## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### Consumer Demand for Ethical Investing Remains Strong Despite International Headwinds

**New research shows New Zealanders are standing firm in their commitment to ethical investment, with three-quarters wanting their money invested according to their values, even as political movements in some countries attempt to undermine responsible investing frameworks.**

The *Voices of Aotearoa: Demand for Ethical Investment in New Zealand 2025* report, released today by Mindful Money and the Responsible Investment Association Australasia (RIAA), reveals the resilience in New Zealand investors' ethical expectations. Despite high-profile political criticism of ESG investing internationally and at home, 75% of Kiwis continue to expect their KiwiSaver and managed funds to be invested ethically and responsibly, with their focus shifting from merely avoiding harm to actively creating positive impact.

Key findings from the 2025 survey include:

* **Strong consumer support persists**: 75% of New Zealanders want their KiwiSaver or investment fund to be invested ethically and responsibly. Only 5% disagree.
* **Expectations of better returns**: 45% of respondents expect ethical and responsible investments to perform better in the long term, with only 11% disagreeing. This shows Kiwis don't perceive a trade-off between investing ethically and earning good returns.
* **Increasing concern about greenwashing**: Half of New Zealanders are concerned about misleading claims. 54% are more likely to choose funds with independent certification, and 66% want to know which companies are in their portfolio.
* **How companies behave matters**: Investors prioritise avoiding companies that violate human rights (91%), abuse labour rights (91%), and damage the environment (89%) over traditional investment exclusions like tobacco and gambling.
* **Growing demand for positive impact**: 76% would invest in a fund that creates positive benefits for society and the environment, with 60% seeking comparable returns and 16% willing to accept lower returns.
* **Strong climate action expectations**: Three-quarters of respondents consider it important for fund managers to reduce financed emissions, set targets for further reductions, and commit to net zero emissions by 2050.

Carey Church, Managing Director of Moneyworks Ethical Investing, and principal sponsor of the survey, pointed out: "These findings show that demand for ethical investing remains strong despite the headwinds of criticism from the US White House and some politicians. They have not convinced others. Investment sectors in the rest of the world are showing leadership, continuing to strengthen ethical investment standards. The New Zealand public agrees. This survey continues to show strong demand for ethical investment funds that reflect people’s personal values.”

Barry Coates, Co-CEO of Mindful Money, commented: “New Zealanders continue to want their investments to avoid harm and contribute to addressing real-world challenges such as climate change, biodiversity loss and harm to people. They not only want to avoid harm, but they are also seeking investments that deliver positive outcomes for society and the environment."

Dean Hegarty, Co-CEO of RIAA, added: “Rising consumer concerns about greenwashing aligns with RIAA’s 2024 benchmark report, which found it has become the top barrier to growth for investment managers. Kiwis want confidence that their money is creating a positive impact, with over half more likely to choose ethical or responsible funds that have independent certification. This presents a significant opportunity for investment providers who can authentically demonstrate how they're contributing to positive social and environmental outcomes."

The survey indicates substantial growth potential, with nearly half (49%) of respondents considering investing in an ethical fund within the next five years, and only 4% stating they would not consider ethical investing at all.

"These findings reinforce what we've been seeing over the past seven years of this survey – New Zealanders want to know that their money is being invested in line with their values. Those values consistently prioritise issues such as human rights, environmental protection, animal welfare and weapons," said Coates.

Dean Hegarty concluded: “The message from Kiwis is clear, they expect their investments to align with their values and the demand for responsible products will continue to grow. Investment providers and financial advisers must take this seriously.”

The 2025 report is a collaboration between RIAA and Mindful Money. It surveyed 1,000 New Zealanders aged 18 years and over via Dynata's New Zealand panel from 6-17 February 2025.

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**For further information, please contact:** Barry Coates, Co-CEO of Mindful Money, barry@mindfulmoney.nz, 021 365 165; or Dean Hegarty, Co-CEO of RIAA, dean@responsibleinvestment.org, 0224 710 653

**About RIAA** The Responsible Investment Association Australasia (RIAA) champions responsible investing and a sustainable financial system in Australia and New Zealand. With over 500 members representing NZ$83 trillion in assets under management, RIAA is the largest and most active network of people and organisations engaged in responsible, ethical and impact investing across Australia and New Zealand.

**About Mindful Money** Mindful Money is a charity that aims to make money a force for good. We empower consumers, engage investment providers and advocate for change. The Mindful Money website provides transparency on KiwiSaver and retail investment funds, showing company holdings and relating them to key public concerns so users can understand their investments and find funds that align with their values.

**Report Launch:** The report will be launched at a free seminar at 3-4.30pm on Monday 7th April, at KPMG, Viaduct Harbour in Auckland CBD. Tickets for the in-person and online event are at <https://events.humanitix.com/voices-of-aotearoa-2025?hxchl=hex-pfl>