

Horizon Research

**Royal Commission Inquiry into Abuse in Care
September 2025**

Prepared for

**Te Kāhui Tika Tangata
Human Rights Commission**

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Executive Summary

This report summarises the results of a survey of New Zealand adults' views on the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in Care.

The survey was conducted nationwide between 4th and 14th September, 2025. There were 1,045 respondents aged 18+, representing New Zealand's adult population.

At a 95% confidence level, the survey has a maximum margin of error of $\pm 3\%$ overall.

Summary of findings

Experience of abuse in state or faith based care

16% (equivalent to around 622,000 adults¹) say they or someone in their whānau, have lived experience of abuse in state or faith-based care.

Knowledge of New Zealand's history of abuse in care is divided.

53% (2,060,000 adults) are confident about their knowledge of New Zealand's history of abuse in care.

40% (1,538,000 adults) are not confident about their knowledge of New Zealand's history of abuse in care.

Opinion of abuse in state care

The majority agree that abuse in care happened due to serious problems with systems and institutions and there are ways to prevent them happening again.

73% (2,829,000 adults) agree there are *practical ways to prevent abuse in care from happening in the future*.

67% (2,574,000 adults) agree *abuse in care happened because there were widespread and serious problems with systems and institutions responsible for care*.

59% (2,269,000 adults) believe that *abuse in state and faith-based care is still a serious problem today*.

¹ All population numbers based on the Stats NZ 2023 Census population 3,865,235 people aged 18 or over. All population numbers are to the nearest thousand.

	Total Agree ²	Total Disagree ³
There are practical ways to prevent abuse in care from happening in the future	73%	3%
Abuse in care happened because there were widespread and serious problems with systems and institutions responsible for care	67%	5%
Abuse in state and faith-based care is still a serious problem today	59%	8%
Abuse in care mostly happened because a few individuals working in care caused serious harm	38%	29%
Abuse in state and faith-based care mostly happened in the past and doesn't happen today	14%	55%
I don't believe that there is much we can do to prevent abuse in care from happening	12%	70%

Views on responsibilities of abuse in state care

The majority believe that abuse in care can be addressed and that families who were involved need support.

78% (3,023,000 adults) agree *we can afford to address abuse in care if we choose to make it a priority.*

75% (2,907,000 adults) agree *many families who ended up involved with the care system needed support, not blame.*

Views are mixed on whether the *government is doing enough to right the wrongs and prevent it from happening in the future* – **22%** (850,000 adults) agree and **38%** (1,465,000 adults) disagree.

	Total Agree	Total Disagree
We can afford to address abuse in care if we choose to make it a priority	78%	4%
Many families who ended up involved with the care system needed support, not blame	75%	3%
Parents bear responsibility for any harm that comes to their children, whether or not their children are in their care	39%	30%
I believe the government is doing enough to right the wrongs of abuse in care and prevent it from happening in the future	22%	38%
We can't afford to focus too much on abuse in care while there are so many other urgent problems in society to deal with	12%	64%

² Strongly agree/agree

³ Strongly disagree/disagree

Views on values and justice in Aotearoa New Zealand

There is strong consensus that everyone deserves the chance to shape their future and lead a life of dignity.

92% (3,552,000 adults) agree *everyone deserves the chance to live a good life and shape their own future.*

91% (2,533,000 adults) believe *no matter who we are, we all deserve to lead a life of dignity.*

The majority agree that lessons are learned from survivors of abuse in state care and justice must be done in response to the harm that was caused.

