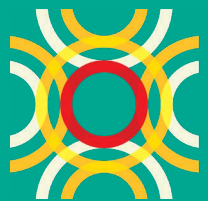


Gender and sexual identity

A Special Report Based on the 2023 Census



Rangahau
Aotearoa

Research
New Zealand

Introduction

The 2023 Census was the first to ask everyone in Aotearoa New Zealand about their gender, sexual identity, and whether they have any variations of sex characteristics (also known as intersex status). See the end of this report for some important definitions.



Why were the new gender and sexual identity questions introduced?

The collection of accurate data is important for statistical, policy, and research purposes. The previous gender question did **not** reflect best practice in terms of collecting data on gender and sex diversity.

Consequently, Statistics New Zealand developed a set of new standards for the best way to collect this data. It recommends these standards are **adopted** by government agencies and other data gatherers around Aotearoa New Zealand.

At the time the content for the Census was finalised, a Statistics New Zealand spokesperson said, *“People’s sense of their gender and sexual identity is really important to them and can impact on their lives and experiences. The Census touches everyone and will provide a detailed picture of how people with diverse genders and sexual identities experience life in Aotearoa New Zealand. The data will also inform better decision making and provision of services for the Rainbow community”*.

The new sex at birth and gender questions

The previous sex-only question was replaced in the 2023 Census with a two-step process in order to identify both sex at birth and gender, as recommended in the updated standard.

The new questions are as follows:

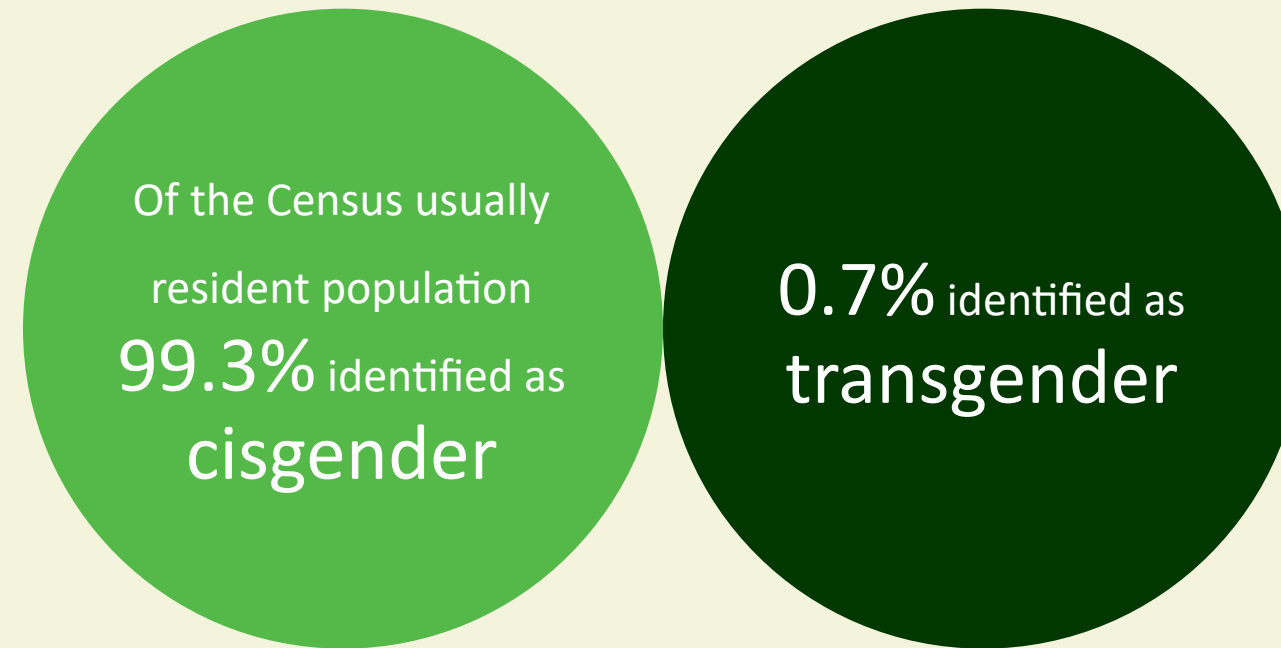
- *What was your sex at birth (for example, what was recorded on your birth certificate)?*

Response categories: Male; Female.

