

# New Zealanders' perceptions of Latin America



2020  
annual poll  
results

Latin America  
Centre of  
Asia-Pacific Excellence



# New Zealanders' perceptions of Latin America

The Latin America CAPE is delighted to present the results of its second annual poll of New Zealanders' perceptions of Latin America.

Before we first asked business owners and members of the public in late 2019 how they viewed Latin America there was no public or objective information on their attitudes to this region we could use to inform our offerings or influence wider conversations.

After two years of remarkably stable results, we now have robust data that shows that business owners in particular are interested in Latin America, despite the barriers to engaging with it. That interest has survived the COVID pandemic, and it extends into the education system where support for Latin American languages and content remains high.

Our Centre of Asia-Pacific Excellence will use these results to shape our innovative programmes for exporters, students and schools, and will deploy them as well in other initiatives that raise awareness of how more New Zealanders can connect to Latin America in beneficial ways.



Dr. Matthew O'Meagher  
Director, Latin America Centre of Asia-Pacific Excellence

## LATAM CAPE – Bringing New Zealand closer to Latin America

The Latin America Centre of Asia-Pacific Excellence (CAPE):

- Develops tools and programmes that help New Zealanders be better prepared to do business with Latin America
- Deepens New Zealanders' knowledge and understanding of Latin American cultures and languages
- Enhances economic, trade, political and cultural relationships with the region
- Disseminates university-based knowledge to inform future decision-making.

Supported by four of New Zealand's leading universities – Victoria University of Wellington, the University of Auckland, the University of Waikato and the University of Otago – the Latin America CAPE harnesses academic expertise, evidence based research, stakeholder know-how and industry acumen to build sustainable commercial and cultural relationships with Latin America.



# Key findings

In November 2020, the Latin America Centre of Asia-Pacific Excellence (LatAm CAPE) and UMR Research conducted their second online poll of New Zealanders' attitudes about Latin America. The research was conducted with the general public, as well as businesses, and it provides us with data that will help the LatAm CAPE to measure perceptions, attitudes and understanding over several years.

This overview document presents our key findings from a sample of 232 decision-makers involved in businesses that export, import or invest in countries outside of New Zealand.

The general public sample of 1,000 New Zealanders included 82 business decision-makers, and an over sample of 152 business decision-makers was added. The margin of error is plus or minus 6.4%.

## We asked businesses about:

- Importance and awareness of Latin America
- Knowledge of Latin America and information sources
- Latin America's role in New Zealand's recovery from COVID19
- Learning about Latin America
- Business success in Latin America
- New Zealand's business relationship with Latin America

## What we discovered:

The majority of business respondents think that Latin America is important to New Zealand and most believe that Latin America has an important role to play in New Zealand's recovery from COVID-19. While 16% of business respondents currently doing business with Latin America reported less activity as a result of COVID-19, 17% reported more activity.

The vast majority of businesses believe that knowledge of local languages and local cultures is important for business success in Latin America. They are very receptive to increased education in these areas.

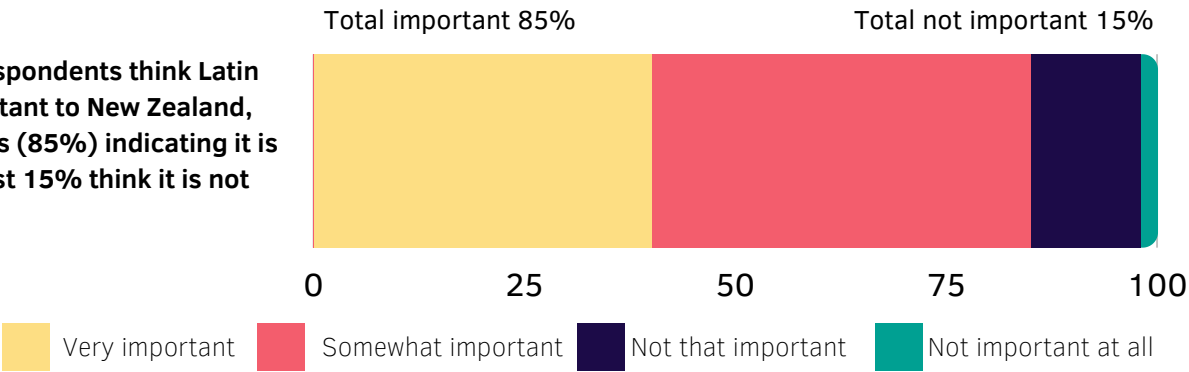
Over three-quarters (78%) see value for New Zealand businesses and organisations in working with Latin American counterparts on indigenous economic development. Most business respondents have at least heard of agreements in existence or under negotiation that are happening between New Zealand and individual Latin American countries.

