
VOICES OF AOTEAROA:

Demand for Ethical Investment in New Zealand 2025



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SUMMARY

This annual survey, *Voices of Aotearoa: Demand for Ethical Investment in New Zealand 2025*, provides a snapshot of the views and preferences of the Aotearoa New Zealand public on ethical and responsible investment.

International headwinds

The survey, undertaken in February 2025, has come at a crucial time. There has been political criticism in the US and some other countries, challenging the notion that social and environmental considerations should be considered in investment decisions. These criticisms have been echoed by a few politicians in New Zealand. Some Republican-run US states have barred funds that use Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) factors from management of state funds.

Most investment managers continue to use ESG management. Evidence has shown that it is effective in managing risks and has provided financial returns that are at least as high as conventional investing. Even so, some large asset managers have weakened their commitments to reducing climate emissions, ESG integration, diversity and inclusion policies and their support for resolutions calling for companies to improve ESG standards.

Continued strong demand

Despite the criticism, this survey shows that demand from the New Zealand public for ethical and responsible investing remains strong. The public are continuing to demand action from their investment providers to meet the mounting challenges of climate change, environmental degradation and social inequality. Three quarters of survey respondents want their investments to be managed ethically and responsibly, and a large proportion of those would consider switching their investment provider if their investments do not align with their values. These core expectations are consistent with data from the past six years that this survey has been undertaken.

Good returns

In the wake of an economic downturn and cost of living pressure, investors are looking for good financial returns, but they also want their investment to align with their values. Investors do not perceive there is a trade-off between investing ethically/responsibly and earning good financial returns. Instead, the survey shows that a large proportion of respondents consider that long term returns from ethical/responsible investment will be higher.

Barriers remain

There continue to be barriers to investing ethically/responsibly, notably a lack of objective information and insufficient time to compare the options. The survey shows that few investors consider that their KiwiSaver or managed fund provides regular and useful information on ethical/responsible investments.

Concerns over greenwash

Investors are also worried about misleading claims and greenwash. These concerns are addressed to some extent by RIAA's independent certification and Mindful Money's portfolio transparency, but a cohesive framework is required. International standards around labelling for terms such as ethical, responsible, ESG, green, sustainable and impact are being introduced. New Zealand needs to develop a framework that builds investor and consumer confidence and trust, as well as attracting international investment.

Avoiding harm

The survey shows that investors want their funds to be used in ways that align with their values. As a priority, they want to avoid companies that violate human rights, damage the environment and harm animals. These company practices are different to the issues that most KiwiSaver and managed funds exclude, such as tobacco and controversial weapons such as cluster bombs, and broader in scope. The historical approach of excluding a few sectors is no longer sufficient if fund providers and financial advisers want to be responsive to their clients and the broader market.

Positive real world outcomes

There is growing demand for positive impact from investments. The numbers of survey respondents interested in investing in a dedicated fund that invests only in positive impact is rising. Most of those are seeking a return comparable to conventional investing and fewer are prepared to accept a lower return. An ideal fund would include investment in improvements to health, nature environment and climate change.

There are also strong expectations that all KiwiSaver and managed funds would contribute to better real world outcomes and communicate those outcomes to their investors. Over recent years there has been an increase in mainstream fund investments that have positive outcomes, initially in sectors such as social housing and renewable energy. These remain a small proportion of portfolios but there are opportunities for fund managers to extend those investments, especially where there are direct social and environmental benefits, such as from smaller and early stage companies in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Climate action

Around three quarters of survey respondents consider it is important for their fund managers to reduce the level of financed emissions in their portfolios, set targets for further reductions and commit to net zero emissions by 2050. This is a challenge for most investment providers. While some investment providers have started to report on their current emissions in Climate-Related Disclosure reports there are only a few with emissions reduction targets and commitments to net zero.

Financial advice

This year's survey showed there are more clients receiving financial advice, particularly through recommendations from friends and family. Clients are more likely to be women and those with higher fund balances.

A new question in the survey asked whether the clients were asked about their social and environmental preferences in the financial advice process. Almost half were asked, although most of those were categorised by respondents as 'only briefly'. The 'ethical question' should be an essential part of an adviser getting to know their client.

Future demand

It appears likely that future demand for ethical and responsible investing will continue to grow. The number of survey respondents who are considering investing in an ethical/responsible fund in the next year is larger than all those who are already invested in a fund they consider to be ethical. And a similar number want to invest within five years. Only 4% of respondents say they would not consider investing in an ethical/responsible fund. This projected growth in demand is reflected in [research](#) showing continued growth in ethical and responsible funds in New Zealand.

While survey intentions do not always translate into investor behaviour, these survey results should give encouragement to those fund providers who are looking to deepen their involvement in ethical and positive impact investing and the financial advisers who are starting to provide informed financial advice about ethical investment options.

INSIGHTS

The demand for ethical, responsible and positive impact investing is stronger among women, younger age groups (particularly Millennials) and those with a university education. However, some issues in the survey have a different level of support across gender, age, and investment balances. These insights provide valuable information for fund providers seeking to understand customer preferences and trends, and to financial advisers in meeting client expectations. The results will also be of interest to policymakers and New Zealanders who want to better understand how investment can play a role in meeting crucial social, environmental and climate challenges ahead. Further information on the survey results and the underlying issues is available from Mindful Money and RIAA.

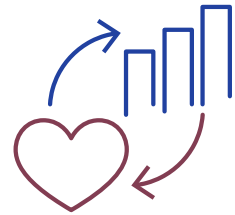
KEY FINDINGS



The survey reveals **strong public expectations** that KiwiSaver and other managed fund providers will invest their funds ethically and responsibly (75%). Growth prospects are strong. **Almost half (49%) of respondents will consider changing to ethical funds** within the next five years.



A large proportion of respondents expect ethical and responsible investments to **perform better in the long term (45%)**, a similar proportion are unsure (44%) and only a small proportion disagree (11%).



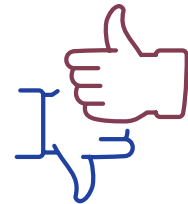
The demand for funds that have **positive social and environmental impacts** is growing. **60%** of Kiwis would be willing to invest in dedicated positive impact funds if the return is similar to traditional investments and **16%** would invest even if the returns were lower. Only **9%** would not be willing to invest.



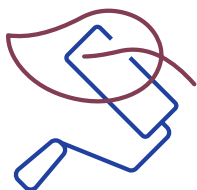
Two thirds of survey respondents expect KiwiSaver and other managed investments to **make a positive impact in the world** and a similar number expect their investment provider to inform them about the real world outcomes.



