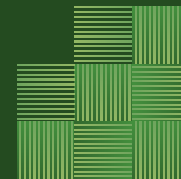




The wellbeing of Māori pre and post Covid-19 lockdown in Aotearoa / New Zealand



Te Rangahau o
Te Tuakiri Māori
me Ngā Waiaro ā-Pūtea

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<https://www.psych.auckland.ac.nz/en/about/maori-identity-financial-attitudes-study.html>



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For more information about the MIFAS please visit our study website:

<https://www.psych.auckland.ac.nz/en/about/maori-identity-financial-attitudes-study.html>

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Report Prepared for Ngā Pae o Te Māramatanga.



Background

Te Rangahau o Te Tuakiri Māori me Ngā Waiaro ā-Pūtea/The Māori Identity and Financial Attitudes Study (MIFAS) is a longitudinal nationwide survey- based study of Māori identity and attitudes towards society and economic development. Doctors Carla Houkamau, Jamie Newth, Kiri Dell, Jason Mika and Chris Sibley form the core MIFAS research group.



Carla Houkamau



Jason Mika



Kiri Dell




Jamie Newth



Chris Sibley

2020 MIFAS timeline

28 February	First COVID-19 case reported in New Zealand.
21 March	The Government introduces the 4-tiered Alert Level system to help combat COVID-19. The Prime Minister announces that New Zealand is at Alert Level 2.
23 March	The Prime Minister announces New Zealand has moved to Alert Level 3, effective immediately.
25 March	New Zealand moves to Alert Level 4, and the entire nation goes into self-isolation. People were instructed to stay at home in their “bubble” other than for essential personal movement.
31 March	The State of National Emergency is extended.
20 April	The Prime Minister announces New Zealand will remain at Alert Level 4 for an additional 5 days. New Zealand will remain at Alert Level 3 for 2 weeks, before the status is reviewed.
23 April	MIFAS survey is sent out via email and people are invited to complete it online.
25 July	Hard copy of MIFAS survey is mailed out.
12 August	Auckland moves to Alert Level 3.
19 November	Final invite to complete MIFAS survey is sent out (email).
29 November	MIFAS round 2 is closed.




The first MIFAS survey was open between September and December 2017, and round two went out between April and November 2020. Round 2 MIFAS data collection occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Round two MIFAS respondents were experiencing a variety of lockdown levels at the time they were completing their surveys. During the highest lockdown level (Level 4), New Zealanders were asked not to leave their homes other than for essential personal movement. New Zealanders were asked to form “bubbles” and stay within them (small groups of people, typically close family members, who would be the only people in close contact for the period of lockdown). Except for essential services, including hospitals, essential health clinics, supermarkets and pharmacies, all businesses were closed, as were schools and universities, and childcare facilities.

During Level 3, people were instructed to stay home other than for essential personal movement, including to go to work or school if they have to, or for local recreation. When outside of the home, physical distancing was required (i.e. distanced one metre from other people) in schools and workplaces. People were allowed to expand their contacts to reconnect with close family/whānau and bring in caregivers or support isolated people.

In Levels 1–2, restrictions loosened; however, life was still not normal, and people were asked to exercise social distancing and caution.



To explore the mental, relational, psychological, and spiritual wellbeing of Māori during and after the COVID-19 lockdowns in Aotearoa, the MIFAS team took the opportunity to include a range of open-ended survey items in the MIFAS survey to provide respondents with the opportunity to tell us how they were feeling and what they were experiencing during and after the lockdown. The MIFAS open-ended items included the following four questions.

1. Please indicate here how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted you and your whānau.
2. How do you think the experience of the COVID-19 pandemic should change us as a society?
3. Who has supported you to stay safe and well during the level 3 and 4 “lockdown” period in New Zealand?
4. What support do you think Māori families will need once the level 4 lockdown requirements have been lifted?”

A total of 3,116 Māori responded with completed surveys and answered some (or all) of the open-ended questions. The data gathered includes details of what was happening in people’s homes

and lives over this unprecedented time in our history. Some surveys were completed during level 4 lockdown, and others responded once this was lifted, and during levels 3, 2 and 1. It is very clear from their answers that many families found these restrictions incredibly challenging. Yet, others found lockdown a regenerating time for themselves and their whānau.

To analyse the data, all responses to the 3116 surveys were manually typed into excel spreadsheets (except from the online survey responses which were directly cut and pasted from their online responses into the excel format). Respondents’ unique numerical identifiers were retained with each answer (to ensure each answer was kept traceable to the correct survey) however like with all MIFAS data analyses all personal information was separated from the surveys before research assistants received any data. This means there was no way that research assistants, or indeed anyone in the MIFAS research team, could see the names or details of who wrote each comment. This report provides a snapshot of their responses to each of the four open ended questions above.



QUESTION ONE

How has the COVID-19 pandemic impacted you and your whānau?

We asked “How has the COVID-19 pandemic impacted you and your whānau?”

A total of 2,000 people responded to this item and their answers reported a wide variety of impacts. Some people provided answers relevant to more than one category, therefore 2,389 responses were counted (some in multiple categories). These are summarised in Table 1 below.