89% (3,456,000 adults) believe *it is important that we listen to and learn from the survivors who spoke out.*

87% (3,370,000 adults) agree *justice must be done in response to the harm caused by abuse in care.*

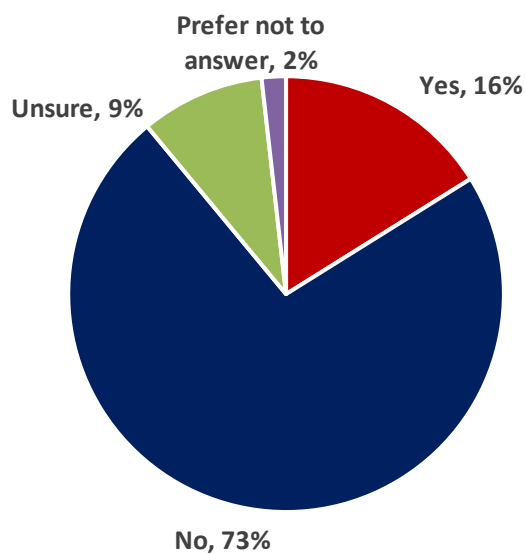
	Total Agree	Total Disagree
Everyone deserves the chance to live a good life and shape their own future	92%	1%
No matter who we are, we all deserve to lead a life of dignity	91%	1%
It is important that we listen to and learn from the survivors who spoke out	89%	1%
Every child should be loved and treasured as taonga	88%	1%
Justice must be done in response to the harm caused by abuse in care	87%	1%
Everyone in Aotearoa should grow up grounded in their identity, and connected to their immediate and wider whānau	72%	7%
The government is responsible for addressing the harm that occurred in state and faith-based care	71%	6%
All families want to create safe, loving environments so our children can thrive	64%	16%

Report

Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in Care

16% (622,000 adults) say they or someone in their whānau, have lived experience of abuse in state or faith-based care.

Do you, or someone in your whānau, have lived experience of abuse in state or faith-based care?



Total Sample: n=1,045

The people (or someone in their whānau) more likely to have lived experience of abuse in state or faith-based care are:

- Have annual household income less than \$50k
- Māori
- Voted Te Pāti Māori in 2023.

Profiles of people who have lived experience of abuse in state or faith-based care are detailed in the following table.

Do you, or someone in your whānau, have lived experience of abuse in state or faith-based care?				
	Total sample	Yes	No	Unsure
AGE				
18-24 years	13%	19%	10%	22%
25-34 years	17%	17%	17%	17%
35-44 years	17%	16%	17%	18%
45-54 years	17%	16%	16%	18%
55-64 years	13%	13%	12%	12%
65-74 years	13%	13%	13%	11%
75 years or over	12%	7%	13%	4%
Under 35 years	30%	35%	28%	39%
35-54 years	33%	33%	34%	36%
55+ years	37%	32%	39%	26%
GENDER				
Male	49%	45%	50%	49%
Female	51%	55%	50%	51%
Another gender	1%	1%	1%	0%
EMPLOYED				
Yes	62%	58%	64%	57%
No	38%	42%	36%	44%
HOUSEHOLD INCOME				
Less than \$20,000 per year	7%	11%	5%	10%
Between \$20,001 and \$30,000 per year	9%	18%	7%	6%
Between \$30,001 and \$50,000 per year	15%	18%	15%	8%
Between \$50,001 and \$70,000 per year	13%	10%	15%	12%
Between \$70,001 and \$100,000 per year	14%	12%	15%	13%
Between \$100,001 and \$150,000 per year	15%	15%	16%	6%
Between \$150,001 and \$200,000 per year	8%	4%	9%	8%
More than \$200,000 per year	6%	2%	7%	5%
Don't know/ prefer not to say	14%	10%	11%	32%
Under \$50,000	31%	47%	28%	24%
\$50,000-\$150,000	42%	37%	45%	31%
Over \$150,000	14%	6%	16%	13%
HOUSEHOLD TYPE				
Single person household	19%	24%	18%	12%
Couple only (no children/none at home)	30%	30%	32%	21%
Two parent family, one or two children at home	23%	17%	24%	23%
Two parent family, three or more children at home	6%	7%	5%	14%
One parent family, one or two children at home	5%	3%	4%	11%
One parent family, three or more children at home	2%	6%	1%	2%
Flatting or boarding - not a family home	8%	10%	8%	8%
Extended family	6%	3%	6%	3%
Prefer not to say	2%	0%	1%	8%
HOUSEHOLD WITH CHILDREN	41%	36%	41%	52%
HOUSEHOLD WITHOUT CHILDREN	57%	64%	58%	41%

