



Ministry of Business,  
Innovation & Employment

# Community perceptions of migrants and immigration

December 2016



# OBJECTIVES AND SUMMARY

## OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this research is to build an evidence base and track community attitudes towards migrants and immigration. In particular, the research aims to understand awareness, knowledge and community perceptions of migrants, including:

- Overall attitudes towards migrants and migration.
- Specific differences in attitudes towards migrants from different countries.
- Attitudes surrounding migrant numbers.
- The contribution of migrants to New Zealand's productivity, culture and society.

## SUMMARY

### Overall views of migrants

Positivity surrounding migrants appears to be in decline. Just over half (53%) of New Zealanders' now hold a positive view of migrants, a significant decline from 58% in 2015.

Migrants from the United Kingdom and Australia are the most positively perceived (achieving average scores of 7.1 and 7 out of 10 respectively). Migrants from China and refugees are least positively perceived (both receiving an average score of 5.4 out of 10).

### Views on migrant numbers

New Zealanders' are now much more likely to say there should be fewer permanent migrants coming into New Zealand each year. Spontaneously 45% now feel this way - double that in 2015 (22%).

When informed of the government's migration target, an even greater proportion of New Zealanders feel fewer migrants should be able to come and live in New Zealand each year (49%). Again, a significant increase from the 31% who felt this way in 2015.

### Perceived positive and negative impacts of migration

New Zealanders have become less positive about the impacts of migration. This is manifested in two ways:

1. They are less likely to agree with statements about the perceived positive impacts of migration: the number agreeing that it's a good thing for any society to be made up of people from different races, religions and cultures was down 7 percentage points and the number agreeing that migrants make New Zealand more productive and innovative was down 10 percentage points.
2. They are less likely to disagree with statements about the perceived negative impacts of migration: the number disagreeing that immigration increases the level of crime in New Zealand was down 18 percentage points and the number disagreeing that allowing migrant cultures to thrive means that New Zealand's culture is weakened was down 13 percentage points.



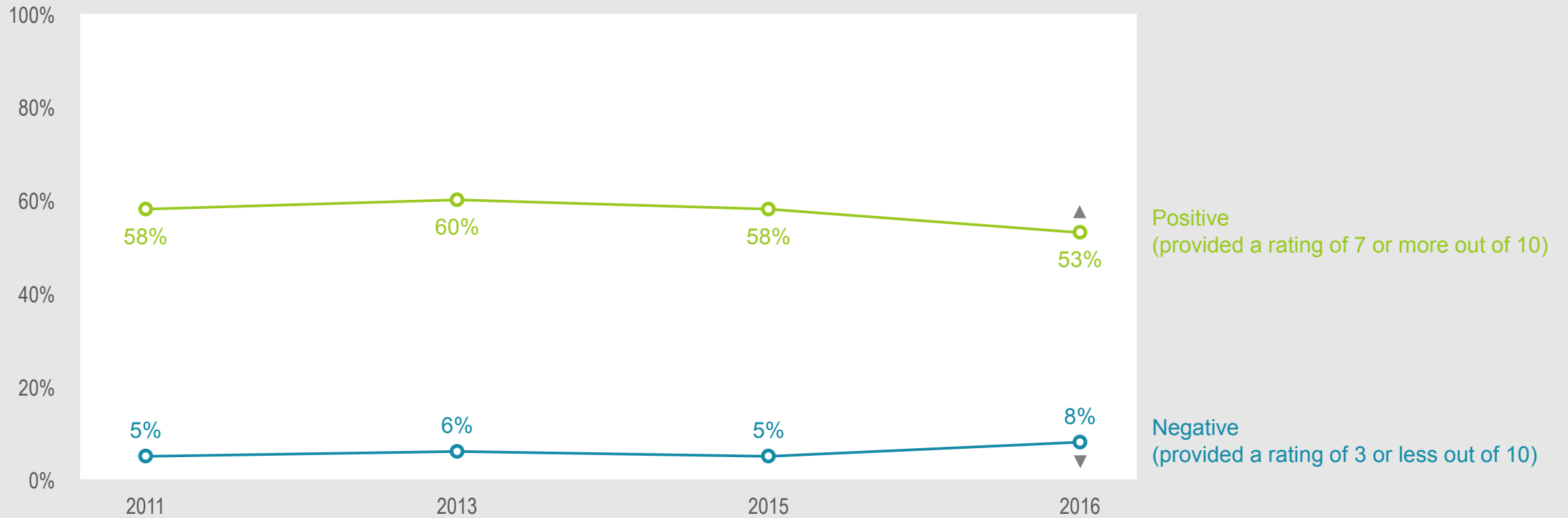
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# OVERALL VIEWS OF MIGRANTS



# OVERALL VIEWS OF MIGRANTS OVER TIME

Since 2015, views on migration have become less positive. In 2016 just over half of New Zealanders' held a positive view (seven or more out of ten) of migrants in general, a significant decline from the fifty-eight percent who held positive views in 2015.



