



# The New Zealand Seniors Series: The Retirement Report 2022

MARCH 2022



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## About the report

In order to understand the opinions, thoughts and behaviours of New Zealand's over 50s, we launched the New Zealand Seniors Series, a research project conducted for seniors. *The Retirement Report 2022* delves into how New Zealand's over 50s feel about the transition to and the experiences of retirement. It looks at their plans for retirement, living preferences, perspectives on aged care and adjusting to retirement.

The report is compiled based on research commissioned by New Zealand Seniors and conducted by CoreData between 6 and 10 January 2022. The research was conducted via a quantitative online survey, gathering **1,002** responses from New Zealanders aged 50 and above.

The sample is representative of the general senior population of New Zealanders in terms of age, gender, wealth, and region.

### Important things to observe about the charts:

*Footnotes directly underneath the charts (e.g. \* Respondents who are pre-retirees) mainly refer to the sampling involved per question. This is to differentiate who was asked that particular question in the survey.*

*Any chart without a specific note on its sampling was asked to all respondents.*

*It also differentiates the types of questions asked. For instance, \*Multiple answers allowed' appears when the question called for more than one answer from the respondent.*

*Some charts may not be equal to 100% due to rounding differences.*





## Key findings



# Key findings

## Many senior Kiwis are lacking a sense of financial security and confidence

- **1 in 5** do not feel financially secure (21%) and **1 in 4** worry about money at least weekly (26%).
- **1 in 3** have felt the adverse impact of COVID-19 on the job security of themselves or their close circle (32%).
- As many as **2 in 5** lack confidence in various aspects of their finances, such as not believing their finances are allowing them to do the things they want and enjoy in life (41%), their long term financial situation (39%) and whether they have emergency savings (38%).

## Most do not have formal plans for their retirement date and many do not feel this is fully in their own control. COVID-19 has led many pre-retirees to feel they may have to delay their retirement

- Only **1 in 2** Kiwi pre-retirees feel on track to retire at the age they prefer (51%).
- **1 in 4** pre-retirees (28%) report the events of 2020-2021 have impacted their retirement plans or have now left them unsure – most typically expecting to delay full retirement (23%).

## Perceptions and preferences have shifted towards seeing retirement as more of a transition than an event – while many feel they need more support

- **3 in 5** pre-retirees find the idea of transitioning into retirement and progressively reducing work commitments rather than a hard retirement date as very or extremely appealing (62%).
- However **1 in 2** pre-retirees wish they could get more support through this planning and transitioning process (52%), with only a further 4% report currently receiving this support.

## Many pre-retirees see retirement as the beginning of new opportunities

- **3 in 5** see it as an opportunity to do the things they have been meaning to get around to (60%).
- **3 in 5** see it as more control over time (56%).
- **1 in 2** see it as the beginning of new adventures (50%).



# Key findings

## Most pre-retirees do not feel prepared and do not have a financial plan for their retirement. Some retirees also do not feel very prepared for the rest of their retirement

- **2 in 5** pre-retirees do not feel particularly prepared or prepared at all financially for retirement (41%) and less than **1 in 10** feel very prepared (8%).
- Most pre-retirees also do not have a financial plan for retirement (27%) or only vague ones (40%).
- For retirees, more than **1 in 5** do not feel particularly prepared for the rest of their retirement (22%). However, 17% feel very prepared.

## Retirees often take time to adjust to retirement and need to be flexible to adapt to the changes

- Adapting to retirement is not always straightforward with **2 in 5** Kiwi retirees admitting they underestimated the emotions involved in retirement (42%).
- **1 in 3** retirees reported emerging needs in retirement they did not anticipate (32%) and over **1 in 2** retirees admit there are things they feel they have to compromise on (56%).
- **1 in 4** retirees reported not feeling in control of when and how they retired at the time (27%). Of those retirees lacking control at time, **1 in 3** took at least three years or more to start feeling more in control of their lives (36%).

## Concerns for the future

- Health issues are the biggest concerns for the future for **7 in 10** (68%) Kiwi retirees.
- This is followed by where the world is going (57%) and the welfare and happiness of their family (44%).

## Maintaining an active lifestyle and independent living are key priorities for most Kiwi seniors facing retirement

- The ability to remain living independently for as long as possible is very or extremely important to **9 in 10** senior Kiwis (89%).



# Key findings

## Independent living and affordability are top of mind

- The top considerations for Kiwi retirees when deciding where to settle down include:
  - Affordability (70%)
  - Access to health care and other needs (66%)
  - Proximity to amenities (59%)
- Whereas the top worries about future living arrangements include:
  - Being able to live independently (55%)
  - Affordability of retirement villages (40%)
  - General financial pressures (40%)

## Despite some concerns, seniors can see the benefits of retirement village living

- Opinions among seniors about living in a retirement village are mixed with as many as **1 in 2** (51%) not particularly keen on this proposition.
- The greatest perceived benefits of living in a retirement village include on site health care (53%), on site amenities and activities (52%) and social benefits and community (49%). Whereas the greatest perceived concerns include finding one that they will be happy in (43%), being able to pay for it (43%) and feeling like they are losing their independence (43%).

## Most prefer home care if that's an option but accept the need for aged care when required – however very few actively make plans in this respect and many desire more support

- **2 in 3** feel they would rather avoid living in a nursing home or would not accept this at all (67%).
- Close to **1 in 4** feel recent events has made their perception of aged care living less desirable (23%) with only 3% becoming more desirable.
- **3 in 5** feel the quality of age care in New Zealand is at least reasonable (61%), **12%** say that it is poor and a further **27%** that it depends on where you are and go.
- **1 in 3** feel they need more support or guidance to help choose and organise possible aged care needs for themselves or family members (32%).





**Financial wellbeing**

# Financial concerns

Have you or any members of your household, family or close circle had their job security adversely impacted by the COVID-19 crisis?



How frequently do you worry about money?



How financially secure do you feel these days?

