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Institute for  
Governance and  
Policy Studies, School  
of Government, VUW,  
Public Trust Survey

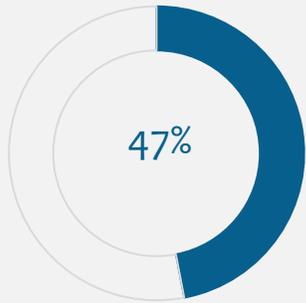
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In association with  
Colmar Brunton

March | 2018

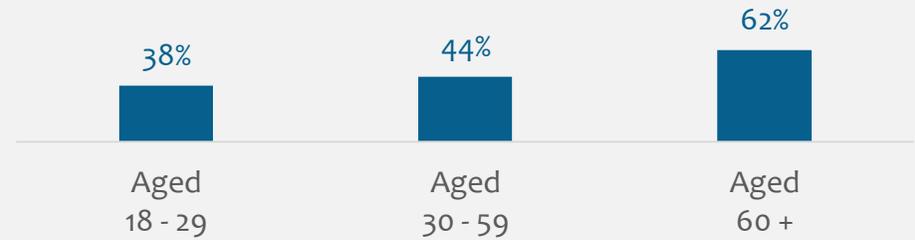


# Summary



Just under half of all New Zealanders feel they have a relatively high level of trust in most people

Older age groups are more trusting



There have been several meaningful improvements in trust in government since 2016

2018      2016



... think New Zealand citizens interests are equally and fairly considered by government

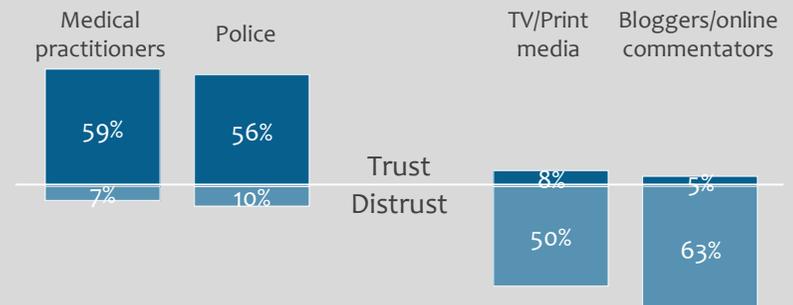


... trust the government to do what is right for New Zealand



... trust the government to deal successfully with national problems

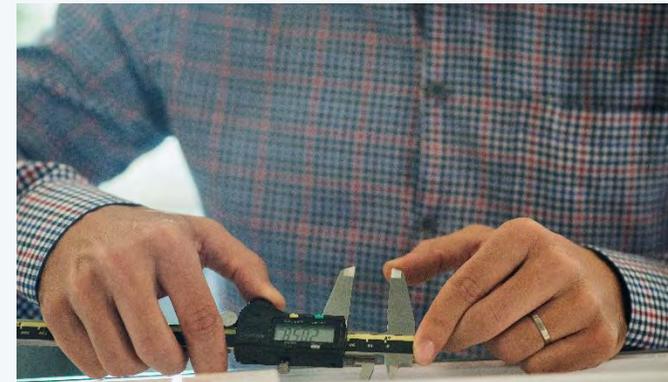
Medical practitioners and Police are perceived to be the most trustworthy while the media, bloggers and online commentators are least trustworthy



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# METHODOLOGY

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# Methodology



A total of 1,000 New Zealanders aged 18 years or over were interviewed online from 26 February to 4 March 2018.

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In order for data to be collected at a individual level, as well as at the national level, best efforts were made to re-contact respondents from the 2016 survey. In total, 472 respondents completed both the 2016 and 2018 surveys. The remaining respondents were new to the survey in 2018 and were randomly sourced from Colmar Brunton's online panel and invited to take part.

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The survey is intended to provide an overall picture representative of the New Zealand public. Quotas were applied at the sampling and selection stage, and the final results were weighted to be representative of New Zealand by age, gender, ethnicity, and location. Not all households have internet access in New Zealand and online panels do not include every New Zealand household, so the survey cannot be said to be truly representative of all groups. Having said this, we are confident that the results provide a reasonably good picture of the population and will allow us to see trends and changes over time.

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The maximum sampling error for a simple random sample of 1,000 is +/- 3.1 percentage points at the 95% confidence interval.

