

COOK ISLANDS

# Community Attitudes Towards Tourism - 2023

Prepared for Cook Islands Tourism Corporation



NEW ZEALAND  
FOREIGN AFFAIRS & TRADE  
MANATŪ AORERE

AUT





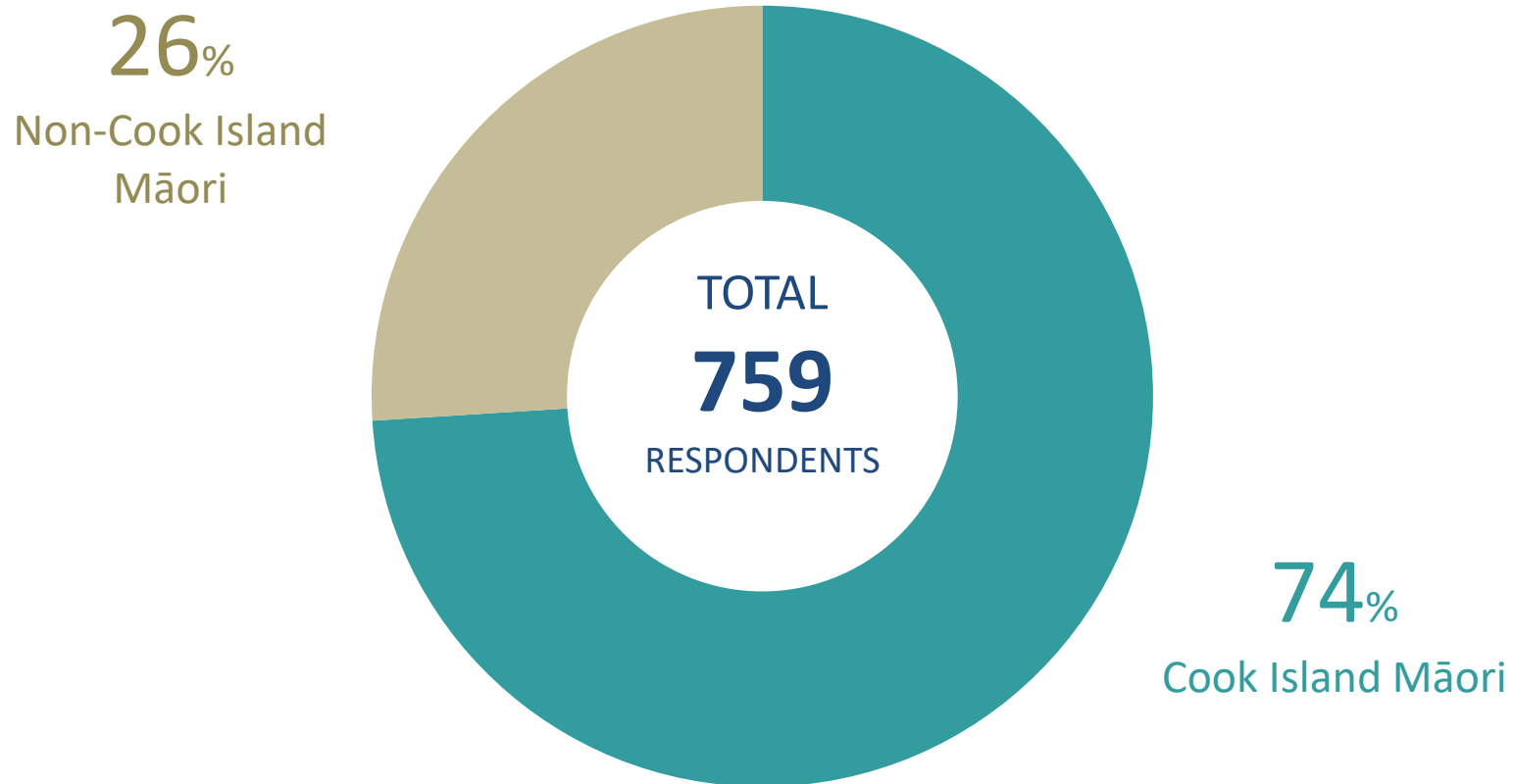
**COOK ISLANDS CAS 2023**

**RESPONDENT  
CHARACTERISTICS**

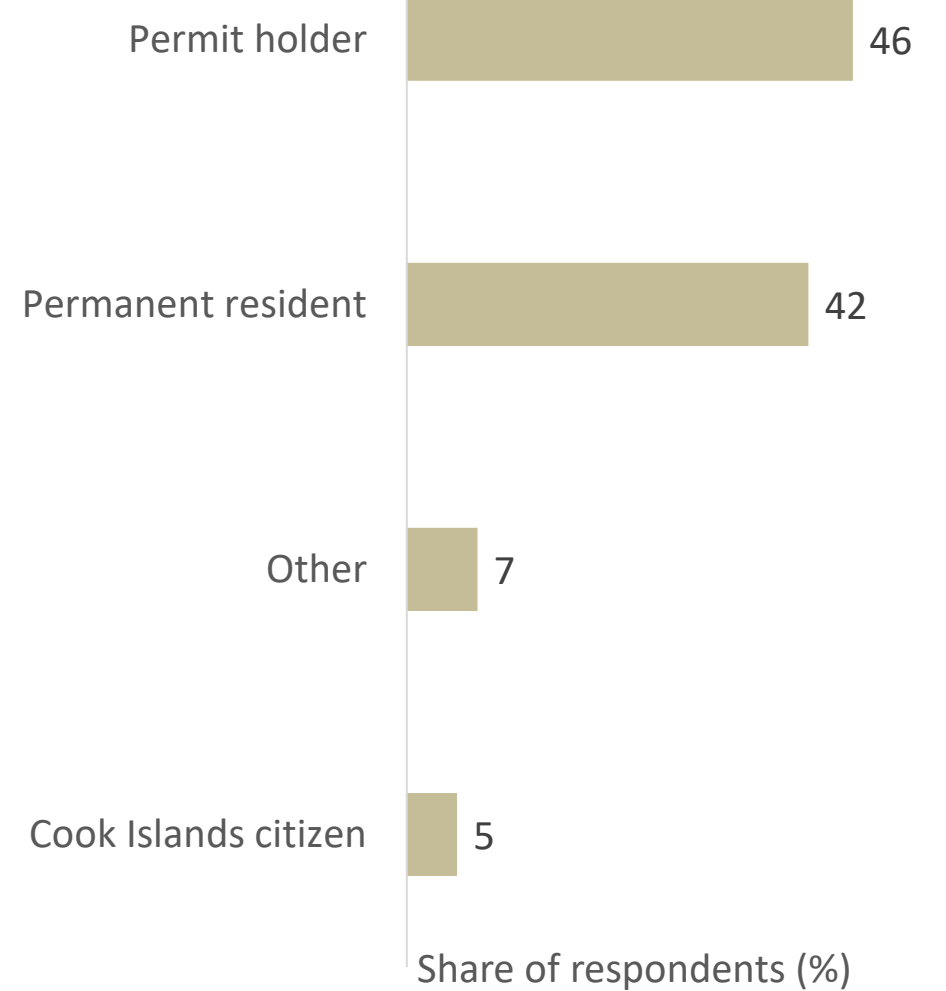
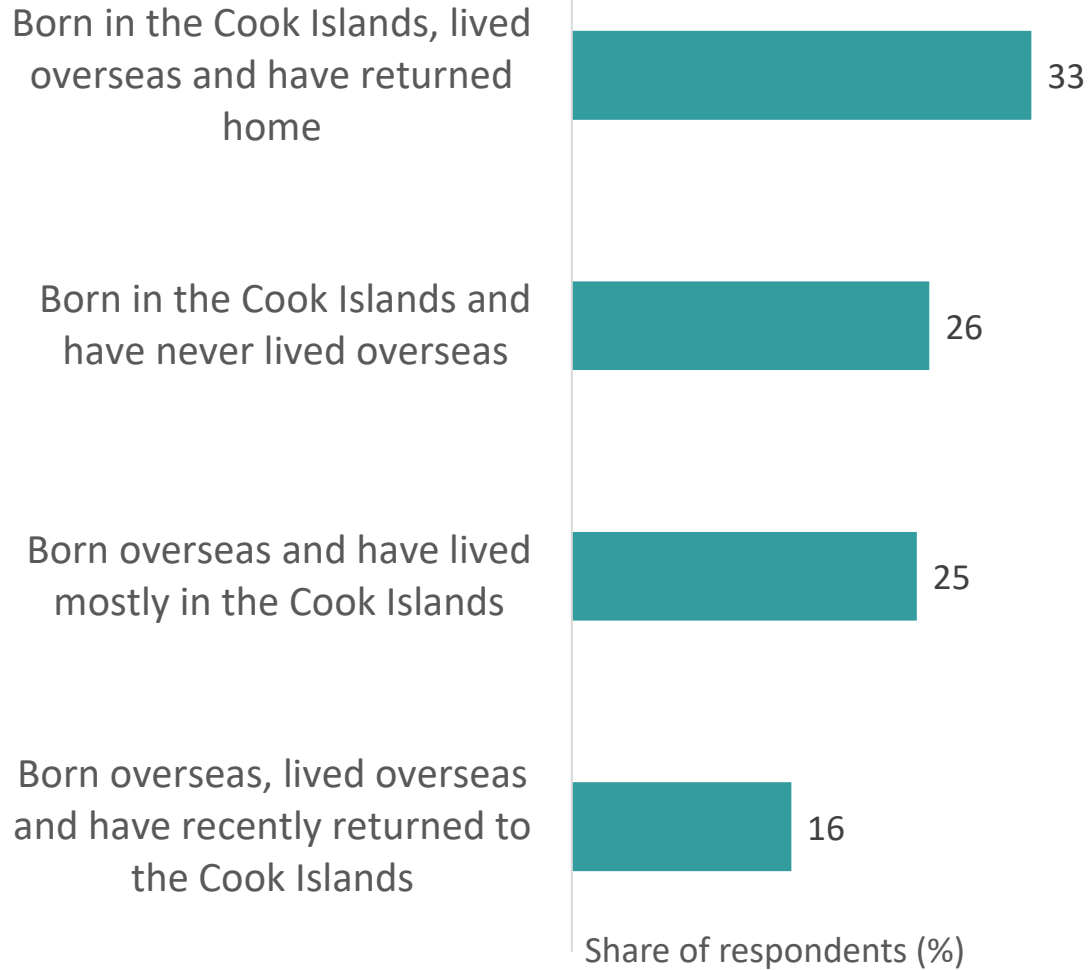
---

**Total CAS respondents N = 759, data collected from Dec 2023 to Mar 2024**

# Respondents of Cook Island Māori and Non-Cook Island Māori

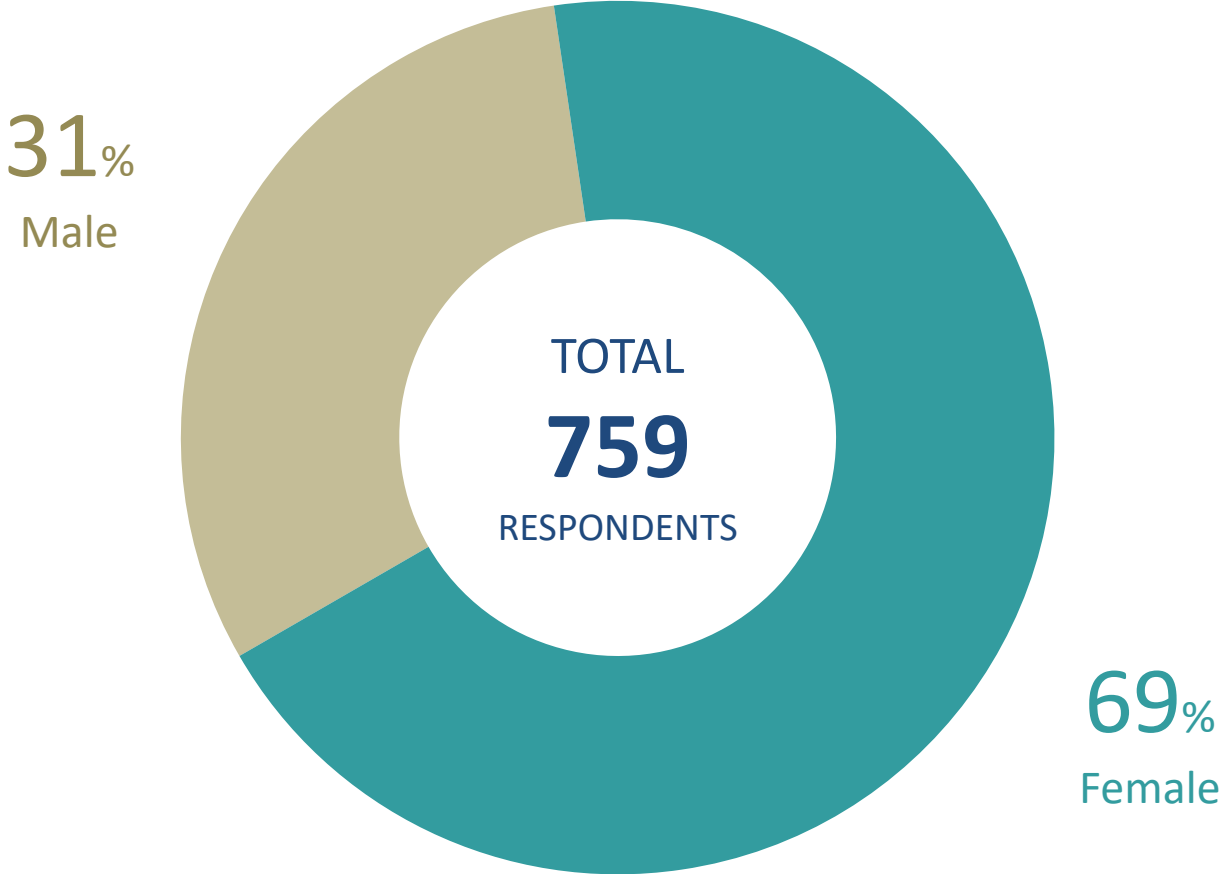


# Respondents of Cook Island Māori and Non-Cook Island Māori

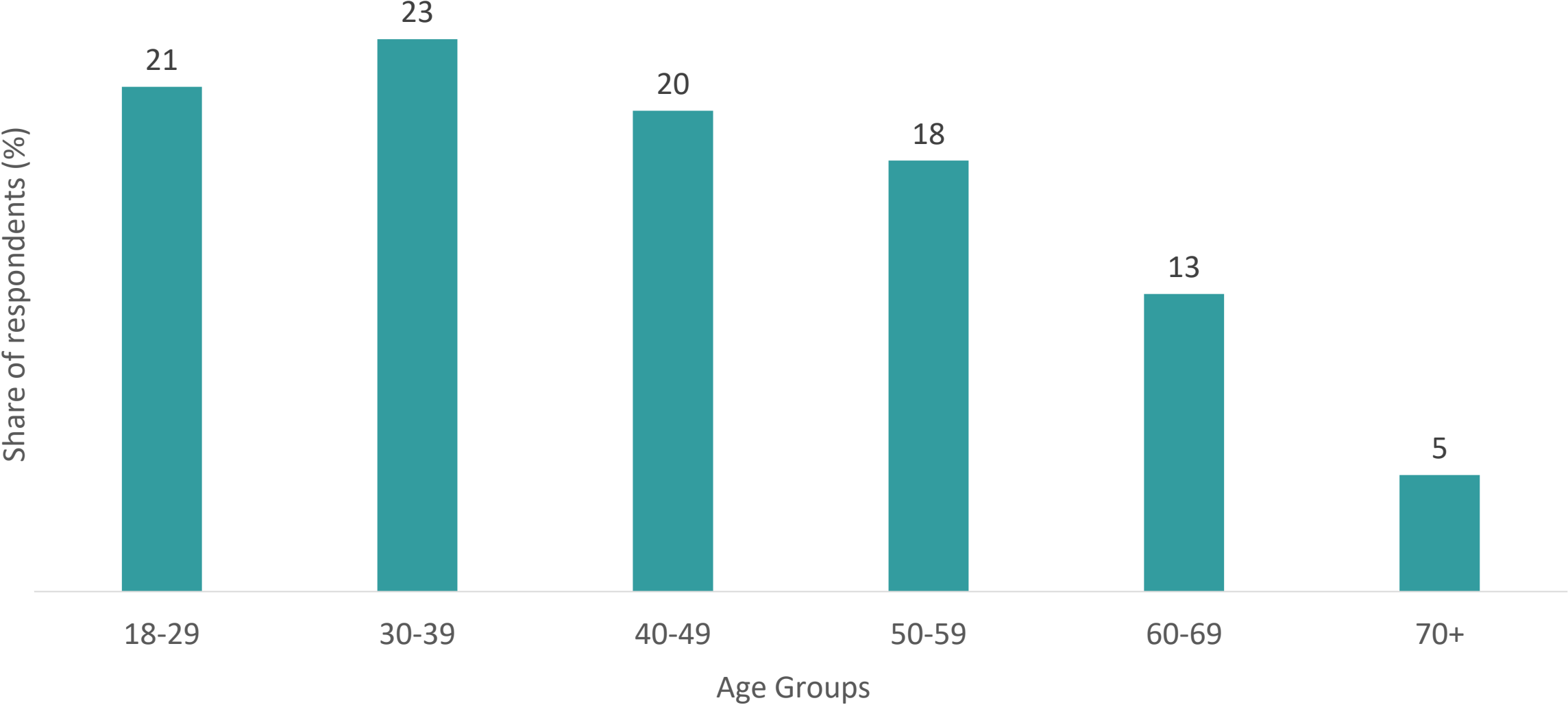


Note: Due to rounding, total does not sum to 100%

# Gender profile of respondents



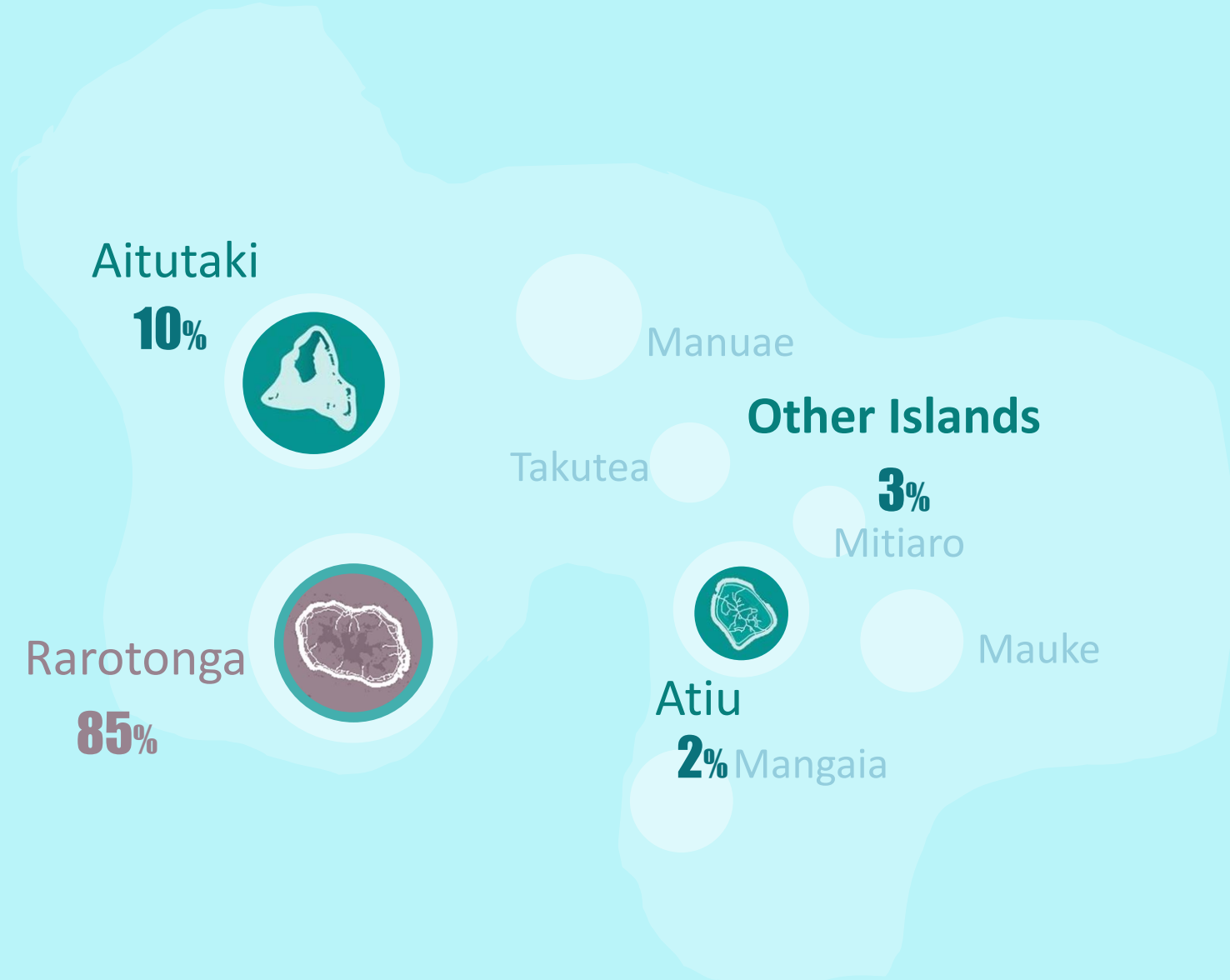
# Age profile of respondents



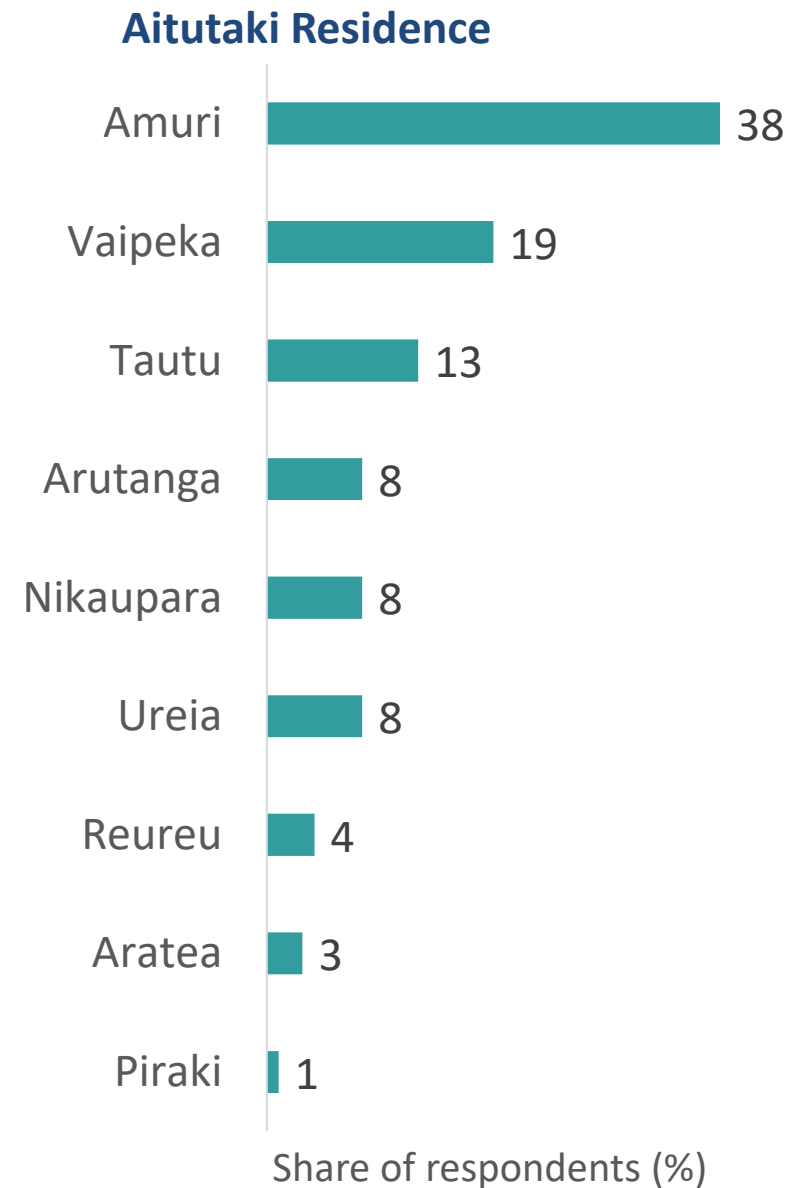
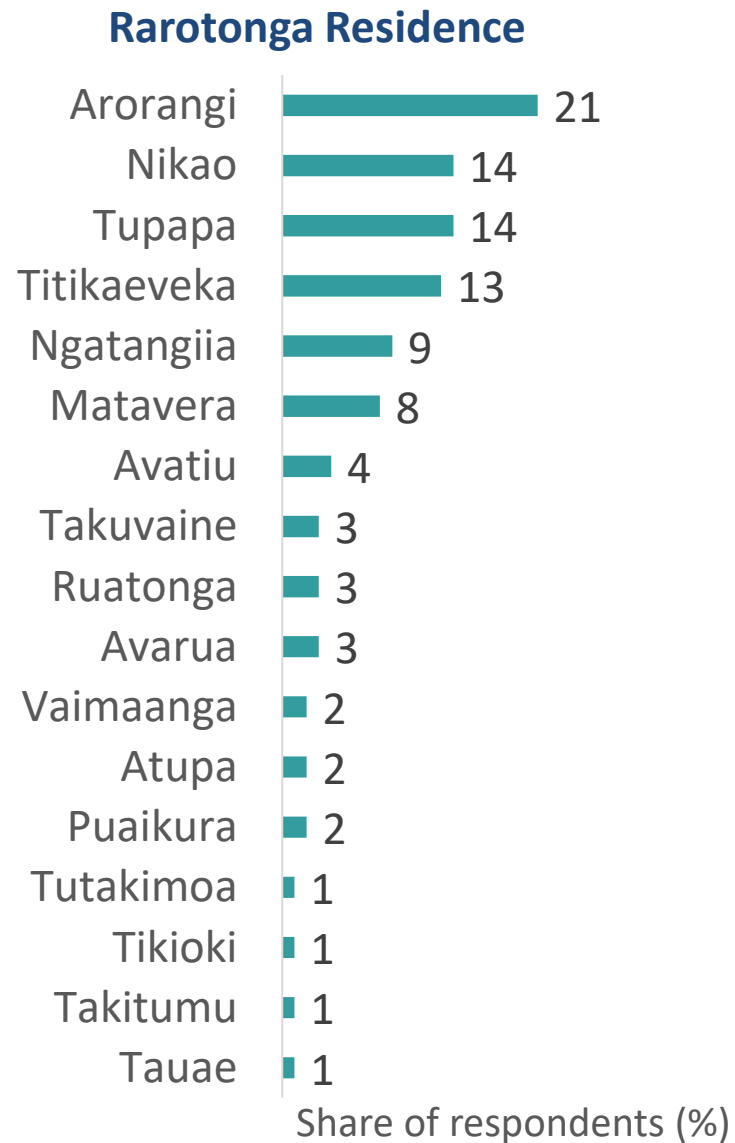
*Note: Due to rounding, total does not sum to 100%*

