

# THE IPSOS NEW ZEALAND ISSUES MONITOR

An Ipsos Survey – February 2021

GAME CHANGERS



# THE IPSOS NEW ZEALAND ISSUES MONITOR OVERVIEW

## Background Information

At Ipsos, we are passionately curious about people, markets, brands and society. We make our changing world easier and faster to navigate and inspire clients to make smarter decisions. As Ipsos and our previous brands we have operated in New Zealand since 1992.

**The Ipsos New Zealand Issues Monitor tracks what New Zealanders are concerned about, who is worried about what, and which political parties are seen to be best able to improve these matters. From 10<sup>h</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> February we conducted fieldwork for our 13<sup>th</sup> Ipsos NZ Issues Monitor report with a total of 1,000 New Zealanders aged 18 and older\*.**

During 2020, Ipsos conducted five waves of the Issues Monitor in order to gauge the views of New Zealanders as the COVID-19 pandemic progressed through its various stages. This current wave took place whilst the country was in alert level 1; however the tail-end of fieldwork overlapped with the 'snap lockdown', when Auckland was moved to level 3 and the rest of New Zealand was moved to level 2 due to the discovery of community cases in Auckland.

This study did not have any external sponsors or partners. It was initiated and run by Ipsos because we are curious about the world we live in and how citizens around the globe think and feel about their world.

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\*The precision of Ipsos online polls are calculated using a credibility interval with a poll of 1,000 accurate to +/- 3.5 percentage points



# THE IPSOS NEW ZEALAND ISSUES MONITOR OVERVIEW

## The Media Context: What was making New Zealand news at the start of 2021?

NEW ZEALAND / POLITICS

### Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern reveals date of first Matariki public holiday

Share this     

2:29 pm on 4 February 2021

RNZ – 4 February 2021

BUSINESS

### Fourth month in a row NZ house prices set record: Real Estate Institute December data

15 Jan, 2021 09:02 AM

5 minutes to read

NZ Herald – 15 January 2021

### Government scrapping Resource Management Act to tackle the housing crisis

6 minutes to read

11 Feb, 2021 05:00 AM

NZ Herald – 11 February 2021

NEW ZEALAND | Politics

### Covid 19 coronavirus: Auckland in level 3 lockdown; rest of country at level 2

15 Feb, 2021 04:22 AM

8 minutes to read

NZ Herald – 15 February 2021

NEW ZEALAND / COVID-19

### Covid-19 Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine: New Zealand government gives formal approval

2:13 pm on 10 February 2021

Share this     

RNZ – 10 February 2021

### NZ's housing crisis to get 'worse and worse', senior economist warns

FRI, FEB 5 • SOURCE: 1 NEWS

TVNZ – 5 February 2021

### Māori Party co-leader Rawiri Waititi enters Parliament without tie, is kicked out by Mallard

9 Feb, 2021 02:21 PM

4 minutes to read

NZ Herald – 9 February 2021

# KEY FINDINGS – FEBRUARY 2021



Concerns around housing have significantly increased and are higher than ever, with **60%** mentioning it as an important issue facing New Zealand.

Aucklanders (67%) are more worried about housing compared to rest of New Zealand (57%).



The Government performance rating soared during the height of the pandemic (*May '20: 7.6*) and despite a drop in February, (*Feb '21: 6.8*) remains higher than pre-pandemic levels (*Mar '20: 5.8*).

The Labour Party remains the party perceived to be most capable of handling most of the issues facing New Zealanders.

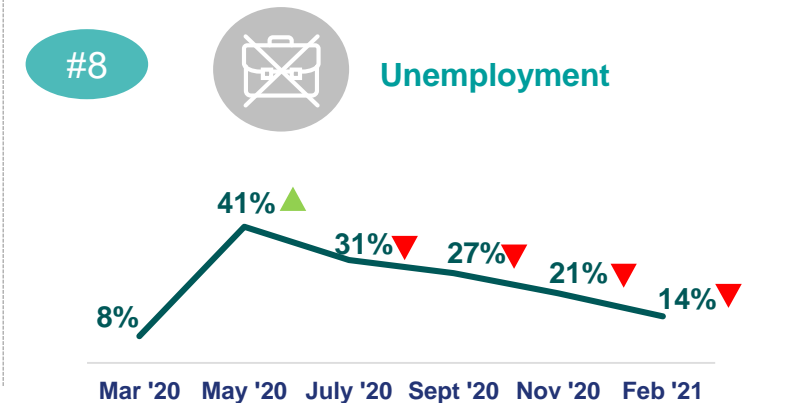
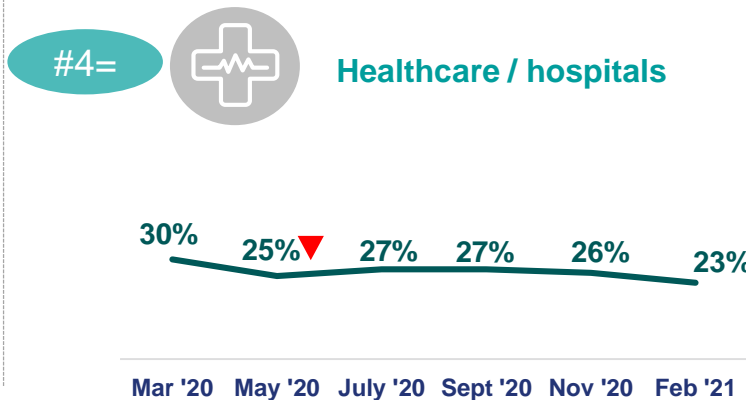
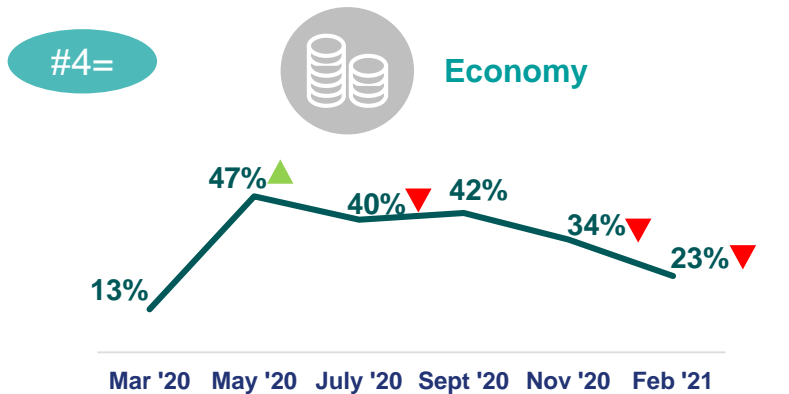
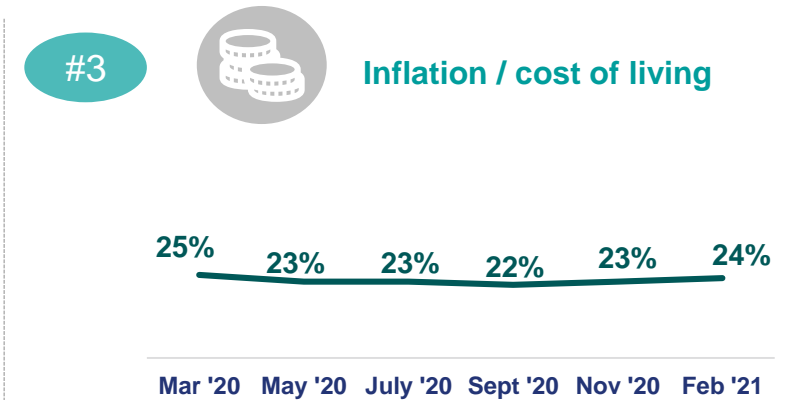
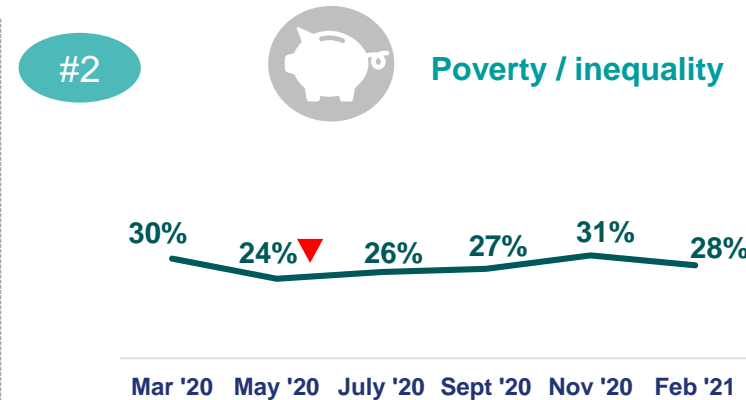
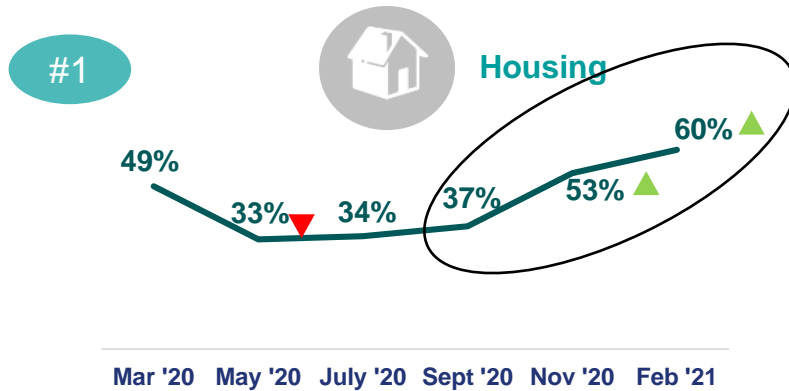