The public want their funds to act on climate change. **Three quarters (74%)** consider that it is important that their funds commit to achieving net zero emissions by 2050. However, they are less sure about the relationship between their **own investment decisions and climate change**.



New Zealanders want to avoid investing in companies that do not align with their values. Their priorities are to avoid harmful investment practices, such as companies that violate human rights or harm the environment. Harmful products like tobacco are a lower priority.



Half of New Zealanders have **concerns about greenwashing**. Two thirds (**66%**) want to know which companies are in their portfolio and **54%** are more likely to choose ethical and responsible funds that have **independent certification**.



There has been an increase in those who have used a **financial adviser (54%)** and more New Zealanders are choosing a fund on the advice of their **financial planner (10%)**.



Expectations for responsible investment management are higher for **women**, younger New Zealanders (**Gen Z and Millennials**), those with **higher levels of education** and those with **higher levels of investment**.

CONSUMER EXPECTATIONS

KEY FINDINGS

- Three quarters of the New Zealand public continues to expect their KiwiSaver or other managed investment fund provider to invest their money ethically and responsibly. A large proportion will consider switching their investment provider if they find out they were investing in companies that do not align with their values. Most survey respondents do not see a trade-off between ethical/responsible investing and high returns. To the contrary, there is a far larger proportion who consider that ethical investing is likely to perform better over the long term than those who disagree.
- The expectations for ethical and responsible investment are higher for women and Gen Z respondents. Younger investors and women are also more likely to consider switching their funds if company activities do not align with their values. Baby Boomers were more reluctant to consider switching.

Strong consumer support for ethical/responsible investment

The expectations for ethical and responsible investment remain strong for the New Zealand public, despite political opposition in the US and from those who consider it 'anti-woke'. Three quarters (75%) want their KiwiSaver or investment fund to be invested ethically and responsibly, a similar proportion to previous years. Only 5% of people surveyed disagree.

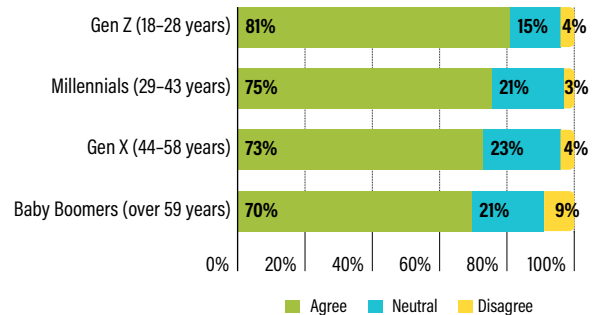
The proportion of women who agree is 81% (versus 67% for men) and 81% for Gen Z. [Surveys by the FMA](#) also show that ethical investments are strongly supported by Māori and Pasifika peoples.

FIGURE 1 Expectations for money to be invested responsibly and ethically by gender



QUESTION: To what extent do you agree with the following statement? I expect my KiwiSaver and other investments to be invested responsibly and ethically.

FIGURE 2 Expectations for money to be invested responsibly or ethically, by generation



QUESTION: To what extent do you agree with the following statement? I expect my KiwiSaver and other investments to be invested responsibly and ethically.

NOTE: Total does not add up to 100% due to rounding.

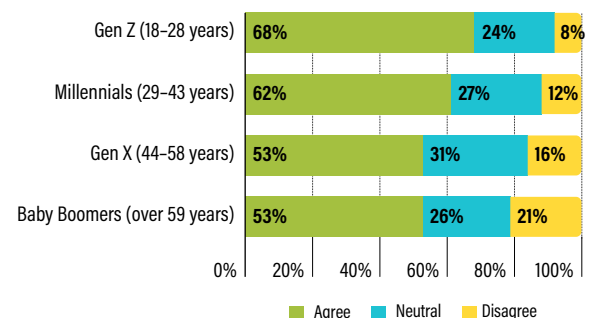
Willingness to switch

There has been a small increase in the proportion of investors who agree with the statement: “I would consider moving my KiwiSaver and other investments to another provider if I found out they were investing in companies that engage in activities not consistent with my values”.

Women, Gen Z and Millennials are more likely to agree, as well as tertiary educated respondents and those with KiwiSaver balances of NZ\$10–40,000.

Conversely, Baby Boomers were more reluctant to switch their investments. This may reflect concerns over the perceived risk of switching during a period of financial uncertainty.

FIGURE 3 Proportion of New Zealanders willing to move their money if their fund engages in activities inconsistent with their values, by generation



QUESTION: To what extent do you agree with the following statement? I would consider moving my KiwiSaver and other investments to another provider if I found out they were investing in companies that engage in activities not consistent with my values.

NOTE: Total does not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Awareness and understanding of ethical and responsible investing

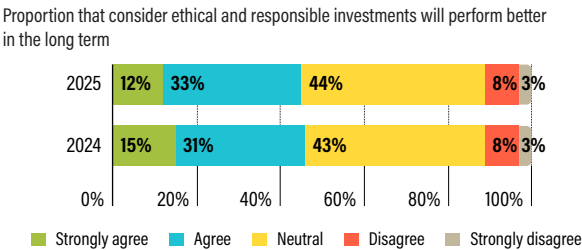
Over the past two years there has been a significant increase in the proportion of New Zealanders who are familiar with ethical and responsible investing. While awareness is high, particularly amongst men, there is still some confusion over its meaning. Over one third of respondents (34%) are familiar with ethical or responsible investing but are not sure about what it means.

The lack of understanding may reflect a lack of outreach and education by fund providers and government on ethical and responsible investment. Less than one third (32%) of those surveyed receive information about ethical/responsible investment regularly, and only 39% consider the ethical/responsible information on their fund provider’s website to be useful.

This may also reflect the different terminology used and the lack of regulation over categories. There are now labelling regulations in the EU, UK and other countries specifying the criteria for using different descriptions of ethical investing. However, there are no labelling rules in New Zealand specifying what is meant by terms such as ethical, responsible, ESG, green, sustainable and impact investing. Greater clarity from lawmakers around definitions would make it easier for the investing public to understand the differences.

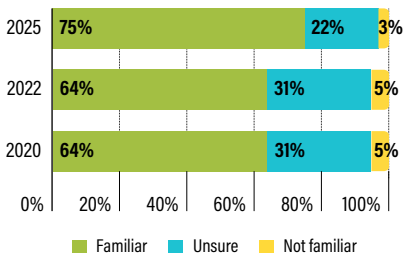
A growing number of individual investors see a positive relationship between ethical/responsible investment and high financial returns. This is reflected in the practices of most fund managers, it is now considered good investment practice to integrate the risks of climate change, the environment, social issues and governance into investment decisions, and to take advantage of opportunities. This understanding is an important contributor to the growth in ethical and responsible investment, and likely to become more important over time, as the risks from climate change are projected to increase.