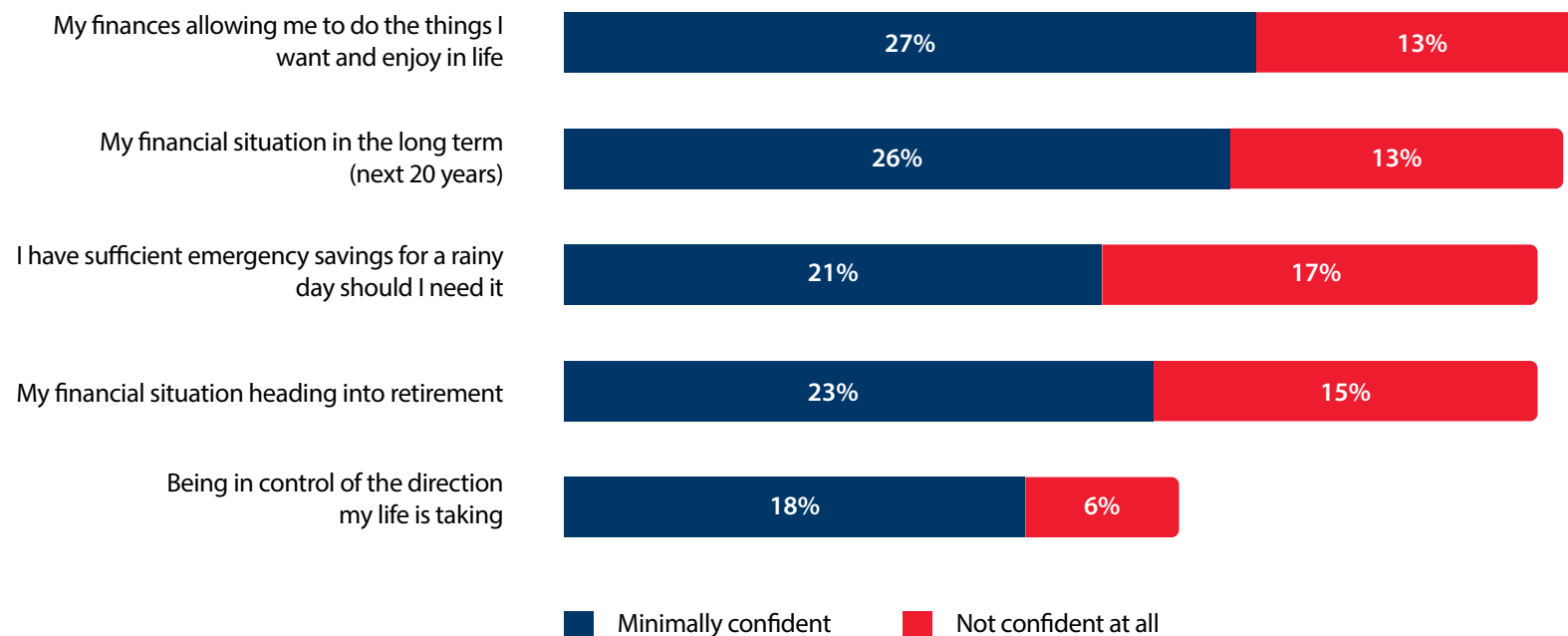


Many senior Kiwis are lacking a sense of financial security and confidence. 1 in 3 have felt the adverse impact of COVID-19 on the job security of themselves or their close circle (32%), 1 in 4 worry about money at least weekly (26%) and 1 in 5 do not feel financially secure (21%).



# Financial confidence

How confident are you about the following?



As many as 2 in 5 lack confidence in various aspects of their finances, most commonly 41% are minimally or not confident that their finances are allowing them to do the things they want and enjoy in life. Seniors are similarly not very confident about their long term financial situation (39%), whether they have emergency savings (38%), their financial situation heading into retirement (38%) and being in control of the direction in life (24%).

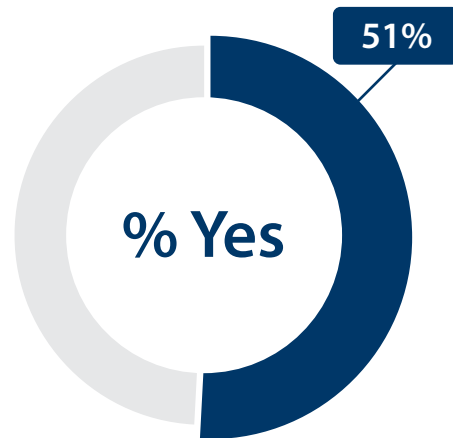


**Approaching retirement**

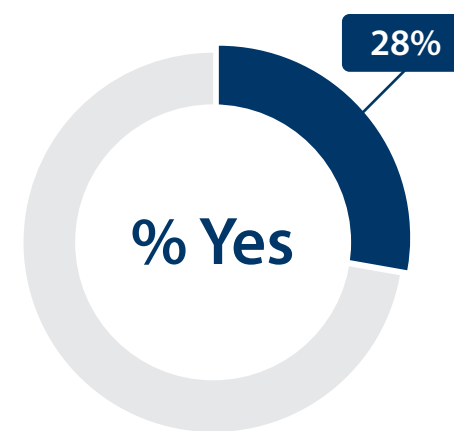


# The perfect age to retire

I feel on track to retire at the age I prefer



Did the events of 2020-2021 impact your retirement plans?