Whilst housing is the top concern in New Zealand (60%), it is a concern for just 22% of Australians. The economy is the top concern in Australia (37%), closely followed by healthcare (35%).

\*Scale of 1-10

# KEY FINDINGS – THE TOP ISSUES

After a drop during the peak of the pandemic in NZ, housing returned as the #1 issue facing New Zealanders in November '20. Now concerns about housing are at the highest level since tracking began in Feb '18. Concerns surrounding the economy & unemployment increased significantly during the pandemic peak and while they have decreased since then, they still remain higher than pre-pandemic levels.



# THE TOP ISSUES

The most important issues facing  
New Zealand today

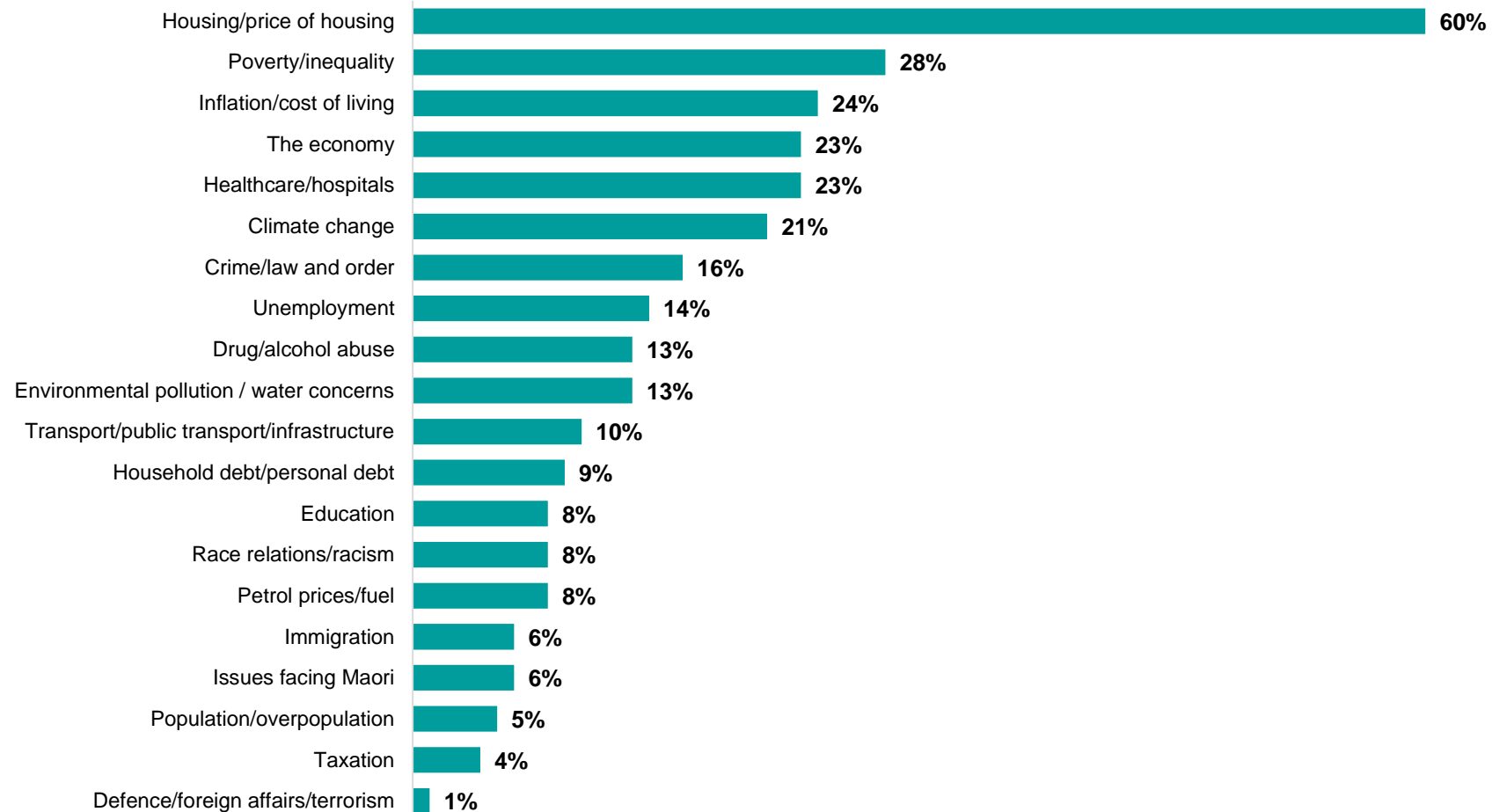
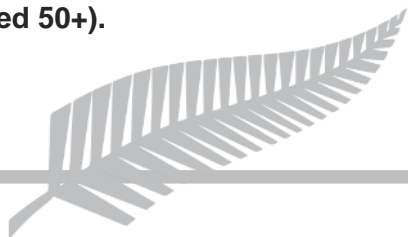
# THE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES FACING NEW ZEALAND

(February '21)



Housing is perceived as the most important issue facing New Zealand today (60%) – more than double the next most important issue (poverty / inequality 28%).

