

Yeah, nah – two-thirds of us are not keen to become an Aussie state

The topic

On the back of our current ‘Cost of Living Crisis,’ with increases to basics like food and electricity prices as well as unemployment - recently there has been discussion in the media about whether New Zealand would be ‘better off’ as a state of Australia, rather than remaining an independent country.

The discussion was kicked off on 3 February by an opinion piece in *The Post* where political pollster David Farrar argued that amid rising global political tensions: “Joining Australia will protect New Zealand, enhance Australia and benefit us all.”

However, many Kiwis weren’t pleased by this idea; including the Prime Minister Christopher Luxon who immediately ruled out the idea of abandoning sovereignty, "This won't be happening."

The opinion piece prompted articles arguing against New Zealand becoming an Australian state, and a survey run by Stuff found 56 per cent of its readers opposed the idea. One month later, on 4 March Andrea Vance revealed in *The Post* that *The Post/Freshwater Strategy* poll with Infrastructure New Zealand revealed 65% opposed the idea, with 52% ‘strongly opposed’.

We decided to look a little closer at these attitudes. Here is our report, based on a poll we conducted early this month.

The survey

A nationally-representative sample of n=1,010 New Zealanders, 18 years of age and over were interviewed online between 7 to 9 March 2026. We asked the following questions:

Q. “Recently there has been discussion in the media about whether New Zealand would be better off as a state of Australia, rather than remaining an independent country. How much do you agree or disagree that...?”

- New Zealand **should** become the 7th state of Australia.
- The main **benefit** of New Zealand becoming a state of Australia would be economic.
- Our **current** Australia - New Zealand trade and defence agreements already give us the benefits of being a state of Australia.
- If New Zealand was part of Australia, we would have **limited** input into the decisions of the government.
- The Treaty of Waitangi would be **insignificant/disregarded** if New Zealand was part of Australia.
- If New Zealand was part of Australia, we would **lose** our distinctive Kiwi culture.”

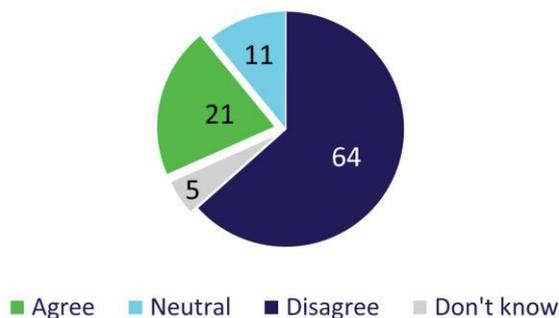
High-level findings

1. Overall, just under two-thirds of all respondents (64%) reported they **disagreed** that New Zealand should become the 7th state of Australia (refer to Figure 1).

This is similar to the 65% who disagreed in *The Post/Freshwater Strategy* poll with Infrastructure New Zealand reported last week – so there would appear to be some consistency in opinion.

However, 21% **agreed** with the concept; not an insignificant percentage (one-in-every five).

Figure 1: The proportion who agreed or disagreed that New Zealand should become the 7th state of Australia



2. Respondents who **disagreed** that New Zealand should become the 7th state of Australia, believed that if New Zealand **was** part of Australia:
 - we would have **limited input** into the decisions of the government (77%); and
 - we would **lose** our distinctive **Kiwi culture** (83%).
3. Conversely, the 21% who **agreed** New Zealand should become the 7th state of Australia were significantly more likely to have reported the **main benefits** would be:
 - economic (88%); and
 - ‘our current Australia - New Zealand trade and defence agreements already give us the benefits of being a state of Australia’ (61%) (i.e., current arrangements already meant we were Australia’s 7th state in effect).
4. Interestingly, most respondents, regardless of whether or not they agreed or disagreed that New Zealand should become the 7th state of Australia, believed that the **Treaty of Waitangi** would be insignificant/**disregarded** if this was to happen (63% for those who agreed and 69% for those who disagreed).

Comment

“This poll has the obvious conclusion that two-thirds of New Zealanders are not keen to lose our identity as a separate country.

However, it is interesting to see the sense of national pride emerging in the support for retaining our ‘distinctive Kiwi culture’ especially amongst the younger generation. And also the level of concern that the majority of us value having input into government decisions.