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# MAIN RESULTS

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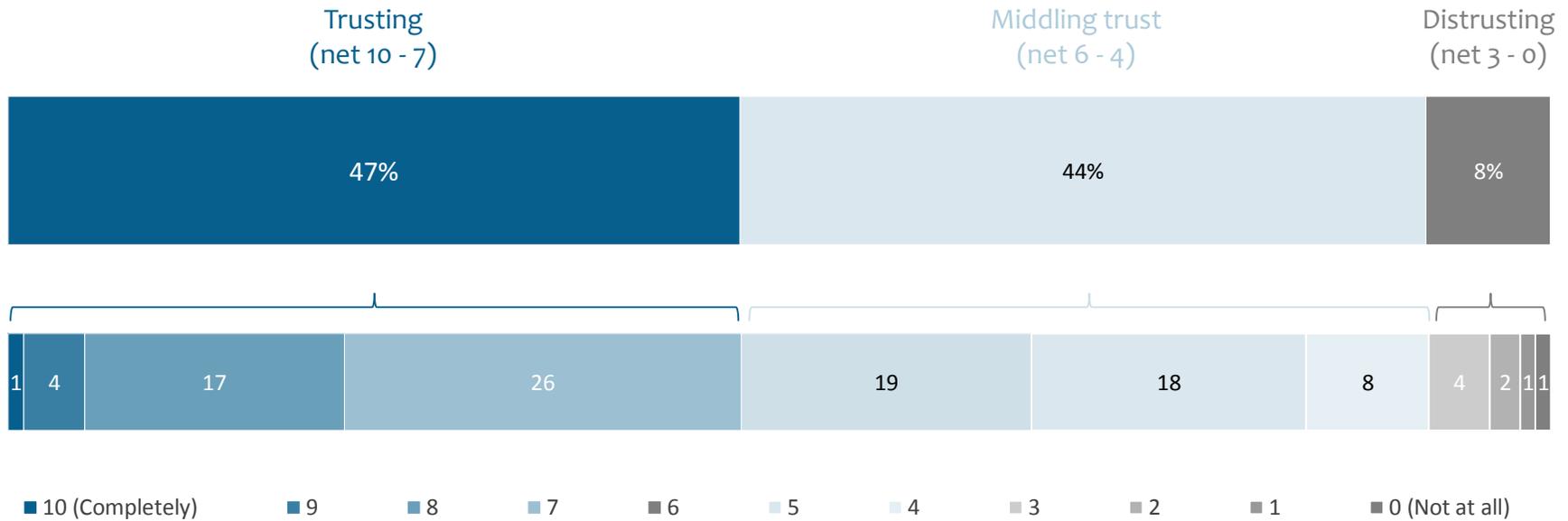


# Overall levels of trust

Nearly half of all New Zealanders believe they have a relatively high level of trust in most people. A slightly smaller proportion have middling levels of trust while around one in ten say they are distrusting

In general how much do you trust most people?

%



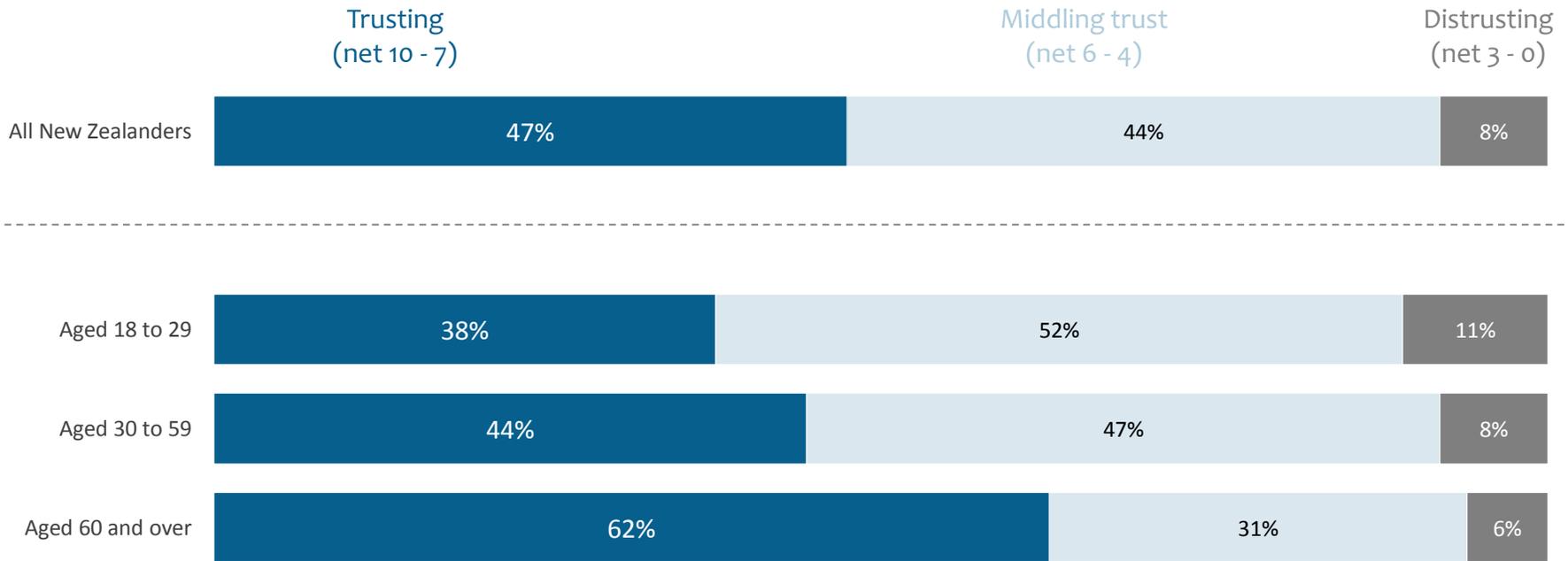
Source: Q1 and Q3  
Base: all respondents (n = 1000)

