

Annual Perceptions Report, 2026

Experience with and perceptions of the Real Estate Industry among the general public

Results from the [NielsenIQ Online Omnibus](#),
reflective of the New Zealand population

26th June 2026

NielsenIQ



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Introduction and method



Introduction

Since 2012, the Real Estate Authority (REA) has tracked consumer perceptions to gain a comprehensive understanding of the Real Estate Industry, with a particular focus on individuals who have engaged in transactions within the past year. This ongoing research explores their perceptions of the overall process, their experiences with real estate professionals, and the challenges they encountered along the way. To remain current and adaptable, the survey has been regularly updated to meet specific requirements and evolving needs within the industry.

Specific objectives amongst each audience are as follows:

Among those who have had a real estate transaction in the last year

Assessment of:

- The process of buying, selling, making or receiving an offer
- Materials available (Real estate guides)
- Perceptions of their real estate agent
- Awareness of, interactions with REA and Settled.govt.nz
- Problems/ issues they faced
- Twelve consumer buying and selling groups/ segments
- Consideration of environmental risks (floods, earthquakes, etc.)

Among all New Zealanders

Assessment of:

- Confidence in the Real Estate Industry
- Awareness of REA
- The perceived impact that the REA has on consumer protection
- Population proportions of consumers, including first home buyers

Covered in this report

About the research

Part 1: Consumers: those who have had a real estate transaction in the last year

A **stand-alone survey** was conducted online among those who have bought, sold, put an offer or received an offer on a property in the last twelve months using a real estate agent.

Sample: The minimum age is 18 years. Soft regional quotas are used to ensure coverage of a range of geographic areas. An equal gender quota has been applied since 2019, but age quotas are not set, due to natural age skews in the target survey group.

Booster sampling was used to increase the number of Māori, Pacific peoples and Asian in 2025. The total base sample size was 744 in 2026 with the additional booster. The total number of Māori consumers was n=153, Pacific Peoples: n=79 and Asian n=146.

Reference 2025: The total base sample size was 729 in 2025 with the additional booster. The total number of Māori consumers was n=125, Pacific Peoples: n=61 and Asian n=135.

Questionnaire: There were minor changes to the 2026 questionnaire. Some wording and routing updates were made and response options expanded. New questions were added on property type (residential, rural, commercial) and who the property was purchased with. Additions were made to agent performance measures and new codes included in challenges and information sources. A question was also added on where consumers would go to make complaints and Whether agents informed them about how to make complaints.

Fieldwork dates: Fieldwork took place between 27 April to 20 May 2026.

Reference 2025: Fieldwork took place between 14 May to 2 June 2025.

Part 2: New Zealand general

Questions were included in the **NielsenIQ Omnibus**.

Questionnaire: Changes made to the Consumer questionnaire were applied to the Omnibus as appropriate.

Sample: The Nielsen Omnibus surveys 700 people nationally aged 18 plus. The sample is structured to be representative of the New Zealand population by age, gender and region. The minimum age is 18 years.

Booster sampling was used to increase the number of people of Māori ethnicity to 106, Pacific peoples to 52 and Asian to 105. With the booster samples, the total sample was n=744.

Reference 2025: Booster sampling was used to increase the number of people of Māori ethnicity to 164, Pacific peoples to 51 and Asian to 98 (new 2025). With the booster samples, the total sample was n=782.

Fieldwork dates: Fieldwork took place between 27 April to 7 May 2026.

Reference 2025: Fieldwork took place between 20 and 29 May 2025.

Covered in this report

Notes to the report

Subgroup differences:

- When subgroup differences are mentioned, the results are compared with the total result of all those who answered the question, unless stated otherwise.

Year-on-year comparisons:

- The sample segment profile should be taken into consideration when making year-on-year comparisons (for example; first-home buyers are less likely to feel empowered, so if there are more first-home buyers in the sample, then this will impact the overall empowerment result). Over time the population makeup may change naturally.
- Also, note that an additional “Seller” category was included from 2021: (those who listed a property but who didn’t sell it). 6% said they have done so.

Rounding:

- Results have been rounded to the nearest whole number. Some results may not add up to 100% due to rounding or multiple responses being allowed for particular questions.

Management of ‘Don’t know’ responses

- ‘Don’t know’ responses have been excluded from ratings analysis.

Small base sizes:

- Results marked with one star (*) are indicative due to a small base size (n=50 or less), and those marked with two stars (**) are highly indicative and should be treated with extreme caution (n=30 or less).

Notes to the report continued

Weighting

- The data are weighted to ensure the sample profile matches the population being measured.
- The Omnibus is weighted by age, gender and region to ensure it is a representative sample of the total New Zealand population aged 18 plus on these variables, using Statistics NZ Census data.
- For the Consumer survey, there are no readily available population results for the subgroup of people targeted, that is those who have had a real estate transaction using a real estate agent in the last twelve months. In the absence of population statistics, the same question set is included on the Omnibus to estimate the population data. The results from the 2021/2022/2023/2024/2025 combined set have been used to weight the results for Consumers.
- That data are weighted by buyers/ sellers/ offers made/ received (from 2021). From 2021 the data are also weighted by first home buyer vs. non-first home buyer.
- Booster samples (Māori, Asian, and Pacific people) are weighted back to their population proportions.

Statistically significant differences

- All differences mentioned are statistically significant at a 95% confidence interval. This means that the difference is a true difference statistically and not due to random variation. These are noted with a triangle. Triangles can denote a significant change from the previous survey or any results that are significantly different from the total result (please refer to the notation on each slide).
- This table displays the maximum margin of error for different sample sizes.

Sample size	Margin of error
n=30	±17.0%
n=50	±13.8%
n=61	±12.5%
n=125	±8.8%
n=164	±7.7%
n=729	±3.6%
n=782	±3.5%
N=744	±3.6%

Key findings



Key findings – among New Zealanders

Awareness of REA and Settled.govt.nz

- **Unprompted awareness of REA** as the independent regulator of the Real Estate Industry declined in 2026, with 13% of New Zealanders naming the Real Estate Authority without prompting, down from 18% in 2025. Net unprompted mention of REA-related responses was 16% in 2026.
- **Prompted awareness of REA** also declined in 2026, with 47% of New Zealanders aware of REA after prompting, compared with 53% in 2025. The proportion saying they know a reasonable amount about what REA does also declined, from 12% in 2025 to 7% in 2026.
- **Recall of seeing or hearing about Settled.govt.nz.** also declined in 2026, with 19% of respondents recalling it, compared with 23% in 2025.
- Recall of Settled.govt.nz remained strongest among younger people, particularly those aged 18 to 24 (36%) and 25 to 39 (26%).

Confidence in the industry

- **Overall confidence in the Real Estate Industry** eased slightly in 2026, with 82% having some confidence, compared with 84% in 2025. The proportion expressing strong confidence also declined slightly, from 42% to 38%, while 18% had little or no confidence.
- Confidence in the industry remained higher among younger New Zealanders and those with a better understanding of REA. Those aged 18 to 24 reported the highest overall confidence (94%), while those who said they know a reasonable amount about REA were also more confident overall (92%).
- **Confidence with different aspects of the Real Estate Industry** remained broadly stable in 2026, with no significant movement compared with 2025.
- While the industry continued to be rated lower for confidence in its fairness and transparency, transparency remained the weakest-rated aspect at 71% for some confidence and 30% for strong confidence.
- Belief that the Real Estate Authority (REA) **makes a positive difference to consumer protection when buying or selling property** strengthened further, with 55% of those aware of REA giving a 4 or 5 score, the highest result recorded to date.

