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NEW CONSUMER SURVEY SHOWS THAT RESPONSIBILITY HAS BECOME THE NEW NORM

A large majority of New Zealanders expect their Kiwisaver and investment funds to be invested ethically¹ and are ready to shift their funds² if company practices are inconsistent with their values.

A new Responsible Investment Association and Mindful Money consumer survey undertaken by Colmar Brunton has been released today revealing New Zealanders care deeply about how their savings are invested. The research was conducted online with 1,000 research panel members. The data has been weighted to ensure it is representative of the New Zealand population in terms of age, gender and regional spread. The maximum margin of error associated with this survey is $\pm 3.1\%$.

It shows that people expect managers of their Kiwisavers and other investments to consider issues important to them, as well as delivering strong financial outcomes. The survey shows concern over a much deeper range of issues beyond just tobacco and controversial weapons when it comes to where their funds are invested.

“The top issues Kiwis want kept out of their KiwiSaver and other funds are animal cruelty, human rights abuse and labour rights³,” explains [Mindful Money](#) founder Barry Coates. “Respondents also want to avoid investments in gambling, pornography, fossil fuels and palm oil⁴.

“One of the most interesting findings from the research is that a lack of independent information is the major barrier to a greater uptake of responsible investment by the public. The other major barrier is a lack of time to compare the options⁵.”

These initial insights have confirmed why the former Green MP has created [Mindful Money](#) - a newly launched charity, focused on providing independent information and helping Kiwis choose the options that align with their values.

The charity has partnered with the [Responsible Investment Association Australasia \(RIAA\)](#) to deliver the research and together will present it at New Zealand’s annual Responsible Investment Conference, which takes place in Auckland tomorrow.

“Building on RIAA’s 2016 consumer research, this research again shows us just how strongly New Zealanders want to ensure their investments are aligned with their values. Although the investment industry has moved rapidly to reflect consumer concerns around weapons and tobacco, this survey shows there remains work to ensure the finance sector is delivering investments that meet consumer expectations” said RIAA CEO Simon O’Connor.

“There has been a lot of discussion about how millennials are driving responsible investing, but this research shows that those over 60 years old are just as committed,” explains O’Connor.

The survey also reveals that New Zealanders are calling for more transparency and information about the way their KiwiSaver funds are invested.

“Almost three quarters of respondents say they would be more likely to invest in a fund certified by an independent body,” says Mr O’Connor. The number of funds certified by RIAA has grown significantly in the two years since the last comprehensive survey of the New Zealand market.

The presentation of this survey will set the stage for tomorrow’s conference. The survey underscores that responsible investing is at a tipping point, with huge potential for growing consumer demand and deepening the impact.

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Mindful Money Background

Mindful Money believes money can be a force for good. The not-for-profit organisation was founded in 2018 by former Green MP Barry Coates and focuses on engaging and educating members of the public about responsible investment. Mindful Money is developing a platform that will allow New Zealanders to compare the options and find a fund that fits their values. www.mindfulmoney.nz

RIAA Background

The Responsible Investment Association Australasia (RIAA) is the peak industry body representing responsible, ethical and impact investors across Australia and New Zealand. With over 230 members managing more than \$9 trillion in assets globally, RIAA is the largest and most active network of people and organisations engaged in responsible, ethical and impact investing across Australia and New Zealand. www.responsibleinvestment.org

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Research Notes:

¹ 72% of New Zealanders say they expect their KiwiSaver to be invested ethically

² 62% would be prepared to move their Kiwisaver if activities are inconsistent with their values

³ Over 90% of respondents would exclude funds that invested in animal cruelty, human rights abuses and labour issues

⁴ Highly ranked issues to avoid include gambling 82%, palm oil 81%, fossil fuels 76% and pornography/ adult entertainment 74%

⁵ 50% agree that there is not enough independent information available, and 49% agree they don't have time to compare the options.