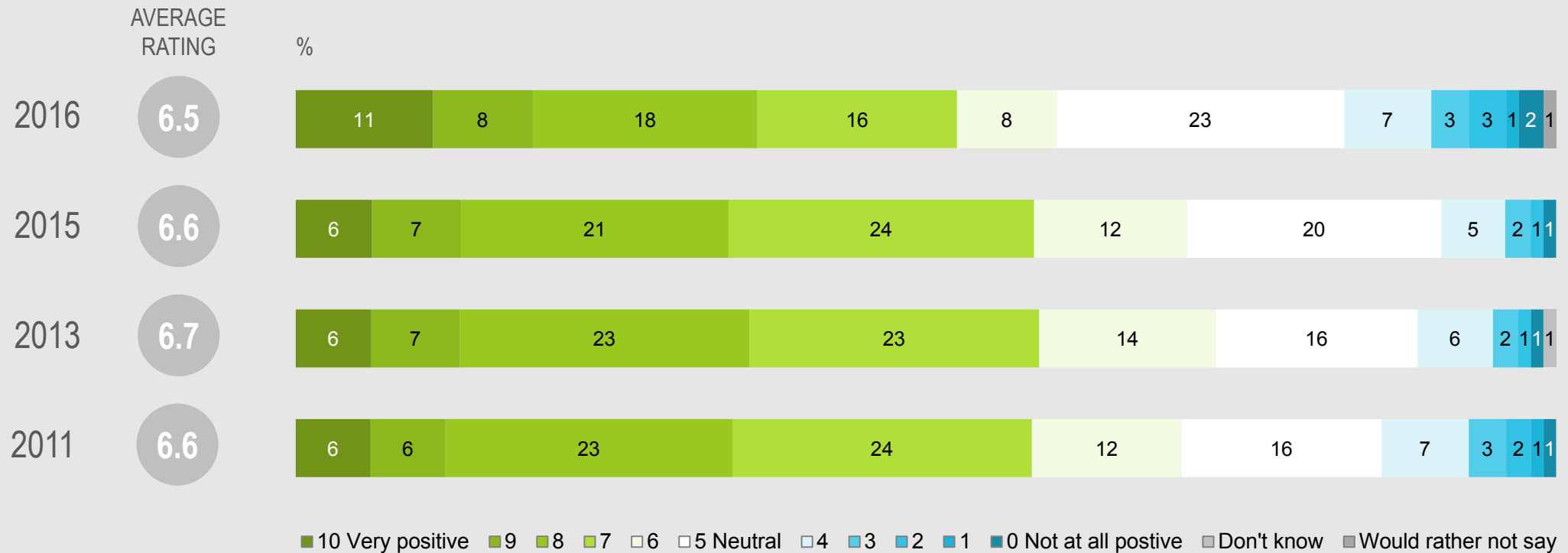
▲▼ Significantly higher/lower than 2015

Base: All respondents (2011 n=1,041, 2013 n=2,927, 2015 n=2,000, 2016 n=1,000)

Source: Q6 - Overall, if you were to describe your general views of migrants on a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 is not at all positive and 10 is very positive, what would your rating be?

# OVERALL VIEWS OF MIGRANTS

While the nett positive ratings have declined since last year, an increase in the proportion using the top end of the scale (10, very positive) means that the average is relatively similar to last years.

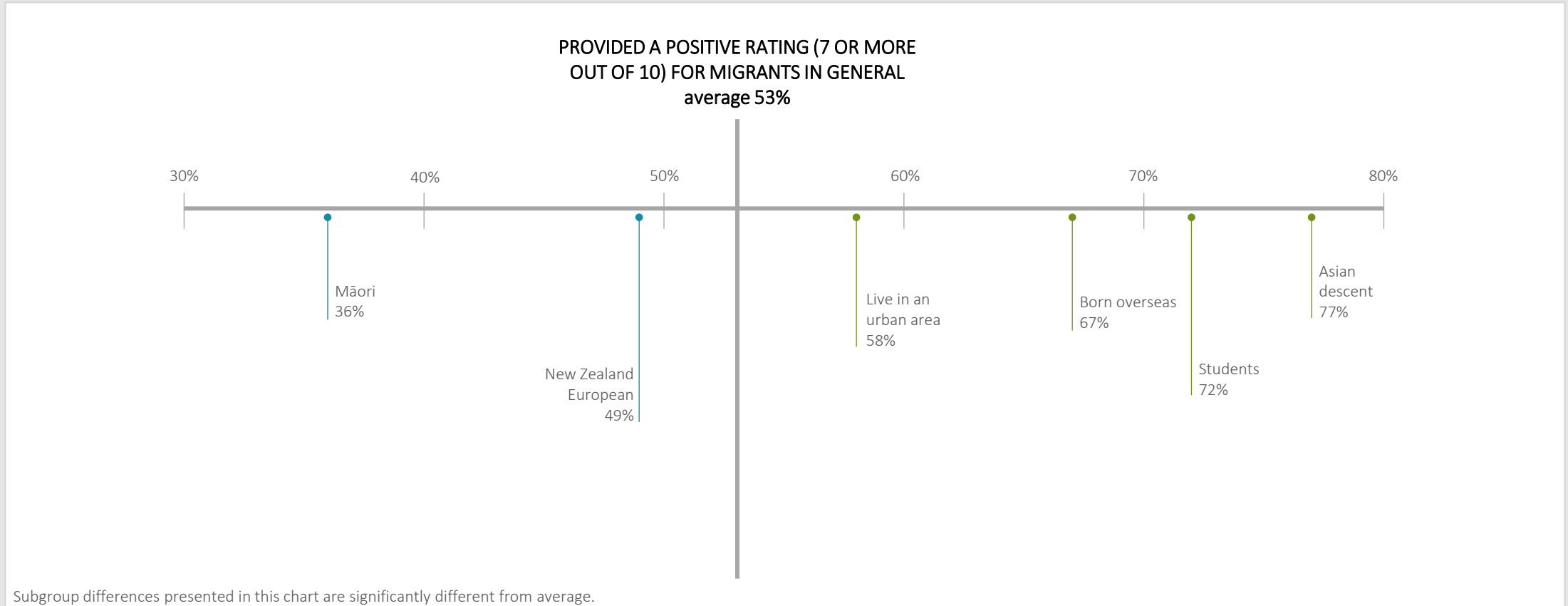


Base: All respondents (2011 n=1,041, 2013 n=2,927, 2015 n=2,000, 2016 n=1,000)

Source: Q6 - Overall, if you were to describe your general views of migrants on a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 is not at all positive and 10 is very positive, what would your rating be?

