

Screen Diversity Report 2026

Kuia: For Those Who Came After, Day One Shorts 2026

Irirangi Te Motu
NZ On Air

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Introduction

An effective way to see Aotearoa's identity and culture reflected onscreen is to have diversity within the creative sectors that produce local media. Helping achieve this is part of NZ On Air's role. For the past 10 years, we have collected information about the gender and ethnic diversity of the above-the-line key personnel[1] of NZ On Air-funded Scripted and Non-fiction content, as well as the regional spread of their production companies.[2]

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 June 2026. In 2021, data collection was extended to the end of June to align this survey with the relevant financial year.

The 2026 Diversity Report includes survey responses from 125 Scripted and Factual/Non-fiction screen projects funded by NZ On Air and delivered between 1 July 2025 and 30 June 2026.

1 Above-the-line roles are directors, writers/researchers, and producers.

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

Highlights

Māori producers reached their highest recorded representation at **28%**, compared with **18%** in 2017. Māori directors represented **32%**, while Māori writers represented **27%**.

Female producers represented **62%** of producing roles and female writers **51%** of writing roles. Female director representation also increased across every genre between 2016 and 2026. The largest shift over the decade was in Drama/Comedy, increasing from **11**% to **57%.**

Production is becoming more geographically dispersed. Auckland remains the main centre, but its share of principal photography has fallen from a peak of **68%** in 2022 to **49%** in 2026, while "Other" locations increased from **17%** in 2021 to **38%** in 2026.

Directors were close to gender parity, at **51%** male and **49%** female. Since 2017, male representation has fallen by **12.5** percentage points while female representation has increased by **11** percentage points.

Producers of Funded Content

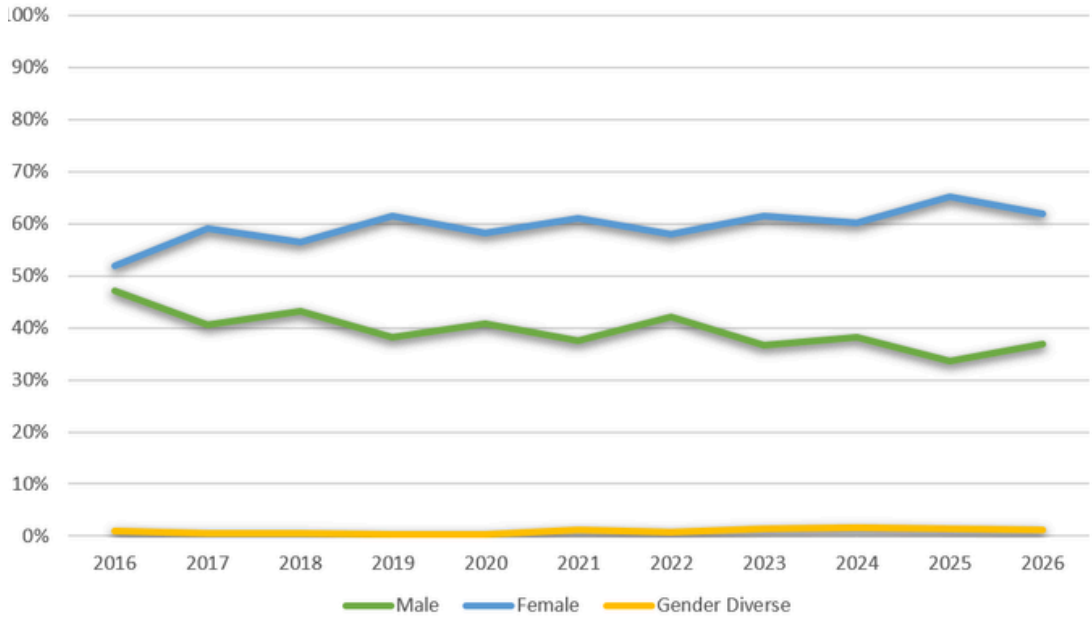
Gender

Our findings are based on survey responses from 271 producers.

Female producers outnumbered their male counterparts for the 11th consecutive year. They performed 62% of producing roles compared to 37% for men. Whilst this was lower than last year's 65% for female producers (albeit there were less responses to the survey last year), this is still an increase from 2024 (60%) and consistent with 2023 (62%).

Male producers remain steady at 37%, consistent with the last 11 years whereby the volume of male producers has reliably fluctuated between 34% and 40%.

Gender diverse producers remained at 1% which was a drop from 2% in 2024 but consistent with 2025. This is in line with the limited census data for gender diverse New Zealanders.[3]



3 Stats NZ.https://www.stats.govt.nz/news/2023-census-shows-1-in-20-adults-belong-to-aotearoa-new-zealands-lgbtiq-population/.
This data represents individuals who selected 'transgender' and 'intersex' in the 2023 Census, but these options do not reflect the entirety of the gender diverse population.

Producers of Funded Content

Ethnicity

Māori producers had their highest representation yet, accounting for 28% of this group, up from 18% in 2017 when reporting began. In 2025 they made up 24% and in 2023 27%. This is higher than the 20% population benchmark for Māori in New Zealand.[4]

The most well-represented ethnicity continues to be European, with creatives from this background making up 70% of funded producers. This is the highest representation since 2020, which saw 78% of producers identifying as European descent. This aligns with the census statistics, which show that 68% of the population are of European descent.[5]

Producers from Pacific backgrounds increased to 11% compared to last year's 7%, although is still lower than previous three years at 14% and 12% in 2024 and 2023. This year's figure is still higher than the population benchmark for Pacific peoples in Aotearoa New Zealand which stands at 9%. [6]