# Residencies in the Cook Islands

**759**  
Total Respondents



# Village residences in the Cook Islands

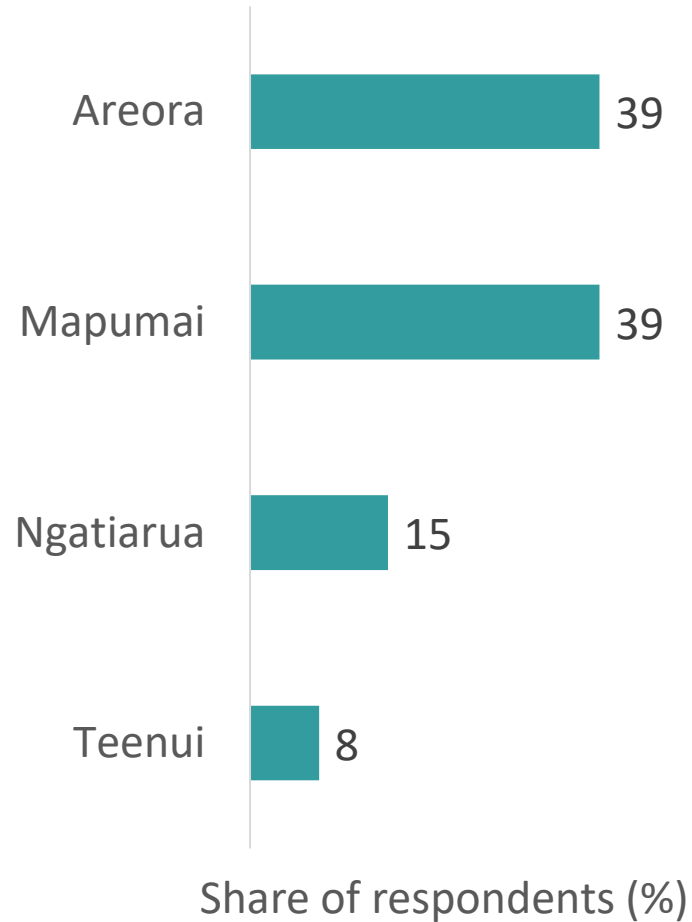


Note: Due to rounding, total does not sum to 100%

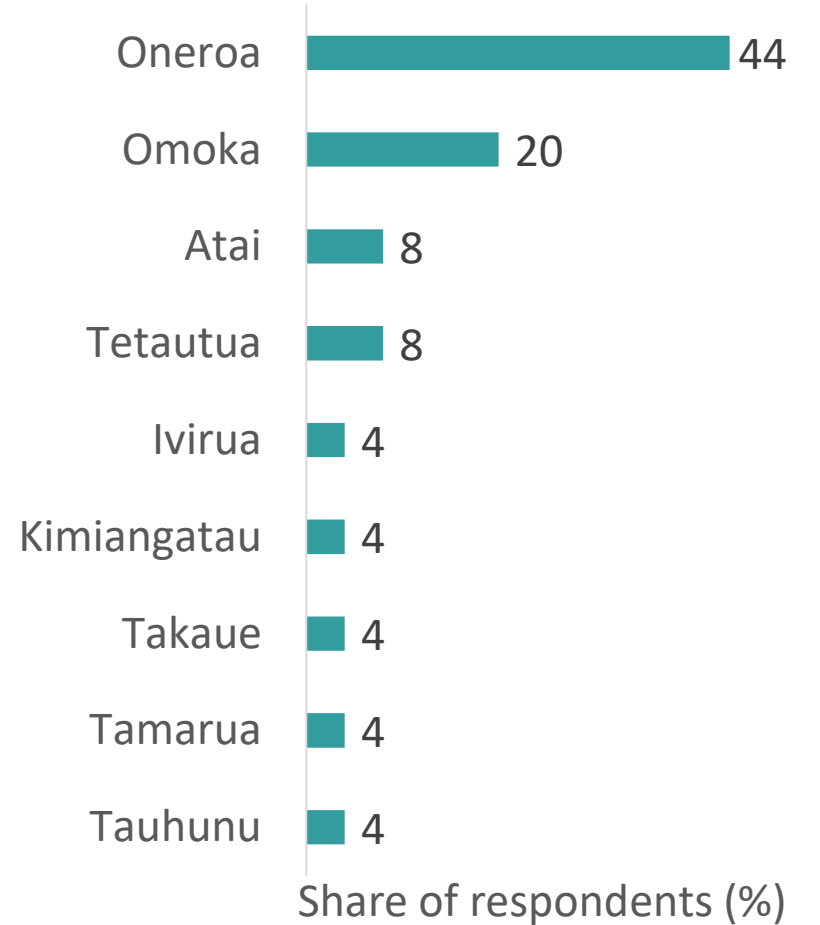


# Village residences in the Cook Islands

## Atiu Residence



## Other Islands Residence



Note: Due to rounding, total does not sum to 100%



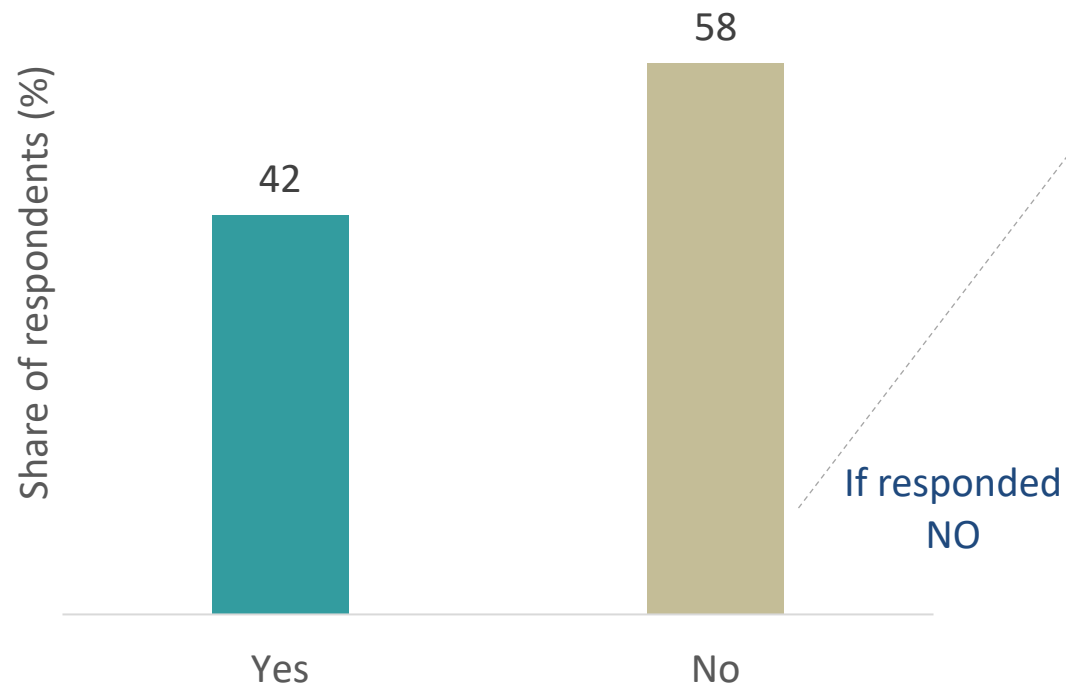
**COOK ISLANDS CAS 2023**

**COMMUNITY  
LINKAGES TO  
TOURISM**

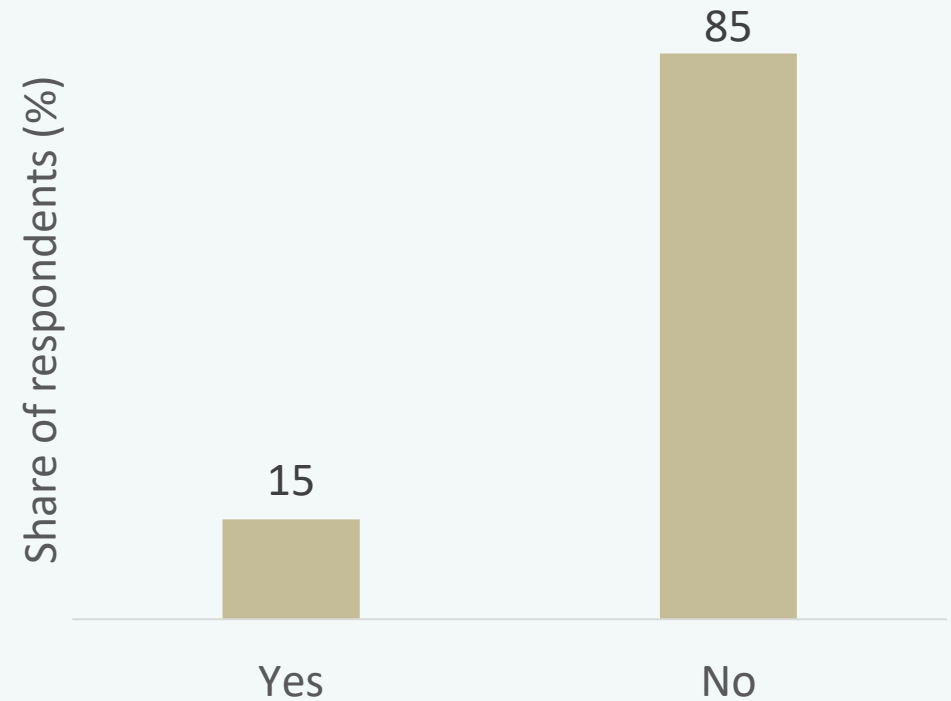


# Involvement in the tourism industry

**Q** Do you work in or own a business in the tourism sector?

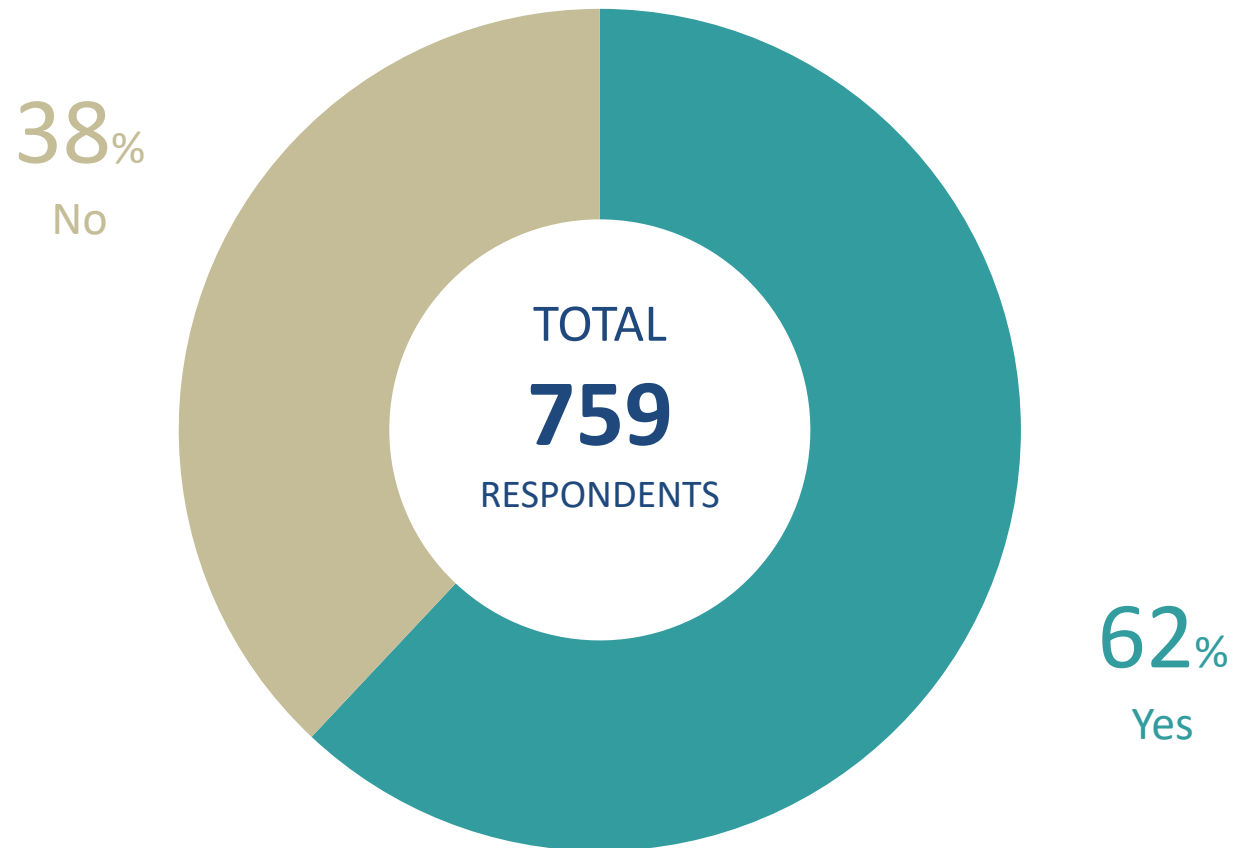


**Q** Do you get any income from tourism?



# Involvement in the tourism industry

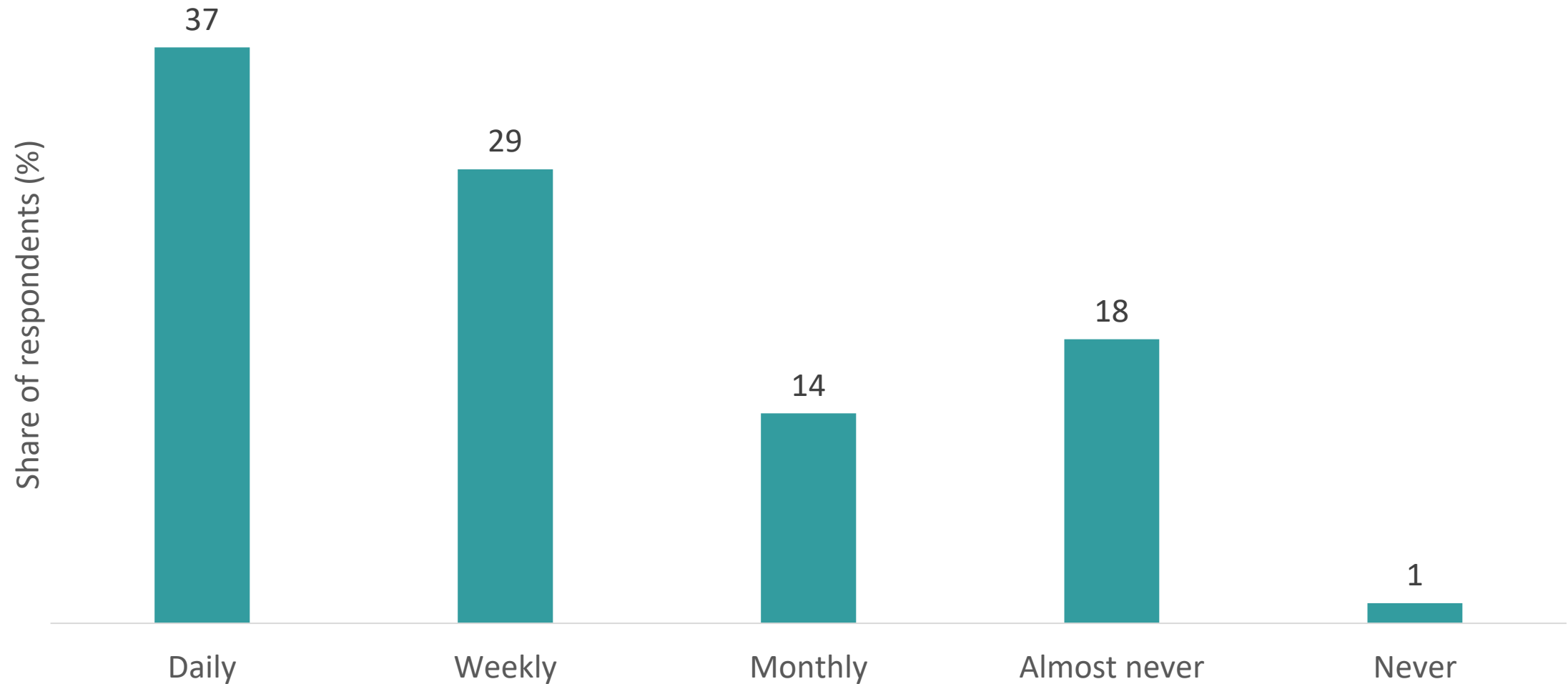
**Q** Do you have family members who work in the tourism industry?



# Frequency of interaction with tourists



How often do you talk with tourists?



Note: Due to rounding, total does not sum to 100%



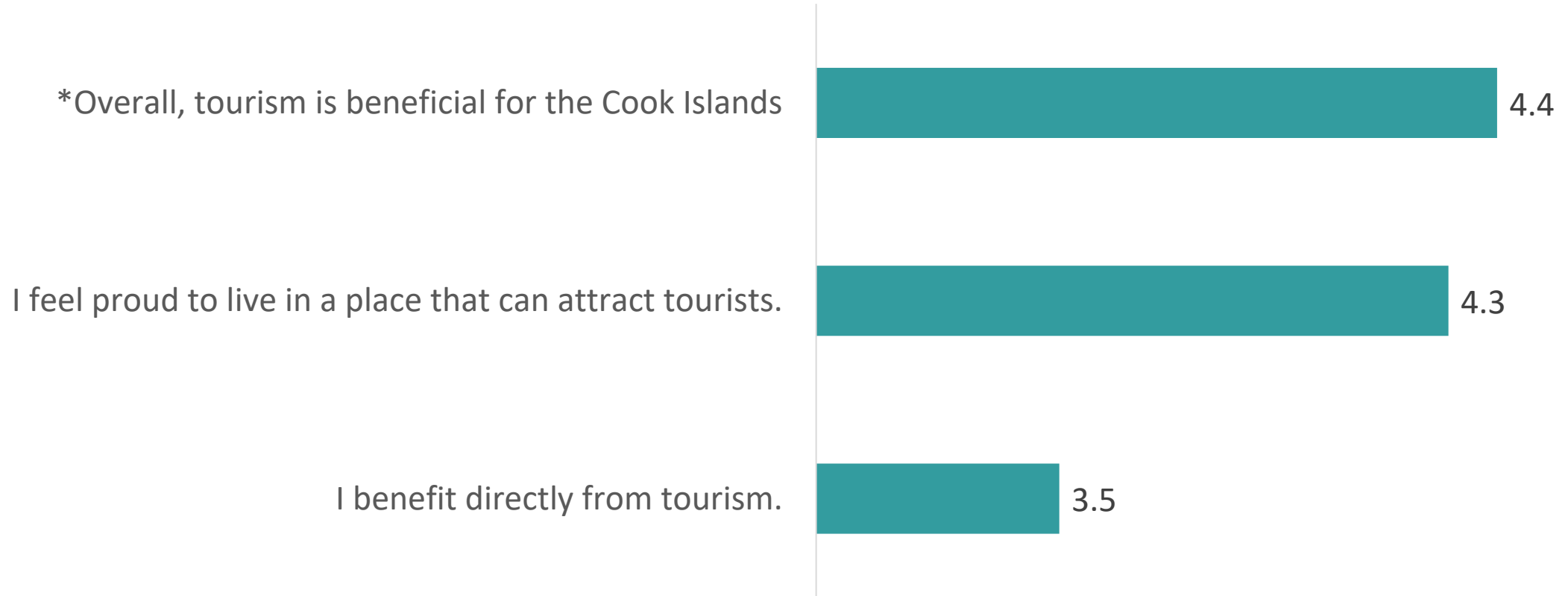


**COOK ISLANDS CAS 2023**

# **ATTITUDES TOWARDS TOURISM**

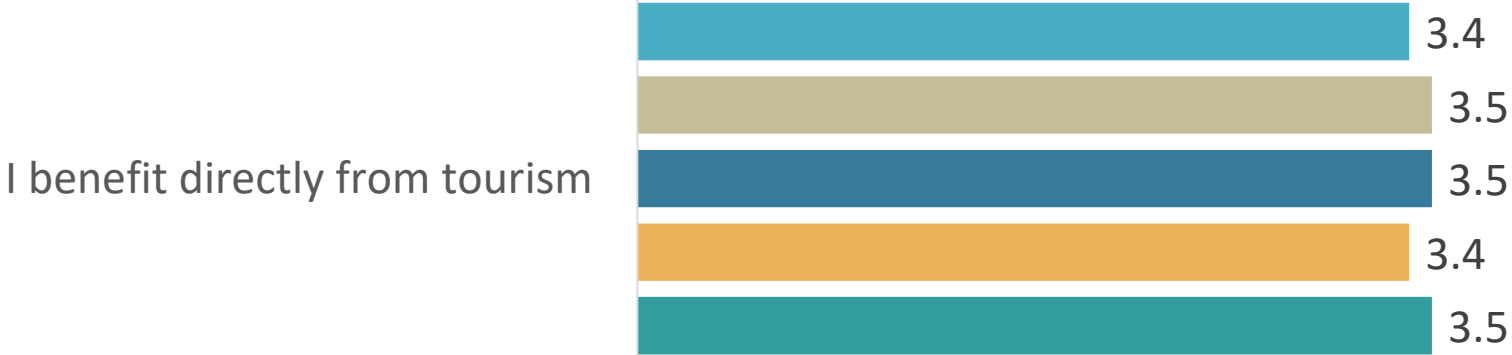
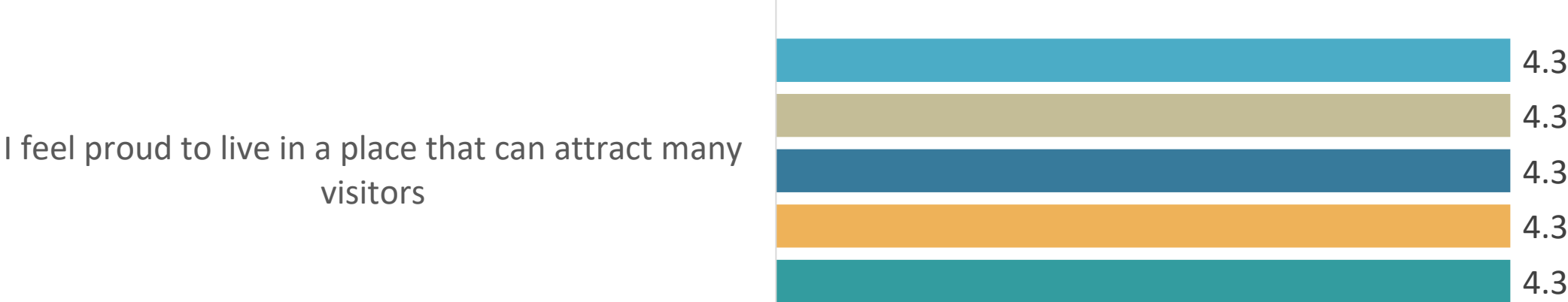


# Attitudes toward tourism



Scale: Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5)

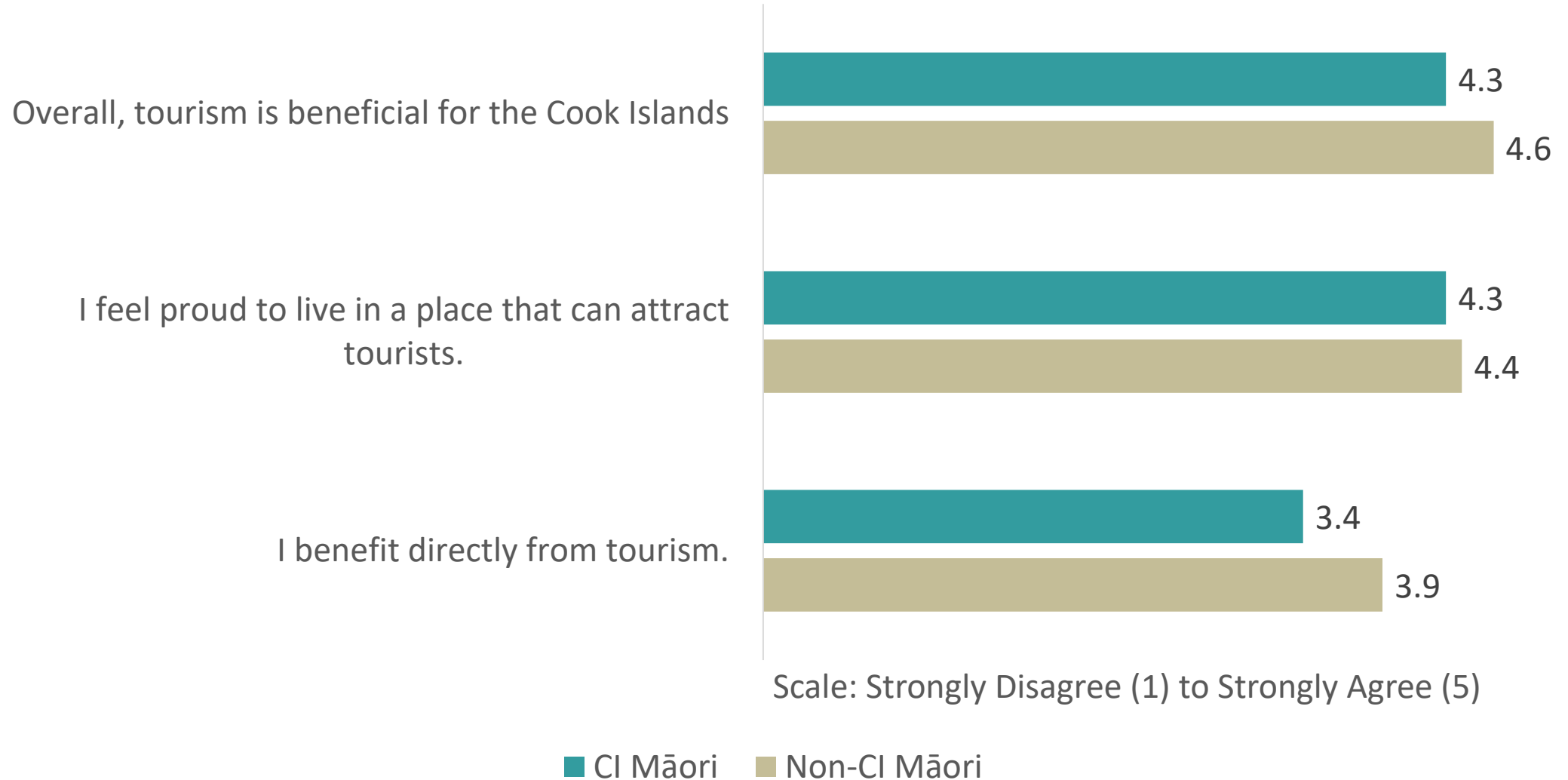
# Attitudes toward tourism - Time series



