

Technology changes. Consumer expectations don't.

Payments are becoming increasingly digital, mobile and embedded in everyday life. Yet the Payments NZ Consumer Research 2026 shows that the fundamentals New Zealanders value remain remarkably consistent. While technology continues to evolve, consumers remain focused on outcomes: payments that are safe, affordable, accessible and easy to use.

Payments NZ has undertaken this research every two years since 2020, returning to many of the same topics to understand where payment behaviours and preferences are changing, where they remain consistent and where new issues are emerging.

In 2026, affordability and concerns about scams are particularly prominent themes in how people experience and choose to make payments. 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.

Payments underpin everyday participation in the economy, enabling people to receive income, pay bills, purchase goods and services, and run businesses. Understanding what New Zealanders value from the payments system provides important evidence for future industry, regulatory and policy decisions.



Trust remains
the foundation
of payments
innovation.

Three themes are shaping payment choices

The findings highlight how trust, affordability and wider social and economic conditions are reflected in payment behaviour. Three themes stand out across the research.

1. Trust is non-negotiable

76%

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

27%

experienced a **scam or fraud attempt** in the previous 12 months.

29%

have **changed how they make payments** in response to these risks.

Consumers want confidence that their money is safe, their information is protected and support is available when something goes wrong. Trust, protection and clear accountability will be essential to confidence in both existing and future payment services.

2. 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 because of **financial pressure**.

16%

struggled to pay household bills on time.

Surcharges have overtaken security concerns as the leading reason people avoid contactless payments. The findings show payment choices are not always matters of preference or convenience. For some consumers, they reflect financial pressure, access to funds and the need to avoid additional costs.

3. New ways to pay must earn consumers' trust

55%

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



No extra charges

or fees and ease of use are the next **most important considerations**.

New Zealanders remain open to innovation, but new ways to pay need to earn their trust. Future payment experiences need to be safe, affordable, accessible and easy to use, while delivering a clear consumer benefit.

Why this matters

Payments are critical economic infrastructure. They enable people to receive income, pay bills, buy goods and services, operate businesses and participate in the economy. When payments work well, they support trust, productivity and economic participation.

As the industry governance organisation for Aotearoa New Zealand's core payments systems, Payments NZ brings evidence, expertise and industry coordination together to support trusted outcomes.

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

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.

The message from consumers is clear: **Innovation matters, but outcomes matter more.**

The future of payments is not simply a technology challenge. It is also a challenge of trust, affordability, accessibility and practical value. Future payments decisions should ultimately be judged not by the technology they introduce, but by the outcomes they deliver for New Zealanders: payments that are safe, affordable, accessible and easy to use.



Payments NZ surveyed a nationally representative sample of 1,000 New Zealanders aged 18 and over through Yabble and Dynata online market panels during June 2026. An additional booster sample of 75 Māori respondents brought the combined Māori respondent sample to 214. All respondents answered the same questions. The survey identifies similarities and differences in the responses received. It does not, by itself, explain why those differences occur. See our full [2026 Consumer Research here](#) ↗