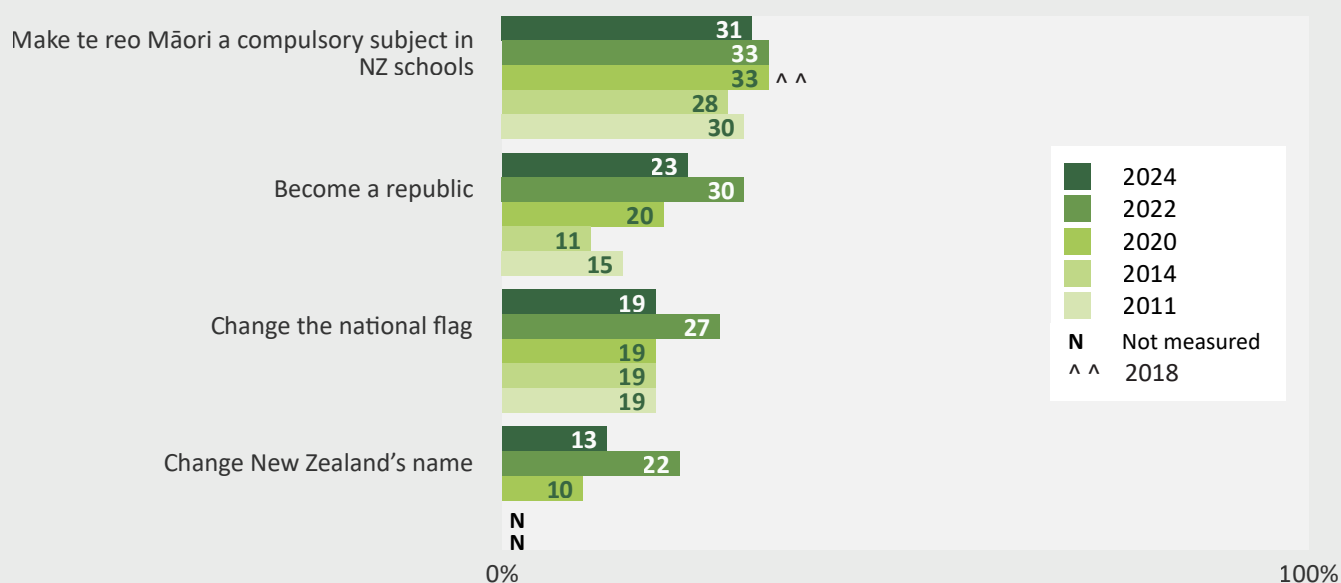


Changing the country's identity has taken a small step back

Given the pride New Zealanders have in relation to the success we have had at the Paris Olympics, we decided to revisit our national identity poll, to understand where opinions currently sit in comparison to the last few years – i.e. should we become a republic; officially change our name; change our national flag; and make te reo Māori compulsory in our schools?

Support for change[^] - over time



[^] Support is based on the % rating 7-10 on the 11-point agreement rating scale.

Key findings

While New Zealanders' appetite to change the country's identity (via its status, name and flag) has been steadily growing over the last 10 years, the current poll does **not** show a continuation of that trend.

- **Fewer** New Zealanders this year are **in favour of the country becoming a republic** (23%, down from 30% in the 2022 poll).
- Only **19%** of New Zealanders think our country should **change its flag** (down from 27% in 2022), and only **13%** think that we should **change the name** (down from 22% in 2022).
- There has been **no change** to the percentage of New Zealanders who are in favour of **te reo Maori being compulsory in our schools**. This remains at about **one-third** and, as such, reflects the results for earlier polls.

"In light of Aotearoa's recent performance on the Olympic stage, we half-expected to see greater support for the country to adopt a new, unique and modern identity. However, this is not the case and is possibly because there are economic and standard of living issues of greater importance weighing on New Zealanders' minds at present."

Rangahau Aotearoa | Research New Zealand Managing Partner, Emanuel Kalafatelis.