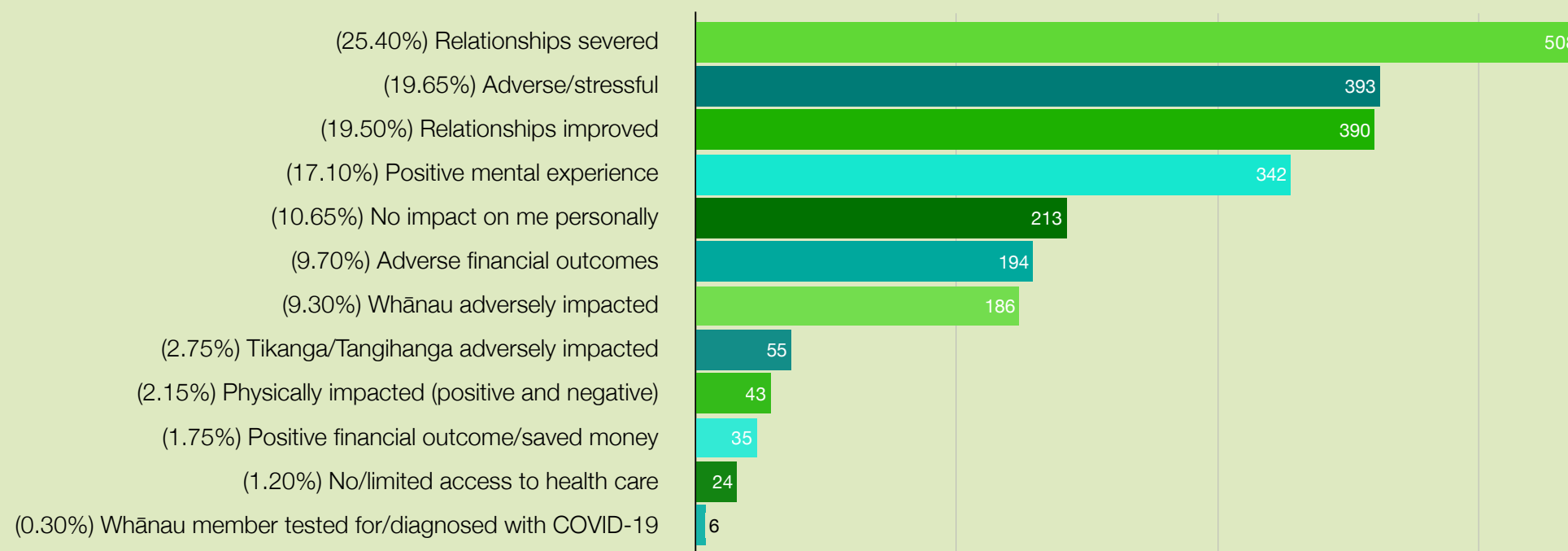


Figure 1: Number of responses per category to item “Please indicate here how the Covid-19 pandemic has impacted you and your whānau”. Total respondents n=2000, total answers categorised=2389

When asked “*How has the COVID-19 pandemic impacted you and your whānau?*”, 25.40% of respondents said their relationships were put under stress due to the pandemic.

The COVID-19 pandemic had a profound impact on personal relationships, forcing some whānau to live closer together while others had to be separated from their loved ones. One quarter of the 2,000 respondents reported an adverse negative impact on whānau relationships. The most common reason for this was lack of connection with extended family outside the respondent’s “bubble”. Respondents reported feelings of sadness, social isolation, and frustration due to the fact they were cut off from their whānau, could not travel to visit them, and could not do their normal day-to-day activities with whānau they usually have close contact with. Some of the more poignant references were from kaumātua who could not see their mokopuna. Pandemic stress, the pressures of being restricted, school closures and financial stress took their toll. Included in this category are also reports of being frustrated with whānau because of too much daily contact with them (although there were far fewer respondents who reported too much social contact – i.e. fewer than 20).



AT A GLANCE: 25.40% of 2,000 respondents said their relationships were put under stress



“

The lockdown has torn into the fabric of our family by us not being able to associate.

Being away from whānau is hard, especially our loved ones who have passed away.

I missed my mokopuna and often cried for him.

19.65%

said they suffered adverse psychological outcomes (including stress, sadness and in some cases depression).

Close to 20% of 2,000 respondents to this question felt that, overall, the lockdown was a negative experience and stressful (mainly mentally) because the rapid lifestyle change put them in difficult, detrimental situations that they were finding hard to handle. Respondents in this category reported being overwhelmed, anxious, sad, depressed, exhausted and worried. A very broad range of responses were included here, referring to sometimes high-pressure environments of confinement, combined with the financial stress brought about by loss of employment. This led to a rise in conflict and tension for some whānau who were simply not used to spending so much time together.



AT A GLANCE: 19.65% of 2,000 respondents said they suffered adverse psychological outcomes

“

It was a really hard time in terms of mental health. My experience of people I know in flatting situations is that the lockdown model/bubble method really didn't work for the flatting environment. A lot of young people I know are now on anti-depressants or anti-anxiety, or had bad mental health episodes during or after the lockdown.

... mental health under stress due to loss of income and no way to pay for essential living costs, physical health in decline ...

It depresses me to see business owners (small and large) make no preparations for hard-times, but instead to pocket the excesses of good-times while ready always to shed staff in the bad.

