

# 2024 NATIONAL RISKS PUBLIC SURVEY ALL THREATS & HAZARDS KEY FINDINGS SUMMARY



GAME CHANGERS



# RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This is the third annual survey the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC) has commissioned to understand public perceptions of National Risks (including both national security threats and significant hazards). While previous surveys focused more on national security threats, the scope has been broadened to include significant hazards. The survey explores:

- New Zealanders' awareness of National Risks, including the public's perceived likelihood of these over the short (next 12 months) and long term (next 10 years).
- Public confidence in government agencies' abilities to protect and respond.
- Opportunities to build confidence, share information and better engage the public.

Survey findings inform the work of the National Hazards Board (NHB) and the National Security Board (NSB) and their agencies. The Survey is also part of the National Security Strategy's current Programme of Action.

*This research report presents results from the third year of surveying (2024) and compares findings to results from the 2023 survey (where applicable).*

The Survey provides an understanding, across a nationally representative total sample of 2,350 people. The survey is split across two 'tracks' where survey respondents are asked to share their views in relation to either **National Security Threats** (n=1,172) or **Significant Hazards** (n=1,178).



National security threats

Significant hazards



# METHODOLOGY – ALL HAZARDS AND THREATS



## Fieldwork dates

19<sup>th</sup> February–14<sup>th</sup>  
March 2024\*



## Methodology

Interviews were conducted online (self-completion). Respondents were recruited from Ipsos, Ipsos-partner panels and river sampling\*\*



## Weighting

The data was weighted to match NZ population for region, ethnicity & gender



## Sample achieved

Total survey = 2,350  
*National Security Threats*  
(n=1,172);  
*Significant Hazards*  
(n=1,178).

## \*Notes

- The Port Hills wildfire in Christchurch (early February 2024) overlapped with survey fieldwork. This may have impacted responses, especially from South island survey respondents.
- Statistically significantly **higher** / **lower** figures are reported at 95% confidence.
- We calculate the precision of Ipsos online polls using a credibility interval with a poll of 1,000 accurate to +/- 3.5 percentage points.
- Where results do not sum to 100 or the 'difference' appears to be + / -1 more / less than the actual, this may be due to rounding, multiple responses or the exclusion of 'don't know' or 'not stated' responses.
- Throughout the report, demographic differences are shown amongst the demographic groups that have a base size larger than n=50.
- \*\*See Appendix for further details on panels.

# KEY FINDINGS SUMMARY





# OVERALL FINDINGS

## Perceived global danger and National Risks to New Zealand in the short and long term

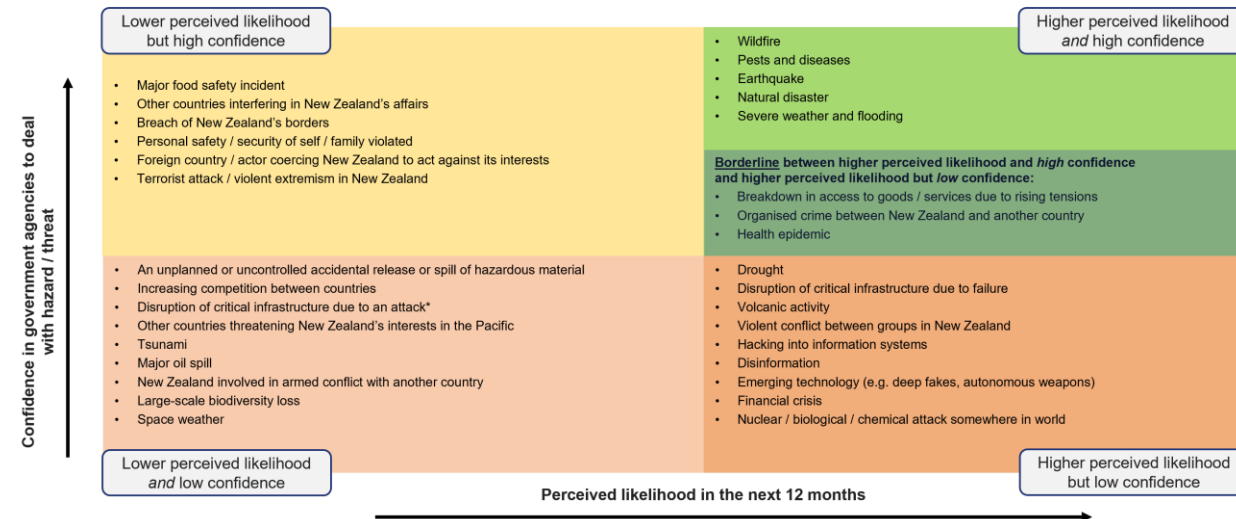
- Most New Zealanders (80%) believe the world has become a more dangerous place in the last year. Ipsos asked this same question in a [global World Affairs survey](#) across 30 countries and found New Zealanders held a similar view to the global country average (84%).
- Across all National Risks (which include both national security threats and significant hazards) those seen as most likely and of concern in the next 12 months include:
  - *severe weather & flooding, earthquake and natural disaster.*
  - This ‘top 3’ is followed by *organised crime, hacking into information systems and disinformation.*
- Across these six National Risks, New Zealanders reported they had already felt the impact or had experience of these. New Zealand’s *geography, natural environment and climate change* were also mentioned, particularly in relation to significant hazards. On national security threats, New Zealanders referred to a perceived a rise in crime and global events.
- In terms of National Risks over the next 10 years, the top 5 remain, although most of the threats and hazards are seen to be *more of a threat* in the next 10 years than in the next 12 months.