New Zealanders aged 50+ have higher concerns for *crime / law* (19%) compared to those aged under 50 years (14%). In terms of *unemployment*, this concern is more prevalent for those aged under 50 (17% vs. 9% of those aged 50+).

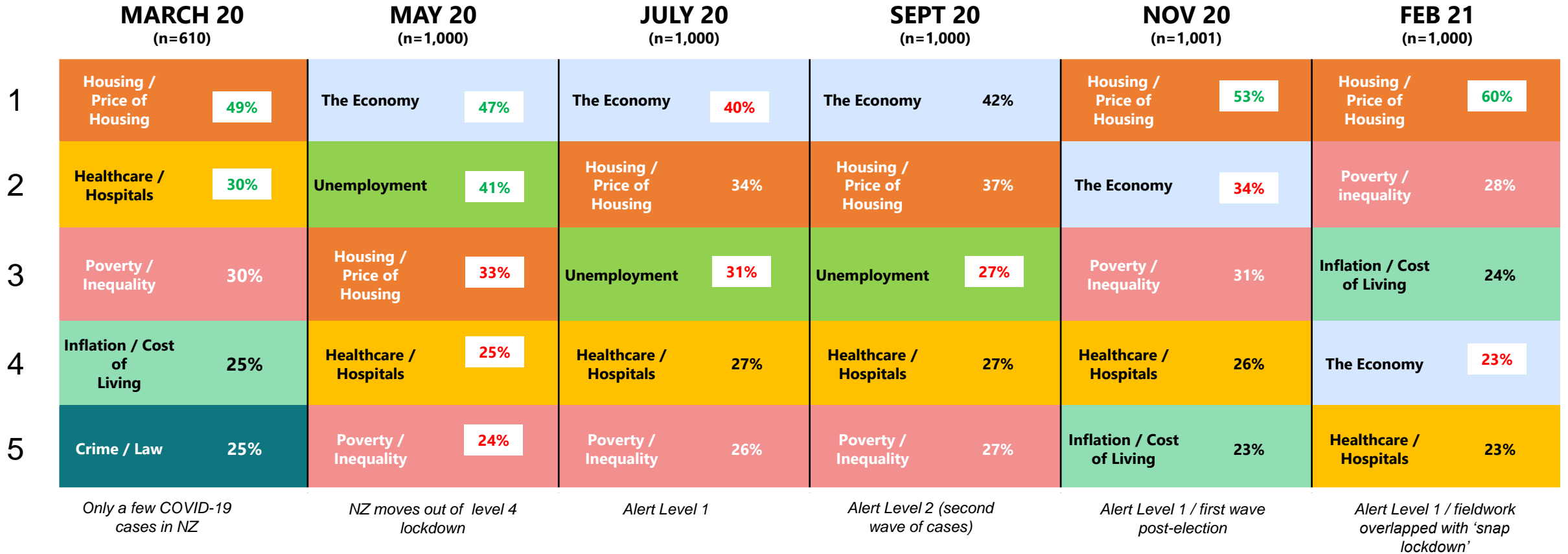


Q: What would you say are the three most important issues facing New Zealand today?

Base: February '21 (n=1,000)

# TOP FIVE ISSUES

Concerns around housing have once again increased while concerns about the economy have dropped significantly. Unemployment is no longer one of the top five issues.



Green / red indicates significant Increase / decrease in score compared to the previous wave

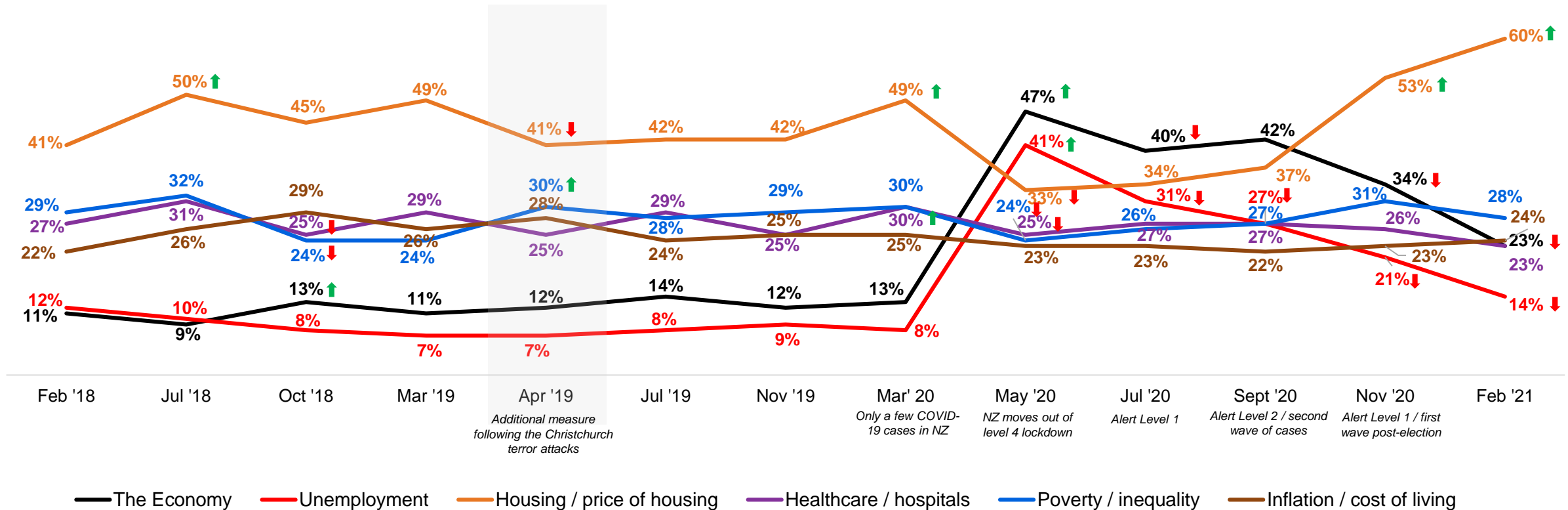
Q: What would you say are the three most important issues facing New Zealand today?

Base: Feb '21 (n=1,000), Nov '20 (n=1,001), Sept '20 (n=1,000), July '20 (n=1,000), May '20 (n=1,000), Mar '20 (n=610), Nov '19 (n=610), Apr '19 (n=615)



# NOTEWORTHY ISSUES

Concerns around housing have increased and are at the highest level since tracking began. Concerns about the economy and unemployment continue to decline.



Q: What would you say are the three most important issues facing New Zealand today?