”

19.50% out of 2000 respondents to this question reported positive whānau outcomes, with family relationships strengthened and improved.

The answers counted in this category referred to primarily positive outcomes for whānaungatanga. A sense that relationships were either improved, strengthened or rebuilt during the COVID-19 pandemic was a salient theme in the data, a pattern that contradicts reports of stress and isolation experienced by some whānau and individuals. Some respondents spoke of stress, pressure and gratitude in the same answer (mainly because they reported being grateful for whānau members who they do not typically get to spend so much time with – even if tensions became strained from time to time).

“

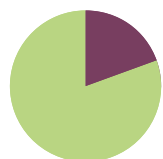
L4 brought us closer together as we had time to spend with each other with no outside distractions and we really go to know each other as people.

If anything we appreciate one another more. Have spent more time together.

I got to spend more time at home doing what I wanted, and with my son and husband. It was actually really nice.

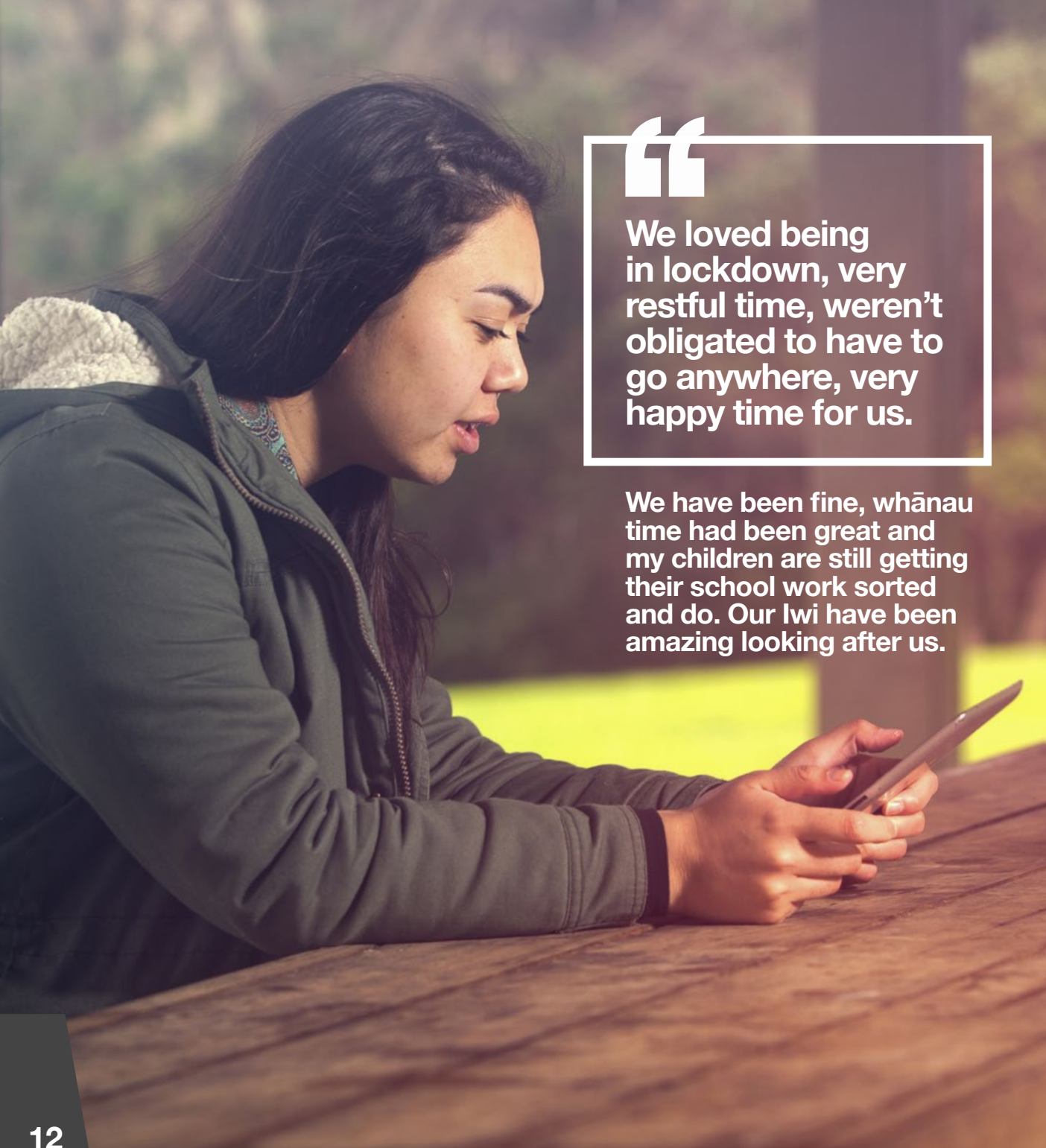
“

I have spent more meaningful time with my kids, I have a better relationship with my husband. I'm more grateful for what I do have in my life, family friends a roof over our heads and food on the table.



AT A GLANCE: 19.50% reported positive whānau outcomes





We loved being in lockdown, very restful time, weren't obligated to have to go anywhere, very happy time for us.

We have been fine, whānau time had been great and my children are still getting their school work sorted and do. Our lwi have been amazing looking after us.