Challenges to real estate transactions

- **Among buyers and sellers of property**, the two key challenges to participating in the transaction were uncertainty about the real estate market (34%) and lack of knowledge about the real estate transaction process (30%).
- The proportion of buyers and sellers saying they did not face any challenges increased significantly in 2026, rising to 32% from 17% in 2025.
- **For considerers**, uncertainty about the market remained the main challenge (38%), followed by lack of knowledge about the process (29%) and financial limitations (29%).
- **For non-considerers**, financial limitations were the main challenge (38%), followed by lack of knowledge about the process (24%) and market uncertainty (21%).
- Other barriers such as lack of trust, access to advisers, communication difficulties and discrimination were mentioned less often, but remained part of the wider context for some groups.

In conclusion

Looking to the future

- The 2026 survey showed a softer picture for public awareness, with both REA awareness and recall of Settled.govt.nz declining compared with 2025, even as perceptions of REA's role in consumer protection continued to strengthen.
- **Confidence in the Real Estate Industry remained relatively high overall**, supported by strong perceptions of professionalism. However, fairness and transparency continued to lag behind other aspects of the industry and remained the key areas for ongoing improvement.
- **Awareness of REA** remained below half of the New Zealand public, while recall of Settled.govt.nz remained below one in five. This suggests there is still room to build broader public understanding of REA, its role, and the information available through Settled.govt.nz.
- Market uncertainty, lack of knowledge about the transaction process and financial barriers continued to shape people's willingness and ability to participate in real estate transactions, although the mix of barriers differed between buyers and sellers, considerers and non-considerers.

Awareness of REA and Settled.govt.nz

Unprompted awareness of REA declined in 2026

Compared with 2025, fewer New Zealanders identified REA as the independent regulator without prompting, with mention of the Real Estate Authority declining to 13% from 18%. Overall, net unprompted mention of REA-related responses was 16% in 2026.

Who New Zealanders think the independent regulator of the Real Estate Industry is

Unprompted mention	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
(NZ) Real Estate Authority	<1%	9%	8%	10%	18%	13% ▼
REAA/REAA NZ	5%	3%	3%	3%	2%	3%
Real Estate Agency / Body / Council / Commission	1%	1%	1%	0%	1%	1%

**16%
Net
REA**

Unprompted awareness	%
(NZ) Real Estate Authority	13% ▼
MBIE / Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment	5% ▲
Government/ NZ Government / NZ Government Real estate Board	4%
Real Estate Institute / Real Estate Institute of NZ	4%
Commerce Commission	4% ▲
REINZ	3%
Ministry of Housing / Housing Minister	3%
REAA/ REAA NZ	3%
Housing New Zealand	2%
Local council / local government	2%
Real Estate Agency / Body /Council /Commission /Organisation	1%
Real Estate Agents Authority/ NZ Real Estate Agents Authority	1%
REANZ	1%
NZ Real Estate / Real Estate NZ	1%
Ray white	1%
New Zealand Real Estate Association/ Real Estate Association / Real Estate Association of NZ	1%
MREINZ	1%
Other	10%
None/ Nil/ Nothing	2% ▼
Don't Know	41%

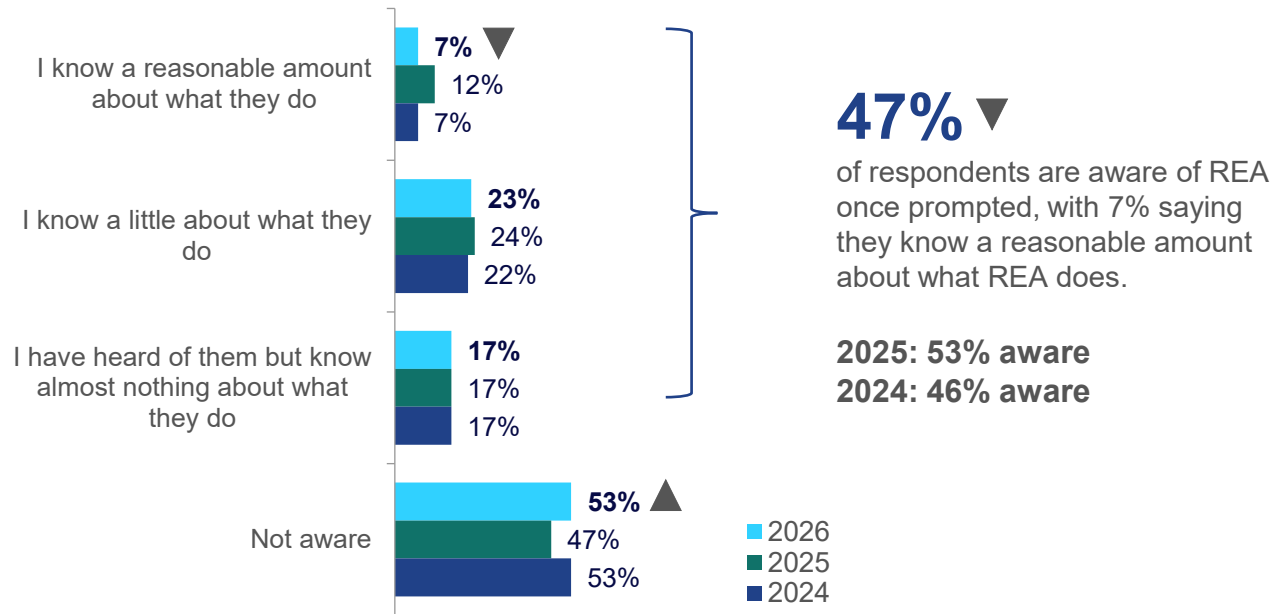
QB6. Unprompted awareness of the main independent government organisation responsible for regulating real estate agents? (n=744)

▲▼ Significantly higher / lower than previous wave

Prompted awareness of REA declined in 2026

Just under half of New Zealanders were aware of REA after prompting (47% vs 53% in 2025), while the proportion saying they knew a reasonable amount about what REA does declined to 7% from 12% in 2025.

Prompted awareness of REA



Awareness of REA (47%) is higher among:

- Males (53%)
- Working full time (54%)
- Those with a lot of confidence in the professionalism of the Real Estate Industry (52%)
- Aware of Settled.govt.nz (68%)
- First home buyers (66%)
- Considered buying or selling a property (64%)
- Bought or sold a property in the last year (73%)

Awareness of REA (47%) is lower among:

- Females (42%)
- Not employed (39%)
- Not aware of Settled.govt.nz (43%)
- Haven't used a real estate agent in the last year (40%)
- Did not consider buying or selling a property (41%)

Please note: Percentage will not total up to the mentioned percentage because the decimals on proportions are rounded to next whole number.