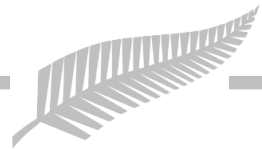
Base: Feb '21 (n=1,000), Nov '20 (n=1,001), Sept '20 (n=1,000), July '20 (n=1,000), May '20 (n=1,000), Mar '20 (n=610), Nov '19 (n=610), Jul '19 (n=610), Apr '19 (n=615), Mar '19 (n=614), Oct '18 (n=610), Jul '18 (n=611), Feb '18 (n=610)

# CURRENT GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE

# RATING OF GOVERNMENT OVER LAST 6 MONTHS

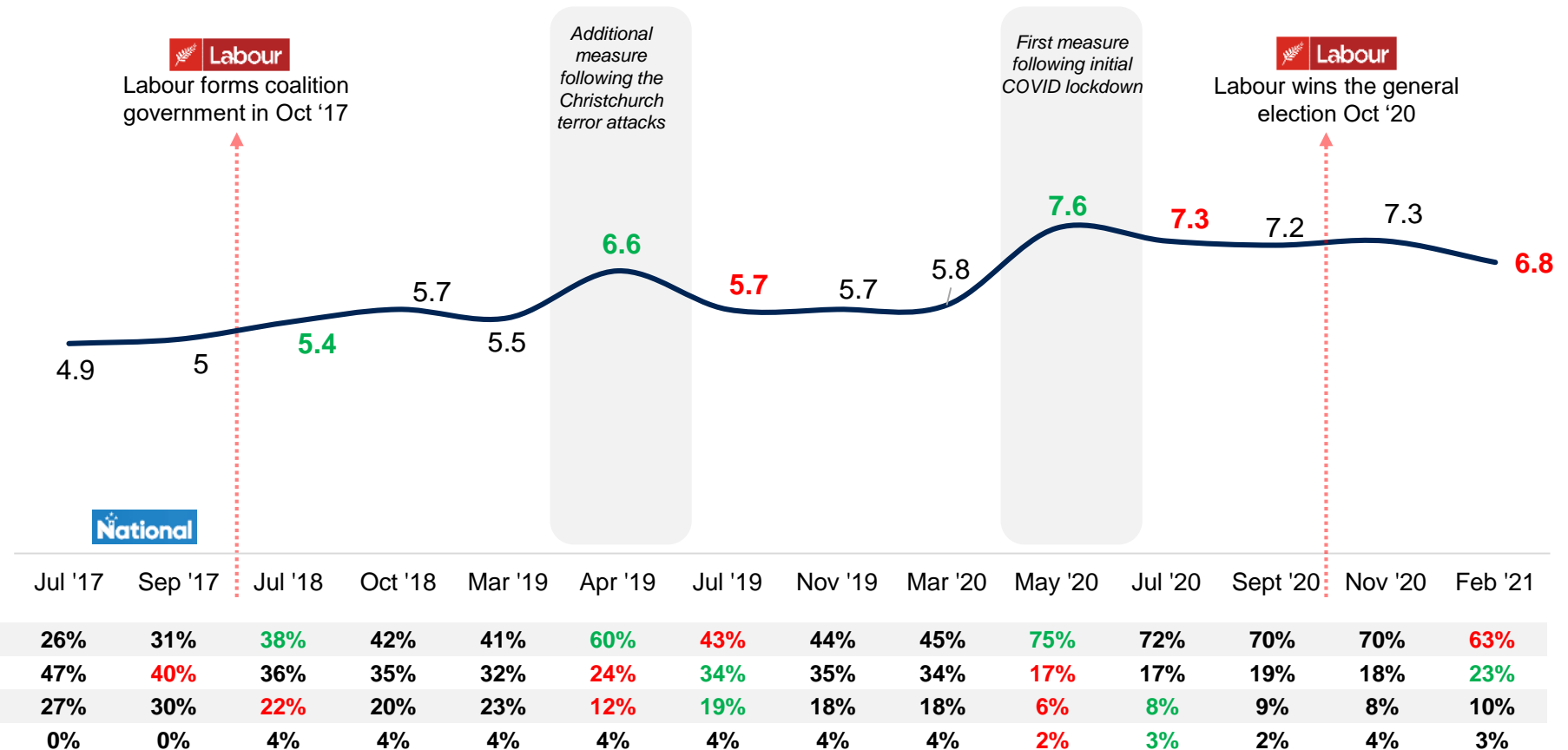
Ratings of the Government's performance increased significantly during the pandemic; while the current wave shows a drop, the rating is still higher than pre-pandemic levels.

63% of all respondents gave the current Labour government a rating of between 7–10 out of 10 and 10% gave a rating of between 0–3.



## Key Demographic Differences

Females (7.2) and those aged 18–34 (7.2) are more likely to rate the government higher for their job in the past 6 months



Q: Overall, how would you rate the government for its job in the last 6 months from 0 to 10, where 0 means 'abysmal' and 10 means 'outstanding'?

Base: Feb '21 (n=1,000), Nov '20 (n=1,001), Sept '20 (n=1,000), Jul '20 (n=1000), May '20 (n=1,000), Mar '20 (n=610), Nov '19 (n=610), Jul '19 (n=610), Apr '19 (n=615), Mar '19 (n=614), Oct '18 (n=610), Jul '18 (n=611), Feb '18 (n=610)











Green / red Indicates significant Increase / decrease in score compared to the previous wave











# MANAGING THE ISSUES

The political parties perceived as most capable of managing the issues

# POLITICAL PARTY MOST CAPABLE OF MANAGING ISSUES

*The Labour Party is seen as the political party most capable of managing the majority of issues. Environmental pollution is seen as best-handled by the Green Party & issues facing Māori are seen as best-handled by the Māori party.*

| ISSUE  | POLITICAL PARTY   |
|--|---|
| 1: Housing / Price of Housing                |  Labour   |
| 2: Poverty / Inequality                      |  Labour   |
| 3: Inflation / Cost of Living                |  Labour   |
| 4=: The Economy                              |  Labour   |
| 4=: Healthcare / Hospitals                   |  Labour   |
| 6: Climate Change                            |  Labour   |
| 7: Crime / Law and Order                     |  Labour   |
| 8: Unemployment                              |  Labour |
| 9=: Drug / Alcohol Abuse                     |  Labour |
| 9=: Environmental Pollution / Water Concerns |  Green  |

| ISSUE   | POLITICAL PARTY   |
|---|---|
| 11: Transport / Public Transport / Infrastructure |  Labour      |
| 12: Household Debt / Personal Debt                |  Labour      |
| 13=: Education                                    |  Labour      |
| 13=: Race Relations / Racism                      |  Labour      |
| 13=: Petrol Prices / Fuel                         |  Labour      |
| 16=: Immigration                                  |  Labour      |
| 16=: Issues facing Māori                          |  māori PARTY |
| 18: Population / Overpopulation                   |  Labour    |
| 19: Taxation                                      |  Labour    |
| 20: Defence / foreign affairs                     |  Labour    |

Q: Please select the political party that you believe is most capable of managing each of the following issues:

Base: February '21 (n=1,000)