# How trust changes with age

Older New Zealanders are more trusting of others than younger New Zealanders

In general how much do you trust most people?

%

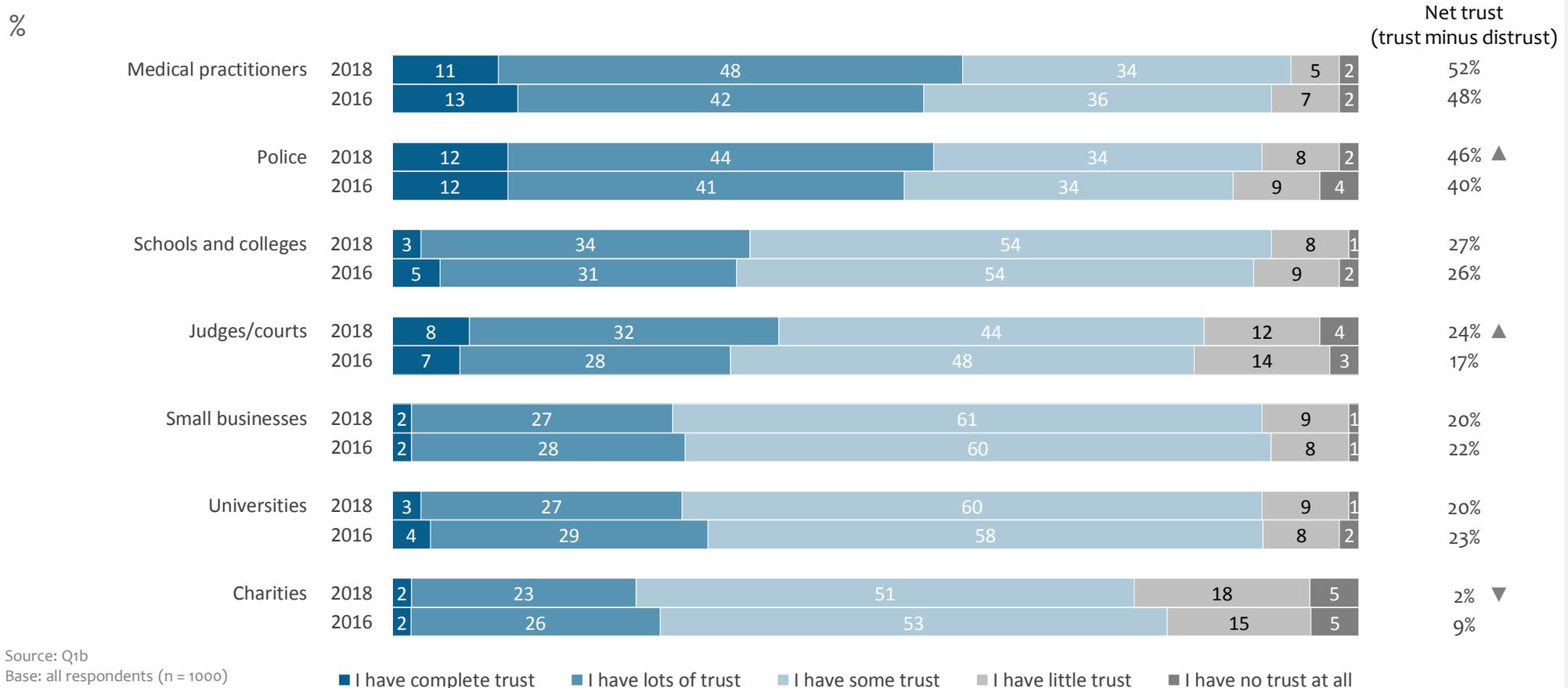


Source: Q1 and Q3  
Base: all respondents (18 to 29 n = 214, 30 to 59 n=532, 60 + n=251)