BLUE = significantly higher than total sample RED = significantly lower than total sample

Do you, or someone in your whānau, have lived experience of abuse in state or faith-based care?				
	Total sample	Yes	No	Unsure
European	72%	69%	74%	59%
Māori	13%	22%	9%	26%
Pacific	6%	10%	4%	17%
Asian	13%	8%	14%	17%
Middle Eastern, Latin American, African (MELAA)	2%	2%	1%	5%
Other	6%	5%	6%	7%
PARTY VOTE 2023				
ACT New Zealand	6%	9%	6%	4%
Green Party	8%	11%	7%	9%
Labour Party	19%	13%	21%	18%
National Party	27%	21%	30%	19%
New Zealand First	4%	4%	5%	2%
Te Pāti Māori	3%	7%	2%	3%
N (unweighted)	1,074	168	769	91

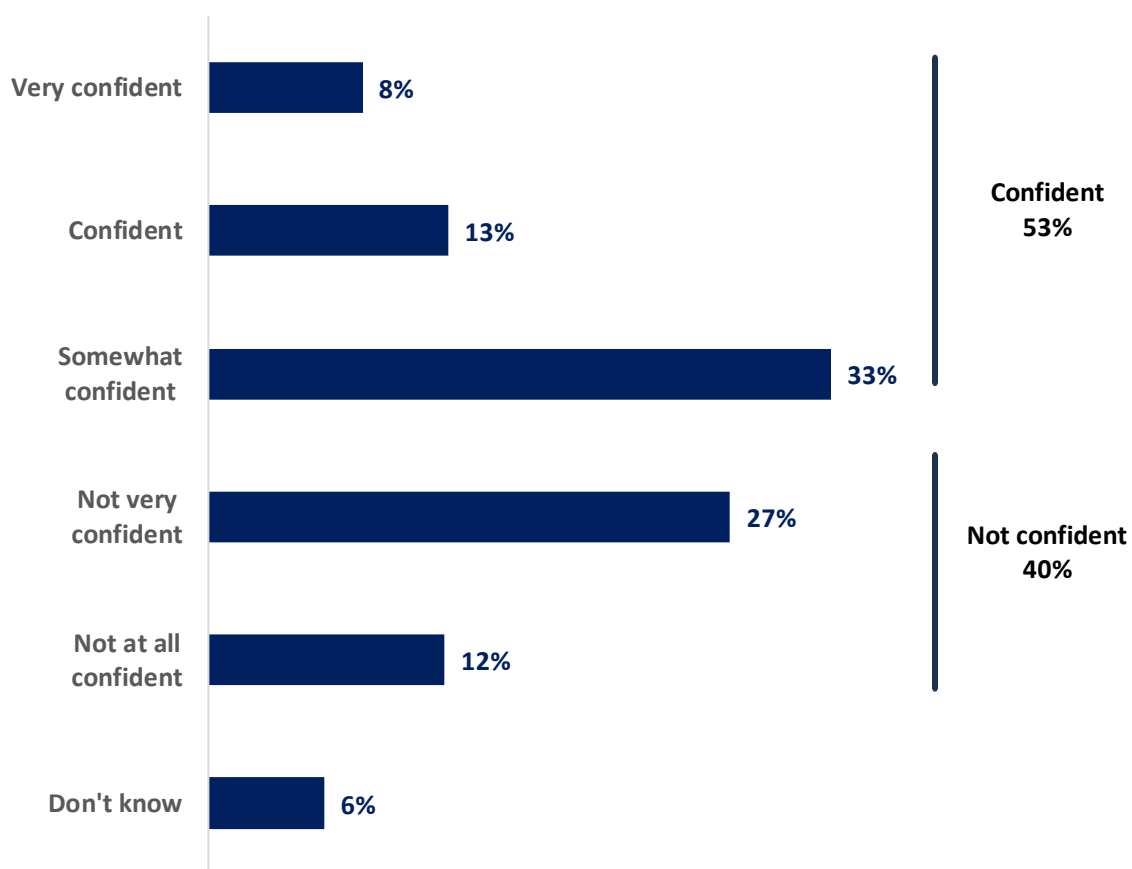
BLUE = significantly higher than total sample RED = significantly lower than total sample

Knowledge of New Zealand's history of abuse in care

53% (2,060,000 adults) are confident about their knowledge of New Zealand's history of abuse in care.