17.10% out of 2000 respondents reported positive psychological outcomes.

Despite the challenges of lockdown, the pandemic also presented people with the opportunity to stop and reflect on their lives. Nearly 14% of respondents felt that, overall, the lockdown was a positive experience and regenerating (mainly mentally) because they had a chance to take time out, reflect on what is really important, and live life at a slower pace with less pressure. Some reported being grateful for time to try new hobbies and take care of tasks and chores they normally would not have time to complete. A very broad range of responses were included here, including those who referred to feeling grateful to live in New Zealand and for all the benefits that this country provides, and being reflective or philosophical about the meaning of life generally. Most people in this category did not simultaneously report being financially stressed and that their whānau were safe and coping well.



AT A GLANCE: 17.10% of 2000 respondents reported positive psychological outcomes

Some participants reported the COVID-19 pandemic or lockdown had little immediate impact

Some, perhaps unexpectedly, reported no impact at all (or very little) from the COVID-19 pandemic or lockdown. Typically, this answer reflected their personal situations. They were either financially secure and independent or were already used to living alone or in a socially isolated situation, and therefore they did not see the disruption as of major detriment to their lives.

“

Not felt any detrimental impact on our household. There is only my husband and I and we have coped extremely well.

It hasn't my life is still running as it normally has just without going out and keeping social distance with people outside of my bubble.

No real impact. It's hasn't impacted at all.

We are very lucky to live in a small community so the virus has not had a big impact on us.

Not impacted as I am a farmer. We had setbacks – not being able to sell cattle on time. But this is not an issue, just a different plan.



AT A GLANCE: 10.65% of 2000 respondents reported positive psychological outcomes

9.70% reported averse financial outcomes and associated worry, stress and loss.

A number of respondents mentioned financial stress and strain from loss of jobs and income. Many references to loss of income were connected to comments about feeling stressed and overwhelmed.

“ Incredible increase of stress trying to keep my small business afloat and alive by coming up with new and different ways of promotion and earning (with no skills or knowledge in this area and no-one to assist me, plus very little time or energy for it).



AT A GLANCE: 9.70% of 2000 respondents reported averse financial outcomes

Some were deeply concerned about whānau members who were stressed, unwell, in difficult circumstances and/or isolated. The majority of answers in this category emphasised respondents were more concerned about their whānau members than themselves.

“

I watched my oldest son who is 30 fall into a state of depression because he only was paid 80% of Government wages (which was taxed) and he could not keep up with his weekly bills (we helped him out as much as we could to lessen his burden).

My brother lost his job so feel for him and will help him if he needs it.

One of my family members with undiagnosed mental health issues struggled severely with being in lockdown.



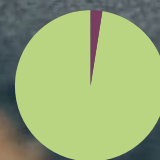
AT A GLANCE: 9.30% reported their wider whānau were adversely impacted and that caused worry and stress

Some others expressed a great deal of sadness and distress that they could not attend tangihanga or that tikanga processes were disrupted around tangi as a result of the COVID-19 restrictions.

Tragic when tangihanga were NOT permissible. Tragic to know that whānaunga took them directly to bury – at times in strange, city cemeteries.

Great sadness around tangihanga, no ability to grieve with whānau as is our tradition. This is a huge mamae for whānau to carry collectively.

Also hearing the death of some family members and not being able to attend is really huge for Māoridom.



AT A GLANCE: 2.75% reported distress that COVID-19 had disrupted tangihanga practices adversely

”

2.15% out of the 2000 respondents reported they were physically impacted by the pandemic (positively or negatively).

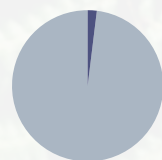
A small number of respondents reported impacts that were specifically physical – both negative and positive – that resulted from being out of their normal routine. Because of the restriction in movements outside of the home, many people could not do their normal sports or exercise with friends. Generally, weight gain was the most frequent comment in this category, due to a lot more home cooking and over-indulgence in comfort foods (sometimes more alcohol consumption was reported). A small number of respondents reported they lost weight because lockdown provided an opportunity to exercise and spend time cooking healthier food.

“
Lockdown isolation did interrupt my motivation levels towards maintaining my fitness regime.

Ate too much, put on weight. Drank lots of alcohol level during 4 and 3.

All was good. Look after our wellbeing exercised, ate healthy, lost weight.

All was good. Look after our wellbeing exercised, ate healthy, lost weight.



AT A GLANCE: 2.15% of 2000 respondents reported they were physically impacted by lockdown

A smaller number of respondents described an improvement in their financial situation, mainly because lockdown prevented them from spending money on social events, eating and shopping.

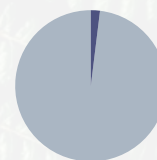
We are better at saving money; eat less processed food and we make our food go further.

We've been able to save money and use the time to reflect.

We saved money and reconnected on a deeper personal level with our children mokopuna and whānau.

We followed the rules and became quite inventive about finding other ways to do things, bank balance has improved 100%.

I believe the impacts have been mostly positive, close bonding time and spending less money.



AT A GLANCE: 1.75% of 2000 respondents reported positive financial outcomes





1.24% could not access necessary health care during the Pandemic (including a COVID-19 test).

