

Consumer Research 2026

paymentsnz[®]



Foreword

Tēnā koe,

Ko te pae tawhiti, whāia kia tata; ko te pae tata, whakamaua kia tina.

Seek to bring distant horizons closer, and sustain and maintain those that have been arrived at.

Payments affect every person, whānau, hāpori (communities) and business in Aotearoa New Zealand. They help people receive wages, buy groceries, pay bills, send money to whānau, run businesses and participate in the economy.

Understanding how people experience payments, what is changing and where different needs emerge helps Payments NZ and the wider industry make better decisions about the future of the payments system.

Our Consumer Research provides that evidence over time. We have undertaken this research every two years since 2020, returning to many of the same topics so we can understand where payment behaviours and preferences are changing, where they remain consistent and where new issues are emerging.

The research has evolved alongside the payments environment. In 2022, we introduced questions about financial resilience. In 2024 the research explored payment preferences, open banking, contactless payments, future payment concepts and financial vulnerability. The 2026 research continues to track payment preferences and experiences while exploring defined indicators of financial stress, fraud and scams, affordability and what consumers value when considering new ways to pay.

This research also connects directly to our Tō Mātou Haerenga strategy. We are committed to ensuring Māori perspectives inform our work and help to inform a payments system that supports the financial wellbeing and equity of whānau across Aotearoa. This research contributes to that commitment by helping the industry better understand the experiences and priorities reported by Māori consumers within the payments system.

Our 2026 findings span a wide range of payment behaviours and experiences, but three themes stand out:

1. [Trust is non-negotiable](#)
2. [Affordability is influencing behaviour](#)
3. [New ways to pay must earn consumers' trust](#)

New Zealanders continue to adopt digital and mobile ways to pay and remain open to new payment experiences and technologies.

However, payment choices are rarely driven by convenience alone. They reflect people's circumstances and priorities, including trust, affordability, security, control and access to different payment options.

Trust remains fundamental. As payments become increasingly digital and embedded in everyday life, consumers want confidence that they are protected, informed and in control.

Affordability also matters. Fees, surcharges and wider financial pressures are reflected in the payment choices and trade-offs reported by some consumers. For the first time, this research explores defined indicators of financial stress and how these relate to payment behaviour.

New Zealanders also remain open to innovation, but new ways to pay must earn their trust. Safety, security, affordability, accessibility, ease of use and clear consumer benefit remain important to confidence in future payment experiences.

Taken together, the findings provide more than a snapshot of consumer behaviour. They offer evidence-led insight into what New Zealanders value, where experiences differ and what the industry should consider as the payments ecosystem evolves.

While payment technology will continue to change, what New Zealanders need remains clear: payments that are **safe, affordable, accessible and easy to use**.

These insights help Payments NZ bring the consumer voice into industry, regulatory and policy discussions about the future of payments. They strengthen the evidence we use to support coordination across the ecosystem, inform future system development and help keep consumer needs at the centre of how payments evolve in Aotearoa.

Ngā mihi



Steve Wiggins

Chief Executive, Payments NZ



Technology
changes.
**Consumer
expectations
don't.**

Trust is
non-negotiable

76%

are **concerned**
about **fraud**
and **scams**
when making
payments



Affordability
is influencing
behaviour

46%

reported at
least one
indicator
of **financial**
stress



New ways to
pay must earn
consumer trust

55%

say **safety** and
security is the
most important
factor when
considering a
new way to pay



Key findings

New Zealanders are embracing faster, more convenient ways to pay, but three broader themes stand out across the research: trust, affordability and the need for new ways to pay to earn consumer trust. These themes emerge consistently throughout the research and help explain how New Zealanders are using payments today and what they want from the payments system of the future. Cost, control, trust and practical usefulness all influence how consumers decide which payment methods work for them. Contactless payments are a default option for many because they are quick and familiar, but surcharges have overtaken security concerns as the main reason for people not using them.

Debit cards remain important for money management. Many consumers associate these methods with using their own funds, avoiding debt and keeping day-to-day spending under control.

Credit cards and Buy Now, Pay Later (BNPL) serve more specific needs, highlighting how consumers increasingly choose different payment options for different circumstances rather than relying on a single preferred method. Credit cards appeal for larger purchases, where flexibility, rewards, purchase protection and repayment timing matter. BNPL is used more narrowly, particularly to spread costs or manage short-term affordability.

Cost of living pressure is influencing how some New Zealanders pay. Respondents report delaying purchases, struggling to pay bills, or relying on credit and BNPL because they cannot pay upfront.

Trust and security remain central to payment behaviour. Scam and fraud concerns are widespread, prompting consumers to verify payment details, avoid saving card information and be more cautious when transferring money.

Protection and traceability matter most when using online marketplaces. In this setting consumers prefer payment methods that provide proof of payment, recourse, or platform-backed safeguards.

Consumers are broadly satisfied with payment speed when sending and receiving from their online accounts, but expectations remain for future improvements. Instant, simple and low-friction experiences are increasingly becoming the benchmark for modern payment options.

Looking ahead, New Zealanders expect payments to become more digital, mobile, biometric and embedded in everyday experiences. Consumers are open to future payment innovation when it delivers practical value and meets the conditions they care about most: safety, affordability, ease of use, accessibility and choice.

Together, these findings show what consumers expect from the payments system of the future. Across the report, New Zealanders are looking for safe, affordable, accessible and easy to use options. For policymakers, regulators, industry leaders and providers, these insights point to the conditions that will shape consumer confidence in future payments innovation and better outcomes for New Zealanders.



About this research

Payments NZ conducts biennial consumer research to understand how people experience payments, track changes in payment behaviours and preferences, and provide evidence to inform discussion about the future of payments in Aotearoa New Zealand.

The programme began in 2020, with further research undertaken in 2022, 2024 and 2026. Returning to many of the same topics over time helps us identify where consumer behaviours and preferences are changing, where they remain consistent and where new issues are emerging.

The research has evolved as the payments environment has changed:

2022: introduced questions about financial resilience and continued exploring what consumers expected from future payments.

2024: explored payment preferences, open banking, contactless payments, future payment concepts and financial vulnerability, alongside Māori consumer attitudes and behaviour.

2026: continues to track payment preferences and emerging payment experiences while introducing defined indicators of financial stress and further exploring fraud and scams, affordability and what consumers value when considering new ways to pay.

This longitudinal view helps Payments NZ understand how consumer experiences are changing alongside developments in the payments ecosystem and provides an evidence base for Payments Direction, our programme exploring the future of payments in Aotearoa.

How the 2026 research was conducted

The 2026 research was conducted through Yabble and Dynata online market panels during June 2026.

We surveyed a nationally representative sample of **1,000 New Zealanders aged 18 and over**, balanced for age, gender, region and ethnicity.

An additional **75 Māori respondents** were included, bringing the combined Māori respondent sample to **214**. All respondents answered the same questions.

The findings are also considered by age and other demographic characteristics where these provide useful context. Full sample and methodology information is included in the Appendix.

1,000
New Zealanders
aged 18 and over
surveyed.

Understanding the experiences of Māori consumers

The research includes a Māori respondent sample so we can better understand the payment experiences, behaviours and priorities reported by Māori consumers, including where these are similar to or differ from the national sample.

These insights are considered alongside the national findings throughout the report rather than as a separate research stream.

This approach supports Tō Mātou Haerenga, a core element of Payments NZ's company strategy, and our wider commitment to ensuring Māori perspectives inform our work. The research contributes to this by building our understanding of the payment needs, experiences and priorities reported by Māori consumers.

The combined Māori respondent sample includes **139 Māori respondents within the national sample plus an additional booster sample of 75**, giving a total Māori respondent sample of **214**. All respondents answered the same questions.



Section 1: Payment preferences

How New Zealanders prefer to pay

Payment preferences reflect two key considerations: the source of funds, such as a bank account or credit card, and the payment method, such as a card or smartphone.

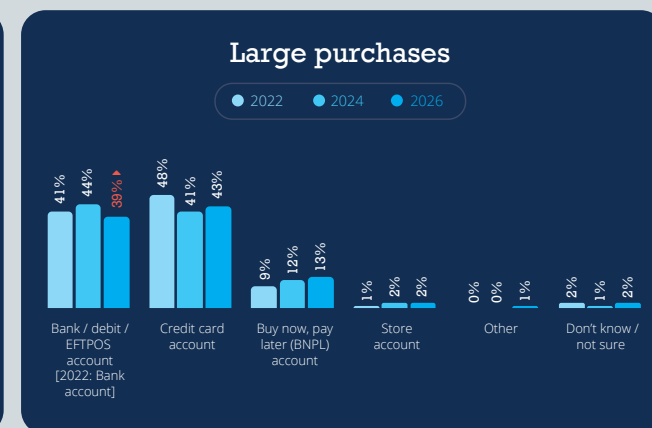
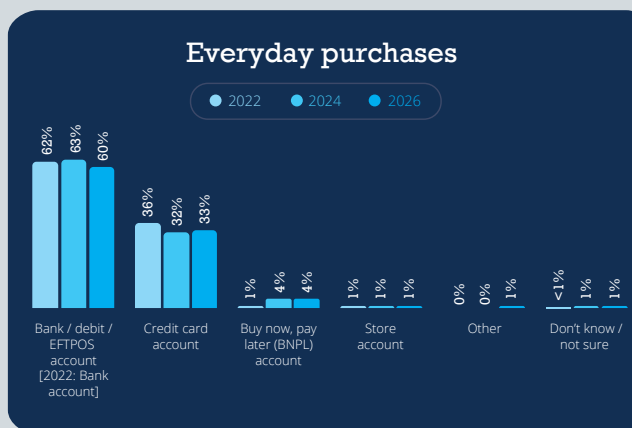
While the way New Zealanders prefer to fund purchases has remained largely stable over the years, the methods people use to pay continue to shift.

Most respondents still prefer to use their own money for everyday purchases, with 60% preferring to use their own funds. This compares with 39% who prefer to use their own funds for large purchases, almost the same as the most common choice, credit cards, at 43%.

