

Irirangi Te Motu
NZ On Air

2023 Diversity Report

March | 2024

Inky Pinky Ponky, Tikilounge
Productions, for Whakaata Māori

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Introduction

NZ On Air is tasked with reflecting Aotearoa’s diversity onscreen. An effective way to support this goal is to have diversity within the creative sectors that produce local media. For the past seven years, we have collected information about the **gender** and **ethnic diversity of the key personnel of NZ On Air-funded screen content**, as well as the **regional spread of their production companies**.¹

This information is made available in our annual Diversity Reports, which identify industry trends and contribute to the wider discourse around gender, ethnic, and regional production representation across the local screen industry. Although our funded content comprises a small amount of total local output, we do not expect the trends overall to be significantly different.

We have now gathered comparable Scripted and Factual (Non-Fiction) screen content data from March 2016 to March 2023. In 2021, data collection was extended to the end of June to align this survey with the relevant financial year. This increased the number of productions surveyed over previous years but had no significant effect on the percentage splits across gender or ethnicity. Other changes implemented in 2021 included gathering data on **age** and **disability**. The 2021 survey also included **locations of principal photography** and **locations of production companies** to better reflect the regional spread of production activity. We have now collected this data over two years and are able to provide our first sets of comparisons.

The 2023 Diversity Report uses population data from the 2018 NZ Census. Although the most recent census was conducted in March 2023, its information will not become available until 2024, past the publication of this report.

We now report on diversity in funded Music in a separate report.

¹ All information is provided directly by the personnel with their informed consent and is de-identified within this Report.

Executive summary

The 2023 Diversity Report includes survey responses from **203** Scripted and Factual (Non-Fiction) screen projects funded by NZ On Air and delivered between March 2022 and the end of June 2023. Having eight consecutive years of data means we can report on consistent trends in several areas of the NZ On Air funded production sectors.

The key findings are:

- **Ethnic diversity is on the rise.** 2023 had the lowest proportion of Directors identifying as Pākehā or another European ethnicity (57.9%) since this survey started and Pākehā writers held the second-lowest percentage of roles (57.8%) ever.
- **The percentages of creatives from Asian backgrounds have reached new highs.** 2023 saw the highest numbers of Asian-identifying Producers (11%) and Asian-identifying Directors (12.6%) since this report began. However, these figures remain lower than the estimated 15.1% of the population who identify as one or more Asian ethnicities. They have also been boosted in this year's figures by one project, *Kainga*,² which had eight female Asian Directors.
- **Gender parity is improving**, in part in 2023 attributable to one project. 2023 saw the most even gender split yet between male and female Directors, and female-identifying directors of drama projects (including comedy) outnumbered male-identifying directors for the first time in the history of the Diversity Survey. 2023 also had the highest percentage of gender diverse directors of drama projects in the past eight years, reaching 5%. Gender diverse writers also held the highest proportion of roles (4.3%) since reporting began. As above the boost in female directors was impacted by one project, *Kainga*, which had eight female Directors.
- Auckland continues to be the most common location for production companies that completed NZ On Air-funded projects. However, for the first time since reporting, one quarter (25%) of funded principal photography occurred in locations other than Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch, or nationwide.

² Without *Kainga* 9% of Directors were Asian-identifying, which is still an increase from 7.8%

Producers of Funded Content – Gender and Ethnic Diversity

203 projects were surveyed this year (1 July 2022 to June 30 2023), which included **277** individual producers performing **369** producer roles.

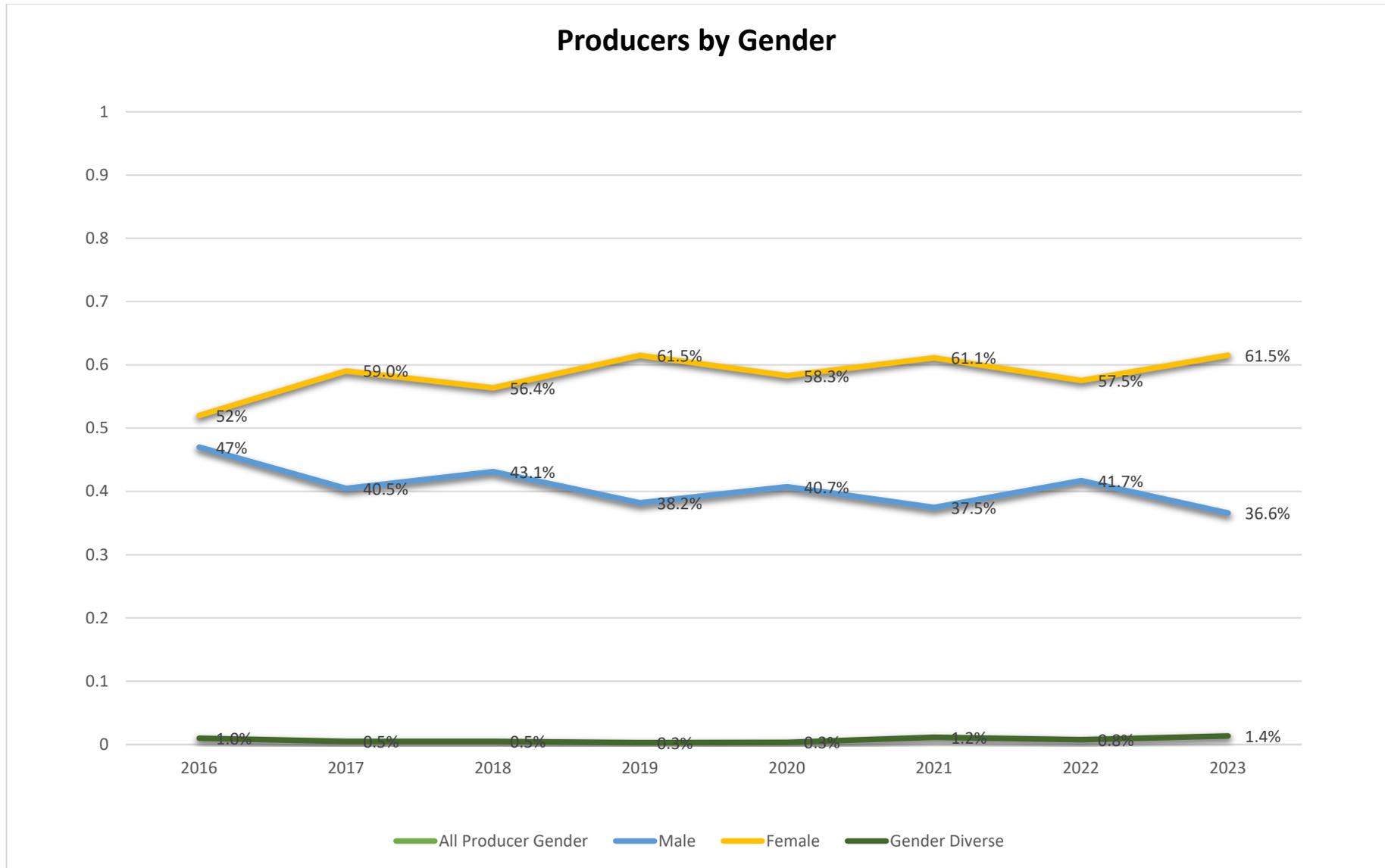
Gender

- Female producers of funded content continued to outnumber male producers for the eighth consecutive year. Females filled 62% of producing roles, a 4-point increase on 2022.
- Male producers performed 37% of roles, down from 42% in 2022.
- Gender diverse producers made up 1% of roles, the same percentage as 2022.
- The split between the male and female producers has remained relatively consistent over the past eight reports and is wider than the 2018 Census figures, which indicate that 51% of the New Zealand population is female and 49% is male.³

