



**TE MANA
RARAUNGA**
Māori Data Sovereignty Network

Te Mana Raraunga Statement on Delay in Release of Data from Census 2018

28 November 2018

Te Mana Raraunga, the Māori Data Sovereignty Network, is disappointed that Stats NZ has again delayed the first release of data from Census 2018 without giving a clear indication of what data will be available and when. Stats NZ planned to publish its first census data release in October this year but in July announced that the first release would be pushed back to March 2019 owing to problems arising from lower than usual census participation. This week Stats NZ said it could not make the March deadline but did not specify a future date, only noting that "by April 2019 we will be able to announce when census data will be available".

While Te Mana Raraunga supports moves by Stats NZ to appoint an external data quality panel and to have an independent review of Census 2018, we remain concerned that Census 2018 may yet fail to deliver high quality Māori and iwi data (for an earlier TMR press release and technical statement, see: <https://www.temanararaunga.maori.nz/panui/>).

For many iwi, the census is the only reliable source of official socio-economic and demographic data about their people. Poor census response rates could significantly decrease recorded iwi population numbers and seriously compromise the usefulness of the data for decision making in areas such as service provision, or negotiations with the Crown or other iwi.

An accurate census count of the Māori descent population is also crucial because it is part of a statutory formula used to determine the boundaries and number of Māori electorates.

While Stats NZ plans to using other government data (such as births, tax, health, and education records) to compensate for missing census information, it notes that there are 'some gaps and inconsistencies in what other data sources can tell us, for example, who lives together in a household, and Māori descent and iwi information'. These shortcomings, along with the complex nature of Māori and iwi identification in the census, raises questions

about the planned use of extensive statistical imputation to deal with missing Māori descent, Māori ethnicity and iwi data.

Te Mana Raraunga urges Stats NZ to involve Māori and iwi in decisions affecting the quality of their data from Census 2018, and to prioritise a timely evidence-based assessment of the quality and usability of Māori and iwi data , both nationally and sub-nationally.

About Te Mana Raraunga:

Te Mana Raraunga, the Māori Data Sovereignty Network, brings together more than 100 Māori researchers, practitioners and entrepreneurs across the research, IT, community and NGO sectors. TMR advocates for Māori rights and interests in data and for the development of Māori, iwi and hapū data infrastructure and capability.

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