

Aotearoa's

# CIRCULAR ECONOMY REPORT.



## TRADE ME AND THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY.



**Sally Feinson, Marketing Brand and Communications Director**

Whenever you purchase, sell, trade or donate something, you're playing a part in the circular economy by extending the life of that item.

### So what is a circular economy?

According to New Zealand's Ministry for the Environment, a circular economy or *ōhanga āmiomio* is a system in which we keep resources in use for as long as possible, extracting the maximum value from them whilst in use, then recovering and regenerating products and materials as much as possible.

For almost a quarter of a century, Trade Me has been helping millions of Kiwi participate in the circular economy in a way that not only benefits their wallets but also helps our planet.

Trade Me's DNA is strongly linked to the circular economy. Our platform dates back to 1999 when our founder, Sam Morgan, struggled to find a secondhand heater for his chilly Wellington flat. While much has changed since then, the enduring thrill for listing, selling, bidding, and securing deals in Aotearoa continues.

At any given moment, there are more than 780,000 secondhand items listed on Trade Me, and every day, over a million Kiwi from all corners of the motu are actively finding ways to transform discarded items into cherished treasures.

We take pride in offering Aotearoa a secure and reliable platform that gives items a second chance and sustains the continuous use of products and materials.

### The Circular Economy in a nutshell:



**1. DESIGN OUT WASTE AND POLLUTION.**



**2. KEEP PRODUCTS AND MATERIALS IN USE.**



**3. REGENERATE NATURAL SYSTEMS.**

From designer dresses to dirt bikes, in 2023 alone, we played a pivotal role in re-purposing over

**\$14M**

worth of secondhand items, granting them a renewed lease on life.

## ABOUT THE REPORT.

In 2019, we released our first report on Aotearoa's circular economy, delving into the trends of how, where, and why Kiwi were buying, selling, and trading their secondhand items. Our research revealed a thriving local circular economy, with millions of Kiwi actively participating every year.

Fast forward to 2023, and we are now in our fifth year of producing this report. Over this period, we have witnessed the circular economy grow and change, as more thrifty Kiwi embrace the concept of buying and selling pre-owned items to save money and give items a new home.

In this year's report, we have gathered responses from over 4,000 Kiwi, providing a detailed snapshot of what Aotearoa's Circular Economy looks like today.

Survey methodology: This survey was conducted by Trade Me's UXR (User Experience Research) team during October 2023 and collates answers from 4,000 individual New Zealand-based respondents. Respondents were externally recruited (via Dynata) to avoid any potential Trade Me membership bias and the survey was written from a platform-agnostic perspective (not 'from Trade Me'). The survey was also sent out via a third party (Dynata).

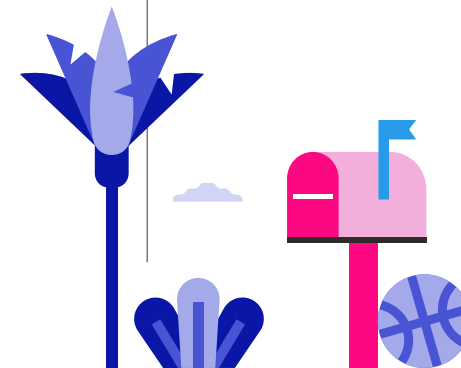
### One Kiwi's trash...

Our findings reveal that the current value of Aotearoa's circular economy is an impressive

# \$5B\*

with every Kiwi household essentially sitting on a treasure trove of items they no longer need or want.

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



# FIVE YEARS OF THRIFTY-NESS.

## TE TAU WHAKAMOAMO A TUARIMA.

Almost three out of four Kiwi have items they could sell, and on average they have 20 items each - that's five more than in 2019.

### \$1,300 better-off

Based on the average selling price of used items on Trade Me, each Kiwi could make almost **\$1,300** by offloading their preloved goods - that's up from \$1,200 in 2019.

### 78 million treasures

There are approximately **78 million items** around the country in Kiwi households that could be sold for cash - that's five million more than in 2019.

87% of Kiwi have bought something secondhand in the past six months - that's up from 76% five years ago.

### From trash to cash:

According to our survey findings, three out of four New Zealanders have at least 20 items they no longer use or need.