# Trust in specific institutions and professions

New Zealanders are most trusting of medical practitioners and the police. Compared to two years ago, New Zealanders are now significantly more trusting of the police, judges and courts, local government, government ministers, and members of parliament than in 2016. They are significantly less trusting of charities and churches.

How much trust do you have in the following groups to do the right thing?

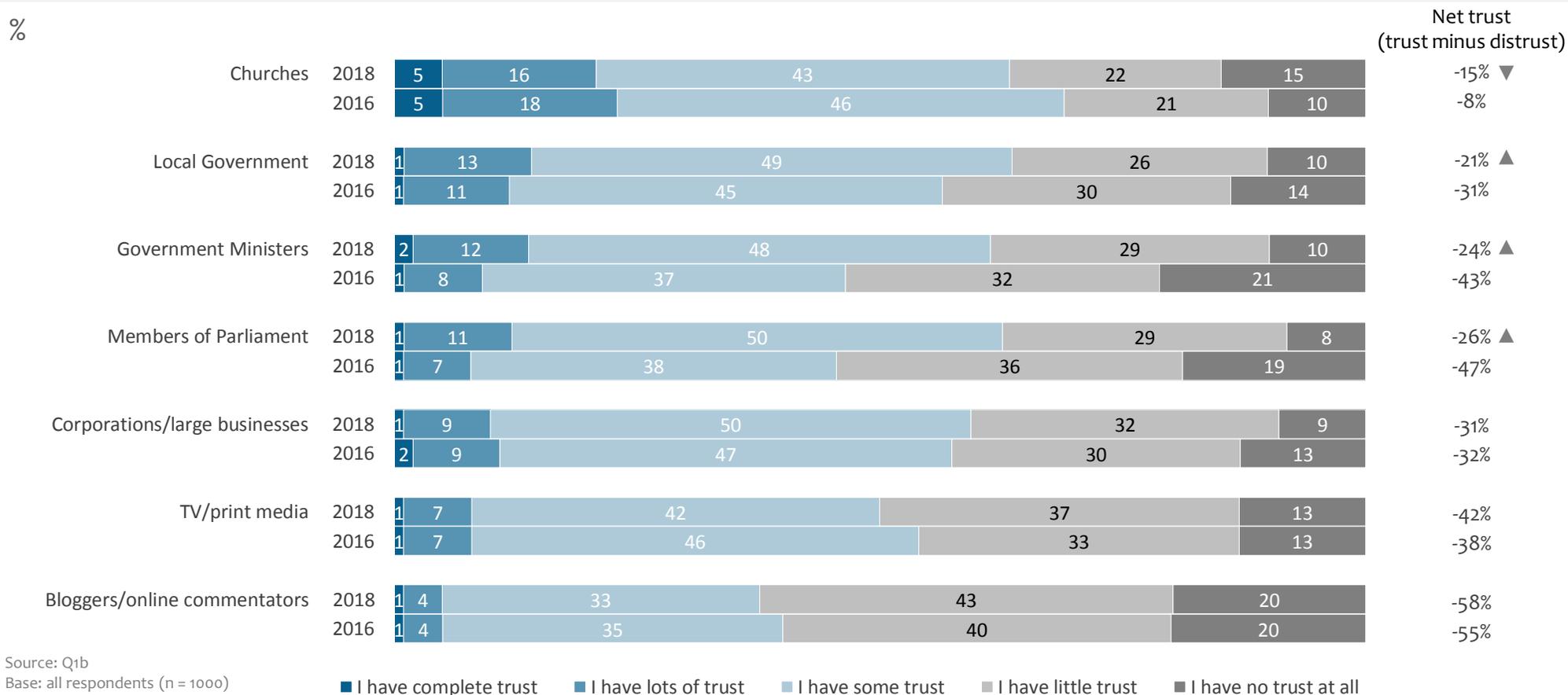


Source: Q1b  
Base: all respondents (n = 1000)

# Trust in specific institutions, cont.

New Zealanders are most trusting of medical practitioners and the police. Compared to two years ago, New Zealanders are now more trusting of the police, judges and courts, local government, government ministers, and members of parliament. They are significantly less trusting of charities and churches.