40% (1,538,000 adults) are not confident about their knowledge of New Zealand's history of abuse in care.

How confident do you feel in your knowledge about
New Zealand's history of abuse in care?



Total Sample n=1,044
 Excludes respondents who selected "prefer not to answer"

The table below shows differences across groups and those who more likely to be confident or not confident about their knowledge of New Zealand's history of abuse in care.

Differences among voters are highlighted in the table.

More likely to be confident ⁴		More likely to <u>not</u> be confident ⁵	
Total - 53%		Total - 40%	
55-64 year olds	68%	25-34 year olds	48%
65-74 year olds	78%	35-44 year olds	51%
75+ year olds	68%	Have household income \$100k-\$150k	50%
Have household income \$70k-\$100k	66%	Two parent family, one or two children at home	47%
Couple only (no children at home)	65%	Flatting/boarding – not family home	53%
Voted ACT in 2023	71%	Asian ethnicity	51%
		Voted Labour Party in 2023	63%

⁴ Very confident/confident/somewhat confident

⁵ Not at all confident/Not very confident

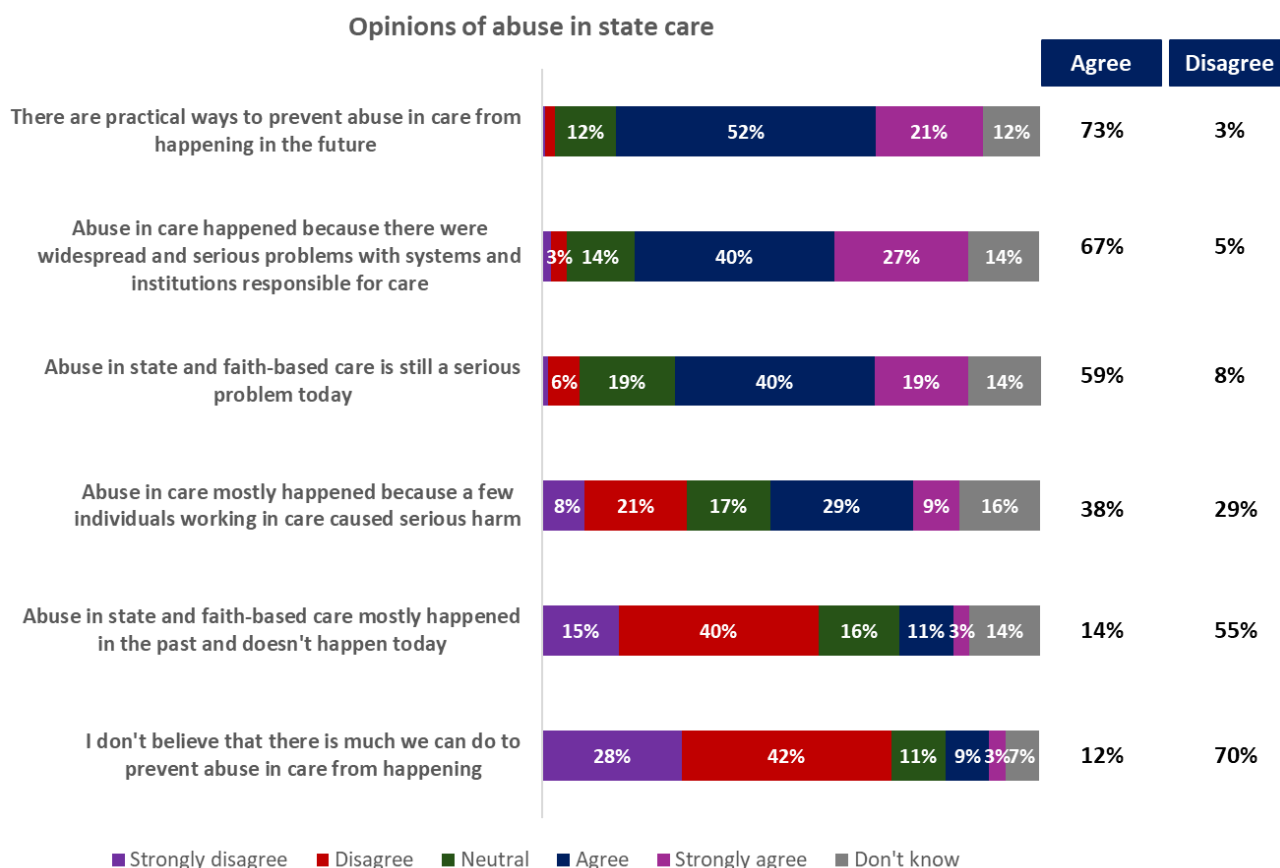
Opinions of abuse in state care

The majority agree that abuse in care happened due to serious problems with systems and institutions and there are ways to prevent them happening again.

73% (2,829,000 adults) agree *there are practical ways to prevent abuse in care from happening in the future*. **21%** (827,000 adults) strongly agree.

67% (2,574,000 adults) agree *abuse in care happened because there were widespread and serious problems with systems and institutions responsible for care*. **27%** (1,040,000 adults) strongly agree.

59% (2,269,000 adults) believe that *abuse in state and faith-based care is still a serious problem today*. **19%** (727,000 adults) strongly agree.