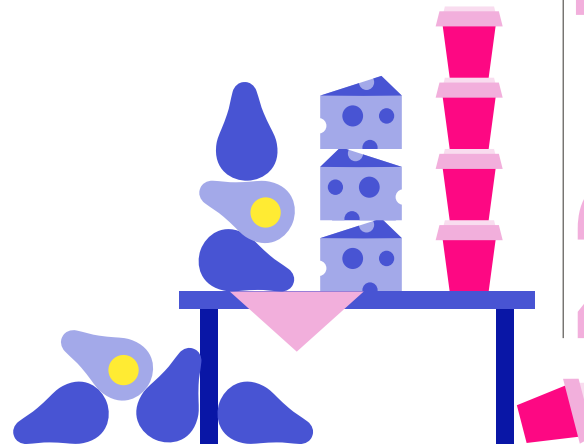
Based on the average selling price of items sold on Trade Me, that means Kiwi could make approximately **\$1,300** by selling their unwanted stuff that's sitting in their drawers, wardrobes and garages.

That's over:

**1,260** avocados

**150** blocks of cheese or

**275** takeaway coffees!



## HOW THE COST OF LIVING IS IMPACTING THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY.

## TE PĀNGA O TE UTU NOHO KI TE ŌHANGA ĀMIOMIO.

2023 proved to be another challenging year for many, as inflation and increasing expenses prompted New Zealanders to tighten their budgets, and make cuts wherever possible.

Our research indicates that the escalating cost of living has spurred Kiwi to turn to the circular economy as a proactive measure to help counter rising expenses.

- Almost two thirds (63%) of Kiwi with things to offload plan to sell them to save money.
- 42% of people who have items they could offload say that the rising cost of living has made them consider selling secondhand more often which is a 4% increase when compared to 2022.
- 43% of Kiwi who have items they could offload agree that the rising cost of living has made them buy more secondhand items than they did before, that's up 3% on last year.

### “LIFE IS EXPENSIVE RIGHT NOW...

and if I can get something that's good quality for cheaper I'm going to go for that option.”

### “CHEAPER AND MORE SUSTAINABLE FOR THE PLANET...

If I buy something “new” it looks “used” very quickly anyway, so I may as well save a few bucks!”



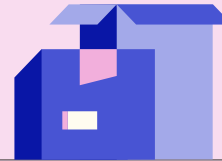
# OUR MOTIVATIONS FOR SELLING SECONDHAND.

## NGĀ HIHIKO KI TE HOKO ORUORU.

When it comes to why we let go of our stuff, our research found there were a bunch of reasons in the mix.

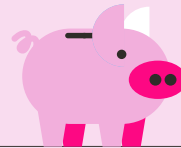
### Top four reasons Kiwi sell secondhand things:

#### 1. CREATE SPACE



Most Kiwi sell their preloved items primarily to create space, with **64%** of respondents stating that their goal is to declutter.

#### 2. MAKE MONEY



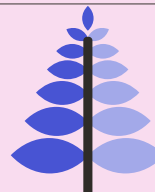
**63%** sold items to pocket some cash, whether it was to pay some bills or stash away savings for other things.

#### 3. GIVE BACK



Almost half of Kiwi part ways with their preloved belongings to spread joy to someone else, with **45%** believing there's still plenty of life left in their items.