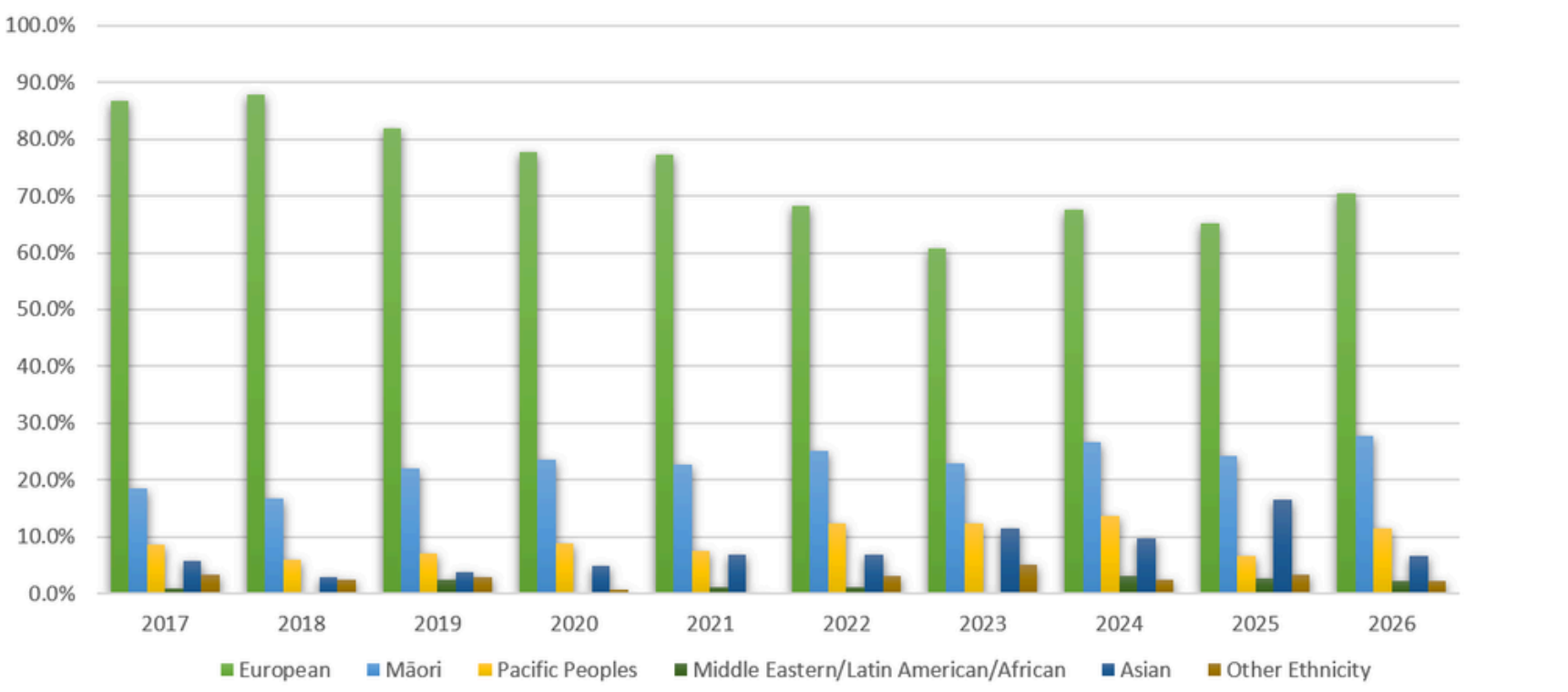
Producers from Middle Eastern, Latin American, or African (MELAA) backgrounds made up 2% of the group, marginally lower than the previous 3% in 2025. This result aligns with the census population figure for MELAA which is 2%.

Pan-Asian producers accounted for 7% of this group, but this is the lowest percentage since 2022. [7]

4 Stats NZ https://www.stats.govt.nz/infographics/people-of-maori-descent-living-in-aotearoa-new-zealand/.
5 Stats NZ https://tools.summaries.stats.govt.nz/ethnic-group/new-zealand-european
6 Stats NZ. https://tools.summaries.stats.govt.nz/ethnic-group/pacific-peoples
7 Stats NZ https://tools.summaries.stats.govt.nz/ethnic-group/middle-eastern-latin-american-african

Producers of Funded Content

Ethnicity



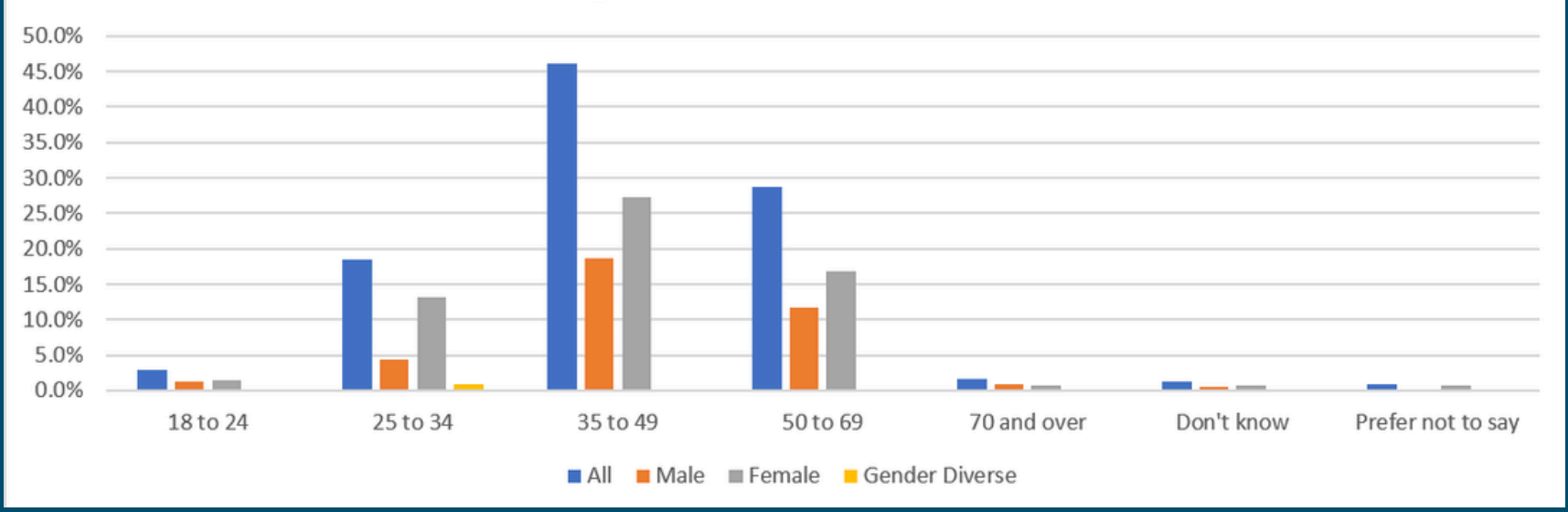
Producers of Funded Content

Age

Producers are concentrated in the 35–49 age group, which accounts for about 46% of all producers, making it by far the largest age category.

