

Horizon Research

Gun Control in New Zealand

Prepared for:
Gun Control NZ
July 2023

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

This report gives the results of an online survey of 1,081 adults in New Zealand conducted from 19 to 24 July 2023. The methodology is described in Appendix 1.

Summary of results

Number of firearms in household

Respondents were asked how many firearms they have in their household.

- **87%** of adults said they **do not** have any firearms in their household,
- **0.3%** were not sure how many,
- **2.5%** would rather not say.

These numbers¹ equate to:

- Around **389,000** adults² have **one or more firearms** in the household,
- Average of **3** firearms per adult,
- Around **1,177,000** firearms in New Zealand.

Support for gun registry

- **71%** of New Zealand adults **support** (strongly support/support) a registry – around *2,809,000 adults*
 - **53%** of gun owners **support** a registry - *205,000 gun owners*
- **14%** of New Zealand adults **oppose** a registry – *555,000 adults*
 - **22%** of gun owners **oppose** a registry – *86,000 gun owners*

Do people feel safer now most semi-automatic weapons have been banned and all firearms will have to be registered?

- **53%** of New Zealand adults **said they felt safer** – *2,107,000 adults*
 - **34%** of gun owners **said they felt safer** – *133,000 gun owners*
- **12%** of New Zealand adults **said they felt less safe** – *492,000 adults*
 - **26%** of gun owners **said they felt less safe** – *99,000 gun owners*

Do people think a political party which supports registering all firearms has stronger or weaker law and order policy?

- **64%** said a political party supporting a registry has a **stronger** policy – *2,523,000 adults*
 - **40%** of gun owners said a political party has a **stronger** policy – *157,000 gun owners*
- **12%** said a political party not supporting a registry has a **weaker** policy – *587,000 adults*
 - **26%** of gun owners said a political party has a **weaker** policy – *100,000 gun owners*

¹ These calculations are based on the numbers given by respondents and calculated as an average. It excludes people who said “don’t know” or “prefer not to say”.

² All population estimates based on 18+ population for June 2022 (3,967,760) - Statistics NZ. Population numbers are rounded to nearest thousand.

Results across voting intention for main political parties

The following results are for respondents who indicated which of the main parties they would vote for if an election were held tomorrow.

Support a gun register.

Support for a register is highest among intending Green and Labour party voters. There is majority support among intending voters for all main parties. AT 53%, lowest support is among ACT voters.

- Green Party voters (92%)
- Labour (83%)
- Te Pāti Māori voters (76%)
- National (64%)
- NZ First (54%)
- ACT (53%).

Do people feel safer now most semi-automatic weapons have been banned and all firearms will have to be registered?

The below shows the percentage of voters who say they feel safer. Green and Labour party voters feel the safest, with ACT feeling the least safe.

- Green Party voters (85%)
- Labour (71%)
- Te Pāti Māori voters (67%)
- National (42%)
- NZ First (33%)
- ACT (20%).

Does a political party which supports registering all firearms have stronger or weaker law and order policy?

Stronger Law and Order policy

- Labour (75%)
- Green Party voters (72%)
- National (65%)
- Te Pāti Māori voters (60%)
- NZ First (50%)
- ACT (46%).

Weaker Law and Order policy

- Te Pāti Māori voters (24%)
- Green Party voters (17%)
- Labour (15%)
- National (12%)
- ACT (11%)
- NZ First (9%).

DETAILED REPORT

Before answering the survey, respondents were shown the following information:

“We’d like your views on firearms control. Here’s some background to help you answer the next few questions...”

Firearms owners already have to be licensed. Since June this year the Government has also introduced a firearms registry.

Most firearms owners could have up to five years to record all the firearms and other relevant arms items in their possession into the registry.

However, some licence holders would need to provide information for the registry in a shorter timeframe. If they buy a firearm, they need to register that and other firearms within 30 days.

The government argues the registry will give licence holders more confidence when buying or selling firearms as it will let them know if they are dealing with a current licence holder and if the firearm they are looking to buy has been reported stolen.

