns about the government's ability to manage the rising cost of living and provide quality healthcare and education.

According to the findings, nearly two-thirds (65%) are experiencing higher levels of stress and anxiety now than at the start of last year as a result of uncertainties they are facing these days, and when asked to rank their level of overall concern, Kiwis achieved an average index score of 68.1 out of 100*, demonstrating moderate concerns that approach very concerned which registers at a score of 75.

The report found that across various backgrounds that the topics of finances, health, and the future of work and education are top of mind for nearly all Kiwis as they hit the ballot box, with over three-quarters (76%) feeling that Kiwi voices aren't being heard by the government.

According to the survey, the top ten concerns among Kiwis include*:

1. The rising cost of living (75.8 index score)
2. Economic management and easing the rising cost of living (72.2 index score)
3. Impact of work on life and well-being (71.8 index score)
4. Timely access to quality healthcare (71.0 index score)
5. The quality of education (70.9 index score)
6. Exposure to online or phone scams (70.6 index score)
7. Law enforcement and tackling youth crime (70.5 index score)
8. Wage growth not in line with rising cost of living (70.4 index score)
9. Cost of staying healthy and living a healthy lifestyle (70.2 index score)
10. Rising interest rates (70.1 index score)

Gen Z (73%) and Gen Y (72%) are currently feeling more stressed and anxious when compared to the start of last year due to uncertainties they are experiencing these days. This is higher than Gen X (57%) and Baby Boomers (57%). Finances could be a driving force behind this, with almost a third of Gen Z (32%) and Gen Y (26%) ranking finance as their greatest overall concern, while health and wellbeing issues are the top concern among Gen X (24%) and Baby Boomers (22%). Women are also more concerned overall than men, achieving an average index score of 70.1 versus 66.2*.

Political commentator Dr. Grant Duncan commented on the importance of the cost-of-living conversation this election: "This survey identifies people's real dissatisfaction, which the political parties must hear and address in the election campaign," says political commentator, Dr. Grant Duncan. "Kiwis experience the effects of the rising cost of living in many ways – through their personal health and fitness, education and training, and ability to devote time to family, not just at the supermarket checkout. These are the issues that will be on voters' minds at the ballot-box in October."

Few topics will set the scene for the election like the state of the economy, with almost three-quarters (72%) of Kiwis feeling very or extremely concerned about the government's ability to manage the economy to ease the rising cost of living.

In fact, many are very or extremely worried about the rising cost of living (76%), wage growth not aligning with the rising cost of living (68%), rising interest rates (67%), and rising property prices (66%).

The public health system is another gripe for Kiwis this election, with more than three-quarters (76%) doubting the Te Whatu Ora's ability to ensure the quality of healthcare. The general theme of health and wellbeing has emerged as the greatest overall concern felt by the population in the lead up to the election, with an average ranking score of 6.4 out of 10.

With the cost of living rising, over 9 in 10 (93%) have already cut back on their spending on health-related products and services, with almost half worrying about affording allied health services (47%), GP doctor appointments (46%), unexpected costs (45%) and a further two-fifths concerned they cannot pay for appointments with medical specialists (42%) and dentists (42%).

"Kiwis are experiencing pressures on their wellbeing, healthcare and education," adds Dr. Duncan. "And the issues are complex, when we consider rising crime and declining educational standards – all coming at them at once."

Looking ahead, the future career opportunities in New Zealand is also a major issue for voters this election, with over two-thirds (69%) very or extremely worried about a lack of job availability and high unemployment rates (66%) and future job security and market stability.

Further insights from the research can be found on the OneChoice New Zealand website [here](#).

-ENDS-

*Index scores: An index score of 50 indicates the respondent is moderately concerned, 75 indicates they are very concerned and 100 indicates they are extremely concerned.

Additional Key Findings:

- **Economic management to ease cost of living**
 - The top 3 financial issues Kiwis are very or extremely concerned about are
 - The rising cost of living (76%)
 - Wage growth not in line with rising cost of living (68%)
 - Rising interest rates (67%)
 - 72% of Kiwis are either very or extremely concerned about the government's economic management and easing the rising cost of living
- **Health**
 - Wellbeing and health concerns in general ranked as Kiwis' greatest overall concern, with an average ranking score of 6.4 out of 10
 - The top 3 health and wellbeing issues Kiwis are very or extremely concerned about are
 - Timely access to quality healthcare (69%)
 - Cost of staying healthy and living a healthy lifestyle (66%)
 - Affordability of healthcare (66%)
 - Over 9 in 10 (93%) of Kiwis have reduced their spending on health-related products and services due to the rising cost of living
 - More than three-quarters (76%) are doubting the Te Whatu Ora's (health authority) ability to ensure timely and affordable access to healthcare.
 - Over 6 in 10 Kiwis are very or extremely concerned about whether there is sufficient infrastructure for health services such as hospitals and aged care (63%) and are very or extremely worried about health inequities in New Zealand (61%).
- **Youth crime & justice system**
 - 68% of Kiwis are either very or extremely concerned about the government's ability to tackle youth crime and law enforcement
 - Over 9 in 10 (91%) Kiwis believe the government needs to toughen up laws and improve the justice system.
- **Environment and climate change**
 - Many Kiwis are frustrated about the government's approach to environmental issues:
 - 55% feel extremely or very frustrated by the time and money the wasted on on ineffective responses to climate change

- 53% are extremely or very frustrated about New Zealand's failure to take more actions to address climate change
- 52% are frustrated about not knowing who and what evidence to believe around climate change and environment concerns
- The top 3 environmental issues among Kiwis are either very or extremely concerned about are:
 - Degrading environment reducing quality of life (66%)
 - Impacts of floods, cyclones, and other climate change weather events on housing availability (65%)
 - The economic impacts of weather events (65%)
- **Inequality**
 - 63% of Kiwis are very or extremely concerned about the government's ability to address growing inequality and inequity in New Zealand

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About OneChoice

OneChoice helps Kiwis by providing trusted insurance products that take the stress and confusion out of the buying process. Backed by award-winning partners, OneChoice launched in 2019 with the goal of bringing simple life insurance to New Zealand. OneChoice set out to be different by providing cover that's easy to understand and easy to manage. To find out more, visit www.onechoice.co.nz.

About the OneChoice Kiwi Concerns Report 2023

In partnership with the consumer research group CoreData, OneChoice New Zealand has recently commissioned a survey of 1,026 New Zealanders over 18 years old. The study looks at pressing issues currently faced by New Zealand ahead of the election, including financial matters, work and education, government policies, climate change and environmental issues. The quantitative survey was conducted online by CoreData between 17 May and 22 May 2023. The sample is representative of the general over 18 population of New Zealand in terms of gender, wealth, and region.