Perhaps this gives hope that amidst the cost-of-living crisis and gloomy economic forecasts, not all are drawn to the bright lights of our larger, wealthier neighbour.”

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

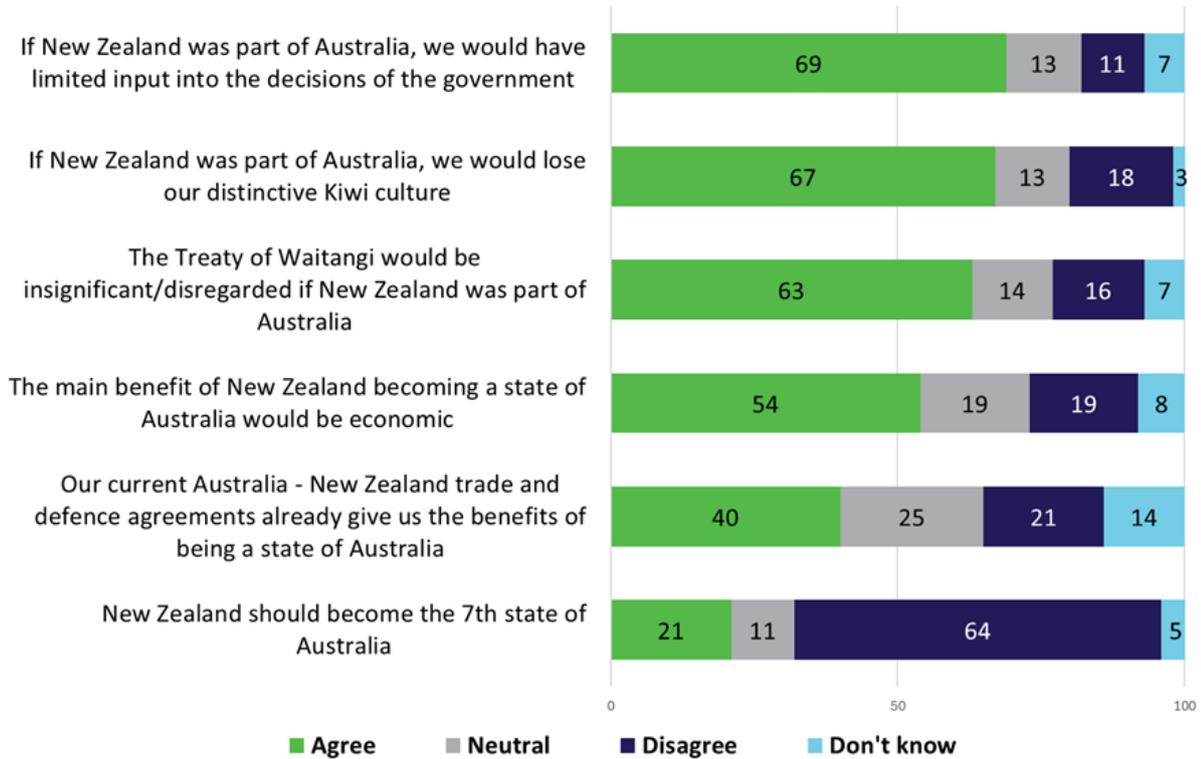
Contact: Emanuel Kalafatelis (027 500 4401)
Managing Partner
Rangahau Aotearoa Research New Zealand Limited
P O Box 10-617
Wellington 6140

Key findings – attitudes towards whether New Zealand would be better off as a state of Australia

Respondents were asked to say whether they agreed or disagreed with a series of statements related to the discussions around the idea that New Zealand would be better off as a state of Australia rather than remaining as a separate country (refer to Figure 2 overleaf).

The key findings are as follows:

- Overall, just under two-thirds of all respondents (64%) reported they **disagreed** New Zealand should become the 7th state of Australia, whilst 21% **agreed**:
 - those aged 55 or older were more likely to disagree (69%).
- Given that those disagreeing are in the majority, around two-thirds of **all** respondents agreed that **if New Zealand was part of Australia**:
 - we would have **limited input** into the decisions of the government (69%)
 - we would **lose** our distinctive **Kiwi culture** (67%); and
 - the **Treaty of Waitangi** would be insignificant/**disregarded** (63%).
- However, the fact that 21% agreed with the concept should not be disregarded; males were particularly in favour.
- In fact, overall, over **one-half** (54%) of **all** respondents - regardless of whether or not they agreed with New Zealand becoming Australia's 7th state – agreed that the main benefit of New Zealand becoming a state of Australia would be economic.