Overall, the research indicates that businesses are becoming more aware of the differences between Latin American nations and are recognising their importance in export markets. There is an openness and desire to explore the opportunities, increase knowledge and strengthen New Zealand's business relations and economic partnership.

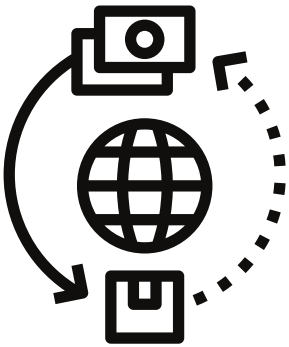


# Importance of Latin America to New Zealand businesses

Most business respondents think Latin America is important to New Zealand, with over four-fifths (85%) indicating it is important and just 15% think it is not



Nearly 100% of business respondents who either have a current relationship with Latin America, or who have visited Latin America in the past 5 years, think that Latin America is important to New Zealand.



Around one-third of business respondents currently export to, invest in or import from Latin America, while 25% are open to the idea.

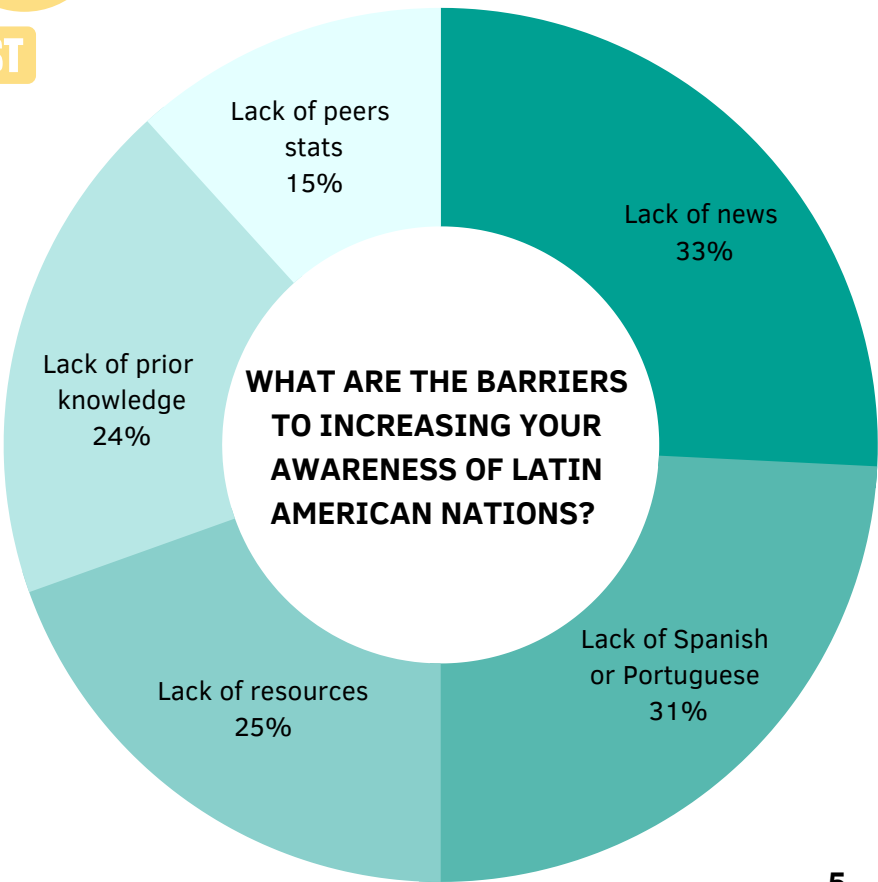
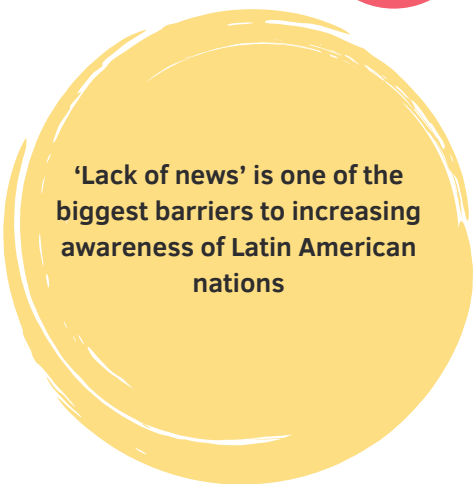
79% of business respondents have some awareness of the differences between individual Latin American nations



