Aotearoa makes top 10 of world's happiest countries again

A family group enjoying Matauri Bay in Northland. (file pic) Photo: 123RF

The survey by the United Nations' sustainable development solutions network assesses life expectancy, GDP per capita, social support, low corruption and high social trust.

It placed Finland at the top, followed by Denmark, Iceland, Switzerland and the Netherlands.

New Zealand at 10th was the highest placed southern hemisphere country, two places ahead of Australia.

Afghanistan rated lowest, followed by Lebanon, Zimbabwe and Rwanda.

This year marks the 10th anniversary of the *World Happiness Report*, which uses global survey data to report on how people evaluate their own lives in more than 150 countries around the world.

One of the report's authors, John Helliwell, said that with the world still in the grip of the Covid-19 pandemic, there was evidence of a marked increase in helping strangers, volunteering, and donations in 2021.

"This surge of benevolence, which was especially great for the helping of strangers, provides powerful evidence that people respond to help others in

need, creating in the process more happiness for the beneficiaries, good examples for others to follow, and better lives for themselves," he said in a statement.

The report noted there has been a marked increase in many countries of people helping strangers and volunteering, during the pandemic. Photo: 123RF

The authors noted that Finland's score was significantly ahead of other countries that made the top 10. They also noted Canada's drop to 15th - 10 years ago it ranked fifth.

The US was 16th (up from 19th last year) while the UK was 17th.

At the other end of the scale, the report noted the impact of war or conflict on the wellbeing of citizens.

"Notably we find that people in Afghanistan evaluate the quality of their own lives as merely 2.4 out of 10.

"This presents a stark reminder of the material and immaterial damage that war does to its many victims and the fundamental importance of peace and stability for human well-being," co-author Jan-Emmanuel De Neve said.

The top 10 happiest countries

- 1 Finland
- 2 Denmark
- 3 Iceland
- 4 Switzerland
- 5 Netherlands
- 6 Luxembourg
- 7 Sweden
- 8 Norway
- 9 Israel
- 10 New Zealand