A further 29% of producers are aged 50–69, meaning roughly three-quarters of producers are aged 35–69. By comparison, around 18% are aged 25–34 and only about 3% are aged 18–24.

Very few producers are represented at either end of the age spectrum. Those aged 70+ account for only around 2%, while the youngest group (18–24) represents around 3%, indicating that producer representation is strongly centred in the middle-age brackets.



Directors of Funded Content

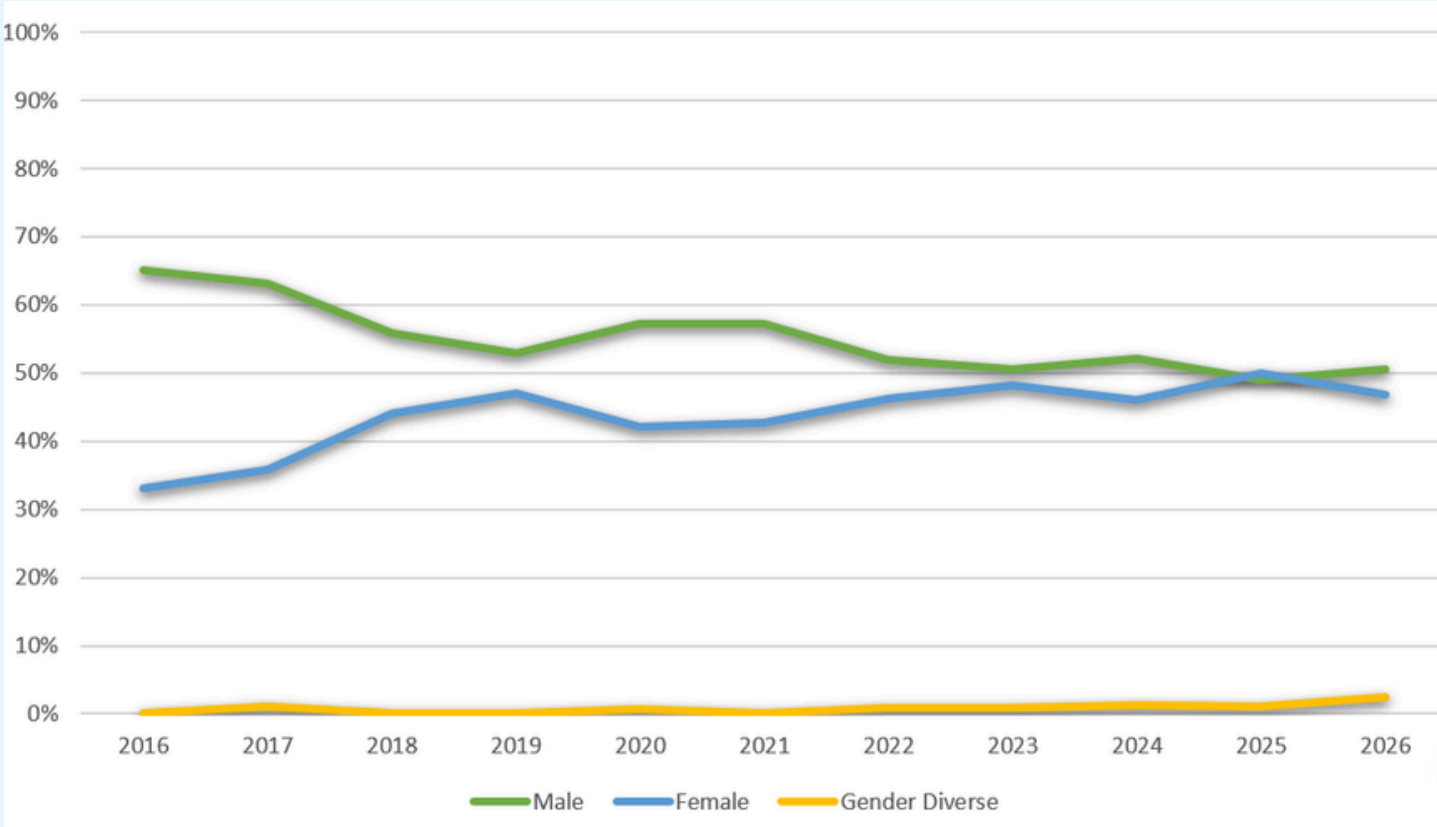
This year's survey included 162 directors.

Gender

For the first time since reporting began in 2016, we saw the highest number of gender diverse Directors at 4%.

Male Directors marginally outweighed female counterparts 51% to 49%.

Since 2017, male representation among directors has declined by 12.5 percentage points, while female representation has increased by 11 percentage points.



Directors of Funded Content

Ethnicity

MELAA representation reached its highest level since reporting began at 4%, reflecting growing diversity among directors.

64% of directors identified as European, down from 69% last year. However, this is down from 81% in 2017, reflecting the increasing ethnic diversity of the director's workforce.

Asian directors remained stable at 10% which is consistent with the last 5 years, but a steep increase since reporting first began where it was at 1%. However, this result still falls below the population benchmark for Asian New Zealanders, which is 17%.[8]

Māori representation remained consistent at 32% of directors in 2026, compared with 23% in 2017, indicating long-term growth. This was a slight drop from 34% in 2025.

Pacific representation among directors increased from 6% in 2025 to 13% in 2026 although this remained below the 15–18% seen in earlier years.