At the same time, 18–34-year-olds are showing different preferences, with lower and declining preference for credit cards being replaced by BNPL for both everyday and larger purchases. BNPL preference for large purchases is also trending up for 35–44-year-olds, reaching 18% in 2026.

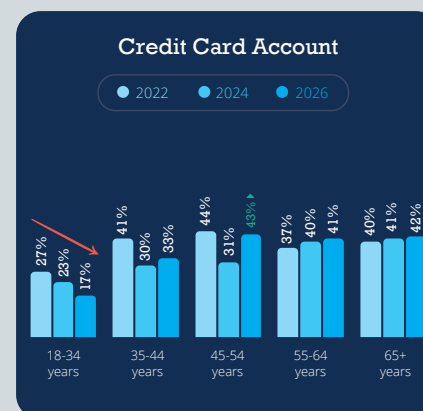
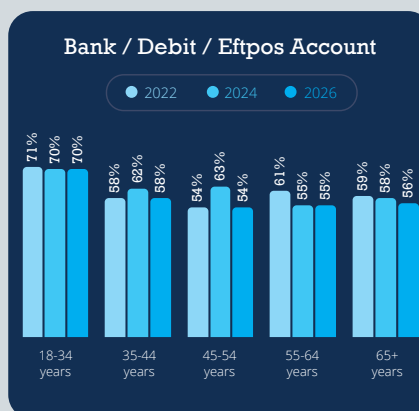
6 in 10 New Zealanders prefer using their own funds for **everyday purchases**.
4 in 10 prefer using their own funds for **large purchases**, down slightly since 2024

Most preferred account type to use when paying for **everyday** and **large purchases**



18–34-year-olds' preference for funding **everyday purchases** with a credit card is declining, being replaced by BNPL

Most preferred account type to use when paying for **everyday purchases** by age

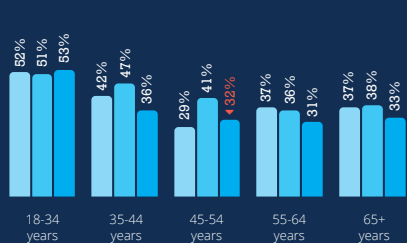


Credit cards are preferred by older New Zealanders for **large purchases**, while BNPL is increasingly preferred by 18–44-year-olds

Most preferred account type to use when paying for **large purchases** by age

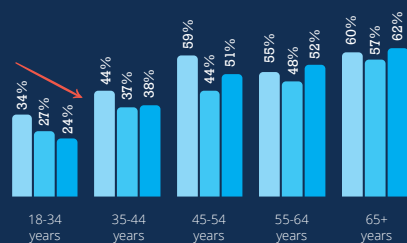
Bank / Debit / Eftpos Account

● 2022 ● 2024 ● 2026



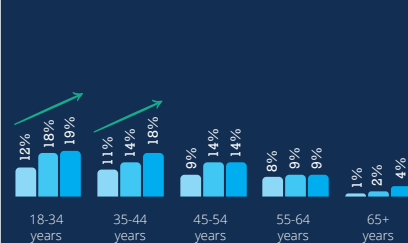
Credit Card Account

● 2022 ● 2024 ● 2026



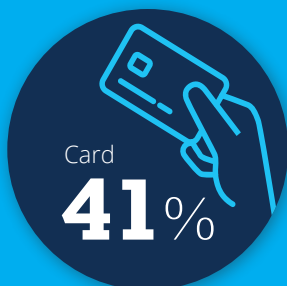
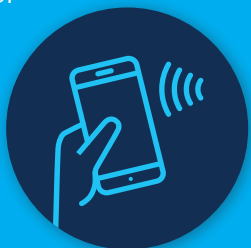
Buy Now, Pay Later (BNPL) Account

● 2022 ● 2024 ● 2026



Among **18–34-year-olds**, smartphones are **nearly as popular** as cards for making everyday purchases.

Smartphones
38%



Smartphone payments are gaining ground

As digital options continue to evolve, consumers still need payment methods that help them manage spending, access credit when needed, avoid debt and choose the option that best fits their circumstances.

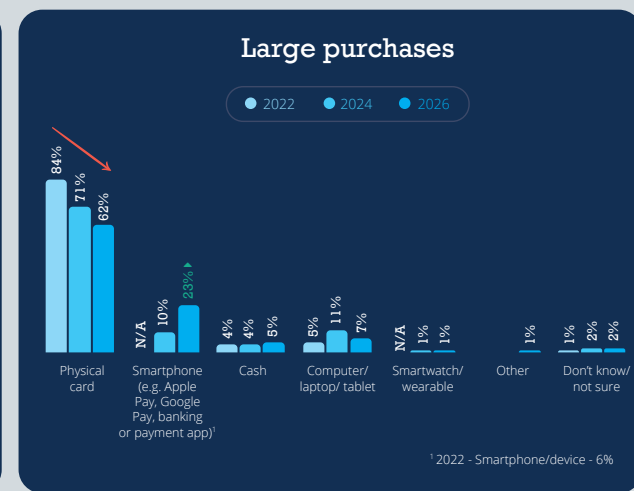
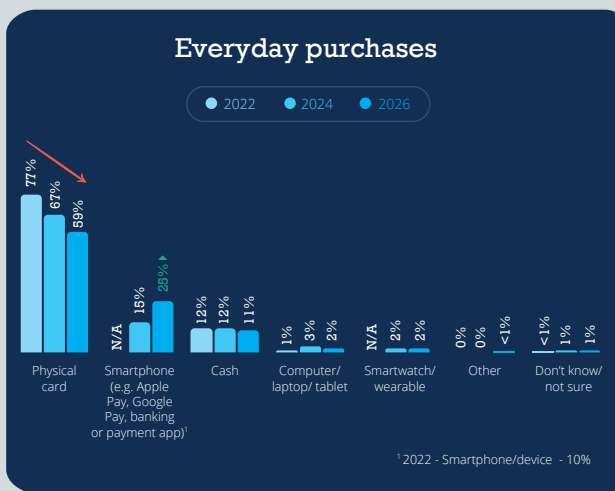
Physical cards remain the most preferred way to make purchases for many consumers, with 59% preferring them for everyday payments compared with 25% who prefer smartphones. However, smartphone preference is increasing across all age groups and is close to parity among 18-34-year-olds, where 41% prefer a physical card and 38% prefer using a smartphone. Across all age demographics, preference for cash has remained steady at 11% since 2022, suggesting it continues to play a consistent role for a smaller group of consumers.

Smartphone preference for everyday purchases increased from **15% - 25%** (2024) (2026)



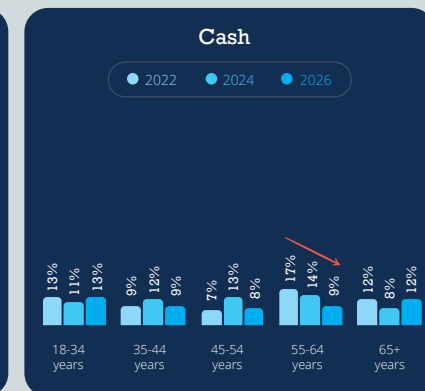
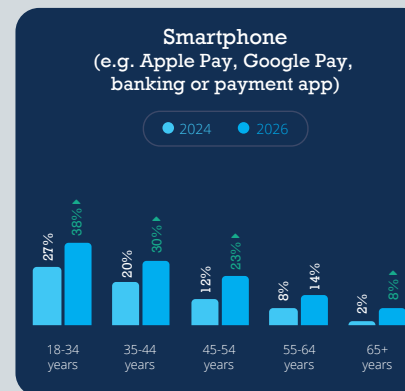
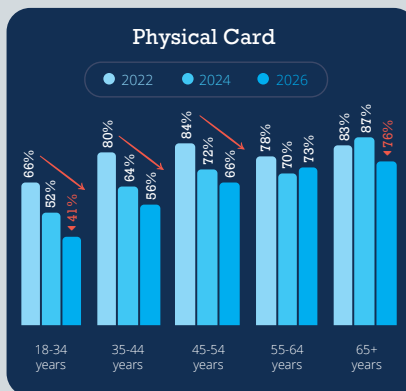
Using a physical card remains the most preferred **payment method**, but this preference has declined since 2022 as consumers increasingly favour using smartphones to make payments

Most preferred payment method to use when paying for **everyday** and **large** purchases



The shift in preference towards smartphones since 2022 is present across all age groups

Most preferred payment method to use when paying for **everyday** purchases by age



Payment preferences vary across the Māori and national samples

The survey identifies some differences between the payment preferences reported by Māori respondents and the national sample.

Māori respondents were more likely to prefer using their own funds and less likely to prefer credit cards for everyday and larger purchases. They were also more likely to prefer buy now, pay later for larger purchases, at **24% compared with 13% nationally**.

When considering payment methods, Māori respondents were more likely to prefer cash and less likely to prefer physical cards for everyday and larger purchases. Smartphone preferences were similar across the Māori and national samples.

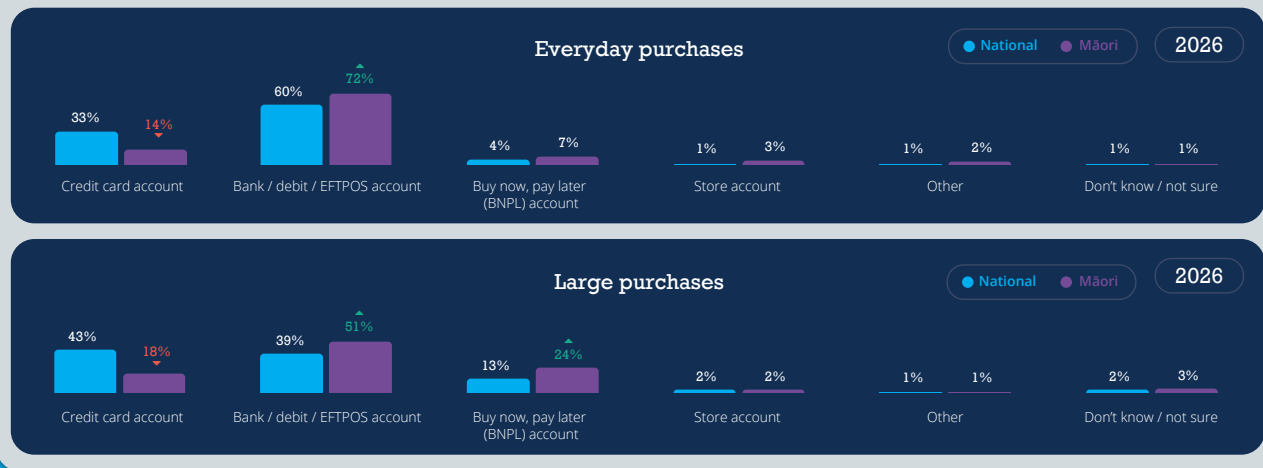
These findings identify differences in the payment preferences reported by respondents within this survey. They do not, by themselves, explain why those differences occur. The demographic profiles of the Māori respondent and national samples should also be considered when interpreting the results.