# VIEWS OF DIFFERENT MIGRANT GROUPS

Each of the following groups are more likely than average, to hold positive views of migrants in general: those who live in a urban area, those born overseas, students, and those of Asian descent.





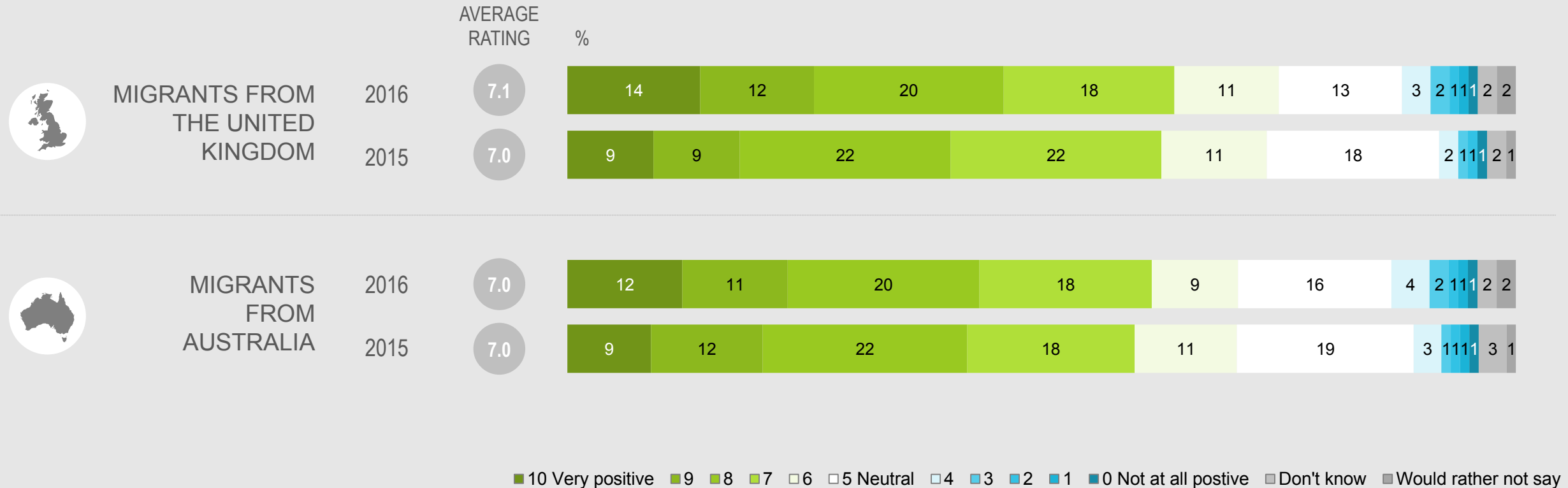
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# DIFFERENT MIGRANT GROUPS



# VIEWS OF DIFFERENT MIGRANT GROUPS

When asked about specific migrant groups, New Zealanders were most positive about migrants from the United Kingdom and Australia. These groups saw little movement in average ratings between 2015 and 2016.



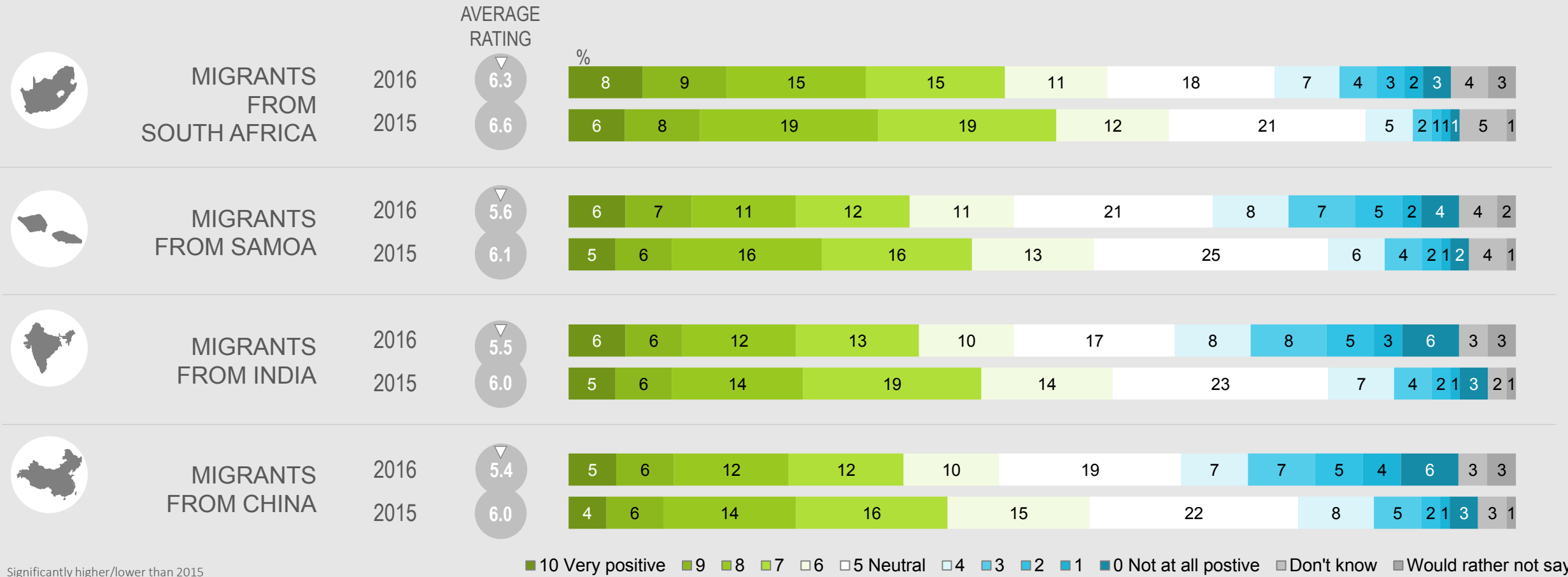
Base: All respondents (2015 n=2,000, 2016 n=1,000)

