

## Well-being Statistics: 2016

Embargoed until 10:45am – 20 July 2017

### Key facts

- Most New Zealanders are satisfied with life, with around 83 percent rating their overall life satisfaction as 7 or above on the 0–10 scale.
- 1 in 4 Kiwis had good outcomes in all four aspects of well-being (they had excellent or very good health, more than enough or enough money, had never felt lonely, and had no major housing problems).
- Kiwis had a strong sense of belonging to New Zealand, on average rating this as 8.6 out of 10.
- However, they were less likely to have a sense of belonging to their neighbourhood, with a mean rating of 6.5 out of 10.
- Asian people were least likely to have a strong sense of belonging to New Zealand – about 33 percent rated it 10/10, compared with 44 percent of the total population.
- Family matters to New Zealanders – on average, people rated their sense of belonging to family as 9.1 out of 10.
- People in Northland, Bay of Plenty, and Gisborne had higher 'life worthwhile' ratings than the average New Zealander, with 31.2 percent rating it 10/10.
- Pacific people were twice as likely as the general population to rate sports as extremely important in defining New Zealand (49.4 percent compared with 26.4 percent, respectively, rated it 10/10).
- Pacific people were also the group most likely to have a strong sense of belonging to another country (49.9 percent rated it 10/10 compared with 22.8 percent of the general population).
- Māori rate Māori culture and cultural practices as extremely important – 1 in 2 rated it 10/10, compared with around 1 in 4 of the total population.

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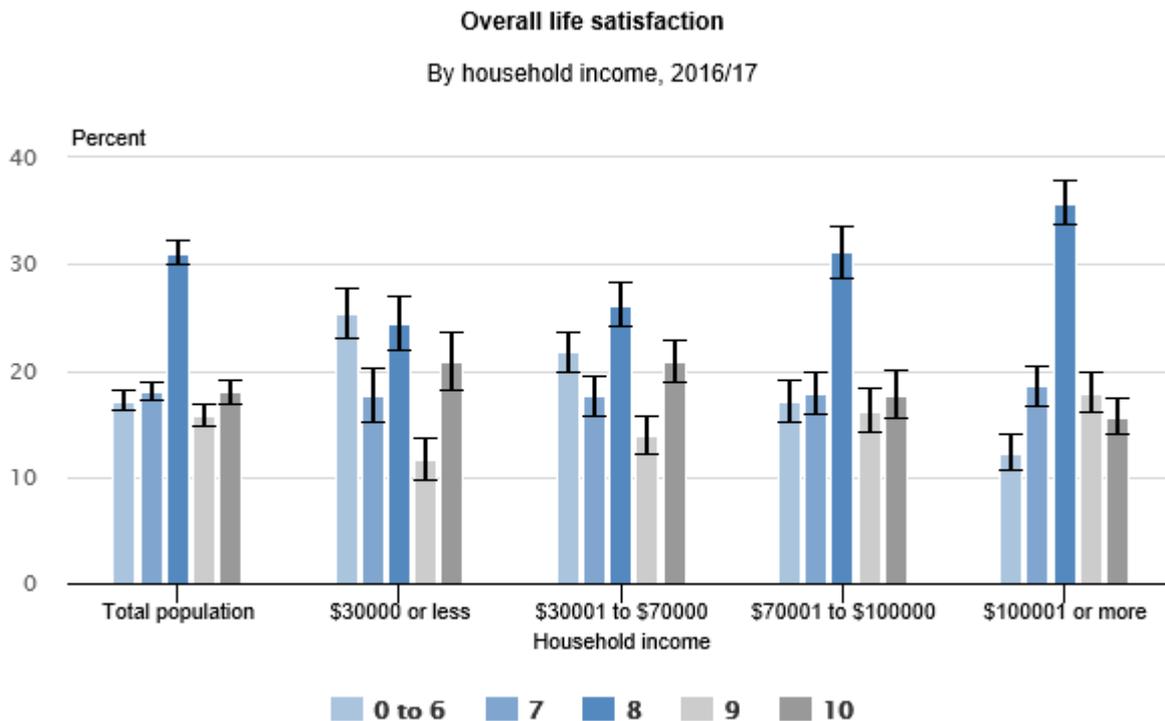
## Commentary

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### Most New Zealanders are satisfied with life

New Zealanders are overall satisfied with life. Around 83 percent rated their overall life satisfaction as 7 or above on the 0-10 scale. The sense of overall life satisfaction for New Zealand as a whole has not changed with a similar result seen in 2014.

We did find some differences in overall life satisfaction by different population groups. One in 5 people earning under \$30,000 (20.4 percent), around 1 in 4 unemployed, and sole parents (23.6 and 28.0 percent respectively) gave a low overall score for life satisfaction of between 0–6. These figures compare with 1 in 6 of the total population (17.1 percent). Rates of overall life satisfaction were lower for people with disabilities, with around 1 in 3 (37.6 percent) rating their life satisfaction at 0–6.



Source: Stats NZ

Note: Error bars represent variability in estimates.