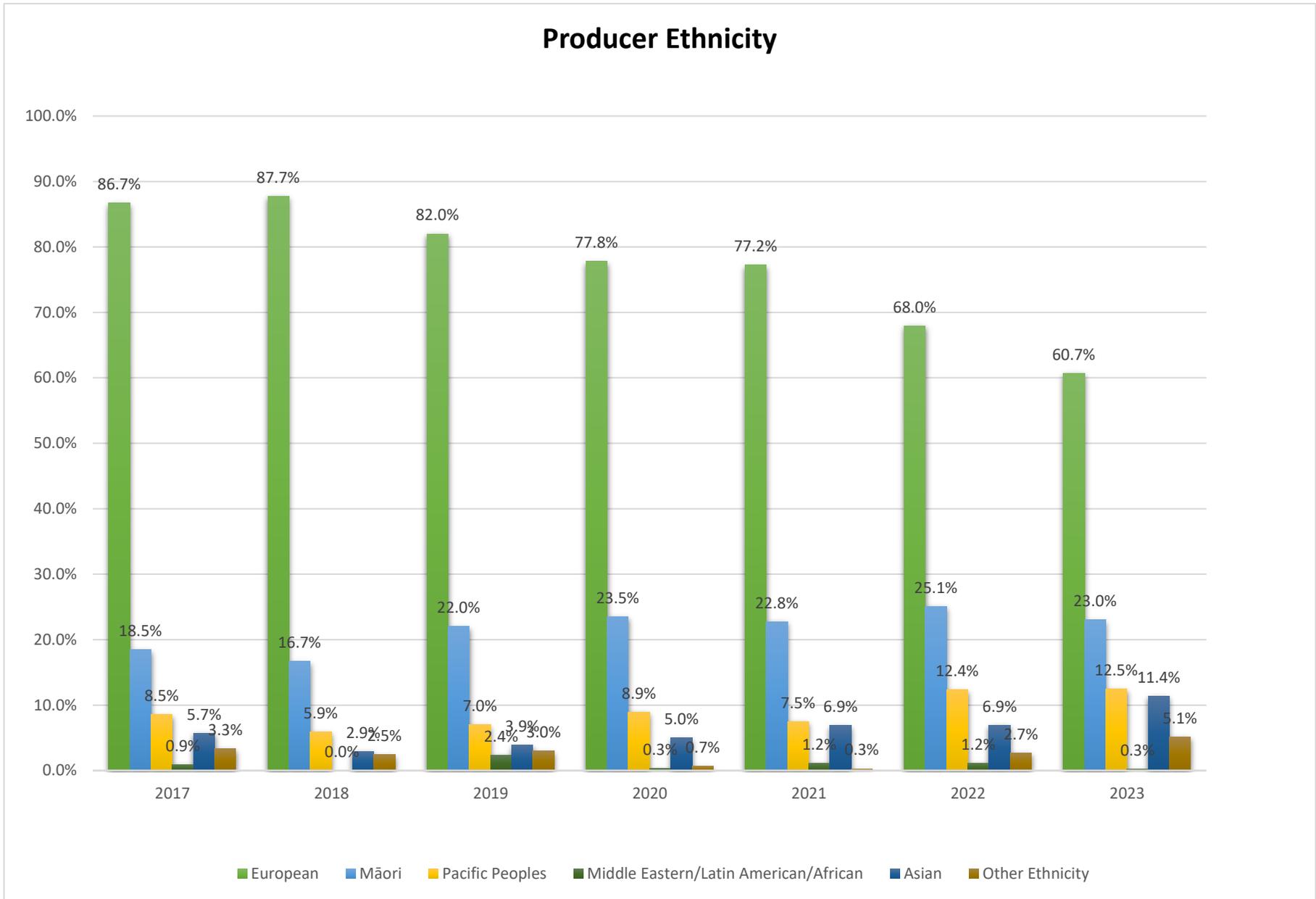
Ethnic Diversity

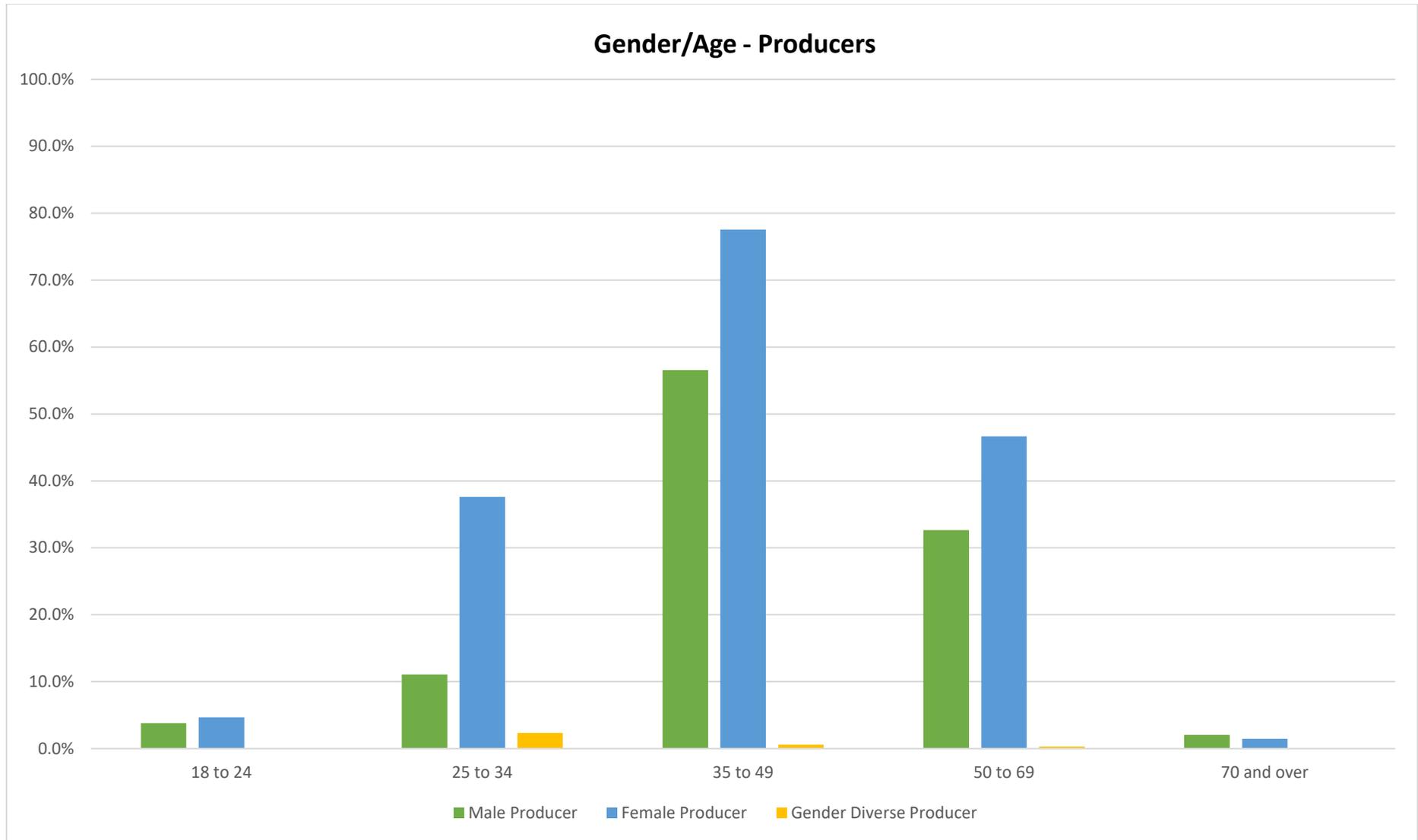
- The proportion of producers identifying as Pākehā or another European ethnicity is 61%, 5 points lower than 2022 and 16 points lower than 2021. This finding is also 9 points lower than the 2018 Census figures (where 70.2% of the population identified with one or more European ethnicity).
- In this year's survey, 23% of producers identified as Māori, 2% down from 2022. The Census figures show that 16.5% of the population identify as Māori.
- Pasifika-identifying producers made up 12%, which is the same as last year's figure. Pasifika Peoples make up 8.1% of the overall New Zealand population.
- The number of producers identifying as Asian increased to 11%, the highest since this report began, though still lower than the 15.1% of New Zealanders who identify as one or more Asian ethnicity, as per the 2018 Census. The 11% figure demonstrates a steady increase in the number of Asian producers, from 7% in 2022 and 2021, 5% in 2020, 4% in 2019, and 3% in 2018.
- Only one producer identified as Middle Eastern, Latin American or African (MELAA) which is statistically represented as 0% in the report. This is below the census MELAA population figure of 1.5%. In 2022, just over 1% of roles (three individuals) were filled by MELAA producers.

³ The only options for gender identification in the 2018 Census were 'male' and 'female' which is why the population statistics in these two categories total 100%. The option to add a 'gender diverse' category was implemented in the 2023 census.



Producer Ethnicity





Directors of Funded Content – Gender and Ethnic Diversity

This year's survey includes **210** unique directors performing 247 director roles.