Source: Q7 - And now thinking about some specific migrant groups. Using the same scale from 0 to 10 where 0 is not at all positive and 10 is very positive, how would you rate your views of ...?



# VIEWS OF DIFFERENT MIGRANT GROUPS

Migrants from South Africa, Samoa, India and China received lower average ratings and all saw a decline when compared to 2015 average ratings.

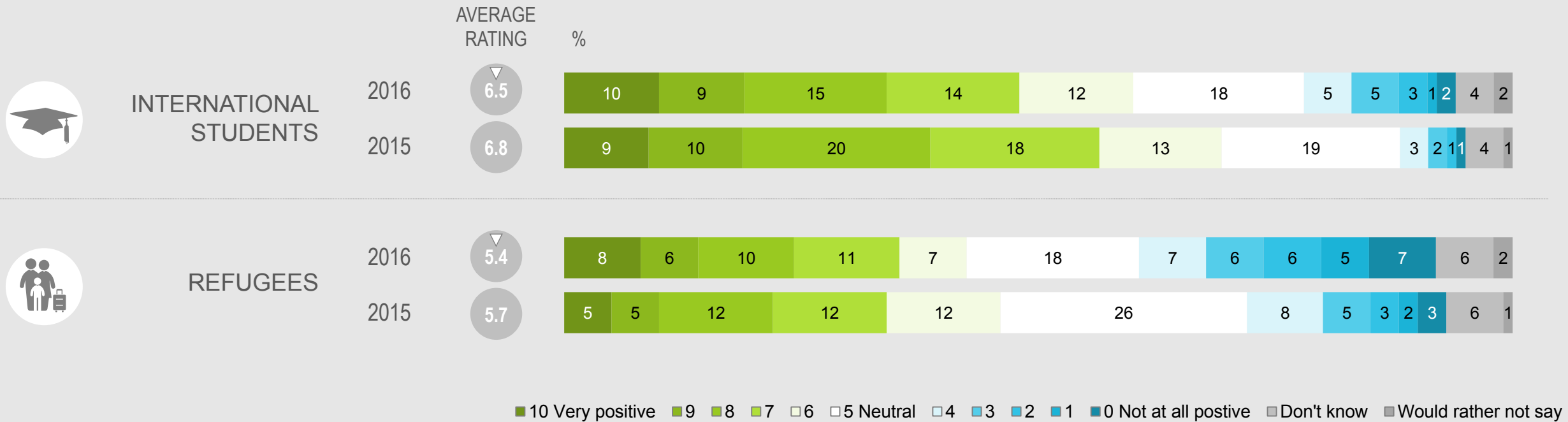


Base: All respondents (2015 n=2,000, 2016 n=1,000)

Source: Q7 - And now thinking about some specific migrant groups. Using the same scale from 0 to 10 where 0 is not at all positive and 10 is very positive, how would you rate your views of ...?

# VIEWS OF DIFFERENT MIGRANT GROUPS

Average ratings of international students and refugees have also declined significantly since 2015.



△▽ Significantly higher/lower than 2015

Base: All respondents (2015 n=2,000, 2016 n=1,000)

Source: Q7 - And now thinking about some specific migrant groups. Using the same scale from 0 to 10 where 0 is not at all positive and 10 is very positive, how would you rate your views of ...?



