



2024 NATIONAL RISKS PUBLIC SURVEY

NATIONAL SECURITY THREATS

KEY FINDINGS SUMMARY



GAME CHANGERS





RESEARCH OBJECTIVES – NATIONAL SECURITY THREATS

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:

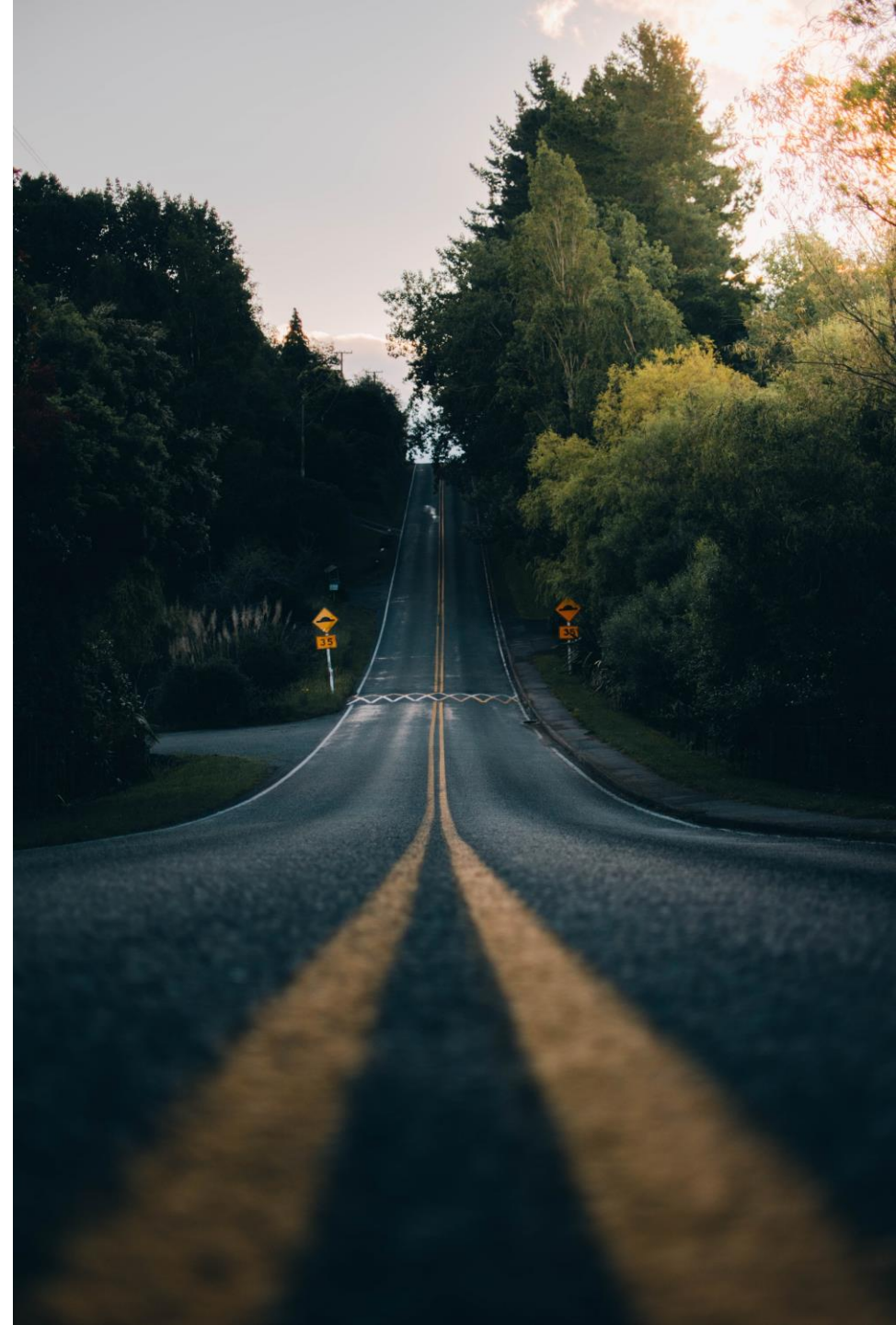
- New Zealanders' awareness of National Risks, including the public's perceived likelihood and concern related to these over the short (next 12 months) and long term (next 10 years).
- Public confidence in government agencies' abilities to protect and respond.
- Opportunities to build confidence, share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

This report provides information across a nationally representative sample of 1,172 people, in relation to:

- What 'national security' means to New Zealanders, and which threats they see as most likely, now (next 12 months) and in the future (next 10 years).
- The level of confidence New Zealanders have in the government's ability to manage threats and what the government can do to build confidence.
- What information New Zealanders would like to receive on threats.





