

THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY REPORT OF AOTEAROA

TE ŌHANGA ĀMIOMIO KI AOTEAROA

Powered by Trade Me Marketplace

Published February 2026



Every action taken on Trade Me Marketplace, from listing a pair of vintage jeans to purchasing an upcycled piece of furniture, is a step towards nurturing the circular economy. It is all about helping more of us give our items a second life, making sure good things stay in use for longer.

Since our beginning over two decades ago, sparked by founder Sam Morgan's simple search for a secondhand heater, Trade Me has been the home for Kiwi to find and sell their pre-loved items. We offer a place where extending an item's life is good for your back pocket and the planet. Even now, decades later, that sense of excitement for finding a great deal or offloading a bunch of unused items for some extra cash remains strong across the country.

With over a million pre-loved items on site at any time, we're proud to be the place millions of New Zealanders across the motu rely on to buy and sell their things. We're focused on providing a safe, trusted platform where Kiwi can trade with confidence, backed by our dedicated support and Trust and Safety teams. This commitment saw us extend the life of nearly four million pre-loved items in 2025 alone, proving just how much life is left in the things we own.



Lisa Stewart

Head of Trade Me Marketplace

AT A GLANCE

1M+

items live at any time

3.9M

pre-loved items
reused in 2025

\$5.2B

total estimated
value of the Circular
Economy in
Aotearoa

ABOUT THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY REPORT

Trade Me launched its inaugural report exploring New Zealand's circular economy trends back in 2019. That initial research investigated the behaviours of Kiwi, focusing on how, where, and why they were engaging with pre-loved items.

The findings confirmed a thriving local circular economy, supported by thousands of Kiwi every year.

This year marks the seventh edition of this annual report. Over this time, we have documented the evolution and expansion of the circular economy as more budget-conscious New Zealanders look to secondhand marketplaces. We've seen a clear shift, with thriftier Kiwi increasingly choosing to buy and sell pre-loved items as a practical way to manage their budgets and contribute to product longevity.

This latest edition provides a comprehensive snapshot of the circular economy in Aotearoa today. We gathered responses from over 4,000 Kiwi to provide detailed, up-to-date insights into these trends.

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

This research was commissioned by Trade Me and carried out by our Research Operations team between October and November 2025. It compiles data from 4,000 individual, New Zealand-based respondents.

To ensure the highest level of objectivity, respondents were recruited externally via a third-party provider (Dynata). This approach deliberately avoids any bias from our existing Trade Me membership base. Furthermore, the survey was designed to be platform-agnostic, focusing on overall secondhand behaviour rather than specifically referencing the Trade Me platform.



NEW ZEALAND'S CIRCULAR ECONOMY IS WORTH \$5.2 BILLION*

Our findings reveal that the current value of our circular economy is an impressive \$5.2 billion, with every Kiwi household essentially sitting on a treasure trove of items they no longer need or want.



The secondhand market in Aotearoa is massive, with a huge volume of pre-loved goods ready for a new home.

- Almost **three out of four Kiwi (75%)** have items they could sell.
- There are an estimated **76 million unwanted items** across New Zealand households available for sale, with a collective estimated value of over \$5.2 billion.
- **83% of people** bought a secondhand item in the last six months.
- The most common items Kiwi currently have to sell are **clothing, home and living goods, and books, CDs, and DVDs.**