QB7. Have you heard of the Real Estate Authority or REA as it is sometimes called? Base: All respondents (n=744)

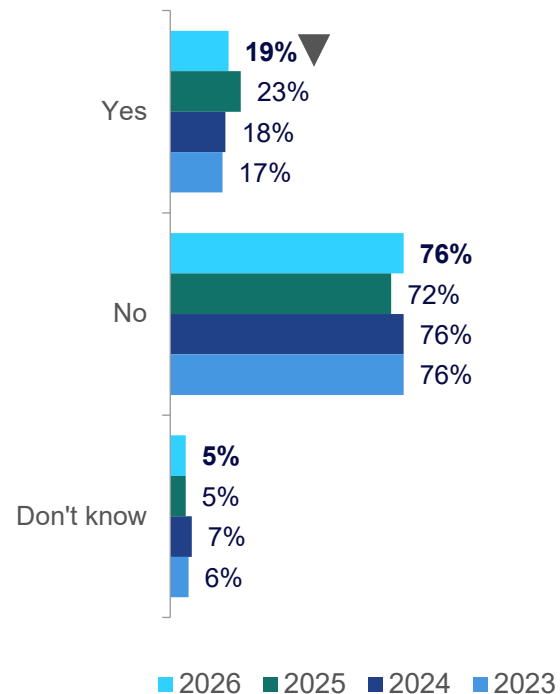
QB5. How much do you know about what the Real Estate Authority (REA) does? Base: Among aware of REA (n=354)

▲▼ Significantly higher / lower than previous wave

Recall of Settled.govt.nz declined in 2026

Recall of seeing or hearing about Settled.govt.nz declined to 19% in 2026, down from 23% in 2025. Recall remained higher among younger New Zealanders, including those aged 18 to 24 (36%) and 25 to 39 (26%).

Prompted recall of Settled.govt.nz



19%▼

have heard or seen something about Settled.govt.nz compared with...

2025: 23%
2024: 18%
2023: 17%
2022: 23%
2021: 14%



Those more likely to have heard or seen something about Settled.govt.nz are:

- Male (23%)
- Aged 18 to 24 (36%), Aged 25 to 39 (26%)
- New Zealand Māori (33%), Asian (32%)
- Household with children (26%)
- Working full time (29%)
- NET Know at least a little about REA (35%)
- First home buyers (44%), First time investors (65%)
- Bought or sold a property (40%), Considered buying/selling (33%)
- Used an agent in the past year (43%)



Those less likely to have heard or seen something about Settled.govt.nz are:

- Female (15%)
- Aged 55+ (7%)
- Not employed (8%)
- Haven't used a real estate agent in the last year (11%)
- Did not consider buying or selling a property (12%)

Please note: Percentage will not total up to the mentioned percentage because the decimals on proportions are rounded to next whole number.

QB8. Have you ever heard of or seen anything about Settled.govt.nz?

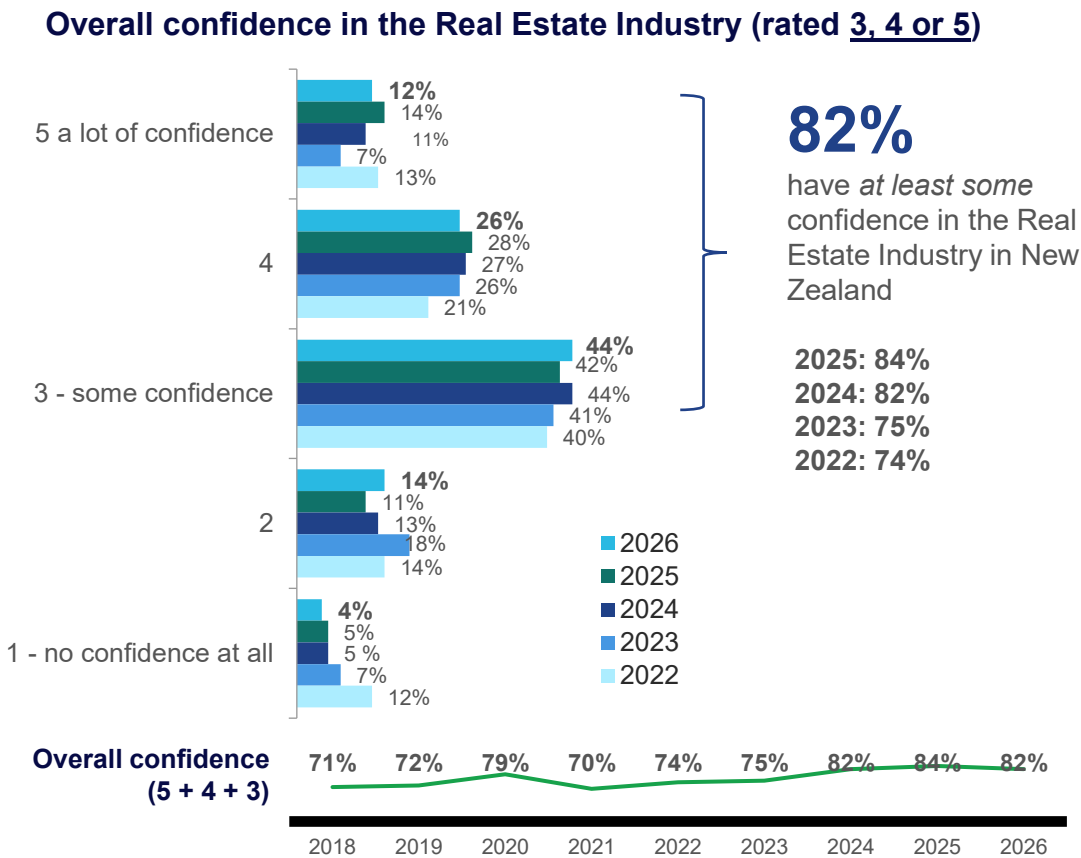
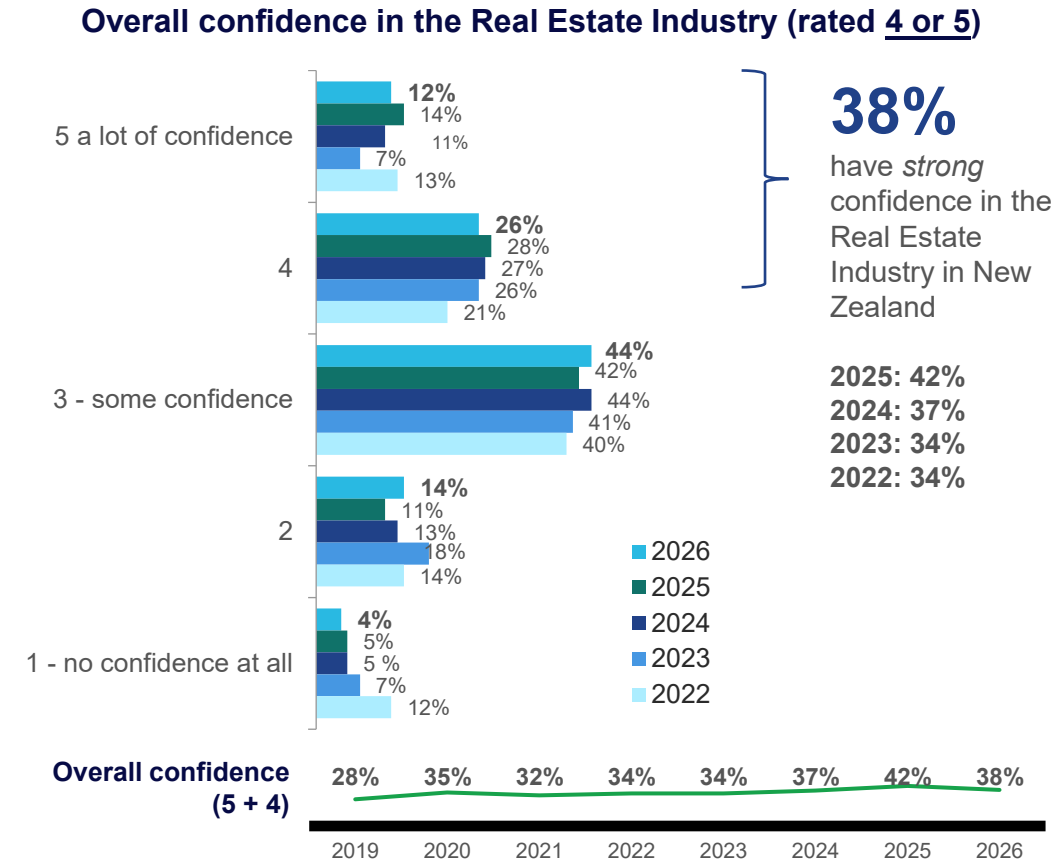
Base: All respondents (n=744)