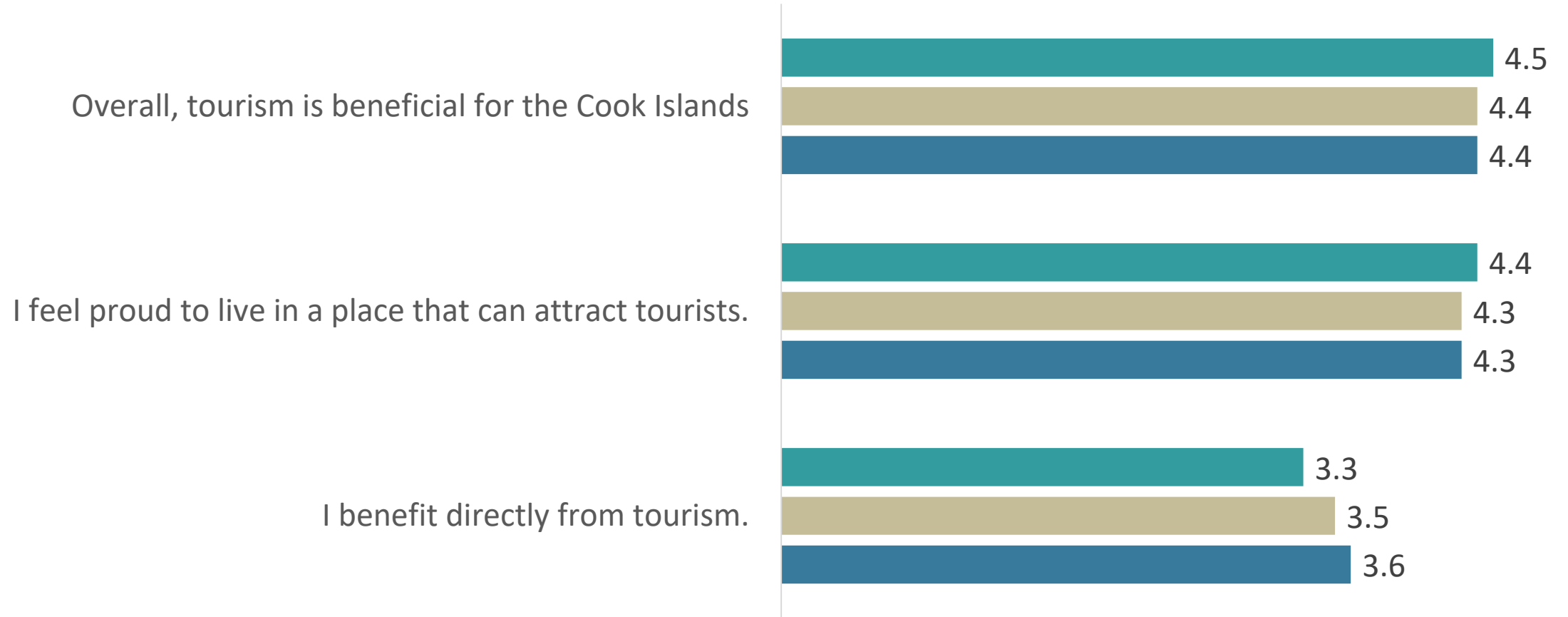
Scale: Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5)

2018 2019 2020 2021 2023

# Attitudes toward tourism - CI Māori / Non-CI Māori



# Attitudes toward tourism - Age group

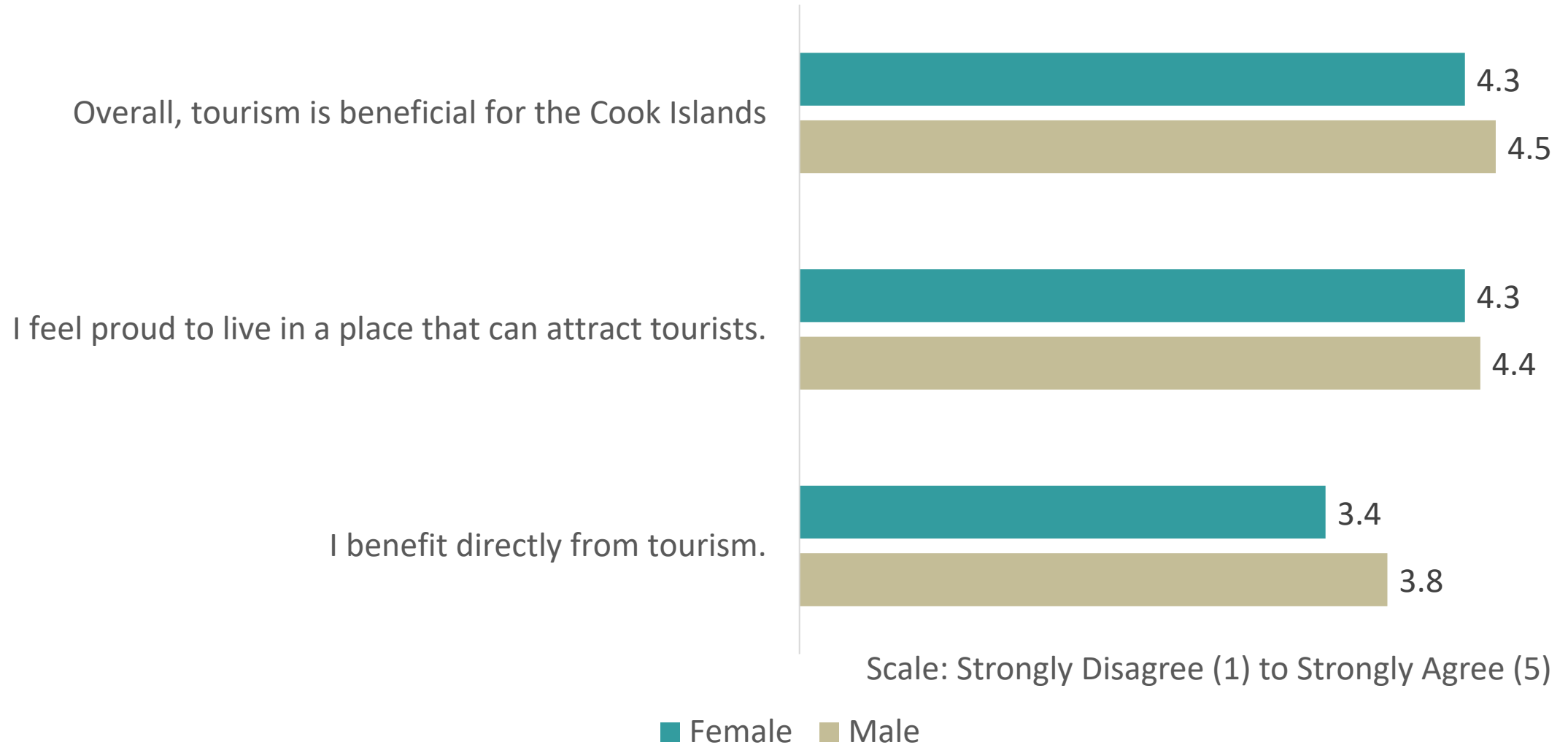


Scale: Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5)

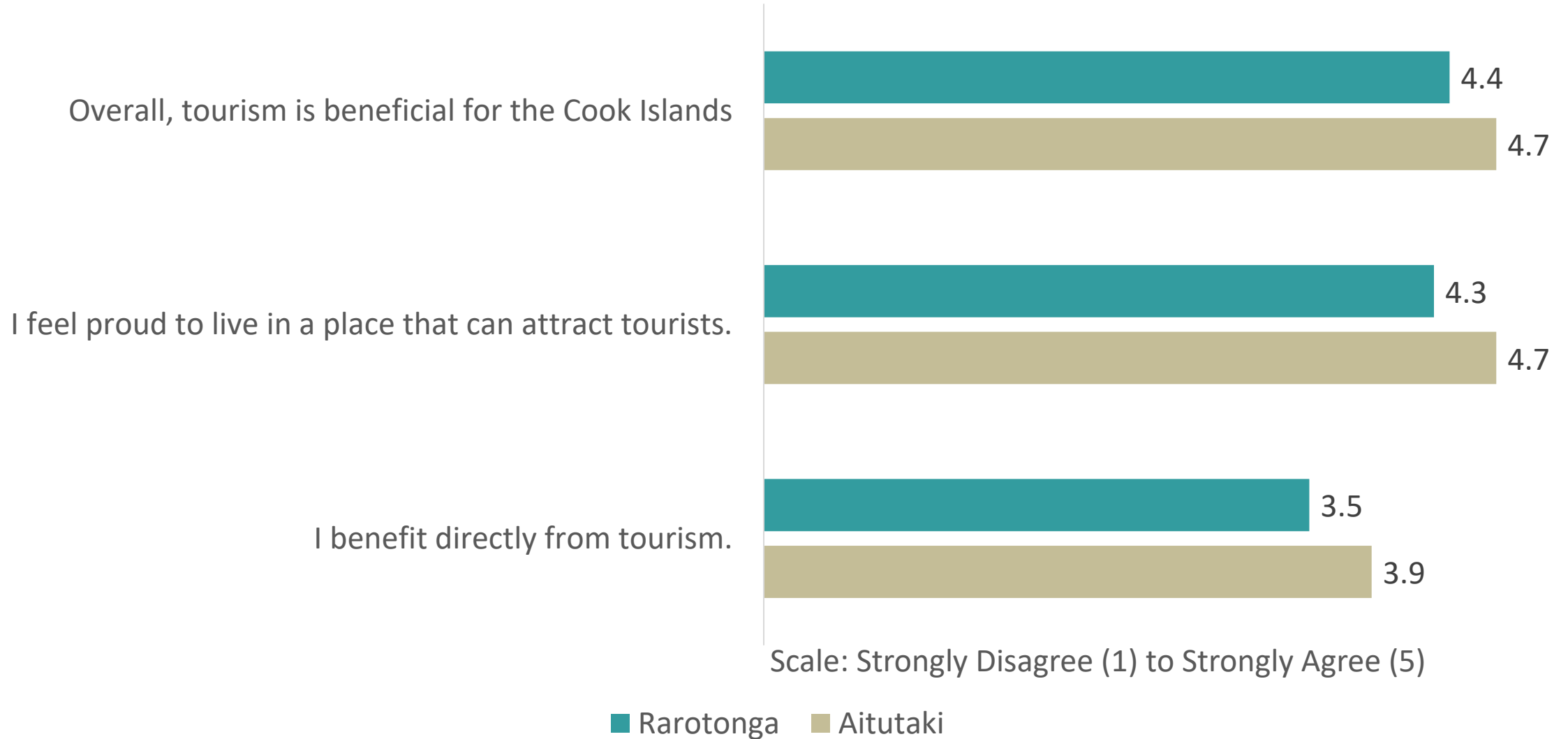
18-29 30-59 60+



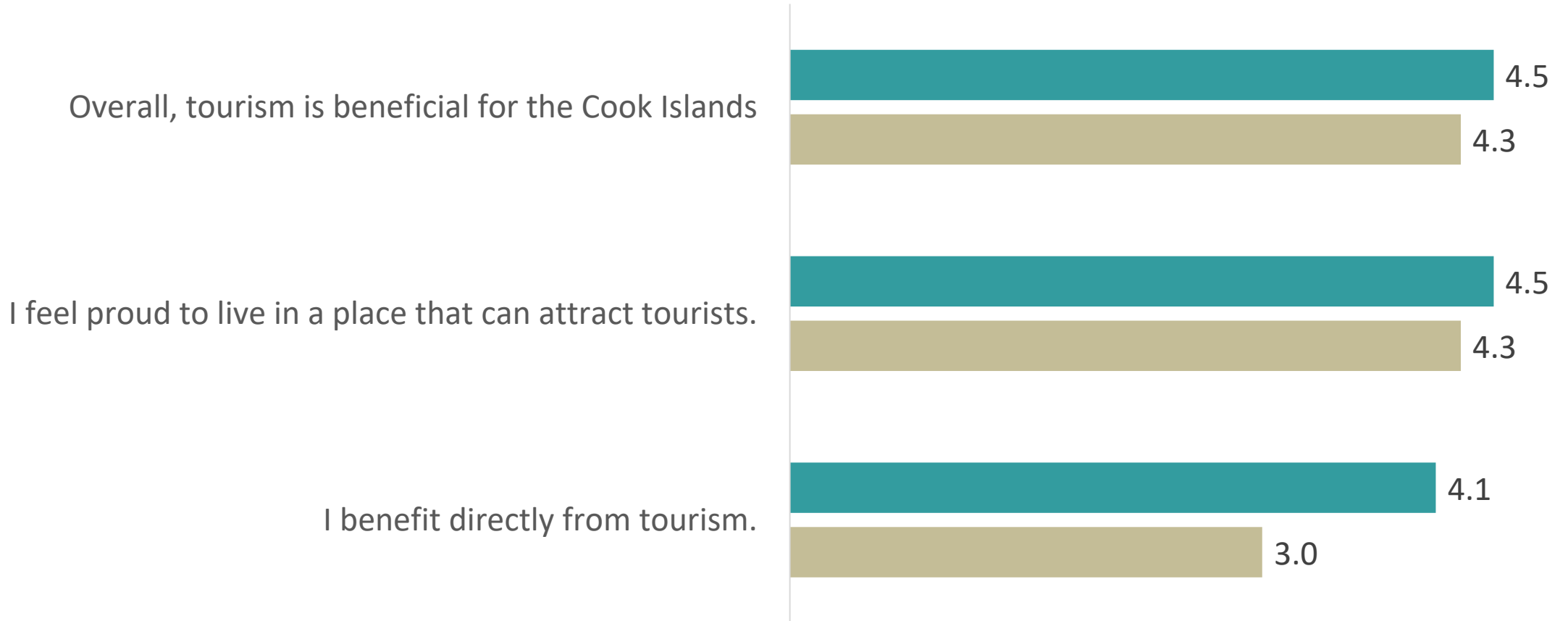
# Attitudes toward tourism - Gender



# Attitudes toward tourism - Rarotonga / Aitutaki



# Attitudes toward tourism - Tourism / Non-tourism



Scale: Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5)

■ Tourism sector ■ Non-tourism sector

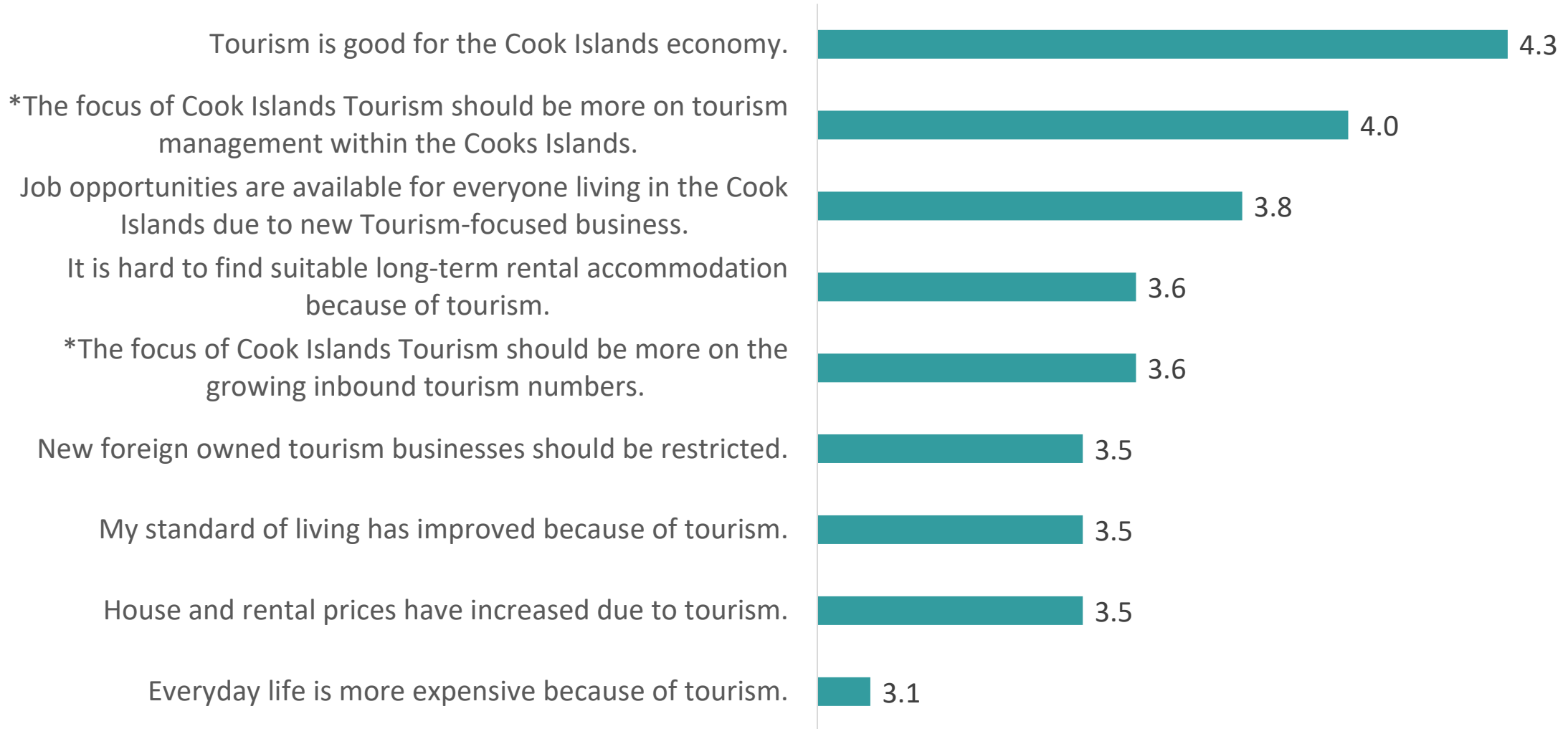


COOK ISLANDS CAS 2023

# TOURISM AND ECONOMIC DIMENSIONS



# Tourism and economic dimensions



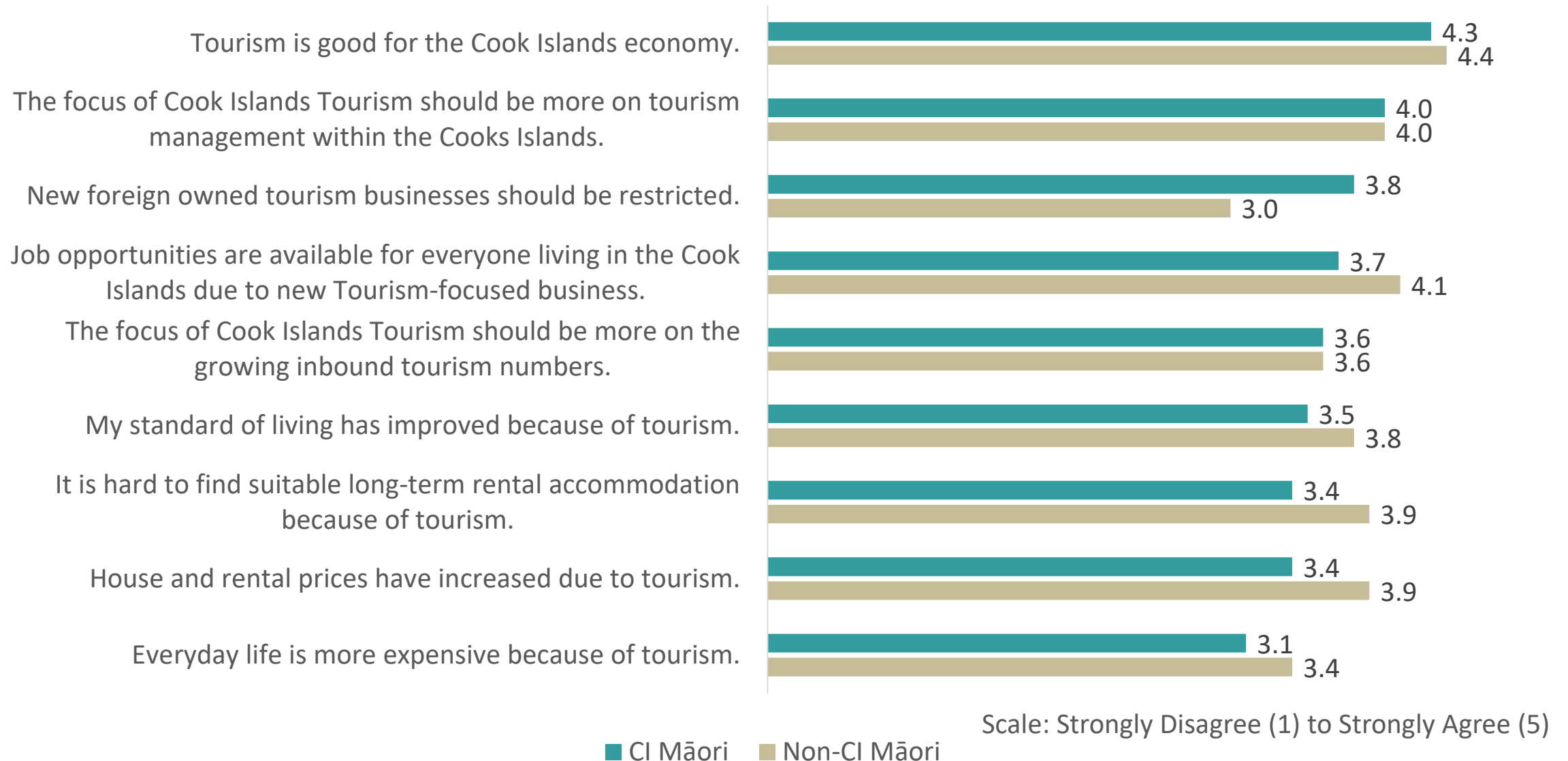
Scale: Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5)



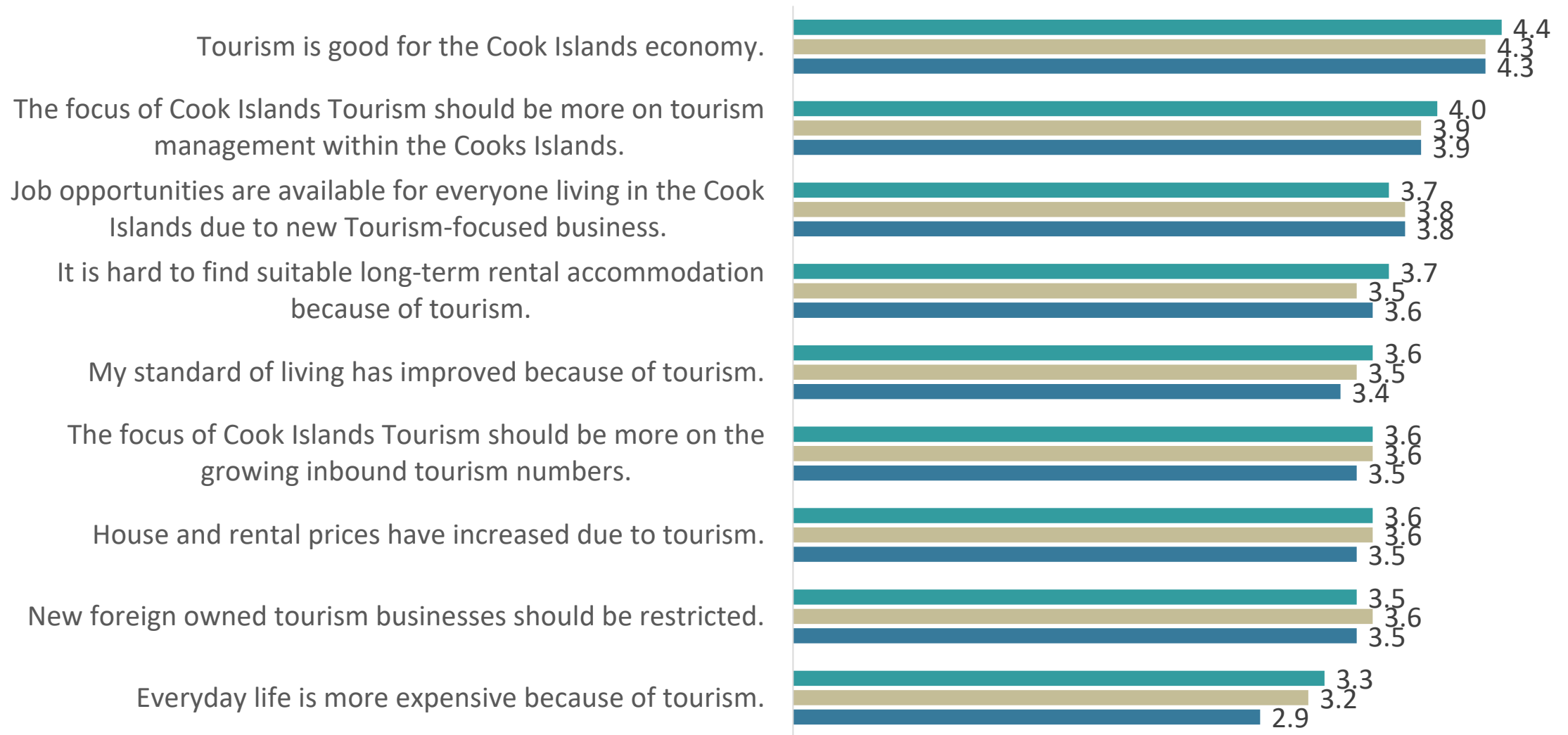
# Tourism and economic dimensions - Time series