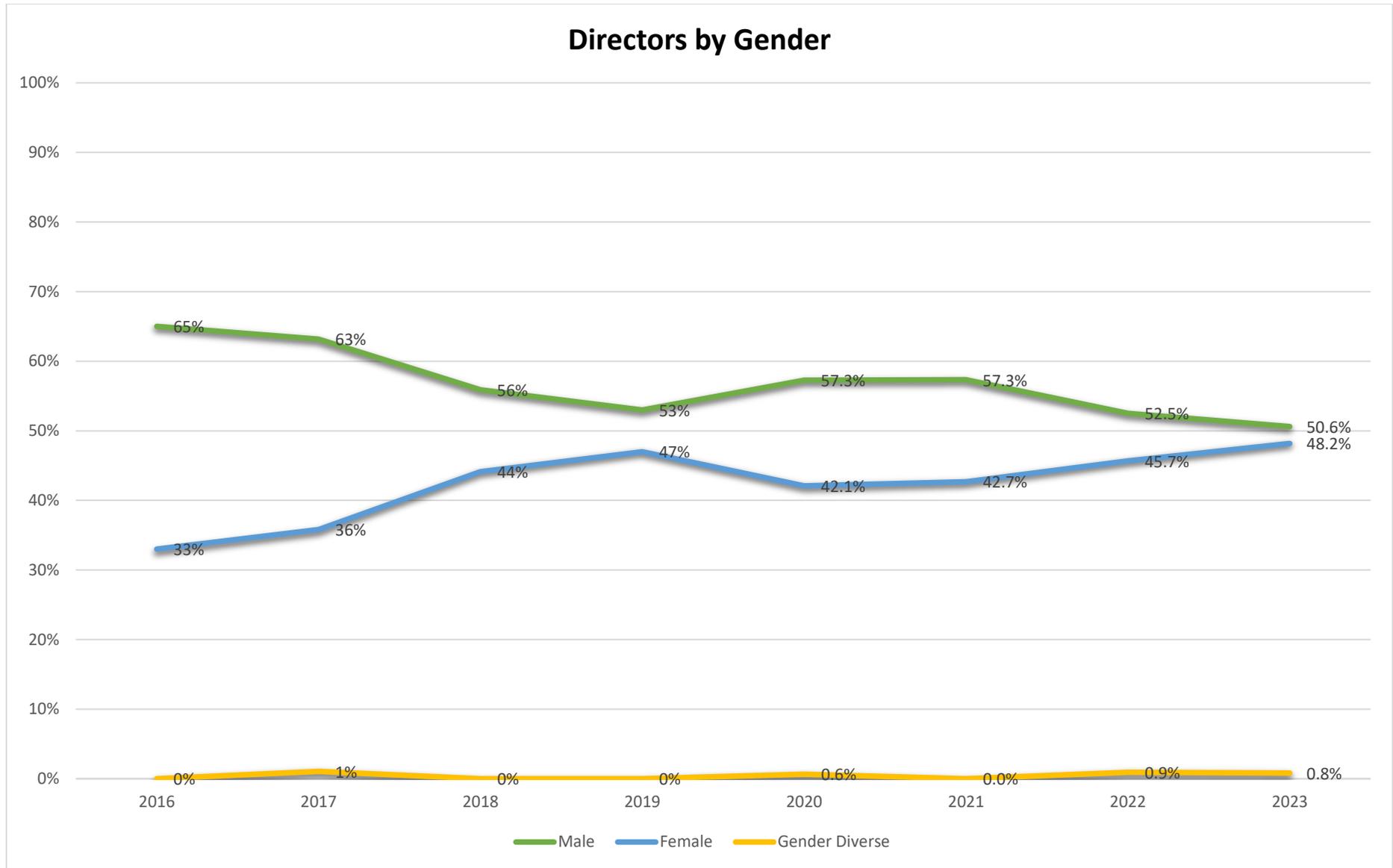
Gender

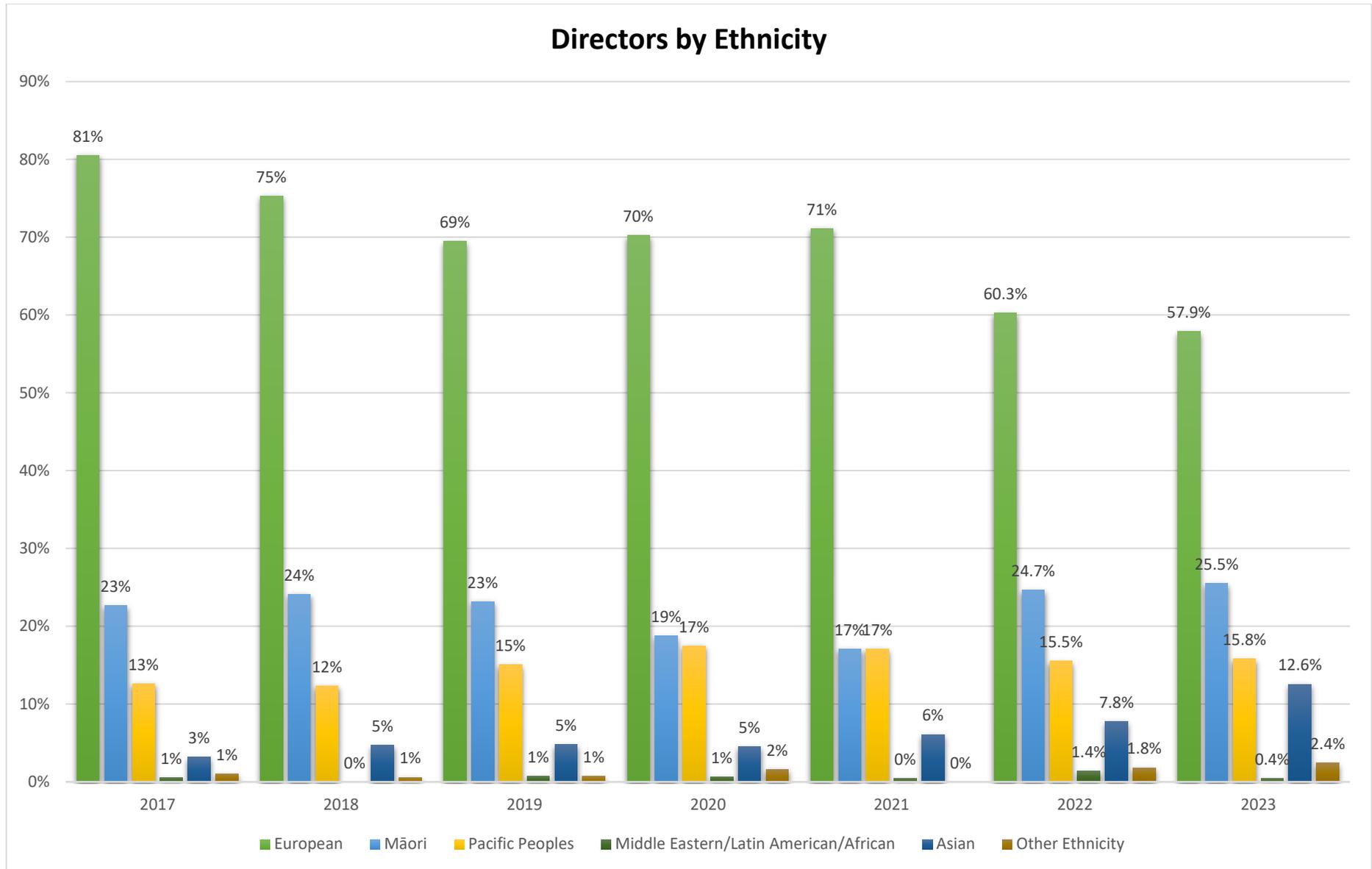
- Since 2016, male directors have outnumbered female directors. However, 2023 saw the most even split between them since this report began. 50.6% of directing roles were filled by men and 48.2% were filled by females. In 2022, male directors accounted for 53% and female directors made up 46%. As already noted, one project *Kainga*,⁴ which had eight female directors, impacted this data. However, 2023's figures indicate a significant increase in gender parity from 2016 and 2017's figures, which showed that men filled around two-thirds of directing roles.
- 0.8% of directors were gender diverse, down 0.2% from 2022, but up from 2021, when no directors identified as gender diverse.

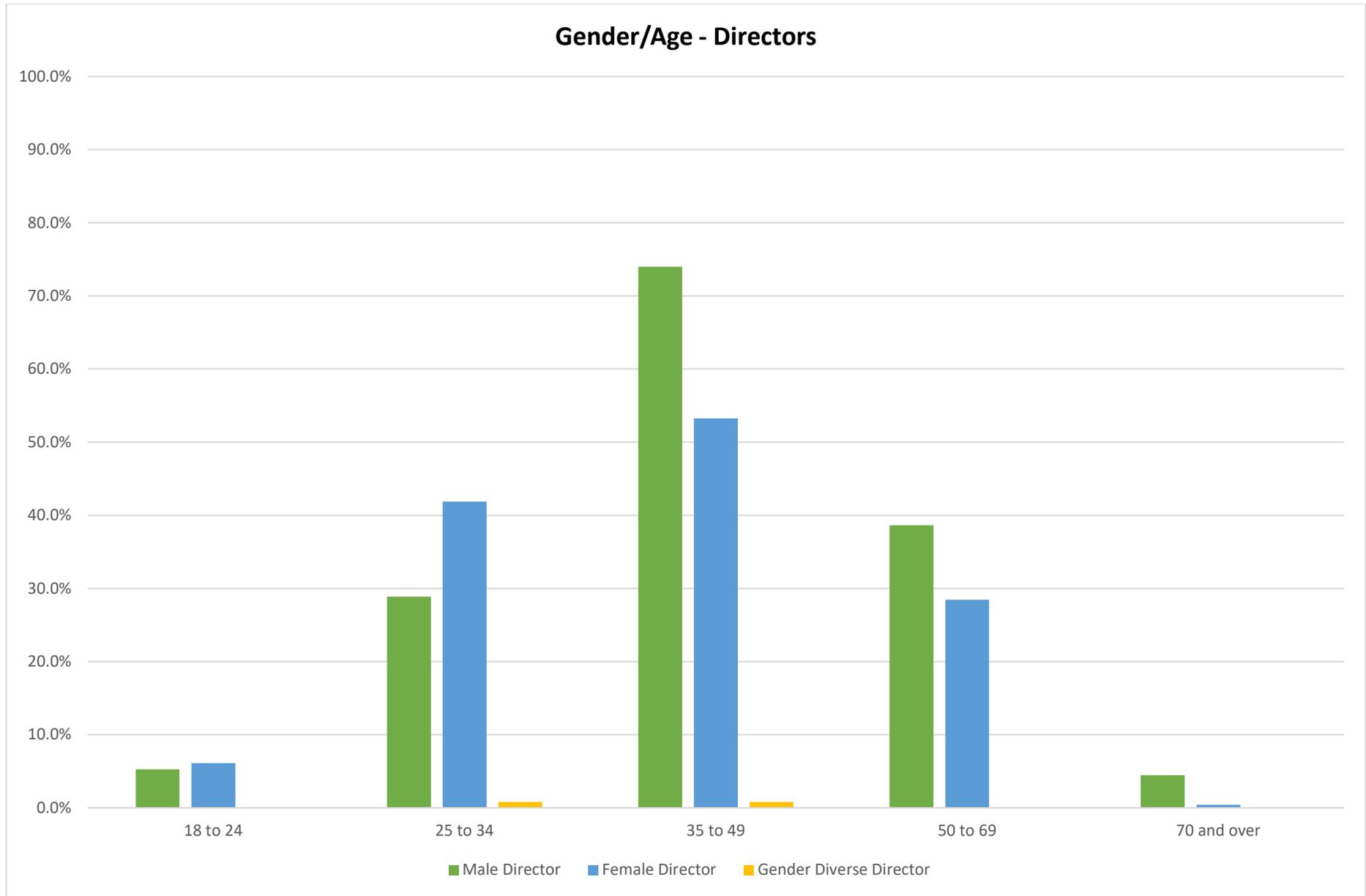
Ethnic Diversity

- 2023 had the lowest proportion of directors identifying as Pākehā or another European ethnicity (57.9%) over the past eight years of reporting. 2017 had the highest proportion at 81% and this figure declined progressively between 2018 (75%) – 2020 (70%), increasing marginally in 2021 (71%) before dropping 11 points in 2022 (60%).
- This year, 25.5% of directors of funded content identified as Māori (a marginal 0.5% increase on 2022) while 15.8% identified as one or more Pacific ethnicity (a marginal 0.2% decrease on 2022).
- For the first time since the report began, the proportion of Asian-identifying directors crossed the 10% threshold, reaching 12.6% which is a 4.6% increase on 2022. Despite this milestone, this figure is still lower than the 15.1% of the New Zealand population that identifies with one or more Asian ethnicities.
- 0.4% of directors identified as being from Middle Eastern/Latin American/African ethnicities, down from 2022's figure of 1%. Ethnicities in the 'Other' category made up the remaining percentage of 2.4%.