Total Sample
Excludes respondents who selected "prefer not to answer"

The table below shows groups who are significantly more likely to agree or disagree with the opinions on abuse in state care.

	More likely to agree ⁶		More likely to disagree ⁷
There are practical ways to prevent abuse in care from happening in the future	55-64 year olds 81% Have household income more than \$150k 84% Voted Green Party in 2023 87%		No significant differences
Abuse in care happened because there were widespread and serious problems with systems and institutions responsible for care	55+ year olds 79% Voted Green Party in 2023 85% Voted Labour Party in 2023 75%		No significant differences
Abuse in state and faith-based care is still a serious problem today	Voted Green Party in 2023 76% Voted Labour Party in 2023 67% Voted Te Pāti Māori in 2023 74% Voted National Party in 2023 50%	Voted ACT in 2023 20%	
Abuse in care mostly happened because a few individuals working in care caused serious harm		55-64 year olds 43% 65-74 year olds 41% Have household income more than \$200k 55% Voted Green Party in 2023 45% Voted Labour Party in 2023 37% Voted Te Pāti Māori in 2023 56%	
Abuse in state and faith-based care mostly happened in the past and doesn't happen today	25-34 year olds 23% Males 20% Have household income \$70k-\$100k 23% Have household income more than \$200k 27% Voted ACT in 2023 26%	65-74 year olds 72% Females 62% Have household income less than \$50k 62% Voted Green Party in 2023 69% Voted Labour Party in 2023 65%	
I don't believe that there is much we can do to prevent abuse in care from happening	25-34 year olds 22% Have household income more than \$200k 22%	55-64 year olds 83% 65-74 year olds 85% Voted Green Party in 2023 84% Voted Labour Party in 2023 77%	