# Tourism and economic dimensions - CI Māori / Non-CI Māori



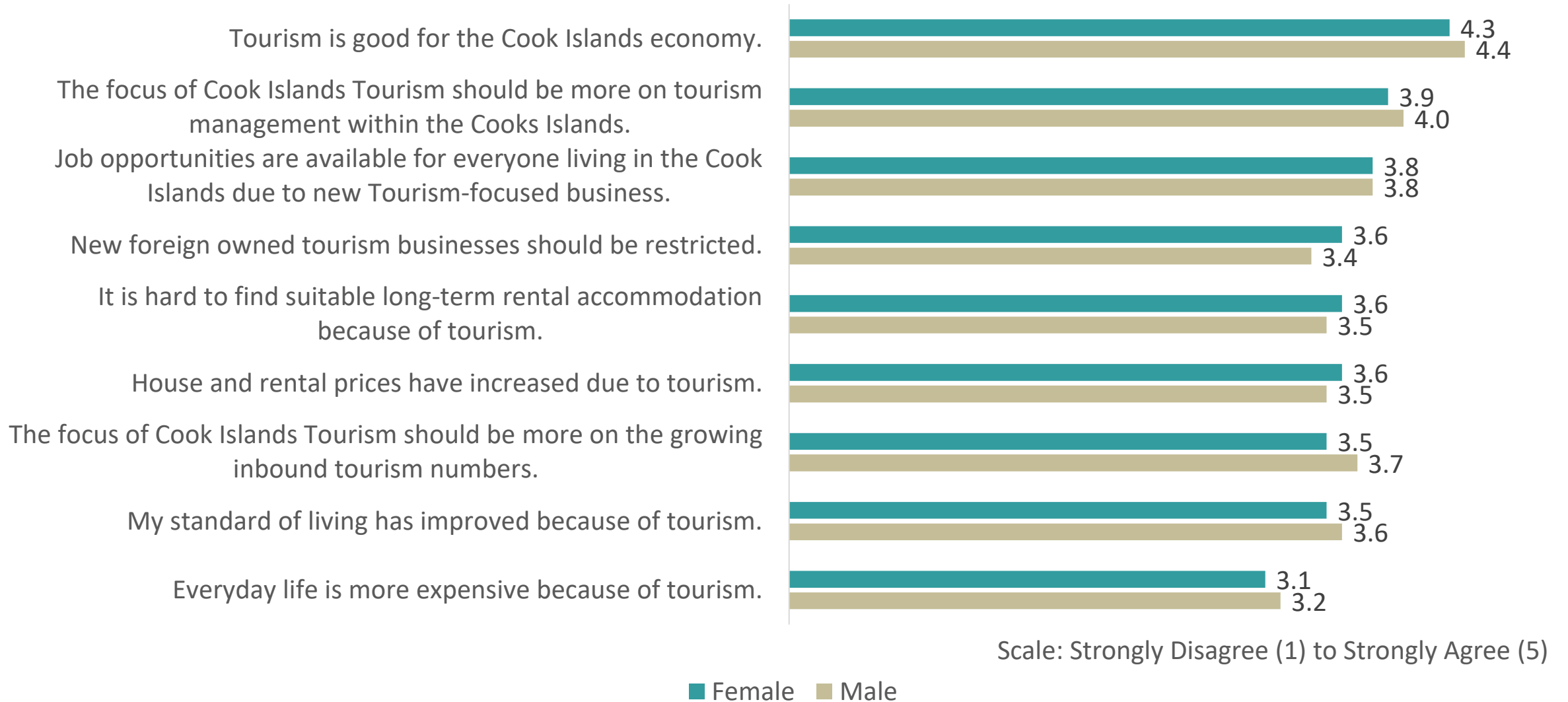
# Tourism and economic dimensions - Age group



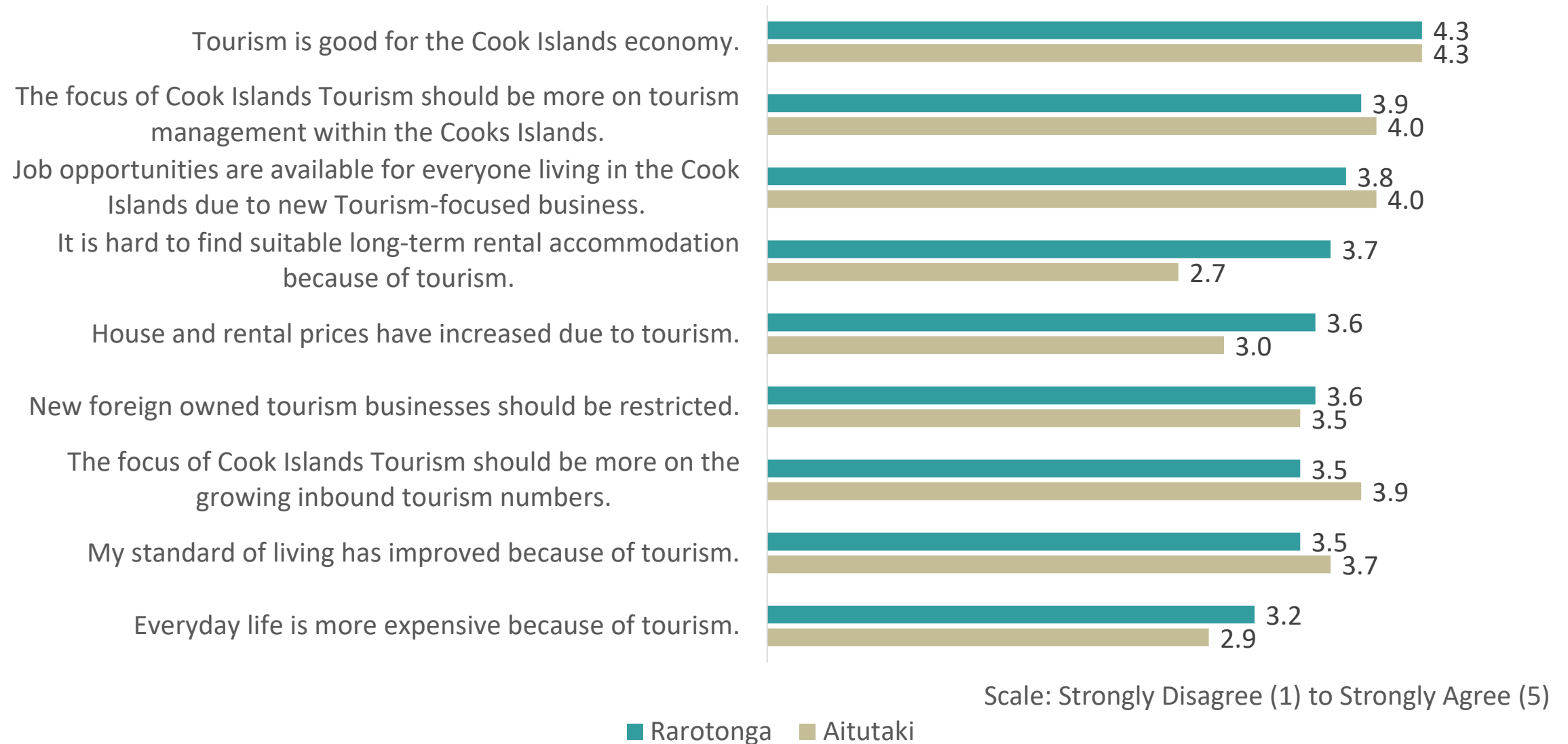
Scale: Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5)

■ 18-29 ■ 30-59 ■ 60+

# Tourism and economic dimensions - Gender

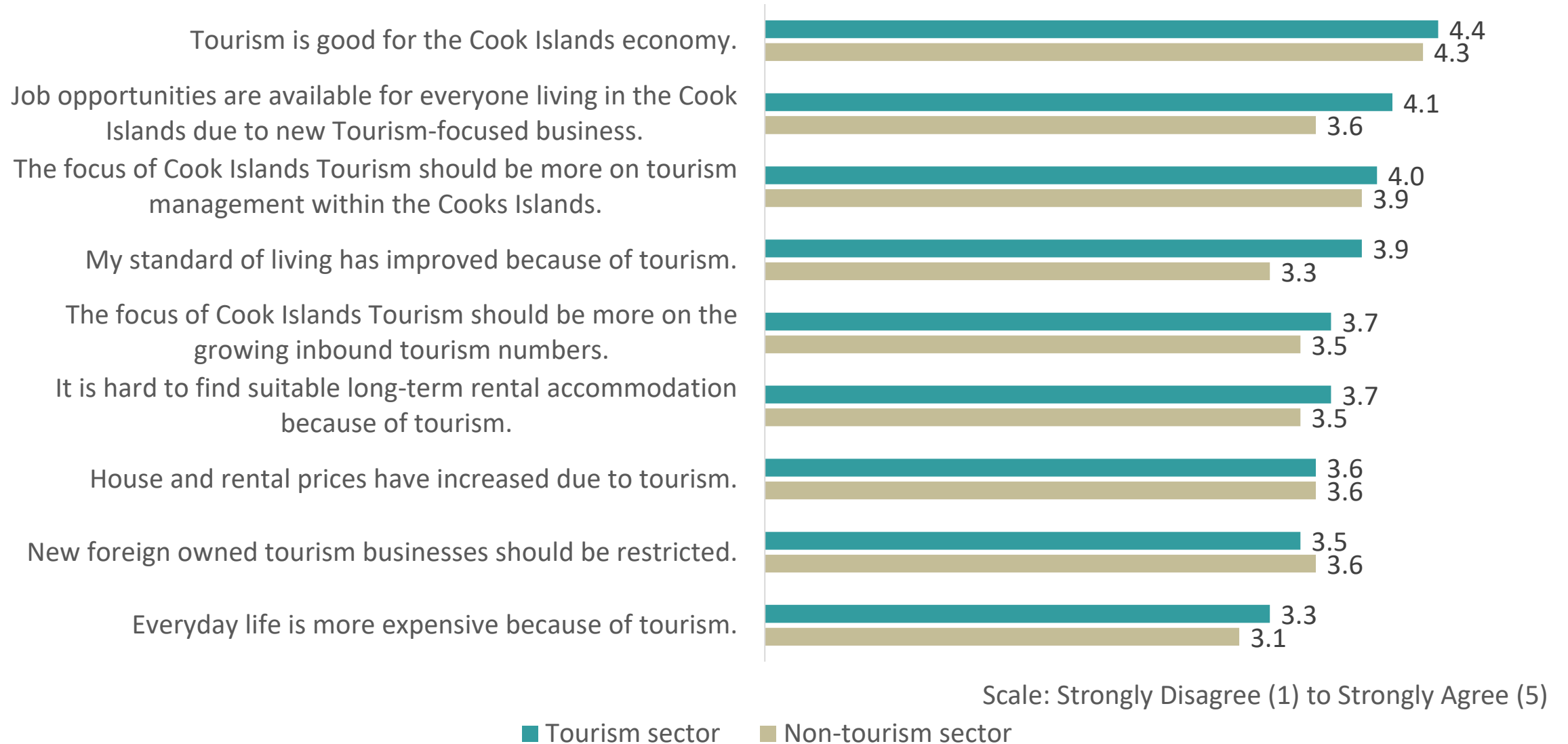


# Tourism and economic dimensions - Rarotonga / Aitutaki





# Tourism and economic dimensions - Tourism / Non-tourism



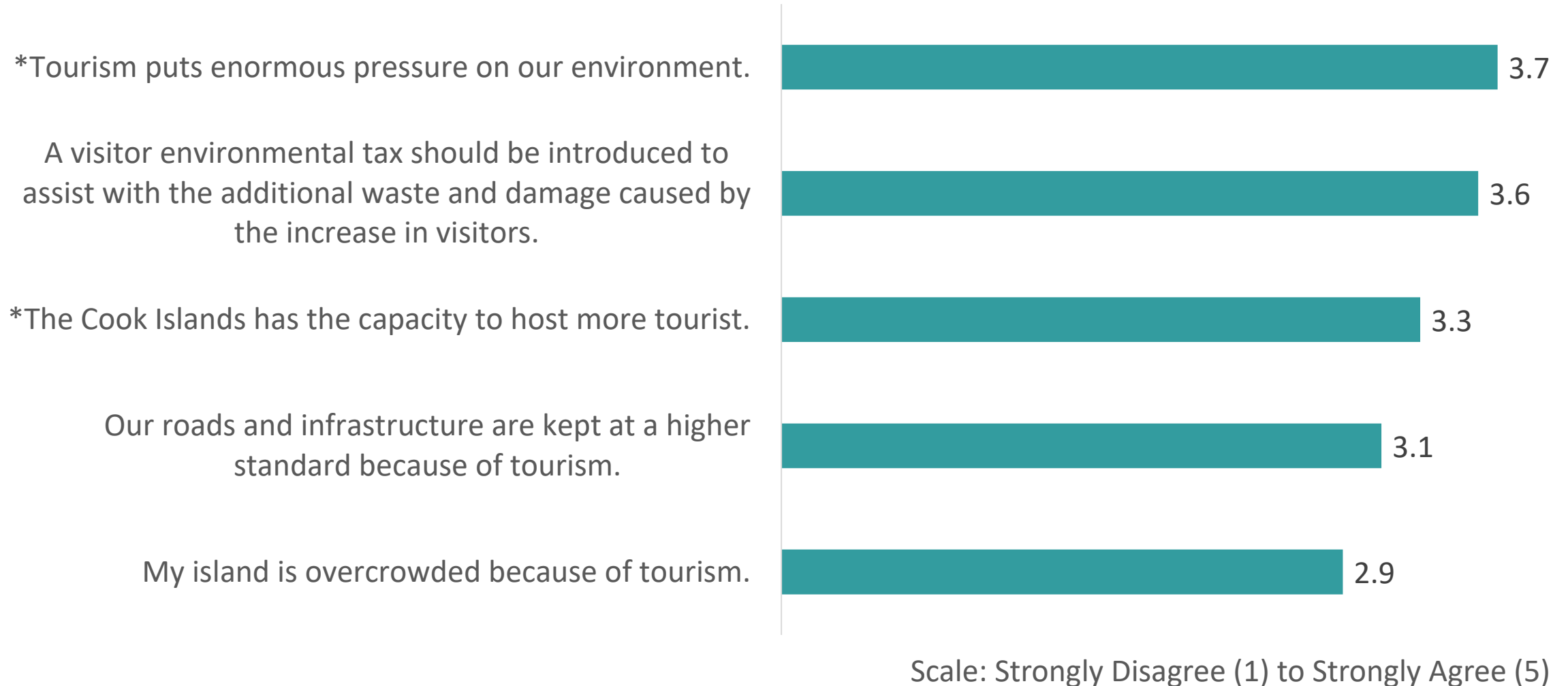


**COOK ISLANDS CAS 2023**

# **TOURISM AND ENVIRONMENTAL DIMENSIONS**



# Tourism and environmental dimensions

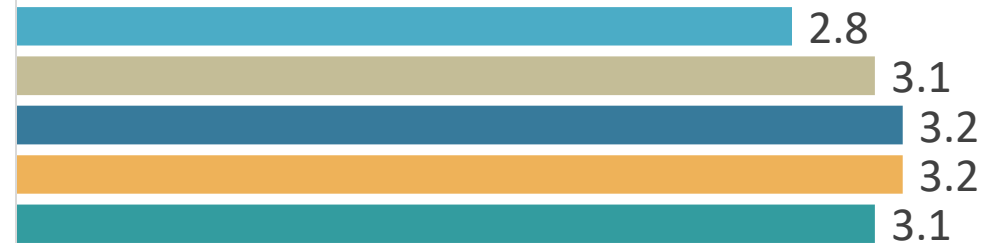


# Tourism and environmental dimensions - Time series

A visitor environmental tax should be introduced to assist with the additional waste and damage caused by the increase in visitors.



Our roads and infrastructure are kept at a higher standard because of tourism.



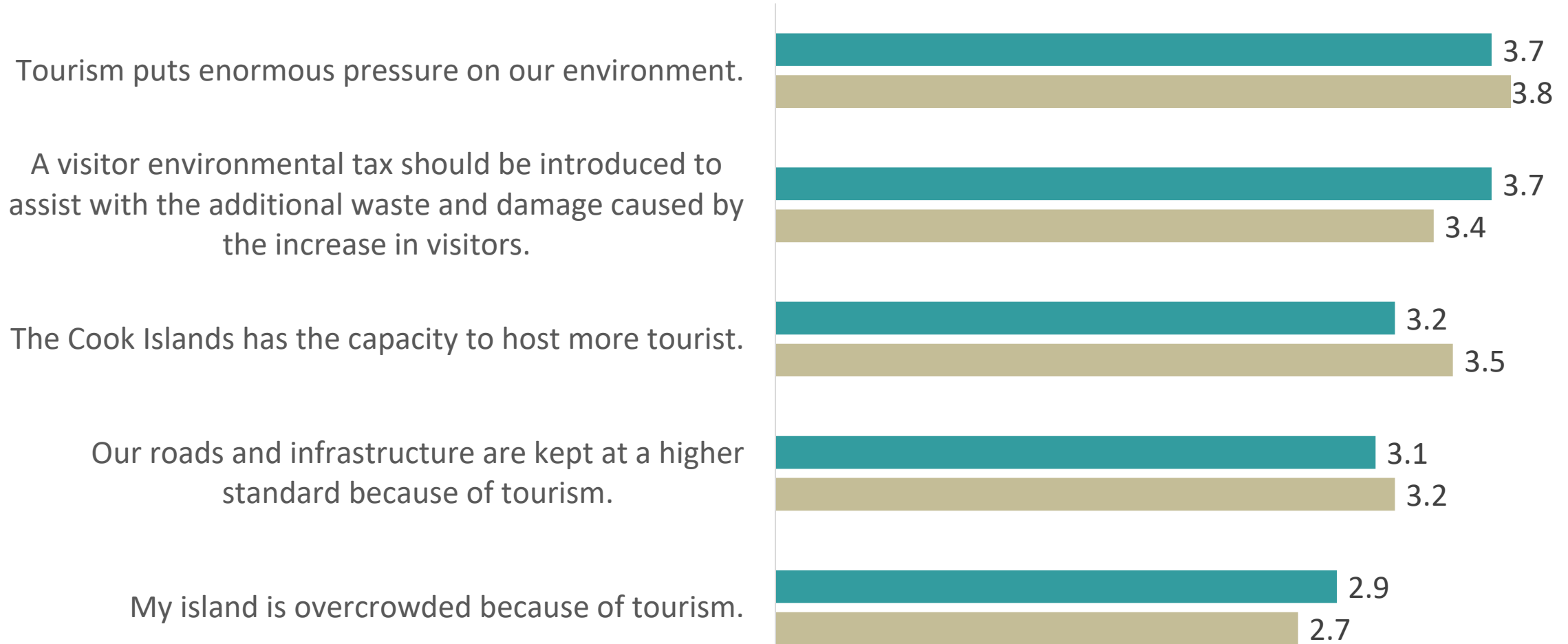
My island is overcrowded because of tourism.



Scale: Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5)

■ 2018 ■ 2019 ■ 2020 ■ 2021 ■ 2023

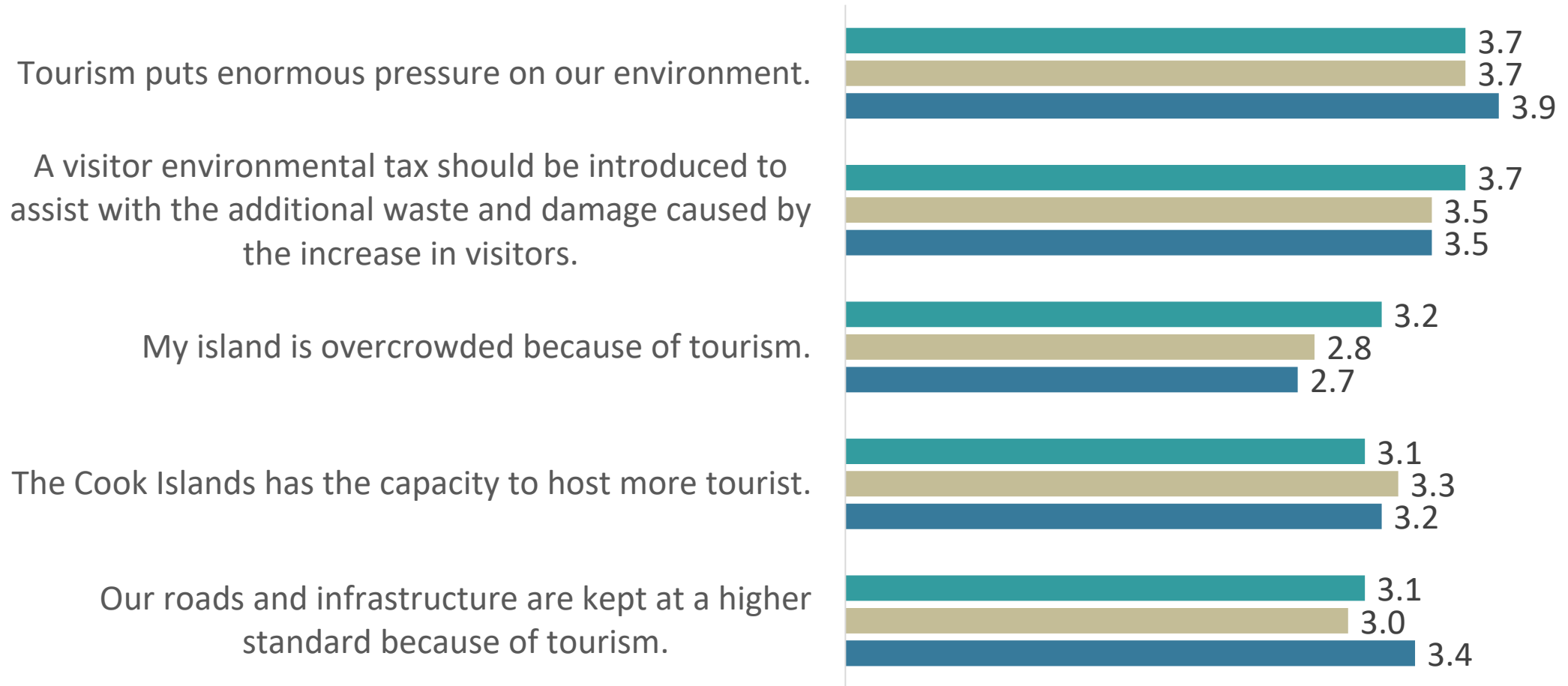
# Tourism and environmental dimensions - CI Māori / Non-CI Māori



Scale: Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5)

■ CI Māori ■ Non-CI Māori

# Tourism and environmental dimensions - Age group

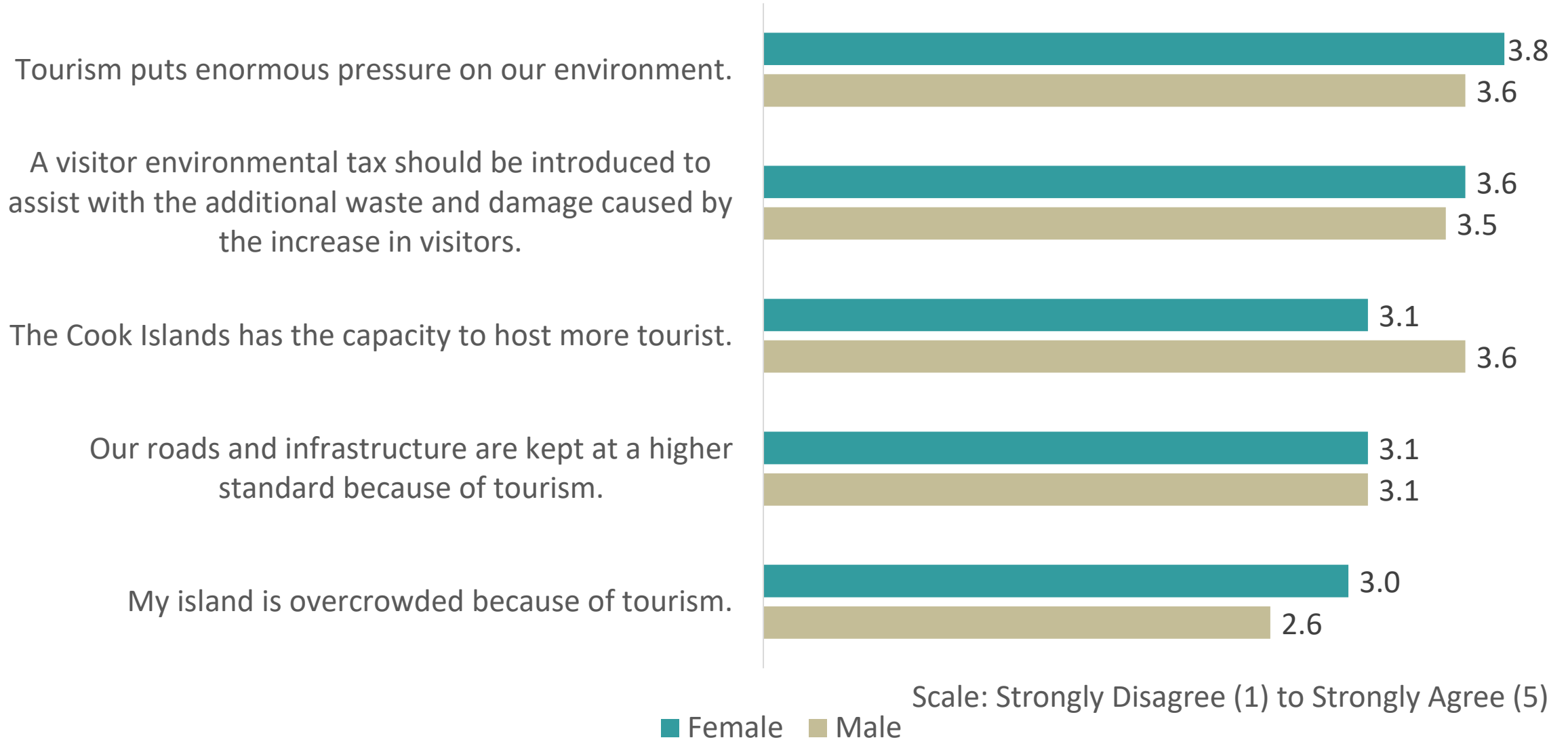


Scale: Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5)