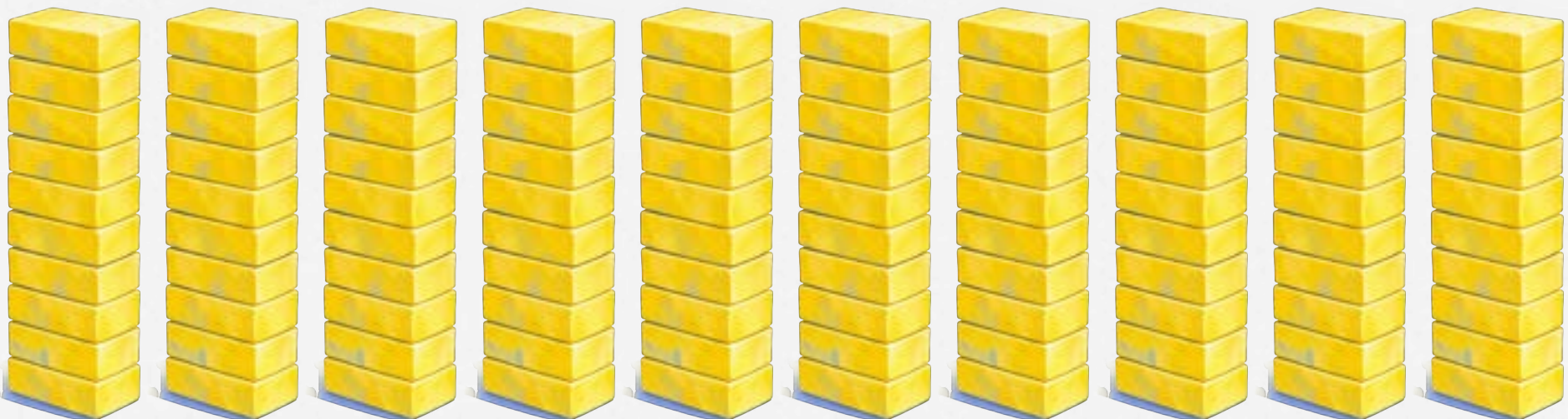
*Based on the average value of unwanted items respondents to our survey had, multiplied by the NZ population.

GOODBYE THINGS, HELLO CASH

According to our survey findings, three out of four New Zealanders have an average of 19 personal items they no longer use or need.

Based on the average selling price of items sold on Trade Me, that means Kiwi could make approximately **\$1,300** by selling their things.

That's over 150 blocks of butter.



HOW THE COST OF LIVING IS IMPACTING THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY

TE PĀNGA O TE UTU NOHO KI TE ŌHANGA ĀMIOMIO

2025 was a tough year for many New Zealanders. Despite initial signs of inflation easing, Kiwi are still battling the cost of living with increasing household expenses forcing people across the motu to find practical ways to make a bit more money.

Our latest research indicates a clear response to these pressures: the escalating cost of living has actively driven more Kiwi to participate in the circular economy, seeing it as an effective way to help manage rising expenses.

A significant **64% of Kiwi** report that the cost of living has made them consider buying or selling secondhand more often. This is a 4% increase compared to the previous year.

The desire for a bargain is also strong, with 46% of Kiwi agreeing that the cost of living has prompted them to buy more secondhand items than they did before. This figure is up 3% from last year.

For many, the motivation to sell is simple: 43% say needing "extra money to pay for living expenses" is a key reason for selling items.



64%

46%

43%

OUR MOTIVATIONS FOR SELLING SECONDHAND

NGĀ HIIKO KI TE HOKO ORUORU

When it comes to why we actually decide to let go of our things, our research found there are a couple of main motivations.

For most Kiwi, it's simply about clearing out the clutter and making some space. But money is a close second.

Here are the main motivations for Kiwi selling their pre-loved items:

1

Clear the clutter

A massive **70%** of sellers say they are trying to make more space and declutter their homes

2

Chasing the cash

43% are selling to get extra money to pay for living expenses

3

Sharing the love

41% just want to let someone else enjoy their unused item



HOW DO NEW ZEALANDERS FEEL ABOUT BUYING SECONDHAND?

NGĀ HUATAU O NGĀI AOTEAROA KI NGĀ HOKO ORUORU?

Turns out, Kiwi are totally into buying pre-loved goods!

Our research shows that over the last six months, a huge chunk of the population has bought something secondhand.

- A massive **83% of Kiwi** bought something secondhand in the last six months
- Kiwi are pretty chuffed about their pre-loved purchases too: **68%** agree they would feel proud of buying secondhand items
- It's not just about saving money; **63%** agree that buying secondhand lets them grab something unique
- The vast majority of people are open to it: **71%** say they would consider buying secondhand

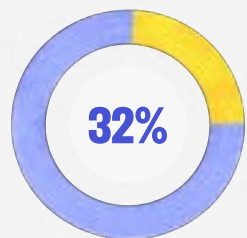


WHY DO WE BUY SECONDHAND?

HE AHA TĀTOU E HOKO ORUORU ANA?

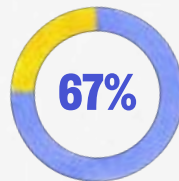
Our research shows that Kiwi are looking to secondhand marketplaces for a few reasons.