#### 4. GO GREEN



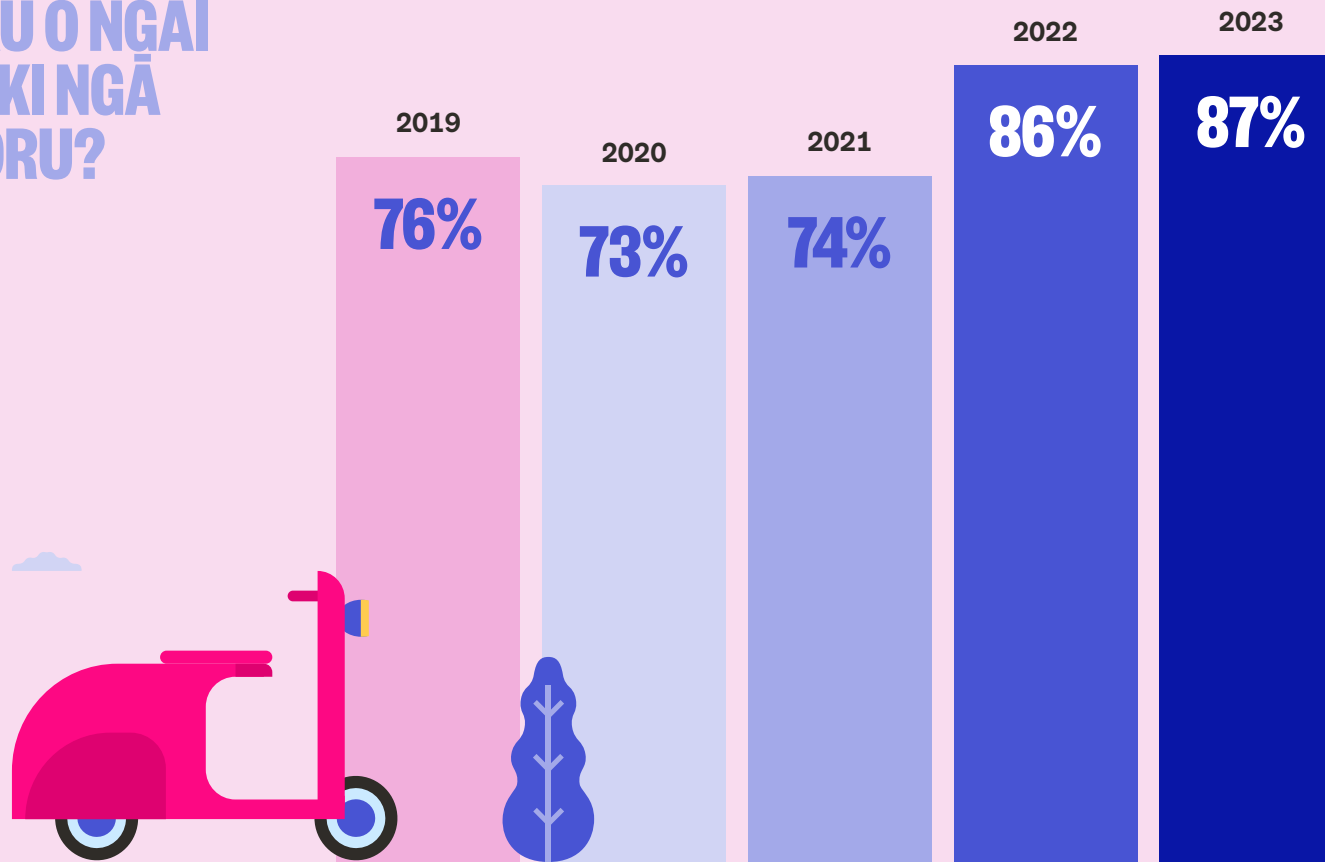
**40%** of Kiwi mentioned that they took the environment into account when selling their items, aiming to keep them their stuff out of landfill.

# HOW DO NEW ZEALANDERS FEEL ABOUT BUYING SECONDHAND?

## NGĀ HUATAU O NGĀ AOTEAROA KI NGĀ HOKO ORUORU?

Our research found that most Kiwi are into recycling stuff. Around 87% of them said they've snagged something secondhand in the past six months. That's a solid 11% jump from 2019!

Percentage of Kiwi that have bought secondhand items in the past six months:



Kiwi are pretty pumped about their preloved buys, too. 65% of the people we heard from said they're proud of their secondhand treasures, while only 8% admitted to feeling a bit embarrassed about not going for something brand new.

Only 3% of respondents said they definitely wouldn't buy secondhand.

# WHY DO WE BUY SECONDHAND?

## HE AHA TĀTOU E HOKO ORUORU ANA?

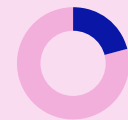
Our research found Kiwi shop secondhand for many reasons, but there were a few themes that stood out:

### Saving money



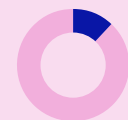
**47%** of Kiwi say they're buying more secondhand items than they did before to combat the rising cost of living.

### Shopping green



Almost a quarter of Kiwi (**21%**) say they consider the impact of their purchases on the environment, and shopping secondhand is a more sustainable option.

### Quality



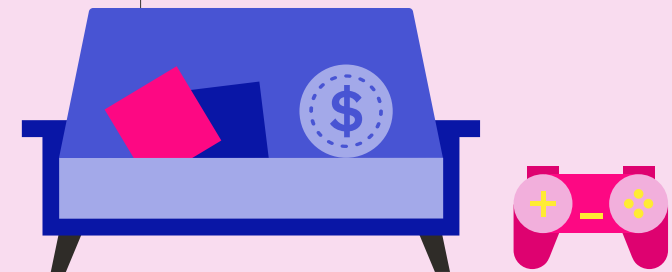
**12%** of Kiwi said quality quality played a part as they believe older items are often made to last longer.