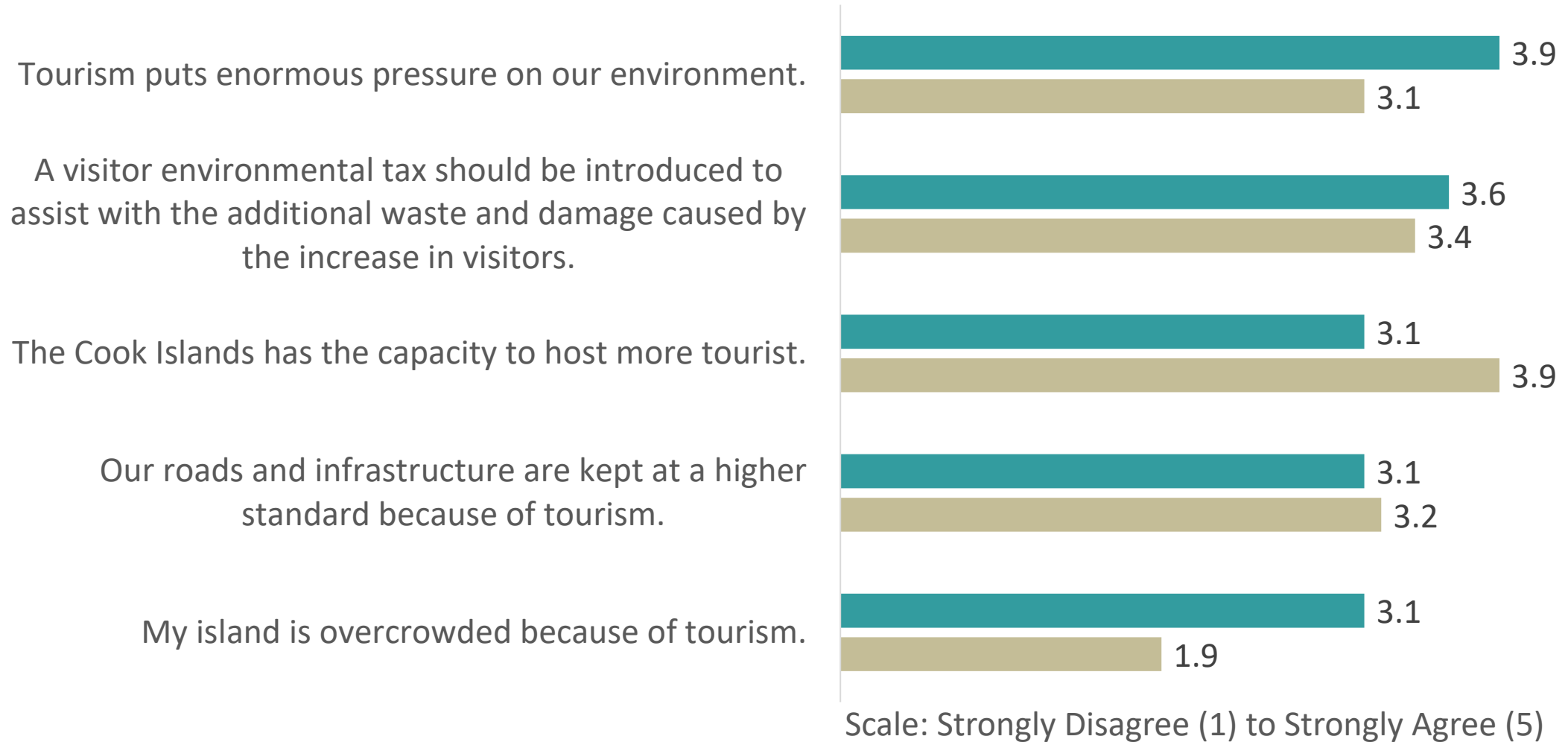
■ 18-29 ■ 30-59 ■ 60+



# Tourism and environmental dimensions - Gender

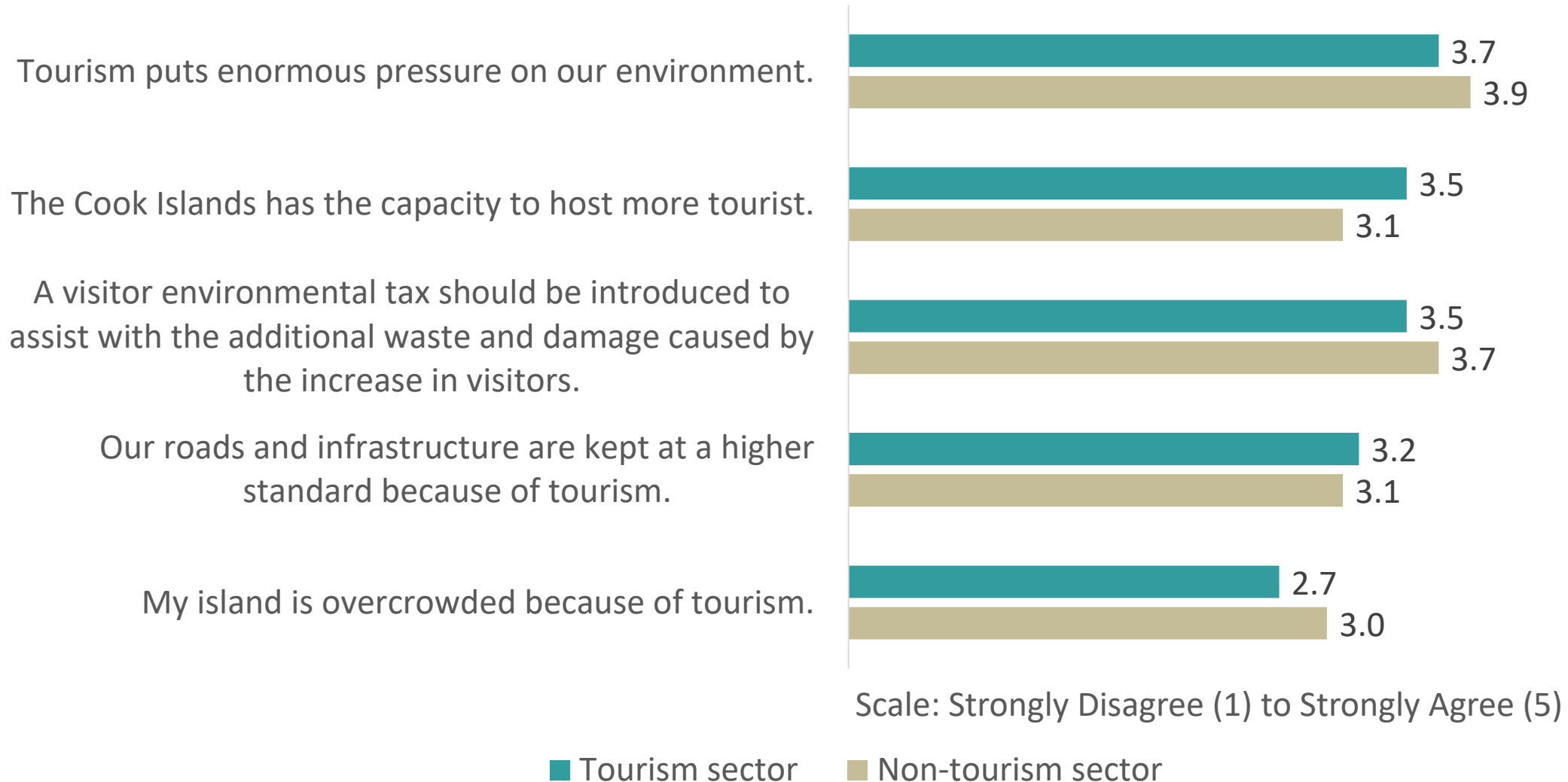


# Tourism and environmental dimensions - Rarotonga / Aitutaki



■ Rarotonga ■ Aitutaki

# Tourism and environmental dimensions - Tourism / Non-tourism





**COOK ISLANDS CAS 2023**

**TOURISM AND  
CULTURAL  
DIMENSIONS**

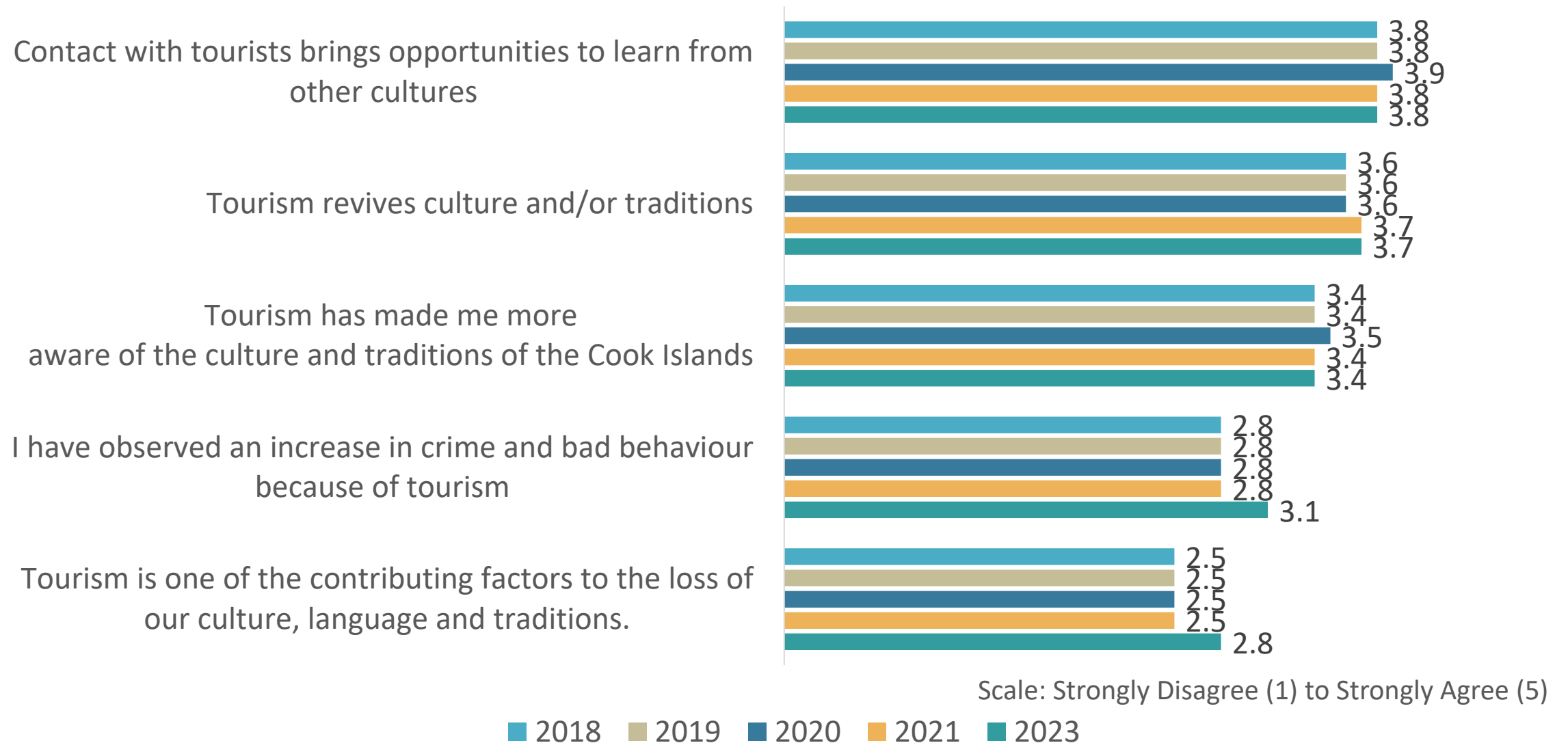


# Tourism and culture dimensions

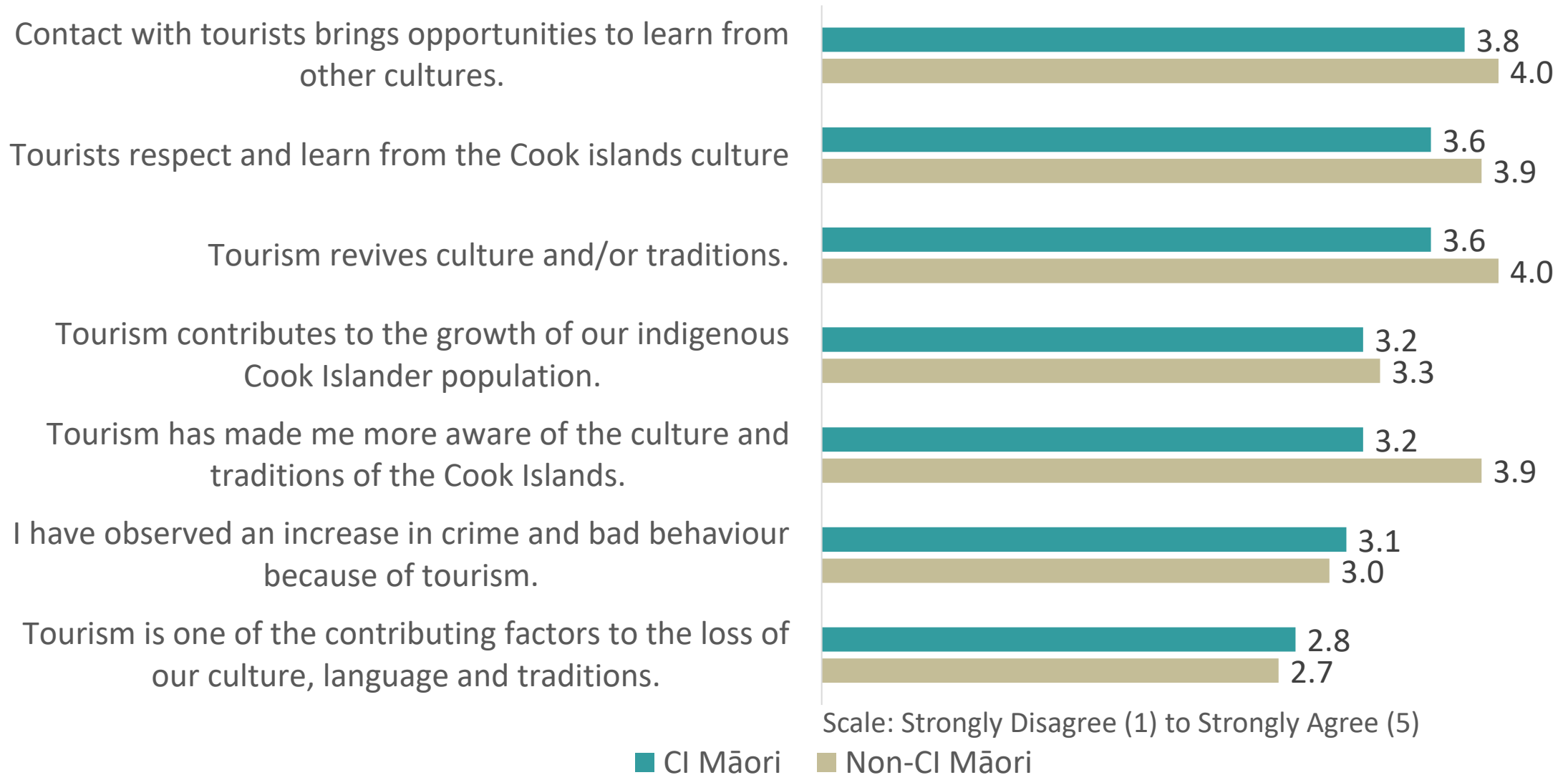


Scale: Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5)

# Tourism and culture dimensions - Time series



## Tourism and culture dimensions - CI Māori / Non-CI Māori





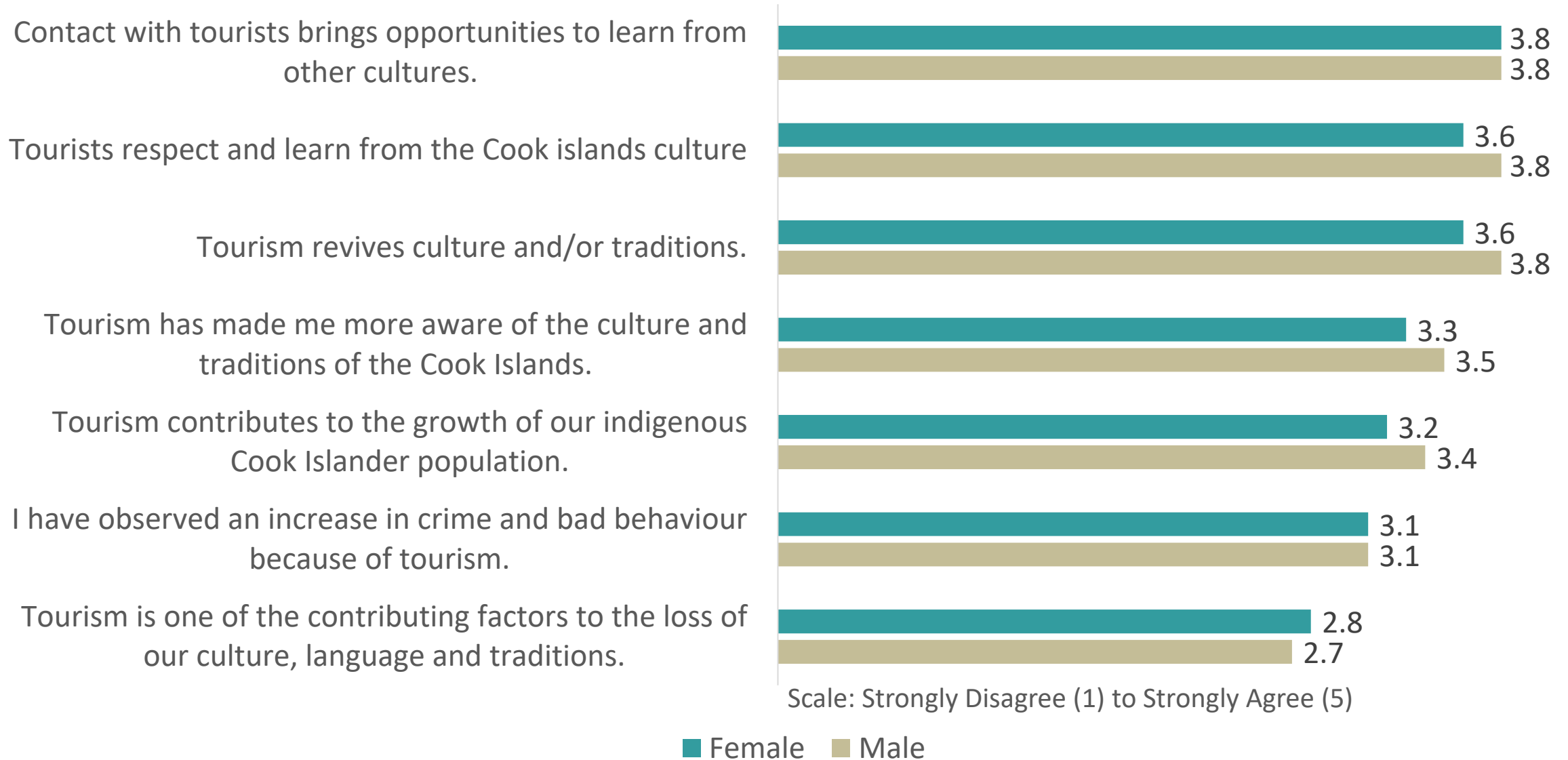
# Tourism and culture dimensions - Age group



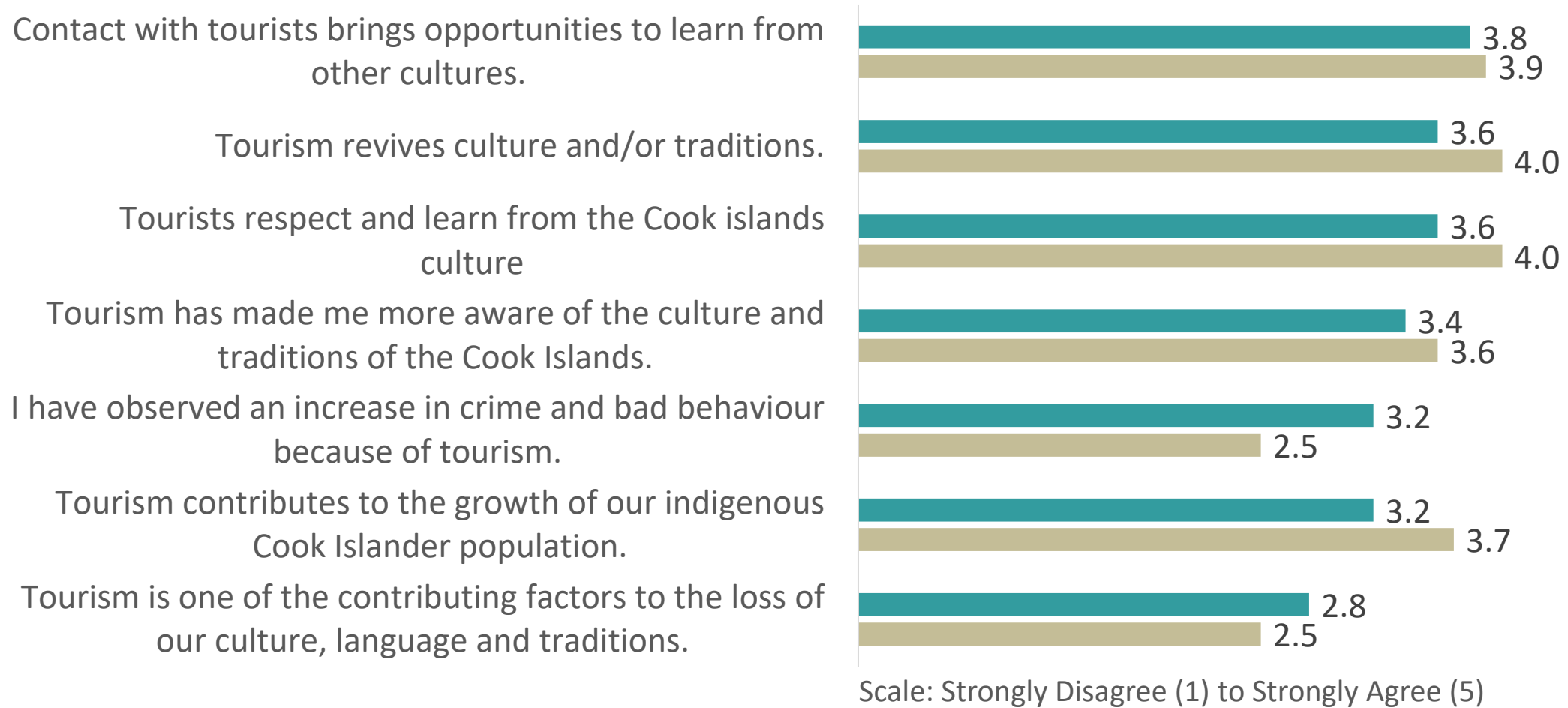
Scale: Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5)

■ 18-29 ■ 30-59 ■ 60+

# Tourism and culture dimensions - Gender



# Tourism and culture dimensions - Rarotonga / Aitutaki



■ Rarotonga ■ Aitutaki

# Tourism and culture dimensions - Tourism / Non-tourism



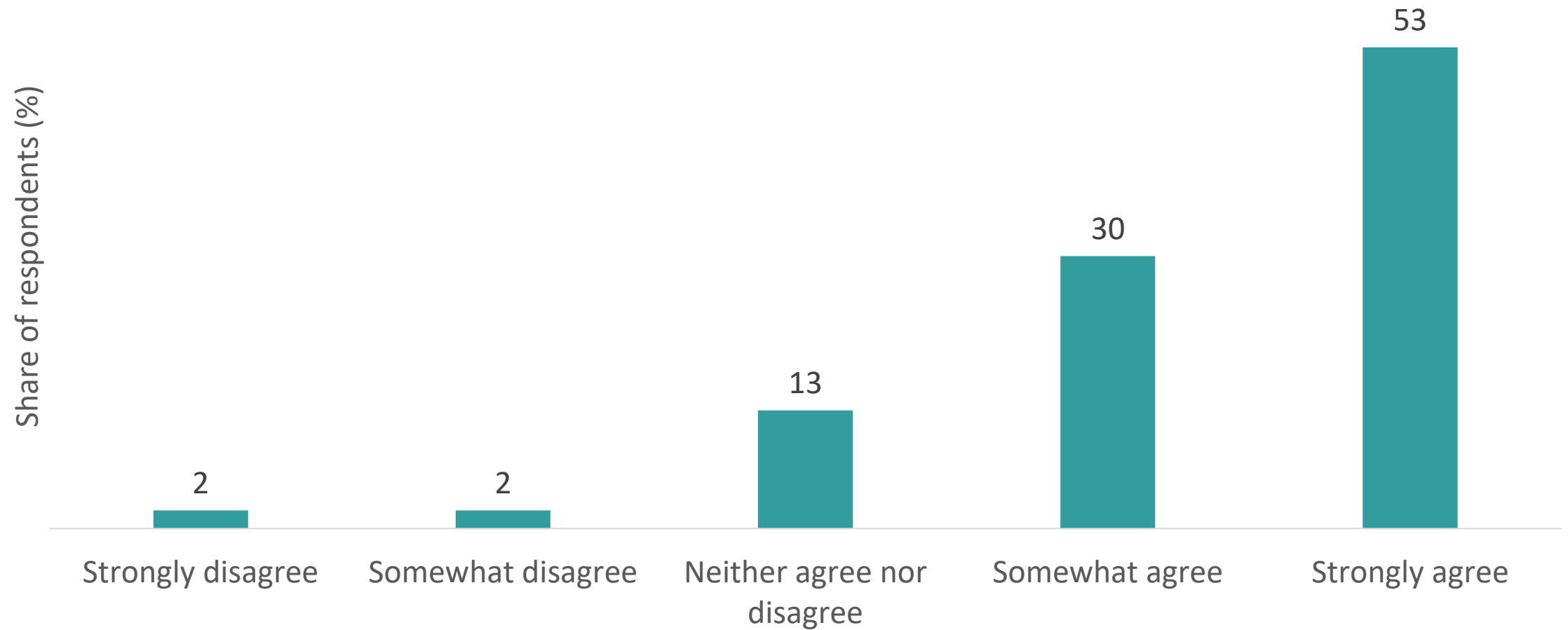
Scale: Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5)

■ Tourism sector

■ Non-tourism sector

# Willingness to share culture with tourists

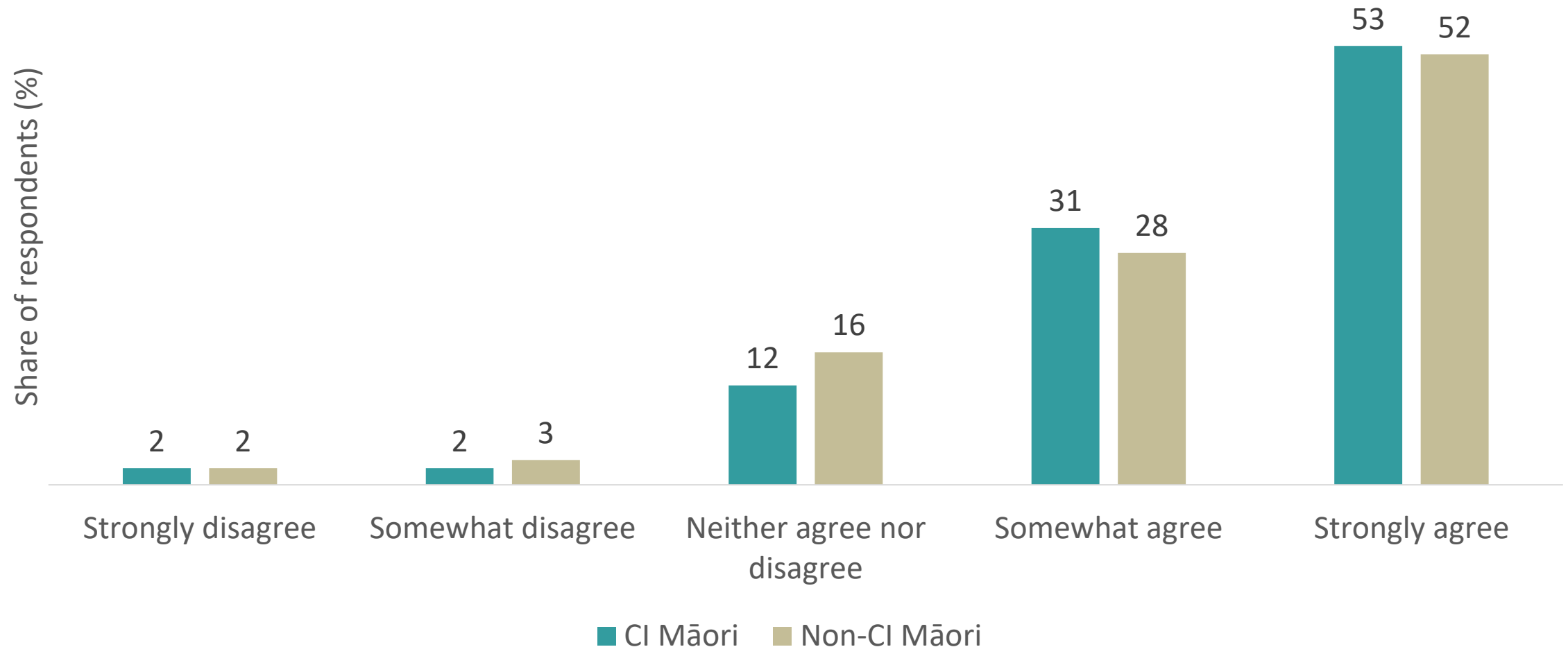
**S** I am willing to share my culture and values with tourists.