⁴ Without *Kainga* the gender split remained static – at 46% female to 52% male.



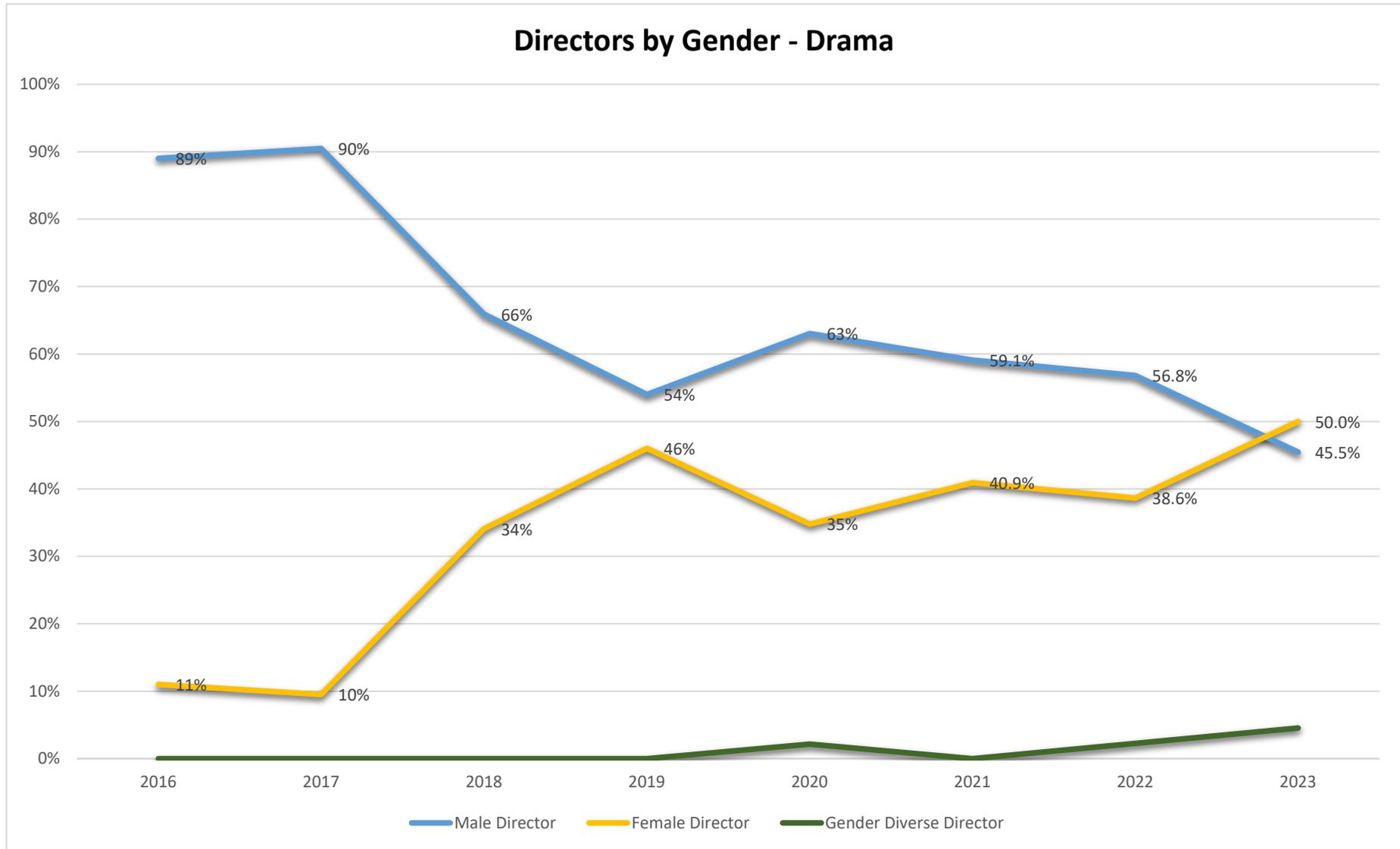


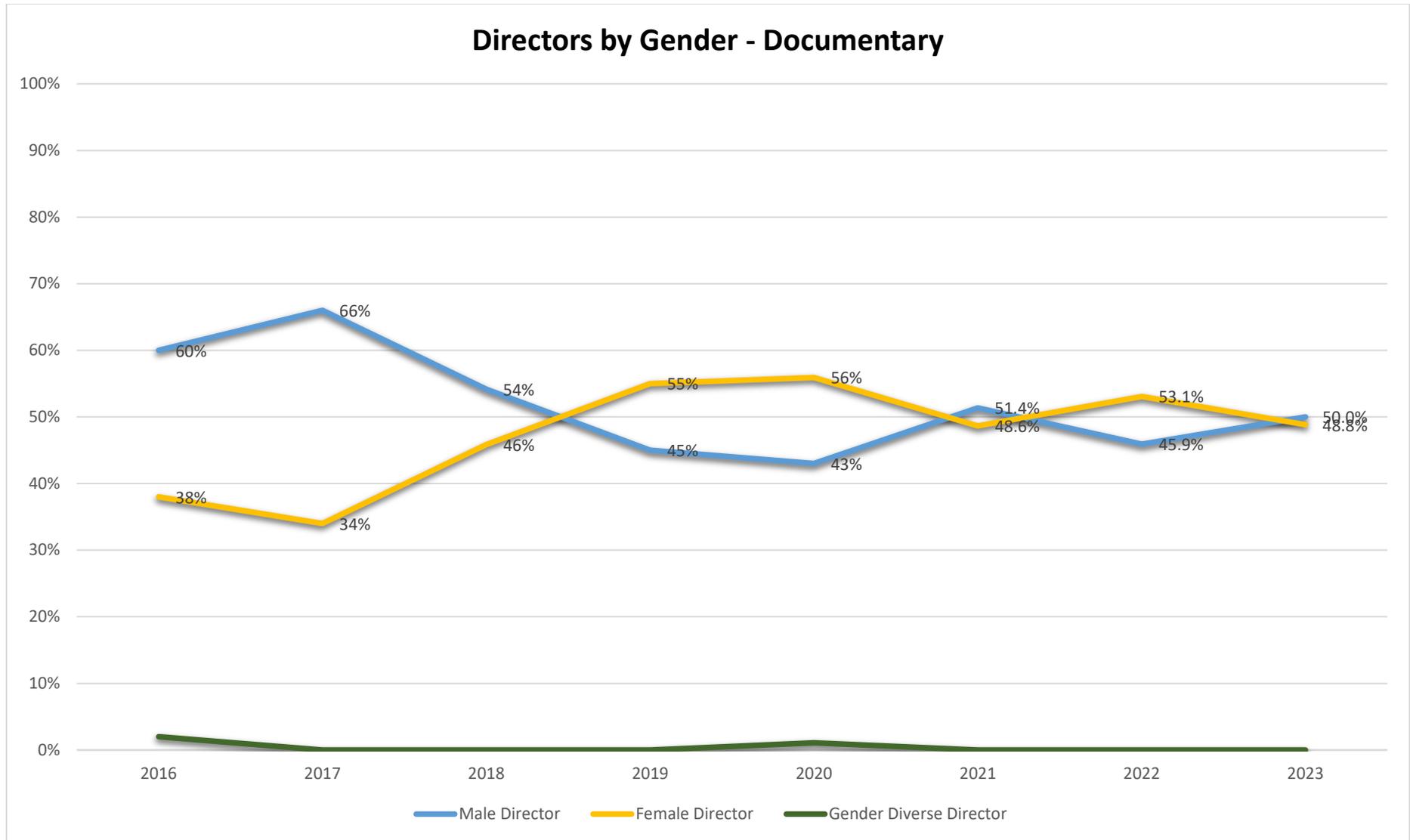


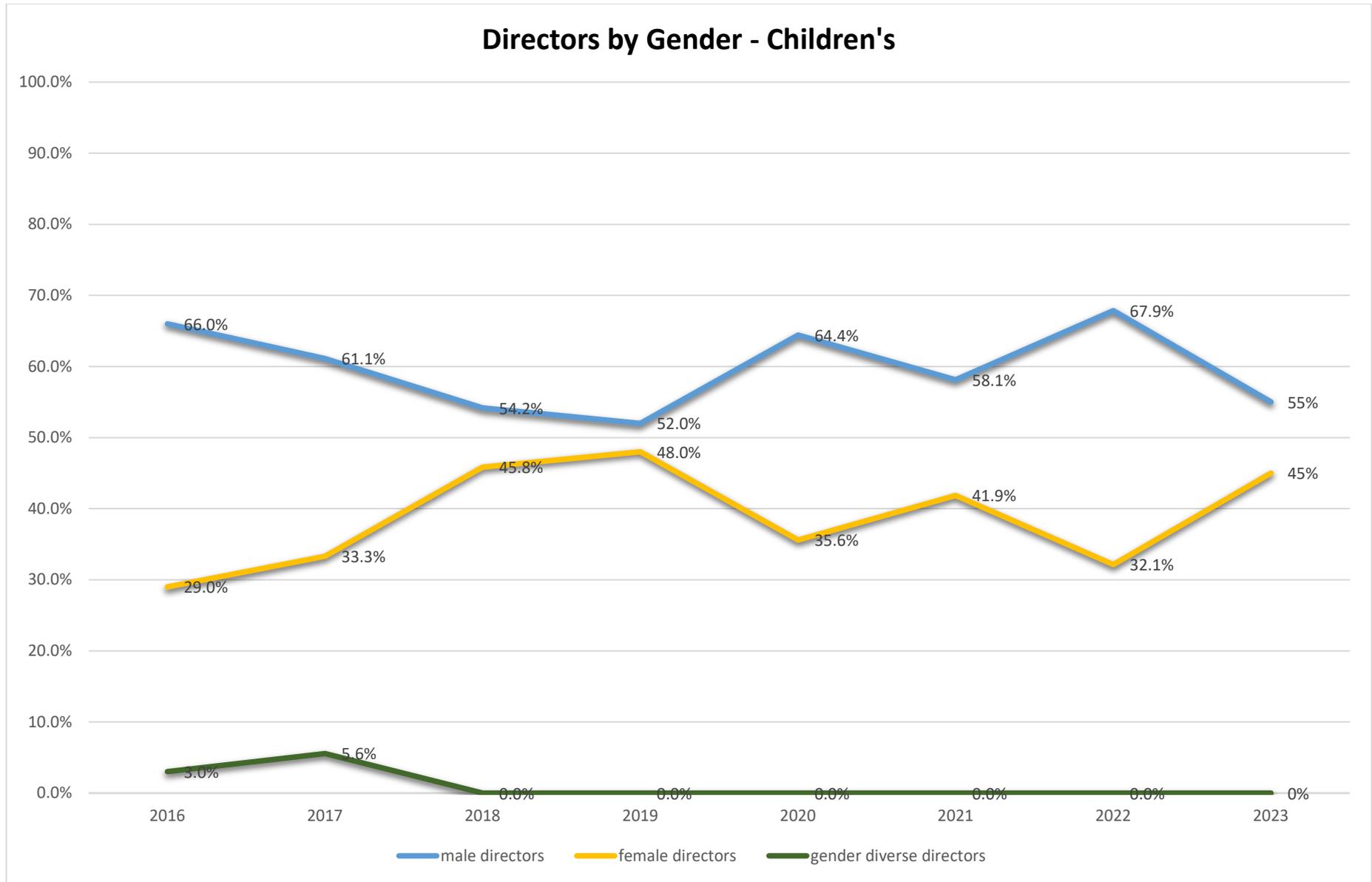
Directors of Funded Content – Gender by Genre

