

Where is Rangatiratanga in the latest Census Redesign?

Scrapping the traditional Census risks violating the principle of **Rangatiratanga (authority to control Māori data)**, a foundation of Māori Data Sovereignty. The shift to the Integrated Data Infrastructure (IDI) excludes key indicators e.g., *Māori descent*, *iwi affiliation* and *detailed ethnicity*. This produces **statistical invisibility** where rural or disconnected Māori communities are likely to be undercounted, impairing iwi/hapu planning, equitable funding, and self-determination.

This breaches key principles articulated in both Chris's lecture and the [GIDA CARE Principles](#), specifically *Authority to Control* and *Responsibility*. Māori were not meaningfully engaged in the redesign. The risk extends beyond technical issues; it undermines trust and accountability when decisions about Māori data are made without Māori.

Mitigation: Stats NZ should co-design the new Census model with Māori, through iwi, hapu, Te Mana Raraunga, and Māori data stewards. This includes:

- Embedding Māori governance in the IDI.
- Developing targeted, culturally responsive surveys.
- Ensuring iwi/descent/ethnicity data are collected (possibly through legislation).
- Considering a hybrid model to safeguard Māori rights and visibility.

Kaupapa Māori asserts that contextualisation is key. Without knowing where indigenous data is or owning it, sovereignty is impossible. Māori Data Sovereignty is therefore essential: it strengthens communities, protect rights and resists digital colonisation.