## One-quarter of Kiwis have good well-being outcomes

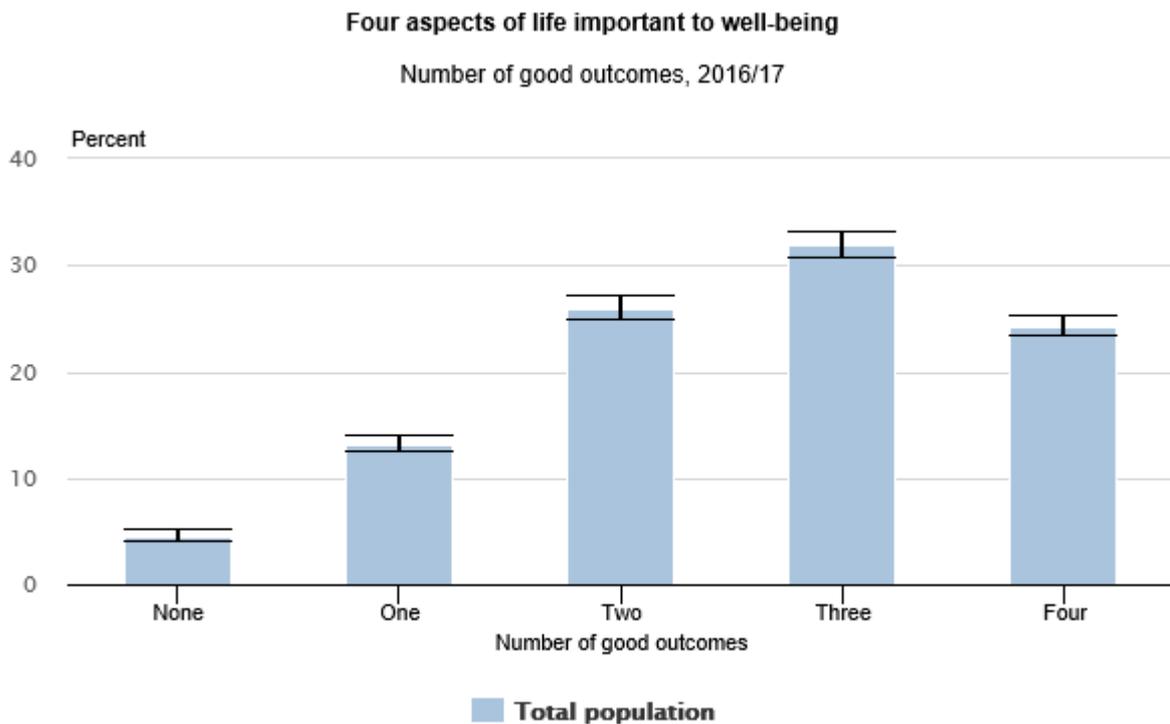
New Zealand General Social Survey (NZGSS) analysis in 2012 showed several aspects of New Zealanders' lives had a strong independent relationship with overall life satisfaction. The four with the strongest relationship that are measured in the NZGSS are:

- self-rated health status
- availability of money to meet everyday needs
- quality of relationships with family and friends
- housing quality (note: questions on housing quality have changed since the 2012 survey).

A good outcome for each of these aspects of life is captured in the survey when someone reports having:

- excellent/very good general health
- more than enough/enough money to meet everyday needs
- not felt lonely in the last four weeks
- no major problems with the house/flat in which they live.

In 2016, just under one-quarter (24.3 percent) of New Zealanders had good outcomes in all four aspects of life. However 4.6 percent had none and 13.2 percent had just one good outcome.

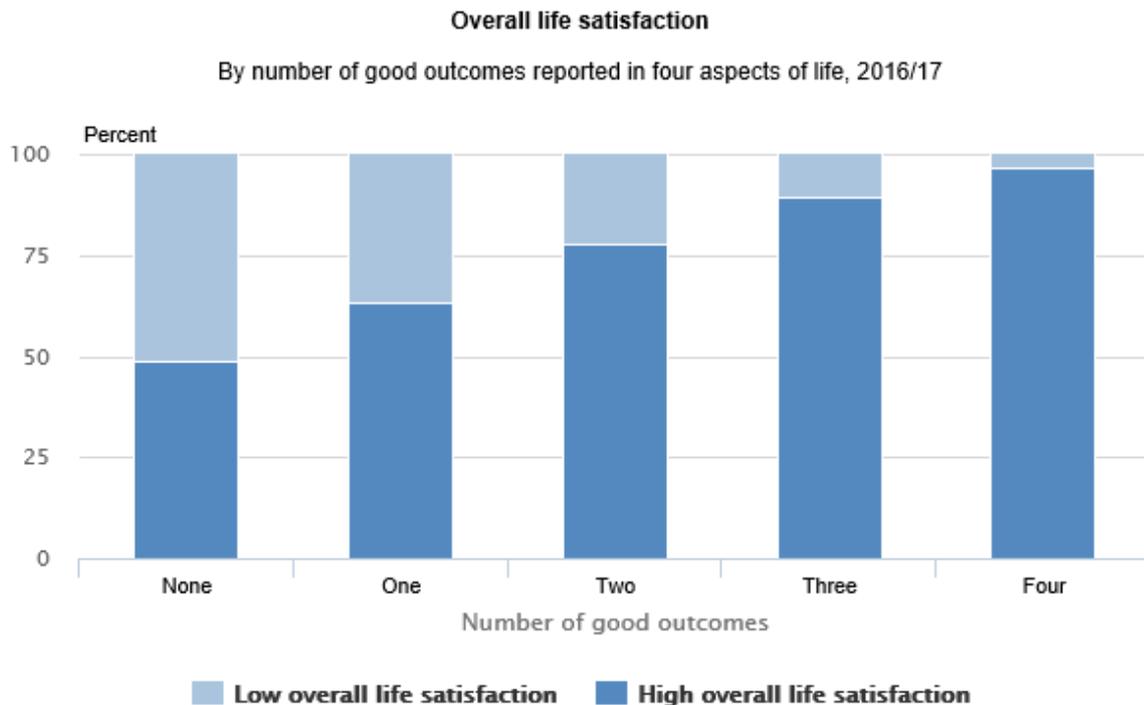


Source: Stats NZ

Note: Error bars represent variability in estimates. Four aspects of life have a strong relationship with well-being in New Zealand. A good outcome for each is when someone reports having excellent/very good health, more than enough/enough money to meet everyday needs, not felt lonely in the last four weeks, and no major problems with their house/flat.