How much trust do you have in the following groups to do the right thing?



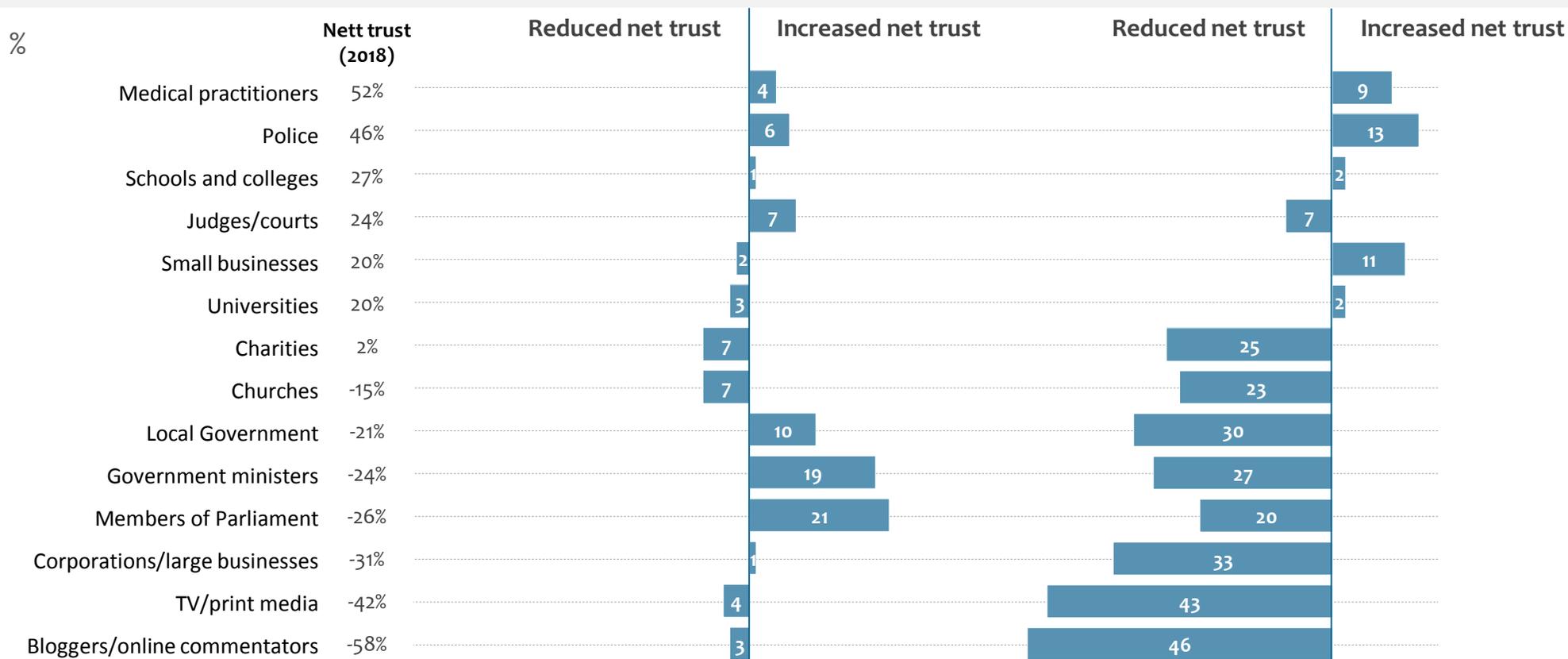
Source: Q1b  
Base: all respondents (n = 1000)

# Actual versus perceived shifts in trust

Institutions with low levels of trust are perceived by New Zealanders to have had their trust levels eroded even further over the past two years, even though their trust ratings have actually increased or seen negligible declines

Actual shift in trust levels between 2016 and 2018

Perceived changes in personal trust between 2016 and 2018



Source: Q1a and Q1b  
Base: all respondents (n = 1000)

