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## New Zealand's housing shortage

### The issue:

The shortage of affordable housing in New Zealand, particularly in Auckland, is becoming an increasingly concerning social issue, with the situation expected to get worse over the next few years. Last month, Building and Housing Minister Nick Smith said the government was prepared to elevate New Zealand's housing issues to a 'matter of national significance'.

In a recent poll, we asked New Zealanders to tell us who they felt should be mainly responsible for providing affordable housing and what factors were most to blame for the current situation.

The poll was conducted with a nationally representative sample of 500 adult New Zealanders in May and June 2016.

### The poll questions:

The following questions were asked:

**Q1. As winter approaches, there are an increasing number of stories in the media about people living in cars, garages, and even shipping containers. Some people say it's because there is a shortage of low cost housing and rental accommodation. In your personal opinion, who should mainly be responsible for providing this type of housing? Should it be...**

*The following options were read out:*

1. The Government
2. Local councils.
3. Private developers and landlords
4. Community based organisations (e.g. churches, charities such as Salvation Army)
5. Another type of organisation (Specify)
6. Or no one, people should fend for themselves

**Q2. This problem is particularly bad in Auckland. Some people say it is because the housing market has driven up the price of rental accommodation. Others say it is because not enough land is becoming available to build low cost housing. In your personal opinion, which one of these factors is most to blame, or is there another factor most to blame?**

*The following options were read out:*

1. The housing market
2. The availability of land
3. Or something else (Specify)



### Important note:

Although respondents were asked to identify who should be 'mainly' responsible, many identified more than one authority or organisation. Similarly, when asked what is 'mostly' to blame, many respondents identified more than one factor. Therefore, all options mentioned have been recorded and the results have been analysed and reported on this basis.

### Key results:

The key results are as follows:

- ◆ In terms of who should be mainly responsible for providing affordable housing, most frequently respondents stated it should be **central government** (75 percent) and/or **local government/councils** (45 percent).
  - ◆ In contrast, one-quarter of respondents (24 percent) felt that community-based organisations such as the Salvation Army should be mainly responsible, while 19 percent said responsibility should lie with private landlords and developers.
  - ◆ Fourteen percent of respondents believed that no particular organisation should be responsible and people should fend for themselves.

**Table 1: Main responsibility for affordable housing**

	Base =	Total 500 %
The Government		75
Local councils		45
Community based organisations (e.g. churches, charities such as Salvation Army)		24
Private developers and landlords		19
Another type of organisation		3
Or no one, people should fend for themselves		14
Other		8
Don't know		2

Total will not sum to 100% due to multiple answers.



- ◆ When asked which factors were most to blame for the shortage of affordable housing in Auckland, 60 percent of respondents felt the **housing market driving up the cost of renting** was the main cause, and a further 30 percent attributed it to the availability of land.
  - ◆ Smaller numbers of respondents cited specific factors such as immigration (eight percent), Auckland's population being too big (eight percent), foreign investment (seven percent) and/or property investors and speculators (five percent).

**Table 2: Main reason for housing shortage**

	Base =	Total 500 %
The housing market		60
The availability of land		30
Immigration		8
Auckland population (too big)		8
Foreign investment		7
Property investors/speculators		5
Other		22
Don't know		6

Total will not sum to 100% due to multiple answers.

### Demographic differences:

We also analysed the results to these questions by a number of demographic variables including: gender, age, income, ethnicity, region and urban/rural dwellers. The results are as follows:

- ◆ **Females** compared with males held stronger views:
  - ◆ They were significantly more likely than males to state that **the Government** should be mainly responsible for providing affordable housing (80 percent, compared with 69 percent of males) and, in terms of the problem in Auckland, that the **housing market driving up the cost of renting** was mostly to blame (66 percent, compared with 53 percent of males).
- ◆ There were significant differences by **age**. For example:
  - ◆ Respondents aged **35 to 54 years** were more likely than older respondents to say **the Government** should be mainly responsible for providing affordable housing (80 percent, compared with 68 percent of those aged 55 years and over).
  - ◆ **Older** respondents were more likely to say **people should fend for themselves** (19 percent, compared with 10 percent of those aged 35 to 54 years for example).
  - ◆ In addition, **younger respondents** were more likely to attribute the shortage of affordable housing in Auckland to the **housing market driving up the cost of renting** (73 percent of those aged 18-34 years and 63 percent of those aged 35 to 54 years, compared with 48 percent of those aged 55 years and over).