Significantly higher / lower than previous wave

Confidence in the industry

Overall confidence in the Real Estate Industry eased slightly in 2026

Overall confidence in the Real Estate Industry declined slightly to 82% in 2026, down from 84% in 2025, while the proportion expressing strong confidence also eased to 38% from 42%.

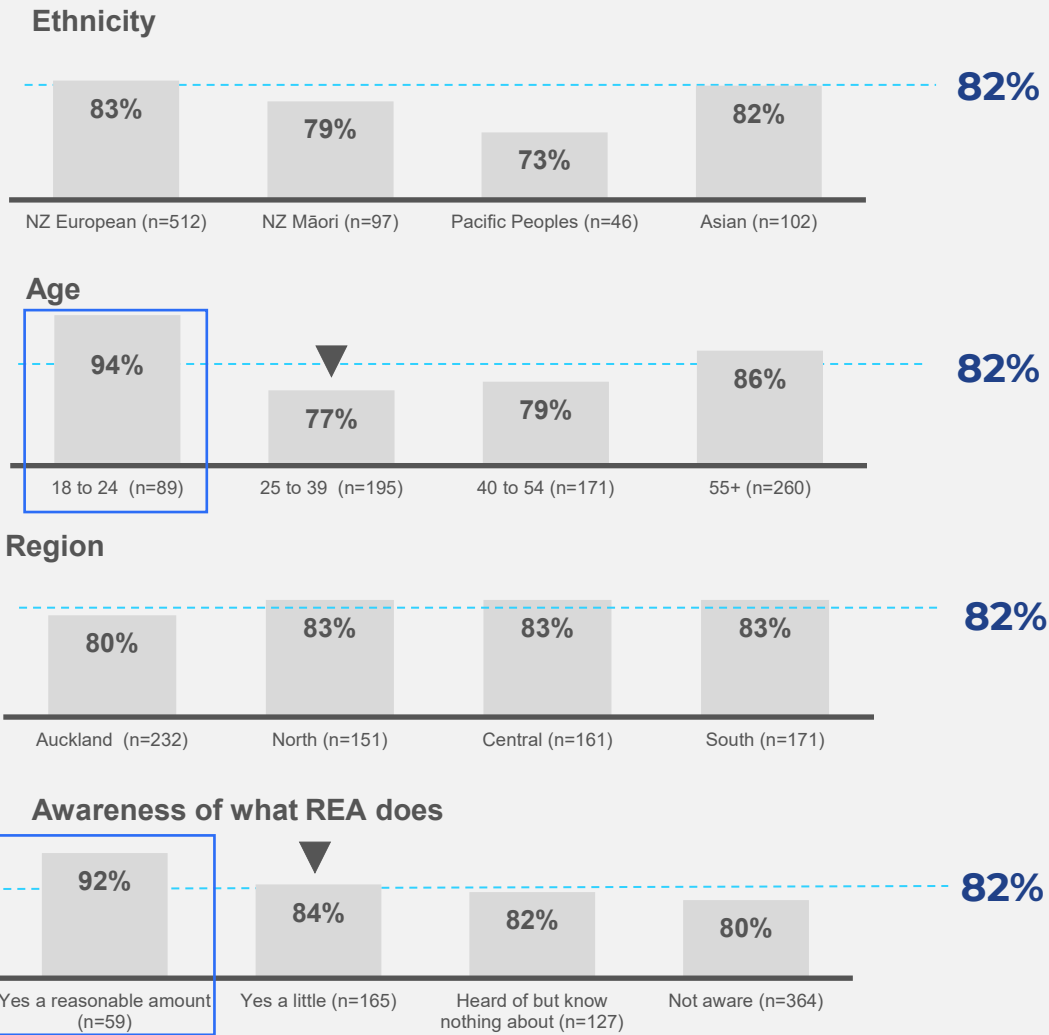


QB9. How much confidence do you have overall in the Real Estate Industry in NZ?
Base: All respondents (excl. don't know) (2025 n=760), (2026 n=715)

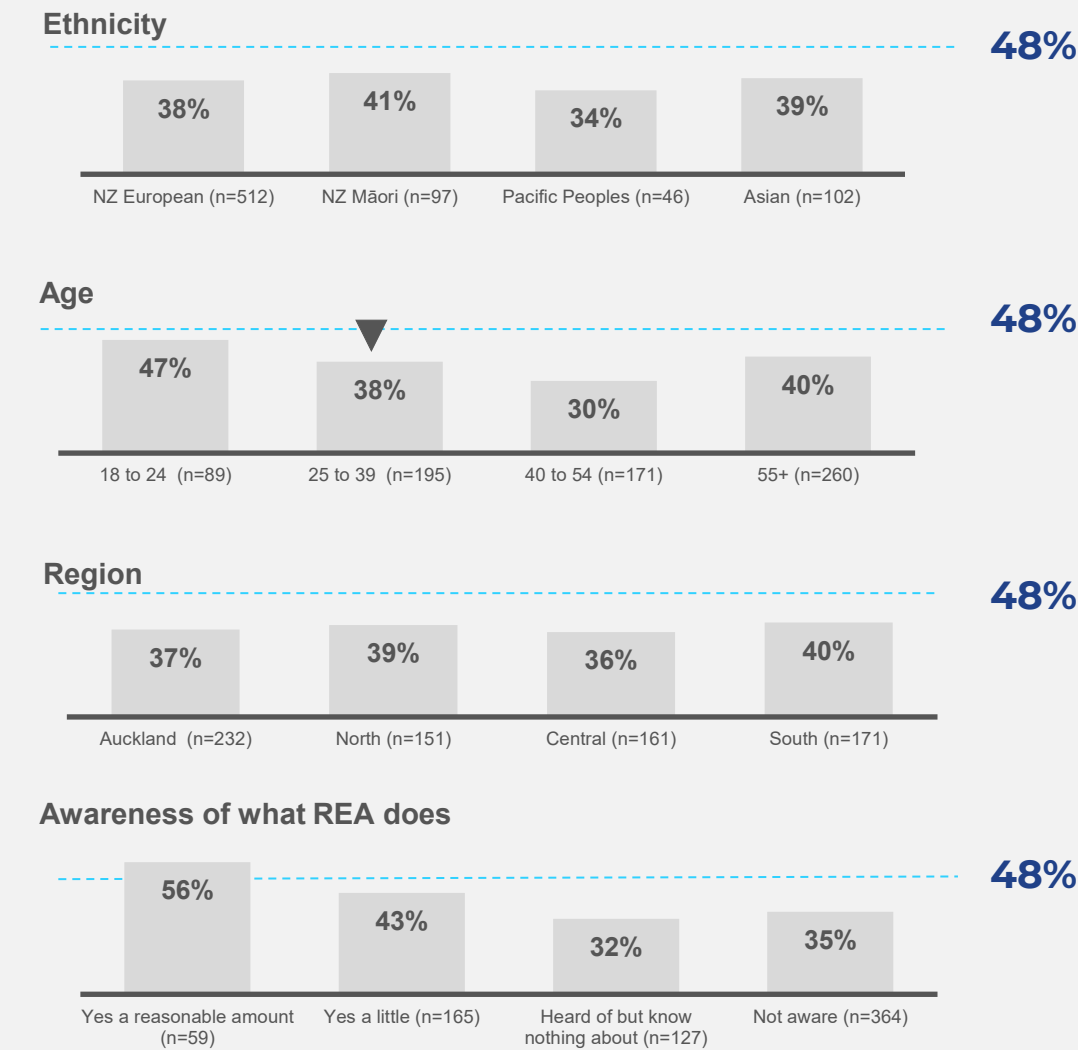
Please note: Percentage will not total up to the mentioned percentage because the decimals on proportions are rounded to next whole number.

