

It looks as if we want to retain the current daylight savings system

The topic

Daylight savings ends this year on Sunday 5 April 2026.

For those who can't remember, we put our clocks **forward** one hour last year on the last Sunday in September and this weekend we will put our clocks **back** one hour to our (winter) New Zealand Standard Time.

Not all countries do this, and there has been some recent discussion about whether New Zealand should revise our daylight saving system.

In 2008, we conducted a poll on the topic with a nationally representative sample of New Zealanders, 18+ and this showed 90% approved of daylight saving and 82% approved of the (then recent) extension to the current system which ran from the last Sunday in September to the first in April.

However, in 2021 when we polled again, less than one-half (47%) were in favour of keeping this system. Over one-third (37%) wanted some form of **change**; specifically:

- About one-fifth (19%) stated they wanted daylight saving to **end** – which means we would permanently stay on (winter) NZ Standard Time, and we would not move the clocks forward for summer.
- Another fifth (18%) said they preferred to move our **clocks forward permanently** – this means that daylight saving time would become the new normal NZ Standard Time.

Last weekend, between 27 and 30 March, we repeated the same daylight savings questions we had asked in 2021 to see if this was still the case, or opinion had changed again.

The survey

This poll is based on nationally-representative sample of n=1,019 New Zealanders, 18 years of age and over. We asked the following questions:

Q. “Which of the following options are you in favour of?”

- Keep the current system – so clocks go forward in spring and back in autumn each year.
- End daylight saving – so we permanently stay on (winter) NZ Standard Time, and do not move the clocks forward for summer .
- Move our clocks forward permanently – so daylight saving becomes the new normal NZ Standard Time.
- I don’t care.
- Don’t know.

Q. What are your reasons for saying ... New Zealand should keep the current system/New Zealand should end daylight savings/New Zealand should move our clocks forward permanently?

High-level findings

1. Compared with 2021, there has been virtually **no** change in opinion with regard to daylight savings.
2. As was the case that year, one-in-every two respondents (47%) this year stated they favoured the **current system**.
3. In contrast, 19% this year stated they preferred **daylight savings to end**, so we permanently stay on (winter) NZ Standard Time.
4. The same percentage (19%) said they preferred our clocks **move forward permanently** – so daylight saving becomes the new normal NZ Standard Time.
5. The percentages of respondents preferring daylight savings to end and preferring our clocks to move forward permanently are also similar to the percentages recorded in 2021 (19% and 18% respectively).
6. Finally, there are relatively few differences based on the standard demographic variables we use to examine survey results (e.g., age, gender, region, etc.) – meaning that the above opinions about daylight savings are universally held.

Comment

“Given that there’s been no change in opinion in 5 years, it looks as if the status quo will remain. Furthermore, we wonder whether the 19% of respondents wanting us to move our clocks forward permanently, so that daylight savings becomes the new normal NZ Standard Time, connects with changing climate patterns given their reasons for wanting this.”

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Key findings – attitudes towards daylight saving

Respondents were asked to consider three options with regard to the future of daylight saving and to choose the one they were personally most in favour of. They were also able to say they didn't care or they did not know.

Table 1 below compares the current results compared with those recorded five years ago in March 2021. This shows that there has virtually been **no** change in opinion:

- Almost everyone had an opinion.
- As was the case in 2021, one-in-every two respondents (47%) stated they favoured the **current system**.
- In contrast, 19% stated they preferred **daylight saving to end**, so we permanently stay on (winter) NZ Standard Time.
- The same percentage (19%) said they preferred our clocks **move forward permanently** – so daylight savings becomes the new normal NZ Standard Time.

Table 1: Q1. Which of the following options are you personally in favour of? I think New Zealand should...

| | March 2026 | March 2021 |
|--|---------------|---------------|
| Unweighted base = | 1019 | 1010 |
| | % | % |
| ... keep the current system – so clocks go forward in spring and back in autumn each year | 47 | 47 |
| ... end daylight savings - so we permanently stay on (winter) NZ Standard Time, and do not move the clocks forward for summer | 19 | 19 |
| ... move our clocks forward permanently – so daylight savings becomes the new normal NZ Standard Time | 19 | 18 |
| I don't care | 12 | 11 |
| Don't know | 3 | 4 |
| Total | 100 | 100 |

Reasons for keeping the current system

Depending on how they had answered the first question (i.e., keep the current system, end daylight savings, move our clocks forward permanently) respondents were asked to provide an explanation for the option they had chosen.

Respondents who stated they were in favour of keeping the current system (47% of the total sample), most frequently stated this was for two reasons:

- It would give them, *'more time to enjoy daylight hours during summer/warmer weather'* (53%).
- It would give them, *'more time for outdoor activities at home'* (41%).