For people with no good outcomes in these aspects of life, more than 1 in 2 (51.1 percent) rated their overall life satisfaction at 6 or below (on a 0 to 10 scale).

Self-rated well-being was notably higher for people who had good outcomes in all four aspects of life, with 96.7 percent of those people rating their overall life satisfaction highly (7 or above on a 0 to 10 scale).



Source: Stats NZ

Note: Four aspects of life have a strong relationship with well-being in New Zealand. A good outcome for each is when someone reports having excellent/very good health, more than enough/enough money to meet everyday needs, not felt lonely in the last four weeks, and no major problems with their house/flat.

## New Zealanders think their financial well-being has improved

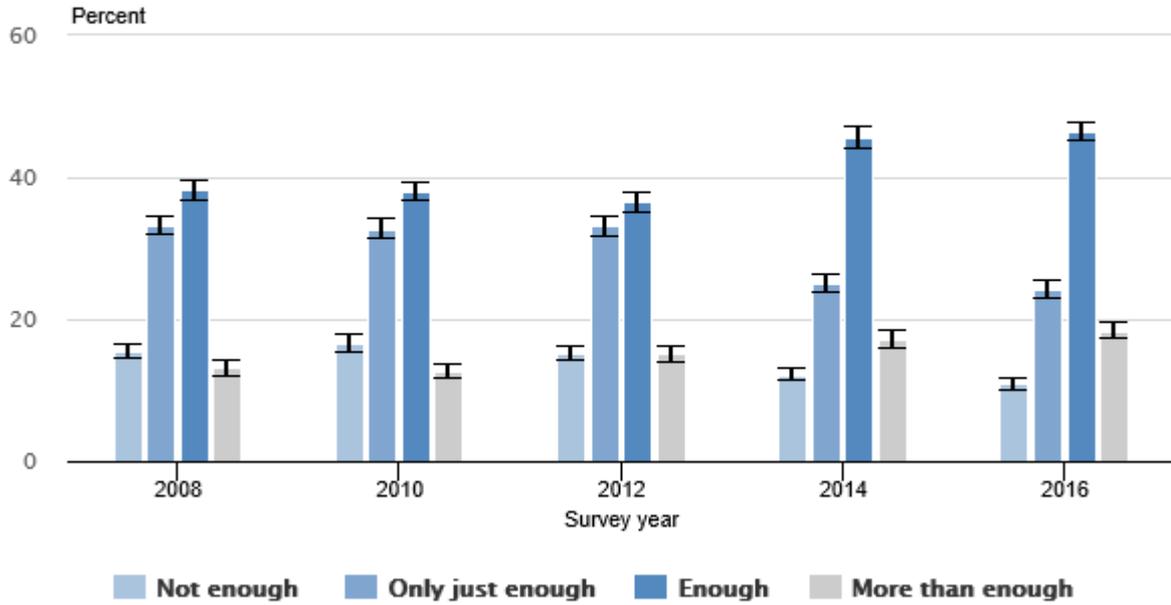
We found that in 2016 New Zealanders rated their financial well-being higher than in 2008. In 2016, 18.4 percent of people reported they had ‘more than enough’ money to meet their everyday needs for things such as accommodation, food, clothing, and other necessities. This compares with 13.1 percent in 2008.

In 2016, people were also less likely to say they did not have enough money – 10.9 percent said this in 2016, down from 15.4 percent in 2008.

The first GSS (2008/09) was carried out during a time of worsening economic conditions. The economy had begun to contract even before the global financial crisis hit New Zealand in mid-2008 (see [New Zealand Economic and Financial Overview 2010](#)). The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate rose 1.2 percentage points between March 2008 and March 2009. The New Zealand Income Survey measured a slight decrease in median household incomes between 2008 and 2009.

## Enough income to meet everyday needs

2008–16



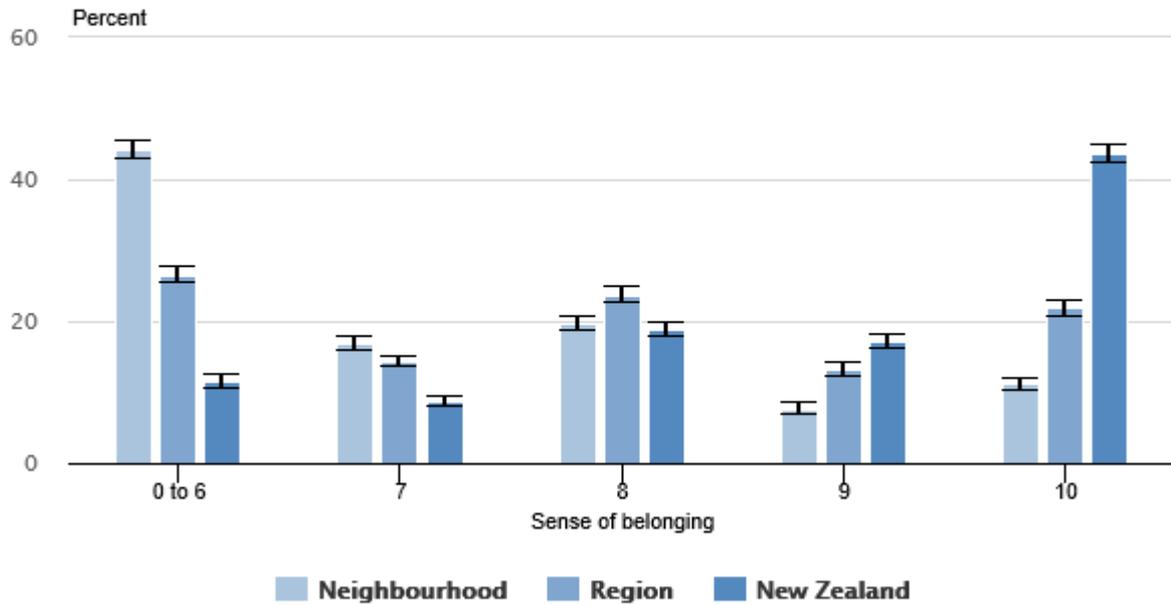
Source: Stats NZ

Note: Error bars represent variability in estimates.