- *What is your gender?*

Response categories: Male; Female; Another gender – Please state below.

The results of the new sex at birth questions

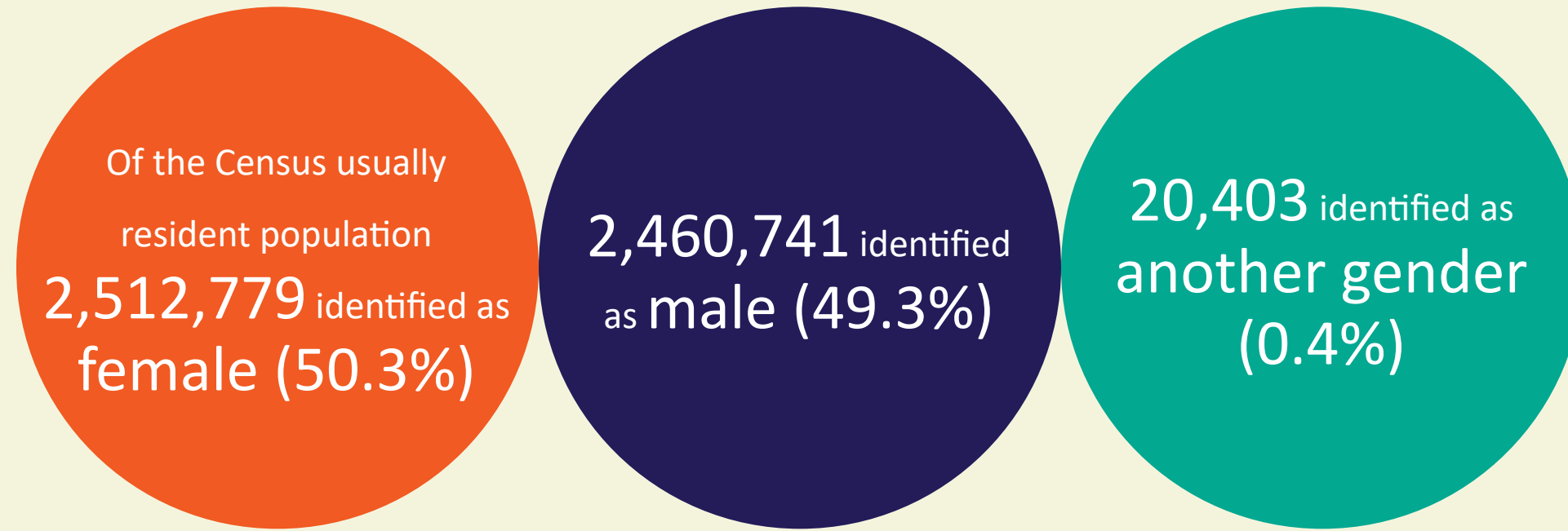


Cisgender refers to a person whose gender is the same as the sex recorded at their birth, and **transgender** refers to a person whose gender is different to the sex recorded at their birth.

* Based on those 15 years of age and over who responded.

* Note that Statistics New Zealand has rated the sex at birth results as 'very high' and the cisgender and transgender status results as 'poor' in terms of their quality. Please refer to the end of this report for a definition of these terms.