# #1 ISSUE – HOUSING / PRICE OF HOUSING

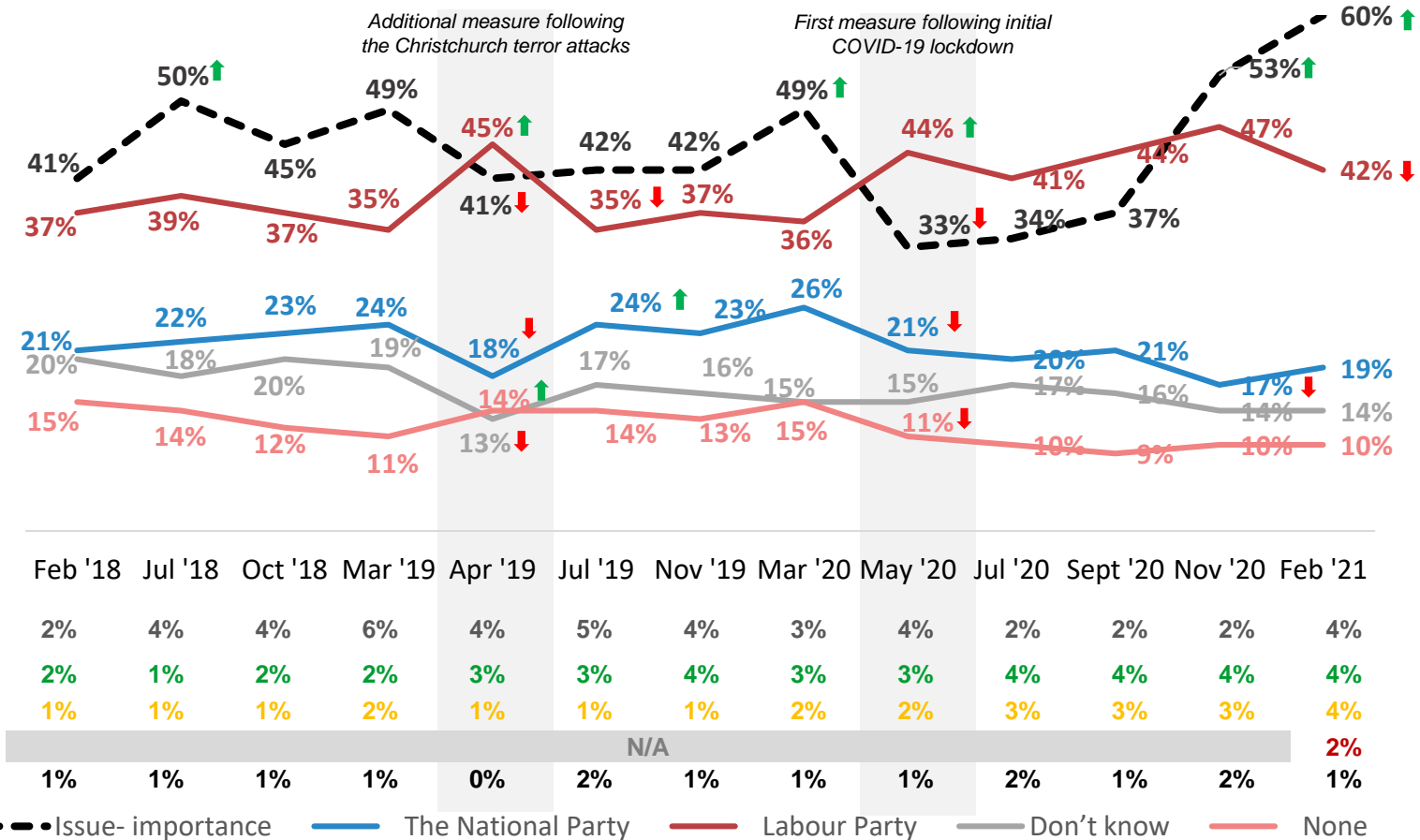
Housing continues to be the biggest issue facing New Zealanders; despite a drop, the Labour Party is significantly ahead of others in perceived ability to manage housing / price of housing.



Concerns about housing & the price of housing are at an all-time high as 60% of New Zealanders believe this is the main issue facing the country.

Although it remains significantly higher than other parties, confidence in the Labour Party's ability to manage this issue has decreased since November.

Aucklanders (67%) are more worried about housing compared to rest of New Zealand (57%).



Q: Please select the political party that you believe is most capable of managing each of the following issues: Housing / Price of Housing  
 Base: Approx. n=610 per wave, except for May '20, Jul '20, Sept '20 (n=1,000), Nov '20 (n=1,001), Feb '21 (n=1,000)

# SUGGESTIONS TO IMPROVE HOUSING ISSUES

## Voice of New Zealanders



*Capital gains tax needs to be addressed because of the high number of housing being bought for rentals.”*

**Manawatu / Whanganui, full-time employment, TAHI\*: \$140k–\$160k**



*Having rents capped in certain areas with inflation. More housing.”*

**Bay of Plenty, student, TAHI\*: \$30k–\$50k**



*More affordable housing. Support rent to buy or more similar scheme's that assist people to get into their own homes.”*

**Auckland City, student, TAHI\*: \$15k–\$30k**



*Make bold choices that will actually make a difference - implement a form of capital gains tax, return to building social houses, invest in significant housing projects.”*

**Canterbury, not in paid work and not seeking work, TAHI\*: \$50k–\$60k**



*The government need to sort out the housing crisis by increasing interest rate and imposing capital tax on all property investor who own more than two houses.”*

**Canterbury, part-time employment, TAHI\*: Up to \$15,000**



*Be more determined and make greater efforts to enable better housing affordability for 1st home owners regardless of political impact.”*

**Waikato, retired, TAHI\*: \$50k–\$60k**

Q: What do you think the government needs to change or do differently to improve life in New Zealand? (open-ended question)

Base: February '21 (n=1,000)