## Kiwis have a strong sense of belonging to New Zealand

Around 8 out of 10 New Zealanders had a strong sense of belonging to New Zealand (they rated 8 or above on a 0 to 10 scale), according to the 2016 GSS.

**Sense of belonging to a place ratings**  
 To neighbourhood, region, and New Zealand, 2016/17



Source: Stats NZ

Note: Error bars represent variability in estimates. 0 represents no sense of belonging, while 10 represents a very strong sense of belonging.

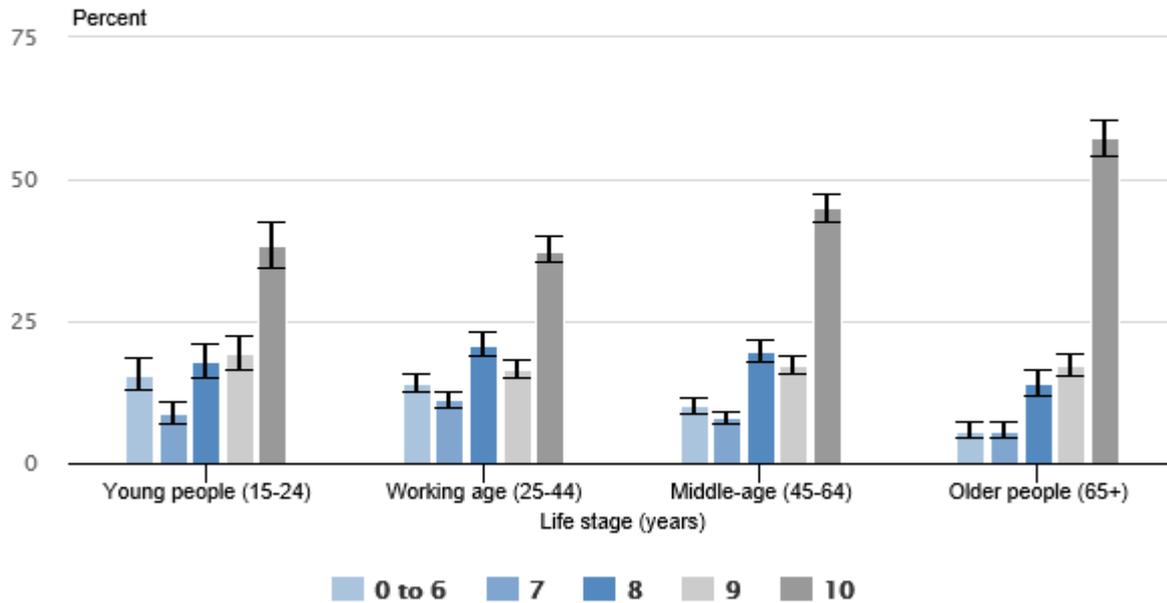
People's strongest sense of belonging to a place was greatest for belonging to New Zealand, with a mean score of 8.6 out of 10. In total, 43.6 percent of people rated their sense of belonging to New Zealand at 10 (very strong); only 11.6 percent rated it from 0 to 6.

In contrast, while people still had a strong sense of belonging to their region (mean score of 7.5), only 21.9 percent rated this as very strong (10/10).

Although there was a strong sense of belonging to New Zealand across all age groups, it was highest for older people (65+), with almost 60 percent rating it as 10/10.

## Sense of belonging to New Zealand ratings

By life stage, 2016/17



Source: Stats NZ

Note: Error bars represent variability in estimates. 0 represents no sense of belonging, while 10 represents a very strong sense of belonging.

People born in New Zealand recorded the strongest sense of belonging to New Zealand, with a mean score of 8.7. Almost half (48.7 percent) rated it as 10/10. Long-term migrants reported a slightly higher sense of belonging (34.7 percent said 10/10) than recent migrants (those who arrived in New Zealand in the last five years) – 19.7 percent said 10/10.