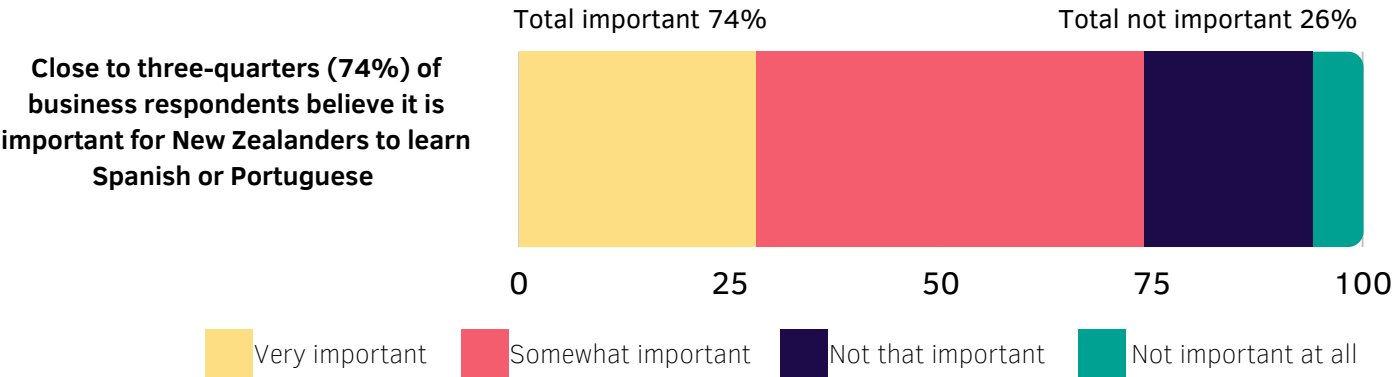
# Knowledge of Latin America and information sources

## MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION ABOUT LATIN AMERICA:

Close to half of business respondents (49%) continued to source their information about Latin America from traditional media -  
Followed by social media (46%)



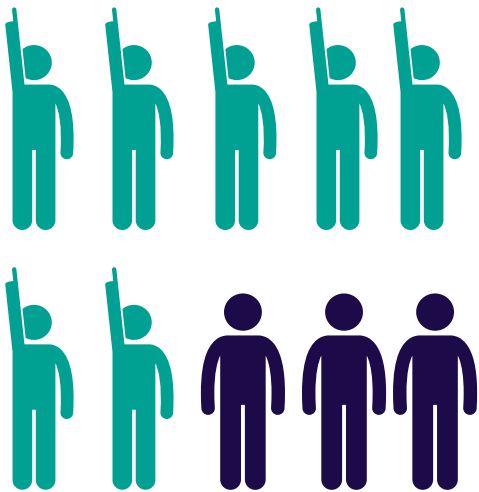
# Learning from Latin America



Two-thirds of business respondents (66%) are likely to develop their own Latin American knowledge and skills in the next five years



How important is it for New Zealand schools to teach more Latin American content?



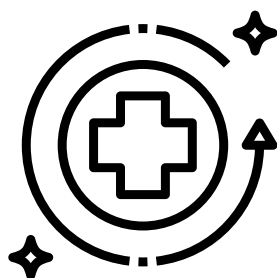
Around 7 out of 10 business respondents think it is important for New Zealand schools to teach more Latin American content





# The impacts of COVID-19 and Latin America's role in New Zealand's recovery

Over half of the business respondents (57%) believe Latin America has an important role to play in New Zealand's recovery from COVID-19



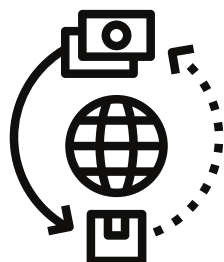
COVID-19 has impacted one-third of businesses with 17% reporting 'more activity' and 16% reporting 'less activity'



"COVID-19 made it a very interesting time to launch a brand (in Latin America) – trying to speak to a new customer during a global pandemic which is stressful for them and their family – was something that we'd never experienced from a marketing perspective. But ultimately more people were sitting at home, on their phones, and that gave us a bigger opportunity to reach them."