Confidence remained higher among younger people and those reasonably aware of REA

Overall confidence (rated 3, 4 or 5)



Overall confidence (rated 4 or 5)



QB9. How much confidence do you have overall in the Real Estate Industry in NZ?
Base: All respondents (excl. don't know) (2025 n=760), (2026 n=715)

Professionalism remained the strongest-rated aspect of the industry

New Zealanders continued to have the greatest confidence in the industry's professionalism, with 89% expressing at least some confidence and 53% expressing strong confidence. Confidence in transparency remained lower at 71% for some confidence and 30% (cf. 35% in 2025) for strong confidence.

Confidence with different aspects % Rated 3 (some confidence), 4 or 5 (5 = a lot of confidence)

The incidence of having at least *some* confidence in key aspects of the Real Estate Industry has continued to rise since 2021, consistent with the rise in overall confidence.

New Zealanders rated their confidence (rating *3, 4 or 5*) for all five aspects similar to 2025, with directional changes for the following aspects.

- *Professional*: increase to 89% from 88% in 2025
- *Well regulated*: remained stable at 80%
- *Well monitored*: dip to 75% from 78% in 2025
- *Transparency*: dip to 71% from 74% in 2025

Confidence with different aspects % Rated 4 or 5 (5 = a lot of confidence)

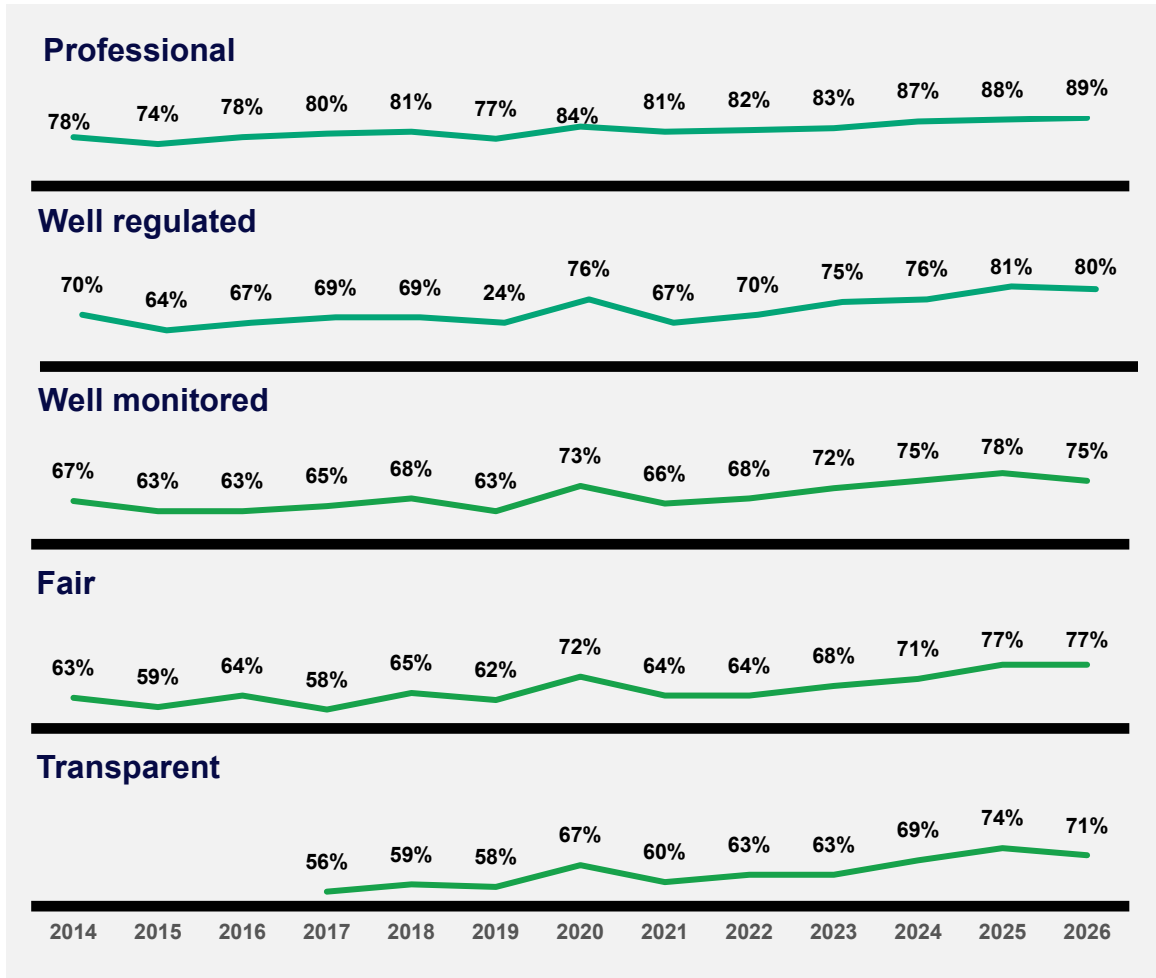
Professionalism continued to be the strongest area of confidence (53%), receiving the highest rating among all measured aspects, but with no change from 2025.