Māori are more likely to prefer using their own funds and **less likely** to prefer a credit cards for everyday and larger purchases.

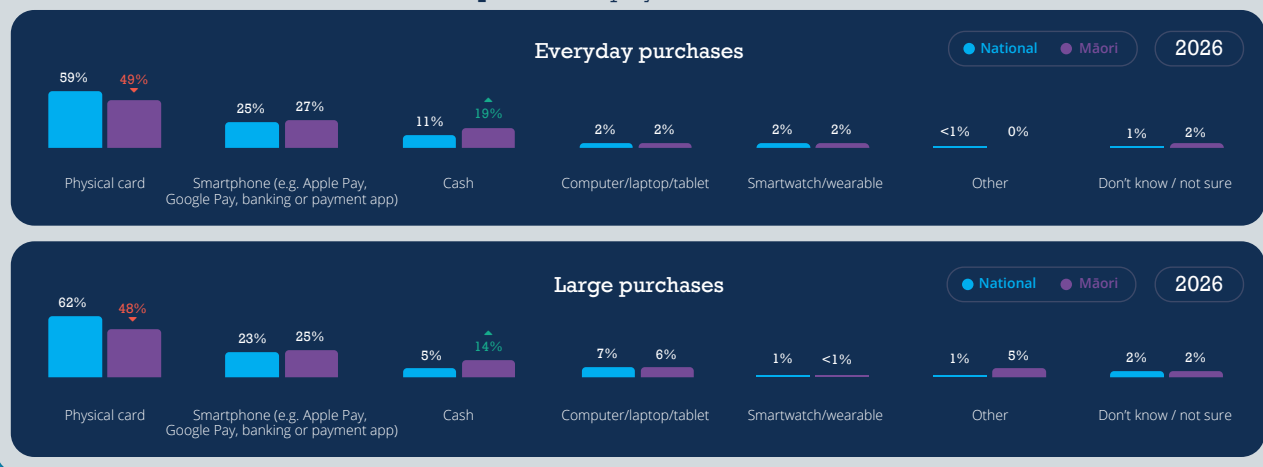
Māori are more likely to prefer using cash and **less likely** to prefer a physical card for when making payments

Most preferred account type to use



When it comes to **payment method preferences**, Māori are less likely to use a physical card for both everyday and large purchases (although it is still the most common method), and are more likely to prefer using cash

Most preferred payment methods



Section 2: Contactless payments

Convenience still wins, but surcharges are changing behaviour

Contactless payments continue to be a common way to pay, with overall use remaining stable since 2024. At least 84% of respondents report using contactless payments at least sometimes, and use is particularly high among 18–34-year-old respondents, at 93%. For the first time, surcharges have overtaken security concerns as the top reason respondents give for not using contactless payments.

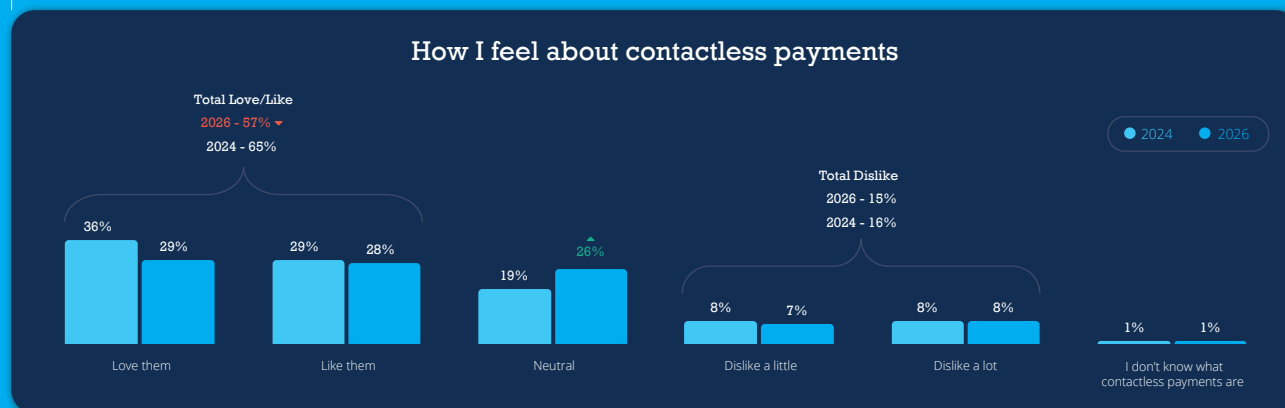
However, sentiment towards contactless payments has softened. Older respondents are less positive about contactless payments overall. Among those aged 65 and over, sentiment has declined since 2024, with 35% saying they like contactless payments and 34% saying they dislike them. Usage among respondents aged 65 and over has also declined, from 79% in 2022 to 69% in 2026.

This may reflect growing awareness of surcharges, or it may indicate that contactless payments are increasingly seen as an expected part of the payments experience rather than something people feel strongly positive about.

Younger New Zealanders are more likely to use **contactless payments**.
New Zealanders over 65 are using them less compared to 2022

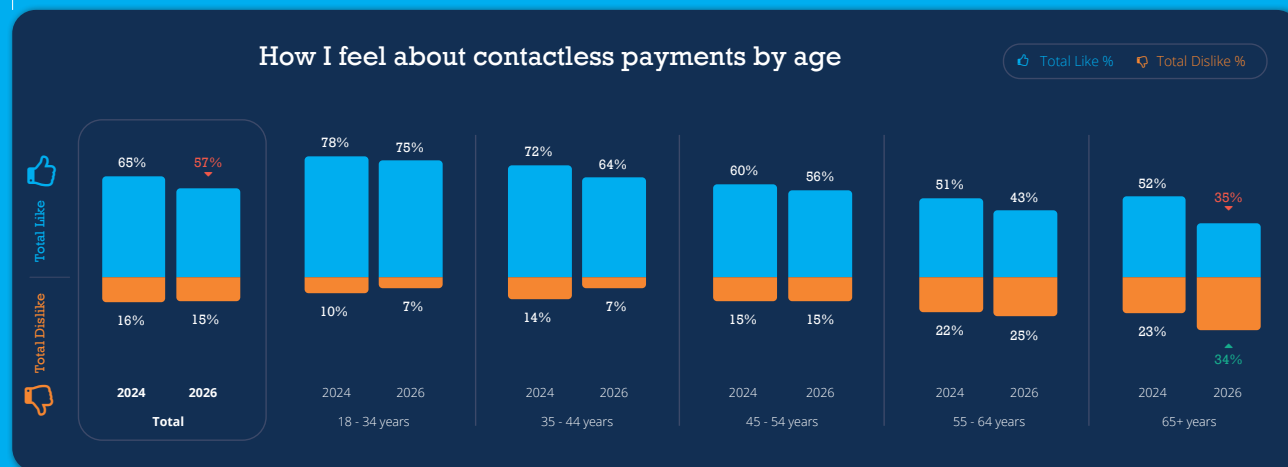


Less New Zealanders 'love' or 'like' **contactless payments** compared to 2024. 26% of people feel neutral about them, up from 19%. The amount of people who dislike contactless payments remains the same at 15%

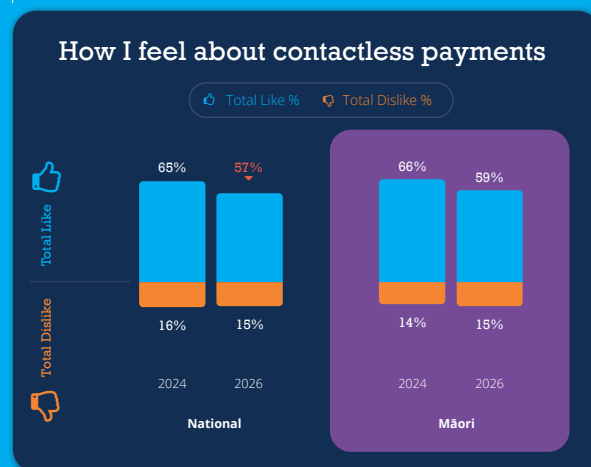


The contactless findings show how convenience, affordability and trust intersect. Contactless is valued because it is fast and familiar, but surcharges are changing behaviour and softening sentiment. This matters for the future payments system because payment options that are easy to use may still lose consumer support if people see them as adding cost or reducing control.