FIGURE 5 Ethical investments are expected to perform better in the long term



QUESTION: To what extent do you agree that ethical and responsible KiwiSaver and other investments perform better in the long term?

FIGURE 4 Awareness of ethical and responsible investing



QUESTION: Are you familiar with ethical investing (also referred to as responsible or sustainable investing)?

INSIGHTS

Over the seven years of these surveys, the differences in expectations for ethical and responsible investment have widened across key demographics. Women, younger New Zealanders and those with tertiary qualifications are more supportive. The supportive attitudes of men and older New Zealanders have not increased to the same extent.

Perception of high returns

45% of respondents consider that ethical and responsible investments are likely to perform better over the long term. A similar proportion are unsure (44%) and only 11% disagree. Positive views are more strongly held by younger New Zealanders (Generation Z and Millennials), those with higher levels of education and those with higher levels of investment.

CHOOSING A FUND

KEY FINDINGS

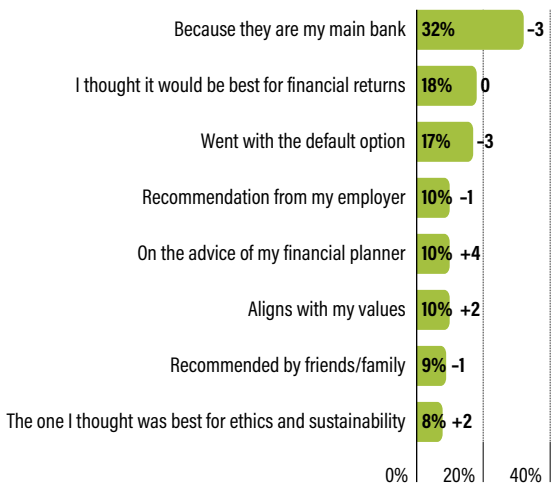
- There has been a significant fall over the years in people choosing a KiwiSaver scheme based on who they bank with. This has declined from 40% in 2018 to 32% in 2025. Fewer KiwiSaver investors are going into default funds or employer schemes, and more are choosing on the basis of sustainability and ethics.

Reasons for choosing a KiwiSaver fund

The most frequently cited reason by New Zealanders for their choice of KiwiSaver fund is still “because they are my main bank” (32%), which may reflect the convenience of dealing with a single financial provider and seeing their financial information in one report, as well as their familiarity and trust with their bank. This is particularly the choice for the younger generations, and those with a low level of KiwiSaver balances. There were increases in the numbers of people choosing a KiwiSaver fund because they aligned with their values or were best for sustainability.

KiwiSaver providers, banks and other financial services providers are the main sources of financial information, along with personal research. Reliance on friends and family, advice from a financial adviser and government websites are also important sources of information.

FIGURE 6 Choosing a KiwiSaver provider



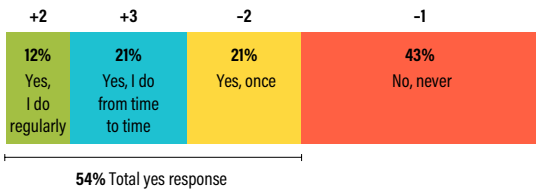
QUESTION: Why did you choose your current KiwiSaver provider?

NOTE: Numbers on the right denote % change from 2024.

Rise in ethical demand from financial advisers

This year, the survey showed more Kiwis choosing a fund on the advice of their financial adviser. When asked, more than half of Kiwis said they have received financial advice (54%, up 3%), although only 12% do so regularly. Clients are more likely to be women and those with higher fund balances.

FIGURE 7 Financial advice from a professional



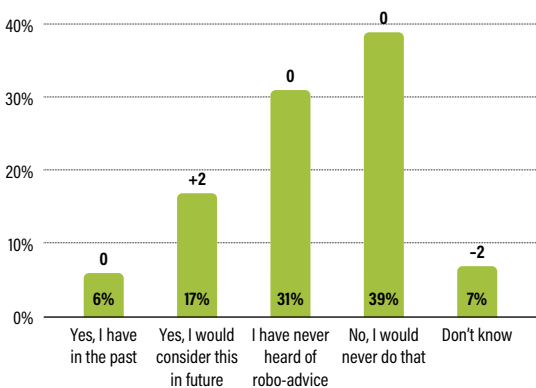
QUESTION: Have you ever obtained financial advice from a professional such as financial adviser?

NOTE: Numbers on the above denote % change from 2024.

The reasons for seeking financial advice were cited as needing specialist advice from a professional (34%, down 5%), taking up a mortgage (23%), putting money aside for children or grandchildren (14%), in response to a life-changing event (14%) and for ethical/sustainable options (12%). There was an increase in the number of people doing so on the recommendation of friends or family (22%, up 3%).

Relatively few New Zealanders have obtained financial advice from a robo-advice service (6%) but there is an increase in the numbers of people who would consider it in future (17%). Of the others, 31% have not heard of robo-advice and 39% would not seek robo-advice. Those interested are more heavily weighted towards younger respondents.

FIGURE 8 Advice from a robo-advice service



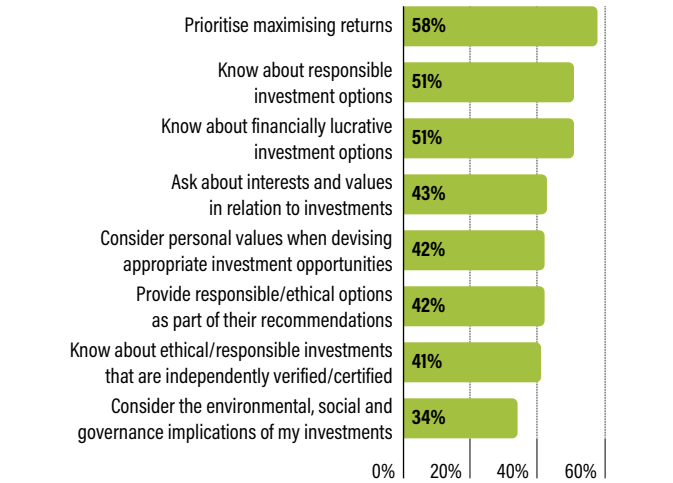
QUESTION: Have you ever obtained financial advice from a robo-advice service or would you consider it in the future?

NOTE: Numbers on the right denote % change from 2024.