In 2026, there were directional dips in ratings of *strong* confidence for the following aspects:

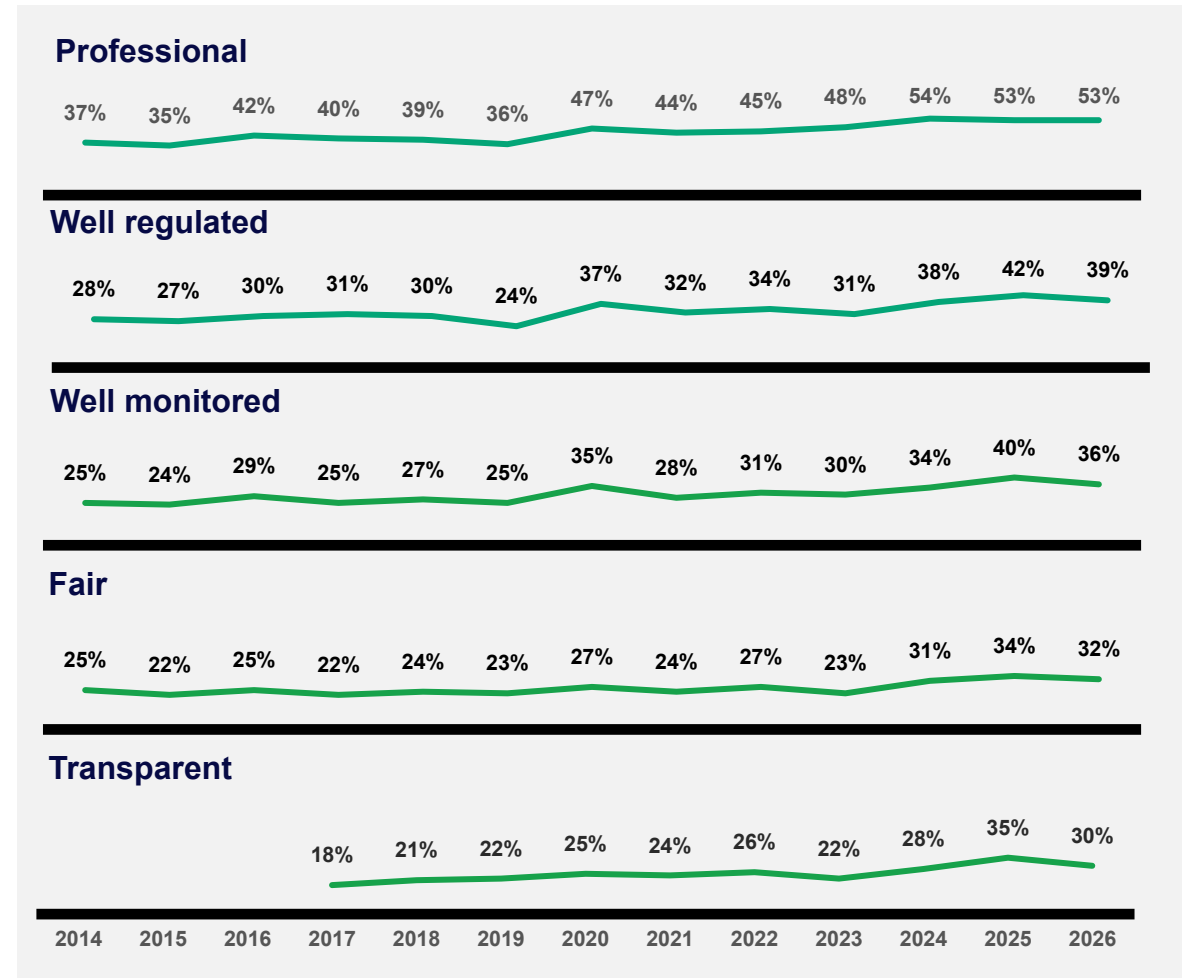
- *Well regulated*: dip to 39% from 42% in 2025
- *Well monitored*: dip to 36% from 40% in 2025
- *Fair*: dip to 32% from 34% in 2025
- *Transparency*: dip to 30% from 35% in 2025

Confidence across industry attributes remained broadly stable in 2026

Confidence with different aspects of the industry
% Rated 3 (some confidence), 4 or 5 (5 = a lot of confidence)



Confidence with different aspects of the industry
% Rated 4 or 5 (5 = a lot of confidence)



QB1. To what extent do you have confidence that the Real Estate Industry in NZ is...
Base: All respondents (excl. don't know) (2026 n=676-708)

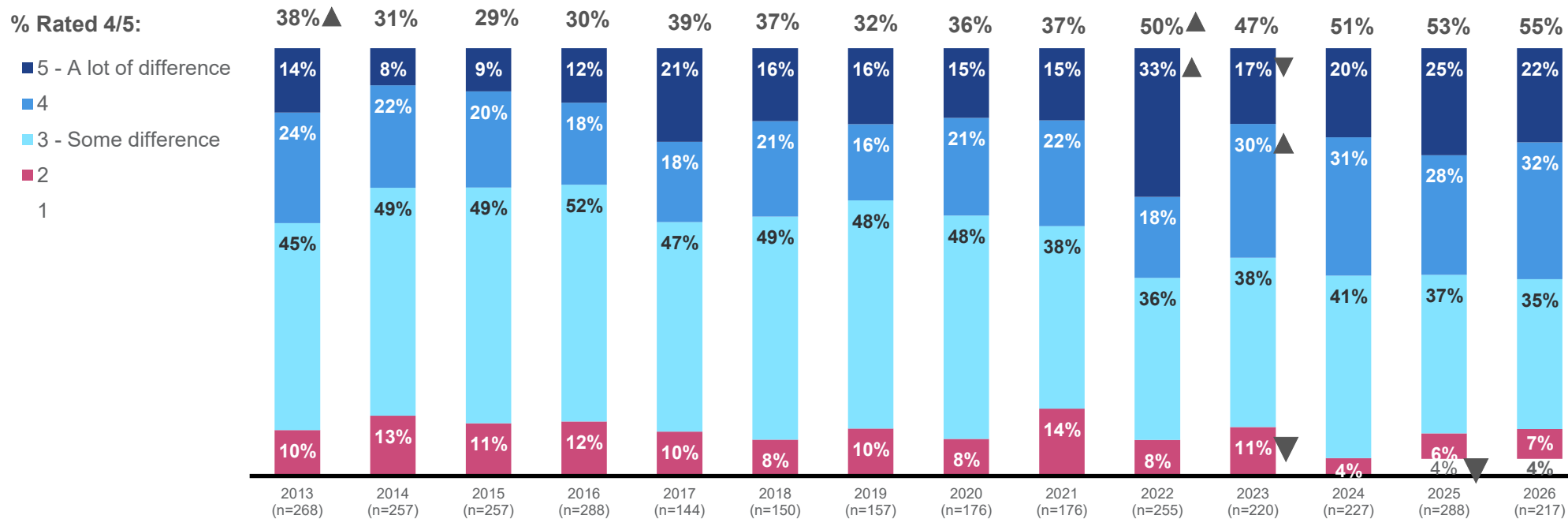
▲ Significantly higher / lower than previous wave

REA's impact on consumer protection

Perceived impact of REA on consumer protection strengthened further in 2026

Among those aware of REA, more than half (55%) said REA makes a positive difference to consumer protection when buying or selling property, up from 53% in 2025 and the highest result recorded to date.

Impact of REA on consumer protection



Please note: Percentage will not total up to the mentioned percentage because the decimals on proportions are rounded to next whole number.

QB3. What difference do you think the Real Estate Authority makes to your consumer protection when buying or selling a property?