The decline in sentiment is clearest for those over 65, where the amount of people who feel positive is the same as the amount of people who feel negative



Contactless use and sentiment among Māori respondents were broadly similar to the national findings



Payment choices are not always a matter of preference. **For some consumers, they reflect financial pressure and trade-offs.**



Section 3: Online payments

The most preferred way to pay online varies by age, with cards on top

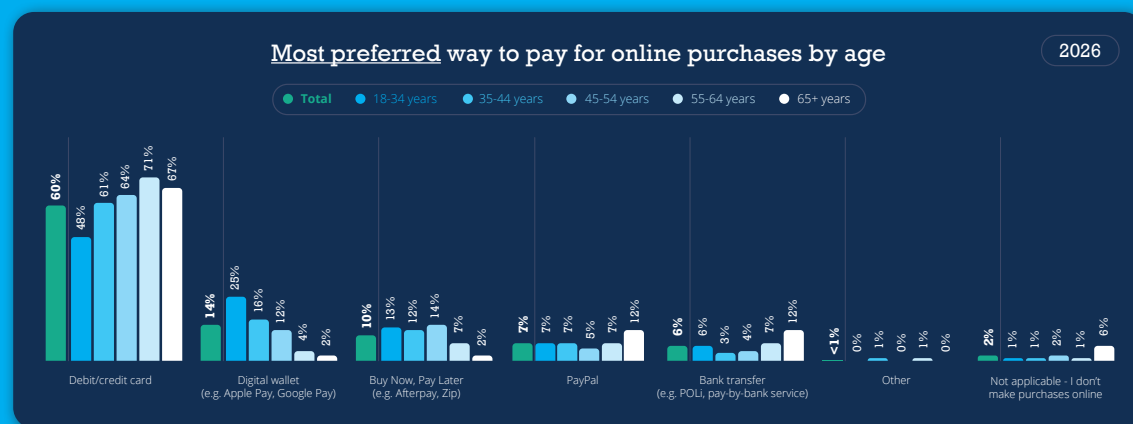
Cards remain the most preferred way to pay online, with 60% of respondents preferring them. However, all other methods also have clear groups of support. Younger respondents show a stronger preference for digital wallets and BNPL, while PayPal and bank transfer methods such as POLi and pay-by-bank services, are more popular with older demographics. Māori respondents report a stronger preference for BNPL and a weaker preference for credit or debit cards.

As more commerce moves online, the system-level challenge is to support payment experiences that work for different circumstances and preferences, while giving consumers clear protections, affordable options and usable choices.

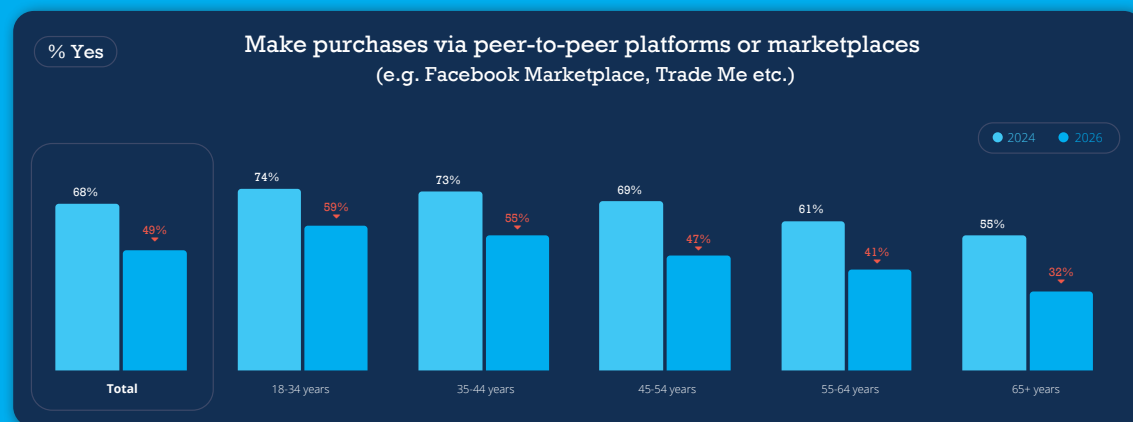
Trust and confidence drive payment choice in online marketplaces

Reported use of online marketplaces such as Trade Me or Facebook Marketplace has declined, with 49% of respondents reporting purchases in 2026 compared with 68% in 2024. There is a similar but less pronounced decline among Māori respondents, falling from 66% to 60% over the same period.

Cards are the most popular way to **make purchases online**. The preference for every option varies by age group



49% of New Zealanders report **buying from online marketplaces**, down from 68% in 2024. The drop is seen across age groups, although younger New Zealanders remain more likely to make purchases on these platforms



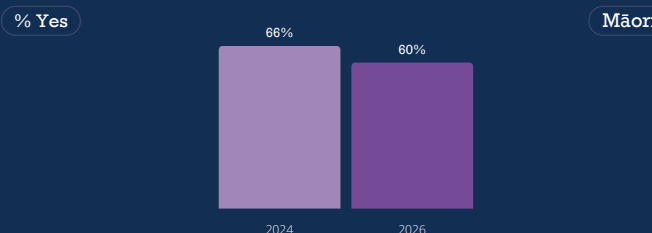
There has been no shift in the way respondents prefer to pay for purchases made on online marketplaces, with cash on pick up remaining the most preferred method. This allows the buyer to inspect the item before making the purchase, giving them more control over the transaction. Similarly, respondents prefer online payment methods that offer an element of protection to the buyer if things go wrong, demonstrating that trust and safety are critical considerations when making purchases on these types of platforms.

The continued importance of protection and traceability shows that trust is a practical design requirement for payments in online marketplaces.



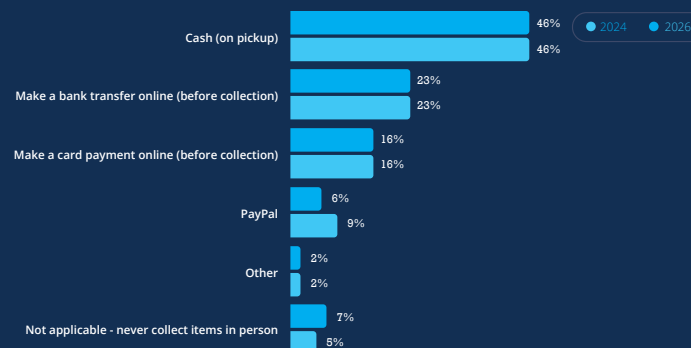
Cash on pickup remains the preferred way to pay for online marketplace purchases

Online marketplace purchase behaviour Make purchases via peer-to-peer platforms or marketplaces (e.g. Facebook Marketplace, Trade Me etc.)



Māori report **less of a decline** in online marketplace usage compared to all New Zealanders

Online marketplace purchase behaviour Most preferred way to pay when collecting items from a seller



Payment preferences when making purchases through online marketplaces remain **unchanged** since 2024. Over half of New Zealanders prefer to pay cash on pickup, followed by a quarter preferring to make an online bank transfer in advance of collection

Online marketplace purchase behaviour Most preferred way to pay when collecting items from a seller



Payment preferences for **online marketplace purchases** were broadly similar across the Māori respondent sample and the national sample

Section 4: Account-to-account payments

Satisfaction with payment speeds remains high

85% of respondents make payments from an online account at least monthly, down slightly from 89% in 2024. Māori respondents make payments from an online account more frequently, with 62% reporting usage most weeks compared with 46% nationally. This difference is consistent with previous surveys.

Satisfaction with the speed it takes to make payments from and receive payments to an account remains high at 85%, but over half of those surveyed would like transfer speeds to be faster.

This preference is consistent with previous surveys, showing a stable expectation for faster transaction speeds. It also connects account-to-account payments to the wider future of payments, demonstrating consumers value immediacy and reliability

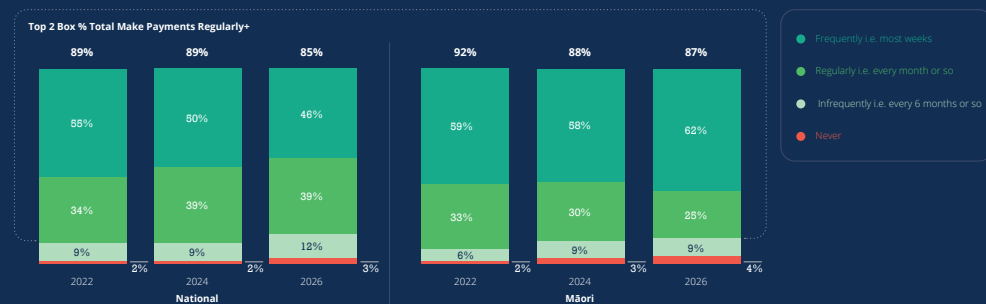
Māori respondents reported **making payments from an online account more frequently**, with 62% reporting use most weeks compared with 46% nationally. This difference is consistent with previous survey results

More people are happy with the time it takes to **receive** money into their account since 2020. Satisfaction with the time it takes to **send** money also remains high

Even though most people are satisfied with current speeds, around half would still like to see faster speeds for both **sending** and **receiving** payments

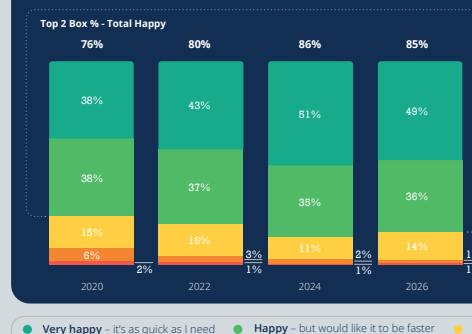
Reported **satisfaction with payment speeds** was broadly similar across the Māori respondent sample and national sample

Frequency of making payments online

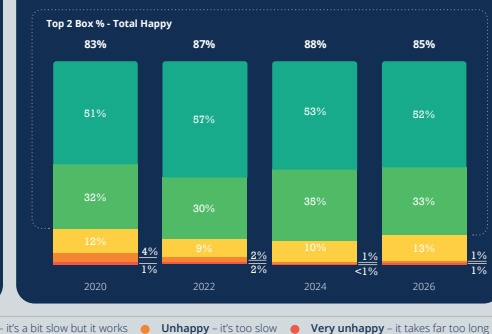


Satisfaction with the time it takes for money...