**“SECONDHAND IS GENERALLY MUCH CHEAPER,**

and I also like to know that I'm reusing something that's already been used, and in doing so hopefully being a bit more sustainable.”

**“BETTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND CHEAPER...”**

Things are very disposable these days. Quality of the secondhand is better.”





# 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 used items. And overall, they're pretty stoked with the outcome. 90% said they were happy with the price they got.

### Money to be made

Now, Kiwi are cashing in more when they decide to part ways with their secondhand treasures.

Based on the average selling price of preloved items on Trade Me, Kiwi could make \$1,300 by offloading their secondhand goods.

### The most common items Kiwi have to offload:



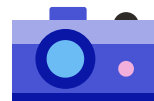
### Average sale price of preloved items on Trade Me in 2023:

# WHO BUYS SECONDHAND THE MOST?

## KO WAI NGĀ KAIHOKO NUI?

More and more Kiwi are hopping on the circular economy bandwagon, but according to our research, there are some that are taking it to the next level.

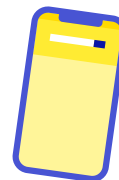
Women were more likely to have bought secondhand in the past six months, with 90% saying they had compared with 83% men.



People in Te Waipounamui (South Island) were slightly more likely to buy used, with 73% saying they would consider it compared with 70% in the North Island.



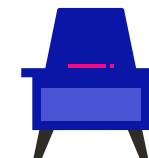
Kiwi in the regions are more likely to consider secondhand (77%) than city dwellers (70%).



Age comes into play in a big way, with 93% of Gen Zers having shopped secondhand in the past six months, compared with 74% of those 75 years+.



The thriftiest shoppers are based in Te Tai Poutini (West Coast) where 97% of people had bought something secondhand in the past six months.



### Eyes on the prize:

Almost half of those surveyed,

# 45%

are scouting for secondhand goodies online every month.

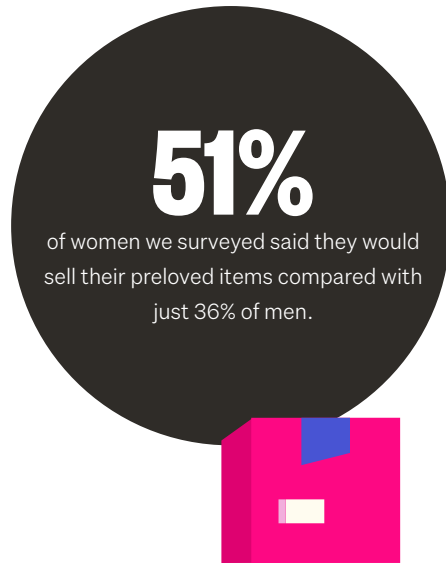
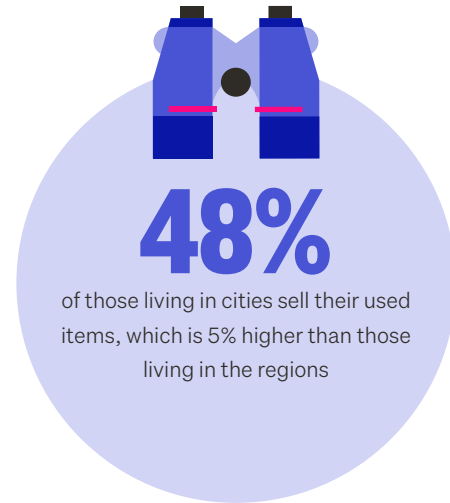
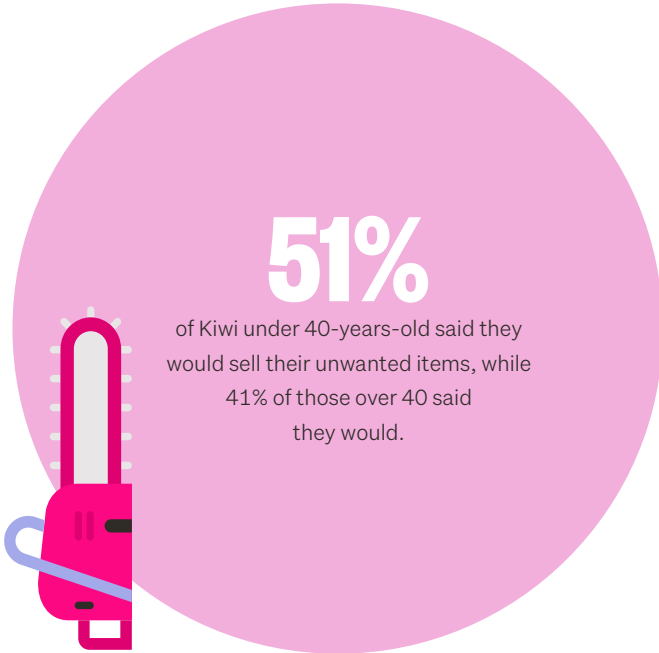
When it comes to making multiple secondhand purchases,

# 22%

of women have scored 10 or more secondhand items in the past six months.