As the title of the category indicates, the respondents in this category reported that they or their whānau could not access necessary health care during the pandemic (including a COVID-19 test). Generally, there was concern, anxiety and frustration about the lack of access and support they required.



AT A GLANCE: 1.24% of 2000 respondents reported they (or members of their whānau) could not access necessary health care

0.03% reported that a member of their whānau was tested for/ diagnosed with COVID-19.

Only six of those who answered this section had either had a COVID-19 test or a whānau member who had been infected with the virus. None of the respondents reported being infected by COVID-19 themselves.

“

One of my sons has been tested and in isolation due to the stupid and selfish actions of a workmate. Fortunately, he has tested negative, but it was a worrying time waiting.

My brother in the UK has had COVID.

Our niece tested positive but cleared and retested to negative over time.

My nana was in the Rosewood Cluster and died.

”



AT A GLANCE: 0.03% of 2000 respondents reported that a member of their whānau was tested for/ diagnosed with COVID-19

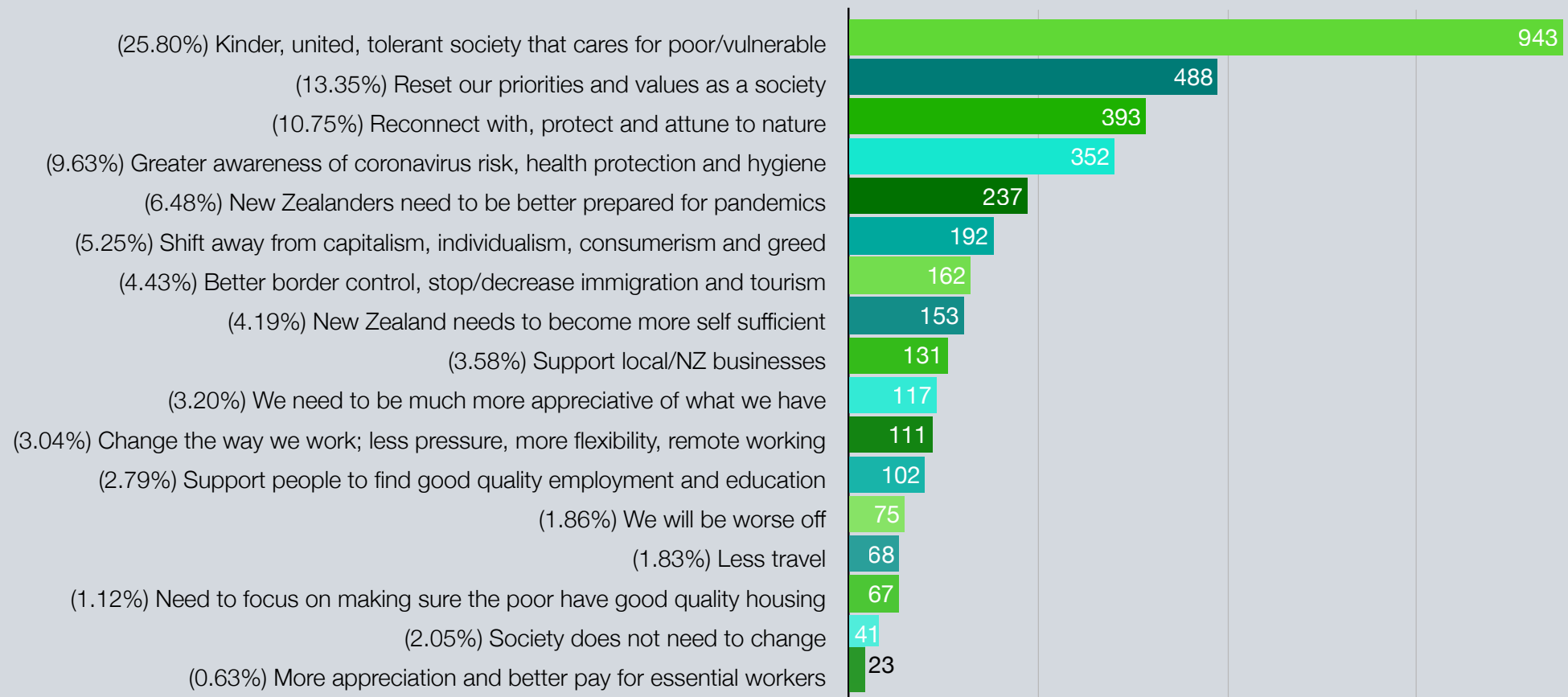
A group of people, including a woman and two children, are playing flag football in a grassy backyard. A woman in a white t-shirt and jeans is on the left, a child in a dark blue t-shirt with a rainbow flag is in the center, and a young girl in a white t-shirt with 'FREE SPIRIT' and denim shorts is on the right. A blue flag football is in the foreground, slightly out of focus. The background shows a wooden fence and a house.

QUESTION TWO

How do you think the experience of the COVID-19 pandemic should change us as a society?

Question 2: How do you think the experience of the COVID-19 pandemic should change us as a society?

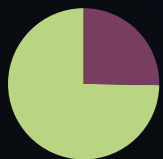
A total of 2,648 people responded to this question. Some people provided answers relevant to more than one category, therefore 3,655 responses were counted (some in multiple categories). These are summarised in the graphic below.