*Note: Due to rounding, total does not sum to 100%*

# Willingness to share culture with tourists - CI Māori / Non-CI Māori

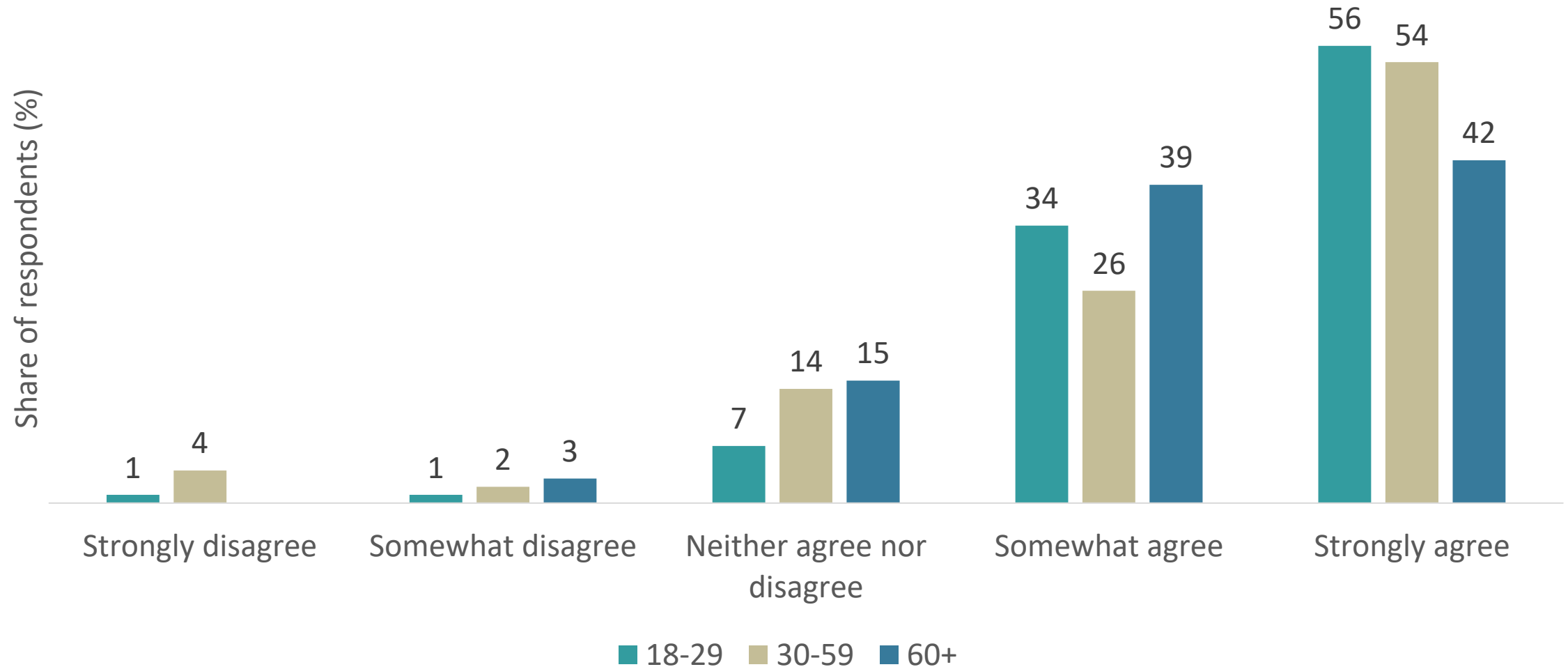
**S** I am willing to share my culture and values with tourists.



*Note: Due to rounding, total does not sum to 100%*

# Willingness to share culture with tourists - Age group

**S** I am willing to share my culture and values with tourists.

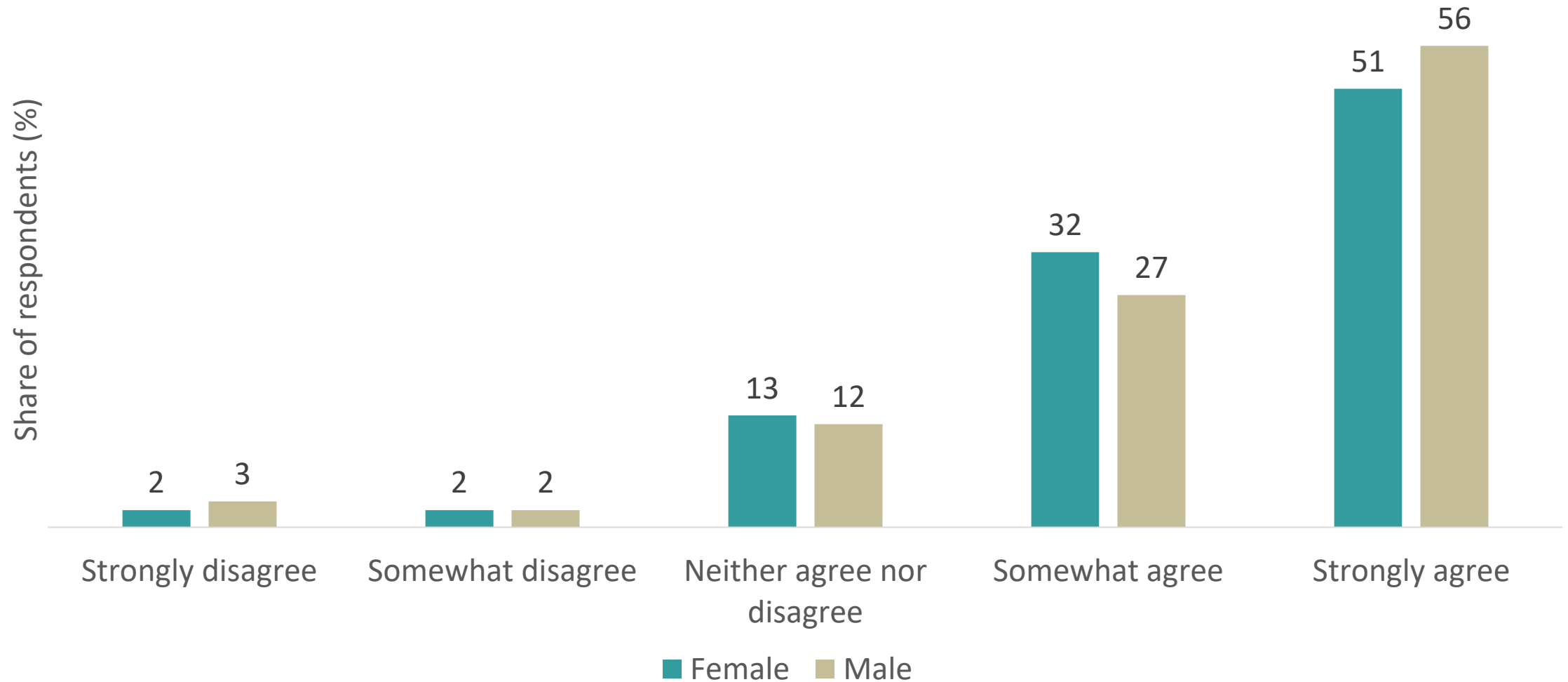


Note: Due to rounding, total does not sum to 100%



# Willingness to share culture with tourists - Gender

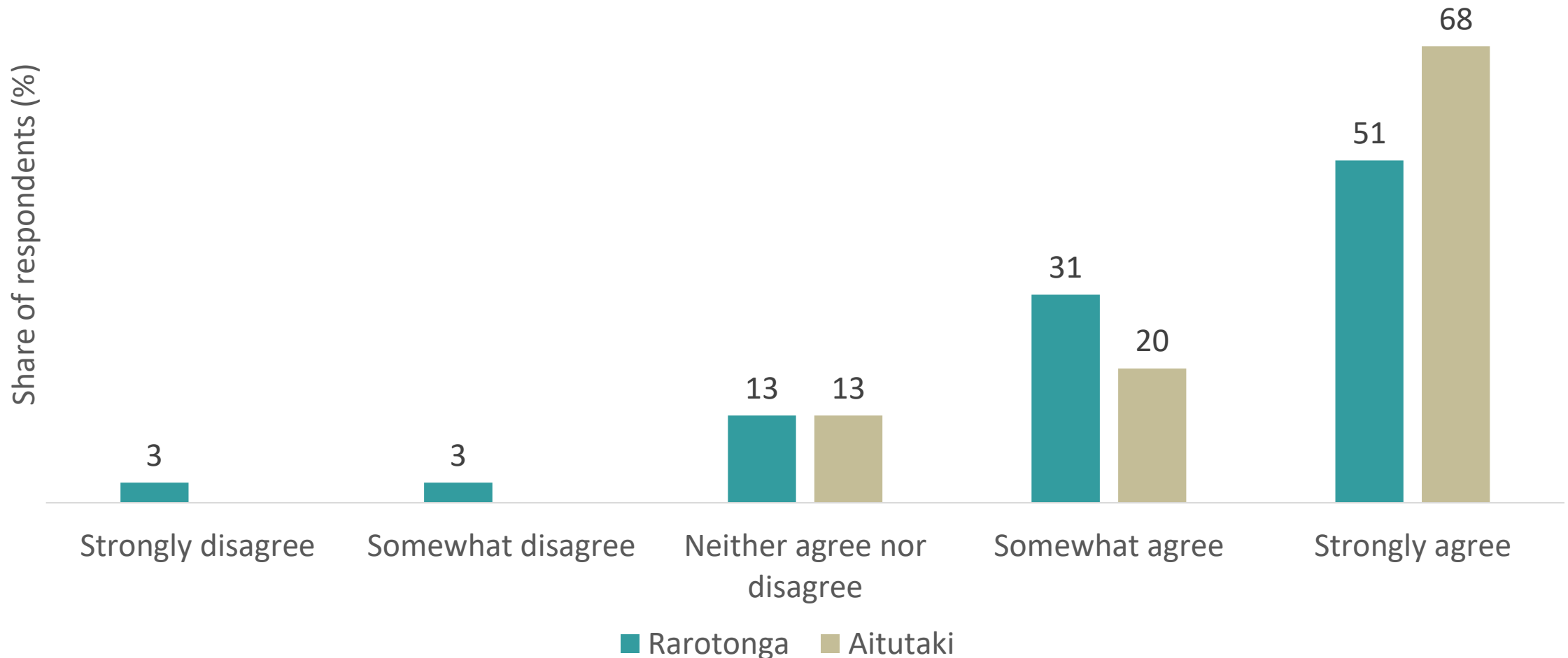
**S** I am willing to share my culture and values with tourists.



Note: Due to rounding, total does not sum to 100%

# Willingness to share culture with tourists - Rarotonga / Aitutaki

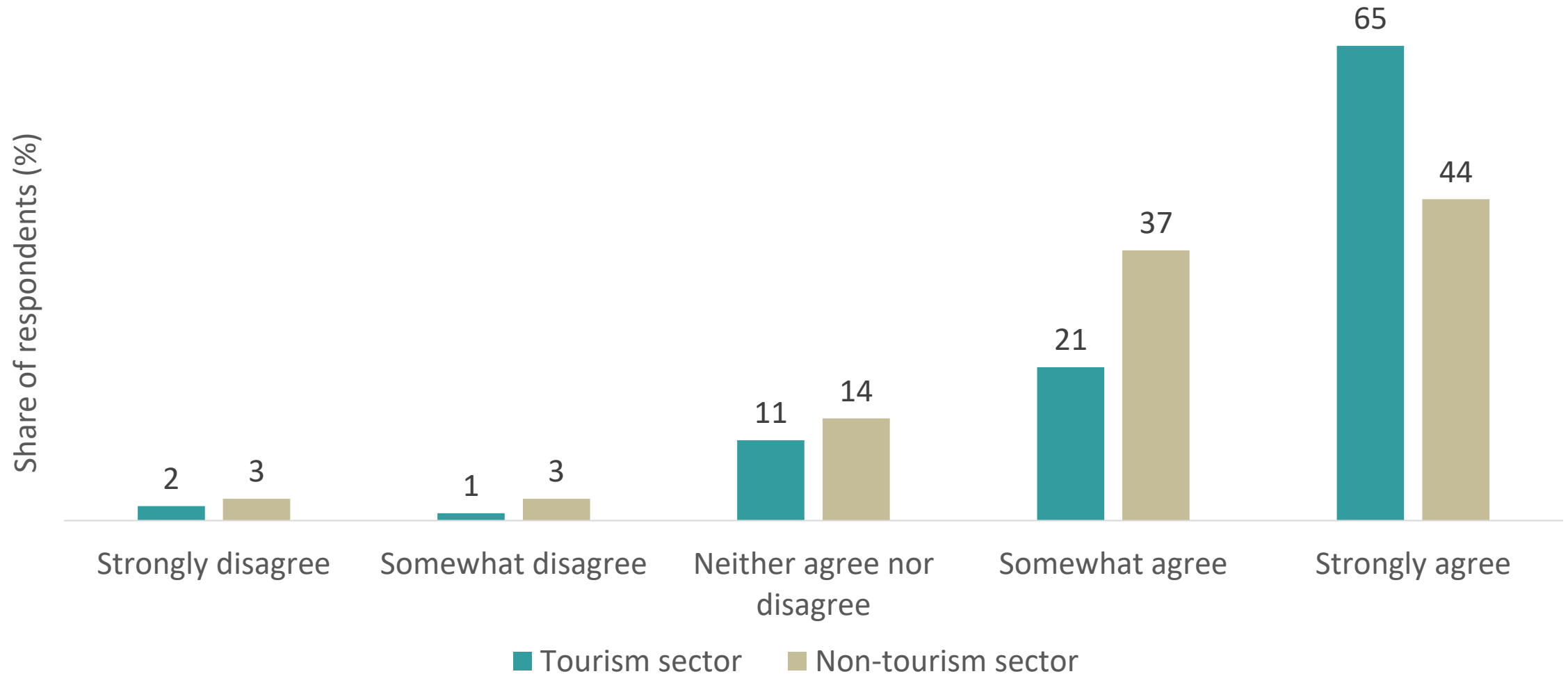
**S** I am willing to share my culture and values with tourists.



Note: Due to rounding, total does not sum to 100%

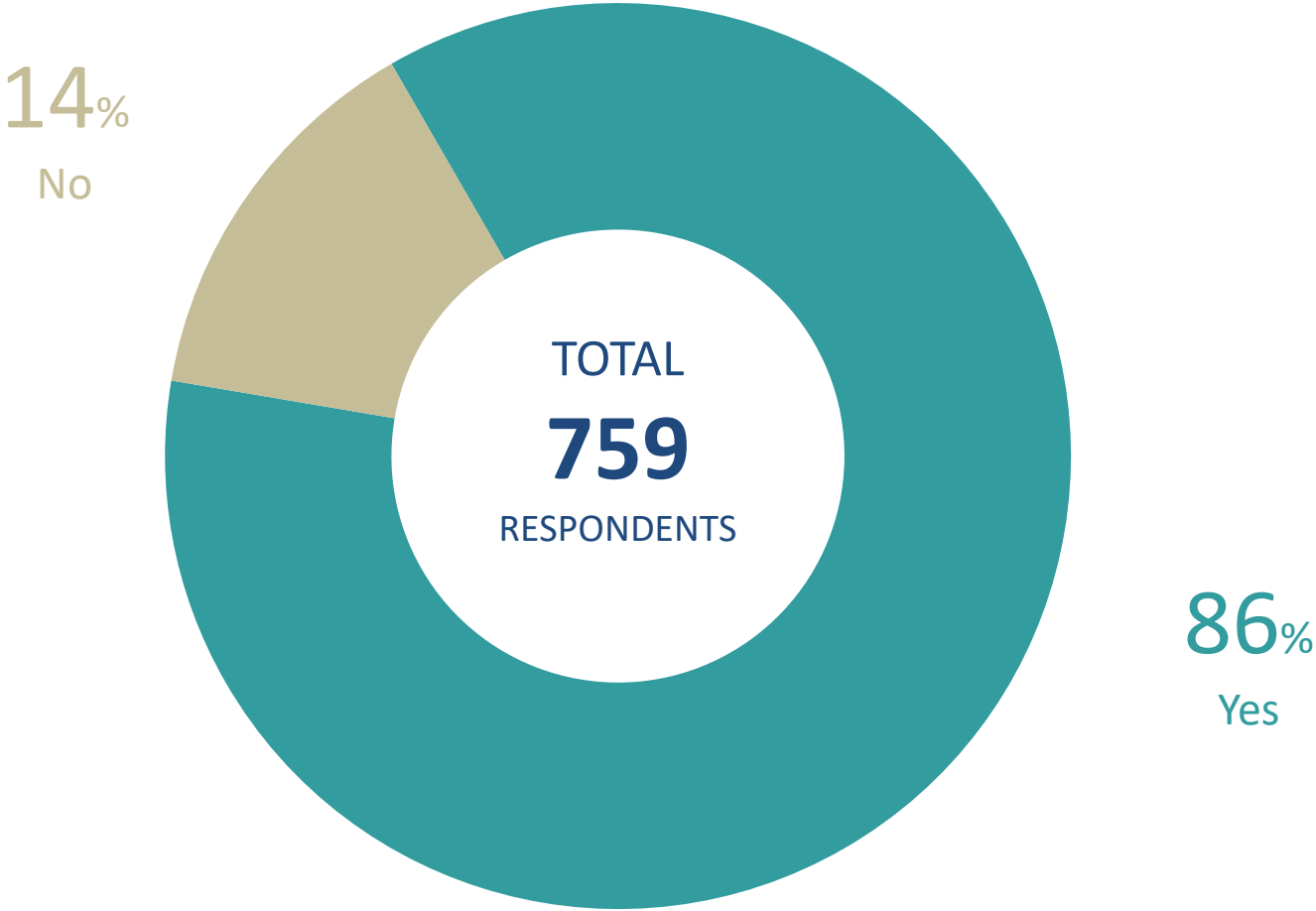
# Willingness to share culture with tourists - Tourism / Non-tourism

**S** I am willing to share my culture and values with tourists.

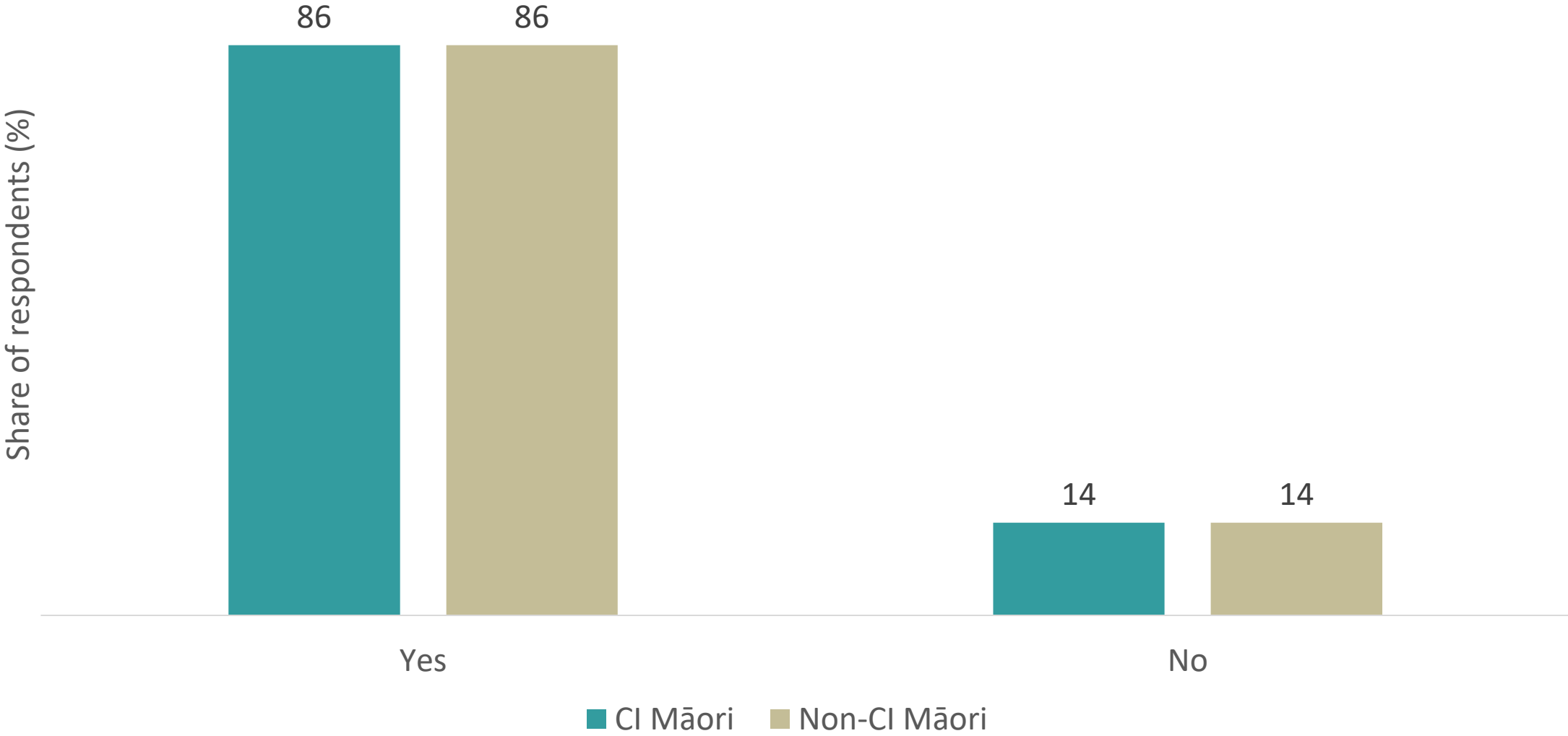


Note: Due to rounding, total does not sum to 100%

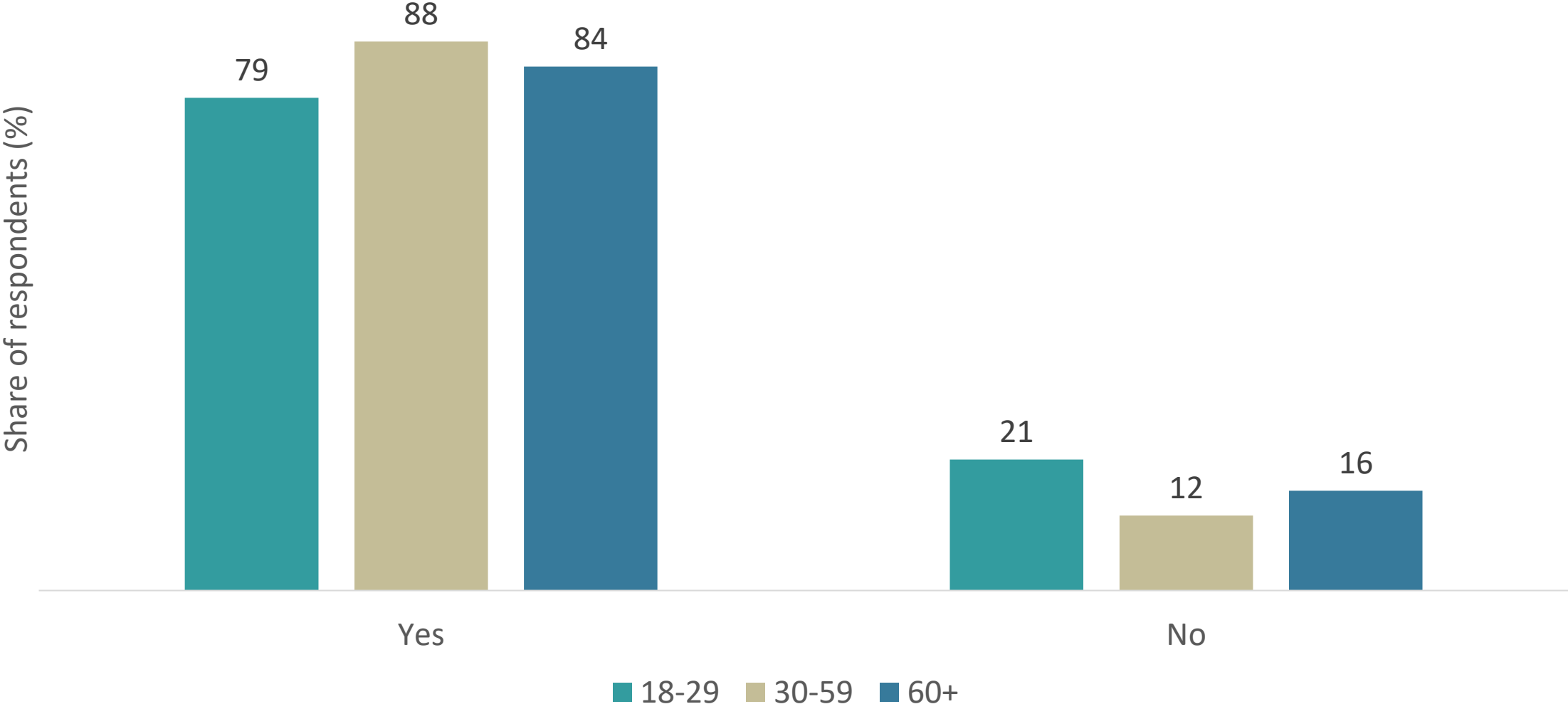
# Awareness of the Kia Orana Values programme