Amelia Watson, Rascal & Friends

Over two-thirds (69%) of business respondents are likely to travel to Latin America once flights resume and travellers returning to New Zealand are no longer required to quarantine

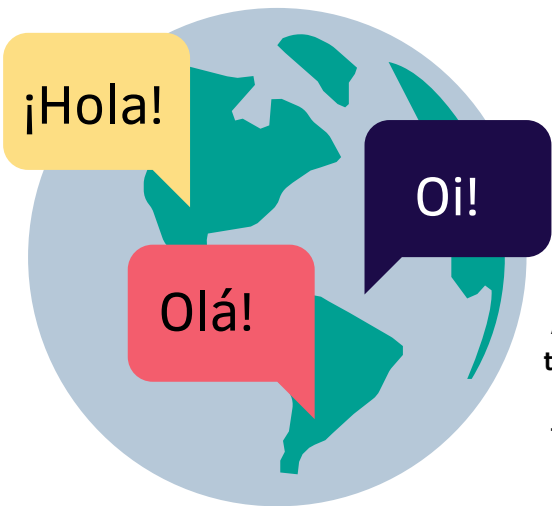
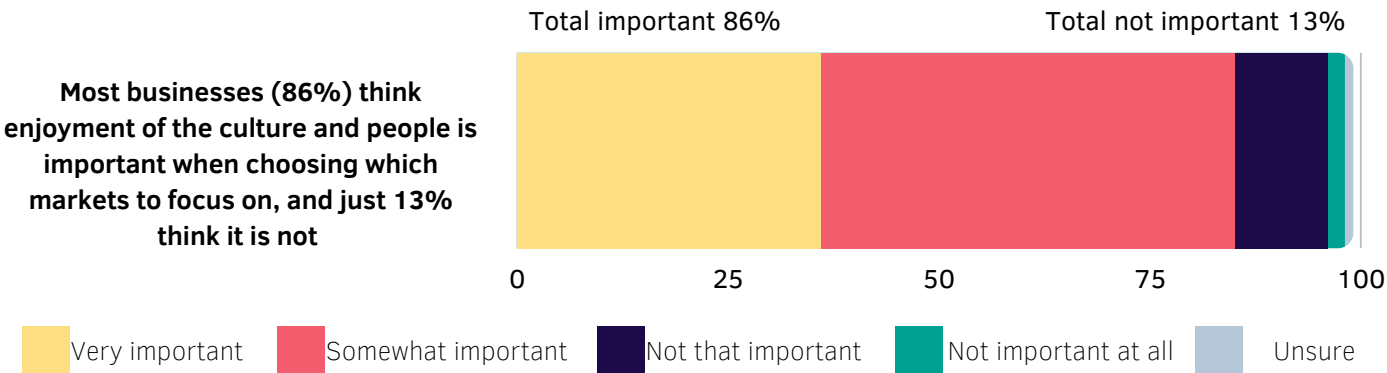


'Trade' is seen as the key role that Latin America can play in New Zealand's recovery from COVID-19

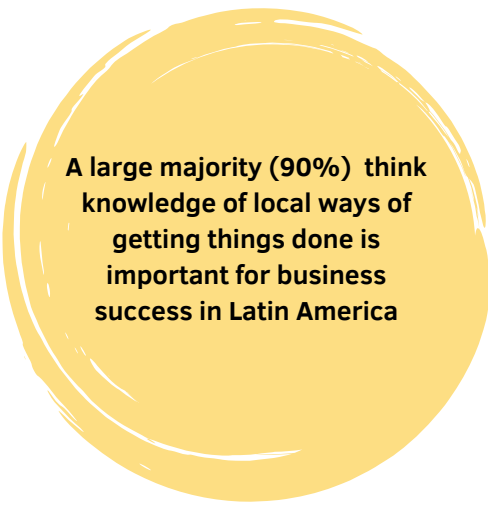
"Through COVID, we decided to look at how we were going to come out of this faster, and obviously Brazil being a low-cost resourcing market, that was a logical place to start building a bigger team. So, we took advantage of it, and we came out of it a way stronger organisation – there's no doubt about it – we did our biggest month in 14 years."