The historic under-representation of female directors, observed both in previous years of this report and wider industry research, means a closer look at this data has been necessary. It will continue to be closely examined despite the gradual equalisation shown in the 2019 report.

- This year, female-identifying directors of drama projects (including comedy) outnumbered male-identifying directors for the first time in the history of this report. This figure is partly attributable to one project, *Kāinga*, which featured contributions from eight pan-Asian female directors.
- Female directors made up 50%, a substantial jump on 2022's figure of 38.6%. Male directors dropped from 56.8% in 2022 to 45% in 2023. During 2016 to 2017, there was a clearly observable trend in the under-representation of female directors in Scripted productions, particularly drama and comedy. Females accounted for only 11% of drama directors in 2016 and 10% in 2017.
- 2023 also saw the highest percentage of gender diverse directors of drama projects in the past eight years, reaching 5%. The previous highest years were 2022 (2.3%) and 2020 (2.2%), with 2021 showing no gender diverse directors.
- Since 2018, documentary projects have seen the most even split between male and female directors. 2023 showed the smallest difference since this report began, with female directors making up 48.8% of projects and male directors constituting the remaining 50.2%.
- This year saw a 13-point increase in female directors of children's content, going from 32% in 2022 to 45% in 2023. By comparison, the percentage of male directors decreased from 70% to 55%.
- Across all genres, directing has consistently seen low-to-no rates of gender diverse participants, the exception being this year's drama category rate of 5%. Both other genre categories saw no directors who identified as gender diverse.







Writers of Funded Content – Gender and Ethnic Diversity

The **203** projects included in this year's survey involved **240** unique writers performing **282** writing (or researching) roles.

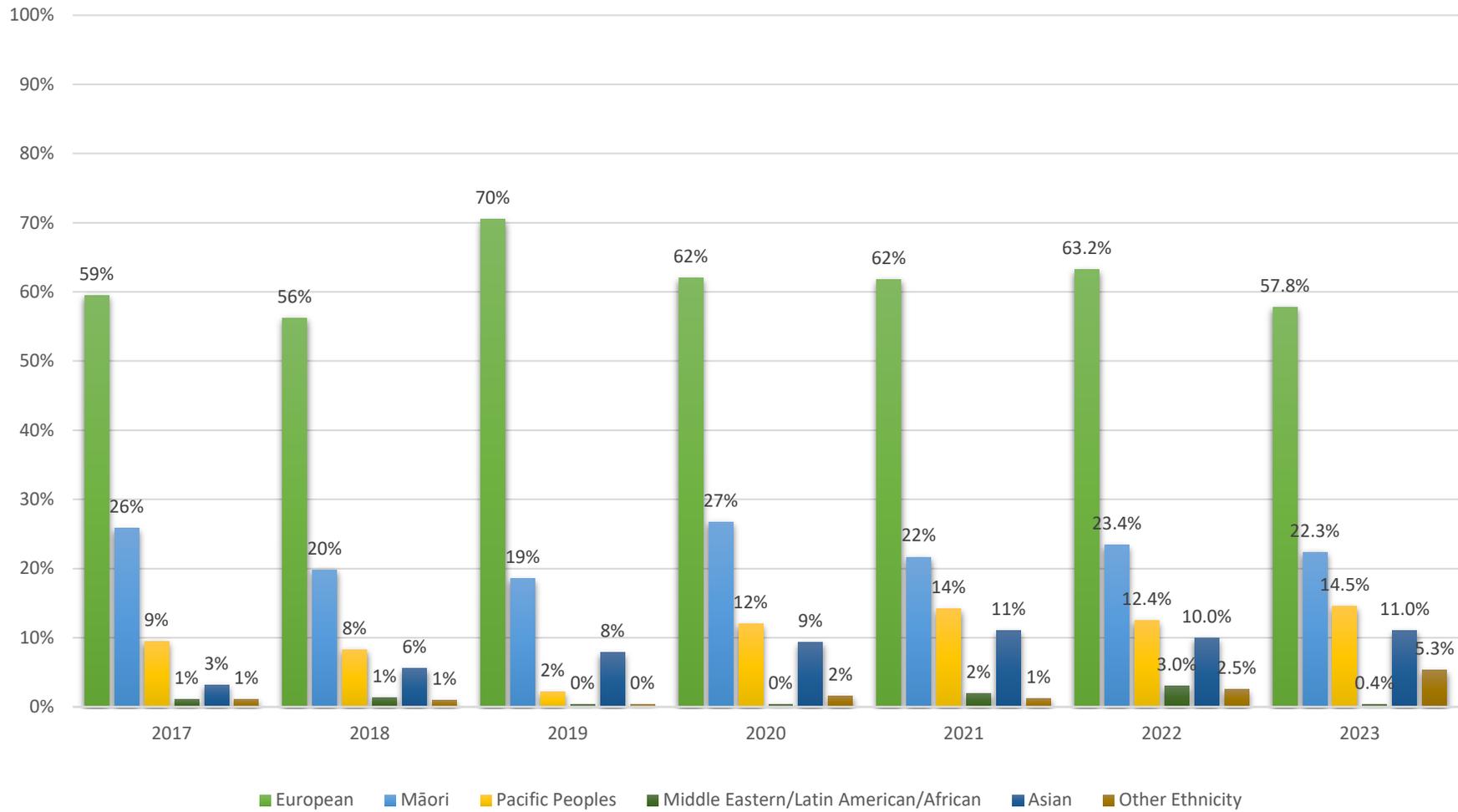
Gender

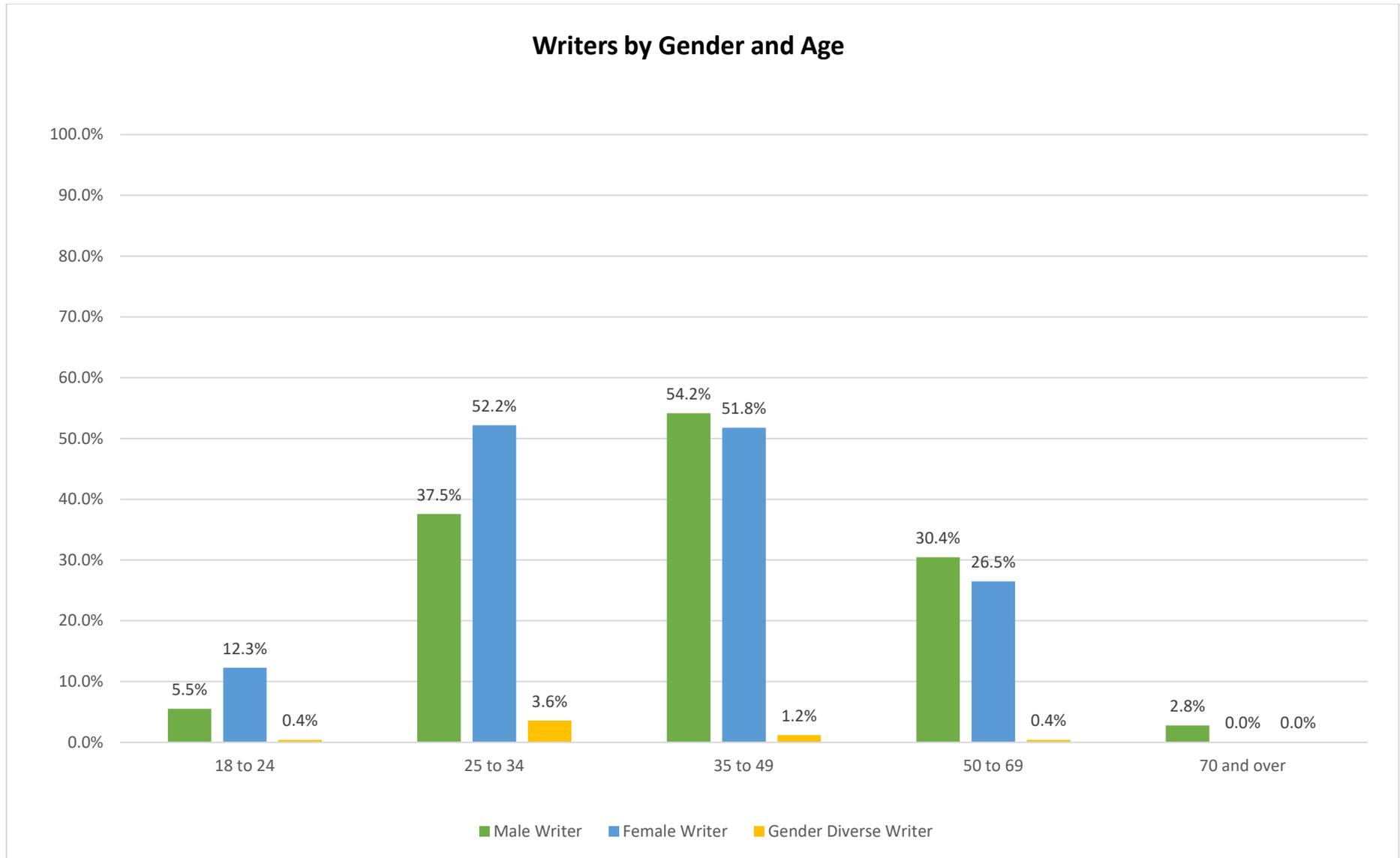
- In 2023, males made up 43.3% of writing roles, females made up 51.8%, and gender diverse writers constituted the remaining 4.3%.
- Female writers continue to outnumber male writers by a small margin, which is consistent with each year of data except 2021, where males represented 50% of writers and females made up 48.8%.
- Gender diverse writers held the highest proportion of roles since this report began, filling 4.3%. Prior to 2023, the highest percentage of roles filled by writers identifying as gender diverse was 1% (in 2022, 2019, and 2018).