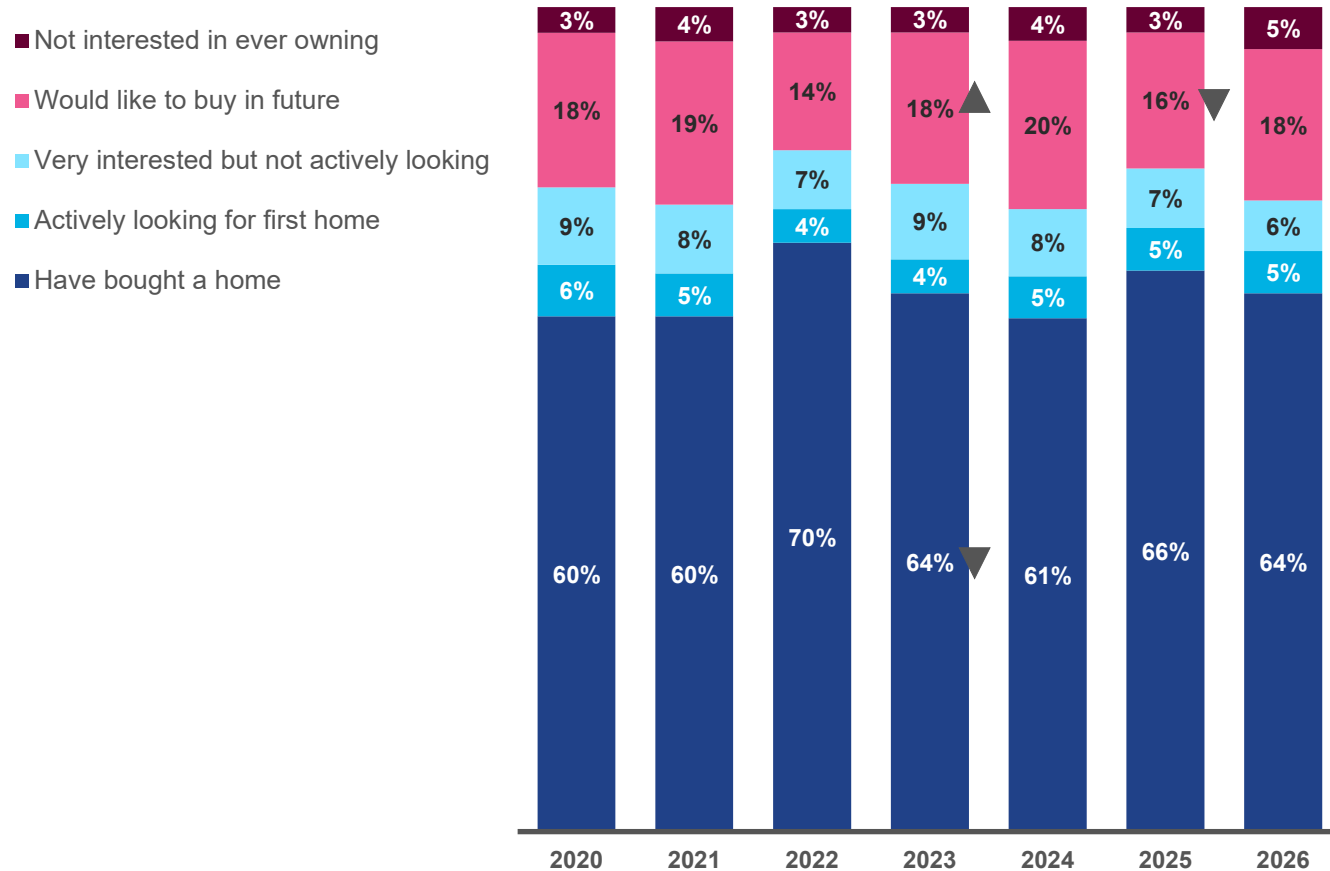
Base: All respondents who know what the Real Estate Authority (REA) does (excl. don't know)

▲ Significantly higher / lower than previous wave

Home ownership and future plans

Home ownership eased slightly, while future purchase interest increased

Nearly two in three New Zealanders (64%) said they had bought a home at some point, slightly down on 2025 (66%). In contrast, the proportion interested in buying a home in the future increased to 18% from 16% in 2025.



More likely to have bought a home:

- Aged 55+ (87%)
- From South Island (73%)
- New Zealand European (67%)
- Household without children (68%)
- NET know at least a little about the REA (77%)



Less likely to have bought a home:

- Aged 18-24 (39%)
- Aged 25-39 (49%)
- New Zealand Māori (45%)
- Pacific Peoples (43%)
- NET Māori and other ethnic minority groups (51%)

QB11. Have you ever purchased (personally or jointly) a home?

QB12. Which of the following currently best describes you? Base: All respondents (n=744)



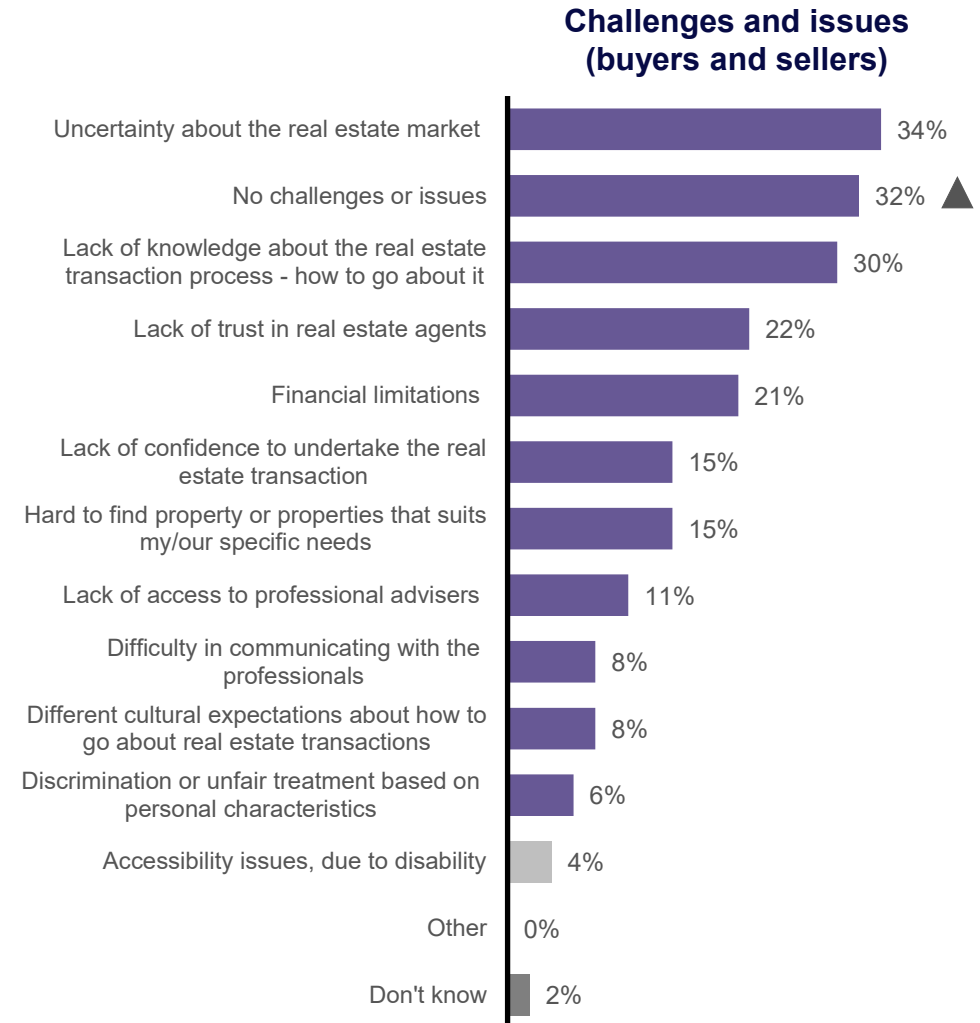
Significantly higher / lower than previous wave

Challenges and issues faced with real estate transactions

Among buyers and sellers, market uncertainty and lack of knowledge were the main challenges

Among those who had bought or sold property, the most commonly reported challenge was uncertainty about the real estate market (34%), followed by lack of knowledge about the transaction process (30%).