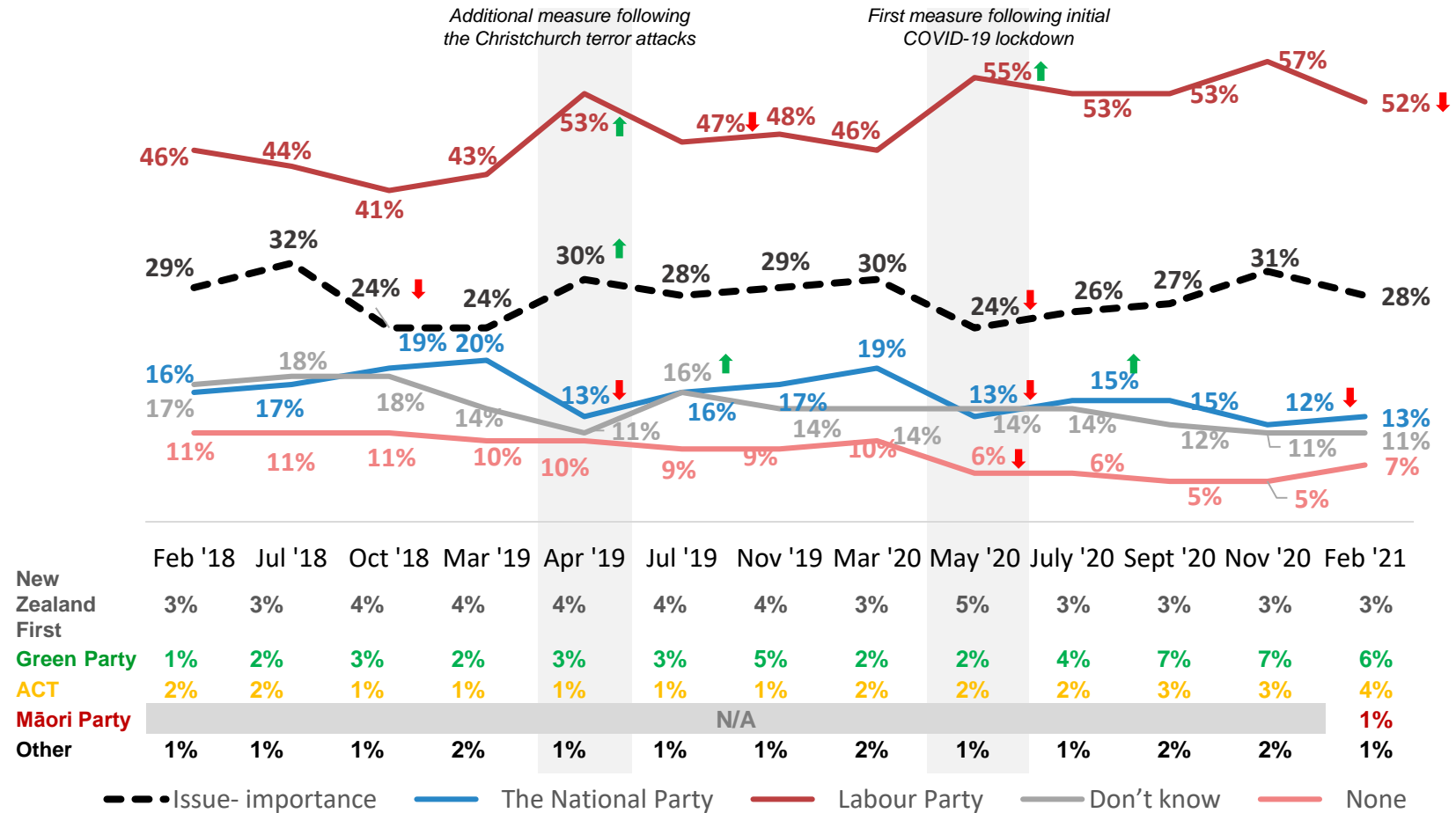
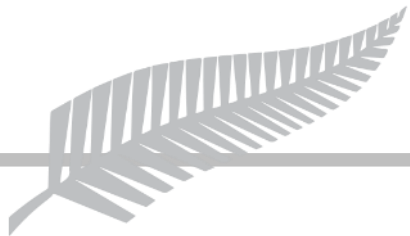
# #2 ISSUE – POVERTY / INEQUALITY

The Labour Party is overwhelmingly seen as the most capable party to handle poverty & inequality issues.



Poverty / Inequality has been one of the top 5 issues since February 2018.

The gap between Labour and the National Party remains wide, with 52% of New Zealanders believing that the Labour Party is most capable of handling issues of poverty and inequality (vs. 13% National Party).



Q: Please select the political party that you believe is most capable of managing each of the following issues: Poverty / Inequality  
 Base: Approx. n=610 per wave, except for May '20, Jul '20, Sept '20 (n=1,000), Nov '20 (n=1,001), Feb '21 (n=1,000)



# #3 ISSUE – INFLATION / COST OF LIVING

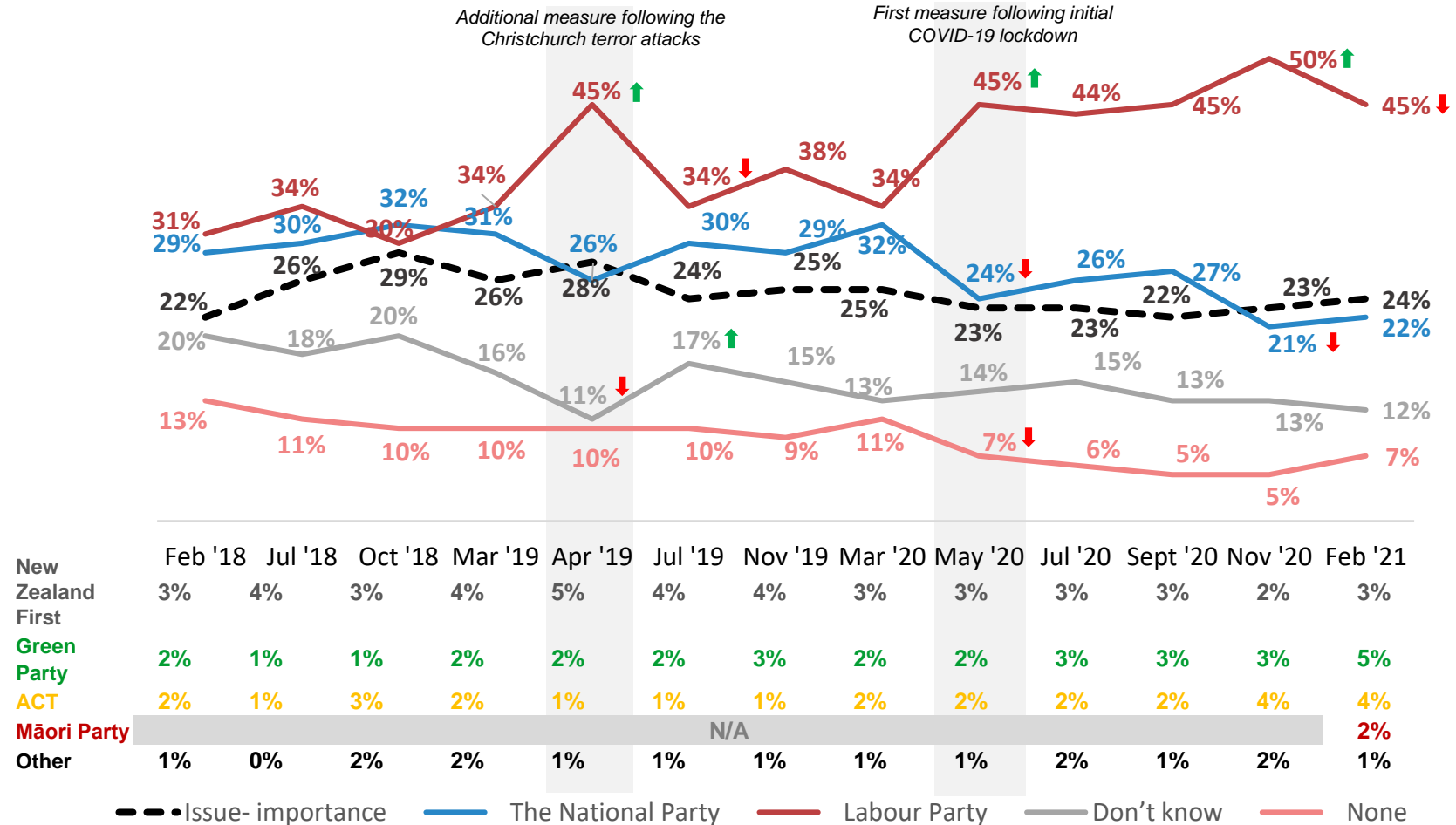
When it comes to the issue of inflation / cost of living, the Labour Party continues to be seen as most capable to handle it.



In March '20, the Labour Party and the National Party were seen as similarly capable of handling this issue.

Since then, the gap widened considerably and despite a decrease in February the Labour Party is still seen to be the most capable for handling this issue by a large margin.