Ethnic Diversity

- 57.8% of writers identified as Pākehā or another European ethnicity, 4.4 points lower than in 2022. This is the second-lowest percentage of Pākehā writers in eight years of reporting, the lowest being 56% in 2018.
- The proportion of writers who identify as Māori dropped marginally from 23% in 2022 to 22.3% in 2023. The percentage of Māori writers has fluctuated between the lowest figure of 19% (in 2019) and the highest figure of 27% (2020). Even at the lowest rate of representation, Māori-identifying writers have consistently exceeded the 2018 Census figures which put Māori as 16.5% of the population.
- Pasifika peoples in writer roles increased to 14.5%, up 2.5 points from 2022. Census figures indicate that Pacific peoples make up 8.1% of the NZ population. Pasifika writer figures have remained between 12 – 14.5% since 2020, with all years beforehand sitting below 10%.
- Asian-identifying writers made up 11% of writing roles, up 1 point from 2022. Prior to 2022, the proportion of Asian writers had grown steadily from 3% in 2017 to 11% in 2021. These figures remain below the Census statistics that show the Asian population at 15.1%.
- 0.4% of writers were from Middle Eastern, Latin American, or African (MELAA) backgrounds, down from 3% in 2022 and 2% in 2021. This year's figure is also lower than the Census statistics of 1.5%.
- Writers of other ethnicities totalled 5.3%, the highest percentage since this report began. The second-highest percentage was 2% in 2022 and 2020.
- The remaining 1.1% of writers had unidentified ethnicities.

Writers by Ethnicity





Key Creatives (Producers, Directors and Writers) by Age

2023 is the third year that this survey has asked the age of participants. This data was gathered by age ranges/bands (18-24, 25-34, 35- 49, 50-69, 70 and over) rather than specific ages⁵. Participants could also state 'Prefer not to say' or 'Don't know'⁶.

- The most populated age band continues to be 35-49, with 43% of key creatives falling into that range. This is one point down from 2022.
- The second-highest age band was 25-34 (25%) followed closely by 50-69 (24%).
- Only 5% of key creatives fell into the 18-24 category and respondents who answered 'Don't know' or 'Prefer not to say' made up 1% each, respectively.
- These trends were consistent across the Director and Producer categories, though Writer roles had a more even split between the 25-39 and 35-49 age bands.

Key Creatives by Disability Status

This is the third year that the survey has asked about disability status. Participants were asked if they had a long-term impairment that restricts their participation in everyday activities.⁷

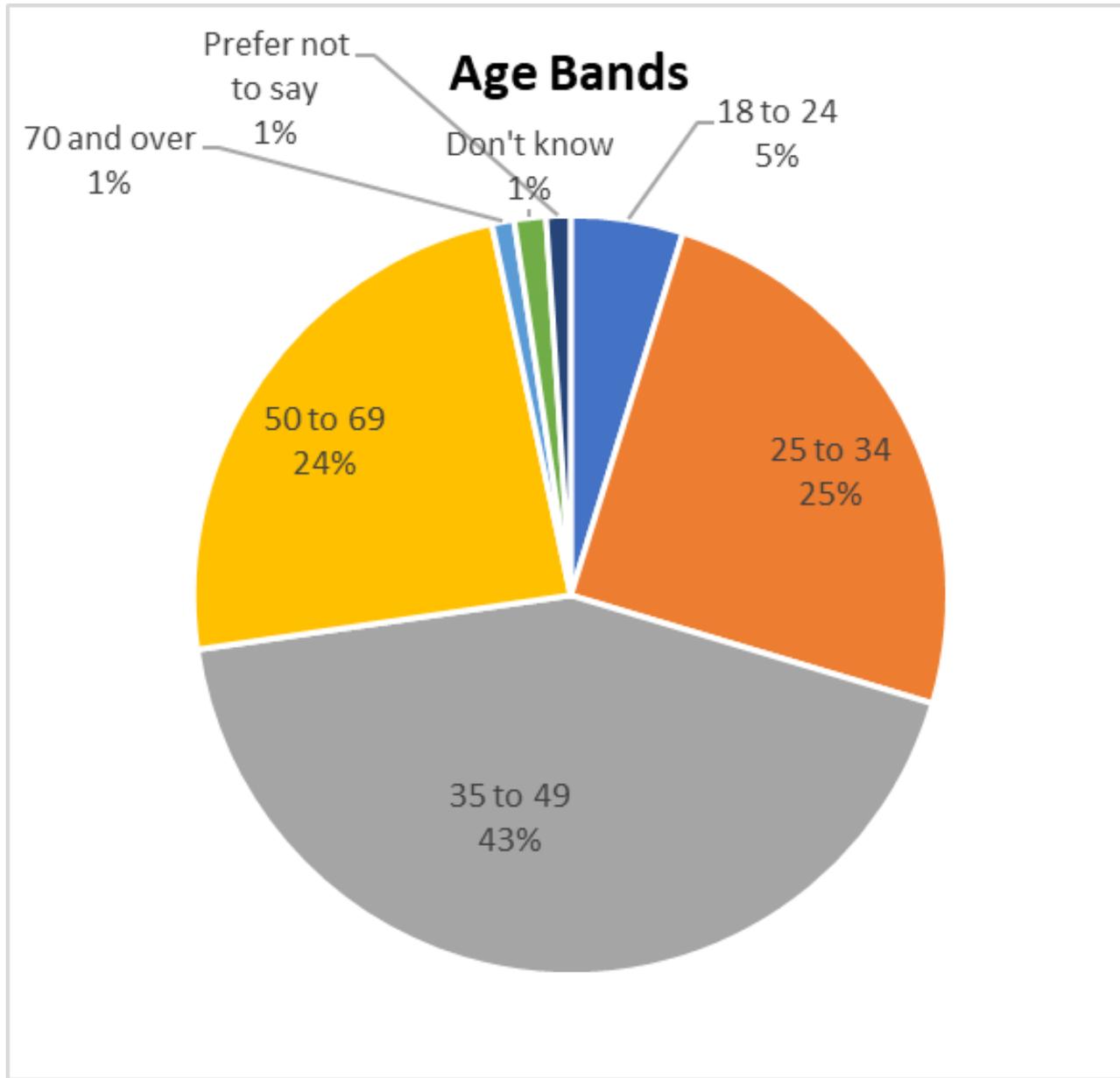
- According to the most recent Stats NZ figures on disability, 24% of New Zealanders have a physical, sensory, learning, mental health or other disability.⁸
- This year, 97% of respondents answered No, 1.6% said yes, and 1.8% did not give an answer.
- In the 2022 survey, 95% of respondents answered No, 3% preferred not to say, and 2% answered Yes.

⁵ These bands are consistent with those used by Statistics NZ regarding engagement with industry and employment.

⁶ The 'Don't know' option is in the instance that the production company submitting the survey did not know the age range of a key creative.

⁷ This question aligns with the phrasing used by Statistics NZ around disability-related questions.

⁸ The most recent nationwide figures are from a 2013 Stats NZ survey. A follow-up survey is being conducted in 2023 but the results have not been released at the time of writing this report.