- ◆ There were significant differences by **region**. For example:
  - ◆ Respondents living in the **lower/central North Island** were more likely than those in the upper North Island to say **the Government** should be mostly responsible for providing affordable housing (82 percent, compared with 69 percent) and less likely to believe that people should fend for themselves (7 percent, compared with 19 percent).
  - ◆ Respondents living in the **upper North Island** were more likely to blame the shortage of affordable housing in Auckland to the **housing market driving up the cost of renting** (66 percent, compared with 51 percent of those in the lower/central North Island).
  - ◆ Respondents in the **lower/central North Island** were more likely to blame the **availability of land** (43 percent, compared with 24 percent of those in the upper North Island and 27 percent of those in the South Island).
- ◆ Respondents living in a **large town or city** were more likely than respondents living in rural areas or small towns to say that **local councils** should be mainly responsible for providing affordable housing (50 percent, compared with 38 percent) and less likely to say people should fend for themselves (11 percent, compared with 19 percent).
- ◆ There are no significant differences when the results are examined by income or ethnicity.

**Comment:**

“These results clearly point to the fact that people believe both central and local government have a responsibility to provide affordable housing”, said Research New Zealand Director, Emanuel Kalafatelis.

*The Research New Zealand poll of 500 people aged 18 and over was conducted by telephone from 24 May to 11 June 2016. 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 3: Main responsibility for affordable housing (by gender)**

	Base =	Total 500 %	Male 250 %	Female 250 %
The Government		75	69	80
Local councils		45	43	47
Community based organisations (e.g. churches, charities such as Salvation Army)		24	22	26
Private developers and landlords		19	19	19
Another type of organisation		3	5	1
Or no one, people should fend for themselves		14	17	11
Other		8	11	6
Don't know		2	2	2

The base numbers shown are unweighted counts.  
Total may exceed 100% because of multiple responses.

**Table 4: Main responsibility for affordable housing (by age)**

	Base =	Total 500 %	18-34 years 56 %	35-54 years 163 %	55 years and over 281 %
The Government		75	76	80	68
Local councils		45	44	47	44
Community based organisations (e.g. churches, charities such as Salvation Army)		24	25	26	22
Private developers and landlords		19	20	21	17
Another type of organisation		3	2	3	4
Or no one, people should fend for themselves		14	13	10	19
Other		8	13	9	5
Don't know		2	0	3	2

The base numbers shown are unweighted counts.  
Total may exceed 100% because of multiple responses.



**Table 5: Main responsibility for affordable housing (by income)**

	Total	Under \$40,000	\$40,000-\$80,000	\$80,000+	Don't know/Refused
Base =	500	144	131	178	47
	%	%	%	%	%
The Government	75	78	73	73	80
Local councils	45	39	49	47	43
Community based organisations (e.g. churches, charities such as Salvation Army)	24	21	24	25	32
Private developers and landlords	19	24	17	18	14
Another type of organisation	3	2	1	6	1
Or no one, people should fend for themselves	14	15	13	15	5
Other	8	5	10	10	7
Don't know	2	3	0	2	4

The base numbers shown are unweighted counts.  
Total may exceed 100% because of multiple responses.