From the survey results, the most important expectation of financial advisers is to maximise financial returns (58%). The emphasis on returns may reflect financial pressures from cost of living increase and greater uncertainty over the future. Financial advisers are also expected to be knowledgeable about ethical and responsible investment options (51%) as well as lucrative financial options (51%). There are also expectations that financial advisers would understand other aspects of client values in relation to ethical investment options.

The survey highlights that clients have expectations around knowledge of ethical/responsible investing as well as financial returns. There are still relatively few New Zealand financial advisers with expertise in ethical and responsible investment, so there are challenges for the sector as a whole to ensure that advice processes include questions on ethical/responsible investing and analysis of the options available.

FIGURE 9 What New Zealanders expect of financial advisers

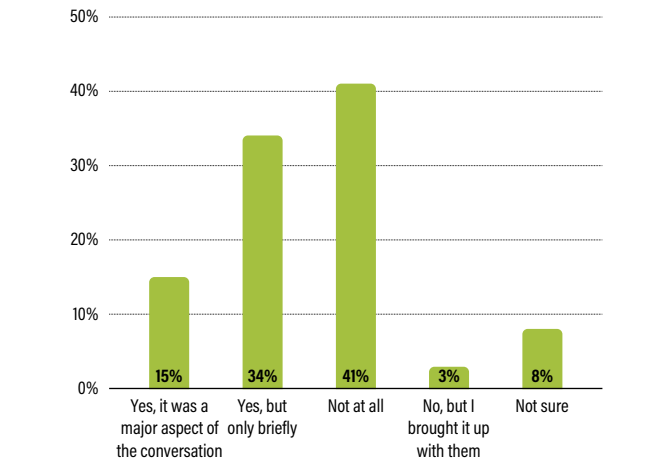


QUESTION: When working with a financial adviser, which of the following, if any, would you expect of them?
If you don't work with a financial adviser, please answer hypothetically.

The survey asked a new question this year, restricted to those respondents who have previously used a financial adviser: "When discussing your financial objectives with your financial adviser, did they ask you about any environmental or social preferences?" Almost half (49%) asked their clients about their ethical preferences, but the survey also shows that most of those (34%) were asked only briefly. A further 4% brought the issues up with the financial adviser.

The client's preferences and values should be a key part of a financial adviser getting to know their client, and a foundation for being able to provide the most appropriate financial advice.

FIGURE 10 Knowing the client's ethical preferences



QUESTION: When discussing your investment objectives with your financial adviser, did they ask you about any ethical, environmental or social preferences?
NOTE: Total does not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Barriers remain

When asked about the main barriers to ethical and responsible investing, there has been an increase in those saying, "there is not enough independent information available" (45%, up 3%) and a decrease in the second main factor, "I don't have enough time to look at all the options and compare them" (42%, down 3%). These two factors have been consistently the highest over the past 7 years.

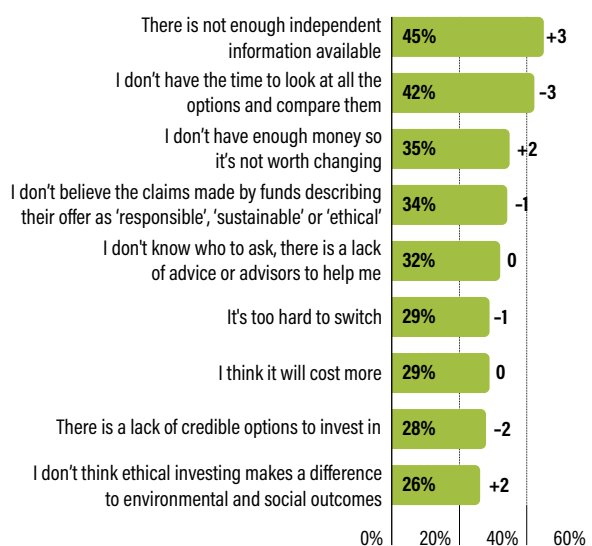
It is evident amongst some of the other responses that further education is required. For example, the perception that it is hard to switch accounts (particularly KiwiSaver funds), is incorrect. Regulations governing KiwiSaver and investment schemes make switching funds or providers relatively easy. In addition, the perception that ethical and responsible investments will cost more is not generally the case, particularly when returns after fees are considered. This indicates an ongoing lack of financial literacy and a specific lack of public understanding of how KiwiSaver schemes work.

The barrier of "I don't consider there are credible options to invest in" is relatively low and has been falling. It is one of the largest of the barriers cited in Australian market surveys.

Those over 58 years old and those without a KiwiSaver account are more likely to cite a lack of independent information, while women and those under 44 years old are more likely to cite a lack of time to look at the options and compare them (42%, -3%). Women are also more likely to say there is a lack of advice. Perhaps surprisingly, those who say it is not worth switching because their balances are too low are more likely to be 45 years old and above, rather than younger New Zealanders.

FIGURE 11 Perceived barriers to responsible investment

% Top 3 ranked barriers to switching to a responsible/ethical KiwiSaver or investment funds



QUESTION: What prevents you from switching your existing investment to a responsible and ethical KiwiSaver fund/investment scheme option? (Or if you have already switched, what were the barriers?)

NOTE: Numbers on the right denote % change from 2024.

INSIGHTS

Younger and tertiary educated Kiwis, and those with high fund balances are more likely to have chosen their KiwiSaver fund on the basis of sustainability or alignment with their values. The proportion citing these reasons for choosing a KiwiSaver fund has risen.

Younger Kiwis are more likely to experience barriers due to a lack of time to compare options, whereas older generations cite a lack of information as a main barrier. Women are more likely to cite a lack of advice or financial advisers as a barrier.

