



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 a few topics related to Christmas and the summer holidays. The questions ask about respondents' spending plans for Christmas presents and the Christmas holidays, whether Christmas has any personal religious significance, and whether they are in favour of shifting New Zealand's traditional summer holiday break from December to February when the weather is more settled.

The results are then compared to the results of the polls from the previous year/s.

The poll was conducted with a nationally representative sample of 500 adult New Zealanders in December 2015.

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. Does the Christmas period have any religious significance for you?
4. Do you believe New Zealand should move its summer holiday period from December to February when the weather is warmer?

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

Spending on Christmas presents:

- ◆ Sixty-two percent of respondents plan to spend **about the same** amount on Christmas presents this year as they did last year, while 30 percent plan to spend less and just seven percent plan to spend more.
- ◆ Compared to the three previous years, significantly **more** respondents this year plan to spend **about the same** as the year before (62 percent, compared with 53 percent in



2014 and 2013, and 49 percent in 2012). The proportion of respondents who plan to spend more or less on Christmas presents has been becoming smaller over time.

Spending on Christmas holidays:

- ◆ Just over one-half (53 percent) of respondents plan to spend **about the same** amount on their Christmas holidays this year as they did last year, while 28 percent plan to spend less and 12 percent plan to spend more.
- ◆ As with spending on Christmas presents, respondents this year were more likely to say they plan to spend about the same amount (53 percent this year, compared with 40 percent in 2014).

Religious significance of Christmas:

- ◆ Fifty-seven percent of respondents said the Christmas period **does not** have religious significance for them, while 41 percent said it **does**.
- ◆ This year's results are not significantly different to the results from 2014 and 2010.

Shifting the summer holidays to February:

- ◆ Thirty-eight percent of respondents said they were in favour of moving the summer holiday period from December to February, while one-half (53 percent) were not in favour and nine percent were undecided.
- ◆ Compared with last year, significantly less respondents this year were in favour of moving the summer holidays to February (38 percent in 2015, compared with 48 percent in 2014).

Comment:

“Despite recent reports of high spending, the results of this poll indicate we remain generally cautious and will not to let our Christmas spirit get away from us”, said Research New Zealand Director, Emanuel Kalafatelis.



The Research New Zealand poll of 500 people aged 18 and over was conducted by telephone from 25 November to 08 December 2015. The maximum margin of error for the sample as a whole is +/-5.1% (at the 95% confidence level). The data has been weighted by gender and ethnicity to ensure it is an accurate representation of the general population of New Zealand. The poll was not taken on behalf of any organisation, but is part of Research New Zealand's monthly survey of attitudes and opinions.

Contact: Emanuel Kalafatelis
Director
Research New Zealand Limited
P O Box 10-617
Wellington 6143
Ph. 04-462-6401 (DDI); 027-500-4401 (M)



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 ...?

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

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

Does the Christmas period have any religious significance for you?

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

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



Table 4: 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?

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

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

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