In New Zealand, around 249,000 licensed shooters own an estimated 1.2-1.7 million guns. The number of guns in New Zealand is not known because until now the firearms have not had to be registered. It is estimated there is at least one gun in 17 of every 100 households.

On average, one person in New Zealand dies by gunshot every 7 days. Of these, 80% are suicides, 13% percent are homicides, 5% are accidents.

Arguments for registering each firearm

The Police Association argues most illegal firearms come from licensed firearms owners - either stolen from poorly secured homes or vehicles, or more often through the practice of straw-purchasing in which a licensed owner on-sells firearms to unlicensed buyers. Often these guns end up in the hands of gang members.

Others argue gun registries overseas have led to drops in gun deaths and crime.

Against a registry

The ACT party says its priority is to repeal the Arms Legislation Act introduced in 2020 (banning most automatic weapons) and the gun registry. It would then set about making “the world’s best firearm laws that balance public safety, firearms control, and freedom”.

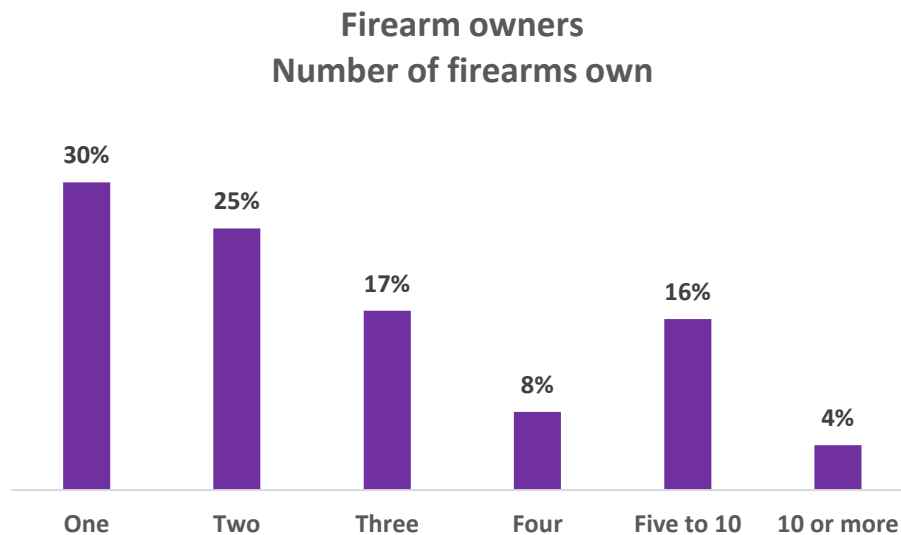
The National Party says it supports the gun registry but, if in Government, would assess whether it was worth the required investment, sufficiently protected owners’ private information and was effective in limiting illegal guns in the community.”

1. Firearm ownership

Respondents were asked how many firearms they had in their household.

- **87%** of adults said they **did not** have any firearms in their household,
- **0.3%** were not sure how many,
- **2.5%** would rather not say.

The chart below shows how many firearms people have in their household. **10%** have at least one or more firearm in their household.



Sample: Have at least one or more firearms in household

These numbers equate to:

- Around **389,000** adults having **one or more firearms** in the household,
- Average of **3** firearms per adult,
- Around **1,177,000** firearms in New Zealand.

These calculations are based on the numbers given by respondents and calculated as an average. It excludes people who said “don’t know” or “prefer not to say”.

Respondents were asked which political party they voted for in 2020 and which party they intend to vote for if an election were held tomorrow.

People who voted ACT in 2020 or intend to vote ACT in 2023 are more likely to have firearms in the household.

Green Party and New Zealand First supporters are least likely to have firearms.