AVOIDING HARMFUL INVESTMENTS

KEY FINDINGS

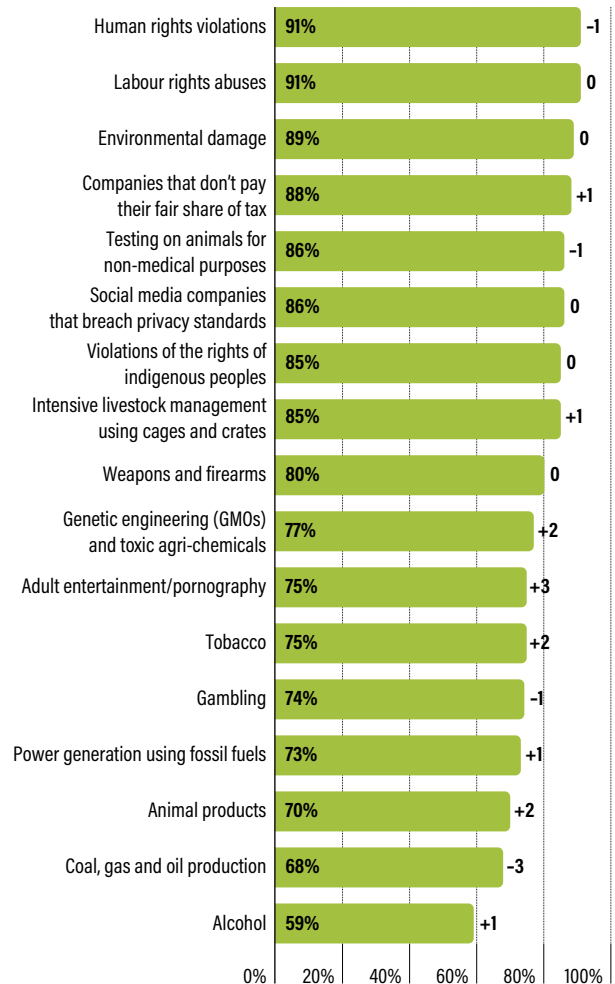
- The values of investors are often considered to be highly individualised, but this survey echoes the past seven years in showing a high degree of commonality in the issues that New Zealanders want to avoid in their investments. The data has been remarkably stable over time, with few changes to the rankings. New Zealanders continue to have stronger preferences in avoiding issues that are inconsistent with their values than Australian investors.
- As with previous years, there is a stronger preference for avoiding harmful corporate behaviours, such as human rights violations and environmental damage, than products and services (such as tobacco and gambling). The traditional focus for ethical investing on the so-called 'sin stocks' is now less of a priority than concerns over human rights, environment and animal cruelty.

Issues of concern are shared, stable and strong

Violations of human rights (91%), labour rights abuses (91%) and environmental damage (89%) continue to be the top three issues that investors want to avoid in their investments. The ranking of the top nine issues is unchanged from last year, with little change in the proportion of respondents citing those factors. The numbers of respondents wanting to avoid these issues is significantly higher than for [Australian investors](#).

The top eight concerns relate to the impacts of companies on human rights, the environment and animals. Over time, there has been a steady increase in concerns over these issues that relate to the real world impacts of these companies, with less emphasis on products and services. This is an important finding for New Zealand fund managers. Many use limited exclusions that cover traditional issues of social harm, such as tobacco and gambling, which are easy to identify and exclude. Harmful company practices related to human rights, environment and animal cruelty that are of higher concern to investors, often require more sophisticated strategies to identify and influence.

FIGURE 12 Sectors, activities, or practices that consumers want their investments to avoid



QUESTION: How important is it to you that your KiwiSaver fund or investment scheme avoids investing in the following sectors or activities?

NOTE: Numbers on the right denote % change from 2024.



INSIGHTS

Women are more concerned to avoid these issues than men in all categories, especially weapons, adult entertainment/pornography, genetic engineering/toxic chemicals and fossil fuels.

Those under 29 (Gen Z) are particularly concerned about fossil fuel investments, while those over 59 (Baby Boomers) are most concerned about tobacco, adult entertainment/pornography and animal cruelty.

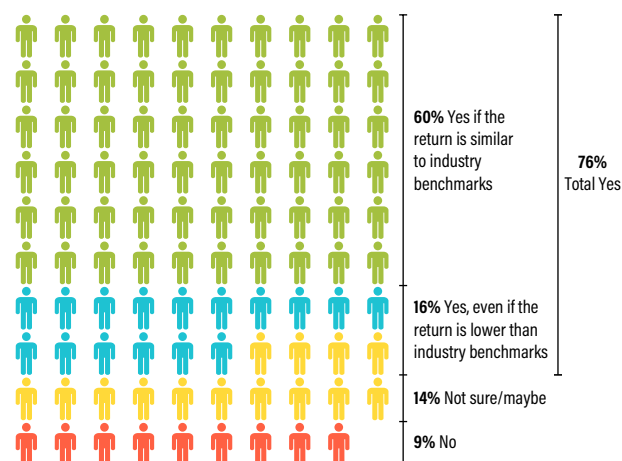
Those with a University degree express stronger concerns than the average in all categories other than genetic engineering/toxic chemicals and animal cruelty.

INVESTING FOR POSITIVE IMPACT

KEY FINDINGS

- There has been an increase in demand for investment that earns comparable financial returns but also has a positive impact on people and the planet. Investors are interested in a range of issues, across nature, environment and social issues.
- The demand for positive impact is not only for dedicated impact funds, but also across all funds. Investors are looking for their KiwiSaver and managed funds to deliver real world benefits and report on those.
- The survey shows strong support for fund providers to take action to reduce their emissions and set net zero targets, but some doubt as to whether their own actions will be influential. Further education and outreach are needed to help Kiwis understand how their financial choices can make a difference to emissions.

FIGURE 13 Willingness to invest in a fund that aims to create positive impact



QUESTION: Would you invest in a KiwiSaver scheme/other investment scheme that invested only in companies that create positive benefits for society and the environment?

NOTE: Total does not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Demand for positive impact investment is rising

In recent years, there has been a significant growth in demand for investment that aims to contribute to positive impact. This year's survey shows that 76% of respondents would invest in a KiwiSaver or other investment scheme that invested only in companies that create positive benefits for society and the environment. 60% were seeking a comparable return to other investments and 16% would accept a lower return.

A far larger proportion (27%) of those under 29 years old (Gen Z) would be willing to accept a return lower than the industry benchmarks. Those with a university degree are more likely to invest in both a scheme with a lower return and in a scheme with a comparable return. There is strong willingness to invest, if returns are comparable, from those aged 29–43 years old (Gen X) and women.

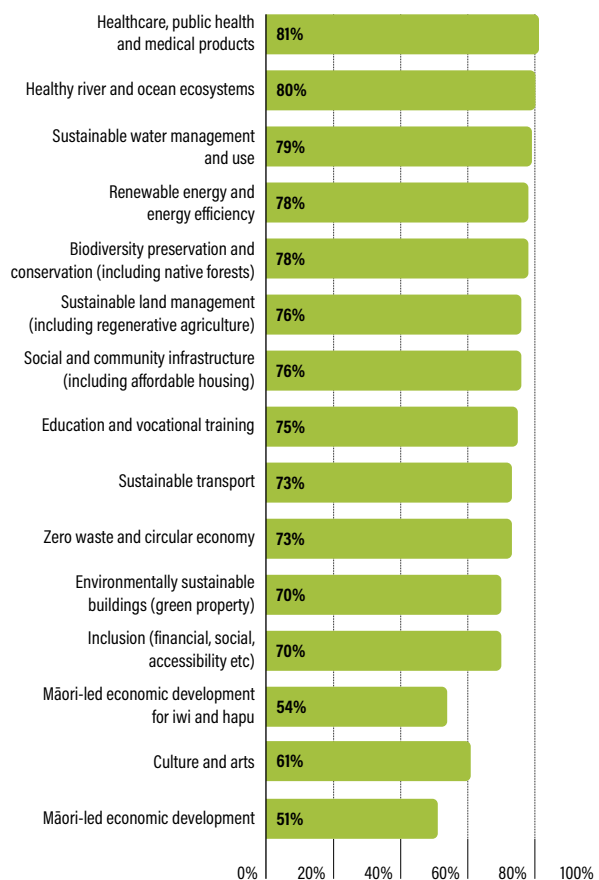
The increased consumer demand is generating a response from investment providers – there are increasing numbers of KiwiSaver and other managed funds that now intentionally investing in companies that deliver positive social and environmental outcomes, as well as mainstream funds investing a portion of their portfolios in companies that deliver positive outcomes.