Luke Irving, Fingermark

# Business success in Latin America



A large majority (92%) think knowledge of local languages is important for business success in Latin America



"Having someone locally on the ground is really important. Often at a meeting or meeting with customers, it's what's not said rather than what is said, and you can only understand that if you're local, you know the culture and you know the people and the language."

Gary Stannard, Maxiloda

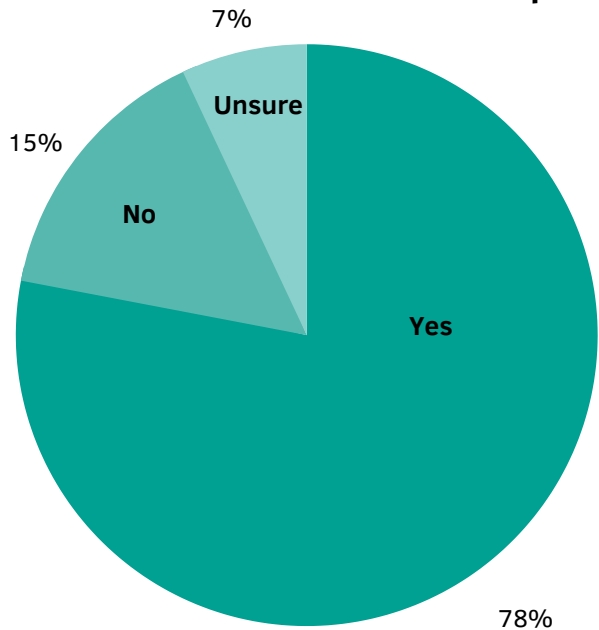




# New Zealand's business relationship with Latin America



Do you see value for New Zealand businesses and organisations to be working with Latin American counterparts on indigenous economic development?

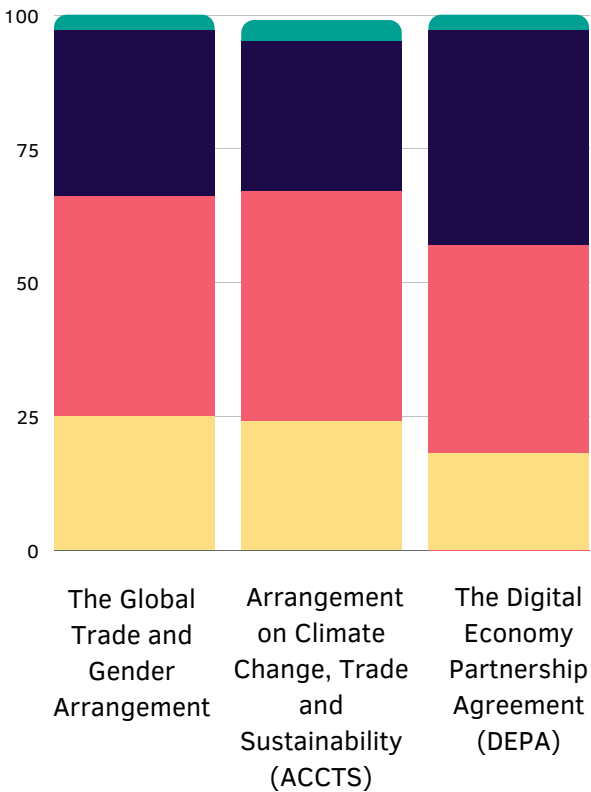
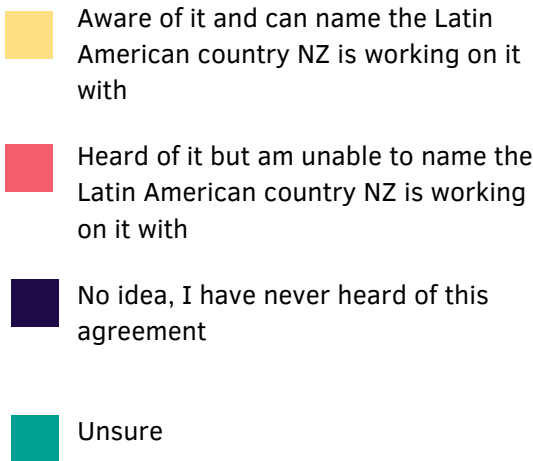


"Because of the scale, Latin America is ripe with opportunities. Such large and diverse countries make it easy to find untapped markets, especially as a smart, innovative New Zealand business."