⁶ Strongly agree/agree

⁷ Strongly disagree/disagree

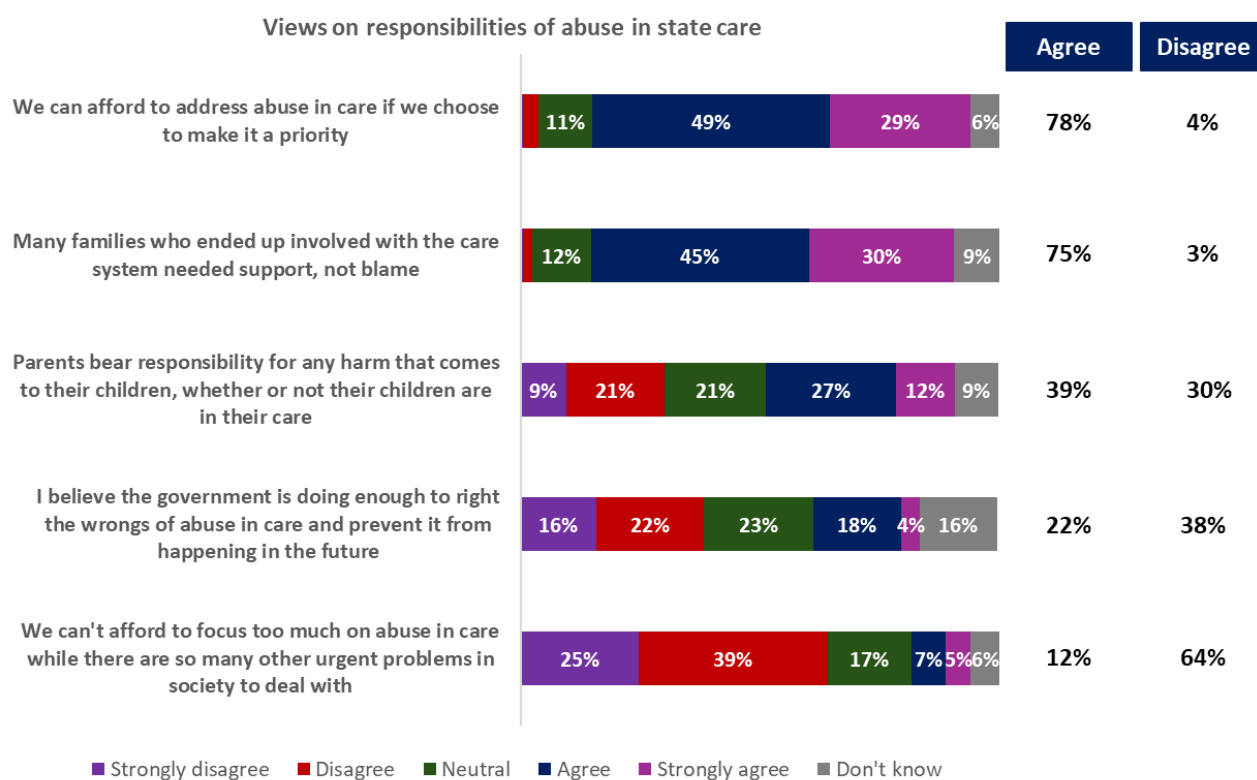
Views on responsibilities of abuse in state care

The majority believe that abuse in care can be addressed and that families who were involved need support.

78% (3,023,000 adults) agree *we can afford to address abuse in care if we choose to make it a priority*. **29%** (1,121,000 adults) strongly agree.

75% (2,907,000 adults) agree *many families who ended up involved with the care system needed support, not blame*. **30%** (1,160,000 adults) strongly agree.

There are mixed views on whether the *government is doing enough to right the wrongs and prevent it from happening in the future* – **22%** (850,000 adults) agree and **38%** (1,465,000 adults) disagree.



Total Sample
 Excludes respondents who selected "prefer not to answer"

The table below shows significant differences on opinion about responsibilities of addressing abuse in state care.

