

Is New Zealand on the Right Track?

I have been an admirer of our neighbours across the 'ditch' for many years. I have found they are innovative in their approach to providing solutions to problems, and they are excellent marketers. In Government, this nation of 4.8 million always seems to apply that hard-to-come-by quality, common sense. In world terms I believe "they punch above their weight", and so it was interesting to me to read that their Government, under PM Jacinta Adern, has introduced the concept of [wellbeing](#) as the measure of the health of their nation.

Previously, New Zealand, like Australia, measured GDP (Growth Domestic Product) and a bouyant stock market as the measure of the health of the nation, but now, in New Zealand, GDP is not the top priority. Under Jacinta Adern, wellbeing is now the top priority, but not the only one.

New Zealand's wellbeing approach

Wellbeing is based on the idea that gauging the long-term impact of policies on the quality of people's lives is better than focusing on short-term output measures. The initiative has [five priorities](#):

1. Supporting mental health for all New Zealanders
2. Reducing child poverty
3. Supporting a thriving nation in the digital age, and lifting Māori and Pacific incomes
4. Enhancing skills and opportunities
5. Aiding the transition to a sustainable and low-emissions economy,

“We're embedding that notion of making decisions that aren't just about growth for growth's sake, but how are our people faring?” Ardern said, “How is their overall well-being and their mental health? How is our environment doing? These are the measures that will give us a true measure of our success.”

Wellbeing requirements in workplaces are constantly evolving and looking for ways to respond to the 5 priorities, generally starting with the introduction of the ‘Well team’.

The Well team have developed a workplace programme which aligns with the Maori model of wellbeing. This model addresses four cornerstones of Maori health – mental health, family health, spiritual health and physical health and creating a positive and supportive work space in general.”

Finance Minister Grant Robertson outlined the plan to the country's parliament whilst releasing billions for mental health services, child poverty and measures to tackle family violence. He said, "success is about making New Zealand both a great place to make a living, and a great place to make a life".

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