Here are the main reasons driving Kiwi to choose secondhand:



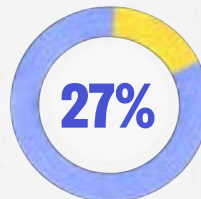
Going green

Almost a third (**32%**) of Kiwi who choose secondhand do so specifically to be more environmentally conscious



Saving money

67% of those who say they would buy secondhand do so for the financial benefit



Quality finds

For **27%** of Kiwi who are keen to buy secondhand, the biggest drawcard is the quality, they know they can still find items in great condition

“THERE'S A WHOLE LOT OF GOOD STUFF, ALREADY MADE, READY TO BE USED.”

“SECONDHAND ITEMS ARE OFTEN BETTER VALUE FOR MONEY - IT MEANS YOU CAN GET HIGH QUALITY, OFTEN EXPENSIVE BRANDS FOR CHEAPER PRICES SIMPLY BECAUSE THEY HAVE BEEN USED.”

“MY MUM ALWAYS BOUGHT SECONDHAND AND WE LEARNT FROM HER SO THERE IS NOTHING WRONG WITH SECONDHAND.”

WHAT EXACTLY DO WE HAVE TO SELL?

HE Ā TĀTOU
HEI HOKO?

In the past six months, almost half of Kiwi (47%) have sold at least one of their pre-loved items. And overall, they're pretty stoked with the outcome. 90% said they were happy with the price they got.

The most common items Kiwi have to offload are:



Clothing, shoes
or accessories

67%



Home and living
items

53%



Books, CDs
and DVDs

28%



Electronics

28%

WHAT EXACTLY DO WE HAVE TO SELL?

HE Ā TĀTOU HEI HOKO?

Money to be made

New Zealanders are sitting on a significant "hidden" economy. Currently, the total estimated value of items in Aotearoa that could be sold is \$5.2 billion.

On an individual level, the average Kiwi has 19 items they could sell, with a total estimated value of \$1,300 per person. While most items are common household goods, certain categories command much higher average prices on Trade Me, such as:

- **Travel, events & activities (e.g. concert tickets): \$282.50**
- **Business, farming & industry: \$222.71**
- **Building & renovation (e.g industrial equipment): \$142.11**

Whether it's to declutter (70%) or to make extra money for living expenses (43%), Kiwi are finding that their secondhand treasures are an easy way to boost their bank balance.



WHO BUYS SECONDHAND THE MOST?

KO WAI MĀ NGĀ TINO KAIHOKO ORUORU?

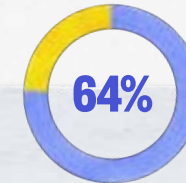
When it comes to who buys secondhand the most, the data reveals a closing gender gap and distinct regional trends, with South Islanders and rural Kiwi being the most avid participants in the preloved market.

South Island lead

Those in Te Waipounamu (the South Island) are slightly more likely to consider buying secondhand (74%) compared to those in the North Island (70%)

Regional reach

Kiwi in the countryside remain more open to the pre-loved market, with 73% saying they would consider buying secondhand compared to 70% of city dwellers



Gender gap closing

The gap between men and women who buy secondhand is shrinking year-on-year. In the last six months, 84% of women and 83% of men purchased a secondhand item



Online scouting

40% of Kiwi scout for secondhand items online at least once a month



High-volume shoppers

Women are twice as likely as men to be high-volume buyers; 20% of females purchased 10 or more secondhand items in the last six months, compared to 11% of males



WHO ARE THE BIGGEST SELLERS IN THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY?

KO WAI MĀ NGĀ KAIHOKO MATUA I TE OHANGA ĀMIOMIO?

Across Aotearoa, different groups are engaging with the secondhand market in unique ways, whether driven by a need to declutter or a desire to boost their bank balance.

51%

The generation gap

Younger Kiwi are leading the charge; over half (51%) of those aged 24–39 sold or attempted to sell items in the last six months

47%

Gender insights:

Women continue to be more active sellers, with 47% having sold something in the last six months compared to 38% of men

42%**44%**

City vs. country

Engagement is fairly balanced across the country; 43% of those living in major cities sold or tried to sell items, compared to 44% of those in regional towns and 42% in the countryside

22-36 ITEMS

Regional goldmines

When it comes to who is sitting on the most "hidden" stock, Tongariro/Taupō leads the country with an average of 36 items per person available to sell. This is followed by Taranaki and Southland, both averaging 22 items

More and more Kiwi are hopping on the circular economy bandwagon, but according to our research, a savvy group of "side hustlers" are taking it to the next level to navigate current economic pressures.