Increased interest in social and environmental issues

The issues that people would ideally like to invest in has remained largely consistent over the past five years. The highest ranked issues are the same as last year – health care, healthy rivers and oceans, sustainable water management, renewable energy and energy efficiency, and biodiversity.

There were strong preferences for these issues from women, those with tertiary education and those with KiwiSaver balance of \$20–40,000.

FIGURE 14 Environmental and social issues that the majority of New Zealanders consider important when investing



QUESTION: When thinking about your ideal investment fund, which of the following social and environmental issues do you want the fund to support?

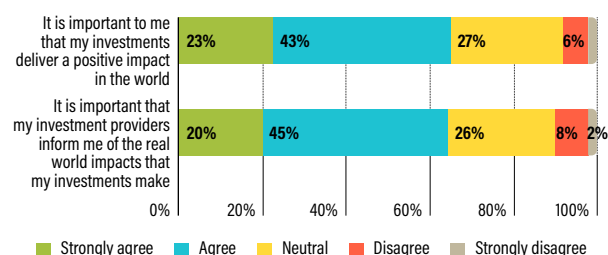
Expectations that investment will make a positive difference

Most respondents expect all their investments, not just dedicated positive impact funds, to deliver positive outcomes in the world (66%). Only 7% disagree. They also expect their investment providers to inform them of the real world outcomes of their investments (64%). This is a challenge for most investment providers who rarely report this information.

The investment sector is now responding to this consumer demand. There are a growing number of mainstream New Zealand funds with investments in positive issues such as social housing, renewable energy or zero waste. Investors are now seeing opportunities to contribute to positive outcomes as part of a KiwiSaver and other managed investment funds.

Many of the New Zealand companies generating positive impact are unlisted SMEs or early stage ventures. There has been interest from fund managers to increase their investments in private capital, not only for positive outcomes, but also for diversification and the potential for higher returns.

FIGURE 15 Importance that my ethical/responsible investments make a positive difference in the world



QUESTION: To what extent do you agree or disagree that it is important to me that my ethical/responsible KiwiSaver/other investments deliver a positive impact in the world.

NOTE: Total does not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Understanding the links between investment and climate change

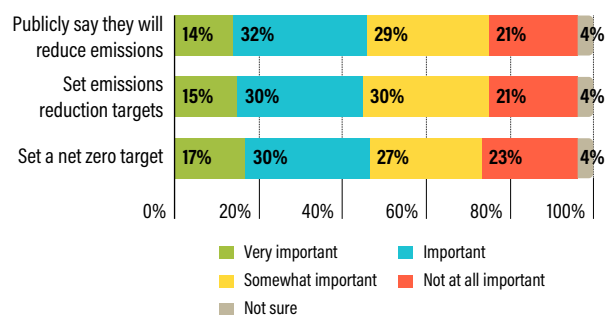
Most respondents expect that their investments can influence societal health and wellbeing (52%), but a lower proportion (40%) agree that their investment decisions can influence climate change. There is a large group of 36% are neutral or unsure, and 9% disagree.

It is of concern during a period of rising climate impacts that the proportion of Kiwis who understand the links between their investments and climate change is lower than in 2022. This suggests that more outreach and education is required to help New Zealanders understand the ways that their KiwiSaver or investment funds can promote lower greenhouse gas emissions, such as through the companies they invest in, their influence over those companies, and their investments in clean energy. Their choices can make a difference.

There is a dramatic difference between the generations in their responses. 52% of Gen Z agree that their decisions can affect climate change but that is true for only 32% for the Baby Boomer generation. Similarly, 44% of women agree but only 36% of men.

However, when they are asked about specific measures, the public is more attuned to climate issues. 75% consider it is at least somewhat important that their fund publicly commits to reduce greenhouse gas emissions; 75% say they should have specific emissions reduction targets; and 74% consider it important that they achieve net zero before 2025. The importance is higher for those who are Gen Z or Millennials, and for those with a university degree.

FIGURE 16 Investing for the climate transition



QUESTION: How important is it for the fund you invest in to ...

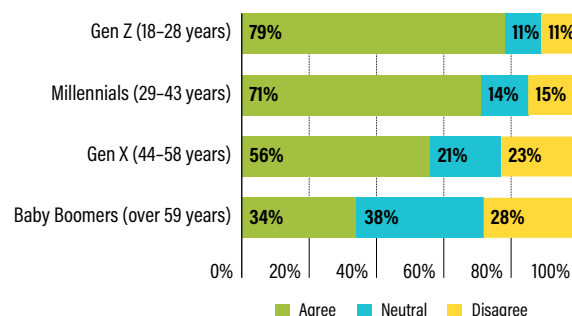
NOTE: Total does not add up to 100% due to rounding.

More savings

Amongst the many public sector and NGO programmes to encourage younger Kiwis and others to save and invest more, there has been little focus on what the money is used for. This survey finds that most New Zealanders would save more if they understood that their investment was creating positive outcomes in the world. 58% say they would save more, a further 20% are unsure and 22% would not save more.

This finding is strongly supported by those with lower levels of KiwiSaver and total investment balances, Gen Z and Millennials. They are important target groups to encourage more savings and investment, and this finding could be useful for those promoting financial literacy. The motivation from their investments doing good has the potential to help engage young people who may have low levels of financial literacy and little interest in the traditional arguments for savings, but a strong commitment to issues such as climate change, the environment and social justice.

FIGURE 17 The proportion of each generation that would be motivated to save or invest more if they knew their investments made a positive difference in the world



QUESTION: If you knew your savings and investments made a positive difference in the world, would you be motivated to try to save and invest more money?

NOTE: Total does not add up to 100% due to rounding.