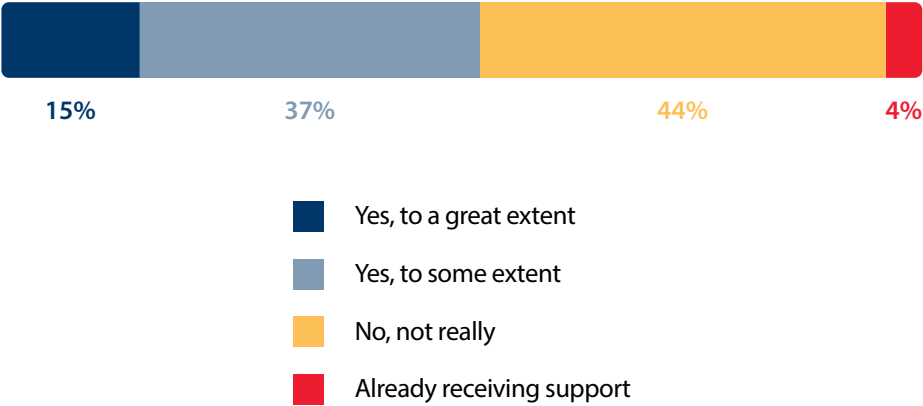
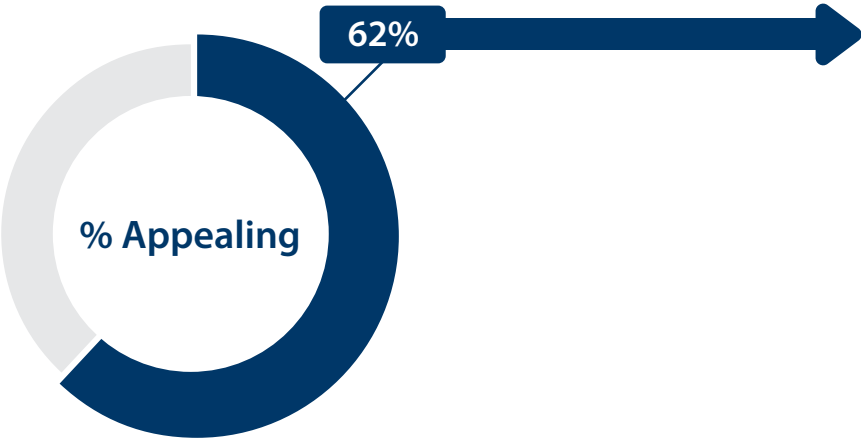


Only 1 in 2 Kiwi pre-retirees feel on track to retire at the age they prefer (51%). 1 in 4 pre-retirees (28%) report the events of 2020-2021 have impacted their retirement plans or have now left them unsure – most typically expecting to delay full retirement (23%).

# Retirement transition

How appealing is the idea of transitioning into retirement and progressively reducing work commitments rather than a hard retirement date?

Do you wish you could get more support through this planning and transitioning process?

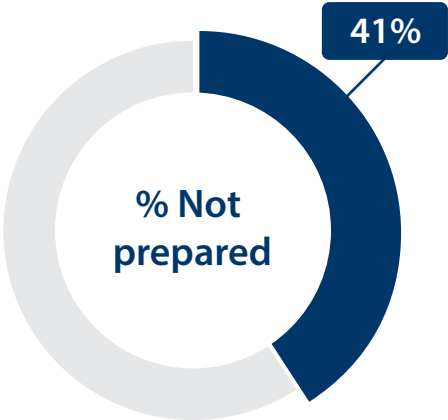


3 in 5 pre-retirees find the idea of transitioning into retirement and progressively reducing work commitments rather than a hard retirement date as very or extremely appealing (62%). However 1 in 2 wish they could get more support through this planning and transitioning process (52%), with only a further 4% reporting currently receiving this support.

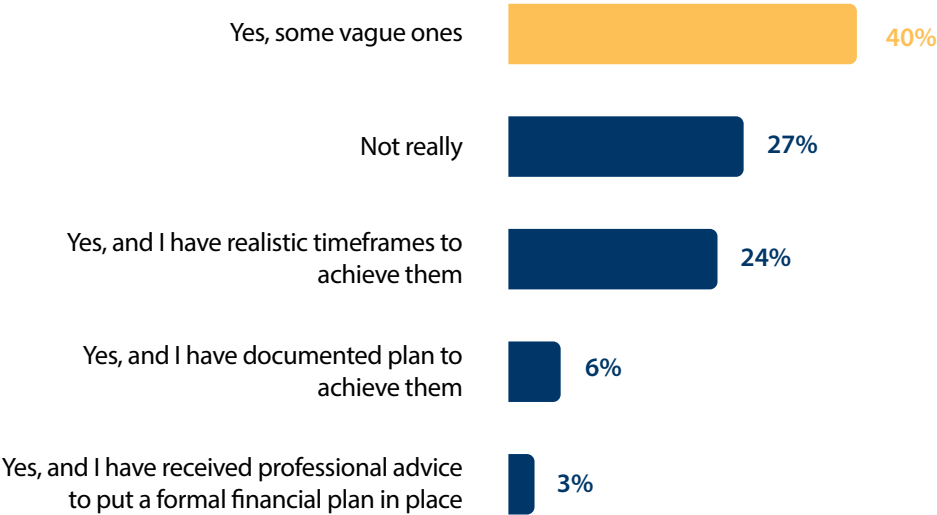


# Preparing for retirement

How prepared do you feel financially for retirement (i.e. on the right track)?