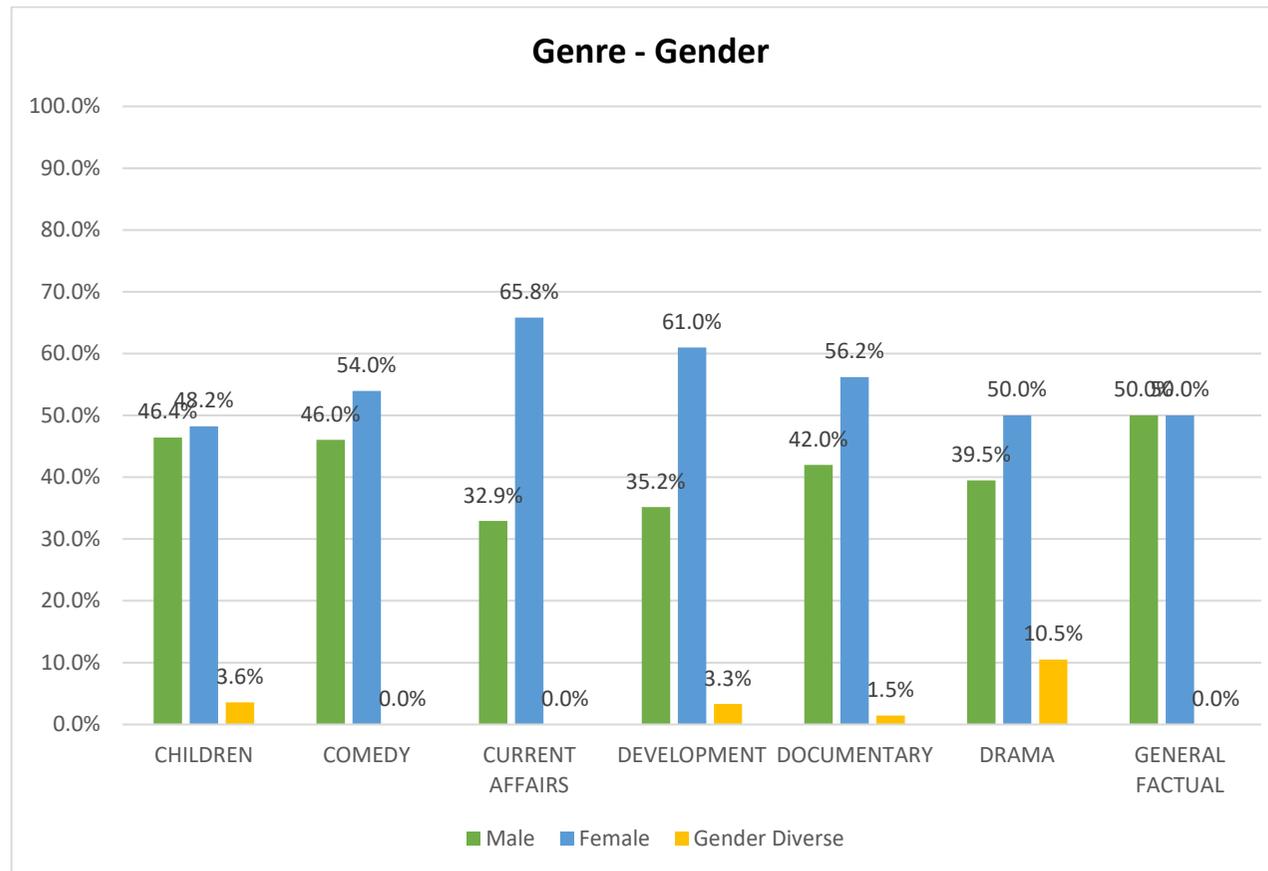


Key Creatives by Genre: Gender and Ethnicity

Gender

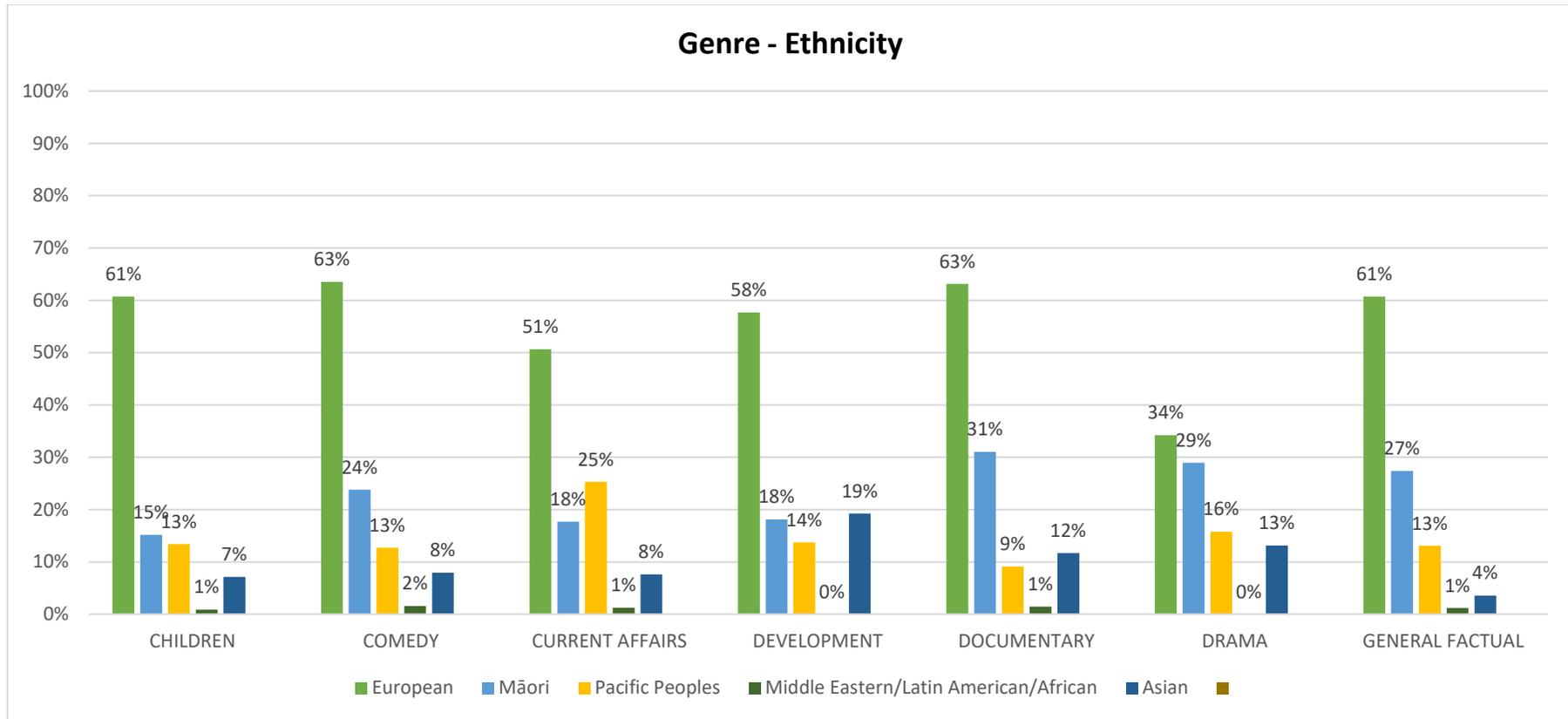
The split of the gender and ethnicity of writers, producers and directors across the genre of projects can be seen in the charts below.

- Female key creatives outnumber males in all genres except for General Factual, with the widest divides appearing in Current Affairs.
- Gender diverse key creatives appeared in four genres – Children (3.6%), Development (3.3%), Drama (10.5%), and Documentary (1.5%).



Ethnicity

- Key Creatives from European ethnic backgrounds continue to make up the highest percentages in every genre, with the lowest proportion seen in Drama (34%).
- Pasifika Key Creatives were most represented in the Current Affairs genre, making up 25%. Their second-highest showing was in the Development category where they made up 16%.
- Māori Key Creatives constituted 29% of Drama roles, 31% of Documentary roles, 24% of Comedy and 27% General Factual roles.
- The biggest genre (in regard to the number of productions) is Documentary. Its breakdown is 63% European, 31% Māori, 9% Pacific Peoples, 16% Asian and 1% Middle Eastern/Latin American/African.



Regional Spread of Production Companies

Auckland continues to be the most common location for production companies that completed NZ On Air-funded projects. In 2023, 76% of companies were based there, down from 83% in 2022. Over one-third of the New Zealand population reside in Auckland ⁹ and the region accounts for 38% of the national gross domestic product (GDP)¹⁰. 9% of companies were located in Wellington, the same percentage as last year, while Christchurch (2%) and other locations (12%) made up the remaining figures.

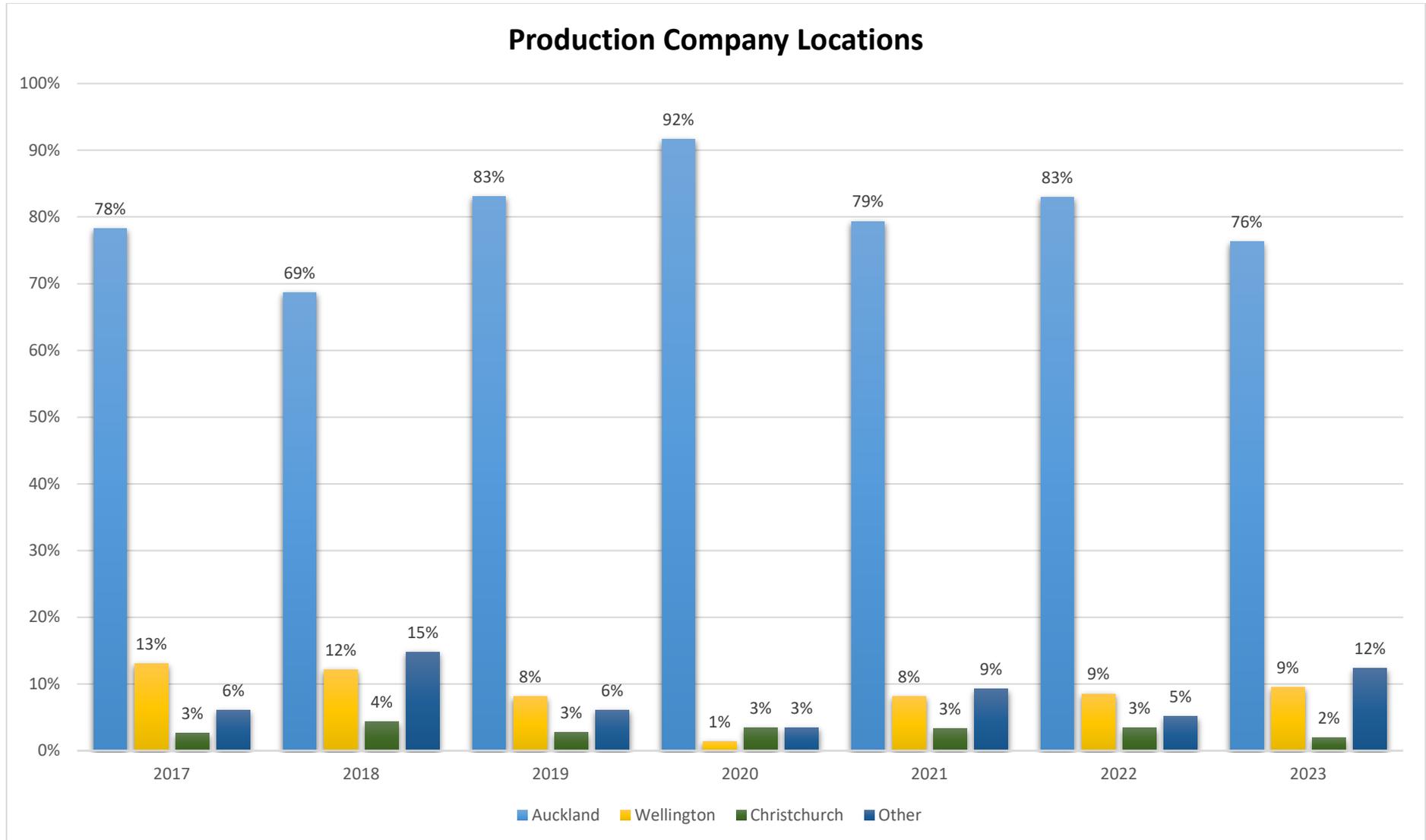
Regional Spread of Principal Photography