Firstly, how many firearms are there in your household?	ALL	PARTY VOTE 2020					
		ACT New Zealand	Green Party	Labour Party	Te Pāti Māori	National Party	New Zealand First
None	87%	69%	97%	89%	87%	85%	98%
One	3%	5%	1%	4%	0%	3%	0%
Two	2%	2%	1%	3%	0%	3%	0%
Three	2%	3%	1%	1%	5%	3%	2%
Four	1%	2%	0%	1%	5%	0%	0%
Five to 10	2%	7%	1%	1%	4%	3%	0%
10 or more	0%	3%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%
Not sure how many	0%	1%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%
Rather not say	3%	8%	0%	1%	0%	3%	0%
ONE OR MORE FIREARMS IN HOUSEHOLD	10%	22%	4%	10%	13%	12%	2%

N (unweighted)	1,081	101	121	424	26	214	38
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BLUE = significantly higher than total sample RED = significantly lower than total sample

Firstly, how many firearms are there in your household?	ALL	VOTE INTENTION					
		ACT New Zealand	Green Party	Labour Party	Te Pāti Māori	National Party	New Zealand First
None	87%	77%	97%	89%	89%	90%	90%
One	3%	6%	1%	4%	0%	1%	0%
Two	2%	0%	1%	3%	0%	2%	6%
Three	2%	3%	0%	1%	3%	3%	2%
Four	1%	1%	0%	1%	5%	0%	0%
Five to 10	2%	5%	0%	1%	4%	2%	0%
10 or more	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%
Not sure how many	0%	1%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%
Rather not say	3%	6%	1%	0%	0%	1%	2%
ONE OR MORE FIREARMS IN HOUSEHOLD	10%	16%	3%	10%	12%	8%	8%

N (unweighted)	1,081	156	143	276	48	224	42
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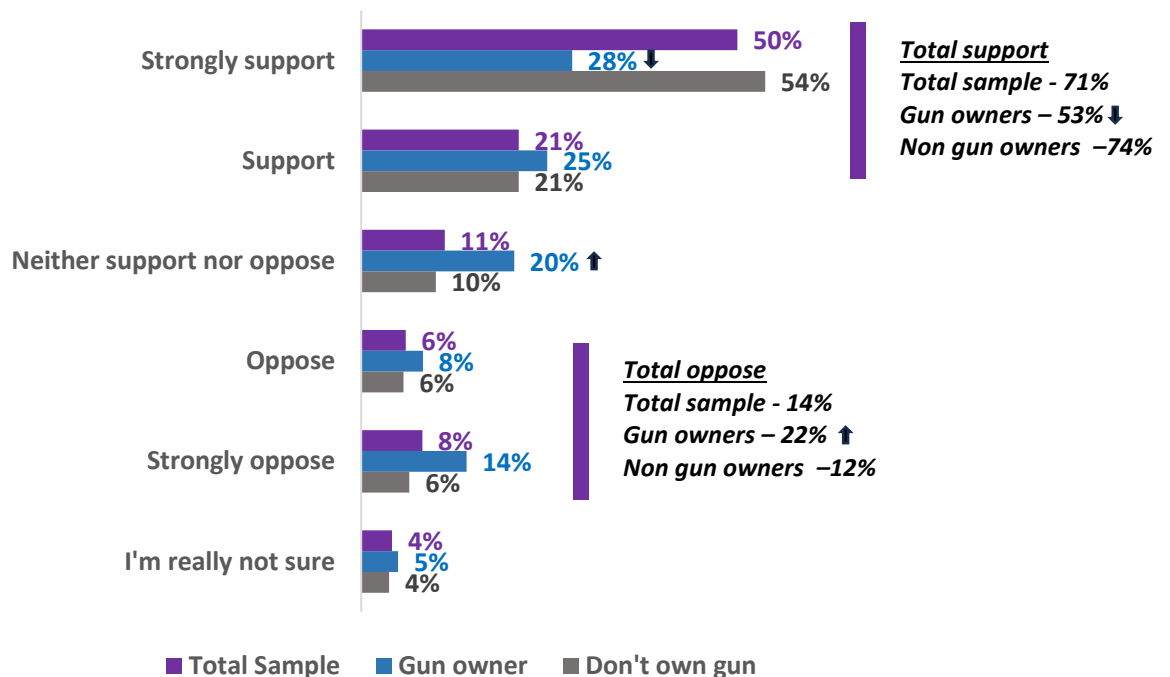
BLUE = significantly higher than total sample RED = significantly lower than total sample

2. Support for gun registry in New Zealand

Overall, there is strong support for a gun registry.