	More likely to agree ⁸	More likely to disagree ⁹
	55+ year olds 85%	No significant differences
	Have household income less than \$50k 84%	
We can afford to address abuse in care if we choose to make it a priority	Flatting or boarding - not a family home 86%	
	Voted Green Party in 2023 93%	
	Voted Labour Party in 2023 84%	
Many families who ended up involved with the care system needed support, not blame	75+ year olds 85%	Voted ACT in 2023 11%
	Voted Labour Party in 2023 82%	
	Voted Te Pāti Māori in 2023 89%	
Parents bear responsibility for any harm that comes to their children, whether or not their children are in their care	25-34 year olds 50%	55+ year olds 37%
	Have household income more than \$200k 51%	Have household income \$150k-\$200k 42%
	Pacific 65%	Voted Green Party in 2023 53%
	Asian 57%	Voted Labour Party in 2023 39%
	Voted ACT in 2023 51%	
	25-34 year olds 31%	55+ year olds 46%
I believe the government is doing enough to right the wrongs of abuse in care and prevent it from happening in the future	Have household income \$70k-\$100k 32%	Have household income less than \$50k 45%
	Have household income more than \$200k 44%	Have household income \$150k-\$200k 50%
	Asian 33%	Māori 52%
	Voted ACT in 2023 43%	Voted Green Party in 2023 64%
	Voted National Party in 2023 33%	Voted Labour Party in 2023 56%
		Voted Te Pāti Māori in 2023 72%
We can't afford to focus too much on abuse in care while there are so many other urgent problems in society to deal with	Under 35 year olds 22%	55+ year olds 78%
	Employed 16%	Not employed 71%
	Have household income less than \$20k 25%	Have household income \$150k-\$200k 73%
	Have household income more than \$200k 24%	Voted Green Party in 2023 80%
	Voted Te Pāti Māori in 2023 28%	Voted Labour Party in 2023 75%

⁸ Strongly agree/agree

⁹ Strongly disagree/disagree

Views on values and justice in Aotearoa New Zealand

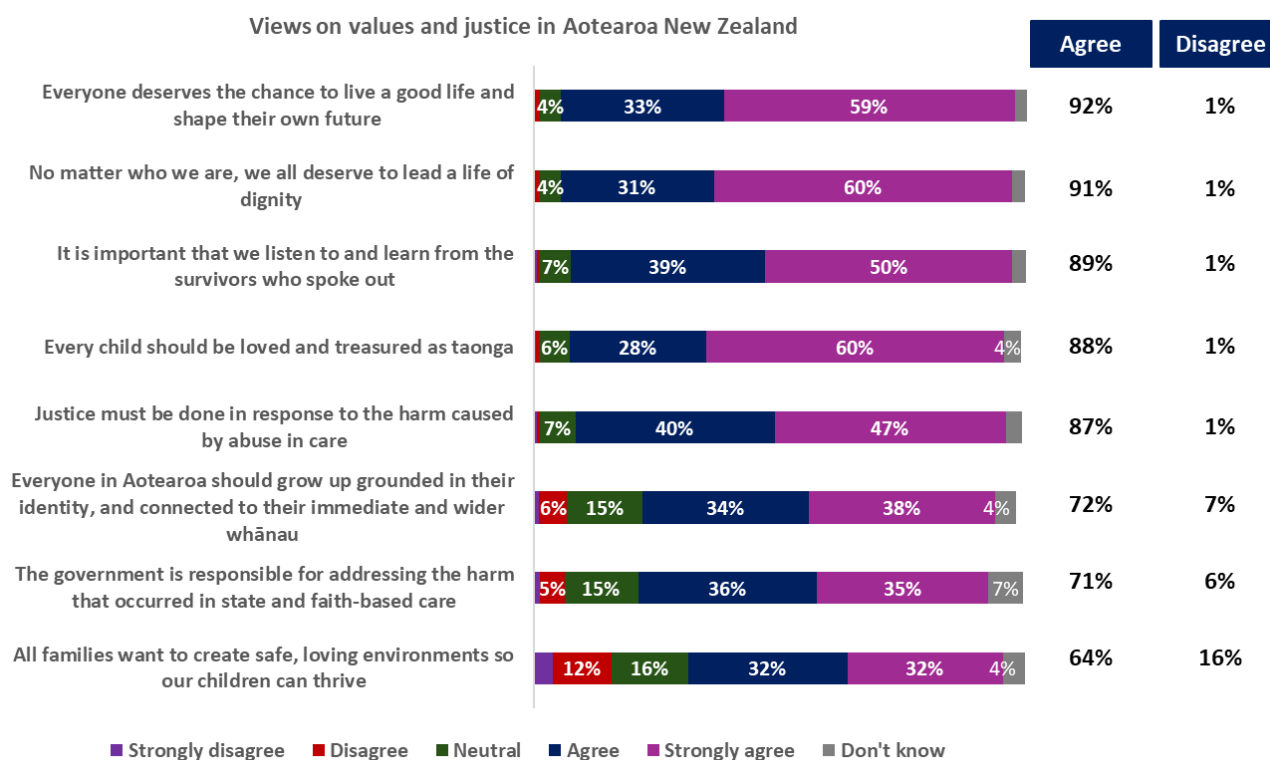
There is strong consensus among adults that everyone deserves the chance to shape their future and lead a life of dignity.