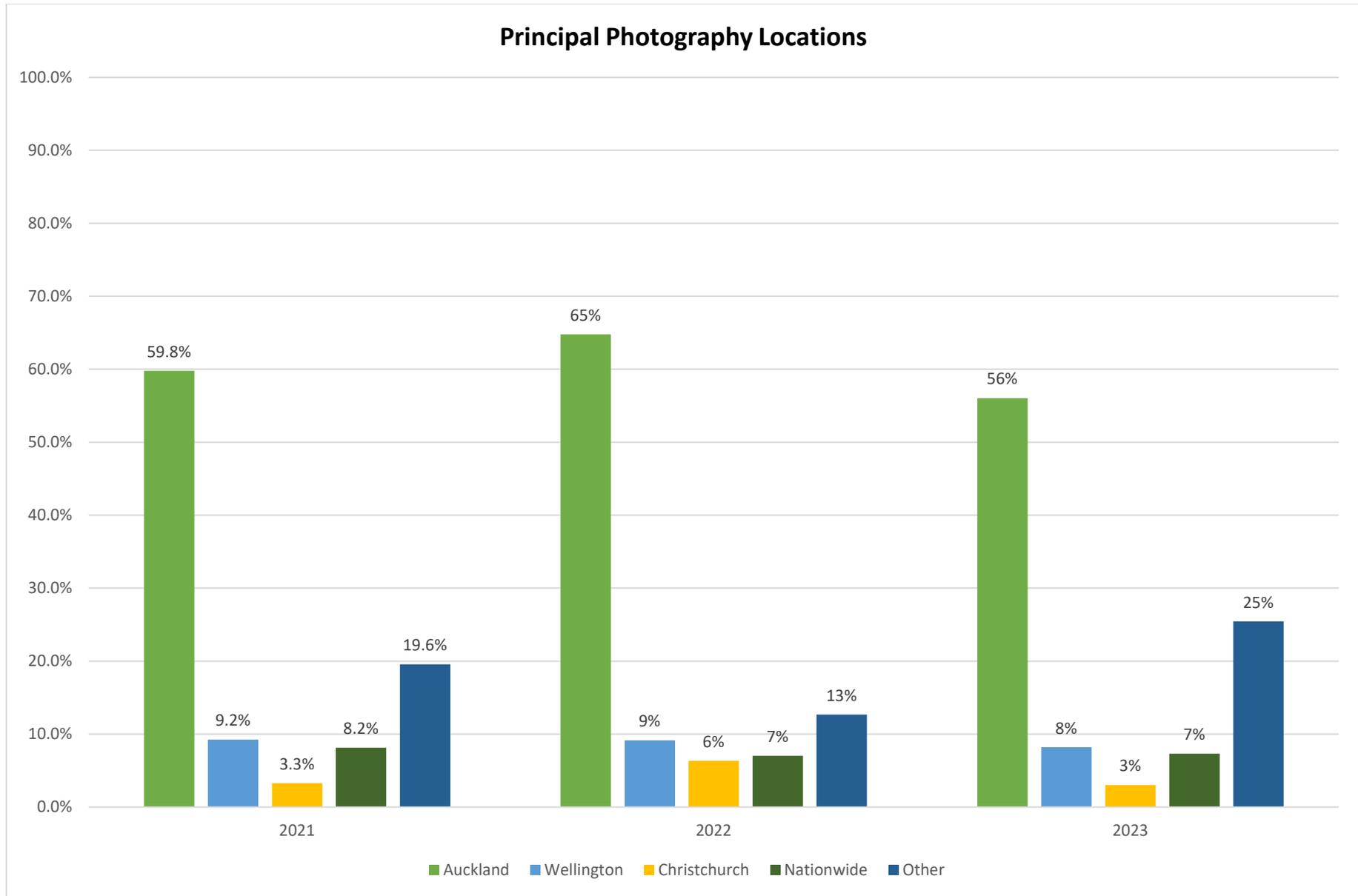
This is the third year that production companies were asked to report the main location of their principal photography. This information gives us a better measure of the spread of production activity across the motu. Auckland remained the number one location for principal photography, accounting for 56% of shooting, but this is a decrease on 2022's figure (65%). Principal photography is increasing in regional Aotearoa. For the first time since reporting began, one quarter (25%) of funded principal photography occurred in regional locations and not Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch, or nationwide¹¹. This is an increase on the 13% figure in 2022 and 19.6% in 2021. The remaining principal photography took place in Wellington (8%), nationwide (7%), and Christchurch (3%).

⁹ "Auckland Region". Stats NZ. 2018. Web. <https://www.stats.govt.nz/tools/2018-census-place-summaries/auckland-region>.

¹⁰ "Modelled Territorial Authority GDP". MBIE. 2021. Web. <https://www.mbie.govt.nz/business-and-employment/economic-development/regional-economic-development/modelled-territorial-authority-gross-domestic-product/modelled-territorial-authority-gdp-2021-release/>

¹¹ Nationwide refers to productions shooting across multiple locations.





NZ On Air's role: What We Will Do

New Zealanders connected through our stories and songs.

NZ On Air is an Autonomous Crown Entity established under the Broadcasting Act 1989. Our primary function is to reflect and develop New Zealand identity and culture by promoting (funding) programmes about Aotearoa New Zealand and New Zealand interests and promoting Māori language and Māori culture. We are also charged with supporting content of interest to women, youth, children, persons with disabilities, as well as minorities in the community (including ethnic minorities). To be creatively and culturally representative, funded content must ensure stories are told from a diverse range of perspectives, by people who have lived experience of those stories, and also includes adequate numbers of people from diverse backgrounds in key creative roles. There are many views and ideas in the industry around how to improve production team diversity. For our part, NZ On Air will:

- Continue to be guided by our mandate to promote Māori language and culture with regards to funding decisions and prioritising content made by Māori production personnel whenever possible.
- Keep consulting with the sector on issues that impact equity and affect diversity.
- Increase our research resourcing so that we can proactively address industry and audience needs while also continuing to make funding and strategy decisions based on sound data.
- Encourage industry guilds to liaise with their members and propose opportunities for positive change, particularly for issues of inequality and access.
- Keep providing accurate diversity information as part of the Diversity Report, so that trends can be identified, targeted initiatives can be introduced, and successes can be measured.
- Consider intersectionality and equity principles in our internal and external processes.
- Uplift the agency of diverse, minority, and marginal creatives when assessing and monitoring funded projects.
- Keep requiring equal employment opportunities for cast and crew.
- Continue to provide opportunities for funding from a wide range of production companies across increasing types of platforms.
- Continue prioritising projects from teams that demonstrate a commitment to diversity, particularly for projects aimed at targeted audiences. Over 2022 and 2023, we have focused on supporting storytelling by and for Pacific and Pan-Asian communities, as well as content that reaches and represents Tamariki and rangatahi.
- Encourage regional diversity by supporting projects with principal photography locations outside of Auckland.

Appendix- Methodology

This Report surveyed Scripted and Factual (Non-Fiction) production and development projects that were fully delivered by the end of June 2023.

The 2016 and 2017 Diversity Reports presented separate survey results for Television and Digital projects, which was in line with our old funding strategy. Following changes to the strategy from 2017 to become platform-neutral the reports now combine all Television and Digital survey results.

To ensure this data is comparable in this report, we have retrospectively merged the Television and Digital data from 2016 and 2017.

We asked respondents to provide gender and ethnicity information about the producers, directors and writers involved in the funded project. Researchers could be included as writers if they performed a significant writing role. Respondents also provided information on where the production company was based.

This report includes data from **203** projects (both Development and Production). As this report focuses on the volume of funded projects, an individual's gender and ethnic identity is counted towards each project they worked on. That means one person's data may be included multiple times within this data set. If a person indicated that they were both, for example, a producer and a director of a funded project, they were counted once in each category.

For the ethnicity section, respondents were asked to identify the top line ethnic groups each key personnel identified with: European, Māori, Pacific Peoples, Asian, Middle Eastern, Latin American or African (MELAA), or Other. They were then asked to specify the applicable ethnicities within these groups. For example, the European ethnic group includes NZ European/Pākehā, Australian, British, and other European ethnicities. These ethnic categorisations reflect those used by Statistics New Zealand. The survey is designed so that multiple ethnic groups can be selected for each key personnel. Where a person identifies with more than one ethnic group, they are counted in each applicable group. As a result, the proportions of people belonging to each ethnic group may not add up to 100 percent.

In line with Statistics NZ standards, this survey includes a third gender category, 'Gender diverse', to acknowledge people who do not identify with a binary man/woman gender. We are in the process of reevaluating the sex and gender categories used in our surveys to be more inclusive of gender diversity and non-conformity.

1. This methodology, which focuses on completed development and production projects, is different to the NZ Film Commission gender report, which measures development funding.