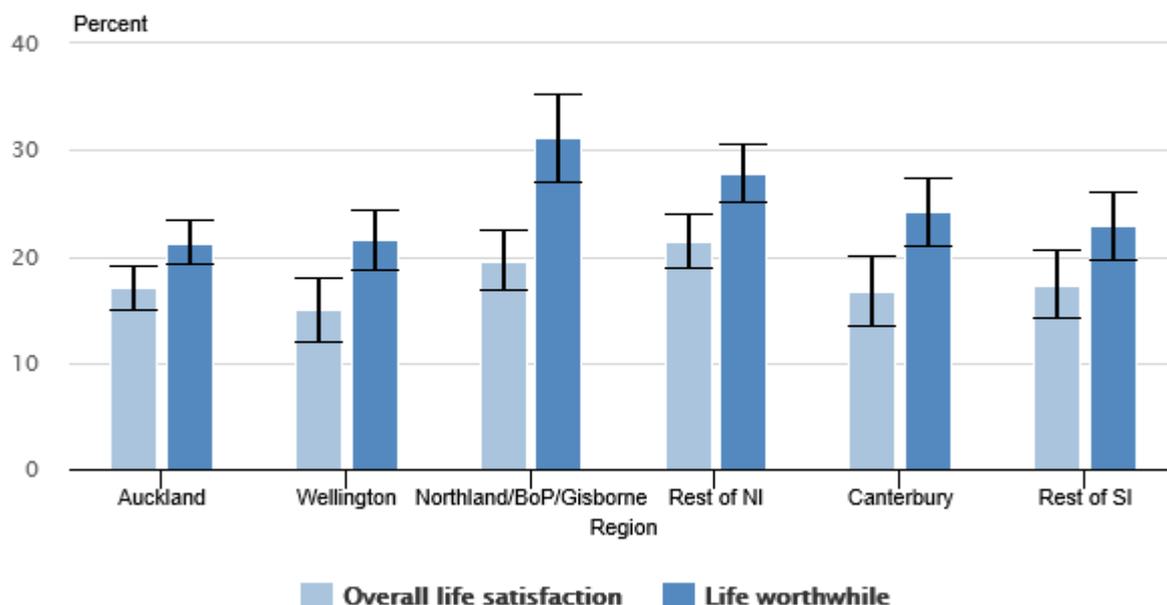
### Kiwis less likely to have strong sense of belonging to neighbourhood

Only 1 in 9 people (11.2 percent) said they had a strong sense of belonging (10/10) to their neighbourhood (mean score of 6.5). However, there was a difference nationally – 1 in 6 people (16.3 percent) in Northland/Bay of Plenty/Gisborne rated their sense of belonging to neighbourhood as very strong, compared with around 1 in 13 people in Wellington (7.7 percent) and 1 in 12 in Canterbury (8.2 percent).

People in Northland/Bay of Plenty/Gisborne had a higher rating for life being worthwhile (31.2 percent rated it 10/10) than the New Zealand average (24.2 percent). People in these regions also had a strong sense of belonging to their region (29.7 percent), almost twice that of people in Wellington (17.3 percent).

## Two measures of 10/10 self-rated well-being – ratings of 10/10

By region, 2016/17



Source: Stats NZ

Note: Error bars represent variability in estimates.

These three regions were areas with a high percentage of Māori, who had a stronger sense of belonging to New Zealand (52.0 percent rated this 10/10) than the average New Zealander (43.6 percent). At the time of the 2013 Census, almost half of all people in Gisborne (48.9 percent), one-third in Northland (32.4 percent), and over one-quarter of people in the Bay of Plenty (27.5 percent) had Māori ethnicity.

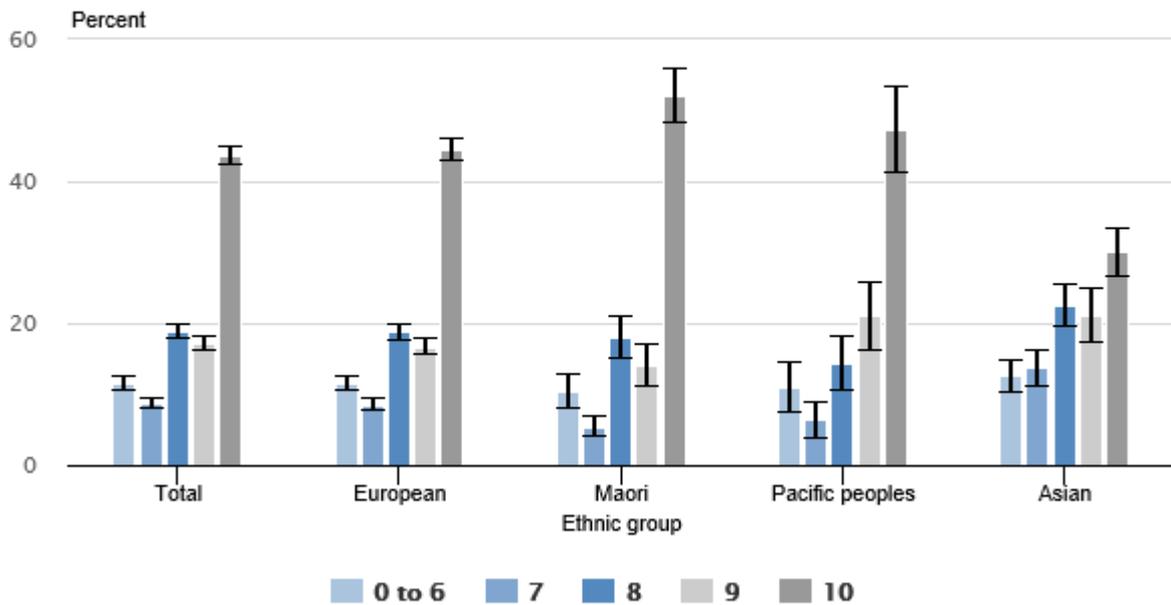
### Sense of belonging shows little variation across ethnic groups

All main ethnic groups had a mean score of over 8 out of 10 for their sense of belonging to New Zealand. However, about half of Māori (52.0 percent) and Pacific people (47.3 percent) rated their belonging as very strong, 10/10. These figures compare with 43.6 percent for the total population.

However, within the population identifying as Asian there was a difference. Just under one-third (30.1 percent) rated their sense of belonging to New Zealand as 10/10. Within this group, sense of belonging varied when we looked at the migrant status of Asian people – 43.9 percent of those born here reported a strong sense of belonging to New Zealand. This compares with 19.1 percent of recent migrants. Asian people were the least likely ethnic group to be born in New Zealand (10.7 percent).