- **71% support** (strongly support/support) a registry – *this is the equivalent of 2,809,000 adults*
 - **53% of gun owners support** a registry - 205,000 gun owners
- **14% of New Zealand adults oppose** a registry – 555,000 adults
 - **22% of gun owners oppose** a registry – 86,000 gun owners.

Do you support or oppose having a gun registry in New Zealand?



↑ ↓ Significantly higher or lower than total sample.

Sub-groups³ who are more and less likely to support or oppose a gun registry are shown below:

Strongly support gun registry (50%)	
Significantly less likely ▼	Significantly more likely ▲
18-24 year olds 38%	65-74 year olds 60%
25-34 year olds 41%	Professional /Senior Government Official 62%
Business Proprietor/ Self-employed 37%	Live in Wellington 60%
Pasifika 30%	
Strongly oppose gun registry (8%)	
Significantly less likely ▼	Significantly more likely ▲
18-24 year olds 1%	45-54 year olds 15%
Household income less than \$20k a year 3%	Business Manager/ Executive 20%
Asian 3%	Pasifika 18%

³ Includes sub groups with sample sizes of more than 30.

Green and Labour Party voters are the biggest **supporters** of a gun register.

35% of 2020 ACT voters and **33%** of those who intend to vote ACT **oppose** a register. **21%** of National Party voters also **oppose** a register.

Do you support or oppose having a gun registry in New Zealand?	ALL	PARTY VOTE 2020					
		ACT New Zealand	Green Party	Labour Party	Te Pāti Māori	National Party	New Zealand First Party
Strongly support	50%	22%	74%	63%	65%	39%	50%
Support	21%	24%	16%	19%	14%	25%	11%
Neither support nor oppose	11%	13%	4%	8%	12%	13%	26%
Oppose	6%	8%	2%	3%	9%	9%	0%
Strongly oppose	8%	27%	1%	4%	0%	11%	10%
I'm really not sure	4%	6%	3%	3%	0%	2%	3%
TOTAL SUPPORT	71%	46%	90%	82%	79%	64%	62%
TOTAL OPPOSE	14%	35%	3%	7%	9%	21%	10%

N (unweighted)	1,077	101	121	420	26	214	38
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BLUE = significantly higher than total sample RED =significantly lower than total sample

Do you support or oppose having a gun registry in New Zealand?	ALL	VOTE INTENTION 2023					
		ACT New Zealand	Green Party	Labour Party	Te Pāti Māori	National Party	New Zealand First Party
Strongly support	50%	32%	77%	67%	51%	37%	28%
Support	21%	20%	15%	16%	25%	27%	25%
Neither support nor oppose	11%	12%	2%	8%	13%	13%	22%
Oppose	6%	8%	3%	3%	5%	10%	11%
Strongly oppose	8%	25%	0%	3%	0%	8%	12%
I'm really not sure	4%	3%	3%	3%	6%	5%	2%
TOTAL SUPPORT	71%	53%	92%	83%	76%	64%	54%
TOTAL OPPOSE	14%	33%	3%	6%	5%	18%	23%

