

MEDIA RELEASE

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Technology changes. Consumer expectations don't: new research reveals what New Zealanders want from payments

New Zealanders are embracing digital payments and new technology, but trust, affordability, accessibility and ease of use remain central to what they need from payments.

New Consumer Research released today by Payments NZ shows cost-of-living pressures, payment surcharges and concerns about fraud are reflected in payment behaviour across Aotearoa New Zealand.

Payments NZ Consumer Research 2026 found:

- 76% are concerned about fraud and scams when making payments.
- 55% say safety and security is the most important factor when considering a new way to pay.
- 46% reported at least one indicator of financial stress.
- 40% changed how they pay to avoid fees or surcharges.
- 25% now prefer smartphones for everyday purchases, up from 15% in 2024.
- 11% prefer cash, which has remained steady since 2022.

Payments NZ Chief Executive Steve Wiggins said the findings showed consumers remain open to innovation, but new ways to pay need to earn their trust.

"New Zealanders are embracing more digital ways to pay, but the fundamentals remain consistent. People want payments that are safe, affordable, accessible and easy to use."

The research found 29% of respondents had changed how they make payments in response to fraud or scam risks. Surcharges have also overtaken security concerns as the leading reason respondents give for not using contactless payments.

“Consumers are telling us clearly that new ways to pay must earn their trust. New payment experiences need to deliver genuine benefits while giving people confidence that their money is safe and costs are transparent,” said Mr Wiggins.

The findings build on Payments NZ’s previous consumer research, which shows that while payment preferences continue to evolve, consumers continue to value security, control and reliability.

Younger respondents show different payment preferences, including declining preference for credit cards among 18–34-year-olds alongside greater preference for buy now, pay later.

Within the 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.

Mr Wiggins said payments are a critical part of Aotearoa New Zealand’s economic infrastructure and understanding consumer needs is important to future decision-making.

“Every day, New Zealanders rely on payments to receive wages, pay bills, run businesses and participate in the economy. When payment systems work well, they support trust, productivity and economic participation.

“As the industry governance organisation for our country’s core payments systems, Payments NZ is committed to ensuring consumer needs remain at the centre of how the payments ecosystem evolves.

“These findings reinforce the importance of industry coordination, common rules and standards, and collaboration across the ecosystem to support trusted consumer outcomes while enabling innovation and modernisation.

“The message from consumers is clear. Innovation matters, but outcomes matter more,” added Mr Wiggins.

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Notes to editors

About the research

- Payments NZ Consumer Research 2026 surveyed a nationally representative sample of 1,000 New Zealanders aged 18 and over during June 2026.

- The national sample of 1,000 included 139 Māori respondents. An additional booster sample of 75 Māori respondents brought the combined Māori respondent sample to 214. All respondents answered the same questions. Comparisons identify similarities and differences in the responses received but do not, by themselves, explain why those differences occur.
- Research was conducted using Yabble and Dynata online market panels

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About Payments NZ

Payments NZ is the industry governance organisation for Aotearoa New Zealand's core payments systems. We establish the rules, standards and coordination that enable the safe and trusted movement of money across the payments ecosystem in Aotearoa and support the transfer of approximately \$8.6 trillion around the economy each year.