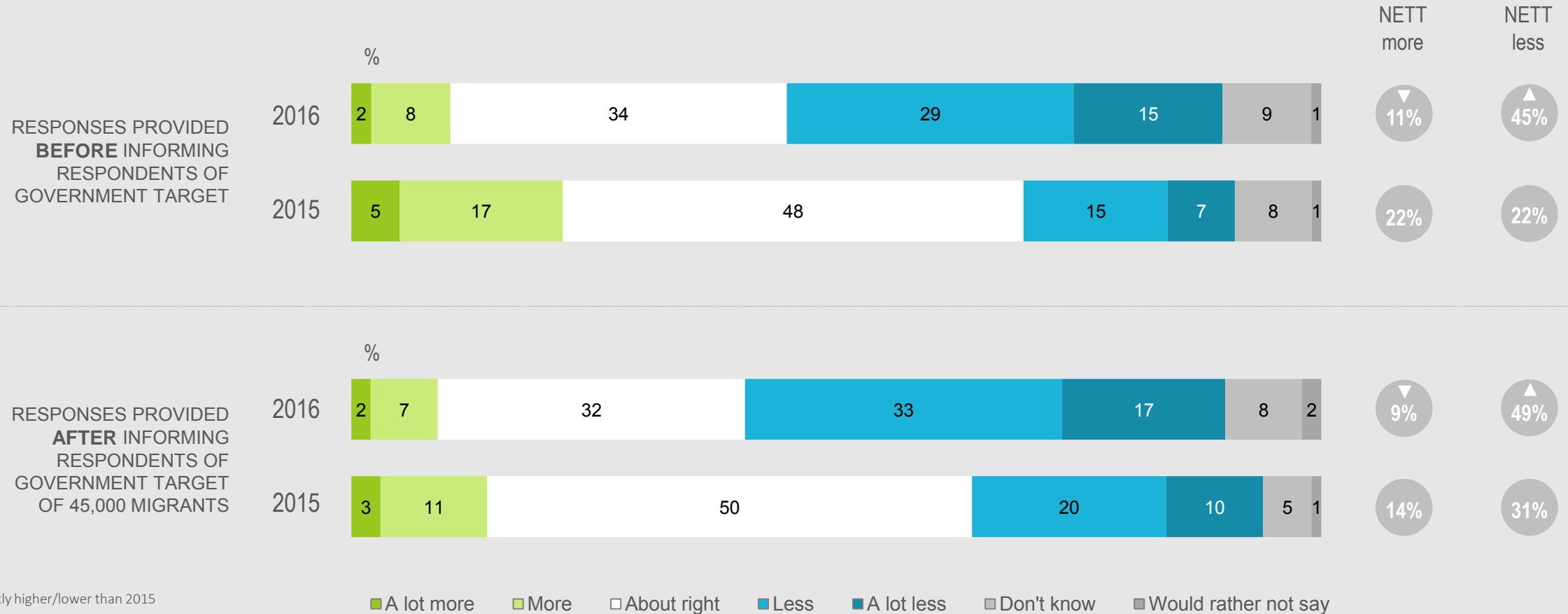
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# MIGRANT NUMBERS



# VIEWS ON MIGRANT NUMBERS

Nearly half (45% spontaneous and 49% informed) of all New Zealanders said they feel fewer migrants should be allowed to come and live in New Zealand permanently each year. This is a marked shift from the 2015 finding (22% spontaneous and 31% informed).



Base: All respondents (2015 n=2,000, 2016 n=1,000)

Source: Q8 - Thinking about the number of migrants who come and live in New Zealand permanently, do you believe the government should let less migrants in, more migrants or is the number about right? Q9 - Around one in four people living in New Zealand were born overseas. The government's current policy is to allow about 45,000 migrants to come and live in New Zealand permanently each year. We are interested in knowing how, if at all, this information affects your opinion on how many migrants should be allowed into New Zealand. Do you believe the government should let less migrants in, more migrants, or do you feel that 45,000 is about right?

# VIEWS ON MIGRANT NUMBERS

After being asked their opinion about the number of migrants coming and living in New Zealand permanently each year, respondents were told the government's actual migration target. As in 2015, there was a negative shift in opinion following the provision of information, however this wasn't to the same extent as the shift seen in 2015. Possibly because fewer people held a positive starting position in 2016.