N (unweighted)	1,077	156	143	276	48	224	42
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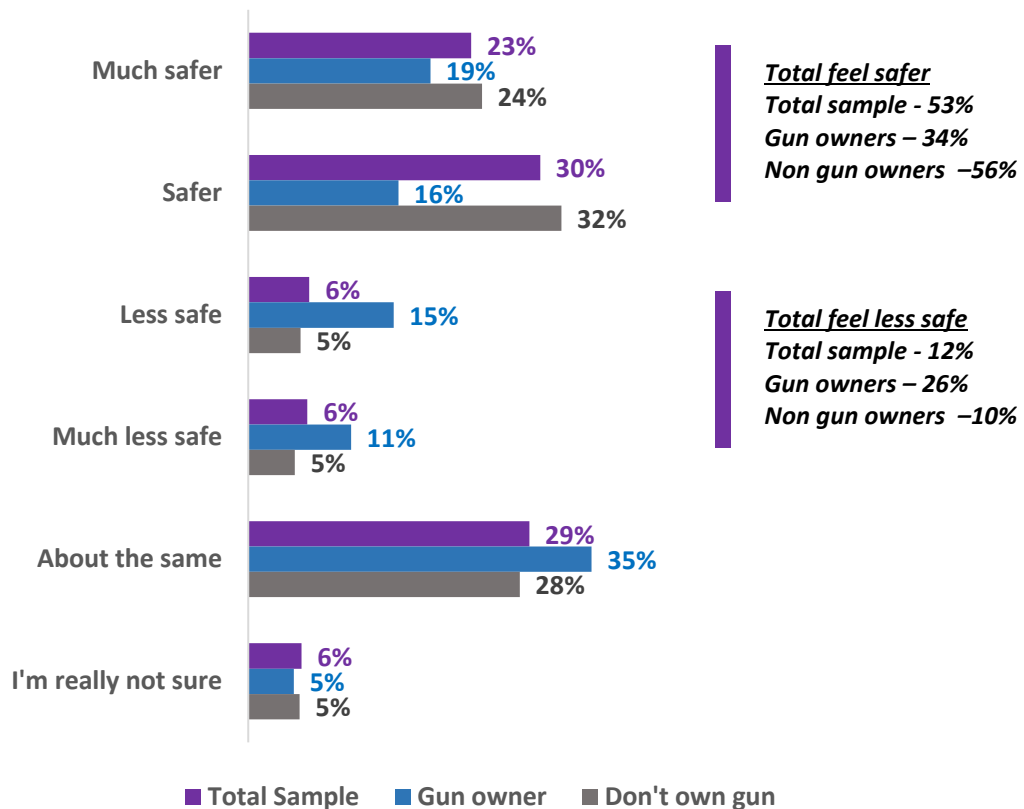
BLUE = significantly higher than total sample RED =significantly lower than total sample

3. Do people feel safer now that most semi-automatic weapons have been banned and all firearms will have to be registered?

Respondents were asked whether they felt safer or less safe now most semi-automatic weapons have been banned and all firearms will have to be registered.

- **53% said they felt safer** – this is the equivalent of 2,107,000 adults
 - **34% of gun owners said they felt safer** – 133,000 gun owners
- **12% said they felt less safe** – 492,000 adults
 - **26% of gun owners said they felt less safe** – 99,000 gun owners

Do you feel safer now that most semi-automatic weapons have been banned and all firearms will have to be registered?



↑ ↓ Significantly higher or lower than total sample.

Sub-groups⁴ who are more and less likely to feel safer now most semi-automatic weapons have been banned and all firearms will have to be registered shown below:

Total feel safe (much safer/safe) 53%	
Significantly <u>less</u> likely ▼	Significantly <u>more</u> likely ▲
45-54 year olds 44%	18-24 year olds 74%
75+ year olds 42%	25-34 year olds 63%
Retired/Superannuitant 44%	Professional /Senior Government Official 68%
Personal income more than \$150k per year 35%	Student 77%
	Unemployed/beneficiary 67%
	Household income less than \$20k a year 69%
	Asian 67%
	Pasifika 73%
Total feel less safe (much less safe/less safe) 12%	
Significantly <u>less</u> likely ▼	Significantly <u>more</u> likely ▲
Unemployed/beneficiary 6%	Business Manager/ Executive 30%
Household income less than \$50k a year 7%	Personal income more than \$150k per year 25%

Across voters, **38%** of 2020 ACT voters and **31%** intending to vote ACT feel **less safe**.

23% of National 2020 voters feel **less safe**.

76% of Green and **70%** of Labour Party 2020 voters **feel safer**.