Women (29%) are also more likely to be concerned about this issue than men (19%), as are those aged under 50 years (28% vs. 18% of those 50+ years).



Q: Please select the political party that you believe is most capable of managing each of the following issues: Inflation / cost of living  
 Base: Approx. n=610 per wave, except for May '20, Jul '20, Sept '20 (n=1,000), Nov '20 (n=1,001), Feb '21 (n=1,000)

# #4 ISSUE – THE ECONOMY

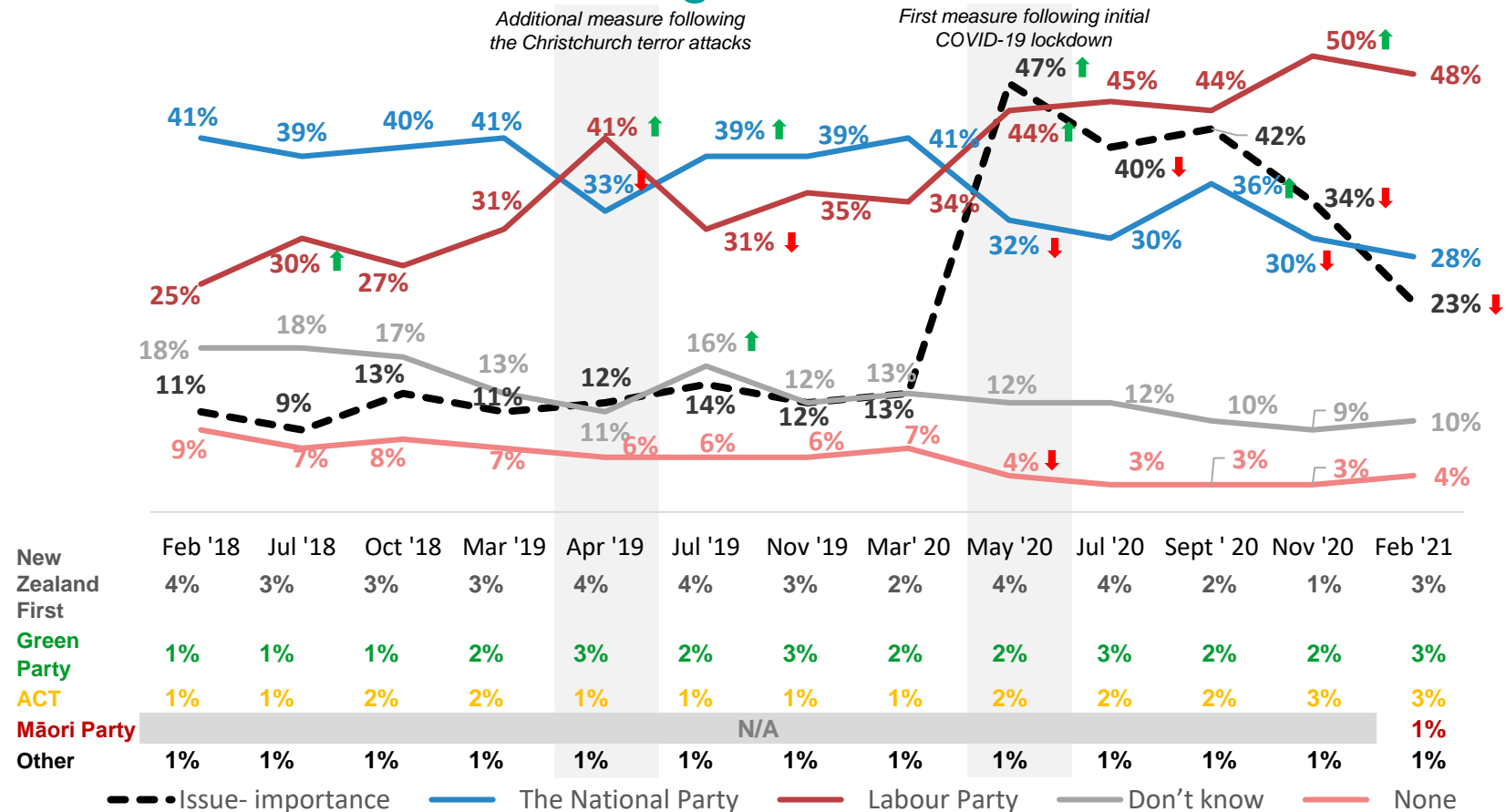
Concerns for the economy continue to decline after increasing significantly during the peak of the pandemic. However, current level of concerns are still higher than March 20.



This time last year, the National Party was seen as most capable of handling issues surrounding the economy.

However, this trend was reversed in May '20 with the Labour party leading considerably compared to the National Party.

Men (26%) are more likely to be concerned about the economy than women (20%).



Q: Please select the political party that you believe is most capable of managing each of the following issues: The Economy  
 Base: Approx. n=610 per wave, except for May '20, Jul '20, Sept '20 (n=1,000), Nov '20 (n=1,001), Feb '21 (n=1,000)

# #5 ISSUE – HEALTHCARE / HOSPITALS

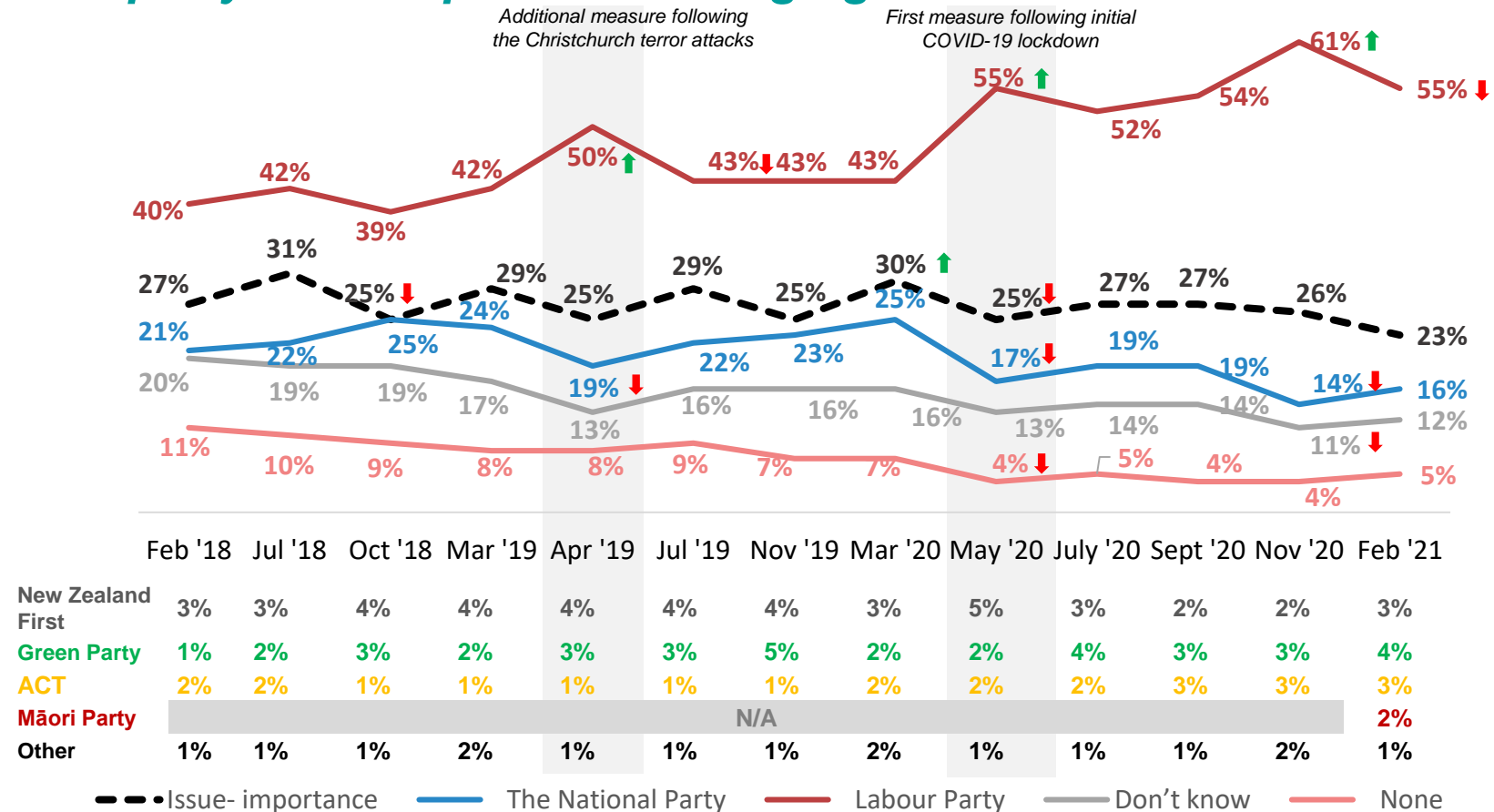
About one in four consider healthcare to be one of the main issues facing New Zealanders. The Labour Party is still seen as the party most capable of managing healthcare issues.