# OVERALL FINDINGS

- 62% of New Zealanders want more information on *national security threats* and 61% want to know more about *significant hazards*. Just under half (48%) know where to find information about *significant hazards*, with 22% knowing where to find information related to *national security*.
- Respondents were asked whether New Zealand’s national security agencies currently share enough information about national security with New Zealanders. As with previous Survey results, only 20% agree.
- This year, respondents were also asked whether enough information about significant hazards is shared, only 30% agreed.
- Confidence in government agencies’ abilities to provide appropriate levels of protection or response to Risks is highest for *wildfire, major food-safety incident, pests & diseases* and *earthquakes*. The next three include: *other countries interfering in NZ affairs, breach of NZ borders* and *personal safety / being violated*.
- New Zealanders are least confident in government agencies’ abilities to provide protection or respond to: *nuclear / biological attack happening somewhere in the world, space weather* and *financial crisis*.

- When considering perceived Likelihood of a Risk vs. Confidence, the National Risks where New Zealanders have lower confidence relative to higher perceived likelihood included:
  - *drought, disruption to critical infrastructure due to failure, volcanic activity, violent conflict between groups in New Zealand, hacking, disinformation, emerging technology, financial crisis* and *nuclear / biological / chemical attack somewhere in the world*.





# OVERALL FINDINGS – NATIONAL SECURITY THREATS

In 2024, we included ‘deep dives’ on *increased competition between countries*, *disruption of critical infrastructure (attack)* and *emerging technology*.

The majority of New Zealanders believe **the government and its agencies have the most responsibility to protect against or manage** the threats of *increased competition between countries*, *disruption of critical infrastructure* and *emerging technology*. Fewer believe they are fully resourced to do so.



“Increasing competition between countries that negatively impacts how New Zealand protects its interests internationally and that may lead to military conflict”

## INCREASED COMPETITION BETWEEN COUNTRIES

New Zealanders who mentioned *increased competition between countries* as a very real threat in the next 12 months, cited current international conflicts, foreign interference, trade and our country’s size and location making us vulnerable. Another reason is the ongoing Russian invasion of Ukraine.

### Perceived likelihood in next 12 months

11<sup>th</sup> out of 16 threats surveyed

### Perceived likelihood in next 10 years

11<sup>th</sup> out of 16 threats surveyed



“Disruption of New Zealand’s critical infrastructure (e.g. water, transport, energy, telecommunications) due to a malicious attack (e.g. cyber attack on transport system)”

## DISRUPTION OF CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE (ATTACK)

New Zealanders who stated they view *disruption of critical infrastructure* as a very real threat in the next 12 months, did so because of the size of our country’s population making us vulnerable, cyber security, seeing it is already happening and technological advances.

### Perceived likelihood in next 12 months

9<sup>th</sup> out of 16 threats surveyed

### Perceived likelihood in next 10 years

7<sup>th</sup> out of 16 threats surveyed



“New Zealand and/or New Zealanders’ security being affected by emerging technology (e.g. artificial intelligence, deep fakes, autonomous weapons)”

## EMERGING TECHNOLOGY

New Zealanders who mentioned *emerging technology* as a very real threat in the next 12 months, cited technological advances, seeing it is already happening now and cyber security. Another reason is the size of our country’s population making us vulnerable to larger foreign powers.

### Perceived likelihood in next 12 months

4<sup>th</sup> out of 16 threats surveyed

### Perceived likelihood in next 10 years

4<sup>th</sup> out of 16 threats surveyed



# OVERALL FINDINGS – SIGNIFICANT HAZARDS

In 2024, we included ‘deep dives’ on *severe weather & flooding, tsunami* and *disruption of critical infrastructure due to failure*.

The majority of New Zealanders believe that **the government and its agencies have the most responsibility to protect against or manage** the threats of *severe weather & flooding, tsunami* and *disruption of critical infrastructure due to failure*. Fewer believe they are fully resourced to do so.



“A severe weather event (e.g. strong winds, heavy rain, snow, landslides and/or flooding) in New Zealand”

## SEVERE WEATHER & FLOODING

New Zealanders who saw *severe weather & flooding* as a very real threat in the next 12 months, cited it as already happening now, a ‘natural phenomenon’, and the effects of climate change / global warming. Another reason is its likelihood to happen again based on past experience and get worse.

**Perceived likelihood in next 12 months**

1<sup>st</sup> out of 16 hazards surveyed

**Perceived likelihood in next 10 years**

2<sup>nd</sup> out of 16 hazards surveyed



“A major tsunami (a series of large, damaging waves) in New Zealand”

## TSUNAMI

New Zealanders who stated they view a *tsunami* as a very real threat in the next 12 months, did so because of the geography / location of New Zealand, as well as it being a ‘natural phenomenon’ that is unpredictable.

**Perceived likelihood in next 12 months**

12<sup>th</sup> out of 16 hazards surveyed

**Perceived likelihood in next 10 years**

11<sup>th</sup> out of 16 hazards surveyed



“Disruption of New Zealand’s critical infrastructure (e.g. water, transport, energy, telecommunications) due to human error or a natural hazard ”

## DISRUPTION OF CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE DUE TO FAILURE

New Zealanders who stated they view *disruption of critical infrastructure due to failure* as a very real threat in the next 12 months, did so because of the state of current infrastructure / roads, having already seen the effects of this as well as it being a ‘natural phenomenon’.

**Perceived likelihood in next 12 months**

6<sup>th</sup> out of 16 hazards surveyed

**Perceived likelihood in next 10 years**

7<sup>th</sup> out of 16 hazards surveyed



**THANK  
YOU**

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