Media release

New Zealanders' mood to change the country's identity has taken a small step back

The topic

We have repeated a poll over the last 10 years (2011-2022) to gauge opinions as to whether New Zealanders believe we should become a republic; officially change our name; change our national flag; and make te reo Māori compulsory in our schools.

Given the pride New Zealanders have in relation to the success we have had at the Paris Olympics, we decided to revisit the poll this year to understand where opinions currently sit, in comparison to the last few years.

This year, we also included a question to rate New Zealanders' acceptance of cultural diversity.

The survey

A nationally-representative sample of n=1,029 New Zealanders, 18 years of age and over were interviewed online between 15-21 August 2024. We asked two questions:

"Aotearoa New Zealand won an impressive 20 medals in the 2024 Paris Olympics, placing it 11th on the medal table. Many people are describing this as 'impressive', 'remarkable' and the country 'punching well above its weight'.

On a scale of 0-10, where 0 is strongly disagree and 10 is strongly agree, how much do you agree or disagree with each of these statements?"

- New Zealanders, in general are accepting of cultural diversity.
- New Zealand should become a republic, independent from the Commonwealth.
- New Zealand should change its national flag.
- New Zealand should change its name.
- Te reo Māori should be a compulsory subject taught in NZ schools.

"New Zealand is often referred to as 'Aotearoa' or 'Aotearoa New Zealand'. In this regard, which **one** of the following do you agree with?"

- New Zealand should officially change its name to Aotearoa
- New Zealand should officially change its name to Aotearoa New Zealand
- New Zealand should officially change its name to something else
- New Zealand should not change its name
- Don't know
- Prefer not to say

High-level findings – Support for change

New Zealanders appetite to change the country's identity (via its status, name and flag) has been steadily growing over the last 10 years.

In our previous poll in 2022, we noted that New Zealanders' appetite for change was the **strongest** it had ever been, likely due to the 'climate' of the day (e.g., the machinations of the British royal family, the death of Queen Elizabeth II and the crowning of King Charles III).

However, the current poll does **not** show a continuation of that trend; instead it reflects opinions as they were in 2020, when there was a growing, but more subdued appetite for change.

The highlights of the current poll in comparison are as follows:

1. **Fewer** respondents this year are in favour of the country becoming a republic (23%, down from 30% in 2022, but in keeping with 2020 at 31%).
2. Two-thirds of respondents (66%) do **not** think New Zealand should change its name. Again, slightly higher than 2022, but aligned with 2020 (59% and 64% respectively).
3. There is also **reduced** support for New Zealand to change its national flag. While interest in 2022 was up to 27%, this is back in-line with the interest for only 19% in 2020.

Notwithstanding these results, a unique aspect that would single out Aotearoa New Zealand is the fact that one-third of respondents (31%) are in favour of te reo Māori being compulsory in our schools; a result which has been consistent across the years that the poll has been run. In support of this is the fact that one-half of respondents (50%) agreed that New Zealanders are accepting of cultural diversity.

Comment

"In light of Aotearoa's recent performance on the Olympic stage we half-expected to see greater support for the country to adopt a new, unique and modern identity. However, this is not the case and is possibly because there are economic and standard of living issues of greater importance weighing on New Zealanders' minds at present.

However, while the mood for change has taken a step back, the appetite persists and will be worth following in years to come."

Rangahau Aotearoa | Research New Zealand Managing Partner, Emanuel Kalafatelis.

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Key findings – Are New Zealanders accepting of change and cultural diversity?

Table 1 outlines the current results, compared with the results for previous years. The table shows the extent to which respondents agreed with each statement, based on the percentage who rated their agreement 7-10 on the 11-point agreement scale.