*Total respondents n=2648, total answers categorised=3655



25.80% said they wanted to see a kinder, united, tolerant society that cares for poor/vulnerable – as we are connected/interdependent.



AT A GLANCE: 25.80% of 2,648 respondents said they wanted to see a kinder, united, tolerant society

“

I hope that it will bring communities closer.

It was impressed on all of us to be “KIND”.

Show us we are all interconnected whether we like it or not.

Learn to be more caring and kinder.

I would like to think that we care more about people and that people matter – from the elderly to the young.

Hopefully societies attitudes towards those in difficulty change, particularly those who have a “harden up” attitude.

13.35% of the 2648 respondents said it is time for a reset, and that we need to challenge and change our priorities and values as a society.

“

Focus on embracing core values of manaakitanga, kotahitanga, aroha, whakaiti, whakapono within everyday living.

It should really change us as a society very significantly. It should significantly change our attitudes and actions towards the environment, towards those less able than us, to those in small businesses.


Economy focusing on values based collective based moving away from global trade model.

It will make us realise that work is not the be all and end all in life.

I think it should change us to care more about our planet and the creatures that live on it.



AT A GLANCE: 13.35% of 2648 respondents said it is time for a reset



10.75% said we need to reconnect with, protect and attune to nature (no more pollution).



AT A GLANCE: 10.75% of 2,648 respondents said we need to reconnect with, protect and attune to nature

“

If people didn't learn to appreciate Papatūānuku during our time of lockdown, they never will.

Make us more willing to choose sustainable transport solutions.

Look after the planet better – more responsibility. Be like Japan – no bins no rubbish anywhere.

Hopefully we will learn more about our impact on the environment and what humans have done to cause this disaster.

Look after Papatūānuku more.

Make us care more about the environment and well-being of people.

I think a lockdown similar to what we have had is important for human connection, a rahui for Papatūānuku and a chance for us all to breathe. These need to be instigated regularly.

9.63% said that the pandemic should instigate greater awareness of coronavirus infection risk and much more concern with health protection and hygiene practices.

“

We should be more respectful of personal space and make sure people continue with good handwashing techniques.

Limits should be made and time spent in certain places.

Take care of own wellbeing and health.

Create healthy environments, healthy minds, and healthy bodies! Healthful living.

Stop being paru.

We should think more about how our health could affect others, and not go to work sick.



AT A GLANCE: 9.63% of 2,648 respondents said that the pandemic should instigate greater awareness of infection risk

6.48% said New Zealand needs to be better prepared for pandemics, improve our health systems, and improve preparedness in communities and in homes.

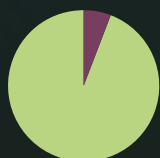


The need for a pandemic plan needs to be in place. Ensure have storage food – extra medicine/medication. Be prepared for emergency situations. Stock up.

I hope smart people find ways to mitigate pandemics like this spreading the way COVID-19 has.

Government should be better prepared for future pandemics (e.g. stockpiling of PPE, custom built quarantine facilities, track and trace technologies) and learn lessons from the COVID-19 experience to react more effectively in future.

More hygiene stations readily available in populated areas such as supermarkets, cafes etc.



AT A GLANCE: 6.48% of 2648 respondents said New Zealand needs to be better prepared for pandemics

5.25% said society needs to shift away from capitalist values, individualism, consumerism and greed.

It should teach us that life isn't about material items, it's about your friends and family and community.

I think we should be less focussed on material things and capitalism.

To be more supportive as communities, be kinder, be more connected, have more understanding of differences, less greed.

Reduce: over consumerism/plastic/waste/pollution, reduce population, reduce greed/corporate greed.

We should appreciate smaller things, appreciate our own country, and be kinder and less materialistic.



AT A GLANCE: 5.25% of 2648 respondents said society needs to shift away from capitalist values, individualism, consumerism and greed

4.43% said New Zealand needs much better border control – and we need to stop/decrease immigration and tourism.

Not so welcoming to overseas visitors/travellers/immigrants etc.

Hope we work smarter on border issues.

Restrict tourism to wealthy who will spend money in our country. Stop all immigration.

After all this lockdown business finishes Kāwanatanga immigration need to think about who comes to Aotearoa.

Stop letting in so many immigrants and refugees into the country.



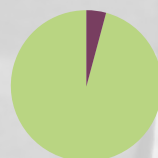
AT A GLANCE: 4.43% of 2648 respondents said New Zealand needs much better border control

4.19% said they feel New Zealand needs to become more self-sufficient – not to rely on the government, trade, tourism, international trade – and whānau can look after themselves when required.

Society has to adjust. We need to become self-sufficient so we can survive on our own without intervention from the outside world.

To become more self-sufficient e.g. have vege gardens, learn to cook healthy meals, spend more time with children and all whānau.

Becoming more self-sufficient, and caring / of others.



AT A GLANCE: 4.19% of 2648 respondents said they feel New Zealand needs to become more self-sufficient

3.58% of 2648 respondents said there is a need to support local/NZ businesses, buy NZ products and protect our economy – and no more internationalisation/globalisation.

“

Keep a focus on supporting local businesses and NZ tourism.

Grow, produce, manufacture locally. Import less. Buy Kiwi grown, produced and made.

Support New Zealand made and get more New Zealand companies up and running.

