

## **Scrapping the Census - Cost Saving at the Expense of Maori Representation?**

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Replacing the full national survey form of the census with the simpler use of existing administrative datasets from the IDI may save costs in the short term, but will result in the underrepresentation of Māori. While it's true that the census also had a low response rate among Māori, the existing datasets have incomplete, inaccurate information and do not accurately represent the Māori demographic. Proper allocation of resources to Māori communities cannot happen when the only data that policy makers have to work with is incomplete and inaccurate. This prevents Māori economies from flourishing, and so they cannot benefit from the data collected from them. This means that the principle of kotahitanga, or collective benefit, is not met - no indigenous peoples, let alone Māori, will be able to benefit from data that is not accurate.

One reason for the low response rate among Māori is the lack of trust in the government stemming from years of misunderstanding starting with the Treaty of Waitangi. My advice is to maintain the traditional census while adding a collaborative, iwi-centred approach to collecting data from Māori. This will improve response rates from Māori, which can be used to help drive iwi-Māori economies.

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