To be received once a payment has been made to their account

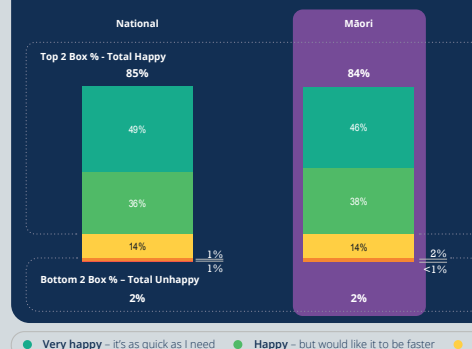


To be sent once a payment has been made to the receiver's account

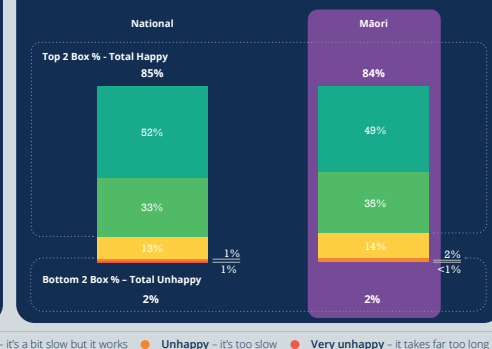


Satisfaction with the time it takes for money...

To be received once a payment has been made to their account



To be sent once a payment has been made to the receiver's account



Section 5: Fraud and scams

Trust is non-negotiable

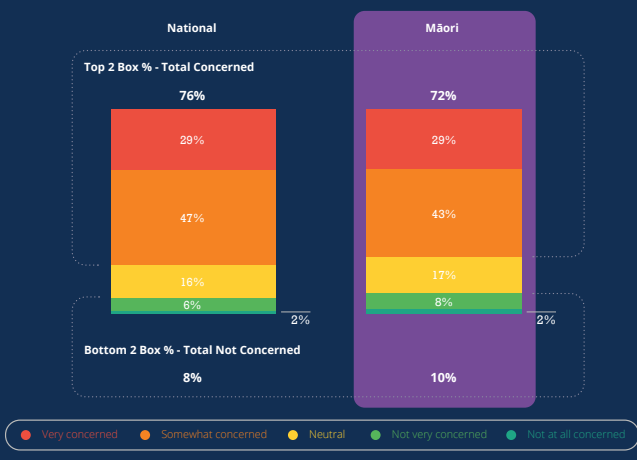
Concern about fraud and scams is widespread. 76% of respondents said they are somewhat or very concerned about fraud and scams when making payments. This concern is reflected in respondents' recent experiences, with 27% reporting that they had experienced a scam or fraud attempt in the last 12 months. The Māori respondent sample and the national sample reported similar levels of experience with scams and fraud attempts.

These concerns are already influencing behaviour. Around 29% of respondents said they have changed how they make payments in response to the risk of scams or fraud. Those who have changed their behaviour described being more vigilant, particularly when dealing with risky or unknown sellers, and making greater use of verification and authentication features.

Responsibility for preventing payment scams is seen as shared, although many respondents place the greatest responsibility on themselves. Overall, 38% said the individual is most responsible for preventing a payment scam, followed by banks at 26% and payment service providers at 12%.

Level of concern about fraud and scams when making payments

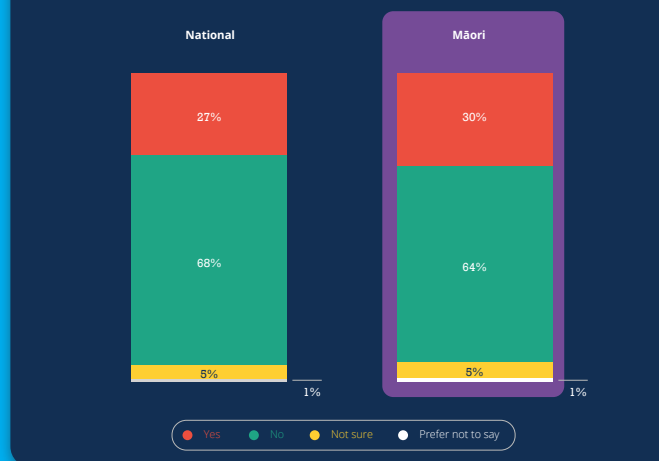
2026



Three quarters of all New Zealanders are 'somewhat' or 'very concerned' about **fraud and scams** when making payments

Experienced a fraud or scam attempt in the last 12 months

2026



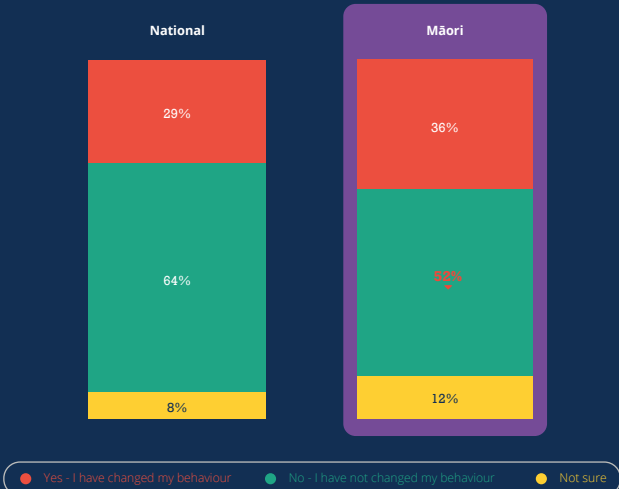
Concern about fraud and scams, and reported experience of fraud or scam attempts, **were broadly similar** across the Māori respondent sample and national sample

Māori respondents were less likely than the national sample to say the individual is most responsible for preventing a scam or fraud attempt, 28% compared with 38% nationally. However, the overall ranking of who is seen as responsible was broadly consistent with the national result.

These findings reinforce that trust is a fundamental aspect of payment experiences, and it must be the foundation of future payments innovation. Scam prevention, consumer education, verification and accountability will be central to future system confidence.

Payment behaviour change due to fraud and scam concerns

2026



Who I think is most responsible for preventing a payment scam

2026



Section 6: Future of payments

New ways to pay must earn consumer trust

New Zealanders remain open to new payment experiences, but innovation cannot rely on novelty alone. Safety and security is a defining consideration, with 55% identifying it as the most important factor when considering a new way to pay. This reinforces the broader finding that trust is central not only to how people experience payments today, but also to their willingness to consider new payment options.

Respondents expect payments to become more digital and device-led over the next decade. When asked to imagine payments in 2036, the most common expectation was greater use of contactless payments through mobile phones and smart devices, followed by biometrics. This suggests consumers see payments becoming more integrated into everyday technology.

However, the fundamentals remain important. More than half of respondents (55%) rank safety and security as their number one consideration when choosing a new way to pay. Weighted across all rankings, safety and security also remains the most important factor overall (24%), followed by no extra charges or fees (20%) and ease of use (17%).

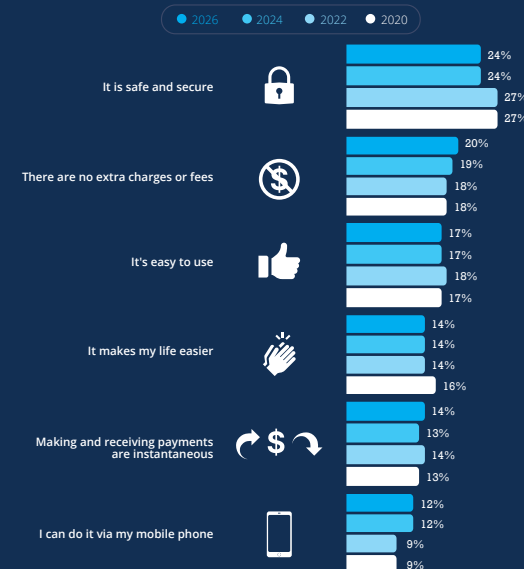
These priorities have remained unchanged over time, showing that innovation needs to be supported by trust, affordability and confidence. The overall ranking of factors was similar across the Māori respondent sample and the national sample.

Payments options that offer practical benefits have the strongest appeal. Among future payment concepts, 24/7 real-time payments were the most appealing both nationally (77%) and for Māori respondents (72%). This provides a clear signal that New Zealanders value payment methods that are fast, reliable and always available. However, appeal has softened over time, suggesting future improvements need to clearly demonstrate their value.

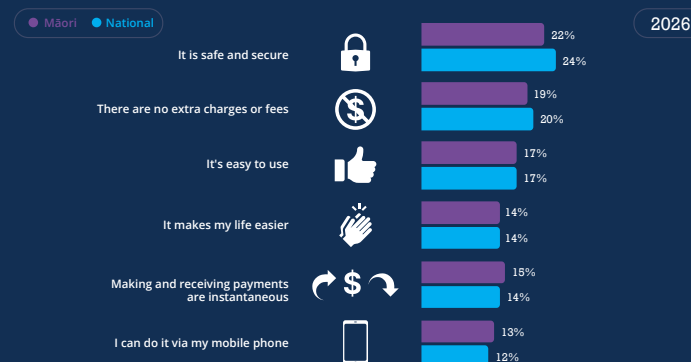
Respondents are more selective about newer or less familiar innovations. Use of AI agents for making purchases was the least popular concept, with 30% finding it appealing. This suggests some ideas may need more explanation, trust-building and evidence of clear consumer benefit before they are widely adopted. This reinforces that innovation must be tied to consumer outcomes, rather than assuming adoption will follow from novelty alone.

Safety and security is the **most important** factor New Zealanders think about when using a new payment method. The ranking of most important features is **unchanged** since 2020

Most important factor when considering a new way to pay
Weighted by all rankings received



Most important factor when considering a new way to pay
Weighted by all rankings received

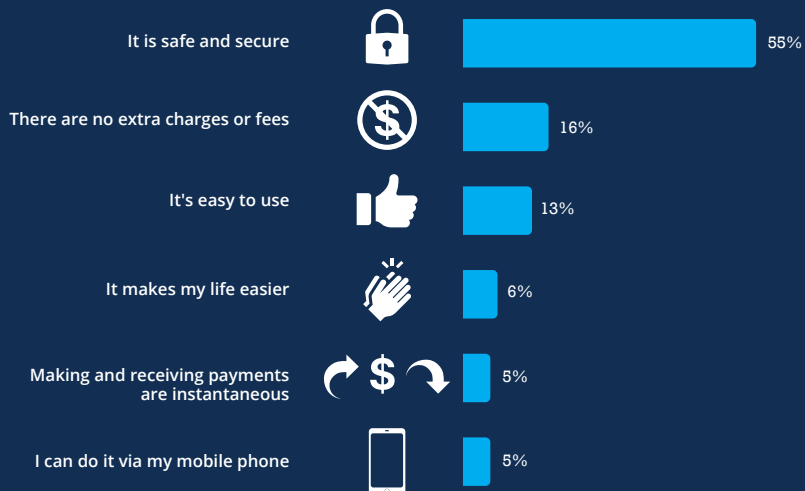


Safety and security is a defining consideration when consumers assess new ways to pay, with **55% identifying it as the most important factor**. This reinforces the broader finding that trust matters not only to how people experience payments today, but also to their willingness to consider new payment options.