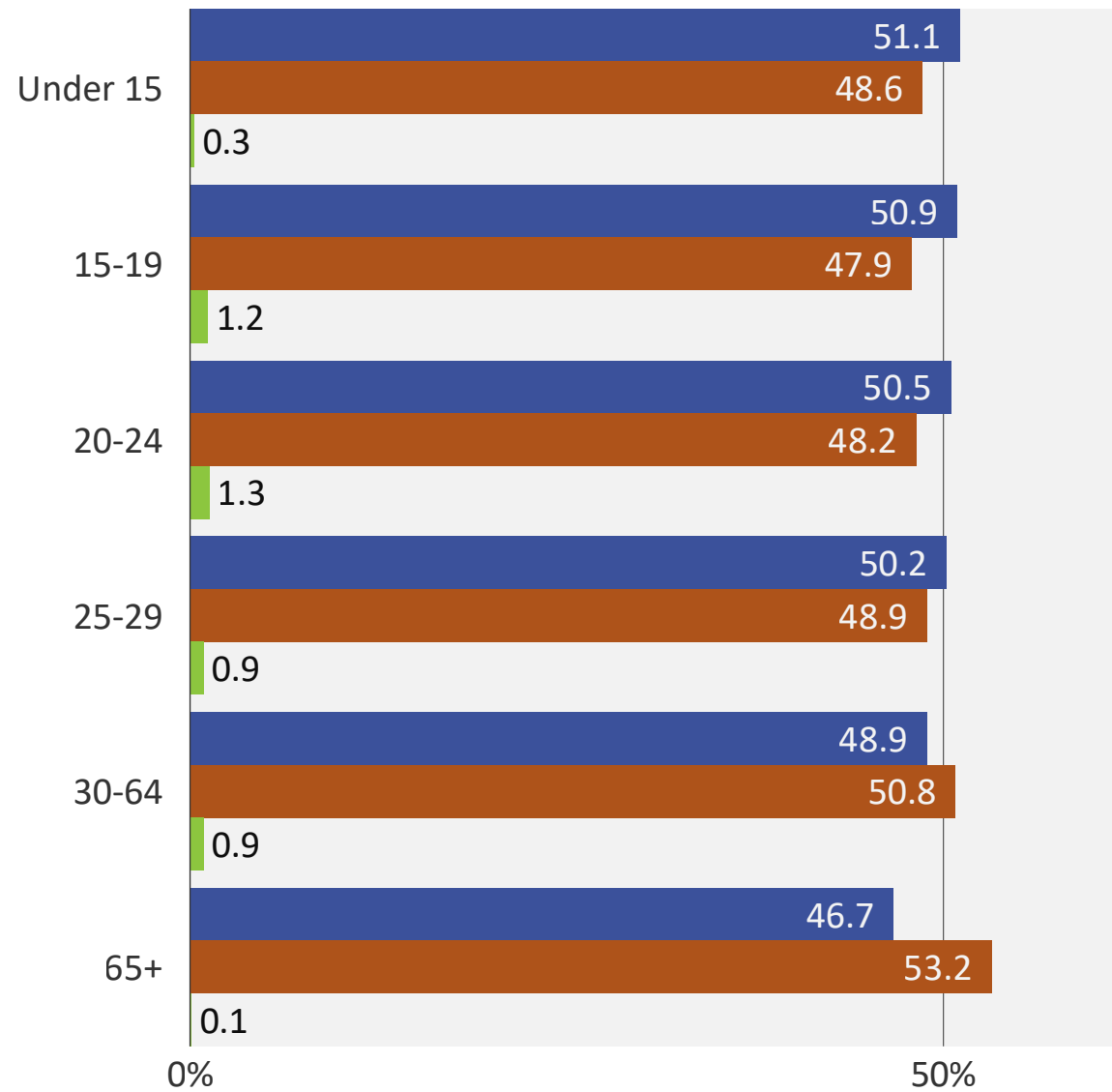
The results of the new gender questions



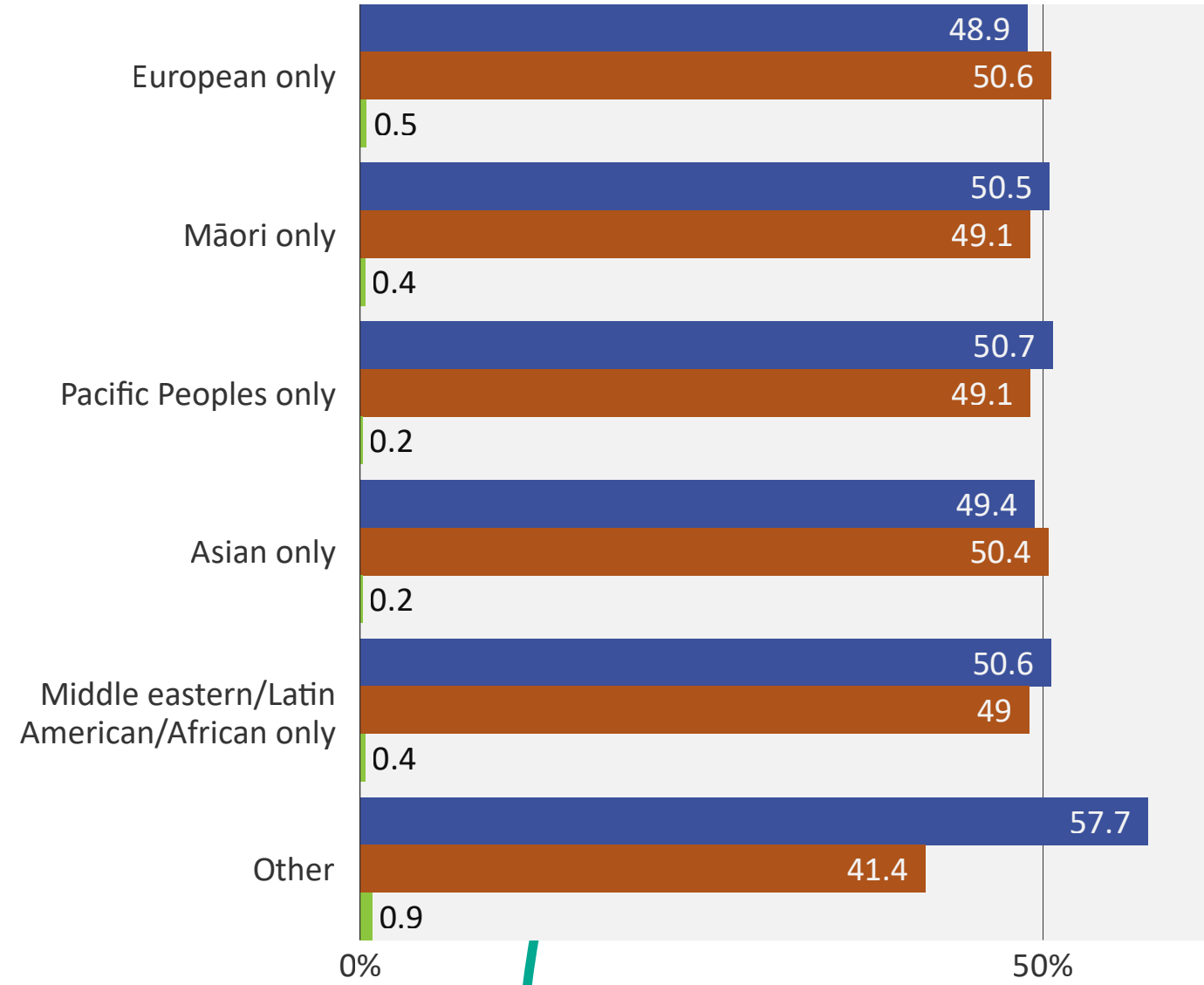
* Note that Statistics New Zealand has rated the gender results as 'high' in terms of their quality. Please refer to the end of this report for a definition of these terms.

