



TE MANA
RARAUNGA
Māori Data Sovereignty Network

Te Mana Raraunga Statement on 2018 New Zealand Census of Population and Dwellings:

Appalling Census collection response rates for Māori

18 July 2019

Te Mana Raraunga, the Māori Data Sovereignty Network, is appalled that Stats NZ only managed to collect individual census forms for 68% of the Māori population in the 2018 Census. Stats NZ yesterday released interim collection response rates and coverage rates for Census 2018, using a mix of traditional and new methods (<https://www.stats.govt.nz/reports/2018-census-interim-coverage-rates-collection-response-rates-and-data-sources>). The 'traditional' Māori collection response rate, based on individual form returns, was **68.2%**. This was far lower than the rate of 85.5% for the 2013 census. The 'new' interim Maori response rate, which includes partial information taken from individual, dwellings or summary household forms, was 74.3%. This too was far lower than the rate of 89.7% in 2013. For the total NZ population, the collection response rates for Census 2018 were 83.3% and 87.5% respectively.

Te Mana Raraunga raised the warning bell about a poorly executed census in July last year (<https://www.temanararaunga.maori.nz/panui>), warning that the national Māori response rate could be around 80 percent, and lower in areas such as Northland and the East Coast. The Stats NZ report finally confirms that TMR's concerns were well founded. Stats NZ has not yet released interim response rates for Māori regionally, but it is likely that they will be well below 68 per cent in some areas.

The very low Māori response rates mean that a significant share of Māori data in the final census dataset has been pulled from alternative sources. While that leads to improved coverage rates, it raises important issues about equity, trust and confidence.

Of the Māori ethnic group counted in the final census dataset, nearly one in four (23 per cent) were found in other government data. That is, the data were pulled from individuals' 2013 census forms or from other administrative data such as birth registrations, health and education enrolments. For Europeans only 8 per cent of records were sourced from alternative sources.

Te Mana Raraunga finds it unacceptable that Māori, as well as Pacific peoples, are among those most impacted by the poor execution of Census 2018, but have had no input into decision-making.

In addition, the change in census methodology has been undertaken without any substantial input from Māori as Treaty partners. This is concerning given the lack of an open and transparent public

conversation about Stats NZ's extensive use of government data, either prior to or following the Census.

With planning for the 2023 Census now underway, Māori trust in Stats NZ is likely to be at an all time low, especially given their failure to produce official Iwi data.

Te Mana Raraunga looks forward to finding out more about the reasons for the poor census enumeration when the Independent Review report is released in August.

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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