Arun Elias, Associate Dean (International and Accreditation), Wellington School of Business and Government

Close to three-fifths (58%) of businesses are aware that Chile, Mexico and Peru are active members of APEC

Most business respondents are knowledgeable or have at least heard of agreements in existence or under negotiation that are happening between New Zealand and individual Latin American countries



# Public perceptions vs business perceptions of Latin America



How important do you think Latin America is to New Zealand?

**85%** of business respondents think Latin America is important to NZ

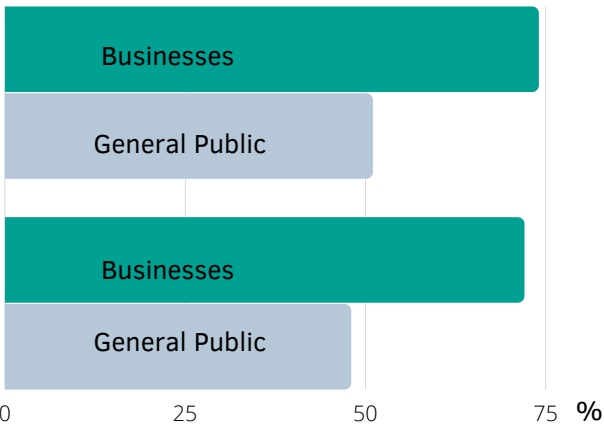
**58%** of the general public think Latin America is important to NZ

Businesses rate the importance of Latin America to New Zealand significantly higher than the general public

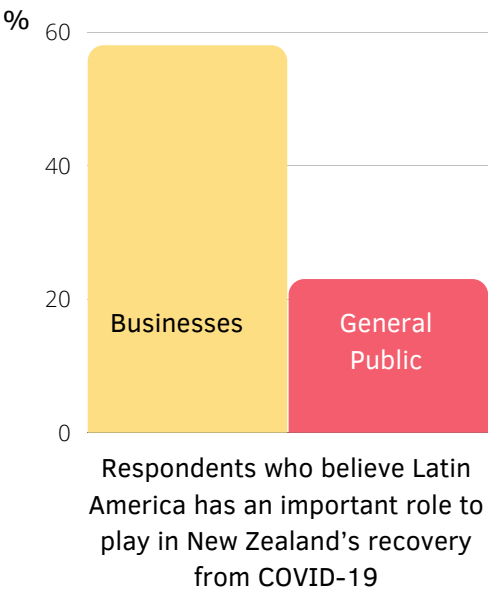
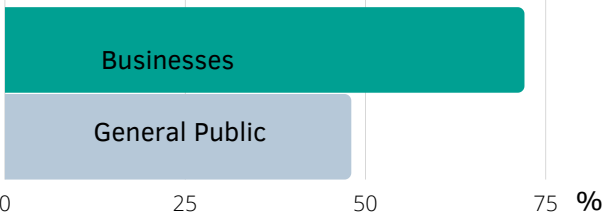
## Learning from Latin America

Business support for Latin American education and language learning in New Zealand was significantly higher than the general public

Respondents who think it's important for New Zealanders to learn Spanish or Portuguese



Respondents who think it's important for New Zealand schools to teach more Latin American content



## Latin America's role in New Zealand's recovery from COVID-19

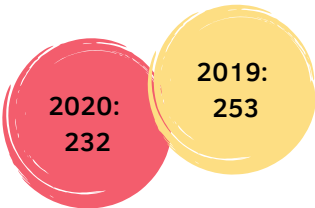
Both the general public and businesses think that 'trade' is the key role that Latin America can play in New Zealand's recovery from COVID-19 (General public 35%, Businesses 20%)



# Year on year comparisons

## Business results

Number polled:



Business respondents who think Latin America is important to New Zealand

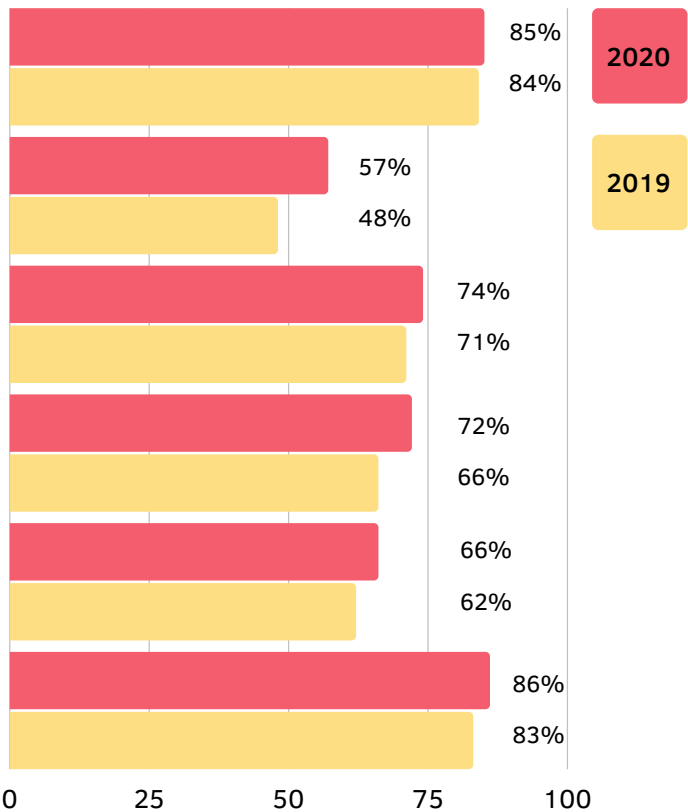
Business respondents who think 'lack of news' or 'lack of prior knowledge' are the biggest barriers to increasing their awareness of Latin American nations

Business respondents who think it's important for New Zealanders to learn Spanish or Portuguese

Business respondents who think it's important for New Zealand schools to teach more Latin American content

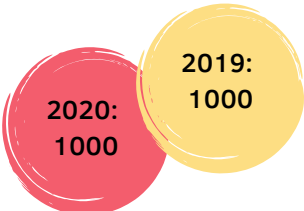
Business respondents who are likely to develop their Latin American knowledge and skills in the next five years

Business respondents who think enjoyment of culture and people they engage with is important when choosing markets to focus on



## General Public results

Number polled:



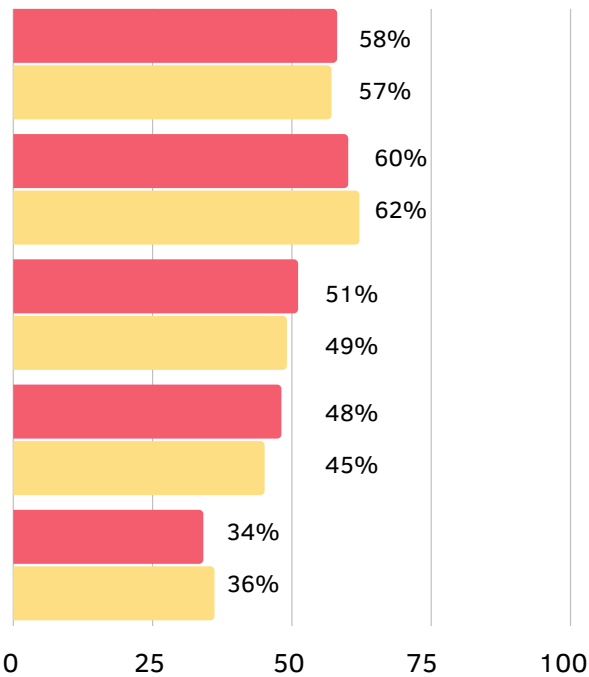
Respondents who think Latin America is important to New Zealand

Respondents who think 'lack of news' or 'lack of prior knowledge' are the biggest barriers to increasing their awareness of Latin American nations

Respondents who think it's important for New Zealanders to learn Spanish or Portuguese

Respondents who think it's important for New Zealand schools to teach more Latin American content

Respondents who are likely to develop their Latin American knowledge and skills in the next five years



## Connect with us:



@CAPELatAm



/company/latamcape



latamcape@vuw.ac.nz



latamcape.org.nz



**Latin America**

**Centre of  
Asia-Pacific Excellence**