The proportion saying they did not face any challenges increased significantly to 32% from 17% in 2025.



Attributes modified in 2024

Q116. If have bought/sold (n=115) Based on your most recent real estate transaction, please indicate if you faced any of the following challenges or issues when participating in the transaction. Please select all that apply [MA]:

▲ Significantly higher / lower than previous wave

Challenges differed between considerers and non-considerers

Among considerers, market uncertainty (38%), lack of knowledge (29%) and financial limitations (29%) were the leading barriers. Among non-considerers, the main challenges were financial limitations (38%), lack of knowledge about the transaction process (24%) and market uncertainty (21%).

Challenges and issues (considerers)



Challenges and issues (non-considerers)



Attributes modified in 2024

Q116. If have not bought/sold - considerers (n=246) non considerers (n=456) Can you identify any challenges or issues that could impact or have impacted your ability or willingness to participate in a real estate transaction, based on your personal circumstances?

▲ ▼ Significantly higher / lower than previous wave

SOI and SPE results



Notes to reporting of SPE and SOI measures

Base sizes:

- Please note that subgroup sizes are small in some instances, so results should be regarded as indicative.
- Results marked with one star (*) are indicative due to a small base size (n=50 or less), and those marked with two stars (**) are highly indicative and should be treated with extreme caution (n=30 or less).
- **Ethnicity boosters in 2026** Note: these subsamples are similar in size to those achieved in 2025, but are still small. Therefore, the margins of error are significant.

2024 Margins of error (95% confidence level)	Total		Māori		Pacific Peoples	
General public (GP)	795	+/-3.4%	131	+/-8.5%	53	+/-13.4%

2025 Margins of error (95% confidence level)	Total		Māori		Pacific Peoples		Asian	
General public (GP)	782	+/-3.4%	164	+/-7.6%	51	+/-13.7%	100	+/-9.8%

2026 Margins of error (95% confidence level)	Total		Māori		Pacific Peoples		Asian	
General public (GP)	744	±3.6%	106	±9.5%	52	±13.6%	105	±9.6%

Statement of Intent: General public: 2020 - 2026

SOI. Percentage of New Zealand public who know what REA does

QB7. Have you heard of the Real Estate Authority or REA as it is sometimes called?

QB5: How much do you know about what the Real Estate Authority (REA) does?

	N=	(% know at least a little– Total)	Māori N=	(% know at least a little – Māori respondents)	PP N=	(% know at least a little– Pacific Peoples respondents)	Asian N=	(% know at least a little– Asian respondents)	Māori Pacific Peoples and Asian NET N =	(% know at least a little– Māori, Pacific Peoples and Asian NET
2020	694	27%								
2021	699	26%								
2022	816	32%	124	40%	53	32%				
2023	826	28%	185	25%	79	27%				
2024	795	29%	131	25%	57	26%				
2025	782	36% ▲	164	35%	51	33%	98	36%	305	35%
2026	744	30% ▼	106	27%	52	47%	105	36%	238	32%

SOI 6. Percentage of New Zealand public aware of REA and the services it provides

QB7. Have you heard of the Real Estate Authority or REA as it is sometimes called?

	N=	(% know REA – Total)	Māori N=	(% know REA – Māori respondents)	PP N=	(% know REA– Pacific Peoples respondents)	Asian N=	(% know REA – Asian respondents)	Māori Pacific Peoples and AsianNET N =	(% know REA– Māori, Pacific Peoples and Asian NET
2022	816	51%	124	61%	53	52%				
2023	826	48%	185	45%	79	36%				
2024	795	46%	131	42%	57	35%				
2025	782	53%	164	54%	51	38%	98	60%	305	54%
2026	744	47% ▼	106	42%	52	56%	105	50%	238	47%

Statement of Intent: General public: 2025 – Confidence in being Well regulated

SOI 7. Percentage of New Zealand public who have confidence that the Real Estate Industry is Well regulated

QB1: To what extent do you have confidence that the Real Estate Industry in NZ is... Well regulated (excl. don't know)

	Total		Māori		Pacific Peoples		Asian		Māori, Pacific Peoples and Asian NET	
	N=	T2B	N=	T2B	N=	T2B	N=	T2B	N=	T2B
2019	627	24%								
2020	624	37% ▲								
2021	645	32%								
2022	766	34%	120	38%	45*	29%				
2023	766	31%	172	29%	74	30%				
2024	740	38%	121	32%	50	26%				
2025	734	42%	152	35%	46	51% ▲	93	45%	285	40%
2026	688	39%	99	36%	50	33%	99	42%	224	37%

SOI 7. Percentage of New Zealand public who have confidence that the Real Estate Industry is Well regulated

QB1: To what extent do you have confidence that the Real Estate Industry in NZ is... Well regulated (excl. don't know)

	Total		Māori		Pacific Peoples		Asian		Māori, Pacific Peoples and Asian NET	
	N=	T3B	N=	T3B	N=	T3B	N=	T3B	N=	T3B
2019	627	67%								
2020	624	76%								
2021	645	67% ▼								
2022	766	70%	120	73%	45*	64%				
2023	766	75%	172	74%	74	80%				
2024	740	76%	121	76%	46	77%				
2025	734	81%	152	75%	46	85%	93	78%	285	77%
2026	688	80%	99	78%	50	78%	99	74%	224	77%

Appendix: Sample profiles

Profile: Age, Gender, Region, Ethnicity

General public (GP) base is n=744 unless otherwise stated.

Gender	GP
Male	49%
Female	50%

Age	GP
18-24	12%
25-34	16%
35-44	20%
45-54	15%
55-64	14%
65 plus	23%

Ethnicity	GP
New Zealand European	73%
Other European	7%
New Zealand Māori	16%
Cook Island Māori	2%
Samoan	2%
Tongan	1%
Chinese	3%
Indian	4%
Other Asian	2%
Fijian	1%
Filipino	2%
Korean	0%
African*	1%
Other	1%
Prefer not to say	1%

Region	GP
Auckland	21%
North excluding Auckland	33%
North including Auckland	55%
Central	21%
South	24%

Migrated to New Zealand	GP
Yes	26%
No	74%

Years in New Zealand	GP
(Migrated to New Zealand) n=	210
Less than 5 years	13%
Between 5 and 10 years	10%
Eleven years or more	78%

*Added in 2024
Consumer: Base = 744 General public: Base = 744
Note: We have removed DQ10 (Household composition) from the Consumer questionnaire in the 2025 wave
Note: We have removed Q110 (First language), and DQ5 (Internet access) from the GP Omnibus questionnaire in the 2025 wave



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