# The impact of individual institutions on overall trust

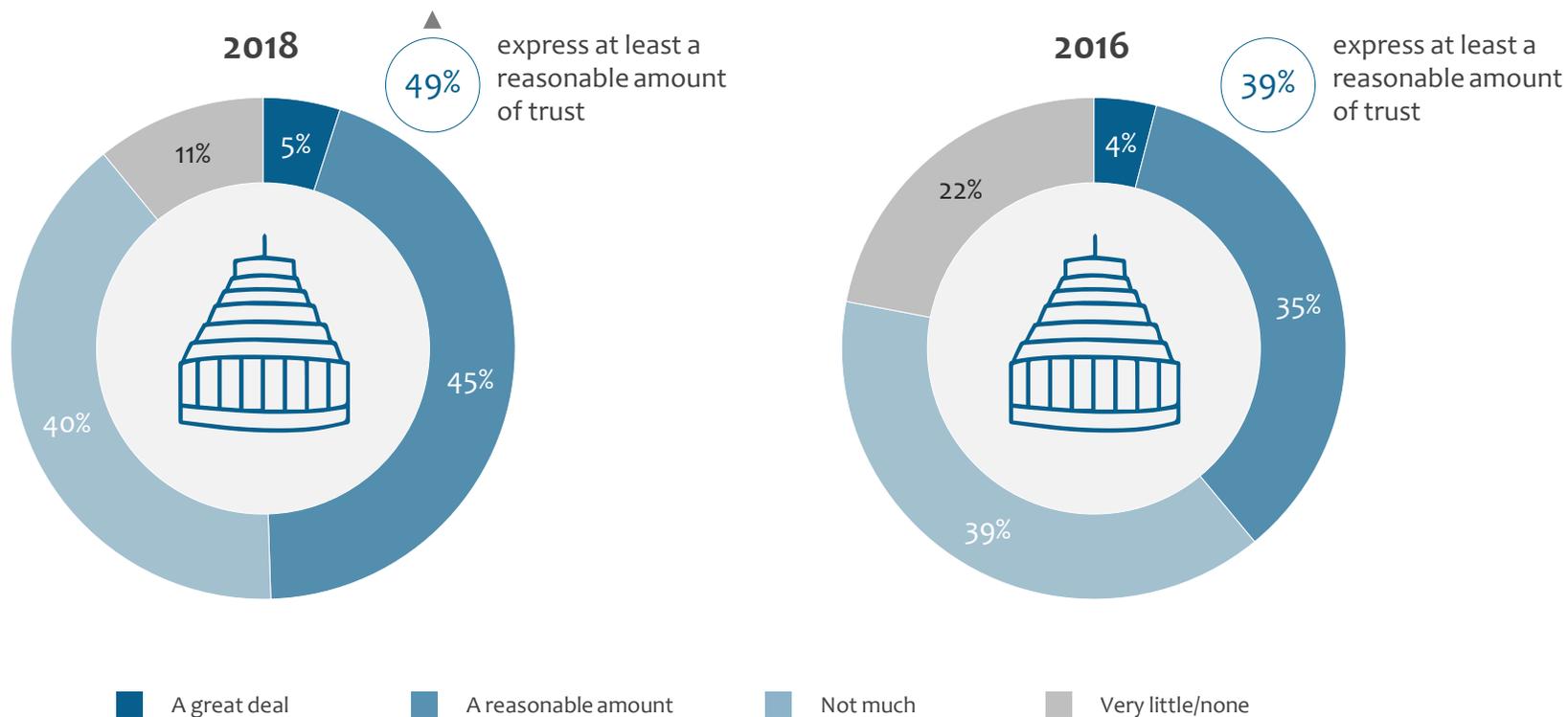
The police, schools and colleges, judges and courts, and universities have the most positive impact on New Zealanders' general trust levels. Members of parliament, local government, government ministers, corporations and large businesses, and churches have the most negative impact on general trust.



# Trust in pluralism in New Zealand

Compared to 2016, New Zealanders are now much more likely to feel citizens' interests are equally and fairly considered by Government

To what extent do you think New Zealand citizens interests are equally and fairly considered by government?