INSIGHTS

Across each of the categories related to positive outcomes from investment, there is far stronger interest, support and understanding from younger people (Gen Z and Millennials), women and those with a university degree.

GREENWASHING AND AUTHENTICITY

KEY FINDINGS

- Concerns over greenwashing continue to grow. Transparency and certification are important, as is action by government on misleading claims. However, in the longer term credible, comparable information is needed. Companies and investment providers need to be required to disclose information about social and environmental outcomes as part of their regulated reporting, as will be the case for climate change disclosure by larger entities. New Zealand needs to develop the frameworks to ensure it is attractive destination for international capital.

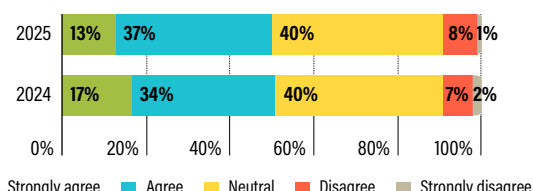
Concerns over greenwashing

Half of those surveyed say they are concerned about greenwashing (50%). Claims about being ethical, responsible, ESG, green, sustainable or positive impact are common in the marketing materials of fund providers. However, the claims are not always supported by clear evidence and consumers are confused over the lack of clear standards and definitions for those terms. Greenwashing is a particular concern for those with a university degree.

This is a persistent issue, not only for New Zealand investors, but for many other countries. Regulators internationally have taken action over specific claims. In New Zealand, the Financial Markets Authority (FMA) has issued guidance to fund providers, including on the need for evidence to support ethical claims. In spite of this, findings from the [2024 RIAA Benchmark report](#) highlight that fund managers are still unclear about the regulators' expectations.

A more comprehensive approach is needed to build the trust of investors. Labelling regimes for sustainability-related products exist in other economies such as the EU and UK, and the Australian Government is currently developing its own. Similar labelling rules in New Zealand will help consumers by clarifying how a particular fund invests their money and setting a standard for when certain terms can be used, as well as helping attract investment into New Zealand funds and companies.

FIGURE 18 Concern that ethical/responsible investors are 'greenwashing'



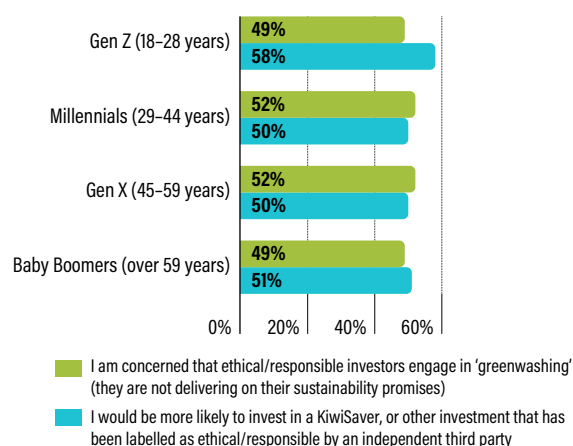
NOTE: Total does not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Importance of certification

Annual surveys show the continued influence of certification as a source of authenticity for responsible investment, particularly in the light of concerns over greenwashing. A large number of New Zealanders would be more likely to invest if a fund was labelled by an independent certifier. This is particularly the case for women and those with a university education.

The credibility that is provided by independent certification is particularly important in the absence of regulatory requirements for labelling and reporting on social and environmental issues. RIAA's Responsible Investment Certification Program is the leading initiative in Australasia for distinguishing quality responsible, ethical and impact investments.

FIGURE 19 Concerns over greenwashing and the importance of independent, third-party certification and labelling among different generations



QUESTION: To what extent do you agree with the following statement?

Transparency is crucial

Transparency is an antidote to greenwashing and it provides important ground-truthing for investors to make informed decisions. Two thirds of New Zealanders want to know what companies are in their investment fund (66%). The response is similar across most demographic categories, but higher amongst those with tertiary qualifications.

Despite the public demand, very few funds currently provide complete and accessible information. Typically, the disclosure is only partial or is in the form of a list of company names without any context, so that it is difficult for investors to understand the impacts of their investments.

Mindful Money provides portfolio information on KiwiSaver and investment funds to Kiwis for free, categorised by the issues that most people want to avoid. Those priority issues are drawn from the results of these annual surveys. This helps users to understand the ethical implications of their investments.

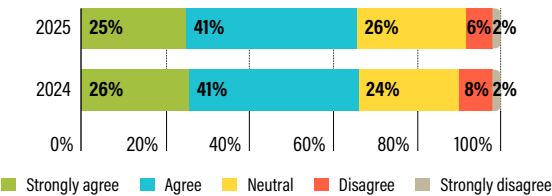
Communications from investment providers

A relatively low level of respondents report that they receive regular information on ethical/responsible investment from their investment provider (30%, +3%). The younger generation are more likely to find the information to be useful (52% for Gen Z compared to 39% overall).

INSIGHTS

Concerns over greenwashing are held consistently across demographic groups. More men than women have concerns.

FIGURE 20 It is important to me to know which companies my fund is invested in



QUESTION: To what extent do you agree with the following statement?
NOTE: Total does not add up to 100% due to rounding.

TRENDS IN DEMAND

Rising Demand

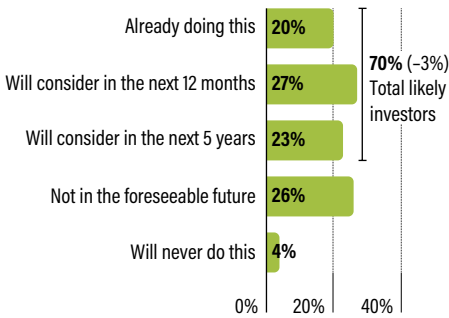
Future demand for ethical and responsible investing remains strong. Almost half of all investors (49%) are considering investing in an ethical fund, with most of those considering investment in the next year. Only 4% of respondents say they would not consider investing in an ethical/responsible fund.

Even though the intentions of respondents do not always translate into action to the degree suggested in the survey, the potential scale of investment is large. Over the next year alone, more people say they will look for an ethical or responsible fund than all those who have invested ethically so far. This projected growth in demand is reflected in research showing continued growth in ethical and responsible funds in New Zealand.

INSIGHTS

The highest level of those seeking an ethical/responsible fund is Gen Z (67%), Millennials (63%), and those with a university degree (54%). Baby Boomers are more likely to say they already have an ethical or responsible fund and are less likely to seek an ethical fund if they do not already have one.

FIGURE 21 Timeframe for considering investing in an ethical/responsible fund



QUESTION: Would you consider investing in responsible and ethical KiwiSaver funds or other investments?