**POSITIVE**  
shift in opinion



**NEGATIVE**  
shift in opinion

## 2016

### BEFORE

		MORE	ABOUT RIGHT	LESS
AFTER	TOTAL	12%	37%	51%
	MORE	8%	1%	*
	ABOUT RIGHT	4%	28%	3%
	LESS	*	8%	47%

## 2015

### BEFORE

		MORE	ABOUT RIGHT	LESS
AFTER	TOTAL	24%	52%	24%
	MORE	13%	2%	*
	ABOUT RIGHT	10%	39%	4%
	LESS	1%	11%	20%

knowing target makes views on migrant numbers MORE positive

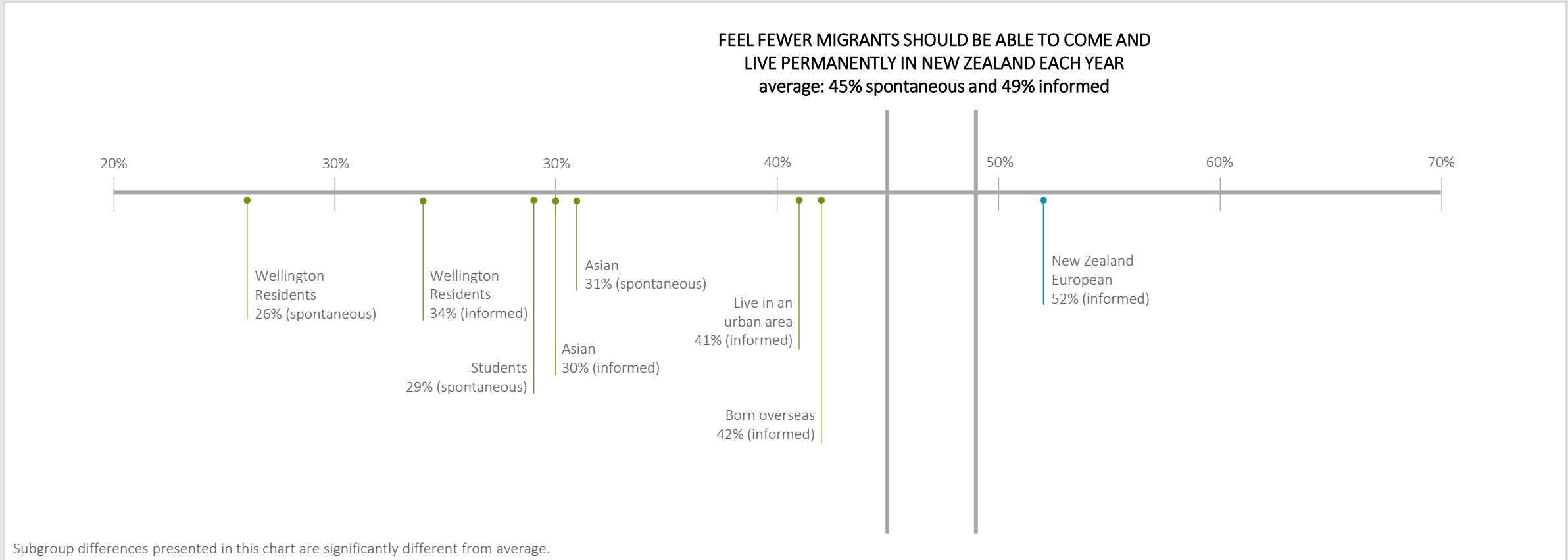
knowing target makes views on migrant numbers LESS positive

Base: All respondents excluding those who said don't know or chose not to answer (2015 n=1,757, 2016 n=869)

Source: Q8 - Thinking about the number of migrants who come and live in New Zealand permanently, do you believe the government should let less migrants in, more migrants or is the number about right? Q9 - Around one in four people living in New Zealand were born overseas. The government's current policy is to allow about 45,000 migrants to come and live in New Zealand permanently each year. We are interested in knowing how, if at all, this information affects your opinion on how many migrants should be allowed into New Zealand. Do you believe the government should let less migrants in, more migrants, or do you feel that 45,000 is about right?

# VIEWS OF DIFFERENT MIGRANT GROUPS

New Zealand Europeans are more likely than average to feel fewer migrants should be allowed to come and live permanently in New Zealand each year.





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# PERCEIVED POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE IMPACTS OF MIGRATION

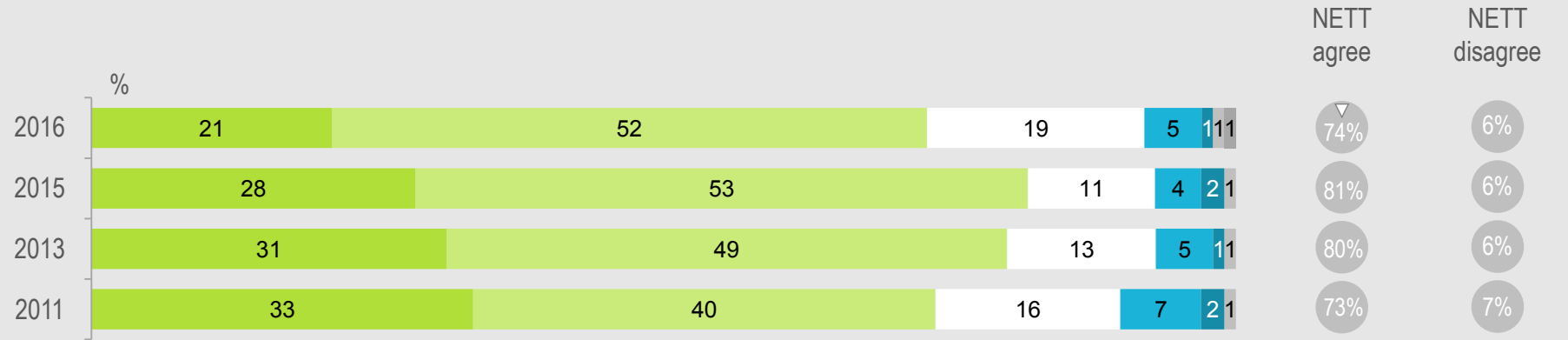


# PERCEIVED POSITIVE IMPACTS OF MIGRATION

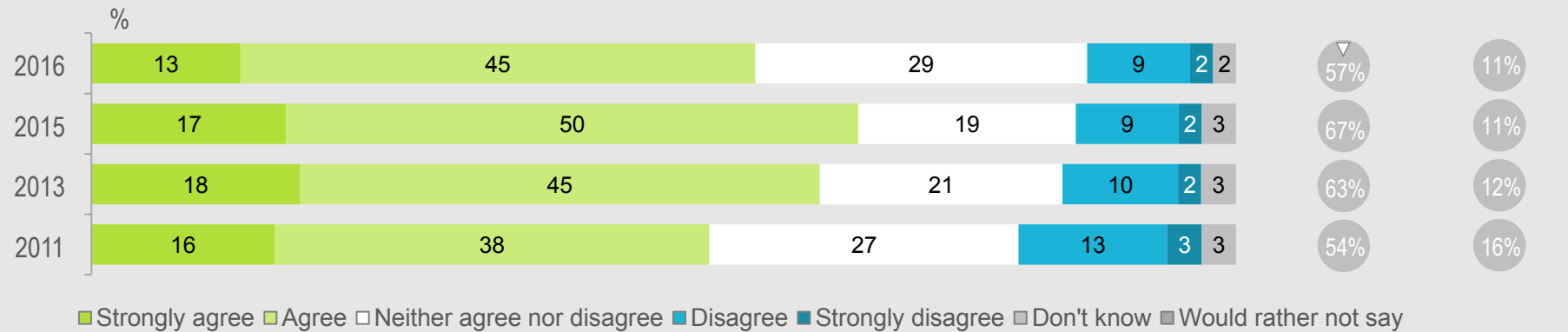
Fewer New Zealanders now believe 'it's a good thing for any society to be made up of people from different races, religions and cultures' and 'migrants make New Zealand more productive and innovative'.