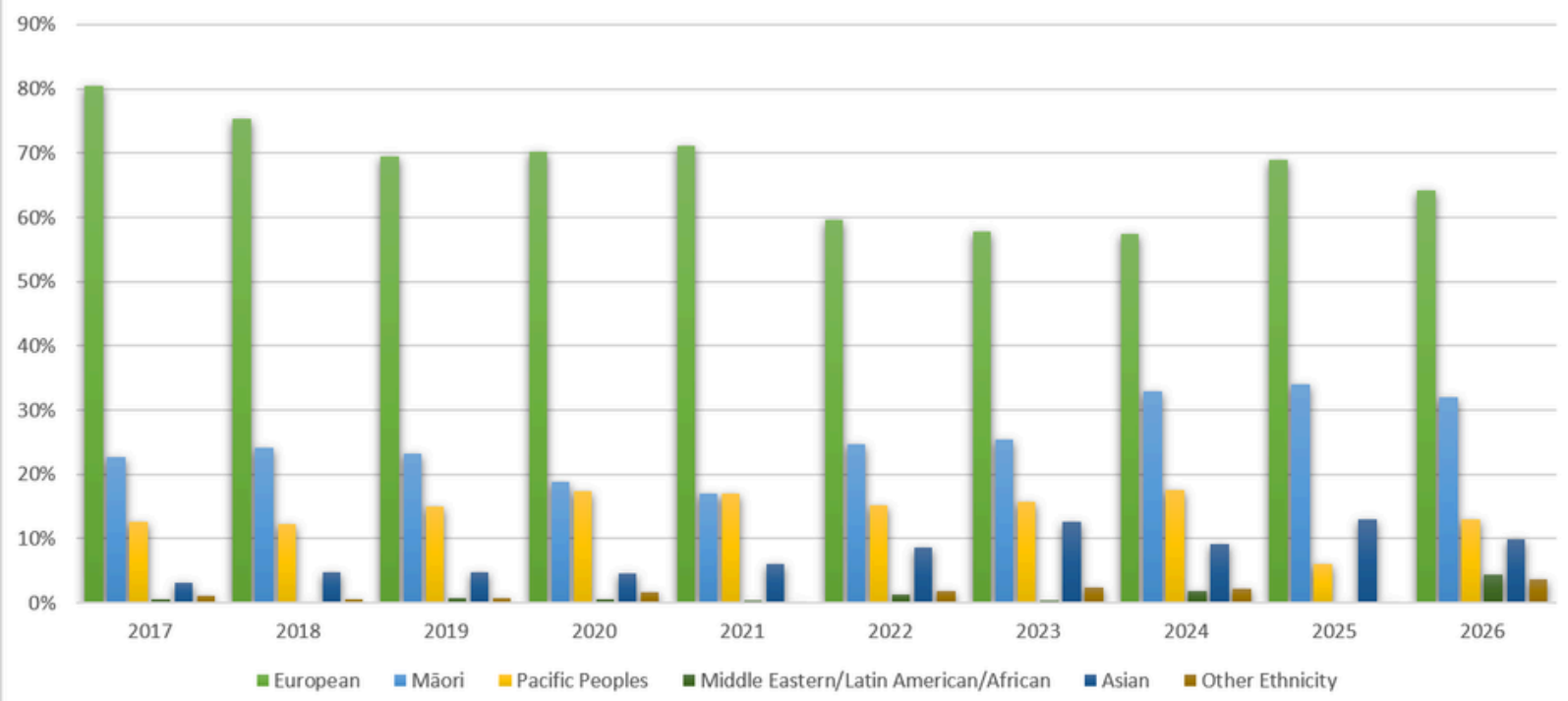
8 Stats NZ https://www.stats.govt.nz/infographics/detailed-ethnicity-infographics-from-2023-census/people-of-asian-ethnicities-living-in-aotearoa-new-zealand/



A Dollar to Dream, Cadness Street

Directors of Funded Content

Ethnicity



Directors of Funded Content

Genre by Gender Key Insights*

There has been a strong growth in female director representation

Female representation increased across all genres between 2016 and 2026, with the most significant gains in Drama/Comedy.

Children's programs reached gender parity

Whilst female directors increased from 29% to 51% over the decade, Male director representation declined from 66% to 46%, making 2026 the first year in which women became the majority group among directors in this genre.

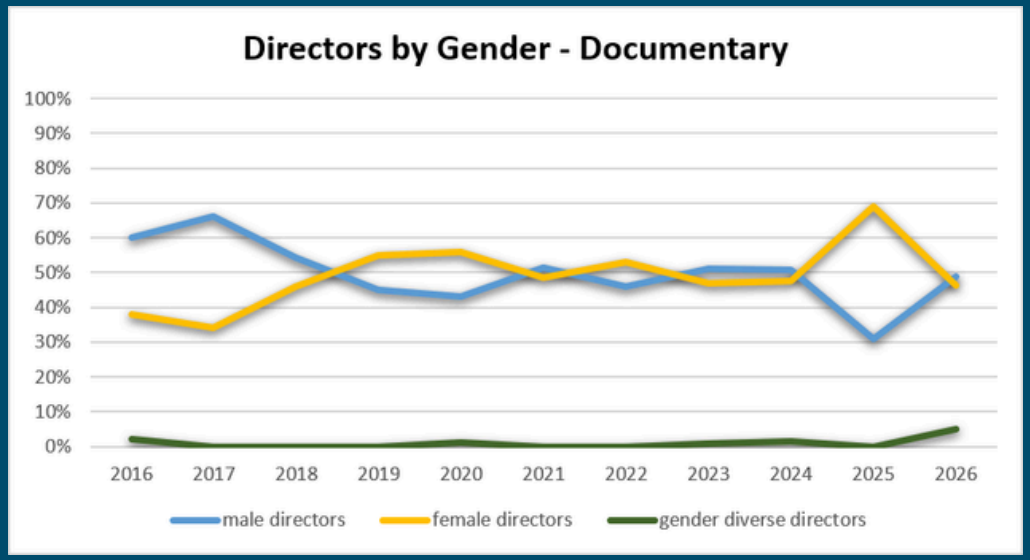
Male director representation declined across all genres between 2016 and 2026

