

MEDIA RELEASE

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Christmas still a religious festival for many Kiwis

Christmas Day is about more than a big dinner, gift giving and holidays for a sizable group of New Zealanders, the latest Research New Zealand polling shows.

While the poll found that, for 55 percent of Kiwis, Christmas Day has no religious significance, the day still holds a religious dimension for 45 percent of New Zealanders, Research New Zealand Director Emanuel Kalafatelis said.

The result mirrors a similar poll taken a year ago.

This year's poll found that Kiwis aged 60 and over were more likely to agree that Christmas Day had religious significance for them (63 percent), compared with 31 percent of 15 to 29 year olds.

"The results by age group indicate that our attitudes to Christmas are in a state of transition, Mr Kalafatelis said.

"While the religious aspects of Christmas are still alive and well for a sizeable number of New Zealanders, this group is likely to grow smaller over time. This change will be driven by the relatively higher number of younger people who attach no religious significance to Christmas," Mr Kalafatelis said.

Research New Zealand polling was conducted between 10 November and 13 November.

The Research New Zealand poll of 500 people aged 15 and over was conducted by telephone between the 26 November and 3 December. The maximum margin of error is +/- 4.6 % (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 organisation but as part of Research New Zealand's monthly survey of attitudes and opinions.



Participants were asked: *Does Christmas Day have any religious significance for you?*

Table 1: Religious significance of Christmas Day - by age group

Does Christmas Day have any religious significance for you?

	Total	15 to 29	30 to 39	40 to 49	50 to 59	60+
Base =	500	96	81	82	82	159
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	45	31	41	41	43	63
No	55	68	59	59	57	36
Don't know	0	1	0	0	0	1
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Total may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

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