### Sense of belonging to New Zealand ratings

By ethnic group, 2016/17



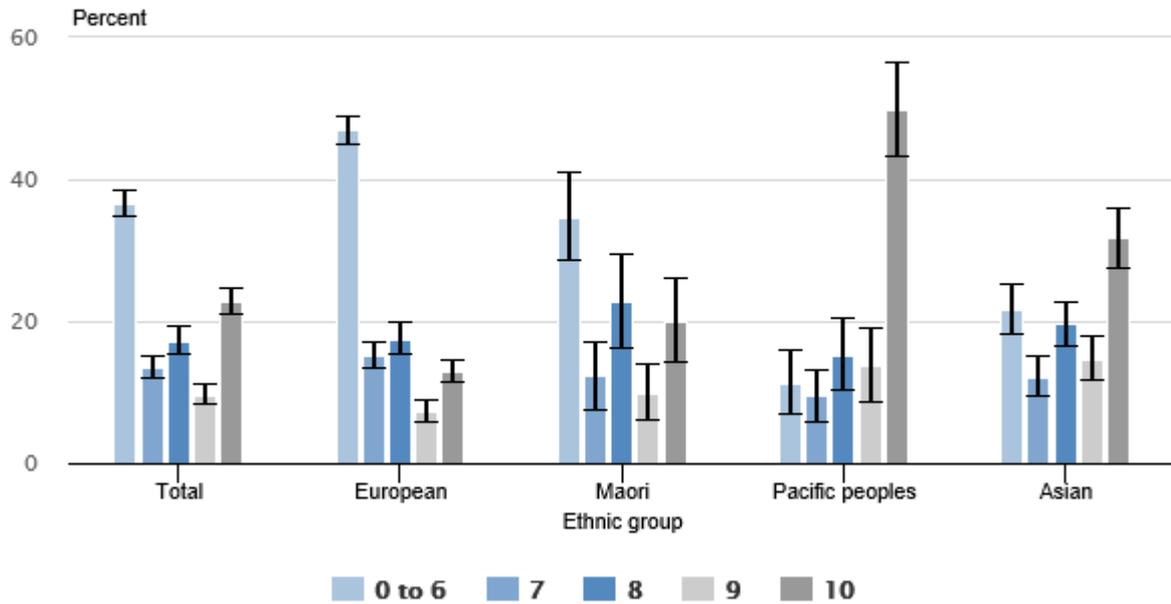
Source: Stats NZ

Note: Error bars represent variability in estimates. 0 represents no sense of belonging, while 10 represents a very strong sense of belonging. The total population also includes people who identified with 'Middle Eastern, Latin American and African' (MELAA) and 'Other' ethnic groups.

While Kiwis with Pacific ethnicity had a very strong sense of belonging to New Zealand, they were equally likely to have a strong sense of belonging to another country. Around half of people with Pacific ethnicity reported a strong sense of belonging to another country (10/10) – compared with under one-third of people with Asian ethnicity, around one-fifth of Māori, and just over 1 in 8 of people with European ethnicity.

## Sense of belonging to another country ratings

By ethnic group, 2016/17



Source: Stats NZ

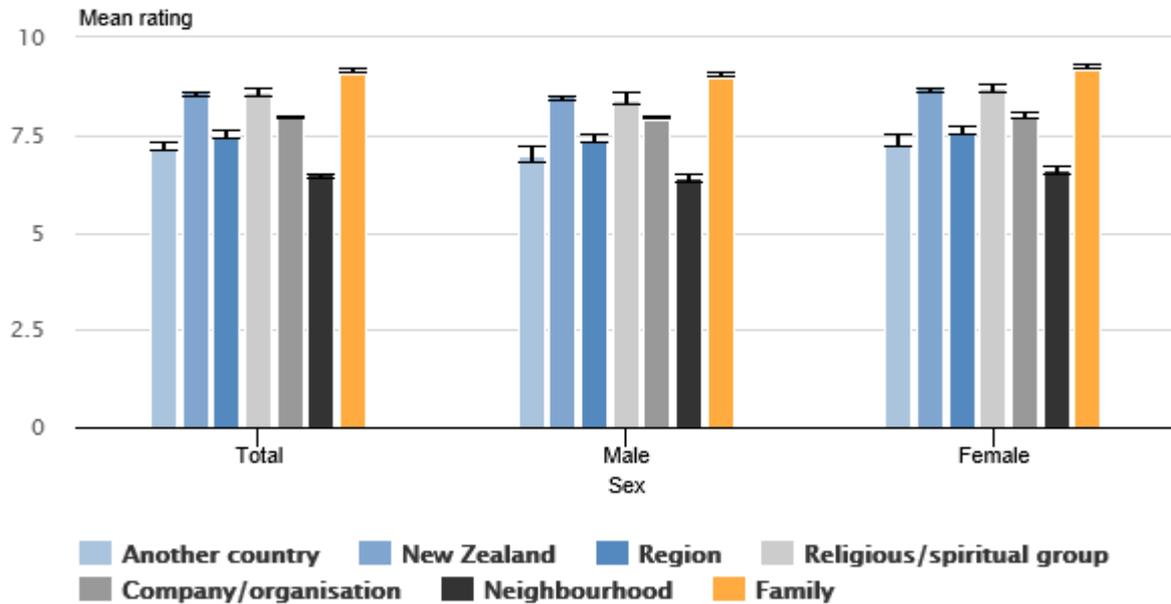
Note: Error bars represent variability in estimates. 0 represents no sense of belonging, while 10 represents a very strong sense of belonging. The total population also includes people who identified with 'Middle Eastern, Latin American and African' (MELAA) and 'Other' ethnic groups.