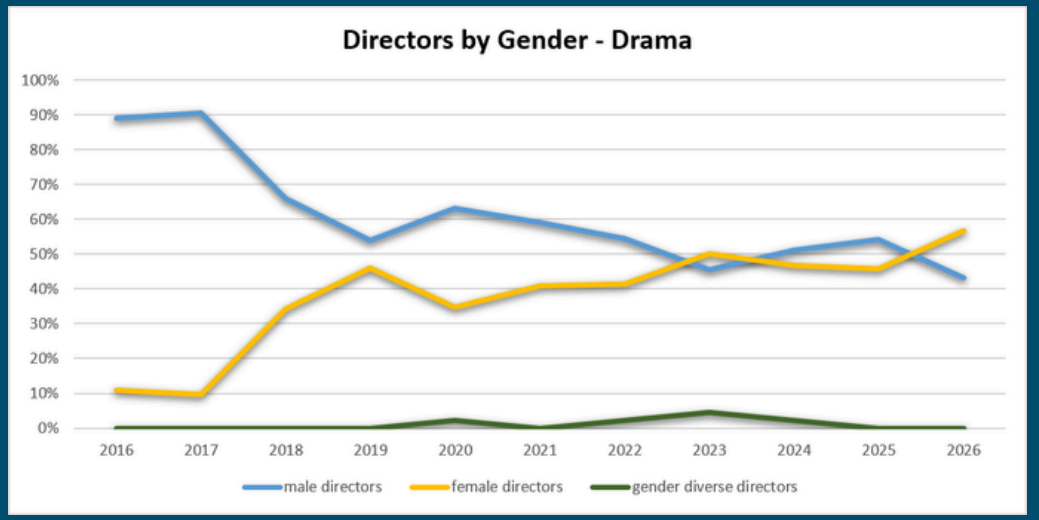
The most significant reduction occurring in Drama/Comedy (–46 percentage points), reflecting a broader shift toward gender-balanced directing opportunities.

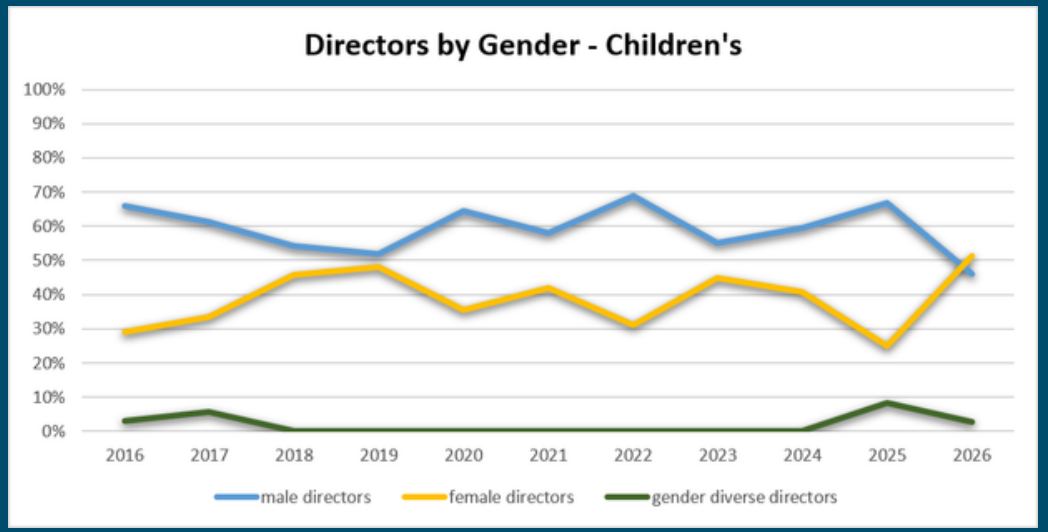
*Genres are categorised as Drama (incl. Comedy), Documentary and Children's (incl. Children's Drama)



A Small Town Scandal, Miss Scandal Limited


Directors by Gender - Documentary
100%
90%
80%
70%
60%
50%
40%
30%
20%
10%
0%
2016
2017
2018
2019
2020
2021
2022
2023
2024
2025
2026
male directors
female directors
gender diverse directors


Directors by Gender - Drama
100%
90%
80%
70%
60%
50%
40%
30%
20%
10%
0%
2016
2017
2018
2019
2020
2021
2022
2023
2024
2025
2026
male directors
female directors
gender diverse directors


Directors by Gender - Children's
100%
90%
80%
70%
60%
50%
40%
30%
20%
10%
0%
2016
2017
2018
2019
2020
2021
2022
2023
2024
2025
2026
male directors
female directors
gender diverse directors



400 Weddings and A Funeral,
Great Southern Television

Writers of Funded Content

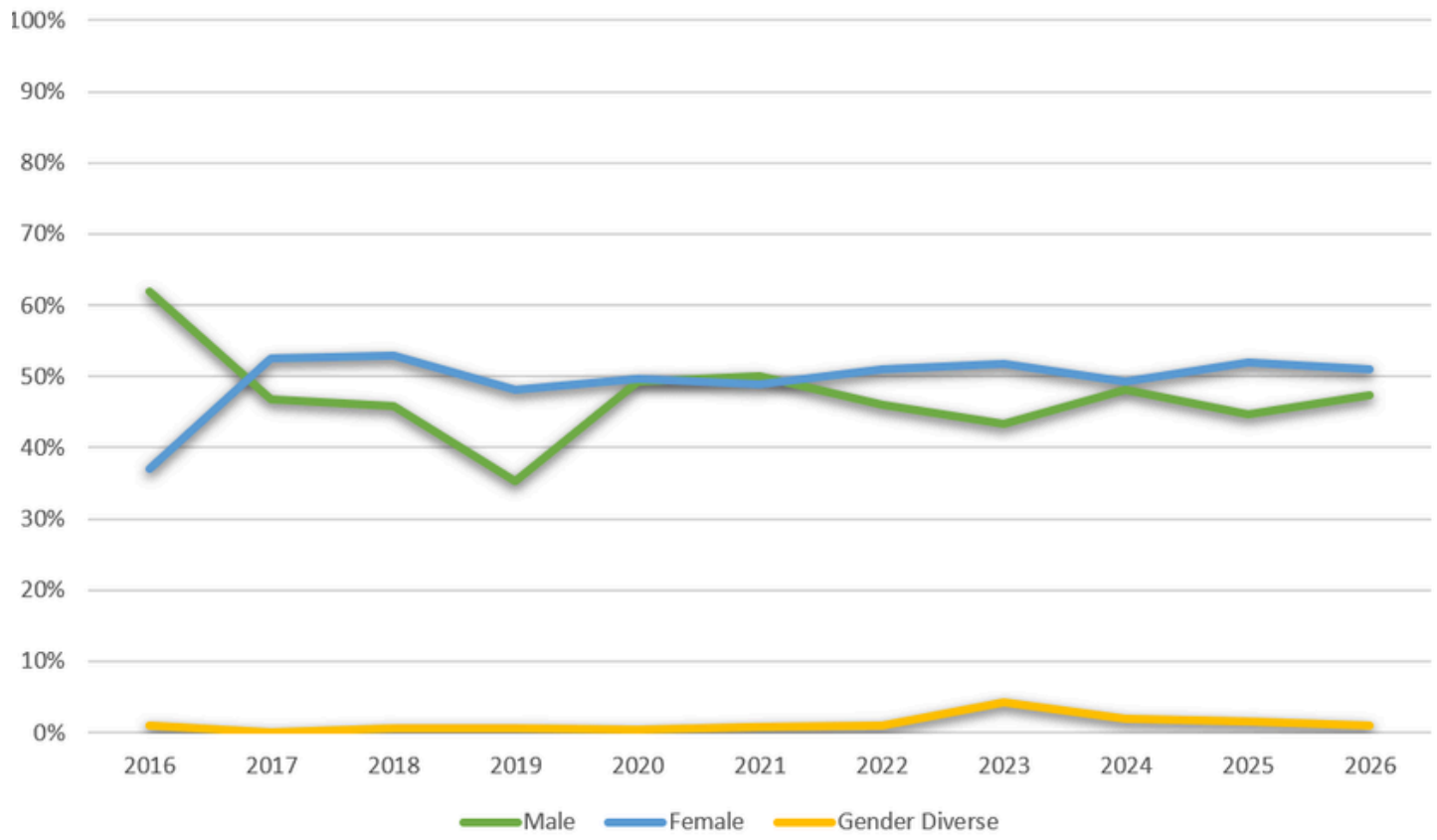
This year's survey included 192 writers.