Do you feel safer now that most semi-automatic weapons have been banned and all firearms will have to be registered?	ALL	PARTY VOTE 2020					
		ACT New Zealand	Green Party	Labour Party	Te Pāti Māori	National Party	New Zealand First Party
Much safer	23%	8%	33%	34%	29%	10%	20%
Safer	30%	11%	44%	37%	39%	19%	27%
Less safe	6%	11%	2%	3%	7%	11%	2%
Much less safe	6%	27%	0%	3%	0%	12%	9%
About the same	29%	39%	19%	20%	19%	44%	40%
I'm really not sure	6%	4%	3%	4%	5%	5%	2%
TOTAL SAFE	53%	19%	76%	70%	69%	29%	47%
TOTAL UNSAFE	12%	38%	2%	6%	7%	23%	11%

N (unweighted)	1,072	100	120	419	26	213	38
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BLUE = significantly higher than total sample RED =significantly lower than total sample

⁴ Includes sub groups with sample sizes of more than 30.

67% of people intending to vote Te Pāti Māori said they feel safer now that most semi-automatic weapons have been banned and all firearms will have to be registered.

Do you feel safer now that most semi-automatic weapons have been banned and all firearms will have to be registered?	ALL	VOTE INTENTION 2023					
		ACT New Zealand	Green Party	Labour Party	Te Pāti Māori	National Party	New Zealand First Party
Much safer	23%	7%	38%	34%	41%	14%	17%
Safer	30%	13%	47%	37%	27%	27%	16%
Less safe	6%	14%	1%	3%	12%	8%	10%
Much less safe	6%	17%	0%	3%	0%	8%	12%
About the same	29%	46%	12%	17%	17%	37%	44%
I'm really not sure	6%	4%	2%	6%	4%	5%	2%
TOTAL SAFE	53%	20%	85%	71%	67%	42%	33%
TOTAL UNSAFE	12%	31%	1%	6%	12%	16%	22%

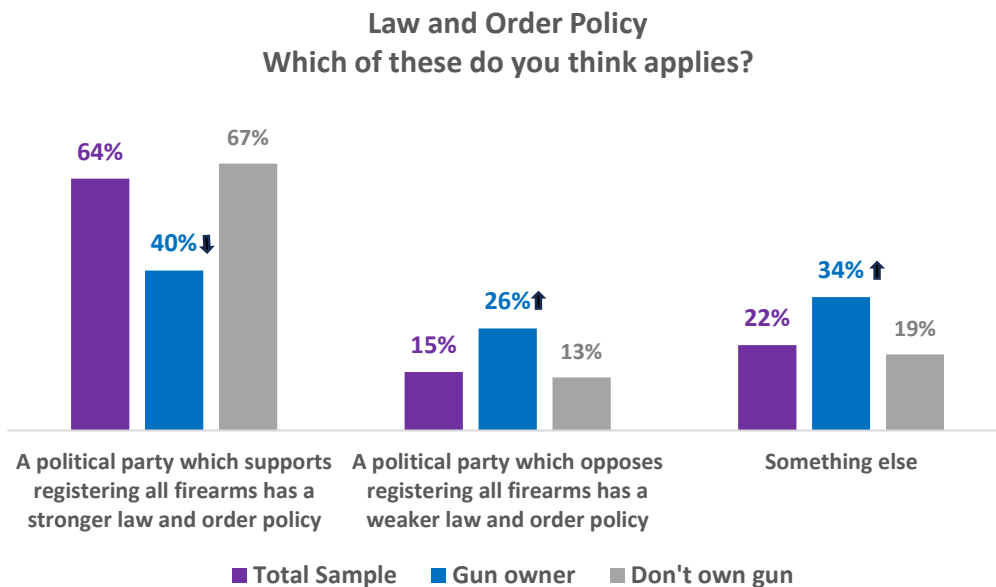
N (unweighted)	1,072	156	142	275	48	221	42
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BLUE = significantly higher than total sample RED =significantly lower than total sample

4. Does a political party which supports registering all firearms have a stronger or weaker law and order policy?

Respondents were asked whether they think a political party which supports registering all firearms has stronger or weaker law and order policy.