METHODOLOGY – THREATS



Fieldwork dates

19th February–14th
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

n=1,172

*Notes

- Fieldwork overlapped the Port Hills wildfire in Christchurch of early February 2024. This event may have impacted people's responses, especially in the South Island.
- 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 main 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 – NATIONAL SECURITY THREATS

Perceived global danger & threats to New Zealand in the short and longer term

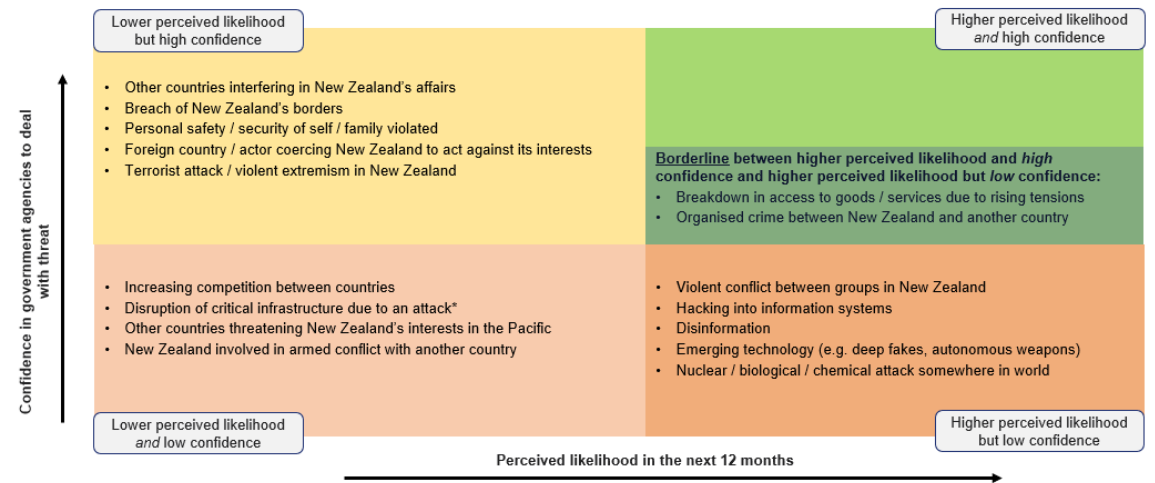
- Consistent with 2023 results, 80% of New Zealanders said they felt the world has become a *more dangerous place over the last year*.
- Also similar to 2023 results, *Organised crime, hacking into information systems and disinformation* are perceived as the three most likely threats in the next 12 months.
- There has been a significant increase in public perceptions of *emerging technology* as a threat, up from 64% in 2023 to 78% in 2024, mostly due to technology advancements. While remaining the lowest ranking threat, *New Zealand being involved in armed conflict with another country* also increased significantly (+7 percentage points since 2023) due to conflict and tensions overseas. Also increased in 2024 are *increasing competition between countries* (+4 percentage points), again due to foreign tension, and *disinformation* (+3 percentage points), which New Zealanders say they are already seeing / feeling the effects of.
- When asked to consider the longer-term (next 10 years), *hacking, organised crime, disinformation and emerging technology* are the four highest ranked threats (with 81-83% of respondents selecting each). The current top-5 threats in the next 12 months are consistent with the top-5 threats in the next 10 years.
- With the exception of the top-3, the level of perceived likelihood for the remaining threats is significantly higher in the next 10 years than the next 12 months.



OVERALL FINDINGS – NATIONAL SECURITY THREATS

- As in previous years, only 20% of New Zealanders agree New Zealand’s national security agencies currently share enough information about national security with the public.
- 62% of New Zealanders want more information on national security threats and over a third want to be involved in public discussion on national security.
- Confidence in government agencies’ abilities to protect or respond to threats is highest for *other countries interfering in NZ affairs, breach of NZ borders, personal safety / being violated, terrorist attack / violent extremism* and *foreign country / actor coercing NZ to act against its interests* with between 54% and 56% feeling confident.
- New Zealanders are least confident in government agencies’ ability to protect or respond to threats regarding *nuclear / biological attack happening somewhere in the world, emerging technology, armed conflict with other countries* and *disinformation*.
- Confidence in government agencies’ ability to protect and respond to a *breakdown in access to goods / services* has statistically significantly increased since 2023 and has decreased for *terrorist attacks, hacking* and *emerging technology*.

- In an analysis of the level of perceived likelihood of threat *versus* confidence in government agencies’ abilities to respond:
 - Five threats seen to have higher likelihood, but lower relative confidence in government agencies’ abilities include: *violent conflict between groups in New Zealand, hacking, disinformation, emerging technology* 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

11th out of 16 threats surveyed

Perceived likelihood in next 10 years

11th 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

9th out of 16 threats surveyed

Perceived likelihood in next 10 years

7th 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

4th out of 16 threats surveyed

Perceived likelihood in next 10 years

4th out of 16 threats surveyed

**THANK
YOU**

GAME CHANGERS