Gender

Female writers narrowly outnumbered their male counterparts this year, accounting for 51% compared to 49% for men.

Female writers have outnumbered male writers by a small margin for every reporting year except 2021.

Gender diverse writers made up the remaining 1%, 1% lower than last year.



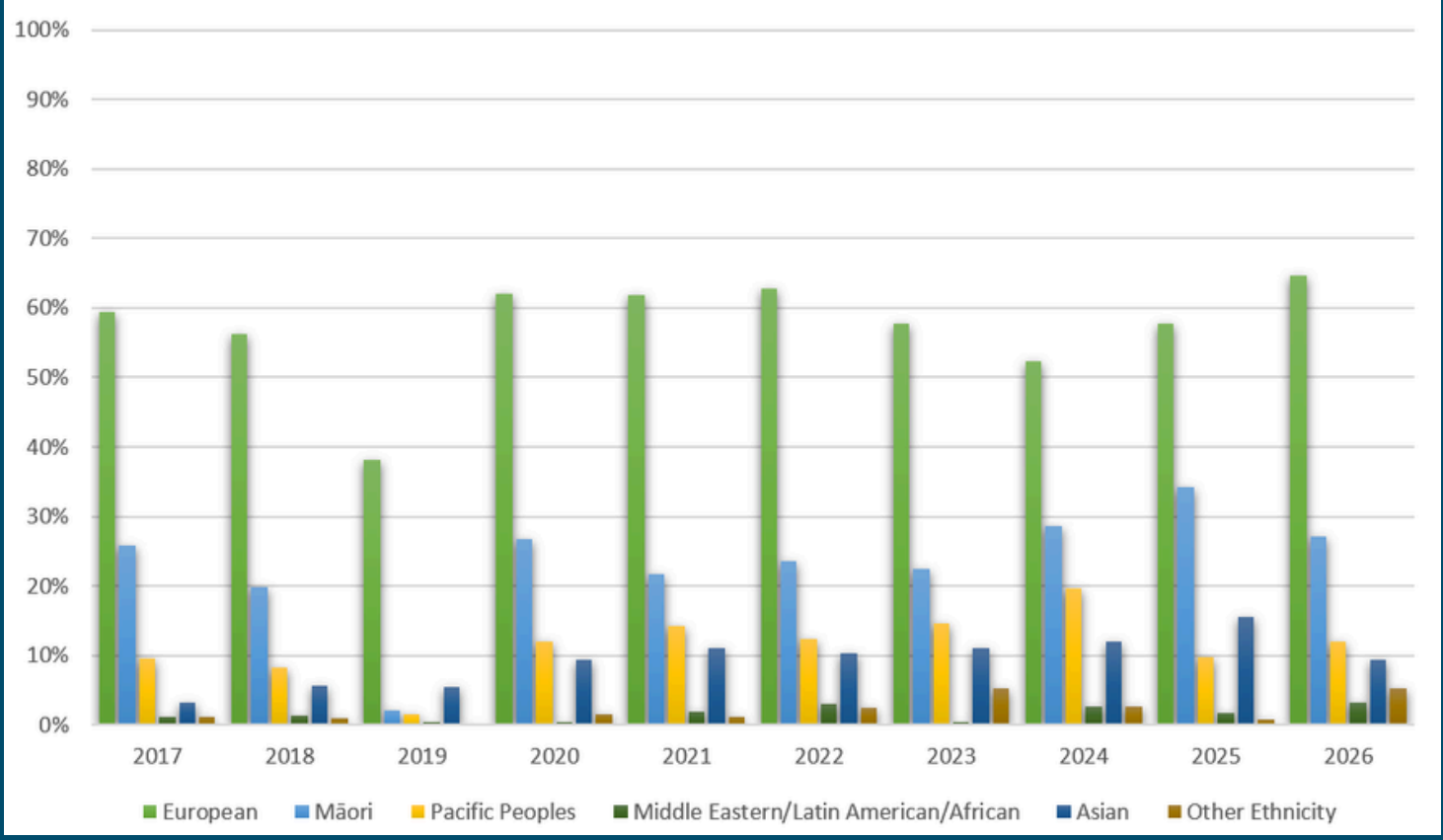
Writers of Funded Content

Ethnicity

European writers continued to represent the largest ethnic group, representing 65% of all survey respondents.

Māori writers accounted for 27% of writers, compared with 34% in 2024/25. Although this is a decrease of 7 percentage points, the recorded number of Māori writers increased from 42 to 52.

Pacific representation increased in both percentage and number. Pacific Peoples rose from 10% to 12%, while the recorded count increased from 12 to 23 writers.



Key Creatives

Key Creatives are Producers, Writers and Directors combined.