Most important factor when considering a new way to pay

Ranked #1 most important

2026



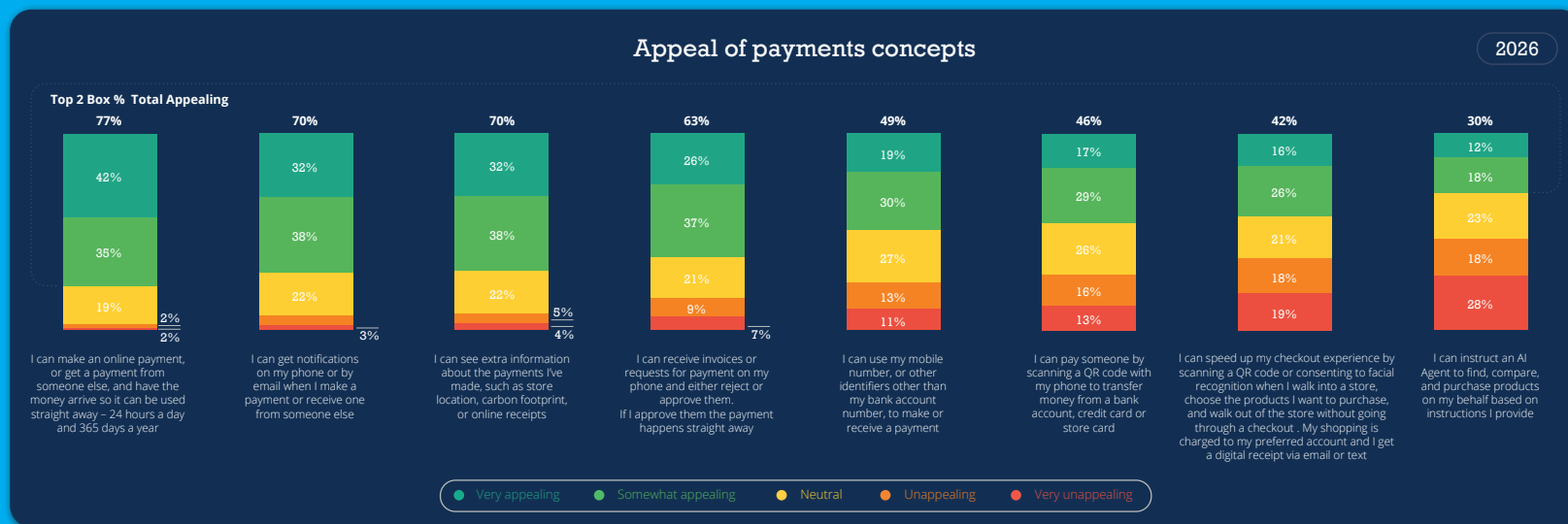
Consumers remain open to innovation, but **new payment experiences** will need to demonstrate that they are **safe, affordable, accessible and easy to use**, while delivering a clear consumer benefit.

55% say safety and security is the most important factor when considering a new way to pay.

Respondents were asked to rate how appealing they found eight payment concepts.

24/7 real-time payments was the **most popular** payments concept, with 77% of New Zealanders finding it appealing.

Using an AI Agent to make purchases was the **least appealing** concept, with 30% of people finding it appealing and 46% of people finding it unappealing



The relative appeal of the payment concepts was **broadly similar** across the Māori respondent sample and the national sample



Technology changes.
Consumer expectations don't.

Section 7: Affordability is influencing payment choices

For this analysis, 'financially stressed' refers to respondents who reported experiencing at least one indicator of financial stress. See the survey scope and methodology in the Appendix for details.



This year's research explored the extent to which New Zealanders are impacted by cost of living pressures, to better understand how financial stress might be impacting payment behaviours and preferences.

These findings provide important context for affordability, consumer outcomes and payment choice. They show that the way people pay is influenced strongly by financial management considerations including how they manage bills, avoid fees, control spending, access goods and services, and maintain confidence when money is tight.

The research findings suggest that cost of living pressures are shaping how some New Zealanders manage everyday payments and make choices about which payment methods to use. Overall, 46% of respondents acknowledged at least one indicator of financial stress, with the most common being delaying or avoiding purchases due to financial pressure (32%). Smaller but still significant groups reported struggling to pay household bills on time (16%), using BNPL for essential items (11%), or incurring late payment fees or penalties (11%).

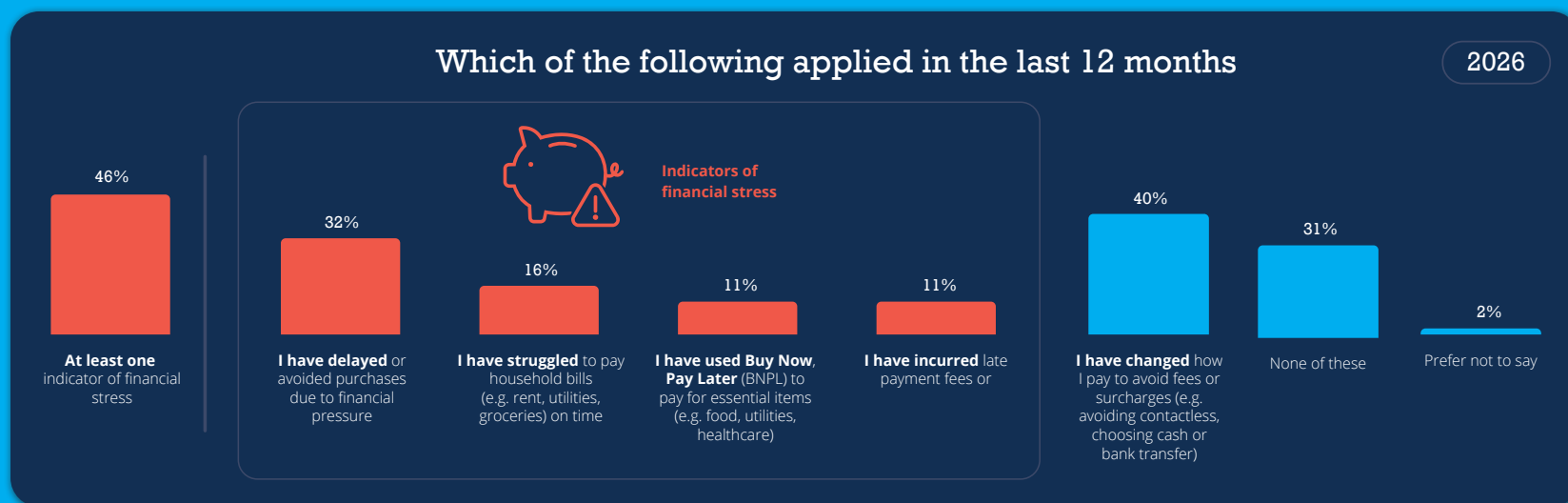
Respondents who acknowledged at least one indicator of financial stress tend to be younger and are more likely to be unemployed. Within this survey, 64% of Māori respondents reported at least one of the defined indicators of financial stress, compared with 46% of the national sample. The research does not establish the causes of this difference. Differences in the demographic profiles of the samples, including age, should also be considered when interpreting the result. People experiencing pressure are also more likely to rely on their own funds or BNPL for everyday and larger purchases, and less likely to use credit cards. This suggests payment choices are shaped not only by convenience, but also by affordability, access to credit and the need to avoid additional costs.

Affordability pressures are not limited to people experiencing financial stress. 40% of New Zealanders said they had changed how they pay to avoid fees or surcharges, demonstrating the significance of this factor in shaping payment behaviour. The payments ecosystem must support options that help consumers participate confidently and manage their financial lives.

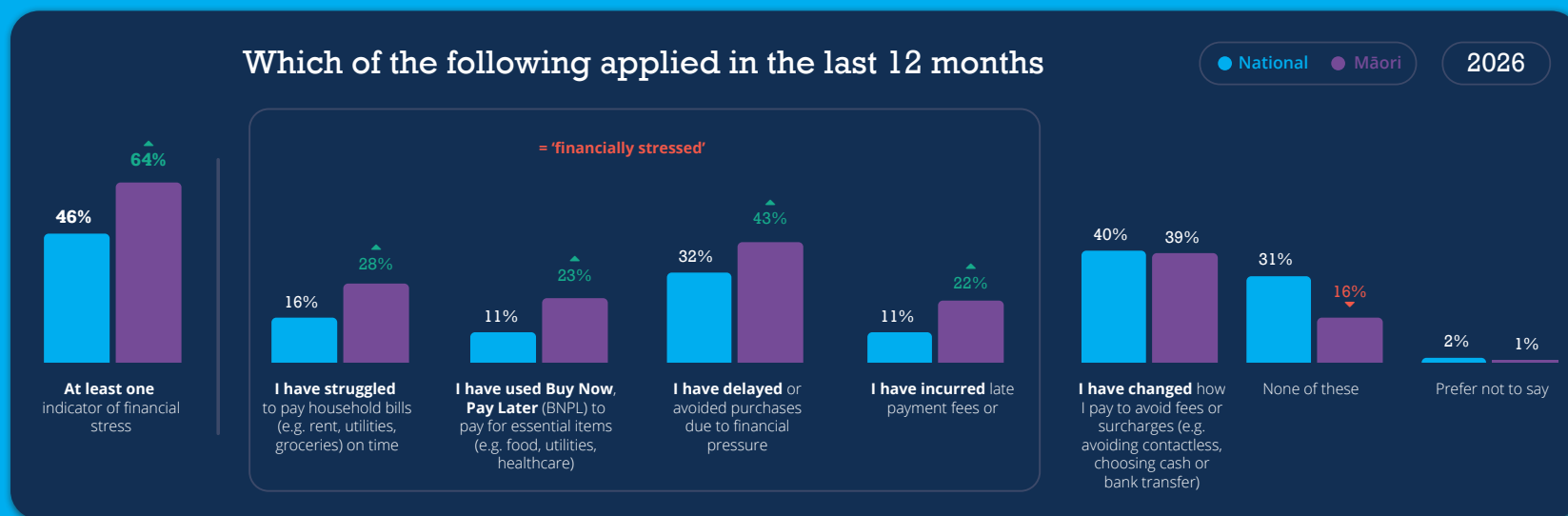
Financial stress across the population

For the purposes of this report, indicators of financial stress include struggling to pay household bills on time, using BNPL for essential items, delaying or avoiding purchases due to financial pressure, and incurring late payment fees or penalties.

