

Māori Data Sovereignty

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The replacement of the Census with the StatsNZ IDI poses risks to Māori data sovereignty, including loss of metadata and statistics on iwi affiliation. The IDI breaches many Māori legal documents and the principles of Māori Data Sovereignty, outlined by Te Mana Raraunga. For example, the protection of Māori Rangatiratanga (self-determination) over their taonga, outlined in Te Tiriti o Waitangi, is breached by the IDI. This gives the government ownership over Māori data, without informed consent. Additionally, IDI data is de-identified. This violates the Māori Data Sovereignty principle around whakapapa (relationships) as de-identified data lacks additional metadata. This overlooks important contextual information and supports disaggregation of Māori data. This violation could lead to deficit models where stigma around Indigenous people is raised without systemic context, creating distrust among iwi and potentially spreading misinformation about Indigenous people throughout Aotearoa. A possible solution could be the use of Te Mana Raraunga principles throughout StatsNZ, including keeping the identification of the iwi throughout the IDI. The use of additional metadata collection and storage under Māori jurisdiction (co-governance or iwi representatives throughout StatsNZ) can be used to support the principle of whakapapa. Overall, these changes will better support Māori Data Sovereignty throughout Aotearoa.

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