These two reasons were also most frequently stated in 2021 and in comparison, to all the reasons given in that poll five years ago, the only significant difference this year is the smaller percentage giving, *'More time with children/family'* as a reason for favouring the existing system (19% and 24% respectively).

Table 2: Q2. What are your reasons for saying New Zealand should keep the current system?

| In favour of keeping the current system | March 2026 | March 2021 |
|--|------------|------------|
| Unweighted base = | 479 | 477 |
| | %x | % |
| More time to enjoy daylight hours during summer/warmer weather | 53 | 57 |
| More time for outdoor activities at home | 41 | 43 |
| More relaxation/leisure hours | 33 | 34 |
| More time for physical activity (sports/exercise/walks) | 31 | 32 |
| No change to my routines/I like things as they are | 27 | 30 |
| Less electricity and fuel use | 27 | 25 |
| More time for socialising | 22 | 18 |
| More time with children/family | 19 | 24 |
| No hassle with remembering to change clocks | 14 | 11 |
| Less effort needed to get up/get family up in winter | 13 | 23 |
| An improvement in health (less mental health issues/heart attacks) | 13 | 13 |
| Less crime, it would be safer to go out with more light | 13 | 12 |

Reasons for ending daylight savings permanently

In contrast to those respondents who stated they were most in favour of keeping the current system, respondents who preferred an end to the system altogether (19% of the total sample), most frequently stated this was for two reasons:

- They would have, *'no hassle with remembering to change clocks'* (49%).
- There would be, *'no change to their routines/I like things as they are'* (47%).

While these two reasons were also most frequently stated in 2021, in both cases, significantly more of this group of respondents this year have provided them as a reason for ending daylight savings permanently.

For example, 49% of these respondents this year stated they favoured ending daylight savings permanently compared with 36% in 2021.

Beyond these two reasons, there are also several other significant differences year-to-year.

Table 3: Q2. What are your reasons for saying New Zealand should end daylight saving?

| In favour of ending daylight saving | March 2026 | March 2021 |
|---|------------|------------|
| Unweighted base = | 188 | 186 |
| | % | % |
| No hassle with remembering to change clocks | 49 | 36 |
| No change to my routines/I like things as they are | 47 | 36 |
| Less changing times would make it easier to contact overseas friends and family | 31 | 22 |
| Less effort needed to get up/get family up in winter | 25 | 19 |
| More time to enjoy daylight hours during summer/warmer weather | 25 | 15 |
| More relaxation/leisure hours | 21 | 17 |
| Less crime, it would be safer to go out with more light | 19 | 10 |
| Less electricity and fuel use | 18 | 15 |
| An improvement in health (less mental health issues/heart attacks) | 17 | 19 |
| Fewer traffic accidents | 12 | 10 |
| More time for socialising | 9 | 11 |

Reasons for moving our clocks ahead permanently

Finally, respondents who were neither in favour of keeping the current system nor ending it altogether, but moving our clocks permanently forward (19% of the total sample), most frequently stated this was because:

- It would give them, *'more time to enjoy daylight hours during summer / warmer weather'* (57%).
- They would have, *'no hassle with remembering to change clocks'* (51%).
- They would have, *'more time for outdoor activities at home'* (46%).
- They would have, *'More time for physical activity (sports/exercise/walks)'* (45%).

As such, these reasons are similar to the reasons given by the group of respondents who favoured keeping the current system.

These reasons, and all the others, reflect a similar set of reasons given in 2021.

Table 4: Q2. What are your reasons for saying New Zealand should move our clocks forward permanently?

| In favour of moving our clocks forward permanently | March 2026 | March 2021 |
|---|------------|------------|
| Unweighted base = | 196 | 190 |
| | % | % |
| More time to enjoy daylight hours during summer/warmer weather | 57 | 65 |
| No hassle with remembering to change clocks | 51 | 46 |
| More time for outdoor activities at home | 46 | 47 |
| More time for physical activity (sports/exercise/walks) | 45 | 41 |
| More relaxation/leisure hours | 42 | 41 |
| Less electricity and fuel use | 41 | 36 |
| More time with children/family | 32 | 25 |
| No change to my routines/I like things as they are | 30 | 31 |
| Less changing times would make it easier to contact overseas friends and family | 27 | 26 |
| Less effort needed to get up/get family up in winter | 27 | 25 |
| More time for socialising | 25 | 25 |
| Less crime, it would be safer to go out with more light | 25 | 25 |
| An improvement in health (less mental health issues/heart attacks) | 26 | 24 |
| More time to work | 16 | 10 |
| More time for volunteering/community activities | 14 | 14 |

Method

This survey of 1,019 respondents aged 18 years and over was conducted online, between 27 to 30 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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