



Christmas - spending plans, religious significance and shifting summer holidays to February

The issue:

Every year around this time we conduct a poll with New Zealanders on topics relating to Christmas and the summer holidays. The poll questions ask about respondents' spending plans for Christmas presents and the Christmas holidays, whether they are in favour of shifting New Zealand's traditional summer holiday break from December to February when the weather is more settled, and whether Christmas has any personal religious significance for them.

This year's poll was conducted with a nationally representative sample of 272 adult New Zealanders in December 2016. The results are compared with the results of the same poll from previous years.

The poll questions:

The following four questions were asked:

1. The next few questions are about Christmas and the summer holidays. New Zealand's retail sales have been up and down for most of this year. Do you plan to *spend less on Christmas presents this year than you did last year, spend about the same, or spend more?*
2. And what about the Christmas holidays? Are you planning to *spend less these holidays than you did last year, spend about the same, or spend more?*
3. Do you believe New Zealand should move its summer holiday period from December to February when the weather is warmer?
4. Does the Christmas period have any religious significance for you?



The **key results** to each question are as follows.

1. **Most people plan to spend the same on Christmas presents:**

- ◆ Fifty-seven percent of respondents plan to spend **about the same** amount on Christmas presents this year as they did last year. Another 30 percent plan to spend less, while a further 10 percent plan to spend more.
- ◆ The current results are comparable to the previous year's results.

2. **Most people also plan to spend the same on their Christmas holidays:**

- ◆ In regards to holiday spending, one-half (52 percent) of respondents plan to spend **about the same** amount on their Christmas holidays this year as they did last year. Another 29 percent plan to spend less, while a further 14 percent plan to spend more.
- ◆ As with spending on Christmas presents, the current results are comparable to the previous year's results.

3. **Over one-third of people are in favour of shifting the summer holidays to February:**

- ◆ Over one-third (36 percent) of respondents said they were in favour of moving the summer holiday period from December to February. Another 56 percent were not in favour, while a further eight percent were undecided.
- ◆ This year's results are not significantly different to the results for 2015.

4. **Christmas has religious significance for one-in-two people.**

- ◆ Less than one-half (47 percent) of respondents stated that the Christmas period **does** have religious significance for them, while 52 percent said that it **does not**.
- ◆ This year's results are not significantly different to the results for 2015.

Comment:

"The results of this poll indicate people remain generally cautious about their spend over Christmas", said Research New Zealand Director, Emanuel Kalafatelis.



The Research New Zealand poll of 272 people aged 18 and over was conducted by telephone from 07 December to 13 December 2016. The maximum margin of error for the sample as a whole is +/-6.5% (at the 95% confidence level). The data has been weighted to ensure it is an accurate representation of the general population of New Zealand by gender and age. The poll was not taken on behalf of any organisation, but is part of Research New Zealand's monthly survey of attitudes and opinions.

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TABULATIONS

Table 1: Spending on Christmas presents

The next few questions are about Christmas and the summer holidays. New Zealand's retail sales have been up and down for most of this year. Do you plan to ...?

	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010
Base =	272	500	500	501	500	NM	500
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Spend less on Christmas presents this year than you did last year	30	30	33	33	37	-	35
Spend about the same	57	62	53	53	49	-	54
Or spend more	10	7	11	10	12	-	8
Don't know	3	1	1	1	1	-	2
Refused	0	0	1	2	0	-	0
Total	100	100	100	100	100	-	100

The base numbers shown are unweighted counts.
Total may not sum to 100% due to rounding.
NM=Not measured.

Table 2: Spending on Christmas holidays

And what about the Christmas holidays? Are you planning to ...?

	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010
Base =	272	500	500	501	500	NM	500
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Spend less these holidays than you did last year	29	28	31	26	29	-	31
About the same	52	53	40	48	45	-	52
Or spend more	14	12	14	16	18	-	14
Not applicable/Working through	4	4	13	8	0	-	0
Don't know	1	2	1	1	6	-	3
Refused	1	0	0	0	2	-	0
Total	100	100	100	100	100	-	100

The base numbers shown are unweighted counts.
Total may not sum to 100% due to rounding.
NM=Not measured.

Table 3: Shifting New Zealand's summer holidays to February

Do you believe New Zealand should move its summer holiday period from December to February when the weather is warmer?

	2016	2015	2014	2010
Base =	272	500	500	500
	%	%	%	%
Yes	36	38	48	42
No	56	53	45	54
Don't know	8	9	6	4
Refused	0	1	0	0
Total	100	100	100	100

The base numbers shown are unweighted counts.
Total may not sum to 100% due to rounding.



Table 4: Religious significance of Christmas

Does the Christmas period have any religious significance for you?

	2016	2015	2014	2010
Base =	272	500	500	500
	%	%	%	%
Yes	47	41	43	43
No	52	57	57	56
Don't know	1	1	-	-
Total	100	100	100	100

The base numbers shown are unweighted counts.
Total may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

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