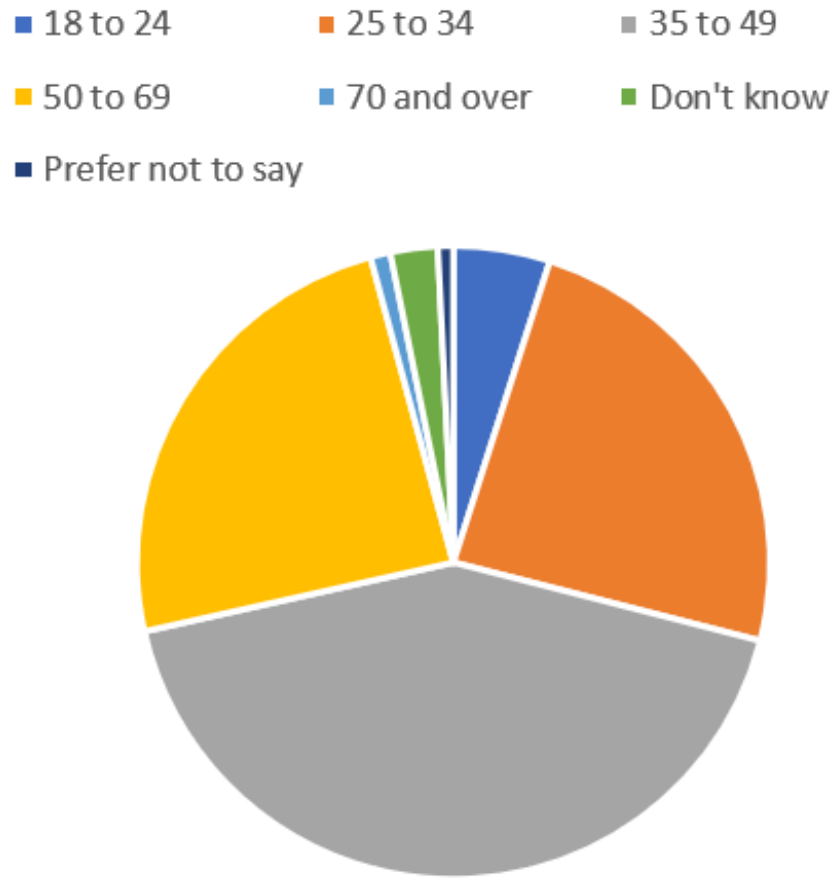
Age

The 35-49 band remains the most populated age band, with 43% of key creatives in that range.

24% of key creatives were between the ages of 25 and 34, followed closely by the 50-69 age band, which included 24% of key creatives.

The remaining key creatives were in the 18-24 age band (5%), 70 and over (1%), or answered ‘don’t know’ (2%).

2026 is the sixth 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 ages.[9] Participants could also state ‘Prefer not to say’ or ‘Don’t know’.[10]



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

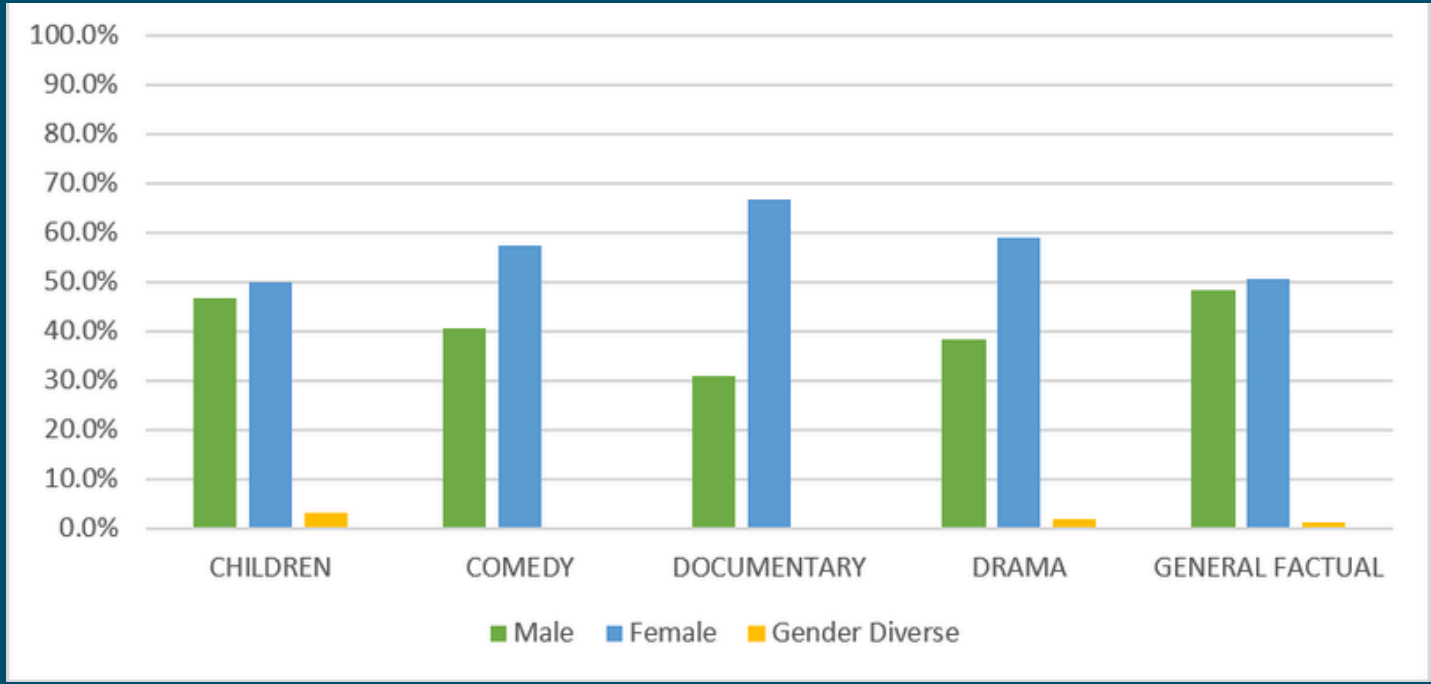
10 The ‘Don’t know’ option is in the instance that the production company submitting the survey did not know the age range of a key creative.

Key Creatives

Genre

Female key creatives outnumbered male key creatives across all five genres with the largest gender gap in Documentary and the smallest gender gap in General Factual/Non-fiction.