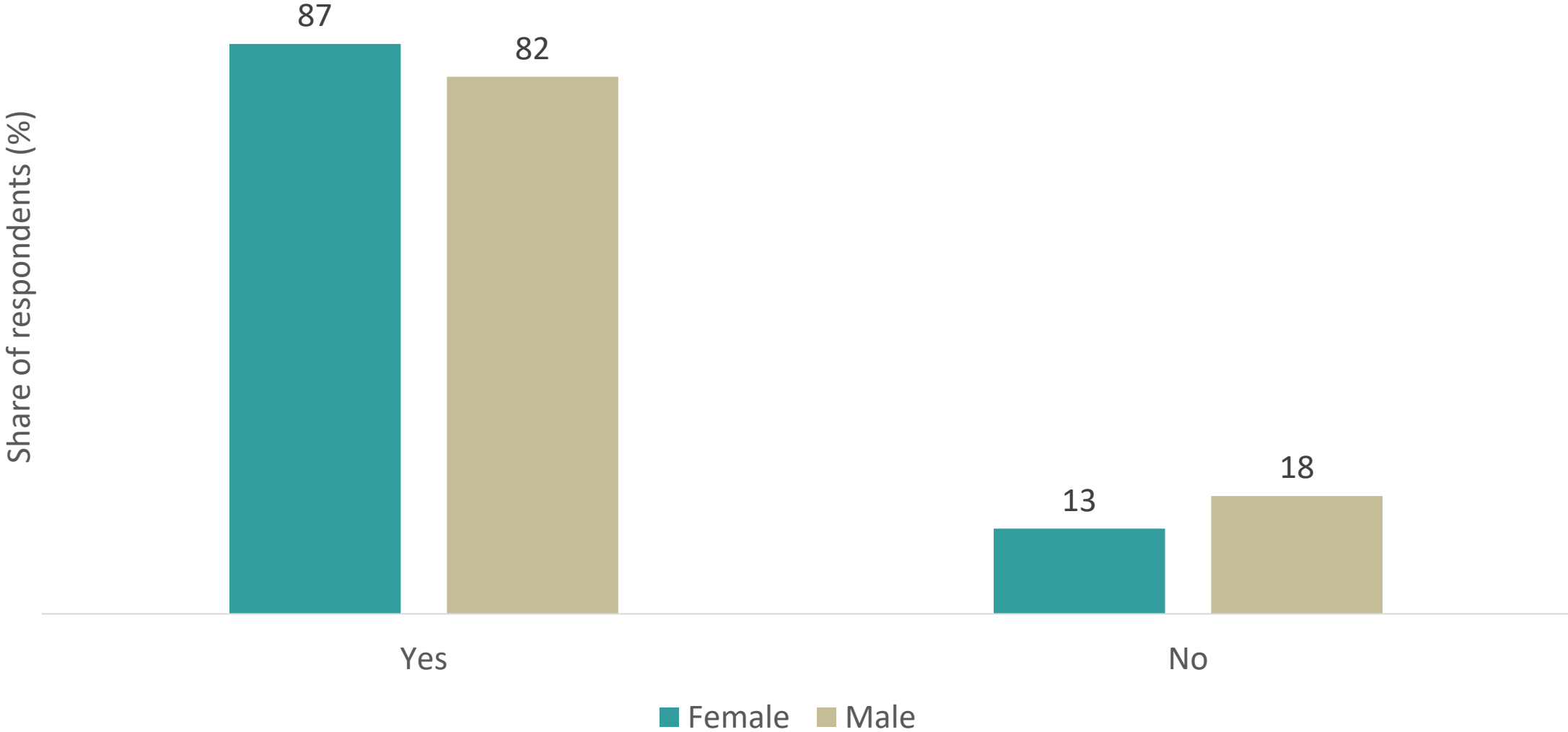
# Awareness of the Kia Orana Values programme - CI Māori / Non-CI Māori



# Awareness of the Kia Orana Values programme - Age group

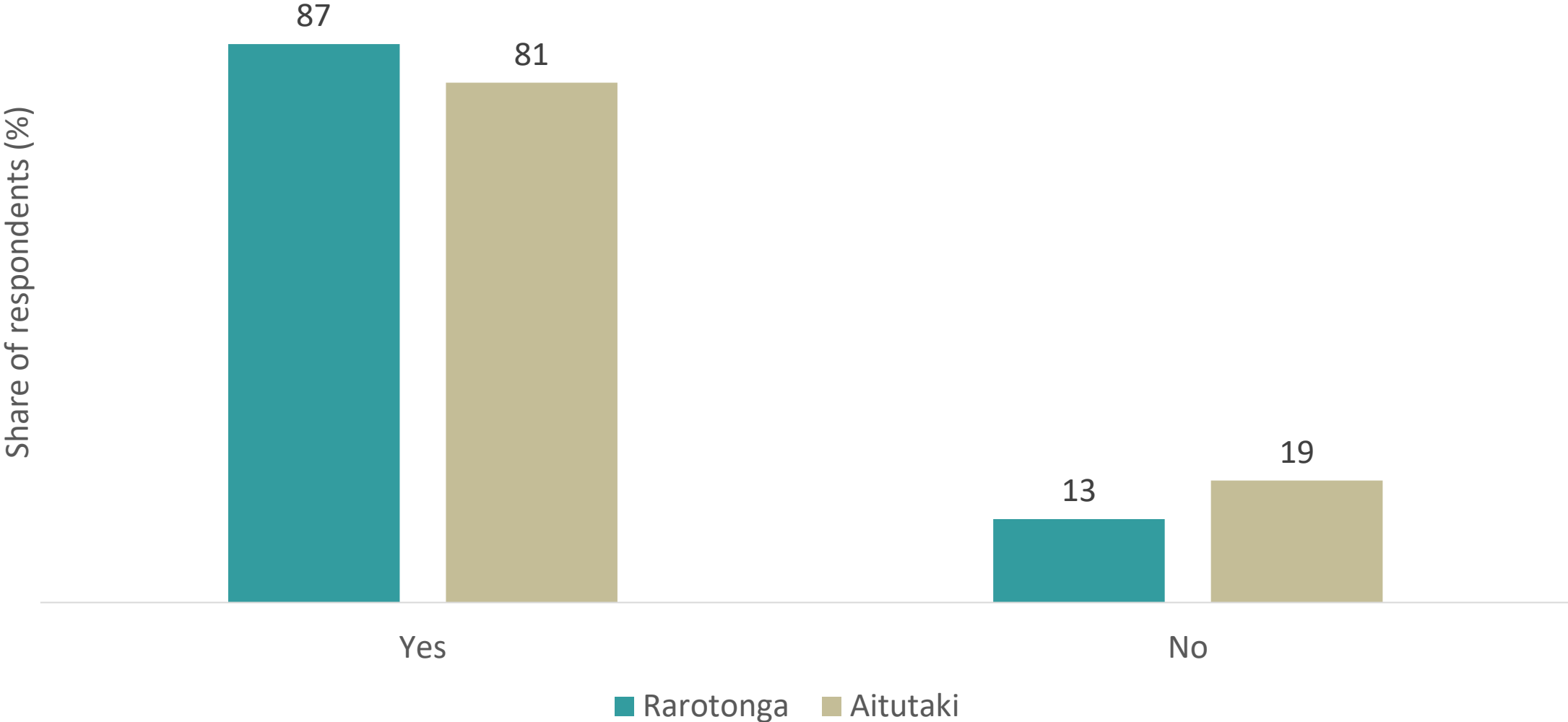


# Awareness of the Kia Orana Values programme - Gender

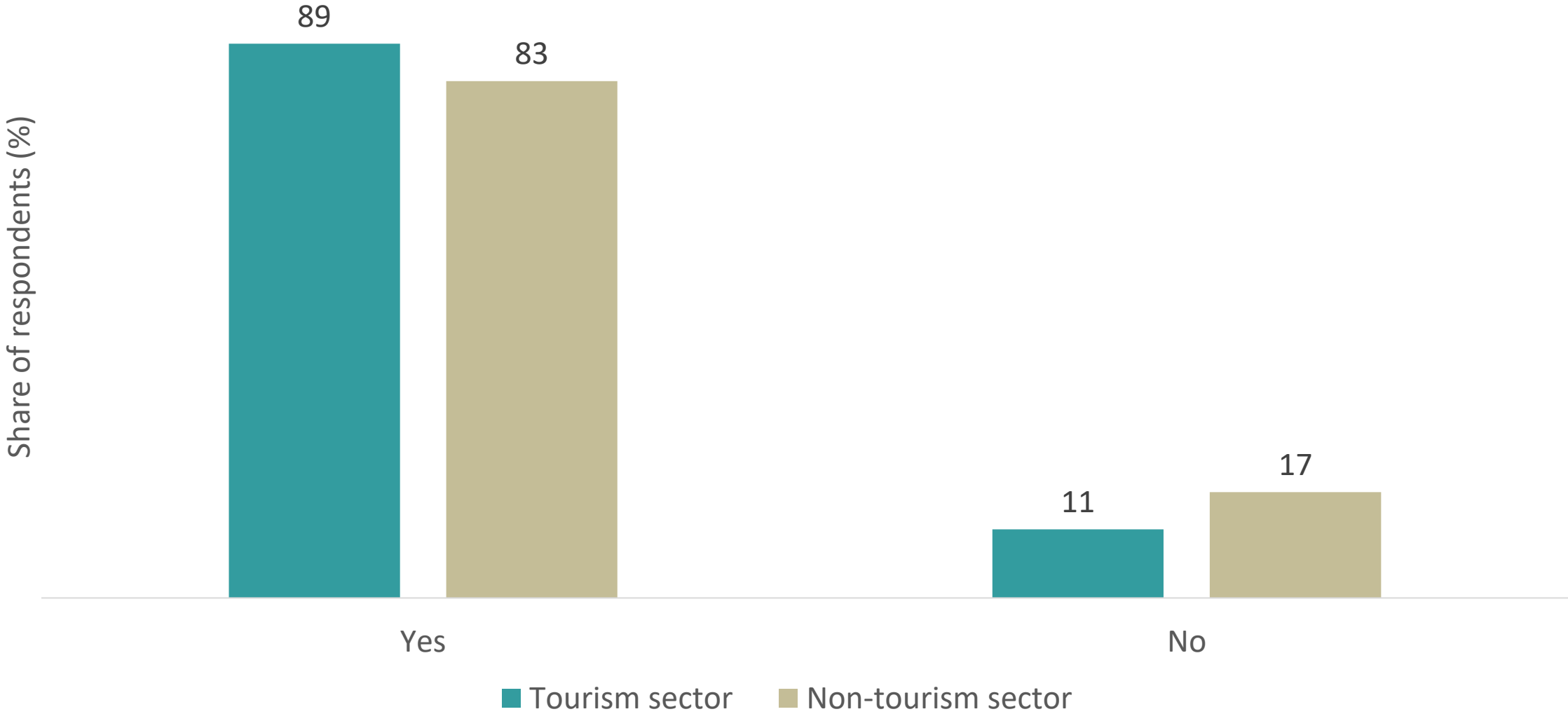




# Awareness of the Kia Orana Values programme - Rarotonga / Aitutaki



# Awareness of the Kia Orana Values programme - Tourism / Non-tourism



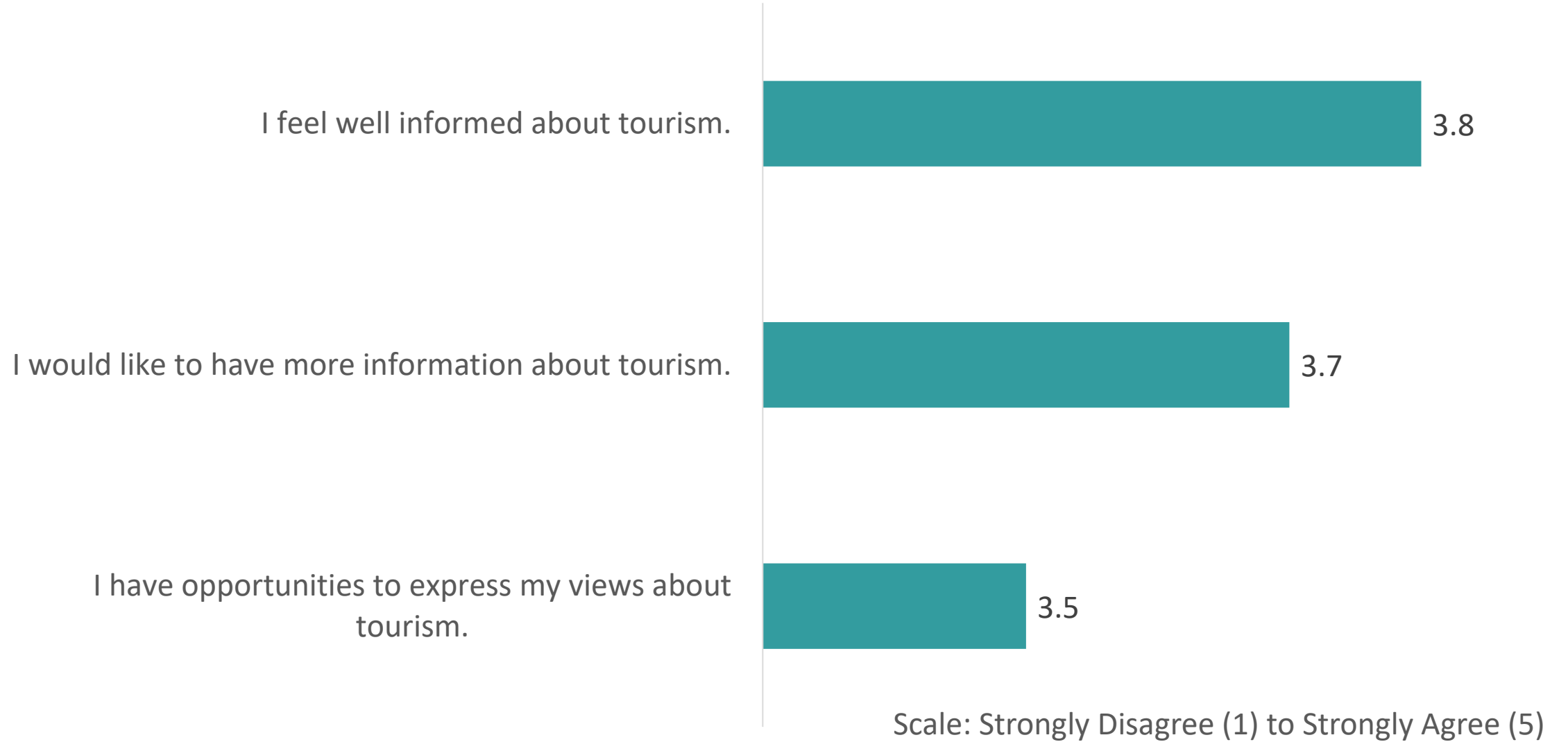


**COOK ISLANDS CAS 2023**

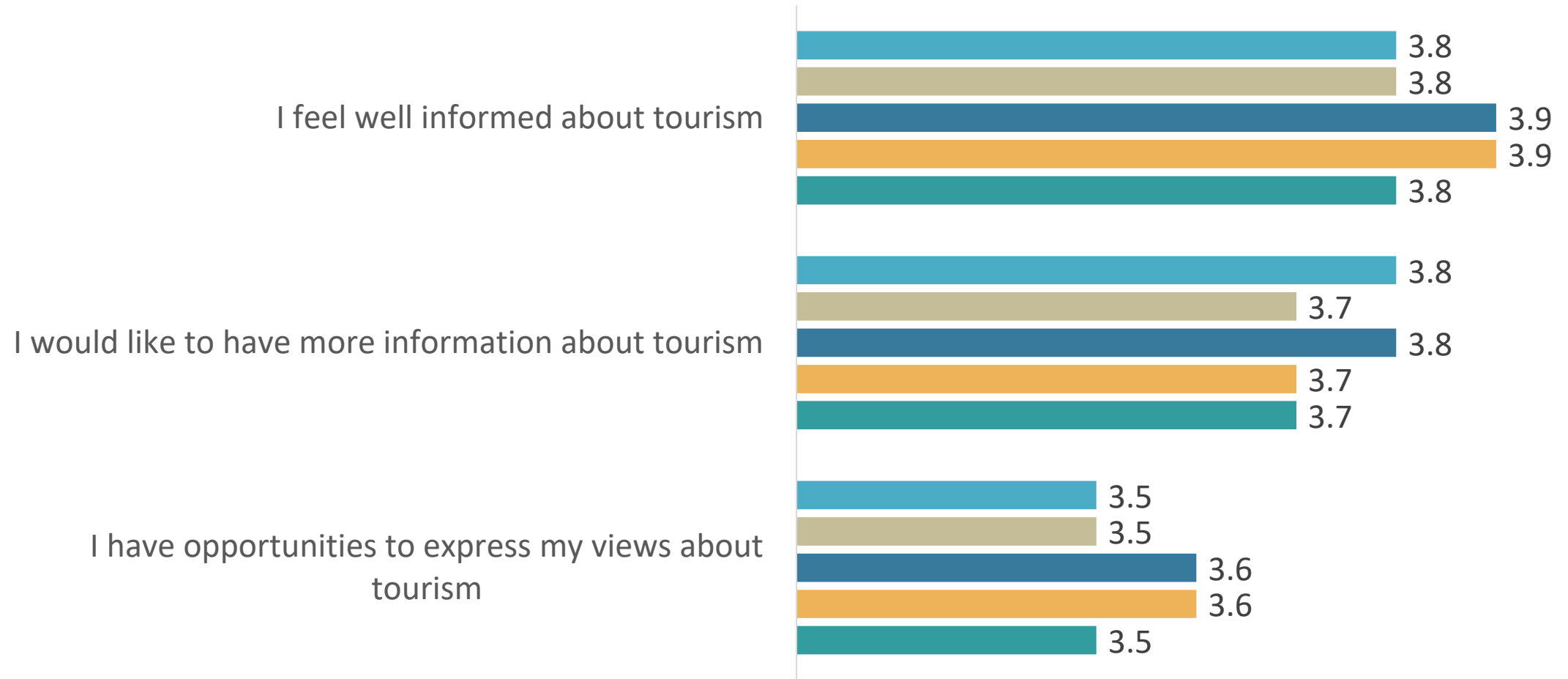
**TOURISM AND  
INFORMATION  
ACCESS**



# Tourism and information access



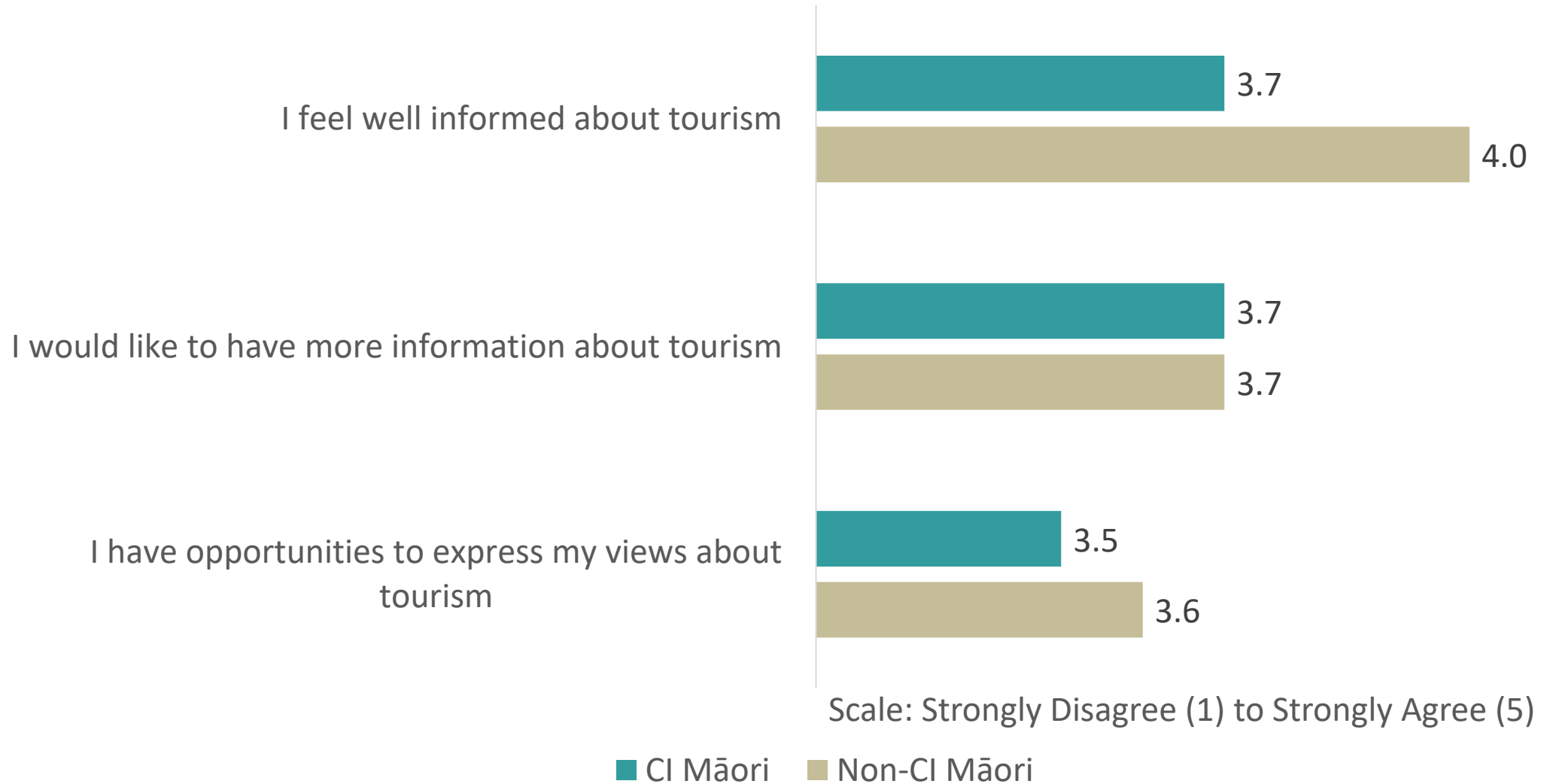
# Tourism and information access - Time series



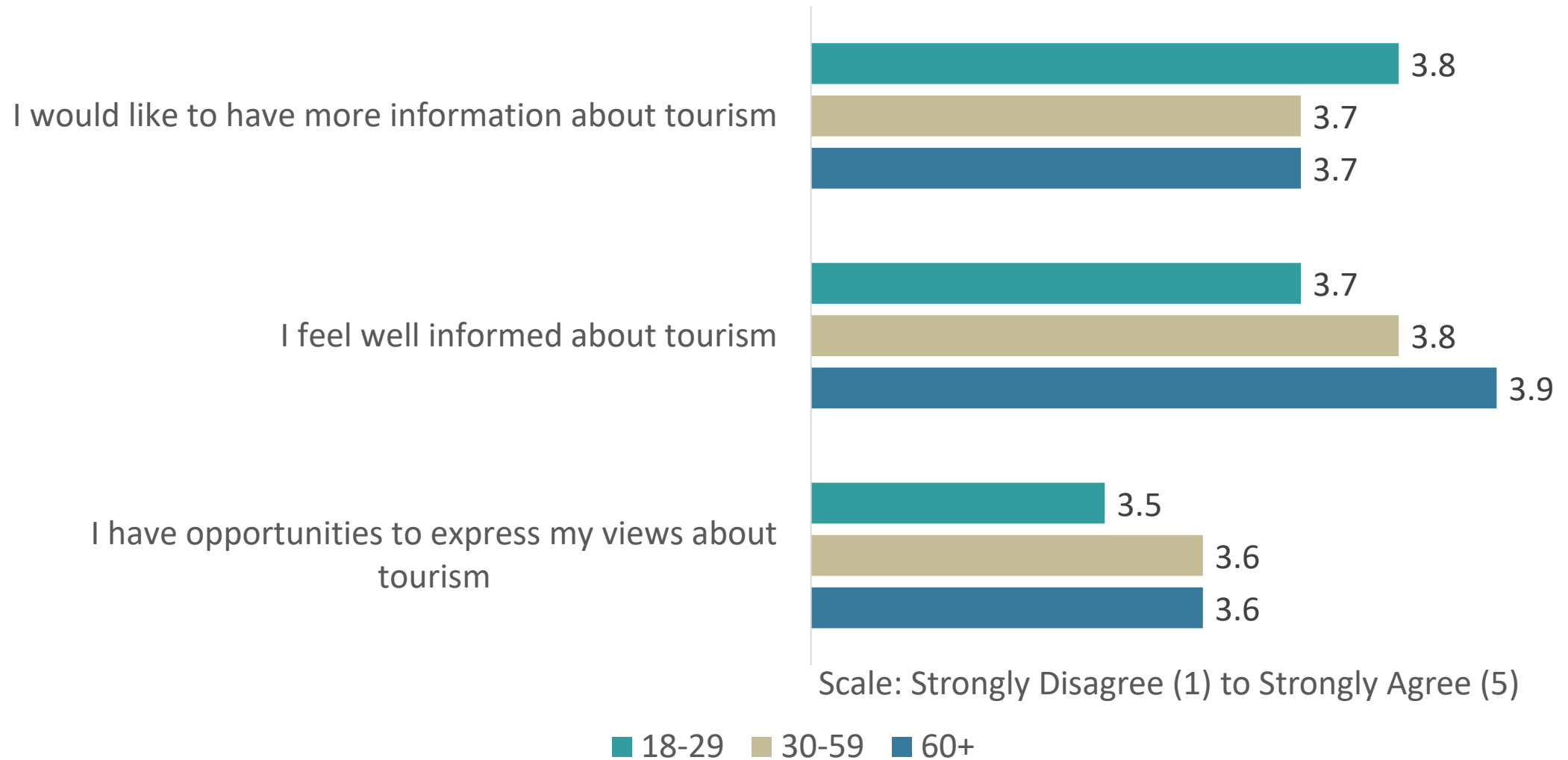
Scale: Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5)

■ 2018 ■ 2019 ■ 2020 ■ 2021 ■ 2023

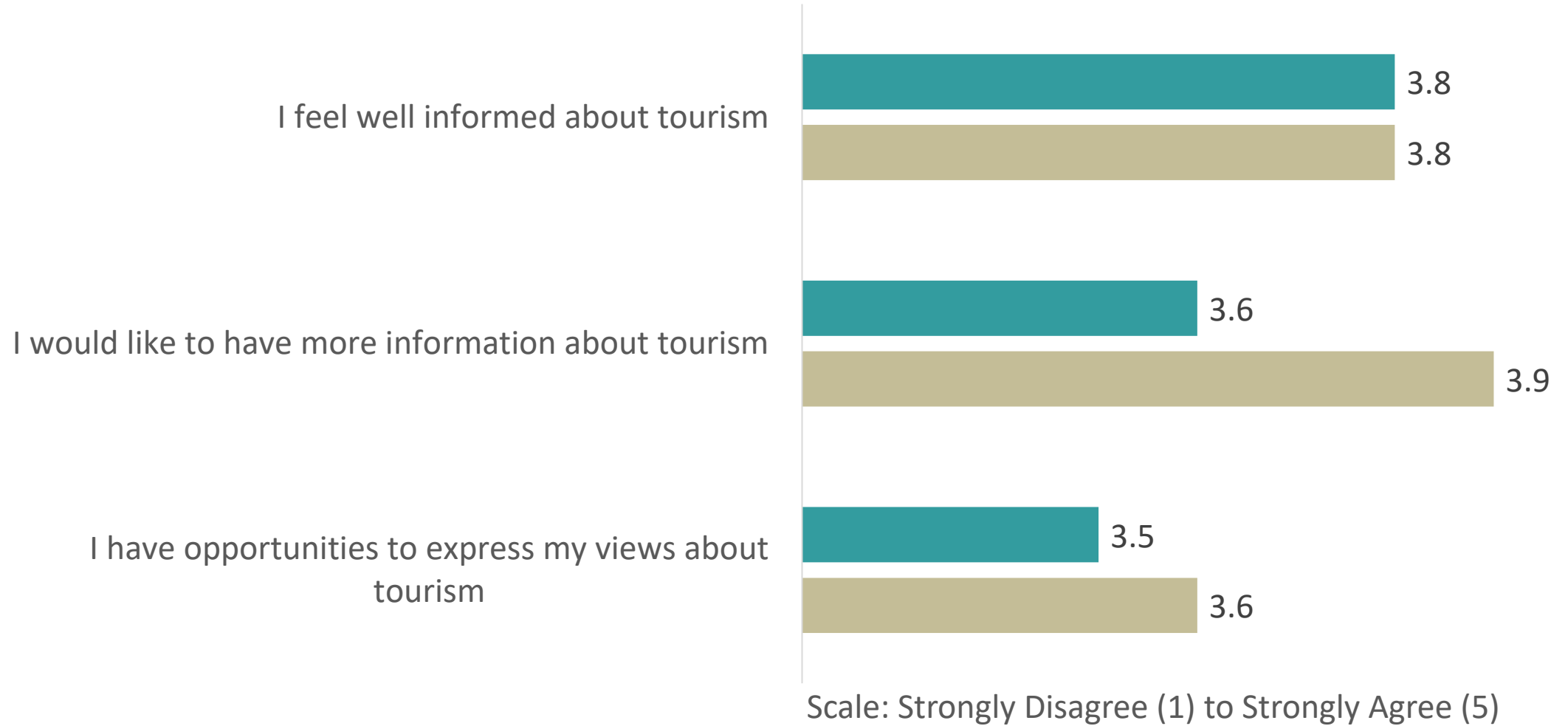
# Tourism and information access - CI Māori / Non-CI Māori



