

SCRAP SCRAPING THE CENSUS

Scraping the Census in favour of administrative data poses a serious risk to Kotahitanga. Administrative data may have biases. The Ministry of Justice may show disproportionate numbers of Māori in prison, and WINZ may record more Māori on benefits. If these skewed datasets dominate, they risk reinforcing negative stereotypes and driving biased, unfair policy decisions.

Without direct enumeration, iwi affiliation and ethnicity data will also be incomplete, weakening Māori ability to govern, plan, and benefit from their own data., This is not simply a technical weakness. It undermines Maor Data Sovereignty.

I strongly recommend retaining the Census, with administrative data used only as a supplement. To improve accuracy and trust, Māori staff should be employed as enumerators, as their presence builds rapport and encourages whānau to share data openly. Furthermore, iwi governance bodies must co-design what is collected and how it is applied. This requires genuine consultation with Māori at every stage, ensuring their authority over how data is designed and used. This ensures the data ecosystem reflects Māori realities, delivers genuine collective benefit, and upholds Māori Data Sovereignty rather than undermining it.