IT IS A GOOD THING FOR ANY SOCIETY TO BE MADE UP OF PEOPLE FROM DIFFERENT RACES, RELIGIONS AND CULTURES



MIGRANTS MAKE NEW ZEALAND MORE PRODUCTIVE AND INNOVATIVE



△▽ Significantly higher/lower than 2015

Base: All respondents (2011 n=1,041, 2013 n=2,927, 2015 n=2,000, 2016 n=1,000)  
 Source: Q4 - Below are some general statements that some people have made about migrants. To what extent you agree or disagree with each statement?

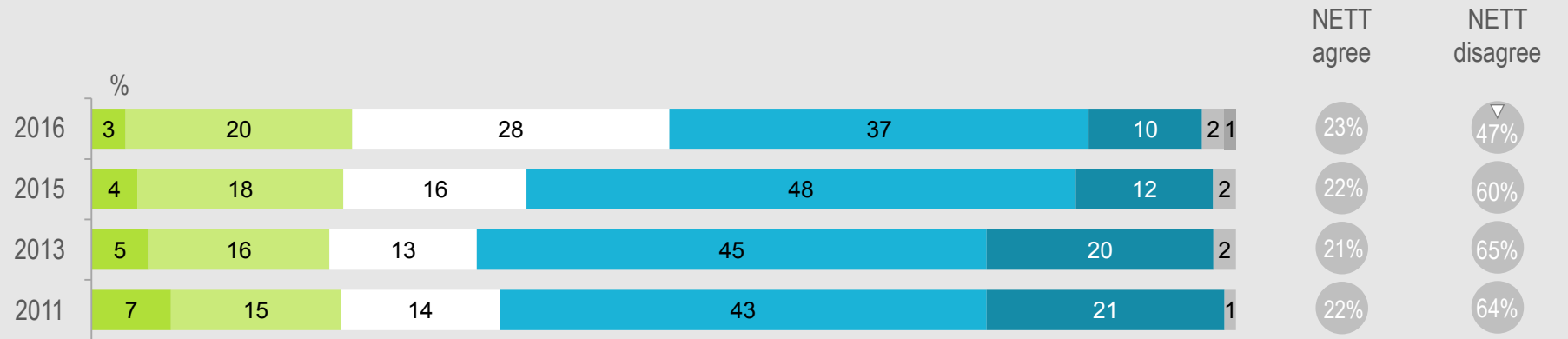


# PERCEIVED NEGATIVE IMPACTS OF MIGRATION

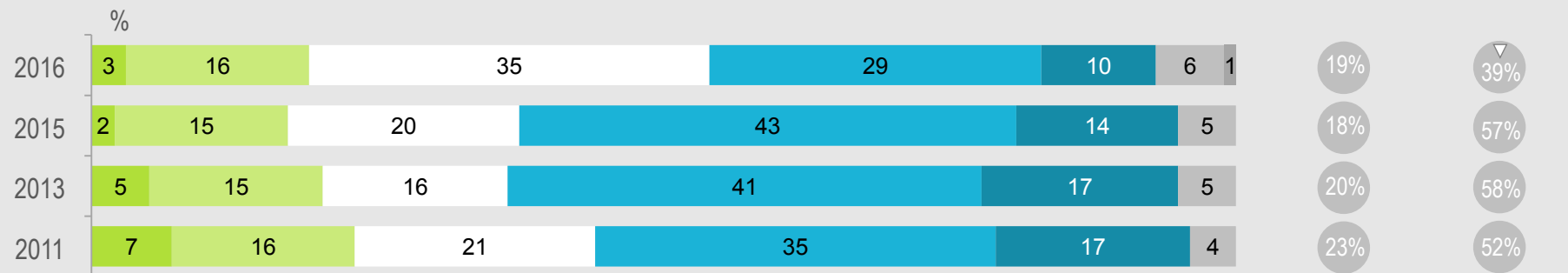
While little movement is evident in levels of agreement with the following perceived negative impacts of migration, a significant decline can be seen in the proportion of New Zealanders who **disagree** that ‘allowing migrant cultures to thrive means that New Zealand's culture is weakened’ and ‘immigration increases the level of crime in New Zealand’ choosing instead to remain neutral.



ALLOWING MIGRANT CULTURES TO THRIVE MEANS THAT NEW ZEALAND'S CULTURE IS WEAKENED



IMMIGRATION INCREASES THE LEVEL OF CRIME IN NEW ZEALAND



△ Significantly higher than 2015
 ▽ Significantly lower than 2015

■ Strongly agree
 ■ Agree
 ■ Neither agree nor disagree
 ■ Disagree
 ■ Strongly disagree
 ■ Don't know
 ■ Would rather not say

Base: All respondents (2011 n=1,041, 2013 n=2,927, 2015 n=2,000, 2016 n=1,000)

Source: Q4 - Below are some general statements that some people have made about migrants. To what extent you agree or disagree with each statement?



