

Scrapping the Census for the use of administrative data risks undermining Māori Data Sovereignty and informed consent. Data is a taonga and must be governed by Māori for the benefit of their communities. Administrative datasets do not align with Māori priorities and may miss crucial information such as iwi affiliation, community level data, or descent. It is important this data is accurate and culturally relevant as Māori need this information to make self determined decisions.

The impact could be significant as iwi and hapū rely on accurate population and housing data to plan, health, education, housing, and resource incentives. If the data does not accurately reflect Māori population or diversity, they risk becoming invisible under national statistics. This would reduce their ability to gain access to needed resources, and shape policies that help their communities.

Stats NZ must include Māori data governance in the administrative census. This means a partnership with iwi and Māori organisations to control how information is gained, stored and shared. Co-governance is the only way Māori can trust the data is being used for the good of their communities and not to erode their tino rangatiratanga.