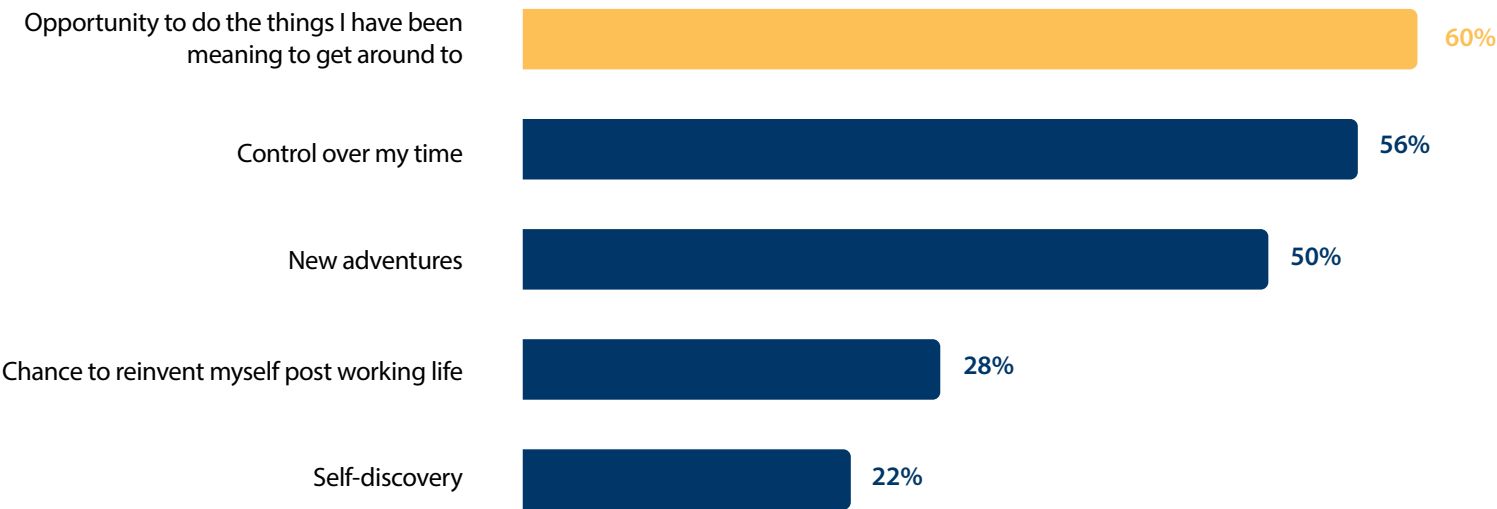
Do you have a financial plan for your retirement?



2 in 5 pre-retirees do not feel particularly prepared or prepared at all financially for retirement (41%) and less than 1 in 10 feel very prepared (8%). Most also do not have a financial plan for retirement (27%) or only vague ones (40%).

# A new chapter

Talking about retirement often feels like it's the end of something, but what do you see it as the beginning of?



Multiple answers allowed  
Top 5 answers only

Many pre-retirees see retirement positively as the beginning of something else. 3 in 5 see it as an opportunity to do the things they have been meaning to get around to (60%). Similarly 3 in 5 see it as more control over time (56%) and 1 in 2 see it as the beginning of new adventures (50%).



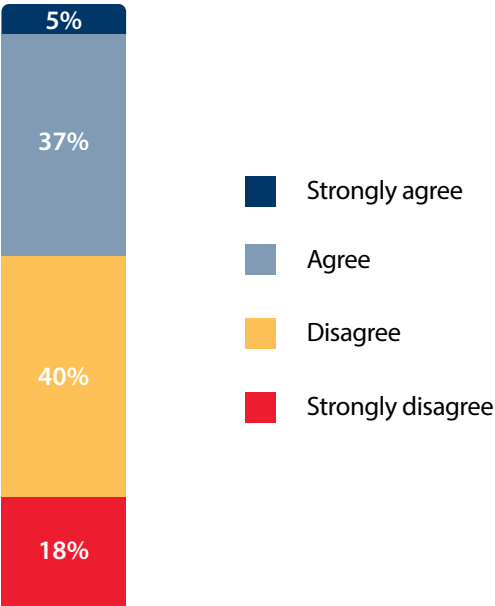
A photograph of an elderly woman with short blonde hair, smiling and looking to her right. She is wearing a green jacket over a white shirt and light-colored trousers. She is holding a wooden crate filled with various green plants. The background shows a greenhouse with a black frame and glass panels, surrounded by lush green foliage and trees. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting a sunny day. A dark blue banner with white text is overlaid on the bottom left of the image.

## The retiree experience

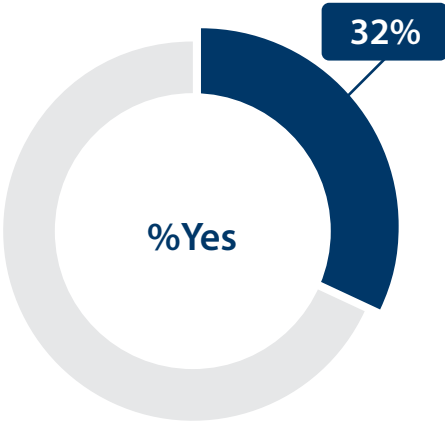


# Adapting to retirement

I underestimated the emotions involved in retirement



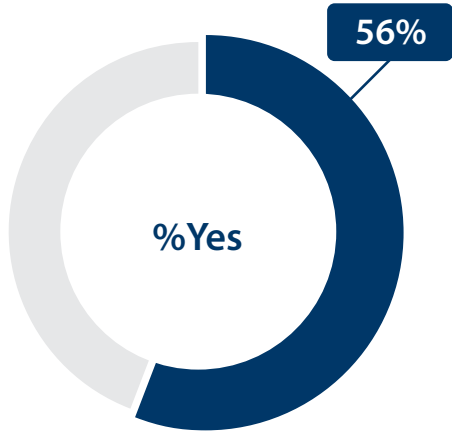
Do you find that you have any emerging needs now that you did not anticipate before you retired?



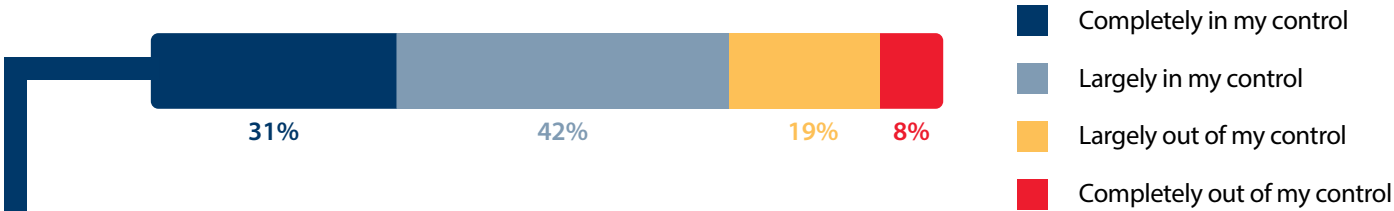
Adapting to retirement is not always straightforward with 2 in 5 Kiwi retirees admitting they underestimated the emotions involved in retirement (42%) while 1 in 3 retirees report emerging needs in retirement they did not anticipate (32%).