**Table 6: Main responsibility for affordable housing (by region)**

	Total	Upper North Island	Lower/Central North Island	South Island
Base =	500	208	124	168
	%	%	%	%
The Government	75	69	82	77
Local councils	45	41	53	43
Community based organisations (e.g. churches, charities such as Salvation Army)	24	25	18	27
Private developers and landlords	19	21	17	19
Another type of organisation	3	4	1	4
Or no one, people should fend for themselves	14	19	7	13
Other	8	9	7	8
Don't know	2	3	3	0

The base numbers shown are unweighted counts.  
Total may exceed 100% because of multiple responses.



**Table 7: Main responsibility for affordable housing (by urban/rural dwellers)**

	Base =	Total 500 %	Rural area or small town with a population of less than 10,000 181 %	Large town or city with a population greater than 10,000 305 %	Don't know 14** %
The Government		75	71	79	41
Local councils		45	38	50	27
Community based organisations (e.g. churches, charities such as Salvation Army)		24	18	28	5
Private developers and landlords		19	15	21	29
Another type of organisation		3	1	4	0
Or no one, people should fend for themselves		14	19	11	11
Other		8	6	10	5
Don't know		2	1	2	6

The base numbers shown are unweighted counts.  
Total may exceed 100% because of multiple responses

**Table 8: Main reason for housing shortage (by gender)**

	Base =	Total 500 %	Male 250 %	Female 250 %
The housing market		60	53	66
The availability of land		30	34	26
Immigration		8	10	5
Auckland population		8	8	9
Foreign investment		7	8	5
Property investors/speculators		5	4	5
Other		22	25	19
Don't know		6	6	6

The base numbers shown are unweighted counts.  
Total may exceed 100% because of multiple responses

**Table 9: Main reason for housing shortage (by age)**

	Base =	Total 500 %	18-34 years 56 %	35-54 years 163 %	55 years and over 281 %
The housing market		60	73	63	48
The availability of land		30	22	33	32
Immigration		8	6	6	11
Auckland population (too big)		8	4	7	12
Foreign investment		7	9	9	3
Property investors/speculators		5	0	4	7
Other		22	14	22	25
Don't know		6	11	3	6

The base numbers shown are unweighted counts.  
Total may exceed 100% because of multiple responses



**Table 10: Main reason for housing shortage (by income)**

	Base =	Total	Under \$40,000	\$40,000-\$80,000	\$80,000+	Don't know/Refused
		500	144	131	178	47
		%	%	%	%	%
The housing market		60	60	62	57	63
The availability of land		30	25	33	32	30
Immigration		8	9	9	6	9
Auckland population (too big)		8	8	9	8	10
Foreign investment		7	4	13	4	4
Property investors/speculators		5	6	2	6	0
Other		22	16	16	31	18
Don't know		6	10	6	2	12

The base numbers shown are unweighted counts.  
Total may exceed 100% because of multiple responses

**Table 11: Main reason for housing shortage (by region)**

	Base =	Total	Upper North Island	Lower/Central North Island	South Island
		500	208	124	168
		%	%	%	%
The housing market		60	66	51	59
The availability of land		30	24	43	27
Immigration		8	9	5	9
Auckland population (too big)		8	8	8	10
Foreign investment		7	6	3	11
Property investors/speculators		5	5	3	5
Other		22	22	20	22
Don't know		6	3	9	7

The base numbers shown are unweighted counts.  
Total may exceed 100% because of multiple responses

**Table 12: Main reason for housing shortage (by urban/rural dwellers)**

	Base =	Total	Rural area or small town with a population of less than 10,000	Or do you live in a large town or city with a population greater than 10,000	Don't know
		500	181	305	14**
		%	%	%	%
The housing market		60	56	62	53
The availability of land		30	31	29	38
Immigration		8	10	7	0
Auckland population (too big)		8	11	7	10
Foreign investment		7	7	7	0
Property investors/speculators		5	2	6	3
Other		22	20	22	33
Don't know		6	6	6	0

The base numbers shown are unweighted counts.  
Total may exceed 100% because of multiple responses