Gender by age and ethnicity

Results by age



Results by ethnicity*

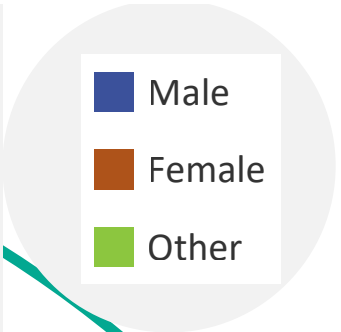
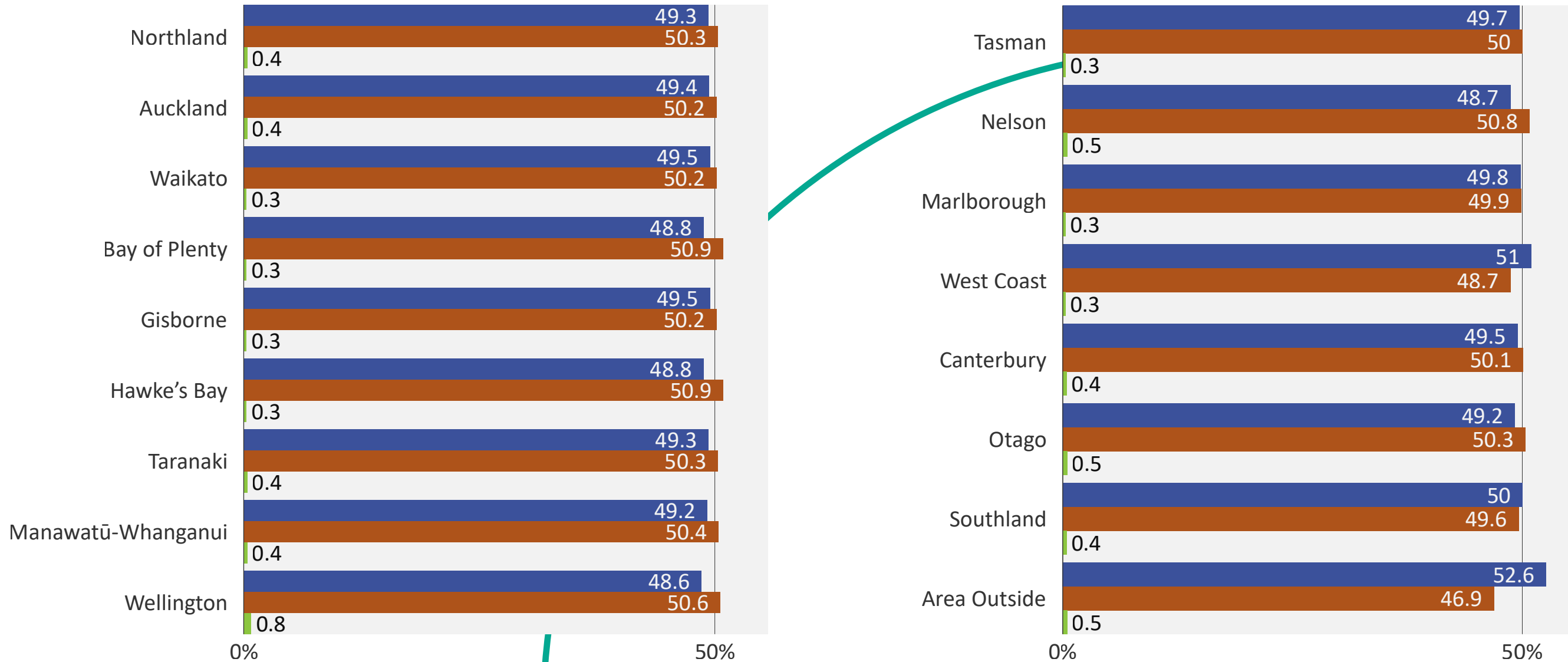


- Male
- Female
- Other

*This is based on a single response

Gender by region

Results by region



The new sexual identity questions

The 2023 Census also included new questions on sexual identity. The inclusion of these questions has allowed Rainbow or LGBTIQ+ communities to be reflected in the Census data:

- *Which of the following best describes how you think of yourself?*

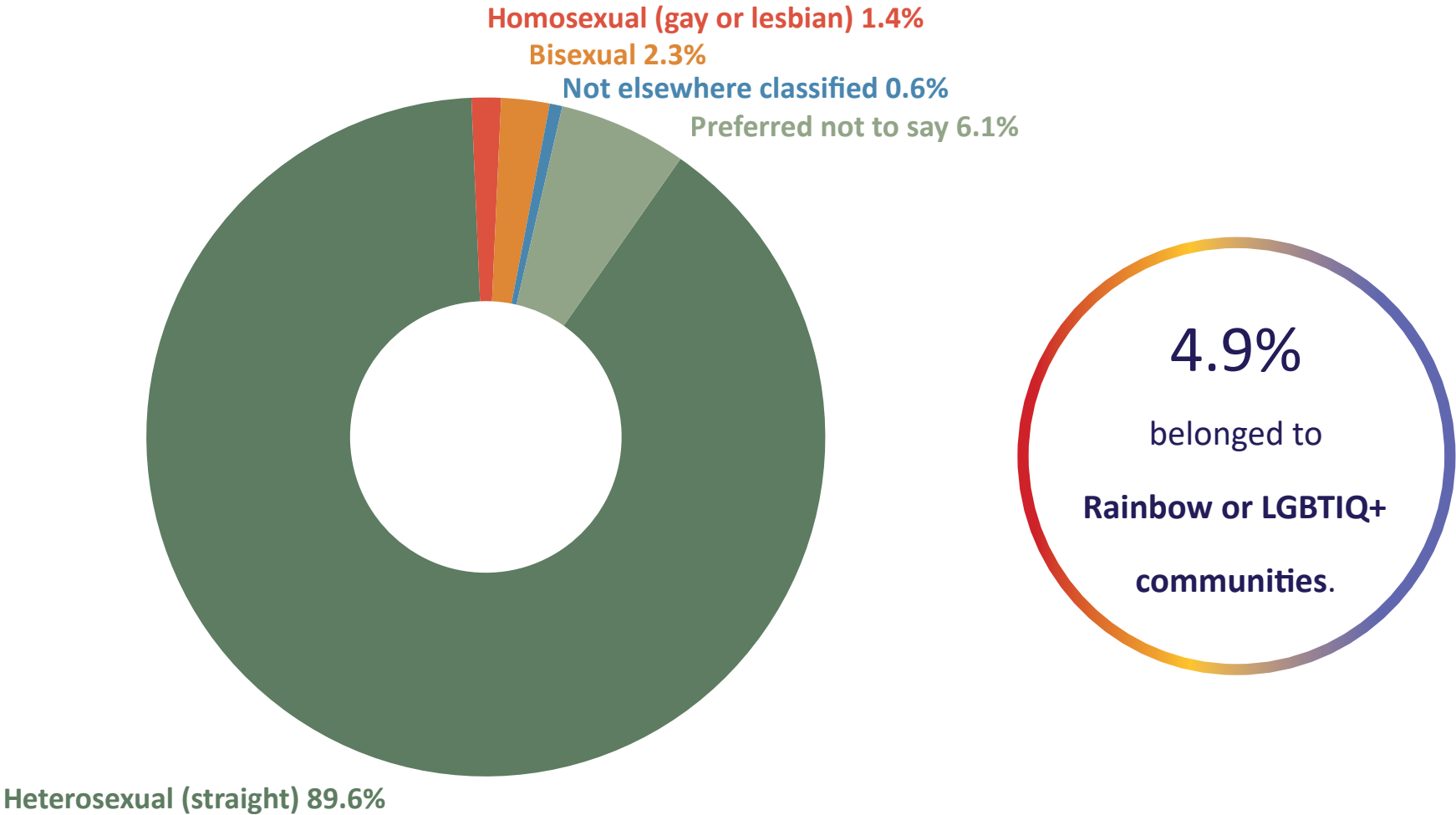
Response categories: Heterosexual/straight; Gay or lesbian; Bisexual; Another identity – Please state below.