It should make us look after our whānau, neighbours and communities more. And that goes for NZ businesses more – buy local or NZ made and holiday locally.

3.20% said we need to be much more appreciative of what we have generally and how blessed we are to live in Aotearoa.

I think it should help us feel more grateful for living in NZ, our people and land.

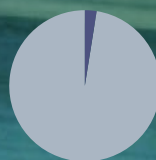
Be more grateful for what we have and what we can control ourselves.

Be more grateful.

I think this pandemic should make us be more grateful – for our health, our family, our leaders and our essential workers.



AT A GLANCE: 3.58% of 2,648 respondents said there is a need to support local/NZ businesses



AT A GLANCE: 3.20% of 2,648 respondents said we need to be much more appreciative of what we have generally

3.04% of the 2648 respondents said we need to change the way we work; less pressure, more flexibility and remote working.



More flexible where people can work out of (from home with kids) – people can see doctors/physios etc. over Zoom. Same travel costs, inconvenience etc.

More flexible work options / different ways of working.

We should change the need for workers to always be at work, become more flexible with times, locations and requirements for the lockdown. Many schools have learnt students can learn while online so this could potentially mean students who are unwell or even students who simply can come in (bad weather, can't afford transport) can still be a part of the class and continue their learning.



AT A GLANCE: 3.04%
of the 2648 respondents
said we need to change
the way we work

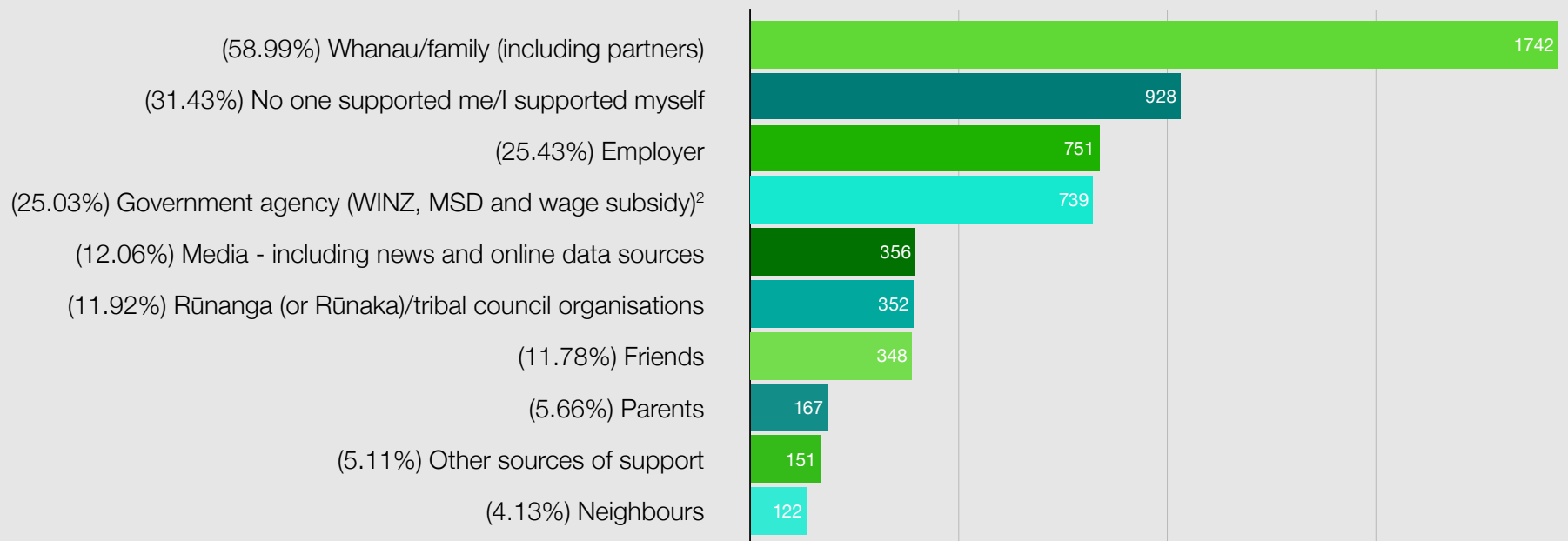


QUESTION THREE

Sources of support

2953 respondents answered this question and recorded multiple sources of support (therefore 5656 sources were classified). Our analyses found that during the lockdown period in New Zealand 2020, 58.99% of Māori surveyed reported their whānau were the most important source of support during the pandemic – however, many reported they had no whānau support at all and had to support themselves (31.43%). The table below indicates the number and percentage of respondents (of 2953) who indicated each form of support.

In the “other” category, respondents mentioned primary health workers, social media, Churches, neighbours and teachers. Thirty eight respondents mentioned the daily reports from Prime Minister Jacinda Adern and Dr Ashley Bloomfield (the Chief executive of the Ministry of Health and the country’s Director-General of Health). A number of respondents to this question, referred to the difficult transition some parents of school aged children experienced trying to provide home schooling for their own children during lockdown. In some cases, parents were both working at home and trying to home school multiple children of different ages, who all needed access to a learning device and resources. Although some parents praised the schools and some teachers, others felt abandoned and struggled to teach their own children during lockdown.