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# APPENDIX



## METHODOLOGY

### 2011 and 2013

The Electoral Roll was used to sample New Zealanders (matching them to publicly available telephone numbers). Respondents received a letter inviting them to complete the survey online and non-respondents were asked to take part in a telephone interview.

### 2015

A two stage mixed method approach was undertaken as it was no longer possible to use the Electoral Roll as a sampling frame. Stage one consisted of a random digit dialling telephone survey while stage two was an online (panel) quota sampling survey.

### 2016

Analysis was carried out on the existing questionnaire to determine a subset of key questions which could be used to track movement in attitudes in 2016 and 2017. The resulting subset of questions was placed on Colmar Brunton's fortnightly omnibus online survey (quota sampling was used to ensure respondents were representative of the New Zealand population aged 18 and over).

## ANALYSIS

### Weighting

Corrective weighting was applied to ensure the profile of the final sample represented that of the New Zealand population (aged 18 and over). Weighting targets were set on age within gender, region, ethnicity, and household income.

### Margin of error

Every survey has a margin of error as a result of interviewing a sample of the population as opposed to everyone. The margin of error for the total base size of 1,000 respondents is up to 3.1 percentage points. This means we can be 95% confident that the true value of any survey finding falls within this margin of error.

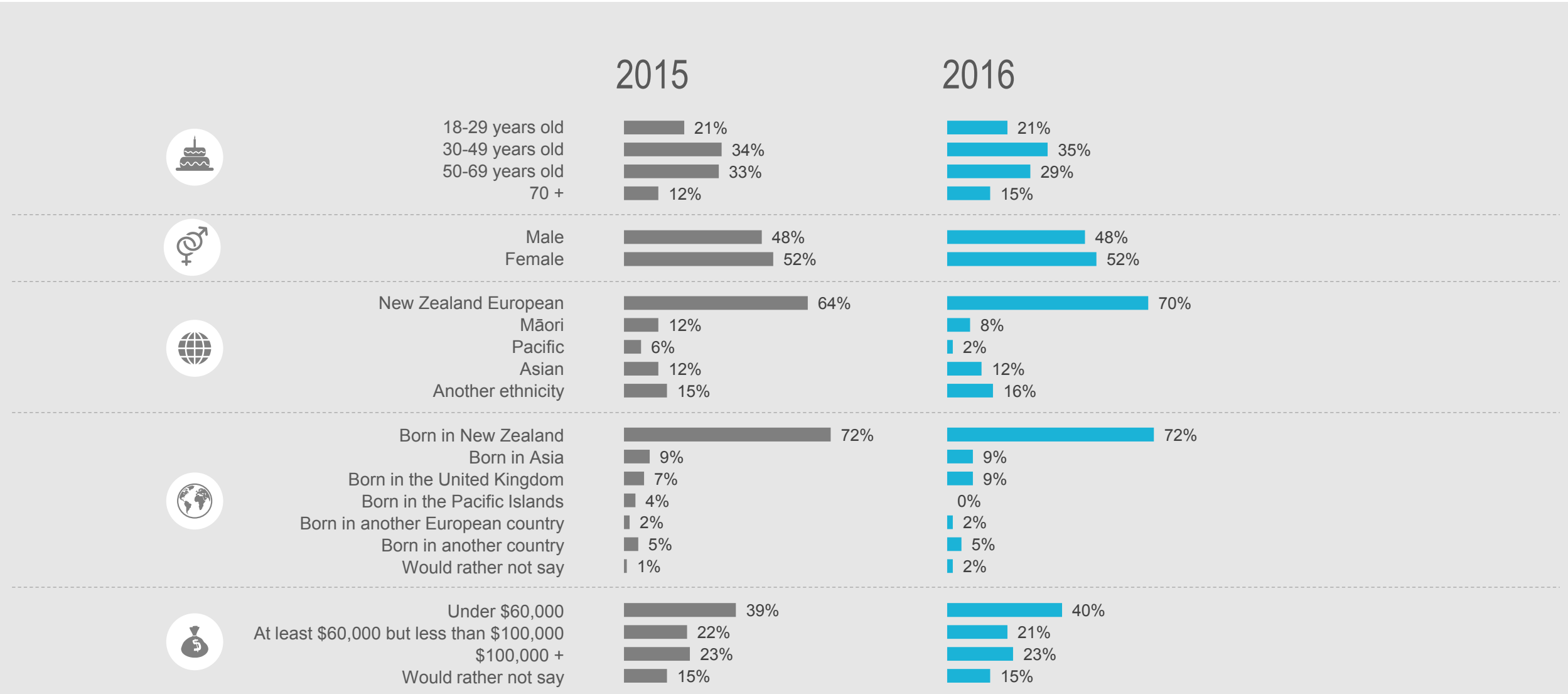
### Comparisons with previous results

Comparisons are made between 2011, 2013, 2015 and 2016. While changes in the sampling approach mean these comparisons should be treated with some caution, the profiles of the samples are broadly consistent, and we feel the research provide useful insight into how New Zealanders' perceptions of migrants are evolving.

### Significant differences

The report highlights any statistically significant differences across the surveys. The report also highlights demographic differences which are both statistically significant, and of note, when compared to the average response for all adults answering that specific question.

# SAMPLE PROFILE



Base: All respondents (2015 n=2,000, 2016 n=1,000)