

Survey: Kiwis generally positive about relationship with China

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First night of the Lantern Festival at the Auckland Domain. File photo.



By: [Lincoln Tan](#)

Lincoln Tan is the New Zealand Herald's diversity, ethnic affairs and immigration senior reporter.

[@LincolnTanNZH](mailto:lincoln.tan@nzherald.co.nz)

More than four in 10 New Zealanders feel positive about our dealings with China - three times more than those who don't.

A new study has found that Kiwis generally like our relationship with China, but we're not sure about who is getting who benefits more from it.

The New Zealand China Council Perceptions of China Monitor found 43 per cent felt positive and 14 per cent negative.

About 39 per cent wanted trade increased, 38 per cent are for it to remain the same and 12 per cent wanted a decrease.

Council executive director Stephen Jacobi said many Kiwis were keen to see more engagement in a range of areas.

"It's clear from the results that New Zealanders appreciate the importance of our links with China," Jacobi said.

The study is the first of its kind to benchmark New Zealanders' attitudes toward China specifically - covering country, trade, investment and culture.

The Chinese culture was viewed positively by respondents with nearly seven in 10 saying Mandarin was one of the most useful foreign languages schools here could teach.

Almost half said they would like to visit China in the future, and 10 per cent said they already did.

However, there was a mixed opinion about who does better from the relationship between the two countries.

When asked which country they thought benefits more from the relationship, 41 per cent thought China did compared with 16 per cent who said New Zealand.

The respondents had more nuanced views on investments from China.

Most incorrectly identified China as the largest investor in New Zealand and residential property was the top area the Chinese invested in.

The online survey of 1001 New Zealanders was conducted between February 2 and 9, 2018.

"The results give us valuable insight which will help address the information gap about public attitudes toward China," Jacobi said.

The council planned to conduct the survey on an ongoing basis, he said, to identify future trends and shifts in attitudes.