The key findings are as follows:

- 1. The highest level of agreement in the current poll was in terms of making te reo Māori compulsory in schools (31%). This is comparable to the result recorded in 2022 and previous polls.
- 2. Support for New Zealand to become a republic is 23% this year, a significant reduction from 30% in 2022, but comparable to the 2020 poll. The 2022 result may have been influenced by the passing of Queen Elizabeth II and the crowning of King Charles III that year.
- 3. There is also a reduction in support for changing the national flag (19%) and the country's name (13%), compared with the 2022 results (27% and 22% respectively) but, again, the current results are comparable to 2020 (19% and 13% respectively).
- 4. In this poll, a further statement was added about the extent to which New Zealanders are accepting of cultural diversity. Fifty percent of respondents agreed.

Table 1: Support for change^ – over time

	2024	2022	2020	2014	2011
Unweighted base =	1029	1000	1003	500	1252
	%	%	%	%	%
Become a republic	23	30	20	11	15
Change the national flag	19	27	19	19	19
Change the country's name	13	22	10	NM	NM
Make te reo Māori a compulsory subject in NZ schools	31	33	33^^	28	30
New Zealanders are, in general, accepting of cultural diversity	50	NM	NM	NM	NM

^ Support is based on the % rating 7-10 on the 11-point agreement rating scale.
^^ 2018.

There are relatively few significant differences by age, gender and region, with the results for the most part being similar across all demographic groups. For example:

- Twice as many **young** respondents (18-34) agreed that 'te reo should be compulsory subject taught in NZ schools', compared with older respondents (55+), (21% and 10% respectively).
- **Male** respondents were more likely to agree that 'New Zealand should become a republic', compared with female respondents (27% and 19%, respectively) and we 'should change our national flag' (24% and 14% respectively).
- Respondents living in the **North Island** were almost twice as likely to agree that we should change our name, compared with respondents living in the South Island (17% and 9% respectively).

Key findings – Do New Zealanders think the name of the country should change and, if so, what to?

Table 2 outlines the current results, compared with the results for previous years, as to whether New Zealand’s name should officially change.

Respondents could ‘vote’ for a change including ‘Aotearoa’, some other name, or no change at all.

The key findings are as follows:

- 1. Consistent with the results for the previous question, most respondents (66%) stated that New Zealand should **not** officially change its name. This is significantly higher than the result recorded in in 2022 (59%), but in keeping with the response for 2020 (64%).
- 2. While lower than previous polls, 27% of respondents stated that New Zealand **should** change its name and have a version that included ‘Aotearoa’. That said, most (19%) were in favour of the name being ‘Aotearoa New Zealand’, rather than just ‘Aotearoa’ (8%). Both results are lower than opinions in the polls in 2022 and 2020 by a small, but significant margin of around 5%.

Table 2: What should the name of the country change to?

	2024	2022	2020
Unweighted base =	1029	1000	1003
	%	%	%
New Zealand should officially change its name to Aotearoa	8	13	10
... to Aotearoa New Zealand	19	24	20
... to something else	2	0	6
Not change its name	66	59	64
Don't know	5	3	0
No preference	0	1	0
Total	100	100	100

There are **no** significant differences in the overall response to this question by gender or region. However, there are significant differences by **age**:

- Overall, **younger** respondents (18-34) were **less** likely to agree that there should **not** be a name change, compared with older respondents (55+), (56% and 76%, respectively).
- In particular, **younger** respondents were more likely to agree that the name should change to ‘Aotearoa’ (12% compared with 4% for older respondents).
- Notwithstanding this, if there was a name change, **both age groups** were inclined to favour ‘Aotearoa New Zealand’ (23% for younger respondents and 18% for older respondents).

Method

This survey of 1,029 respondents aged 18 years and over was conducted online, between 15-21 August 2024. The maximum margin of error is +/- 3.1 percent (at the 95 percent confidence level).

The sample has been weighted by gender and age to ensure the results are representative of the population 18 years-plus, based on these demographic criteria.

The survey was not undertaken on behalf of any organisation, but as part of Rangahau Aotearoa Research New Zealand's social poll of New Zealanders' opinions about topical issues.

Rangahau Aotearoa Research New Zealand is an independent, New Zealand-owned research organisation undertaking social and business research.

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