# Feeling in control

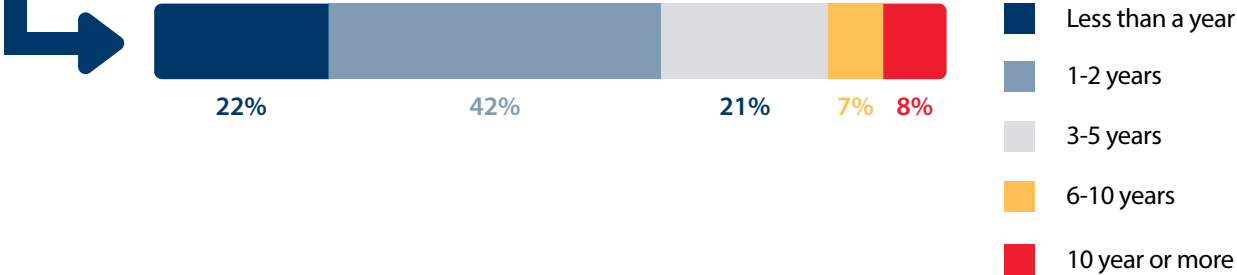
Are there any things (about retirement) you feel you have to compromise on?



How in control did you feel of when and how you retired at the time?

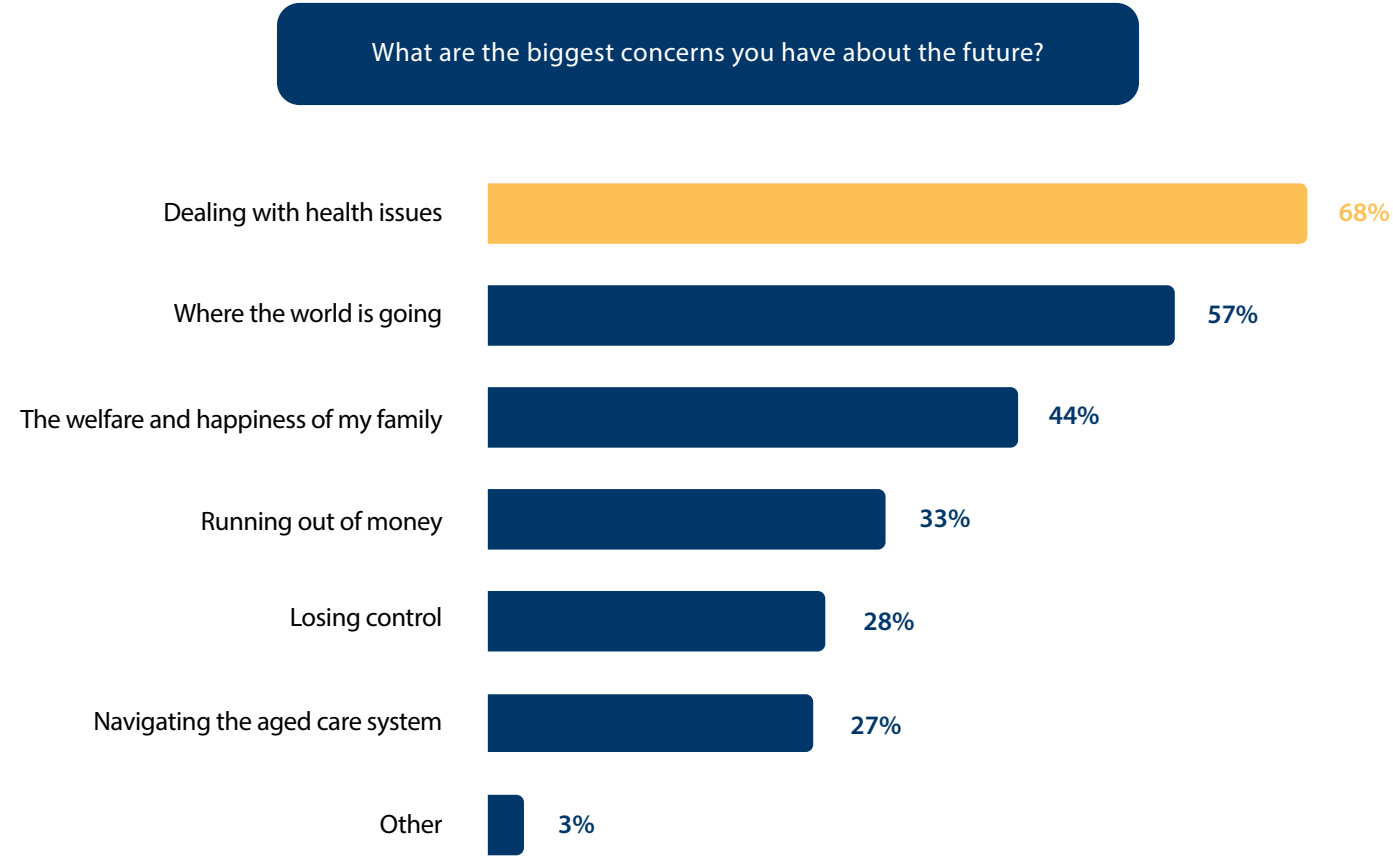


How long did it take to start feeling more in control?



Over 1 in 2 retirees admit there are things they feel they have to compromise on (56%). While over 1 in 4 retirees report not feeling in control of when and how they retired at the time (27%). Of those retirees lacking control at time, 1 in 3 took at least three years or more to start feeling more in control of their lives (36%).

# Concerns for the future



Health issues are the biggest concerns for the future for 7 in 10 (68%) of Kiwi retirees. This is followed by where the world is going (57%) and the welfare and happiness of their family (44%).