THE 'SIDE HUSTLE' GENERATION

Younger Kiwi (aged 24-39) are the true power players of the circular economy, viewing their unused goods as a liquid asset to offset rising costs.

- This age group is the most engaged in clearing out, with **83% having offloaded items** (sold, donated, or disposed of) in the last six months.
- They lead the pack in actual selling activity too, with **51% having sold or attempted to sell** items recently - the highest of any age group.
- The motivation is clear: **76% of 24-39 year olds** say the cost of living has made them consider buying or selling secondhand more often.
- They aren't just selling "as-is." **43% of this generation** say the cost of living has made them more likely to upcycle or repurpose items specifically to sell for extra money.
- They have the strongest drive to turn clutter into cash, **with 80% planning to sell at least some of their unwanted items.**



FULL CIRCLE FOR THE PLANET

TAIĀWHIO NEI,
HE TIAKI
TAIAO



As we've seen in previous years, minimising our impact on the environment continues to motivate Kiwi to both sell and buy secondhand.

- **Repair over replace:** Approximately 47% of Kiwi now report that they are more likely to consider upcycling or repairing items than they were one year ago
- **Environmental consideration:** A little more than half (52%) of Kiwi say they're consciously thinking about the environmental impact of their purchases
- **Changing habits:** 42% of Kiwi say they have changed the way they buy goods to be more environmentally friendly. This shift is led by women (47%) compared with men (35%).

"THE QUALITY OF SECONDHAND ITEMS AVAILABLE IS EXCELLENT, IT HELPS WITH RECYCLING AND THEREFORE SUSTAINABILITY, AND IN THESE ECONOMIC CONDITIONS IS AFFORDABLE."

"I BELIEVE WE ALL HAVE TO DO OUR BEST TO BE MORE SUSTAINABLE RATHER THAN BUY, THROW AWAY THEN BUY MORE."

"I LIKE TO BE SUSTAINABLE BY RECYCLING PRODUCTS, THIS PROMOTES A CULTURE OF REDUCING WASTE AND PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT."

TRADE ME'S COMMITMENT TO SUSTAINABILITY

Our commitment to a smaller carbon footprint is certified through our Carbon Neutral Accreditation with Oxygen Consulting, where we have set ambitious, science-backed targets to reduce our emissions. We are bringing these targets to life through tangible actions, such as our bi-annual 'no-fly' months which cut 20-30 tonnes of carbon from air travel each month.

This focus on sustainability is built into our workspaces, from our 6 Green Star certified Auckland office with its solar panels and rainwater catchment, to using recycled and repurposed materials in our office fitouts. While we balance our remaining emissions annually, our ultimate goal is to drive meaningful reduction as part of our promise to protect the future of Aotearoa for the generations of Kiwi to come.



CONCLUSION

We've been around for over two decades now, and we're proud to provide Kiwi a safe place to trade and keep items in use. We've even been tracking the health of this circular economy every year since 2019.

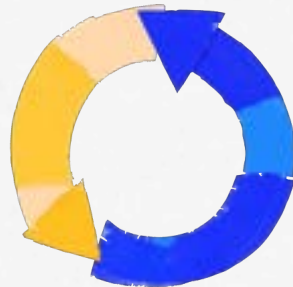
As the cost of living climbs, more people in Aotearoa are turning to the secondhand market.

Financial pressures have made the majority of Kiwi consider buying or selling pre-loved items more often, whether to find a bargain or to generate extra cash for essential expenses.

Beyond the bank balance, the environmental benefits make buying and selling used goods an obvious choice, with over half of Kiwi now weighing up the impact of their purchases on the planet. With billions of dollars worth of unused, sellable items currently sitting in homes across the country, the potential for this movement to grow in the years ahead is immense.

If you haven't already, we encourage you to join the vast majority of Kiwi who have already shopped secondhand in the last six months. Jump on board and be a part of this sustainable movement.





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The Circular Economy Report of Aotearoa