Gender Diverse creatives were represented in three genres – Children, Drama, and General Factual/Non-fiction.



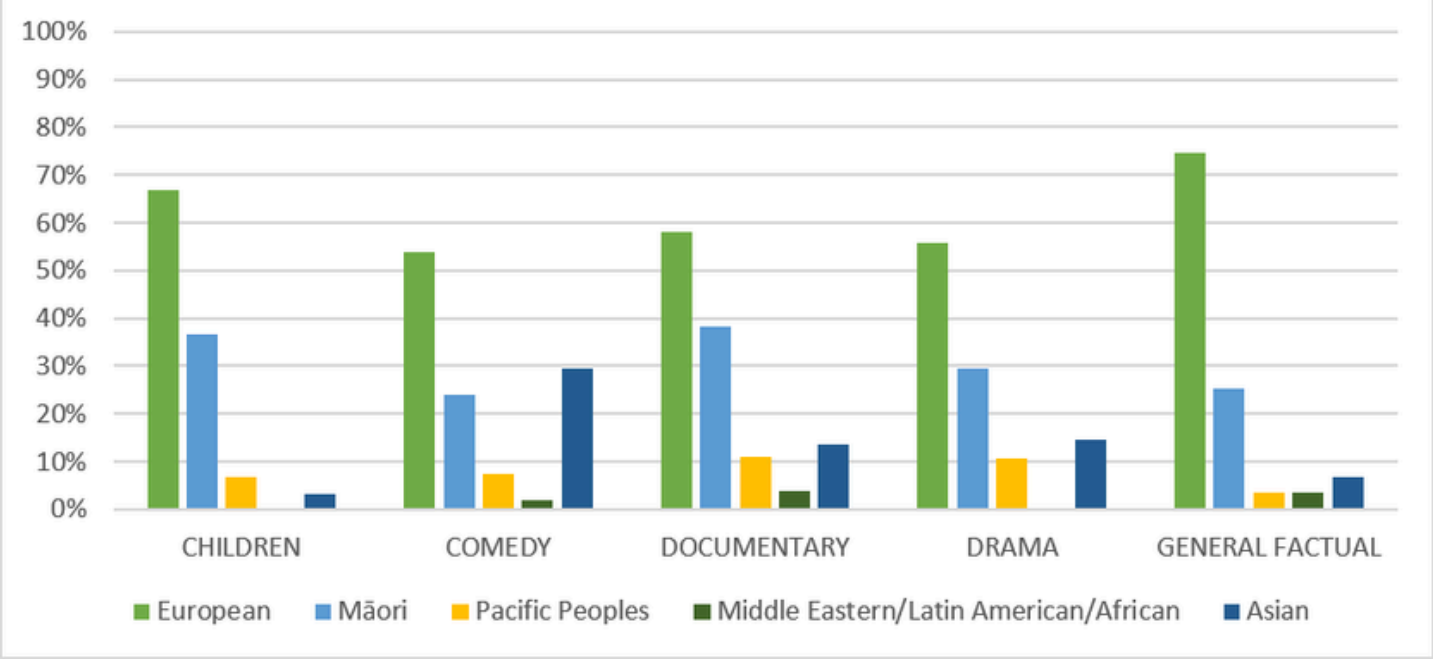
Key Creatives

Ethnicity

European representation is highest across every genre, ranging from approximately 53% in Comedy to 75% in General Factual.

Māori representation is strongest in Documentary and Children, at approximately 38% and 37% respectively. Māori representation is lowest in Comedy at less than 10%.

Pacific Peoples representation is relatively low across all genres, reaching its highest levels in Documentary and Drama at around 10–11%. It sits below 10% in Children, Comedy and General Factual.



Regional Spread of Production Companies

Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland remains the dominant production location, accounting for 70% of production companies in 2026. Its share has reduced from its peak of 92% in 2020, indicating some increased geographic spread over time.

Te Whanganui-a-Tara Wellington remains relatively stable, representing 10% of production companies in 2026.

Ōtautahi Christchurch continues to have a small share, at just 3% in 2026.



Ahikāroa 7, Kura Productions

Regional Spread of Principal Photography

Auckland remains the main filming location, accounting for 49% of principal photography in 2026. Auckland's share has declined overall, from 63% in 2021 and a peak of 68% in 2022 to 49% in 2026.

Wellington has remained relatively stable, accounting for 9% in 2026.

Christchurch and the broader New Zealand category remain small, at 1% and 3% respectively in 2026.

'Other' locations have grown considerably, increasing from 17% in 2021 to 38% in 2026, the highest level shown.



Bling, Hype and Heartbreak, Tavake Limited

NZ On Air's Role

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 local 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, while including 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.

NZ On Air's Role: What We Will Do

For our part, NZ On Air will:

· Continue to pursue research that supports evidence-led decision making and New Zealand audiences, particularly those outlined in Section 36c of the Broadcasting Act.

· Engage regularly with the sector and our stakeholders to understand and address equity and access issues.

· Strengthen the mana of diverse and underrepresented creatives through our assessment and monitoring frameworks.

· Continue to invest in initiatives that track sector and audience trends, inform targeted interventions, and measure progress over time.
One such project is Te Pae Matarau – The Everyone Project Aotearoa, which launched in July 2026. It is a survey tool that will report on the demographic makeup of the screen industry for above and below-the-line roles.[11]

· Continue to use Te Pae Tata, our Rautaki Māori, to guide our decision-making around Māori content and supporting Māori creators and audiences.

· Continue to require equal employment opportunities for all cast and crew members.

· Continue to encourage regional diversity by supporting projects with principal photography locations outside of Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland.

11 This is a collaboration with Te Māngai Pāho and the NZ Film Commission. It aims to provide a comprehensive and accurate picture of the industry by gathering data across a range of categories relating to age, gender, ethnicity, health, language, education and training, health, finances, and domestic situation. The survey is anonymous and all data remains owned by the individuals who provide it. Any reported data will be de-identified and aggregated.

Appendix - Methodology

This Report surveyed Scripted and Factual (Non-fiction) production and development projects that were fully delivered by the end of June 2026.

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 125 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 male/female binary. 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.

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



Mr Hugo's Little Library,
LITTLE LIBRARY
PRODUCTIONS NZ