NOTE: Number in the bracket denote % change from 2024.

ABOUT THIS REPORT

Voices of Aotearoa: Demand for Ethical Investment in New Zealand 2024 is the seventh research report published by Mindful Money and the Responsible Investment Association Australasia (RIAA). The research tracks consumer awareness, practices and attitudes towards ethical, responsible and impact investing in New Zealand.

1,000 New Zealanders aged 18+ completed an online survey via Dynata's New Zealand panel from 6–17 February 2025. The survey questions were developed by RIAA and Mindful Money, largely based on previous surveys, and the survey instrument was designed and analysed by Dynata, in accordance with the ISO 20252 standards.

The survey took 10 minutes on average. The sample has been weighted to be nationally representative of the NZ population aged 18+ by age, gender and region. Significant differences noted throughout this report denote results that are different to the average. These are statistically significant at the 95% confidence level.

The sample was representative of the general population based on gender, age, and region (Figure 22). The majority of those surveyed live in suburban areas (62%), while 22% live in urban and 10% live in rural settings. Respondents were divided into four generational categories based on age: Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials, and Generation Z. Data was weighted to the latest population estimates by Dynata.

The age categories used in this report are as follows:

- Baby Boomer Generation: born 1946–1964 – current age range over 59
- Generation X: born 1965–1979 – current age range 45–59
- Millennials: born 1980–1994 – current age range 29–44
- Generation Z – born 1995–2012 – current age range under 29

FIGURE 22 Age bracket (generation) of respondents in the sample

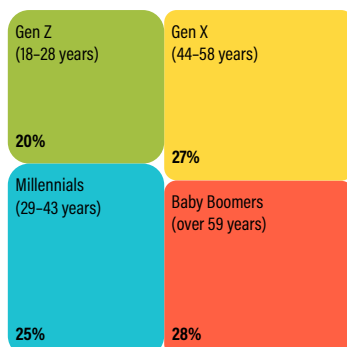
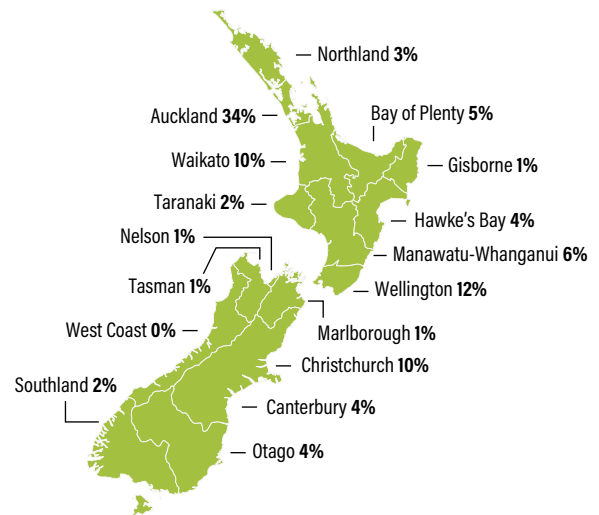
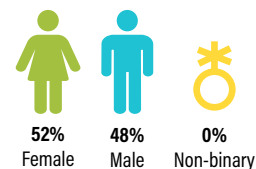


FIGURE 23 Residence of respondents in the sample



NOTE: Total does not add up to 100% due to rounding.

FIGURE 24 Proportion of female, male and non-binary respondents in the sample



NOTE: Due to the low number of non-binary respondents, gender-based analysis in this report only includes female/male comparison.

About Mindful Money

Mindful Money is a charity that aims to make money a force for good. We achieve change by empowering consumers, engaging investment providers and advocating for change. These actions are playing a role in shifting New Zealand KiwiSaver and managed funds investment towards a more positive impact, as shown in our annual impact report.

A starting point is transparency. Consumers want to know where their money goes. The Mindful Money website Fund Checker analyses portfolio holdings for all New Zealand KiwiSaver and retail investment funds, showing company holdings across both direct and indirect investments. These are related to the key public concerns revealed in these annual surveys (such as weapons or violations of human rights) so users can understand their fund investments in each issue. Then, when users are seeking to find a fund that aligns with their values, the Fund Finder tool highlights the qualified Mindful Funds that most closely match their criteria.

Mindful Money's public awareness and education programme includes social media, videos, Ethical Investment Guides, online seminars and workplace seminars. We work closely with allied organisations and networks that share our aims for action on climate change, social equity and environmental regeneration.

Mindful Money is committed to working with all fund providers on the responsible investment journey, through initiatives such as the Net Zero investor coalition and forums on issues such as positive impact investing. We hold an annual Ethical and Impact Investment Conference and Awards, celebrating the leading fund managers, financial advisers and media. And we undertake leading research on investment impacts on nature, carbon transition and human rights.

About the Responsible Investment Association Australasia (RIAA)

The Responsible Investment Association Australasia (RIAA) champions responsible investing and a sustainable financial system in Australia and New Zealand. RIAA is dedicated to ensuring capital is aligned with achieving a healthy society, environment and economy. With more than 550 members representing NZ\$83 trillion in assets under management, RIAA is the largest and most active network of people and organisations engaged in responsible, ethical and impact investing across Australia and New Zealand. RIAA's membership includes super funds, KiwiSaver providers, fund managers, banks, consultants, researchers, brokers, impact investors, property managers, trusts, foundations, faith-based groups, financial advisers and individuals.

RIAA achieves its mission through:

- Providing a strong voice for responsible investors in the region, including influencing policy and regulation to support long-term responsible investment and sustainable capital markets
- Delivering tools for investors and consumers to better understand and navigate towards responsible investment products and advice, including running the world's first and longest running fund Certification Program, and the online consumer tool Responsible Returns
- Supporting continuous improvement in responsible investment practice among members and the broader industry through education, benchmarking and promotion of best practice and innovation
- Acting as a hub for our members, the broader industry and stakeholders to build capacity, knowledge and collective impact
- Being a trusted source of information about responsible investment.

Dynata

Dynata is one of the world's leading providers of first-party data. With a global reach that encompasses 60+ million respondents, and an extensive library of individual profile attributes collected through surveys, Dynata sets the benchmark for precise, trustworthy data.

The company has built innovative solutions around this first-party data in order to bring the voice of the customer across the marketing spectrum. Dynata serves nearly clients across globally and is uniquely placed through its scale and expertise to deliver on your data needs.

At the forefront of Dynata's offering is data quality. Their recruitment methodologies ensure data assets are comprised of real people who provide reliable, accurate survey responses. Dynata adheres to the highest standards of sampling science across every aspect of every project.

For more information on Dynata, please visit www.dynata.com



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