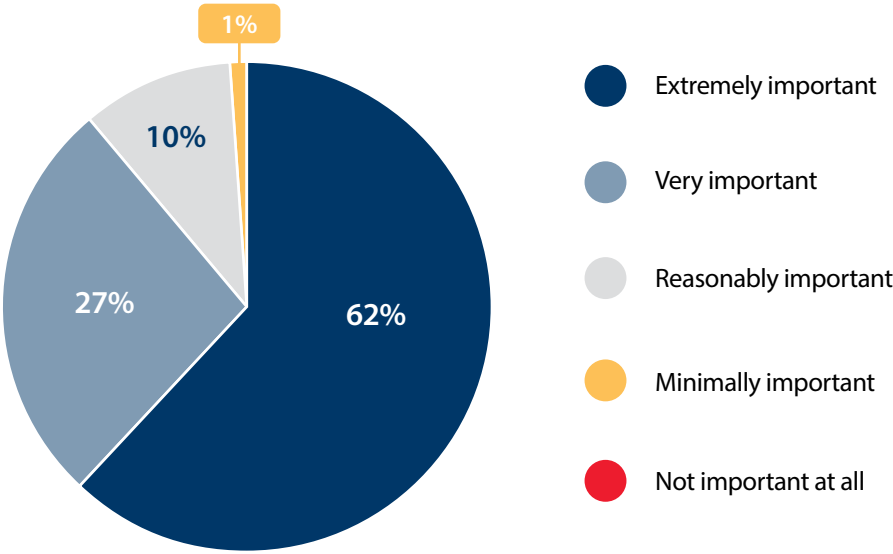




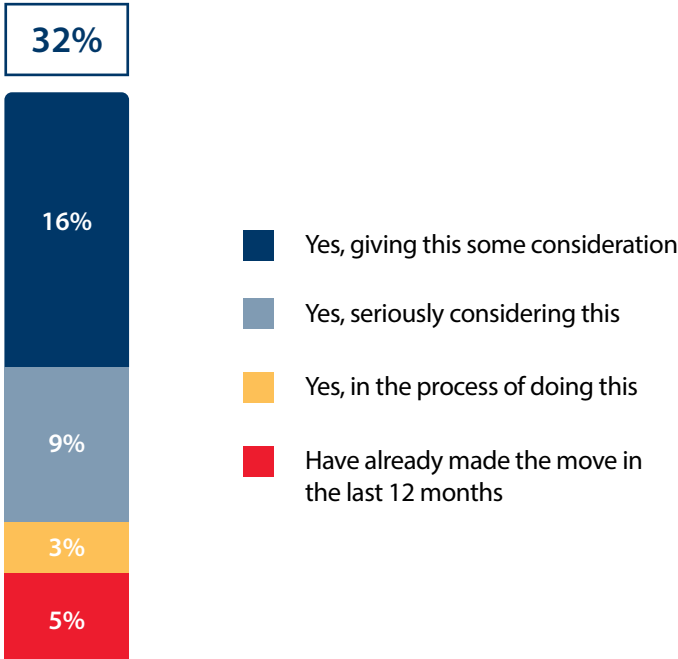
**Retirement living**

# Retirement living preferences

How important is it to you to be able to remain living independently for as long as you possibly can?



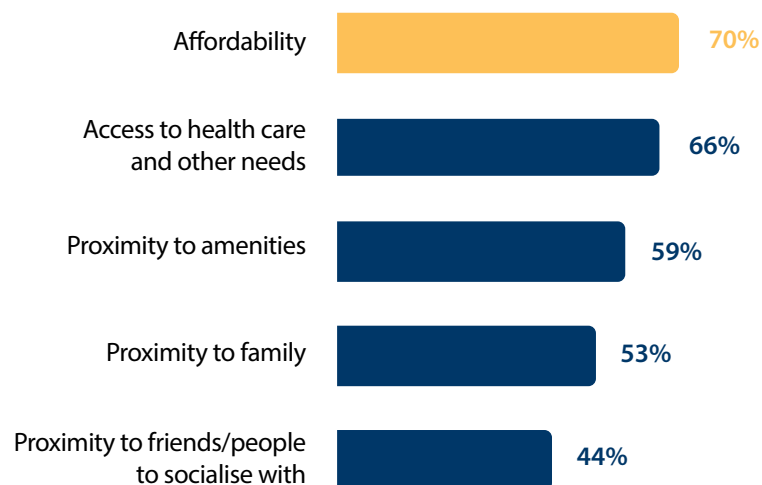
Have you been considering relocating where you live to a different area (i.e. different city or region) in the short-term (i.e. 1-2 years)?



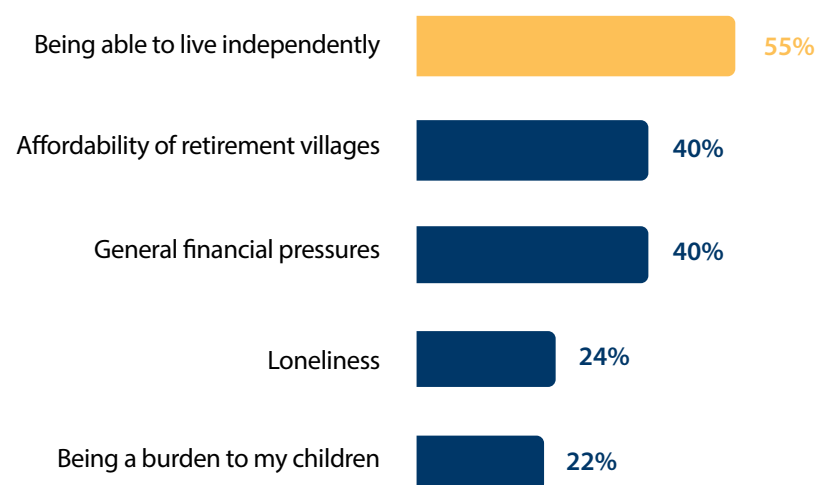
The ability to remain living independently for as long as possible is very or extremely important to 9 in 10 Kiwi seniors (89%). 1 in 3 (32%) have or are now considering relocating where they live to a different area (i.e. different city or region) in the short-term (i.e. 1-2 years) – most of these close to the coast (76%).

