

## **Mexican Gulf Oil Spill has major impact on opinions of BP.**

In April an explosion took place on an oil rig drilling a well for BP in the Gulf of Mexico. The subsequent fire cost 11 lives and a number of oil rig workers were injured. It also created an oil leakage that will go down in history as the biggest ever. BP has accepted responsibility for the oil leakage and for meeting the cleaning costs, as well as providing compensation to the businesses and workers in the coastal areas of the US states that have suffered losses.

Research New Zealand decided to find out what impact this might have had on New Zealanders' attitudes to the possibility that deep sea oil wells may be drilled within our 200 mile economic zone, and whether the opinion of New Zealanders of BP had changed as a result of its responsibility for the explosion and subsequent effects. While it was hardly likely to improve New Zealanders' opinion of BP, the question was more to what extent it had become negative.

We asked whether people were in favour or not in favour of off-shore drilling for oil within the 200 mile economic zone. Forty-nine percent of New Zealanders were in favour of this with 35 percent being opposed. Males were rather more in favour at 60 percent than were females at 40 percent. Those in the age group 55 years + were in favour to a rather greater extent (64 percent) than those in the 15-34 years at 36 percent. Maori were also less in favour at 38 percent, compared with New Zealand Europeans at 51 percent. Fifty-six percent of those living in the South Island were in favour. "This is perhaps not surprising, since the economic impact of an oil find in the Great South Basin is likely to be greater in the South Island", said Research New Zealand Director, Emanuel Kalafatelis.

Respondents were reminded of the explosion on the oil rig in the Gulf of Mexico and the subsequent oil leakage and were asked whether this had influenced their opinion of BP and if so, whether it was now more negative or more positive than before. Sixty-three percent said that their opinion of BP was now more negative, while 33 percent said that it had not influenced their opinion of BP. Opinions of BP were more negative among those in the 35 to 54 year age group at 66 percent and among Maori at 71 percent.

*The Research New Zealand poll of 501 people aged 15 and over was conducted by telephone between 22 and 30 June. The maximum margin of error is +/- 6.2 % (at the 95% confidence level). The data has been weighted to ensure it is an accurate representation of New Zealand's general population. The poll was not taken on behalf of any organization, but as part of Research New Zealand's monthly survey of attitudes and opinions.*

**Contact:** Emanuel Kalafatelis  
Director  
Research New Zealand Limited  
P O Box 10-617  
Wellington 6143  
Ph. 04-462-6401 (DDI); 027-500-4401 (M)

**Table 1:**

*Q6. Thanks for that, now on a different topic, are you in favour or not in favour of off shore drilling for oil within New Zealand's 200 mile economic zone?*

Base =	Total	Male	Female
	501	229	272
	%	%	%
Yes, in favour	49	60	40
No, not in favour	35	27	43
Don't know	16	14	18
Total	100	100	100

Total may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

\*

**Table 2:**

*Q6. Thanks for that, now on a different topic, are you in favour or not in favour of off shore drilling for oil within New Zealand's 200 mile economic zone?*

Base =	Total	15-34 years	35 to 54 years	55 years and over
	501	106	197	198
	%	%	%	%
Yes, in favour	49	36	50	64
No, not in favour	35	42	34	28
Don't know	16	23	15	8
Total	100	100	100	100

Total may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

\*

**Table 3:**

*Q6. Thanks for that, now on a different topic, are you in favour or not in favour of off shore drilling for oil within New Zealand's 200 mile economic zone?*

Base =	Total	Maori/Pacific	New Zealand European	Other
	501	49	389	85
	%	%	%	%
Yes, in favour	49	38	51	43
No, not in favour	35	49	33	39
Don't know	16	13	16	18
Total	100	100	100	100

Total may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

\*



**Table 4:**

*Q6. Thanks for that, now on a different topic, are you in favour or not in favour of off shore drilling for oil within New Zealand's 200 mile economic zone?*

	Total	North Island	Central North Island	South Island
Base =	501	165	202	134
	%	%	%	%
Yes, in favour	49	48	46	56
No, not in favour	35	35	36	32
Don't know	16	16	18	12
Total	100	100	100	100

Total may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

\*

**Table 5:**

*Q6. Thanks for that, now on a different topic, are you in favour or not in favour of off shore drilling for oil within New Zealand's 200 mile economic zone?*

	Total	Under \$40,000	\$40,000 - \$69,999	\$70,000 plus	Don't know/refused
Base =	501	206	108	141	46
	%	%	%	%	%
Yes, in favour	49	44	51	60	36
No, not in favour	35	41	31	28	38
Don't know	16	15	18	12	26
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Total may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

\*

**Table 6:**

*Q7. An explosion took place in an oil well drilled for BP in the Gulf of Mexico. It is now releasing large quantities of oil into the ocean and onto the shores of several American States. Has this influenced your opinion of BP, and if so is it now more negative or more positive than before..*

	Total	Male	Female
Base =	501	229	272
	%	%	%
More negative	63	55	70
More positive	2	3	1
No, the spill has not influenced my opinion of BP	33	41	25
Don't know	2	1	4
Total	100	100	100

Total may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

\*



**Table 7:**

*Q7. An explosion took place in an oil well drilled for BP in the Gulf of Mexico. It is now releasing large quantities of oil into the ocean and onto the shores of several American States. Has this influenced your opinion of BP, and if so is it now more negative or more positive than before.*

	Base =	Total	15-34 years	35 to 54 years	55 years and over
		501	106	197	198
		%	%	%	%
More negative		63	64	66	57
More positive		2	3	1	1
No, the spill has not influenced my opinion of BP		33	30	31	38
Don't know		3	3	2	4
Total		100	100	100	100

Total may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

\*

**Table 8:**

*Q7. An explosion took place in an oil well drilled for BP in the Gulf of Mexico. It is now releasing large quantities of oil into the ocean and onto the shores of several American States. Has this influenced your opinion of BP, and if so is it now more negative or more positive than before.*

	Base =	Total	Maori/Pacific	New Zealand European	Other
		501	49	389	85
		%	%	%	%
More negative		63	71	62	58
More positive		2	2	1	5
No, the spill has not influenced my opinion of BP		33	25	35	31
Don't know		3	2	3	2
Total		100	100	100	100

Total may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

\*



**Table 9:**

*Q7. An explosion took place in an oil well drilled for BP in the Gulf of Mexico. It is now releasing large quantities of oil into the ocean and onto the shores of several American States. Has this influenced your opinion of BP, and if so is it now more negative or more positive than before.*

	Total	North Island	Central North Island	South Island
Base =	501	165	202	134
	%	%	%	%
More negative	63	69	61	59
More positive	2	2	3	0
No, the spill has not influenced my opinion of BP	33	27	33	41
Don't know	3	3	4	1
Total	100	100	100	100

Total may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

\*

**Table 10:**

*Q7. An explosion took place in an oil well drilled for BP in the Gulf of Mexico. It is now releasing large quantities of oil into the ocean and onto the shores of several American States. Has this influenced your opinion of BP, and if so is it now more negative or more positive than before.*

	Total	Under \$40,000	\$40,000 - \$69,999	\$70,000 plus	Don't know/refused
Base =	501	206	108	141	46
	%	%	%	%	%
More negative	63	60	69	62	66
More positive	2	2	0	1	10
No, the spill has not influenced my opinion of BP	33	34	29	36	22
Don't know	3	4	1	1	2
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Total may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

\*

**Research New Zealand is an independent, New Zealand-owned research organisation undertaking social and business research.**

[www.researchnz.com](http://www.researchnz.com)