## Family matters to New Zealanders

New Zealanders had a very strong sense of belonging to their family – on average, people rated this 9.1 out of 10.

## Sense of belonging – mean ratings

By grouping and sex, 2016/17



Source: Stats NZ

Note: Error bars represent variability in estimates. 0 represents no sense of belonging, while 10 represents a very strong sense of belonging.

Women's average rating (9.2) indicated a slightly stronger sense of belonging to family than men's rating (9.0).

This emphasis on family also emerged when looking at contact with family and friends who provide help and support. Overall, 69.5 percent of women had face-to-face contact with family at least once a week compared with 59.5 percent of men.

Family connection is important when it comes to people's well-being. We found that people with a strong sense of belonging to family (rated it 10/10) were more likely to rate their overall life satisfaction highly (10/10) – 23.4 percent of them. In contrast, only 7.3 percent of people who rated their sense of belonging to family between 0 and 6 had a high score for life satisfaction.

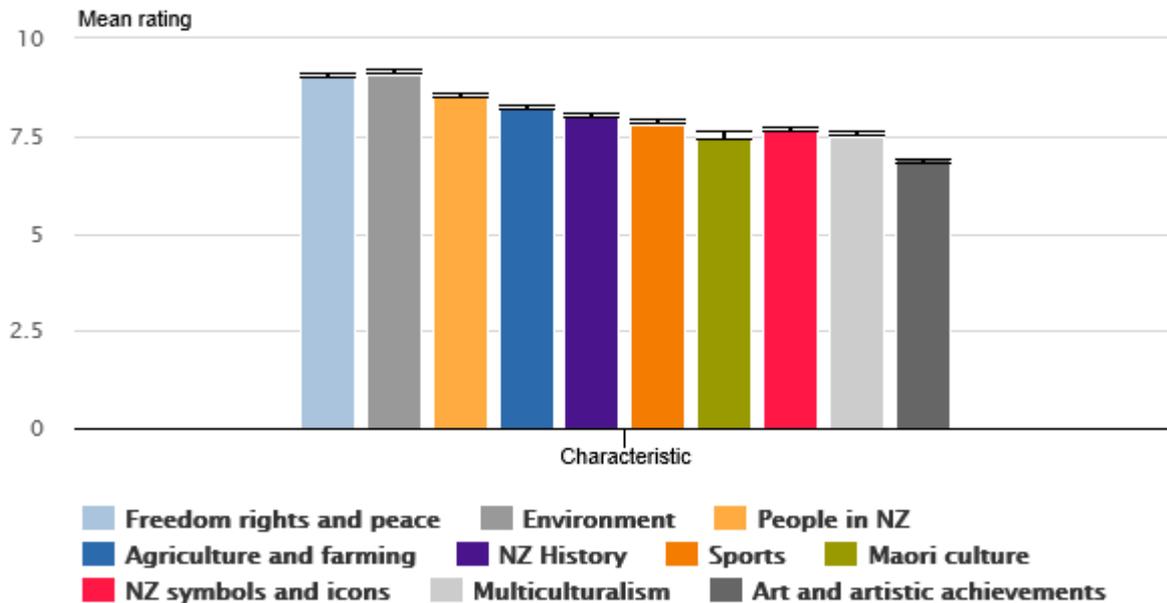
People in couple-with-children families were the family group most likely to have a strong sense of belonging to family, with a mean score of 9.4 out of 10. Perhaps unsurprisingly, those not in a family nucleus were least likely to rate this place for belonging highly (mean was 8.7).

## We indicate what we value about New Zealand

New Zealanders said that freedom, rights, and peace; and our natural scenery and environment, were the most important characteristics in defining New Zealand, rating each 9.1 out of 10.

## Important characteristics when defining New Zealand

2016/17



Source: Stats NZ

Note: Error bars represent variability in estimates. People were asked to rate each characteristic on a scale from 0-10, with 0 being not at all important and 10 being extremely important.

Art and artistic achievements were the least likely to be reported as important – on average people rated this 6.9 out of 10.

### What New Zealanders value varies by age

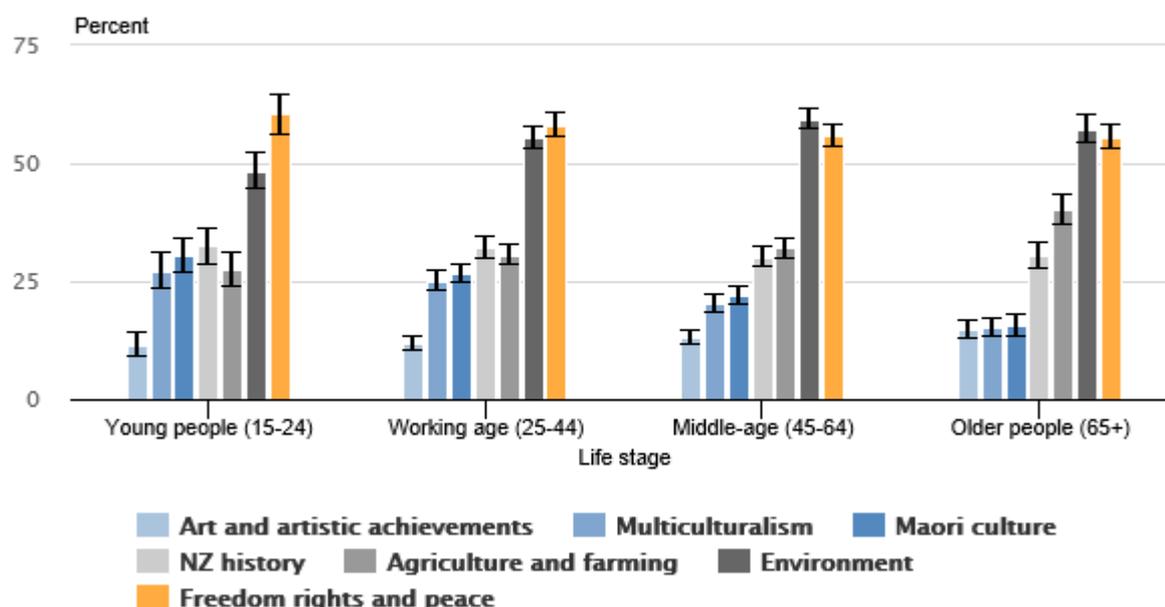
Young people (aged 15-24) said 'freedom, rights, and peace' was the most important defining characteristic of New Zealand – 60.4 percent rated this as extremely important (10/10). They were also almost twice as likely as people aged 65+ to say that multiculturalism, and Māori culture and cultural practices, were extremely important in defining New Zealand.