- **64%** said a political party supporting a registry has a **stronger** policy – 2,523,000 adults
 - **40%** of gun owners said a political party supporting a registry has a **stronger** policy – 157,000 gun owners
- **12%** said a political party not supporting a registry has a **weaker** policy – 587,000 adults
 - **26%** of gun owners said a political party not supporting a registry has a **weaker** policy – 100,000 gun owners



↑ ↓ Significantly higher or lower than total sample.

22% of respondents selected “something else” rather than choose a statement about registering firearms and whether it meant a law and order policy was strong or weak. They were asked to explain why.

The majority of the 22% believed a gun registry **would make no difference**. Below is an example of what they said.

- *It doesn't make any difference, if criminals are going to offend with a weapon they aren't going to register their weapons*
- *Doesn't make any difference to law and order as ram raids and gang violence prove.*
- *It doesn't make any difference as gangs and others who shouldn't own firearms will still be able to access them*

- A registry will make no difference to honest people, & no difference to illegal firearms holders. The new legislation brought in by Labour was virtue signalling.
- Registering firearms makes not a lot of difference as those that do register them are the ones using them appropriately. It's the black market firearms that are the problem and without cracking down on gangs that won't change.

Sub-groups⁵ who are more and less likely think a political party has a strong or weak law and order policy if they have or do not support a gun register are below:

Has a stronger law and order policy 64%	
Significantly <u>less</u> likely ▼	Significantly <u>more</u> likely ▲
45-54 year olds 53%	65-74 year olds 73%
Business Proprietor/ Self-employed 50%	Not employed 71%
Household income \$150k and \$200k per year 52%	Student 76%
Has a weaker law and order policy 15%	
Significantly <u>less</u> likely ▼	Significantly <u>more</u> likely ▲
65-74 year olds 8%	25-34 year olds 24%
75+ year olds 8%	Pasifika 37%
Personal income \$100k and \$150k per year 8%	

Across voters, **74%** of 2020 Labour voters and **75%** intending to vote Labour feel a **political party has a stronger** law and order policy if it supports a firearms register.

35% of Te Pāti Māori voters feel a **political party has a weaker** law and order policy if it supports a firearms register.

Which of these do you think applies?	ALL	PARTY VOTE 2020					
		ACT New Zealand	Green Party	Labour Party	Te Pāti Māori	National Party	New Zealand First Party
A political party which supports registering all firearms has a stronger law and order policy	64%	38%	70%	74%	59%	59%	58%
A political party which opposes registering all firearms has a weaker law and order policy	15%	11%	19%	14%	35%	11%	15%
Something else	22%	52%	11%	12%	6%	30%	26%
N (unweighted)	1,065	100	120	417	26	211	37

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

⁵ Includes sub groups with sample sizes of more than 30.

Among intending voters **72%** of Green and **75%** of Labour voters feel a **political party has a stronger** law and order policy if it supports a firearms register.

Which of these do you think applies?	ALL	VOTE INTENTION 2023					
		ACT New Zealand	Green Party	Labour Party	Te Pāti Māori	National Party	New Zealand First Party
A political party which supports registering all firearms has a stronger law and order policy	64%	46%	72%	75%	60%	65%	50%
A political party which opposes registering all firearms has a weaker law and order policy	15%	11%	17%	15%	24%	12%	9%
Something else	22%	43%	11%	9%	16%	24%	41%
N (unweighted)	1,065	153	142	275	47	222	41

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

APPENDIX 1 - METHODOLOGY

Research method

An online survey of adults living in New Zealand aged 18 and older.

Sample sources

Members of the nationwide Horizon Research panels and a third-party panel (used for source diversity) responded to this survey.

Fieldwork dates

19 to 24 July 2023.

Sample size

1,081 adults overall.

Weighting

The total sample is weighted on age, gender, personal income, ethnicity, region and 2020 party vote to match the adult population.

Maximum predicted margin of error

±3% at the 95% confidence level.

Population estimates in the report

These are based on the Stats NZ June 2022 population estimate of 3,967,760 people aged 18 or more.

Demographic tables

Demographic results tables accompany this report.