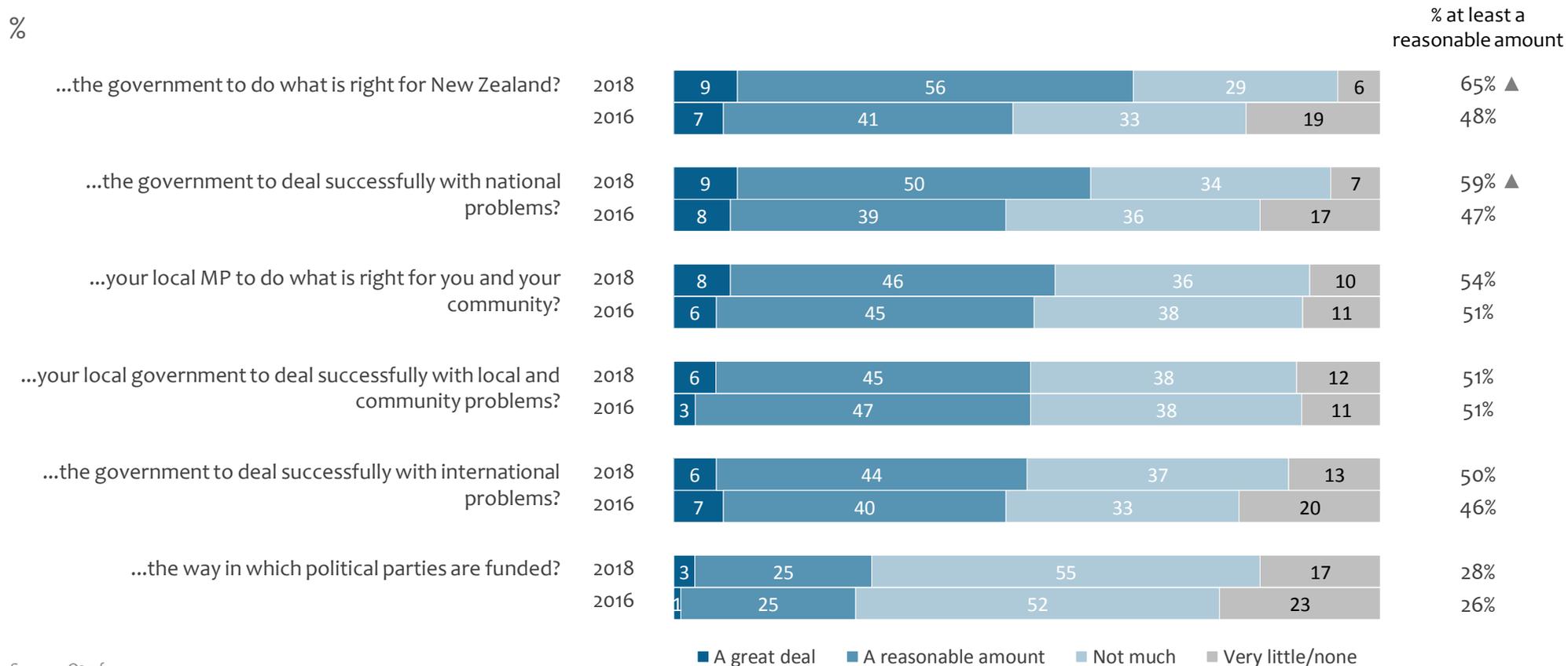


Source: Q2i  
Base: all respondents (n = 1000)

# Trust in central and local Government

New Zealanders are also now more likely to trust the Government to do what is right for New Zealand, and trust the Government to deal successfully with national problems. Other areas of central and local Government also appear to have seen slight increases in trust levels although the shifts are not statistically significant

How much trust do you have in...



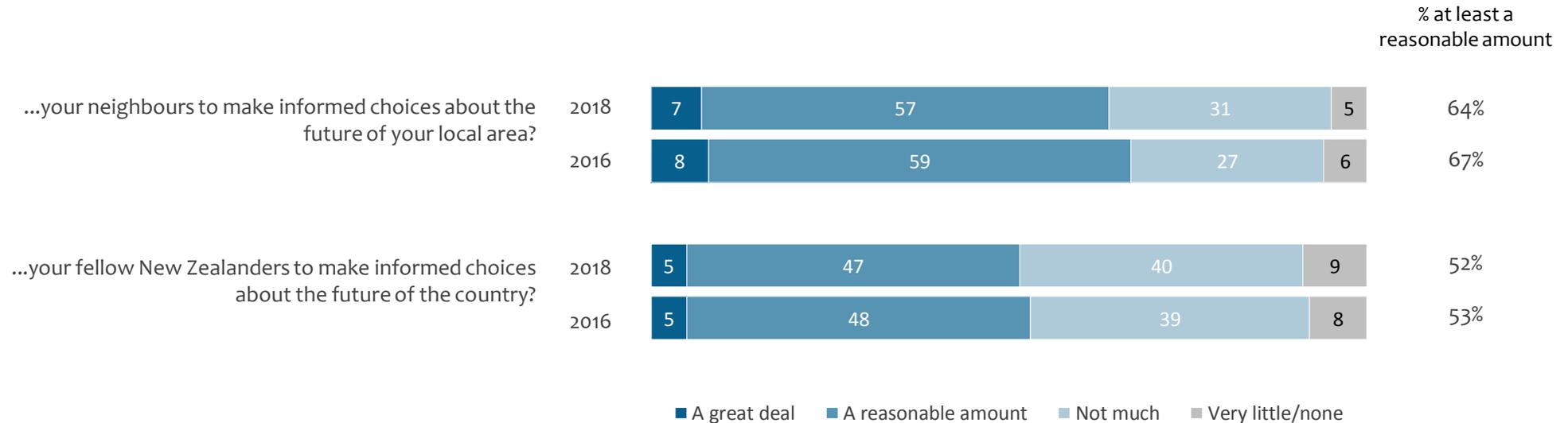
Source: Q2a-f  
Base: all respondents (n = 1000)