92% (3,552,000 adults) agree *everyone deserves the chance to live a good life and shape their own future*. **33%** (1,272,000 adults) strongly agree.

91% (2,533,000 adults) believe *no matter who we are, we all deserve to lead a life of dignity*. **31%** (1,198,000 adults) strongly agree.

89% (3,456,000 adults) believe *it is important that we listen to and learn from the survivors who spoke out*. **50%** (1,933,000 adults) strongly agree.

87% (3,370,000 adults) agree *justice must be done in response to the harm caused by abuse in care*. **47%** (1,813,000 adults) strongly agree.



Total Sample
 Excludes respondents who selected "prefer not to answer"

The table below shows significant differences on opinion about values and justice in Aotearoa New Zealand

	More likely to agree ¹⁰	More likely to disagree ¹¹
Everyone deserves the chance to live a good life and shape their own future	55+ year olds	97%
	Have household income more than \$150k	96%
	35-44 year olds	96%
No matter who we are, we all deserve to lead a life of dignity	55+ year olds	97%
	Have household income \$20k-\$30k	98%
	Have household income more than \$150k	96%
	35-44 year olds	95%
It is important that we listen to and learn from the survivors who spoke out	55+ year olds	94%
	Have household income \$20k-\$30k	95%
	Have household income more than \$200k	98%
	Voted Green Party in 2023	96%
	Voted Labour Party in 2023	93%
	35-44 year olds	94%
	65-74 year olds	96%
Every child should be loved and treasured as taonga	75+ year olds	97%
	Have household income \$50k-\$70k	93%
	Have household income more than \$200k	95%
	Voted Labour Party in 2023	95%
	35-44 year olds	94%
	65-74 year olds	94%
Justice must be done in response to the harm caused by abuse in care	Have household income \$50k-\$70k	92%
	Have household income \$70k-\$100k	92%
	Have household income more than \$200k	94%
	Voted Green Party in 2023	93%
	Voted Labour Party in 2023	93%

¹⁰ Strongly agree/agree

¹¹ Strongly disagree/disagree

	More likely to agree ¹²	More likely to disagree ¹³
Everyone in Aotearoa should grow up grounded in their identity, and connected to their immediate and wider whānau	35-44 year olds 80% Voted Green Party in 2023 83% Voted Labour Party in 2023 86%	Voted ACT in 2023 21%
The government is responsible for addressing the harm that occurred in state and faith-based care	35-44 year olds 82% Asian 80% Voted Green Party in 2023 90% Voted Labour Party in 2023 80%	Voted ACT in 2023 24%
All families want to create safe, loving environments so our children can thrive	35-54 year olds 73% Two parent family, one or two children at home 73% Flatting or boarding - not a family home 74% Māori 76% Pacific 76% Asian 85% Voted Te Pāti Māori in 2023 84%	55+ year olds 25% Couple only (no children at home) 21% Voted ACT in 2023 29%

¹² Strongly agree/agree

¹³ Strongly disagree/disagree

Appendix 1 – Methodology and Sample

1,045 members from Horizon Research's online panels and a third-party research panel, representing the New Zealand population 18+, responded to the survey between 4th and 14th September 2025.

The total sample is weighted on age, employment, Party Vote 2023, region, personal income and ethnicity to match the New Zealand adult population.

The survey has a maximum margin of error, at a 95% confidence level, of $\pm 3\%$ overall.