# Considering where to settle down

What are the key considerations you (would) make when deciding where to settle down in your retirement?



Which one of the following worries you about your future living arrangements?



*Multiple answers allowed*

*Top 5 answers only*

The top considerations for Kiwi retirees when deciding where to settle down include affordability (70%), access to health care and other needs (66%) and proximity to amenities (59%). Whereas the top worries about future living arrangements include being able to live independently (55%), affordability of retirement villages (40%) and general financial pressures (40%).



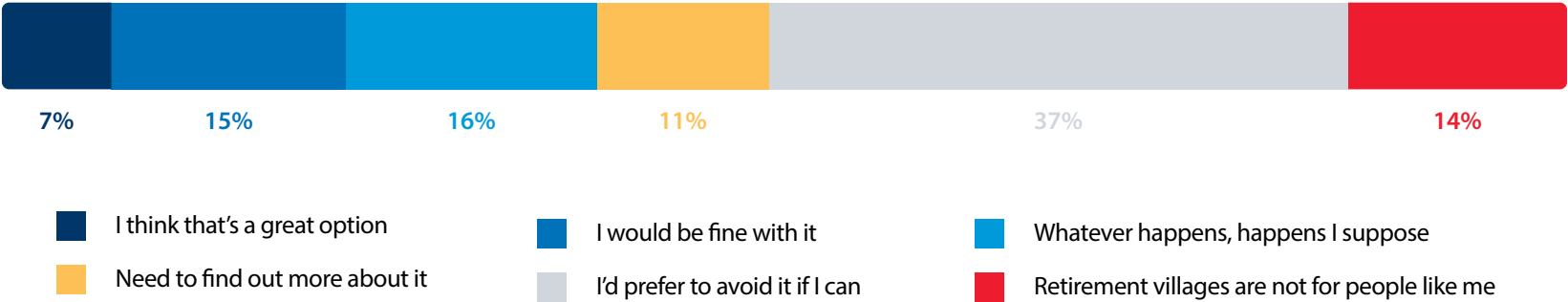


**Retirement villages**



# Retirement village perspectives

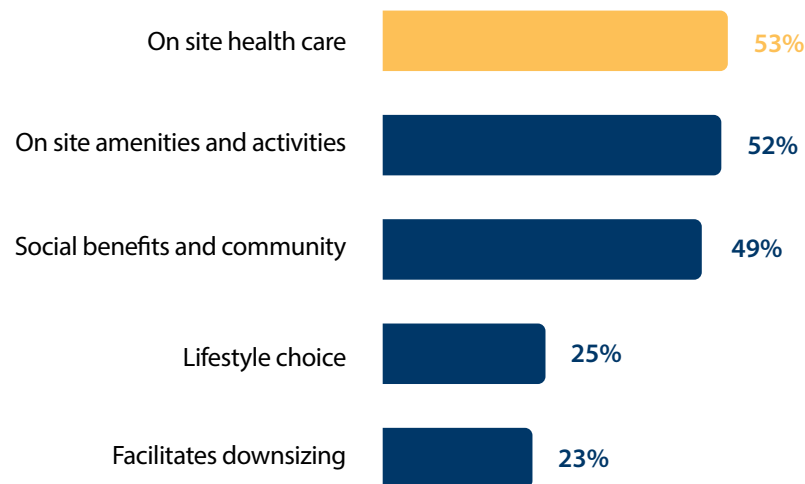
What are your thoughts on the possibility of living in a retirement village one day?



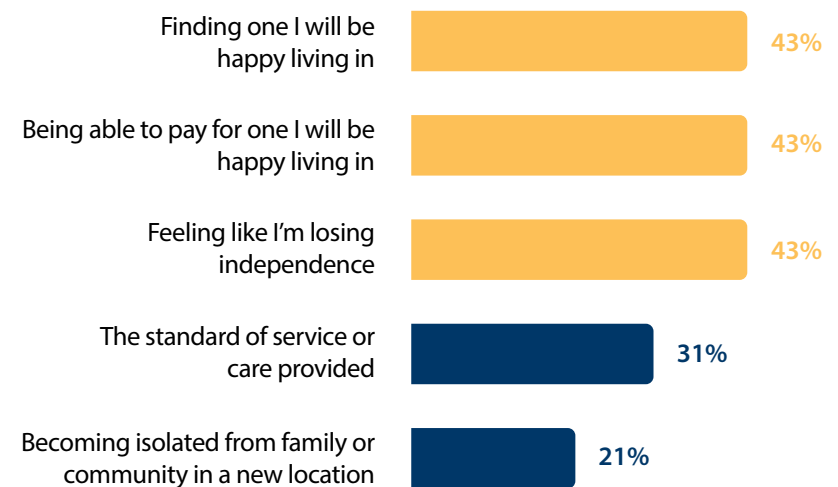
Opinions among senior Kiwis about living in a retirement village are mixed with as many as 1 in 2 (51%) not particularly keen on this proposition.

# The pros and cons of retirement villages

What do you see as the greatest benefits of living in a retirement village?



What are your greatest concerns about living in a retirement village?



*Multiple answers allowed*

*Top 5 answers only*

The greatest benefits of living in a retirement village include on site health care (53%), on site amenities and activities (52%) and social benefits and community (49%). Whereas the greatest concerns include finding one that they will be happy in (43%), being able to pay for one (43%) and feeling like they are losing their independence (43%).