Responses on financial stress



Māori responses on financial stress



Interpretation note: The results show the proportion of respondents in each sample who reported at least one of the defined indicators of financial stress. The research does not establish the causes of the difference between the Māori respondent sample and national sample. Differences in the demographic profiles of the samples should also be considered when interpreting the results.

Smartphone payments **are gaining ground.**

25%

now prefer smartphones for **everyday purchases**

up from **15%** in 2024

Among 18–34-year-olds, smartphone use is **approaching parity** with physical cards



Contactless remains popular, but **sentiment is softening.**

84%

use contactless payments at **least sometimes**

Surcharges

are now the leading reason consumers **avoid contactless payments**

Affordability is **influencing** behaviour.

46%

reported at **least one indicator** of financial stress

40%

changed how they pay to **avoid fees** or **surcharges**

32%

delayed or **avoided purchases** due to financial pressure

Conclusion:

Innovation must deliver value

What New Zealanders want from the future of payments

In our 2020 Consumer Survey, many New Zealanders expected the future of payments to be defined by new technologies, from biometric payments to embedded microchips.

Six years on, the message from consumers is both clearer and more important than ever.

While payments continue to become more digital, mobile and integrated into everyday life, the things New Zealanders value most have remained remarkably consistent. Across our research, consumers have consistently told us they want payments that are safe, affordable, accessible and easy to use. They are open to innovation, but only when it delivers genuine value and improves their everyday lives.

This year's findings also reveal a sharper focus on affordability and trust. Cost-of-living pressures are influencing payment choices for many households, surcharges are affecting how people use payment methods, and concerns about scams and fraud are changing consumer behaviour. These are not simply payment preferences. They are signals about what people need from a payments system that supports them to participate confidently in the economy.

Payments are part of Aotearoa New Zealand's critical economic infrastructure. They underpin every wage payment, business transaction, bill payment and purchase made across the country.

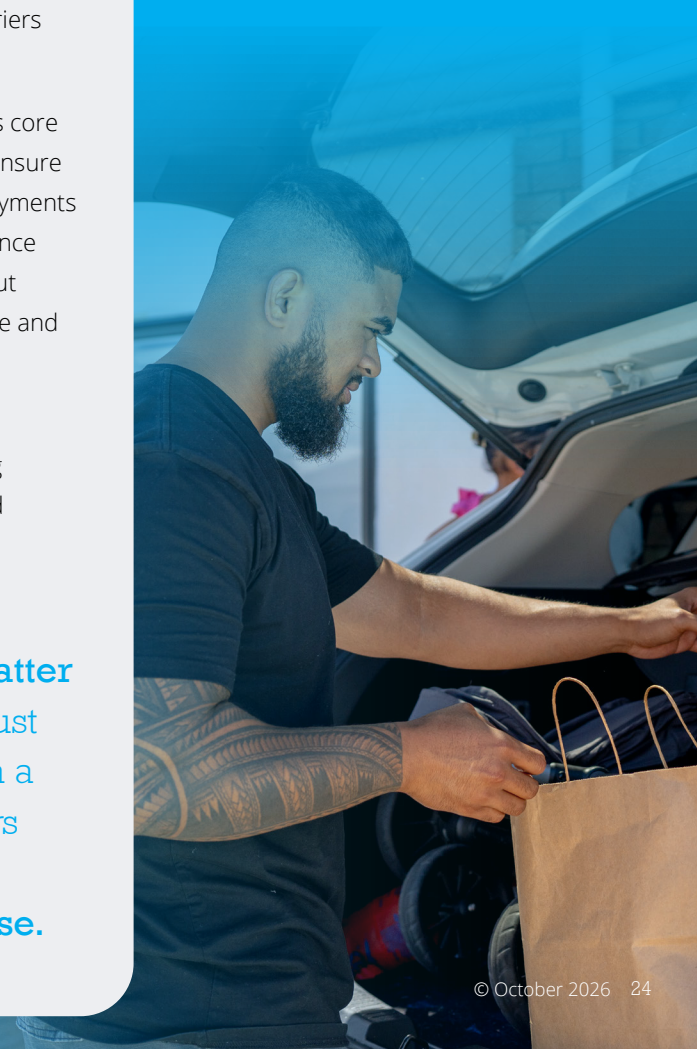
When payments are safe, reliable and accessible, they enable trust, productivity and economic participation. When barriers emerge, consumers and businesses feel the impact.

As the industry governance organisation for our country's core payments systems, Payments NZ has a responsibility to ensure that consumer needs remain at the centre of how the payments ecosystem evolves. These insights provide valuable evidence to inform industry, regulatory and policy discussions about future payments innovation, safety, affordability, resilience and accessibility.

The findings also reinforce the importance of industry coordination, common rules and standards in supporting a payments ecosystem that remains trusted, resilient and responsive to consumer needs.

The message from consumers is clear:

Innovation matters, but outcomes matter more. The future payments system must continue to evolve, but it must do so in a way that delivers what New Zealanders value most: payments that are safe, affordable, accessible and easy to use.



Appendix

Survey scope and methodology

The Payments NZ 2026 Consumer Research survey sample was sourced from Yabble and Dynata online market panels, ensuring a diverse and representative cross-section of the New Zealand population.

We surveyed a national sample of 1,000 people, plus an additional booster sample of 75 people specifically for Māori participants to ensure the statistical validity of insights about this population.

The national sample of 1,000 people is representative of the New Zealand population aged 18 and above, balanced for age, gender, region, and ethnicity. The following ethnicity quotas were targeted, in line with the 2023 Census:

- NZ European: 62%
- Other European: 6%
- Māori: 17%
- Pacific Peoples: 9%
- Chinese: 6%
- Korean: 1%
- Indian: 6%
- Other Asian: 5%
- Other ethnicity: 3%

Respondents were able to select multiple ethnicities, resulting in a total above 100 percent.

The combined Māori sample consists of 139 people from the national sample plus the booster sample of 75 people, resulting in a total Māori sample of 214 people.

Interpreting Māori comparisons

The **national sample consists of 1,000 respondents and includes 139 Māori respondents**. An additional booster sample of 75 Māori respondents brings the combined **Māori respondent sample to 214**.

All respondents were asked the same questions.

The Māori respondent profile differs from the national sample in some demographic characteristics, including age. The Māori respondent sample has a larger proportion of younger respondents than the national sample.

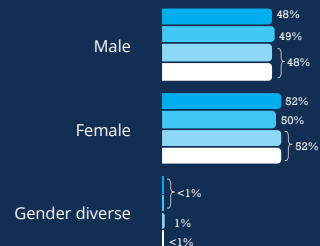
Comparisons in this report should therefore be read as insights from this survey. They identify similarities and differences in the responses received but do not, by themselves, explain why those differences occur.

Sample profile – national demographics

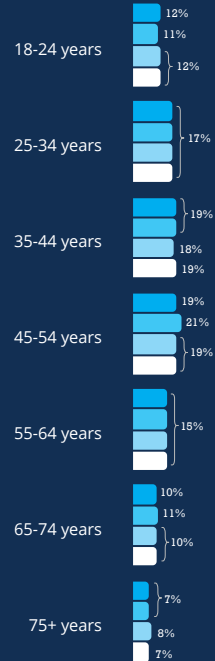
The survey targeted a nationally representative sample for gender, age, and region (and ethnicity from 2022).
The sample is stable over time so we can be confident any observed changes are not due to sample composition