# Tourism and information access – Age group



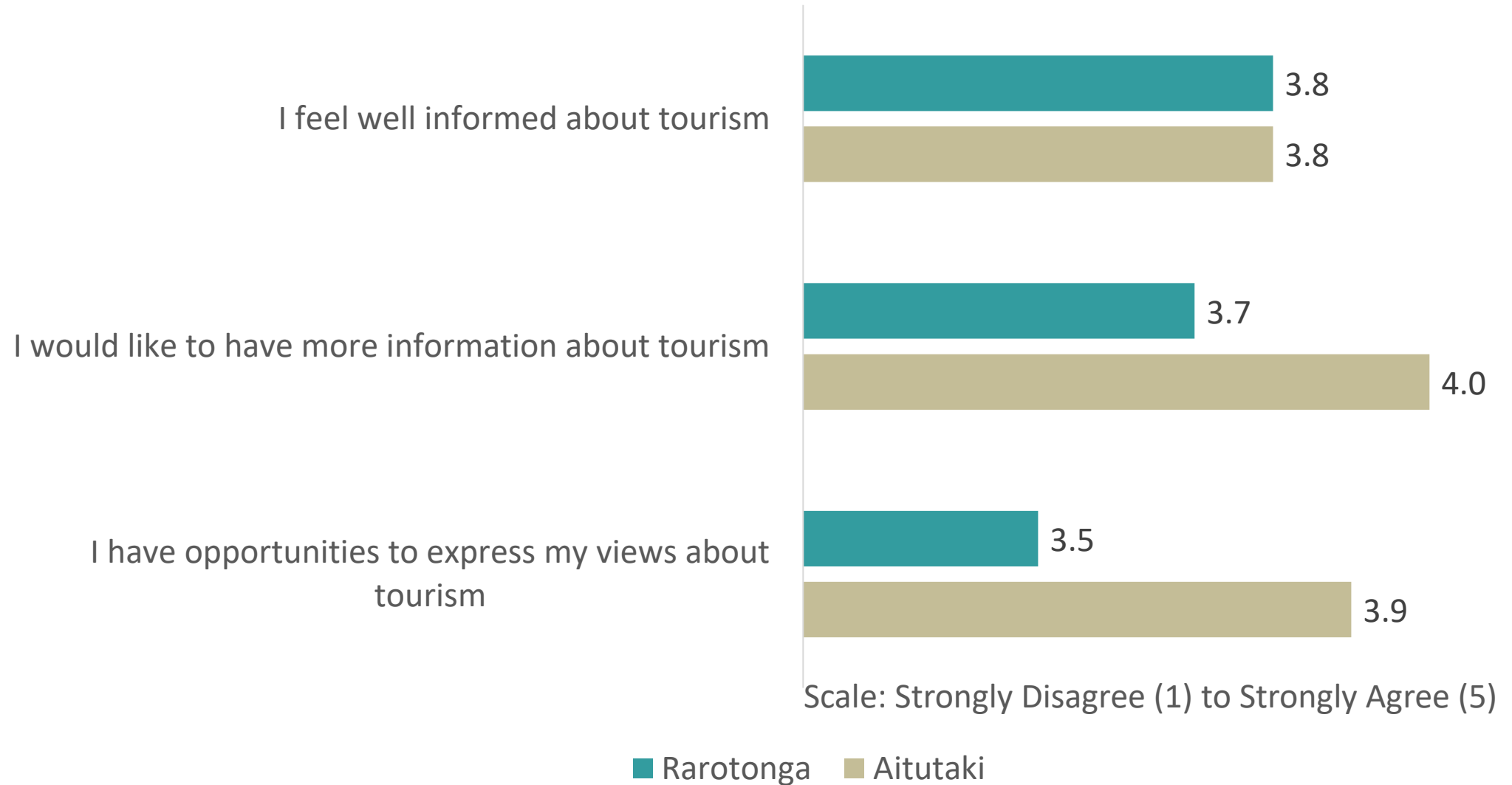
# Tourism and information access - Gender



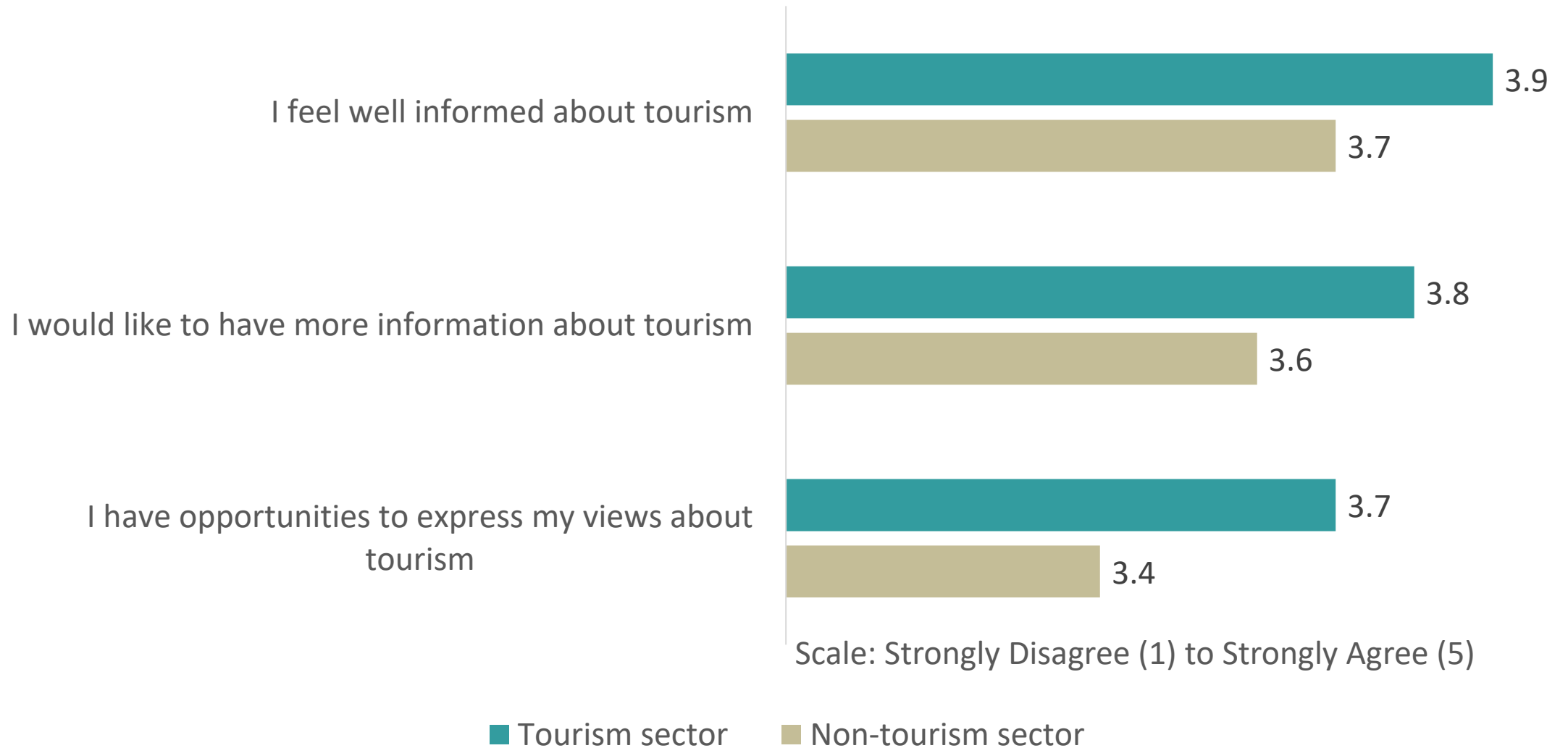
■ Female ■ Male



# Tourism and information access - Rarotonga / Aitutaki



## Tourism and information access - Tourism / Non-tourism





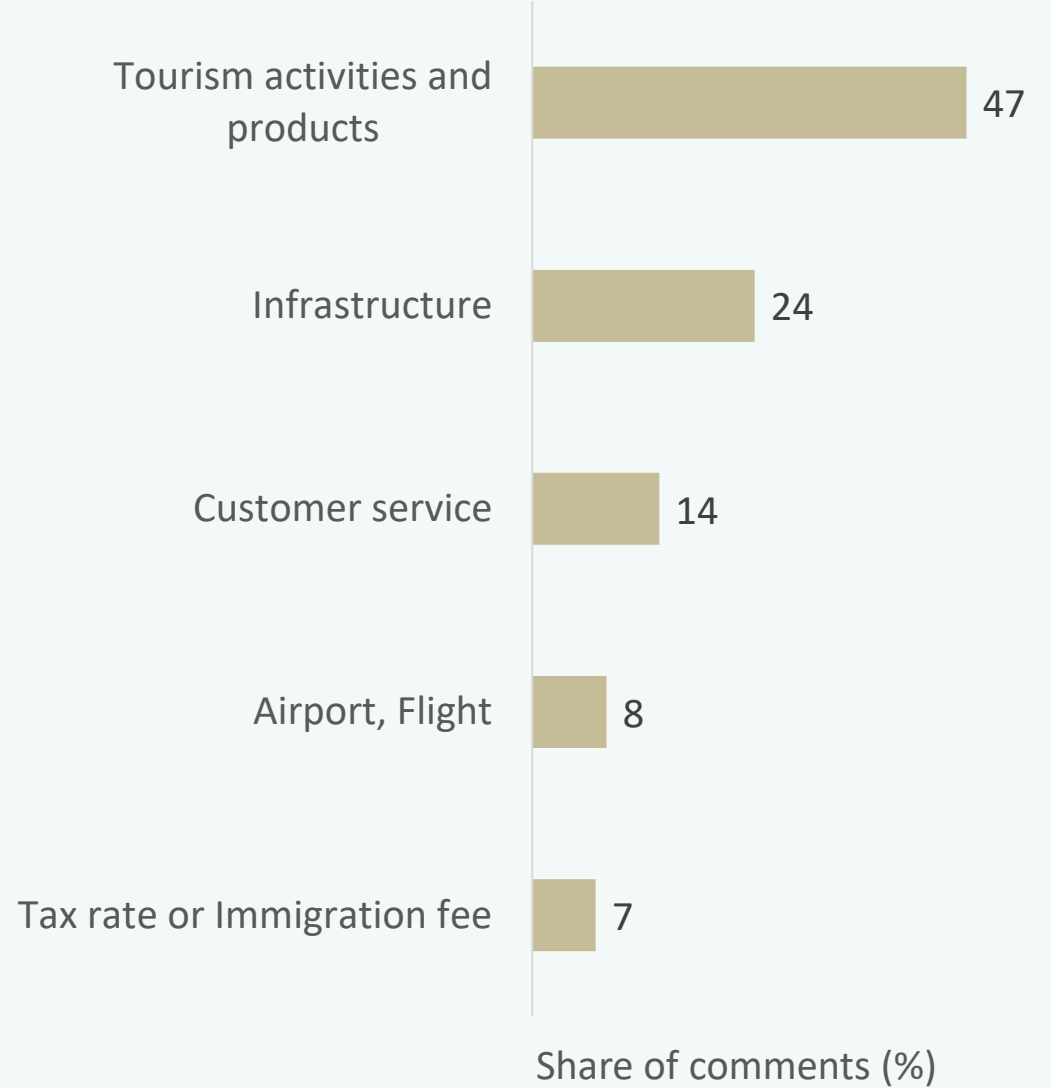
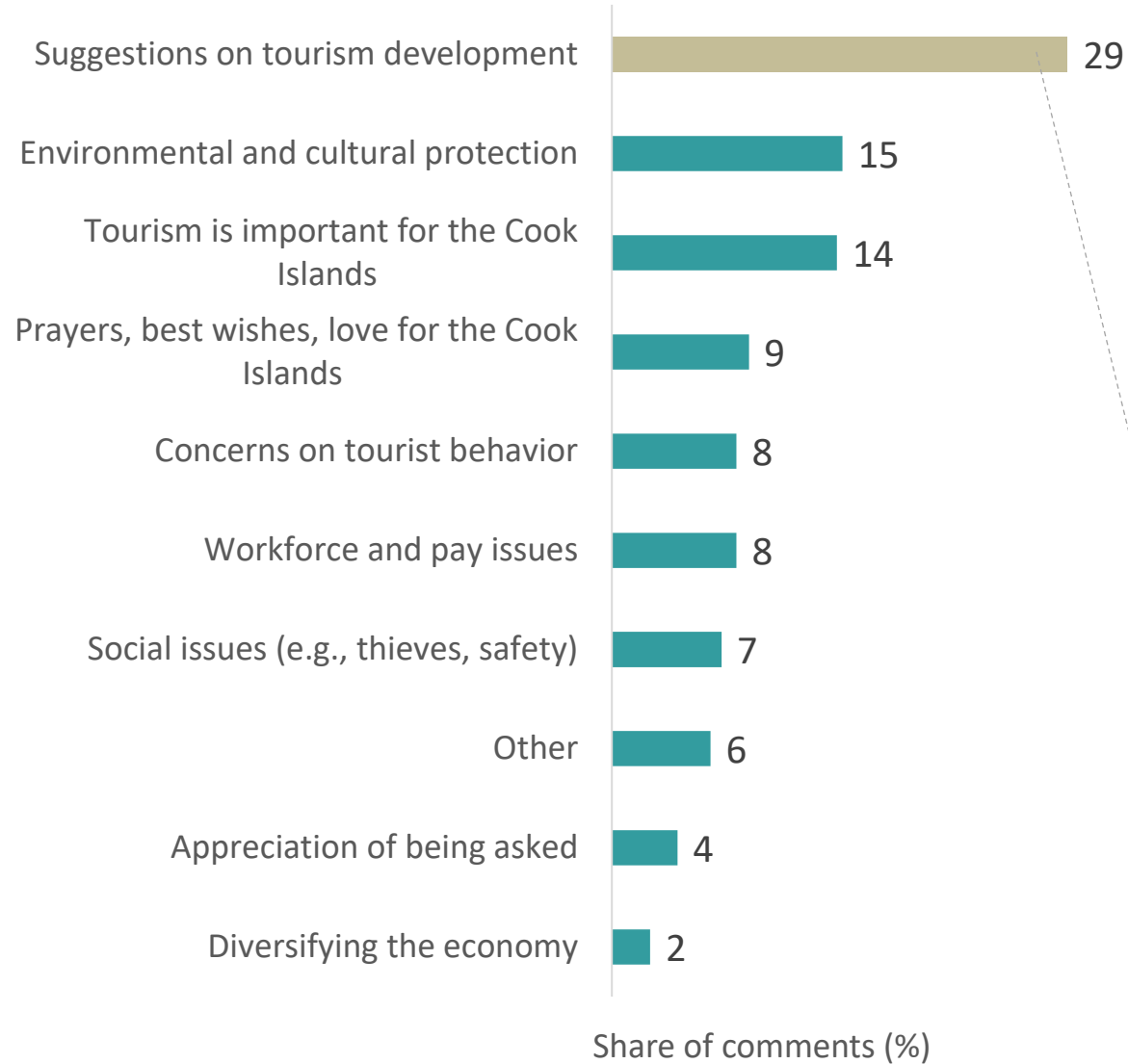
**COOK ISLANDS CAS 2023**

**FURTHER  
COMMENTS**



*Note: Total CAS respondents N = 759, data collected from Dec 2023 to Mar 2024*

# Further comments



Note: n = 284. Due to rounding, total does not sum to 100%

# Suggestions on tourism development - Tourism activities and products

- + We need more investors so we could have big 5-star resorts.
- + Culture is vast, not just dancing and putting shows on for tourists.
- + Activities for the tourists should be more on promoting the make-up or beauty of the Cook Islands rather than created fun activities.
- + My concern is economic growth if fine, but I have some concerns e.g. Highlight the Main Attractions. Focus on Branding.
- + Improve activities on tourism. Feel that Tourism should be promoted in the other Pa Enuu apart from Atiu & Aitutaki.
- + Mangaia is very low on tourists visiting the island. Due to it lack activities to attract the tourist. Without tourist our island will not develop.

# Suggestions on tourism development - Infrastructure

- + Better signs around the Rarotonga and Southern islands for directions, road signs etc....
- + Improve infrastructure, more clean Rest rooms and Toilet facilities, affordable flights for locals.
- + We need new ventures e.g. underwater tubes for Rarotonga Aitutaki and a better security system than now.
- + Development of roads on Raro and outer islands are. The most crucial to economic and support tourism by bringing important social benefits and also, they are vital for trade and commerce.
- + Our infrastructure needs to be impeccable. Cleanliness of our beaches, public places need to be attractive, and cleanliness is imperative (cleaned every day each morning). We need every visitor we have to "want" to come back again to visit our "paradise". Meitaki !
- + If they are looking to expand tourism in the country, then they should consider improving the country's infrastructure & buildings. Example is the Health is it able to cater for the increases in tourist numbers and also cater to CI community?. Are our border team enough to cater for the many that will enter the country & also see that there is nothing illegal that enters the country to spoil it.

# Suggestions on tourism development - Customer service

- + Always services within a Smile or Kiara Orana Spirit, Kia Orana Smile.
- + Hotel businesses should teach their staff good attitude when picking up the tourists from the airport plus no smile, no greetings and some of them were rude to the tourists. I was there waiting for my passengers and witnessed this ungracious treatment.
- + More customer service training/ Kia Orana Values workshops are need for many establishments unfortunately, have experienced better service from our Fijian workers that welcome you with Kia Orana and a big smile and happy to serve you.... not so much with some of our locals.
- + Customer service in retail, hospitality and other services need improvement. I am returning Cook Islander who resided there for 30 years, our standard of customer service needs improvement. Companies need to train their staff, as an example they don't smile, very rude.
- + A need. There should be ongoing support to all staff working in the Tourism services by means of learning how to deal with people. Public relations or communication skills training should be ongoing. There is obviously.

# Environmental and cultural protection

- + Tourism is good and is bad as well...bringing in western cultures is unexpected.
- + Do not change our culture and way of life to suit the tourist.
- + I don't understand why we must share our culture and values to tourist? What are we, an institution? Their research project - on finding ways for them to settle in the Cook Islands and for them then in return to take up reserved Cook Islands business and sharing it to others. Soon we will be like French Polynesia where it's the French now teaching the locals about their culture, about their language.
- + Focus should be on sustainable tourism and managing our resources and less on getting more tourists.
- + I believe more focus should be on growing sustainable tourism to the outer islands, where those communities wish to participate, including the Northern Group islands. At the moment just Rarotonga and Aitutaki primarily benefit from Tourism in the Cook Islands.
- + Waste management needs to be better in busy areas. Tourism should assist with educating locals about how to take proper care of pets as tourists interact with them daily. Lagoon and marine life need to be protected and the issue needs to be taken seriously. Focus on increasing biodiversity for a better future. Studies in many habitats have shown that the more biodiverse an ecosystem the better it captures and stores carbon. At the very least, stop or reduce the destruction of biodiversity.



# Tourism is important for the Cook Islands

- + Tourism is the norm in the Cook Islands.
- + Tourism is the breadwinner of the Cook Islands.
- + Tourism is awesome for Cook Islands and makes our small nation heard in biggest countries.
- + Tourism is the bomb, they bring tourists in our country to bring money to help out people, little business, hotels, motels etc. So tourism is doing a fantastic and awesome job for our people of the Cook Islands.
- + Thanking the tourism industry for their continuous work in bringing more tourist or promoting our islands and culture around the world. It is your industry that attracting tourism to come here and experience our way of life and assuring them that they are in a safe environment.
- + Tourism generates income and creates easily accessible training opportunities and jobs, as well as sales markets for services and local products. Infrastructure. Revenue from tourism can be used to expand important transport, energy and other infrastructure, and for waste and wastewater management, for example.

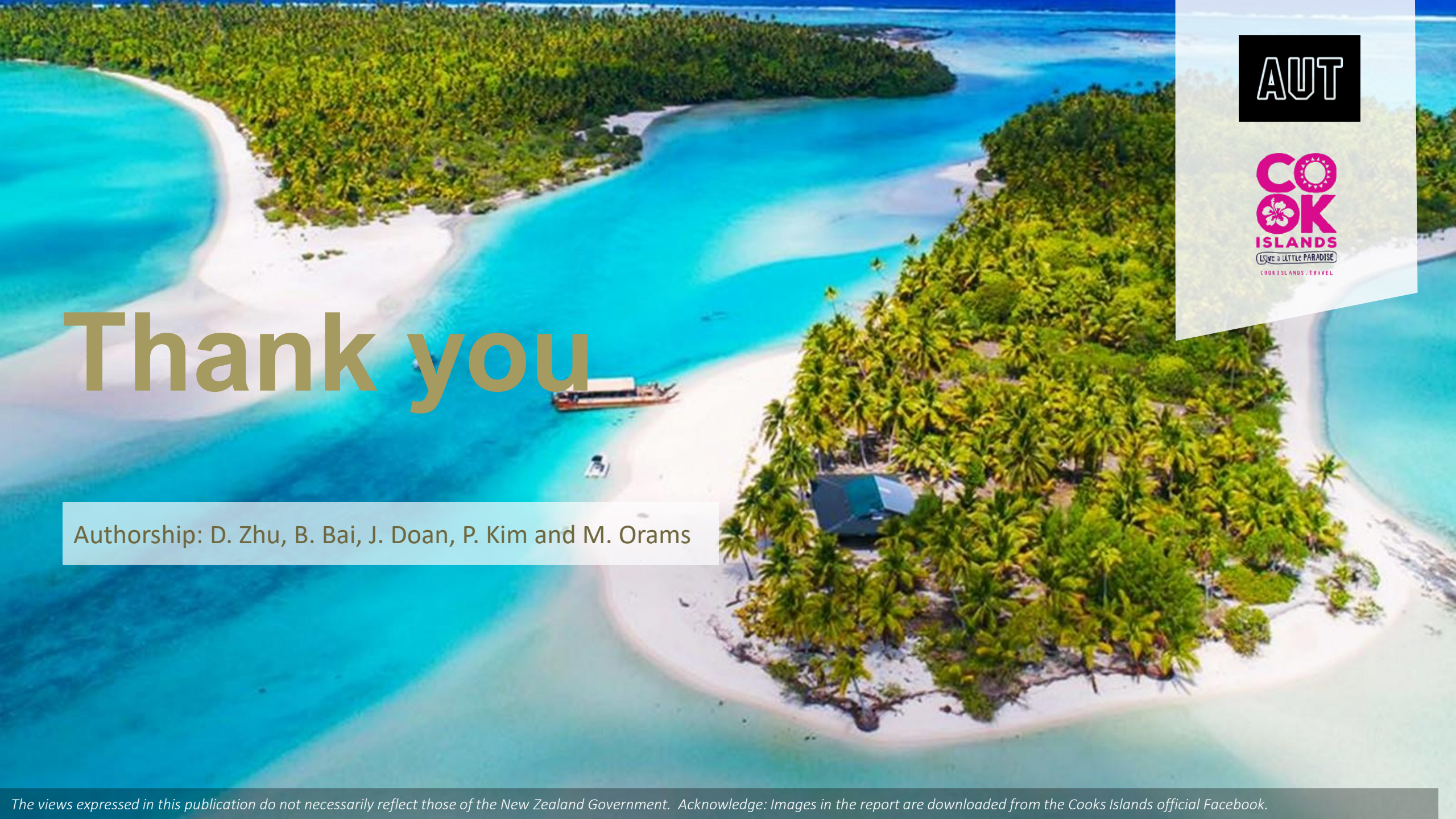
# Prayers, best wishes and love for the Cook Islands

- + We need to be proud of our small nation country and continue to embrace our culture and traditions.
- + Proud to be part of the Cook Islands tourism, thanking you all for allowing us to come here to work in your beautiful country.
- + We should all be proud of our nation that tourist come to visit and we also need to try and work hard at stopping and protecting our tourist from thieving, so the few that do this doesn't bring a bad name for our nation. Let us all continue to be a Christian nation who fears God which is a beautiful thing for tourist to witness and they the tourist will understand how important it is for us to trust in our God. Amen.
- + Being of Fijian Heritage, it has been a great privilege to be here in the most beautiful place in the world, Cook Islands. What more can I say, you culture and tradition is rich and still very well alive in the people. We have learned new things that are educational and empowering, your connection to mother earth makes it inspiring to us foreigners. The world today is polluted due to society not fully aware of their own responsibilities, but here in the Cooks, it is an eye opening and educational journey for us as we come to embrace your wonderful culture which enforces the preservation and taking care of the land given to us by God Almighty. So I would like to thank each and everyone that have made it possible for me to be here today. Meitaki Maata and Thank you so much.

# Concerns on tourist behaviour

- + Please reiterate the importance of respecting private property.
- + There should be more awareness for tourists on how things are here in the Cook Islands.
- + There should be repeated notices for our tourist who drives motorbikes to be careful while driving round on the roads.
- + I am always concerned at the careless driving in town by some stubborn tourists, the Police should do a counselling session with those who applies driving license.
- + Tourists need to be aware of how they should dress in public. Some can be very disrespectful; this is not Tahiti. Bring back those rules on the brochure with the arrival cards.
- + Clothing: tourists including overseas Born and raised Cook Islanders to respect our community and the people by being thoughtful of what they were around the Islands. Two-piece Bikinis are a trend here. A very disrespectful act in our country. Maybe some help in voicing this through the accommodations, upon the confirmation of their tourist bookings or via the travel agents.





AUT

COOK ISLANDS  
Live a LITTLE PARADISE  
COOK ISLANDS TRAVEL

# Thank you

Authorship: D. Zhu, B. Bai, J. Doan, P. Kim and M. Orams