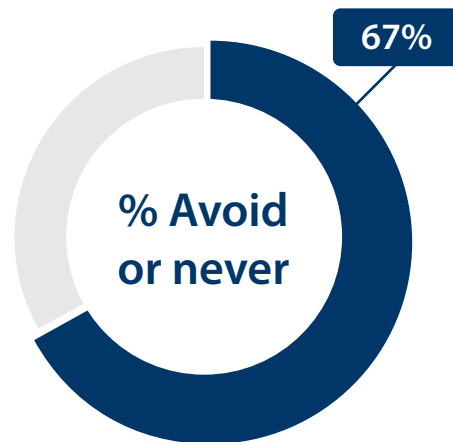


## Aged care

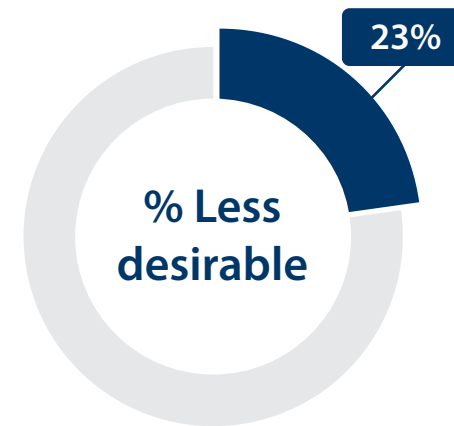


# Aged care perspectives

What are your thoughts on the possibility of living in nursing home care one day?



Have the events of 2020-2021 made you reconsider your perception of aged care living?

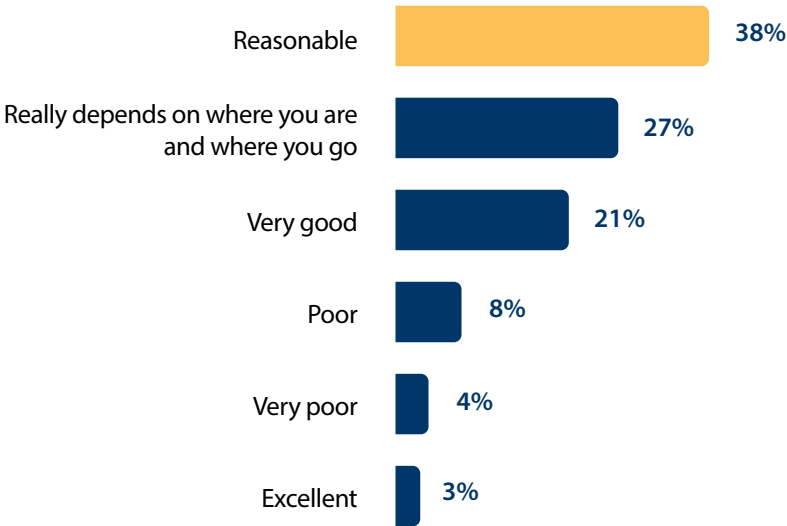


2 in 3 seniors feel they would rather avoid living in a nursing home or would not accept this at all (67%).

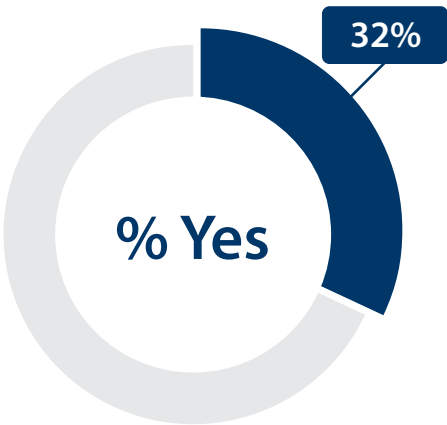
Close to 1 in 4 feel recent events has made their perception of aged care living less desirable (23%) with only 3% becoming more desirable.

# The quality of aged care in New Zealand

What do you think about the overall quality of aged care provided in New Zealand these days?



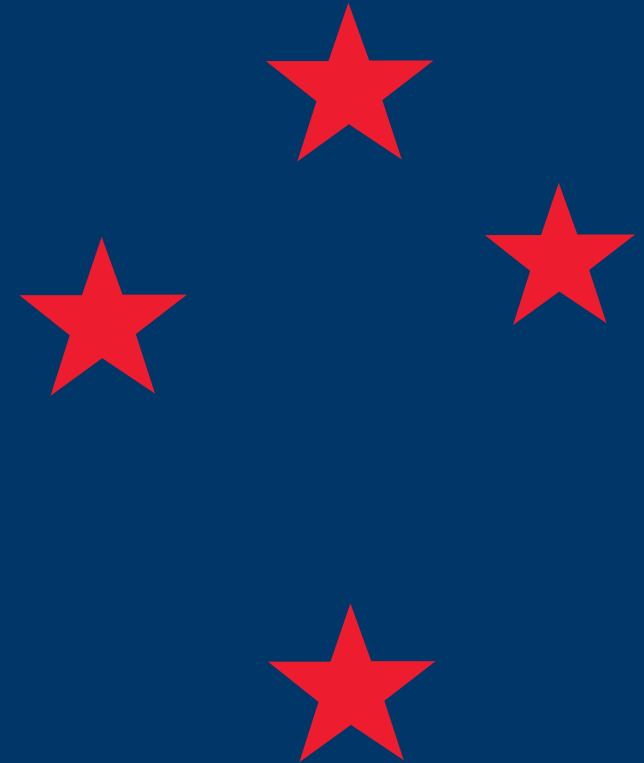
Do you feel you need more support or guidance to help choose and organise possible aged care needs for yourself or family members?



3 in 5 feel the quality of aged care in New Zealand is at least reasonable (61%), 12% feel that it is poor and a further 27% feel it depends on where you are and go. 1 in 3 feel they need more support or guidance to help choose and organise possible aged care needs for themselves or family members (32%).



*More of the  
New Zealand Seniors  
Series coming soon...*



**About New Zealand Seniors**

New Zealand Seniors offers cost-effective financial products that help people protect what's most important to them. We place our customers at the heart of everything we do by providing trusted products that are simple to use and understand.

We are committed to identifying and developing services and products we believe protect and improve the wellbeing of all senior New Zealanders.