Healthcare / hospitals has been a consistently highly rated issue since February 2018.

Whilst there has been a decrease in the number who see the Labour Party as most capable, there continues to be a large gap between the Labour Party and National Party.

Women are more likely to be concerned about healthcare / hospitals (27% vs. 20% males), as are those aged 50+ (30% vs. 19% of those under 50 years).



Q: Please select the political party that you believe is most capable of managing each of the following issues: Healthcare / Hospitals  
 Base: Approx. n=610 per wave, except for May '20, Jul '20, Sept '20 (n=1,000), Nov '20 (n=1,001), Feb '21 (n=1,000)

# COMPARING NZ'S ISSUES TO AUSTRALIA'S

# TOP 10 ISSUES - NZ VS. AUSTRALIA



The issue of housing continues to dominate in New Zealand (60%), whereas in Australia this is a top concern for just 22%.

The economy and healthcare are the top issues in Australia; these two issues are 4<sup>th</sup> equal in New Zealand.

Twice as many Australians are concerned about unemployment as New Zealanders are.



|    |  |     |
|----|--|-----|
| 1  | Housing/price of housing                 | 60% |
| 2  | Poverty / Inequality                     | 28% |
| 3  | Inflation / Cost of living               | 24% |
| 4= | The Economy                              | 23% |
| 4= | Healthcare / hospitals                   | 23% |
| 6  | Climate change                           | 21% |
| 7  | Crime / law and order                    | 16% |
| 8  | Unemployment                             | 14% |
| 9= | Drug / alcohol abuse                     | 13% |
| 9= | Environmental pollution / water concerns | 13% |

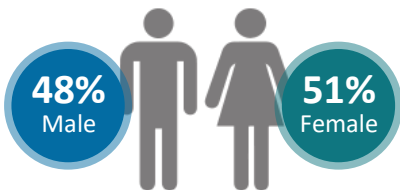
|    |                |     |
|----|----------------|-----|
| 1  | The Economy    | 37% |
| 2  | Healthcare     | 35% |
| 3  | Unemployment   | 29% |
| 4  | Cost of Living | 27% |
| 5  | Environment    | 25% |
| 6  | Housing        | 22% |
| 7  | Crime          | 21% |
| 8  | Poverty        | 17% |
| 9  | Education      | 13% |
| 10 | Drug Abuse     | 11% |

Base: February 2021 – New Zealand (n=1,000), Australia (n=998)

# SAMPLE DEMOGRAPHICS – FEBRUARY ‘21



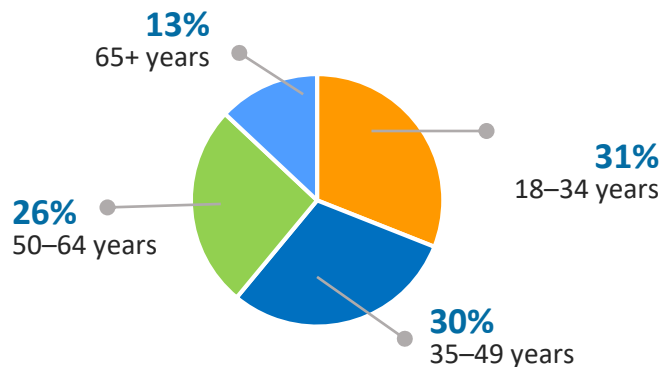
**1,000 respondents** were interviewed online in February 2021 using the Dynata online panel



\*1% answered 'gender diverse'

The precision of Ipsos online polls are calculated using a credibility interval with a poll of 1,000 accurate to +/- 3.5 percentage points

Results are weighted by age, gender and region to ensure they reflect the New Zealand Population



## Employment status

|     |                                   |    |                                     |
|-----|-----------------------------------|----|-------------------------------------|
| 45% | Full-time                         | 9% | Not in paid work & not seeking work |
| 15% | Part-time                         | 7% | Self-employed                       |
| 10% | Retired                           | 5% | Student                             |
| 9%  | Not in paid work but seeking work |    |                                     |



## Highest education completed\*

|     |            |
|-----|------------|
| 37% | Level 1-4  |
| 40% | Level 5-7  |
| 18% | Level 8-10 |
| 5%  | Don't know |

**SAMPLE SIZES OVER TIME:** Feb '21 (n=1,000), Nov '20 (n=1,001), Sept '20 (n=1,000), July '20 (n=1,000), May '20 (n=1,000), Mar '20 (n=610), Nov '19 (n=610), Jul '19 (n=610), Apr '19 (n=615), Mar '19 (n=614), Oct '18 (n=610), Jul '18 (n=611), Feb '18 (n=610)

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# ABOUT IPSOS

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“Game Changers” – our tagline – summarises our ambition to help our 5,000 clients to navigate more easily our deeply changing world.

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# GAME CHANGERS

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In our world of rapid change, the need for reliable information to make confident decisions has never been greater.

At Ipsos we believe our clients need more than a data supplier, they need a partner who can produce accurate and relevant information and turn it into actionable truth.

This is why our passionately curious experts not only provide the most precise measurement, but shape it to provide True Understanding of Society, Markets and People.

To do this we use the best of science, technology and know-how and apply the principles of security, simplicity, speed and substance to everything we do.

So that our clients can act faster, smarter and bolder. Ultimately, success comes down to a simple truth:  
**You act better when you are sure.**



**THANK  
YOU**

**GAME CHANGERS**