National Sample - Profile

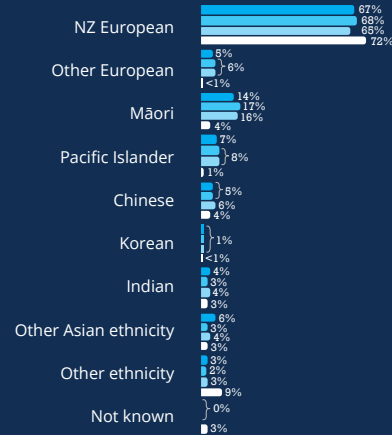
Gender



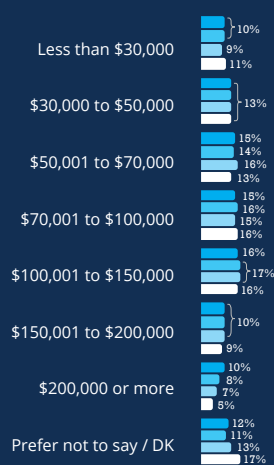
Age



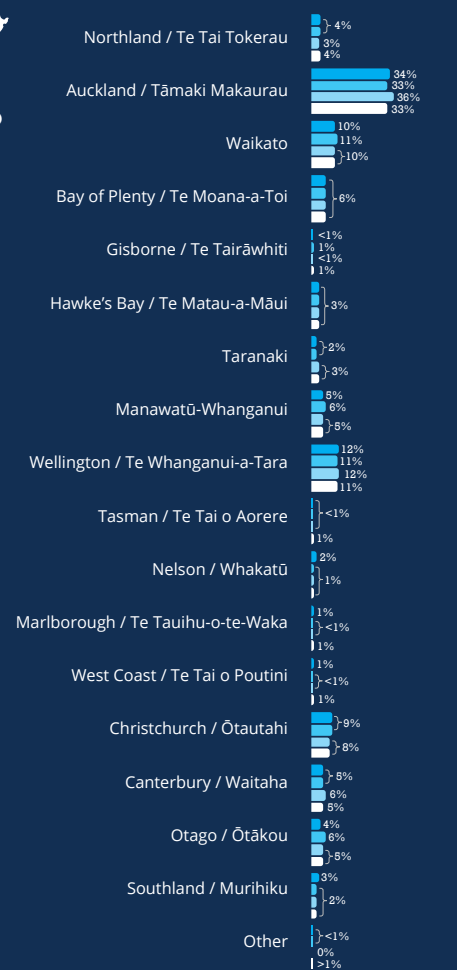
Ethnicity



Annual household income



Region



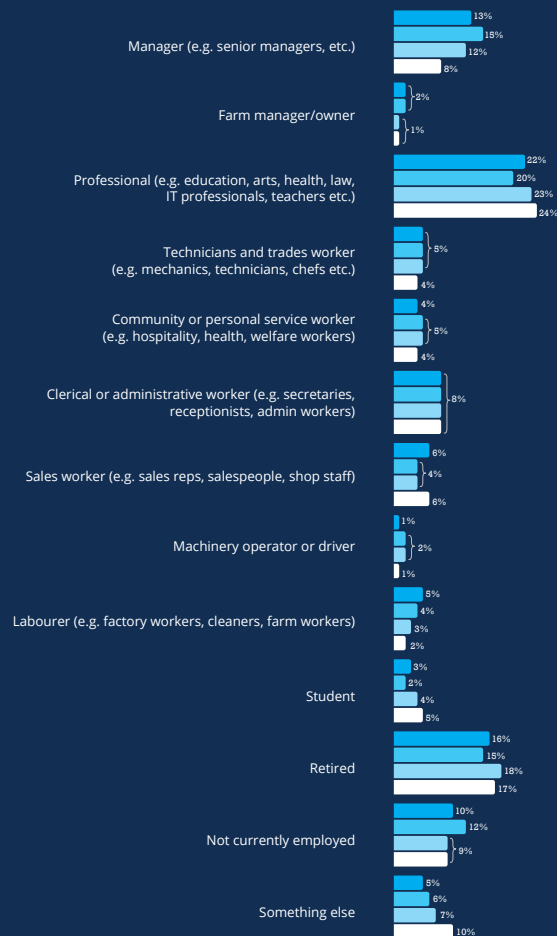
Sample profile – occupation, Māori demographics, and comparisons

National Sample - Profile (Occupation)

● 2026 ● 2024 ● 2022 ● 2020



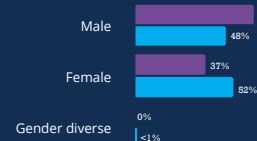
Current Occupation



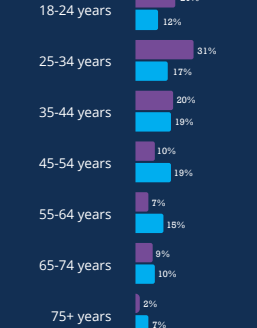
National Sample vs. Māori Sample - Profile (2026)

● Māori ● National

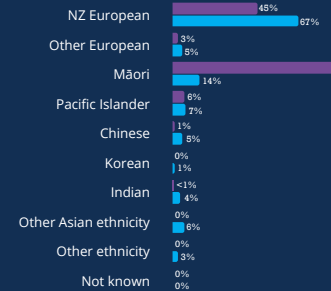
Gender



Age



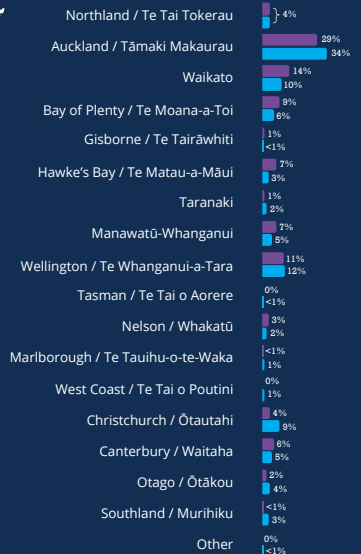
Ethnicity



Annual household income



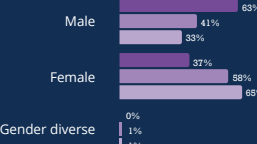
Region



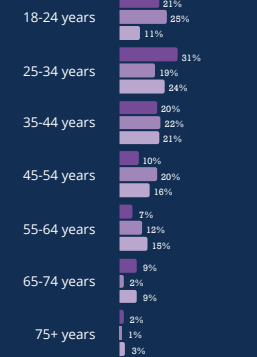
Māori Sample - Profile

● 2026 ● 2024 ● 2022 ● 2020

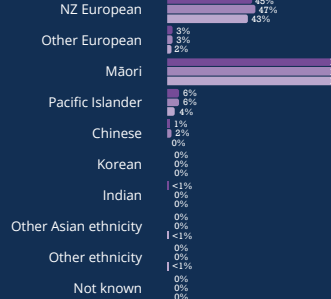
Gender



Age



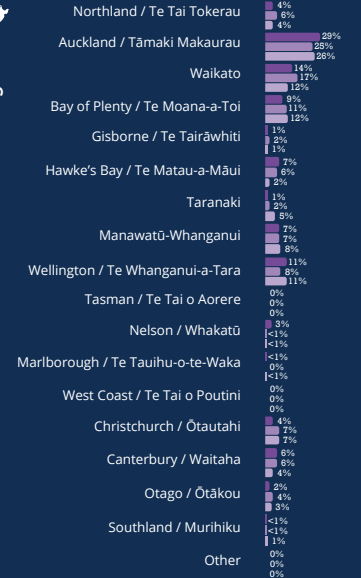
Ethnicity



Annual household income



Region



Financially stressed New Zealanders

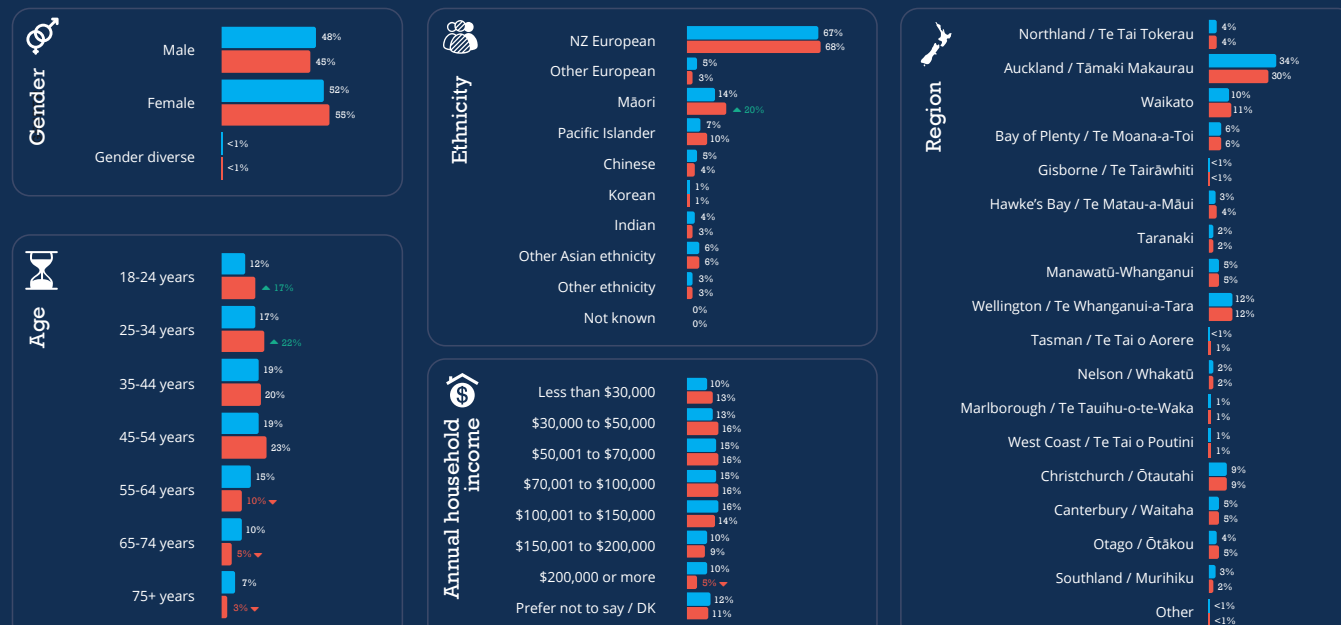
To determine the proportion of the sample who may be financially stressed, respondents were asked if any of the below scenarios had applied to them in the last 12 months:

1. I have struggled to pay household bills (e.g. rent, utilities, groceries) on time
2. I have used Buy Now, Pay Later to pay for essential items (e.g. food, utilities, healthcare)
3. I have changed how I pay to avoid fees or surcharges (e.g. avoiding contactless, choosing cash or bank transfer)
4. I have delayed or avoided purchases due to financial pressure
5. I have incurred late payment fees or penalties

We defined 'financially stressed' respondents as anyone who selected scenarios 1, 2, 4 or 5. For analysis purposes, these respondents were grouped together, equating to 46% of New Zealanders who responded yes to at least one indicator of financial stress in the last 12 months.

Sample profile 2026 - overall versus financially stressed respondents

National Sample vs. Financially Stressed Respondents - Profile



This research forms part of Payments Direction, Payments NZ's programme exploring the opportunities, challenges and priorities shaping the future of payments in Aotearoa New Zealand. Learn more at paymentsnz.co.nz/payments-direction.

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