



Does David Bain deserve compensation?

The issue:

In 1995 David Bain was convicted for the murder of his family in their home in Dunedin, in a case that gained public attention across New Zealand. After spending 13 years in prison, David Bain's conviction was overturned with the help of notable people such as Joe Karam, and he was released. Earlier this year, the government announced that it is not legally required to pay David Bain any compensation for his wrongful imprisonment.

In a recent poll, we asked New Zealanders to tell us if they agreed with the decision that the government was not required to pay David Bain any compensation.

The poll was conducted with a nationally representative sample of 500 adult New Zealanders in August 2016.

The poll question:

The following question was asked:

Q1. Now, on a different topic, the government recently announced it was not legally required to pay David Bain compensation for the 13 years he wrongfully spent in prison. Do you agree or disagree with this decision?

1. Yes
2. No
98. Don't know
99. Refused



Key results:

The key results are as follows:

- ◆ One-half (48 percent) of respondents reported that they disagreed with the ruling that the government was not legally required to pay David Bain any compensation for the 13 years he wrongfully spent in prison.
 - ◆ This compares with 38 percent who agreed with the government's ruling, and another 13 percent who did not know if they agreed or disagreed.

Table 1: Agreement with the Government's decision regarding David Bain's compensation

	Base =	Total 500 %
Yes		38
No		48
Don't know		13
Refused		2
Total		100

Total may not sum to 100% due to rounding.



Demographic differences:

We also analysed the results to this question by a number of demographic variables, including: age, gender, income and region. The results are as follows:

- ◆ There are no significant differences when the results are examined by gender.
- ◆ There are, however, significant differences by **age**. For example:
 - ◆ **Younger** respondents were **less likely** to agree with the decision that the government was not legally required to pay David Bain any compensation (20 percent, compared with 42 percent of both those aged 35 to 54 years, and of those aged 55 or older).
- ◆ There are also significant differences by **income**. For example:
 - ◆ Respondents on a lower income of **under \$40,000** were **less likely** to agree with the decision that the government was not legally required to pay David Bain any compensation (26 percent, compared with 43 percent of those on a medium income of \$40,000 to \$80,000, and 44 percent of those on a higher income of \$80,000 or more).
- ◆ There are also significant differences by **region**. For example:
 - ◆ Respondents living in the **Upper North Island** were **less likely** to agree with the decision that the government was not legally required to pay David Bain any compensation (31 percent, compared with 44 percent of those living in the South Island).



Comment:

“While most respondents disagreed with the government’s ruling, the results suggest a significant proportion of New Zealanders are in agreement. It would, therefore, be fair to say that public opinion is polarised”, said Research New Zealand Director, Emanuel Kalafatelis.

The Research New Zealand poll of 500 people aged 18 and over was conducted by telephone from 9 August to 1 September 2016. The maximum margin of error for the sample as a whole is +/-4.9% (at the 95% confidence level). The data has been weighted by gender and age to ensure it is an accurate representation of the general population of New Zealand. The poll was not taken on behalf of any organisation, but is part of Research New Zealand’s monthly survey of attitudes and opinions.

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TABULATIONS

Table 2: Agreement with the decision regarding David Bain's compensation (by age)

	Base =	Total	18-34 years	35-54 years	55 years and over
		500	62	140	298
		%	%	%	%
Yes		38	20	42	42
No		48	62	42	46
Don't know		13	17	13	10
Refused		2	1	2	2
Total		100	100	100	100

Total may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Table 3: Agreement with the decision regarding David Bain's compensation (by income)

	Base =	Total	Under \$40,000	At least \$40,000 but less than \$80,000	\$80,000 or more
		500	165	122	148
		%	%	%	%
Yes		38	26	43	44
No		48	60	45	40
Don't know		13	13	11	12
Refused		2	1	1	3
Total		100	100	100	100

Total may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Table 4: Agreement with the decision regarding David Bain's compensation (by region)

	Base =	Total	Upper North Island	Lower/Central North Island	South Island
		500	193	154	153
		%	%	%	%
Yes		38	31	40	44
No		48	54	41	46
Don't know		13	14	14	9
Refused		2	1	4	1
Total		100	100	100	100

Total may not sum to 100% due to rounding.