



TE MANA RARAUNGA

Māori Data Sovereignty Network

Te Mana Raraunga Statement on Independent Review of New Zealand's 2018 Census

Treaty-based data governance and partnership crucial

14 August 2019

Te Mana Raraunga, the Māori Data Sovereignty Network, welcomes the findings of the Independent Review of New Zealand's 2018 Census (<https://www.stats.govt.nz/reports/report-of-the-independent-review-of-new-zealands-2018-census>)

Te Mana Raraunga forewarned about a poorly executed census in July last year, and has consistently raised questions about Census 2018 and the implications for Māori in a series of public statements (<https://www.temanararaunga.maori.nz/panui>)

The Review provides a long-awaited explanation for what went wrong and why. This included a lack of strategic direction and effective programme management at the Census management level, an insufficient field workforce, and ineffective strategies to increase participation, particularly for Māori.

The Review also makes a number of important recommendations including investing in governance arrangements that facilitate greater collaboration with Māori as Treaty partners, and forming partnerships with key communities with a particular focus on iwi and Pacific peoples.

Treaty-based data governance and partnership will be crucial for maintaining the trust and confidence of Māori in any future census and in the official statistics system. We respect Liz MacPherson's decision to step down as CEO of Stats NZ but also recognise her considerable efforts to increase recognition of the importance of Māori data and building relationships with Māori. We expect this to continue and grow under new leadership.

The unplanned extensive use of administrative data to backfill census gaps remains a concern for Te Mana Raraunga. Māori and Pacific peoples were most affected by this change in census method but have had no input into decision-making. It is vital that whānau and communities are well informed about how their data are being used and that this is communicated in a transparent and accessible way. We also see much potential for investment in alternative Māori and iwi-led data systems that are strongly focused on delivering high quality, timely and relevant data for Māori.

Te Mana Raraunga looks forward to the independent report from the External Data Quality Panel, in particular, data issues that may affect the usefulness of the data for Māori and iwi as Treaty

partners¹.

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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¹ This a key objective in the EDQP's Terms of Reference:
<https://statsnz.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p20045coll1/id/2692/rec/1>