*2953 respondents out of the 3116 respondents answered this question.
5656 responses were classified as individuals described multiple sources of support.

² Work and Income New Zealand / WINZ and Ministry of Social Development/MSD.

When asked “What support do you think Māori families will need once the level 4 lockdown requirements have been lifted?” the responses were similar to the previous question and many simply noted “as above” in their answers, therefore we provided a summary of key trends only and not specific figures for all responses. We present the top eight priorities for families post-lockdown (these reflect the frequency of responses in order).

1. Basic needs, food, water, power and good quality housing.
2. Employment opportunities and training for new types of employment for those who cannot return to their previous jobs.
3. Financial services and budgeting advice.
4. Support from Work and Income New Zealand/WINZ and Ministry of Social Development/MSD (as well as quality information and advice about how to access government support).
5. Support with children’s education (including technology and reliable, affordable internet access for those who have to home school children).
6. Support with accessing healthcare and simple and clear health related advice, including information about COVID-19 prevention and also mental health support services and help for those families who may be dealing with issues of drug and alcohol addiction in their whānau.
7. Clear rules and guidelines tangihanga restrictions and how to practice tikanga safely.
8. Support for kaumātua and kuia who cannot access essential services themselves during COVID lockdown (should it happen again) for example, support delivering food parcels and filling medical prescriptions.

We also found that 153 respondents (4.91%) of those who responded to the question “Who has supported you to stay safe and well during the level 3 and 4 ‘lockdown’ period in New Zealand?” and “What support do you think Māori families will need once the level 4 lockdown requirements have been lifted?” reported a desire to return to their haukāinga (true home, marae, tūrangawaewae, papa kāinga) to be much closer to their wider support base. This response seem to come mainly from whānau who were living in cities away from their families. Notably 71 respondents took issue with the wording of this question and emphasised that Māori whānau need the same as everyone else in New Zealand (i.e. Māori are no different to other New Zealanders and should not be singled out for special help).

Possibly wage subsidy or benefit if people lose their jobs

Financial support in the form of constant mahi that pays fairly.

Food. Financial and budgeting advice.

The same support as every other New Zealander who needs it, mentally and financially if required.

Key findings and overall summary

We surveyed 3116 Māori as part of the Māori Identity and Financial Attitudes Study during the first stages of the COVID pandemic in New Zealand in 2020.

When asked, how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted them and their whānau, around one-quarter of the 2000 people who answered this question said they found that the pandemic and the associated lockdown and travel bans harmed their relationships in some way. Being separated from whānau and loved ones was cited as painful and a cause of stress and sadness. Nearly 20% of the 2000 people who answered this item reported an (in some cases significant) deterioration in their mental well-being due to financial stress or stress related to relationships, work and a decline in their living standards and circumstances. Yet, nearly 20% of the 2000 people who answered this item said the COVID lockdown period in which families could not travel and had to stay in social “bubbles”, brought their whānau closer together. Relationships were improved and many said they had never had the chance to spend some much time with their partners and children before (due to work commitments); therefore, lockdown was a regenerating time for their whānau. Others pointed to adverse financial outcomes and 9.3% reported being worried about other whānau members, 2.75% lamented not being able to attend tangihanga during the pandemic lockdown. Only 6 of our respondents out of the 3116 reported that one of their whānau members had either been exposed to COVID-or were and diagnosed with it.

2648 people answered the question “How do you think the experience of COVID-19 Pandemic should change us as a society?” . Of that group, just over one quarter called for a kinder, united and more tolerant society that cares for poor/vulnerable, and others called for a reset of societal priorities and values with some calling for a greater focus on environmental protection and a move away from individualism, consumerism and greed.

When asked, “What support do you think Māori families will need once the level 4 lockdown requirements have been lifted?” the responses focused on employment, housing, financial and budgeting services – as well better access to quality education and health-care.

In sum, as we recover from the initial short-term impacts of COVID-19, our data suggest that many Māori feel it is time for a social and economic reset in Aotearoa. One salient theme related to a desire for society to care more for the environment (people and planet) and practice more tolerance, kindness and patience with each other. Lockdown permitted many to spend time cultivating family relationships, and thinking about how they could support others – although many were naturally worried about their own families, this concern was extended to those less fortunate in their communities.

Many of our participants called for a country which adopts a different economic mind-set, focusing on producing what we need to live, rather than focusing on consumerism, short term profits and economic growth. For many, the pandemic lockdown provided an opportunity for slowing down, thinking and living differently – it was a time of consuming less, and spending quality time with whānau, and reflecting on what really matters. Many indicated a desire to retain this experience post COVID and not return to the way they were before.

Although positive outcomes emerged, such as strengthened relationships and time-out to reflect, it is important to note that this survey was completed during the early stages of the Pandemic in Aotearoa/New Zealand, i.e. April to November 2020 and at that time the primary concern of many New Zealanders was to secure the safety of their families and loved ones, it was too soon to project long term implications of the economic damage caused by COVID-10. Next comes recovery which requires support for communities as well as coordinated networks of care. International evidence suggests the social and economic impacts of the pandemic will be felt for longer and more intensely for those already living in precarious conditions.

For more information about the MIFAS please visit our study website

<https://www.psych.auckland.ac.nz/en/about/maori-identity-financial-attitudes-study.html>