Figure 2: How much do you agree or disagree that...

As shown in Table 1 overleaf - amongst those who **agreed** with the statement, 'New Zealand **should become** the 7th state of Australia', there was also **significantly higher agreement** that:

- The **main benefit** would be 'economic' (at 88% compared to 44% who 'disagreed' with the statement); and
- '*Our current Australia - New Zealand trade and defence agreements already give us the benefits of being a state of Australia*' (61% compared to 37% who 'disagreed' with the statement).

Conversely, amongst those who **disagreed** with the statement, 'New Zealand **should become** the 7th state of Australia', there was significantly more concern that **if New Zealand was part of Australia**, we would:

- '*Lose our distinctive Kiwi culture*' (83% agreed compared to 43% who 'agreed' NZ should be the 7th state); and
- '*Have limited input into the decisions of the government*' (77% agreed compared to 63%).

Table 1: Recently there has been discussion in the media about whether New Zealand would be better off as a state of Australia, rather than remaining an independent country. Proportion that 'agreed' with each statement. By attitude towards whether New Zealand should become the 7th state of Australia.

Unweighted base =	TOTAL	New Zealand should become the 7th state of Australia		
	Mar-26	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
	1010	638	112	207
	%	%	%	%
If New Zealand was part of Australia, we would have limited input into the decisions of the government	69	77	43	63
If New Zealand was part of Australia, we would lose our distinctive Kiwi culture	67	83	38	43
The Treaty of Waitangi would be insignificant/disregarded if New Zealand was part of Australia	63	69	43	63
The main benefit of New Zealand becoming a state of Australia would be economic	54	44	53	88
Our current Australia - New Zealand trade and defence agreements already give us the benefits of being a state of Australia	40	37	29	61

NB: 'Not applicable' responses were excluded and 'Don't know' responses are not shown on the table.

It is interesting to note that the attitudes respondents expressed are fairly consistent across different age groups (refer to Table 2 overleaf).

There were, however, two exceptions:

- **Young adults** (aged 18 to 34 years) were significantly more concerned than older respondents that *'If New Zealand was part of Australia, we would lose our distinctive Kiwi culture'* at 73% compared to 64% of those aged 35 years and older.
- **Older respondents** (aged 55 years plus) were more likely to **disagree** with the statement that *'New Zealand should become the 7th state of Australia'*, at 69% compared to the average of 64%.

Table 2: Recently there has been discussion in the media about whether New Zealand would be better off as a state of Australia, rather than remaining an independent country. Proportion that 'agreed' with each statement. By age.

Unweighted base =	TOTAL	18-34	35-54	55+
	Mar-26			
	1010	291	355	364
	%	%	%	%
If New Zealand was part of Australia, we would have limited input into the decisions of the government	69	69	68	68
If New Zealand was part of Australia, we would lose our distinctive Kiwi culture	67	73	64	64
The Treaty of Waitangi would be insignificant/disregarded if New Zealand was part of Australia	63	62	62	66
The main benefit of New Zealand becoming a state of Australia would be economic	54	56	56	51
Our current Australia - New Zealand trade and defence agreements already give us the benefits of being a state of Australia	40	44	38	38
New Zealand should become the 7th state of Australia	21	20	24	17

NB: 'Not applicable' responses were excluded.

In terms of gender differences, **male** respondents were more likely to have agreed that:

- *'New Zealand should become the 7th state of Australia'* at 27% compared to 14% of female respondents.
- *'The main benefit of New Zealand becoming a state of Australia would be economic'* at 59% compared to 49% of female respondents.

In comparison, significantly more **female** respondents agreed that *'If New Zealand was part of Australia, we would lose our distinctive Kiwi culture'* at 71% compared to 63% of male respondents.

Method

This survey of 1,010 respondents aged 18 years and over was conducted online, between 7 to 9 March 2026. 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.

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