



Do Price Increases in Petrol and Diesel Affect Driving Habits?

Despite the recent falls in the cost of petrol and diesel, the long term trend for fuel prices continues to be upwards. Whether prices will fall further because of the record high exchange rate for the New Zealand dollar remains to be seen.

Driving behaviour has the potential to affect fuel consumption and Research New Zealand therefore decided to find out whether New Zealand drivers have adjusted their driving behaviour to minimise their fuel consumption.

Of the 469 drivers in our sample, 50 percent said they had changed their driving habits as a result of the increases in fuel prices, and 50 percent said they had not. Of those in the age group 55 years and over 43 percent had changed their driving habits and 56 percent had not. Some 58 percent of Maori/Pacific People had changed their driving habits to minimise their fuel consumption, compared with 42 percent who had not done so.

Among those who earn \$40,000–\$79,999 p.a. 54 percent had changed their driving habits to minimise their fuel consumption, while 44 percent had not, and in the income group \$80,000 or more, 41 percent had changed their driving habits while 59 percent had not. There were no significant differences by region.

‘Clearly fuel prices have some way to go before the majority of drivers decide to change their driving habits’, said Research New Zealand Director, Emanuel Kalafatelis.

The Research New Zealand poll of 503 people aged 15 and over (n=469 drivers) was conducted by telephone on 20–27 May 2011. The maximum margin of error for the sample as a whole is +/- 4.5 % (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.

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Table 1:

Q6. The price of petrol and diesel at the pumps continues to trend generally upward. If you buy petrol or diesel, have you changed your driving habits to make you go farther as a result?

	Total	Male	Female
Base =	469*	239	230
	%	%	%
Yes, changed my driving habits	50	45	54
No, have not changed my driving habits	50	55	45
Don't know	0	0	1
Total	100	100	100

Total may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

*Sub-sample excludes respondents who do not drive or do not purchase petrol.

Table 2:

Q6. The price of petrol and diesel at the pumps continues to trend generally upward. If you buy petrol or diesel, have you changed your driving habits to make you go farther as a result?

	Total	18-34 years	35 to 54 years	55 years and over
Base =	469*	167	195	107
	%	%	%	%
Yes, changed my driving habits	50	51	54	43
No, have not changed my driving habits	50	49	46	56
Don't know	0	0	0	1
Total	100	100	100	100

Total may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

*Sub-sample excludes respondents who do not drive or do not purchase petrol.

Table 3:

Q6. The price of petrol and diesel at the pumps continues to trend generally upward. If you buy petrol or diesel, have you changed your driving habits to make you go farther as a result?

	Total	NZ European/ Pakeha	Maori/ Pacific	Other
Base =	469*	363	55	51
	%	%	%	%
Yes, changed my driving habits	50	48	58	54
No, have not changed my driving habits	50	52	42	44
Don't know	0	0	0	2
Total	100	100	100	100

Total may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

*Sub-sample excludes respondents who do not drive or do not purchase petrol.



Table 4:

Q6. The price of petrol and diesel at the pumps continues to trend generally upward. If you buy petrol or diesel, have you changed your driving habits to make you go farther as a result?

	Total	Upper North Island	Lower/Central North Island	South Island
Base =	469*	201	115	153
	%	%	%	%
Yes, changed my driving habits	50	52	47	49
No, have not changed my driving habits	50	47	53	51
Don't know	0	1	0	0
Total	100	100	100	100

Total may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

*Sub-sample excludes respondents who do not drive or do not purchase petrol.

Table 5:

Q6. The price of petrol and diesel at the pumps continues to trend generally upward. If you buy petrol or diesel, have you changed your driving habits to make you go farther as a result?

	Total	Under \$40,000	At least \$40,000 but less than \$80,000	\$80,000 or more	Don't know/refused
Base =	469*	164	146	133	26**
	%	%	%	%	%
Yes, changed my driving habits	50	51	54	41	62
No, have not changed my driving habits	50	48	46	59	38
Don't know	0	1	0	0	0
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Total may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

*Sub-sample excludes respondents who do not drive or do not purchase petrol.

**Caution: low base number of respondents - results are indicative only.

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