- *Were you born with a variation of sex characteristics (otherwise known as an intersex variation)?*

Response categories: *Yes; No; Don't know; Prefer not to say.*



The results of the new sexual identity questions



* Note that Statistics New Zealand rated the sexual identity results as 'poor' in terms of quality. Please refer to the end of this report for a definition of this term.

The results of the new variations in sex characteristics questions



* This means that they were born with innate genetic, hormonal, or physical sex characteristics that do not conform to medical norms for female or male bodies. This can also be called intersex.

Note that Statistics New Zealand rated the variations in sex characteristics results as 'poor' in terms of quality. Please refer to the end of this report for a definition of this term. On the following page, we outline why the results were rated in this way.

The main reasons why the results to these two new questions have been rated as ‘poor’ are:

- The questions (and/or concepts that the questions are based on) may have been misunderstood by some respondents.
- The questions recorded a high level of ‘no information’ (approx. 16% for both questions).
- The way respondents answered the questions could have been different between the online and paper versions of the Census form. For example, on the paper form, more than one answer could have been provided and these answers could have been contradictory. In comparison, only one answer could have been provided on the online form.

Consequently, we have **not** provided any detailed results relating to the sex at birth, sexual identity and variations in sex characteristics questions, as we have provided earlier in this report for the gender question (“what is your gender?”).

However, despite the ‘poor’ quality rating, Statistics New Zealand states: *“The data for [these variables] has value in setting an **initial benchmark** ... to inform policy and future data collections”*.

Appendix

Some important definitions

Statistics New Zealand ‘quality’ definitions

Statistics New Zealand provides the information relating to each Census variable (question) a quality rating. The rating process is thorough, but reasonably complex to explain. Here are some brief explanations:

- **Very high** – Data has no data quality issues that have an observable effect on the data. The quality of coding is very high. Any issues with the variable appear in a very low number of cases (typically less than a hundred).
- **High** – Data has only minor data quality issues. The quality of coding and responses within classification categories is high. Any issues with the variable appear in a low number of cases (typically in the low hundreds).
- **Moderate** – Data has various data quality issues involving several categories or aspects of the data, or an entire level of a hierarchical classification. The data quality issues could include problems with the classification or coding of data, such as vague responses resulting in coding issues, or responses that cannot be coded to a specific (non-residual) category, thereby reducing the amount of useful, meaningful data available for analysis.
- **Poor** – Significant data quality issues emerged during evaluation. Data is considered fit for use but there are limitations on how it can be used and interpreted. There are significant issues with respondent interpretation, coding, and/or classification problems.
- **Very poor** – Major data quality problems exist. Data does not reflect reality due to respondent misinterpretation, coding, and/or classification problems.

Definitions of sex, gender, variations of sex characteristics and gender identity

- **Sex** is based on a person's sex characteristics, such as their chromosomes, hormones, and reproductive organs. While typically based upon the sex characteristics observed and recorded at birth or infancy, a person's sex can change over the course of their lifetime and may differ from their sex recorded at birth.
- **Gender** refers to a person's social and personal identity as male, female, or another gender, or genders that may be non-binary. Gender may include gender identity and/or gender expression. A person's current gender may differ from the sex recorded at their birth and may differ from what is indicated on their current legal documents. A person's gender may change over time. Some people may not identify with any gender.
- **Variations of sex characteristics** refers to people with innate genetic, hormonal, or physical sex characteristics that do not conform to medical norms for female or male bodies. It refers to a wide spectrum of variations to hormones, chromosomes, genitals and/or reproductive organs.
- **Gender identity** refers to a person's internal and individual experience of gender.

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