# WHO ARE THE BIGGEST SELLERS IN THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY?

## KO WAI MĀ NGĀ KAIHOKO MATUA I TE ŌHANGA ĀMIOMIO?



# 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.

**56%** of South Islanders are slightly more concerned about the environmental impact of their shopping, with 56% saying it's on their mind compared with 53% in the North Island.

**46%** of women have changed the way they shop to be more environmentally friendly, compared with 34% of males.

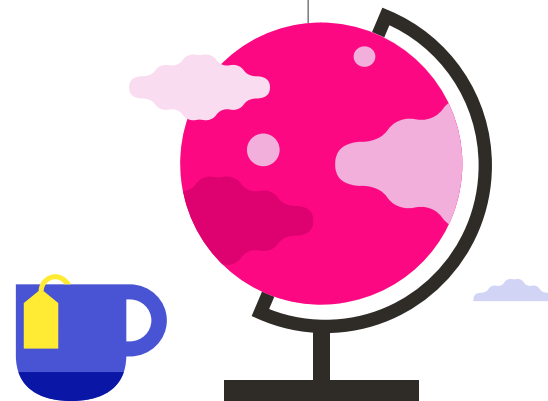
**43%** of Kiwi say they've changed the way they shop to be more environmentally friendly.

**"I GIVE FAR GREATER THOUGHT...**

to the environment and sustainability now than I ever used to."

**"I AM MORE AWARE THAN EVER...**

of my actions on the planet. If I can buy something secondhand it is better for all."



## WEALTH IN YOUR WARDROBE.

Since day one, our [Clothing & Fashion](#) category has been one of our biggest on Trade Me and today there are more than 200,000 preloved clothing listings onsite. So it's no surprise every year we see tens of thousands of fashionable folk flock to the category in search of unique, cost effective and sustainable additions to their wardrobes.

The average Kiwi has around **11 pieces of clothing** they no longer want or wear that could be ready for a new home. That means Kiwi could make an easy **\$300** by just clearing out their closets.

Breaking it down further, our research reveals that clothing takes the lead as the most commonly offloaded item among Kiwi. Almost three in four of us (71%) reported that they've had items to sell but less than a third (31%) opt to follow through and list them.

### Secondhand Spin

Trade Me is making it easier for Kiwi to get more out of the growing pile of clothes with our 'Secondhand Spin' pop-up. To make items look their best, Kiwi can come to our pop-up space in Tāmaki Makaurau and get their items primed, prepped and listed onsite. [Head over here](#) to reserve your spot and join the circular economy movement.

If you can't make it, we have plenty of tips on [how to best sell your clothes here](#):



## TRADE ME'S COMMITMENT TO SUSTAINABILITY.

We've been proudly offsetting our carbon emissions since 2014. In 2022, we upped our game and got certified through Oxygen Consulting's Carbon Neutral Accreditation program. To achieve this we dove deep into identifying and measuring where our emissions come from. Then, with our eyes on the future, we set targets to cut down on carbon in the coming years, all following international standards. Plus, every year, we're committed to balancing out any remaining emissions.

Why? Because we believe in doing our bit to keep Aotearoa awesome for generations to come.

### Conclusion

Celebrating nearly a quarter-century since our very first trade, we take pride in our role in fostering Aotearoa's circular economy by establishing a secure and reliable online marketplace for all Kiwi.

In recent months, the escalating cost of living has prompted an increasing number of people in Aotearoa to embrace secondhand options, both to save money and to part ways with items they no longer need for some extra cash. The added environmental benefit makes buying and selling pre-owned items an obvious choice. Judging by current trends, we anticipate substantial growth in the circular economy in the years ahead.

If you haven't already, we encourage you to join the majority of Kiwi who are actively participating in the circular economy. Jump on board and be a part of this sustainable movement.



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