# Trust in fellow New Zealanders

New Zealanders appear to have similar levels of trust in their fellow New Zealanders compared to this time two years ago

How much trust do you have in...

%



Source: Q2g-h  
Base: all respondents (n = 1000)

# Demographic patterns



**Younger New Zealanders (18 to 29)** are more distrusting than older New Zealanders of churches (47% distrust, cf. 33% among those 30 and over), their fellow New Zealanders to make informed choices about the future of the country (56% have little trust, cf. 46%), and their neighbours to make informed choices about the future of their local area (41% have little trust, cf. 35%).



**Men** are less trusting of members of parliament (44% distrust, cf. 32% among women), government ministers (43% distrust, cf. 34%), and local government (41% distrust, cf. 31%).



**Women** are less trusting of TV and print media (54% distrust, cf. 45% among men).



**Those living in low income households (under \$50,000 per annum)** are less likely to be trusting of judges and courts (35% trust, cf. 47% among those with an annual household income over \$50,000), and of charities (21% trust, cf. 31%).

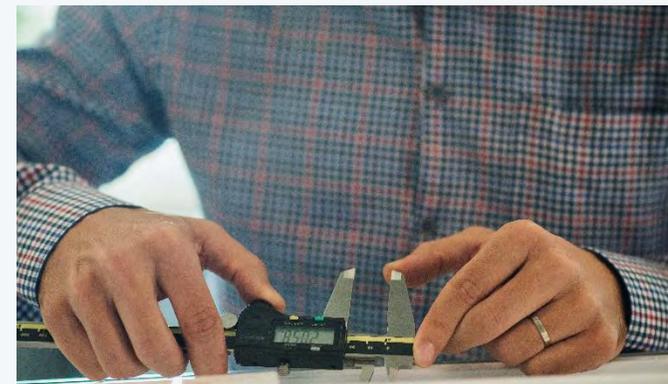


**Pacific Peoples** are less likely than average to be trusting of the police (38% trust, cf. 56% on average).

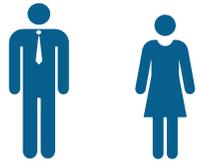
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# APPENDIX

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# Appendix: Demographic Profile



## Gender

	2016 weighted sample (n=1,000)	2018 weighted sample (n=1,000)
Male	48%	48%
Female	52%	52%



## Age group

Aged 18 to 29 years	22%	22%
Aged 30 to 59 years	53%	53%
Aged 60 years and over	25%	25%



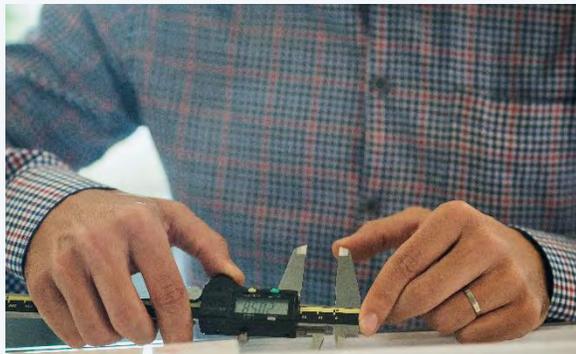
## Ethnicity

New Zealand European	72%	72%
Māori	12%	12%
Pacific	6%	5%
Asian	12%	12%
Other	7%	8%



## Household income

Up to \$30,000	23%	21%
\$30,001 to \$70,000	38%	32%
\$70,001 to \$100,000	17%	19%
More than \$100,001	22%	28%



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