Middle-aged people (45–64) felt natural scenery and environment was 'most important' in defining New Zealand, while older people (65+) and those of working age (25–44) rated natural scenery and environment, and freedom, rights, and peace, fairly equally.

Older people were also more likely than those under 65 years to rate agriculture and farming as extremely important when defining New Zealand – 40 percent rated it 10/10. This compares with only 27.5 percent of young people.

## Proportions stating each theme 'extremely important' in defining New Zealand

By life stage, 2016/17



Source: Stats NZ

Note: Error bars represent variability in estimates. People were asked to rate each characteristic on a scale from 0-10, with 0 being not at all important and 10 being extremely important.

### Freedom, rights, and peace rated 'extremely important' when defining New Zealand

We found some significant differences between ethnic groups when comparing what mattered most in defining New Zealand. For all major ethnic groups, freedom, rights, and peace; and the natural environment, were rated as extremely important (10/10) when defining New Zealand.

However, Pacific people (49.4 percent) were approximately twice as likely as the general population (26.4 percent) to rate sports and sporting achievements as extremely important.

Māori were far more likely than any other ethnic group to rate Māori culture and cultural practices as extremely important. One in two people (49.1 percent) with Māori ethnicity rated this as an extremely important characteristic in defining New Zealand, compared with just one in four (23.9 percent) of the total population.

Agriculture and farming featured in the top four most-highly rated characteristics for European and Asian people.

#### Highest rated characteristics for defining New Zealand, by ethnic group

Percentages are for those who rated the characteristic 10/10

Rank	European	Māori	Pacific people	Asian
1	Environment	Environment	Environment	Environment
2	Freedom rights and peace			
3	Agriculture and farming	Environment	Environment	Environment
4	NZ history	Environment	Environment	Environment

1	Natural scenery and environment 55.7 percent	Freedom, rights, and peace 63.7 percent	Freedom, rights, and peace 69.7 percent	Freedom, rights, and peace 62 percent
2	Freedom, rights, and peace 55.2 percent	Natural scenery and environment 58.9 percent	Natural scenery and environment 53.2 percent	Natural scenery and environment 56.9 percent
3	People in New Zealand 35.4 percent	New Zealand's history 50.7 percent	Sports and sporting achievements 49.4 percent	People in New Zealand 37.2 percent
4	Agriculture and farming 30.6 percent	Māori culture and cultural practices 49.1 percent	People in New Zealand 45.8 percent	Agriculture and farming 34.4 percent

### **Download data files**

For more detailed data see the Excel tables in the 'Downloads' box.

## Related links

- [Next releases](#)
- [Past releases](#)
- [Data quality](#)
- [Related information](#)

## Next releases

We will publish further releases from the 2016 NZGSS in 2017/18. They include new information about civic and cultural participation.

**Time series: changes over NZ General Social Survey releases (short report)** This report will focus on the content changes in the survey over the five NZGSS iterations from 2008 to 2016.

**Political participation (short report)** We'll examine what New Zealanders' interests are in politics, their understanding of how the New Zealand government, local and regional councils make decisions and how many people participate in political activities.

**Volunteering and donations (short report)** This report will focus on how many people engage in and what are the most common groups they volunteer for, the time spent volunteering, and the most common reasons for people not to volunteer. We'll also look at how many people donate money and goods and the types of causes or organisations that people donate to.

**Cultural participation and associated membership (short report)** We'll look at how many people have participated and how often they participated in a selected number of cultural activities, including sports and recreation and Māori cultural activities.

*Well-being Statistics: 2018* will be released in 2019.

## Past releases

See [New Zealand General Social Survey](#) for links to past releases.

## Data quality

### General information

See [New Zealand General Social Survey – DataInfo+](#) for methodology; concepts, definitions, and classifications; data quality; and revisions.

[New Zealand General Social Survey 2016 – data collection methodology – DataInfo+](#) details the methodology used for this release.

[New Zealand General Social Survey: core concepts – DataInfo+](#) provides the definitions of terms used in this release.

## Related information

See [well-being](#) for reports and articles that use previous NZGSS information.

See Rotating Survey Supplement for more information.

Subscribe to information releases, including this one, by completing the online subscription form.

The release calendar lists all information releases by date of release.

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## Tables

See the following tables in the 'Downloads' box on this page. If you have problems viewing the files, see [opening files and PDFs](#).

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### Social identity measures

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### Next release

We will be publishing other information from *Well-being Statistics: 2016* during 2017 and 2018.

*Well-being Statistics: 2018* will be released in 2019.