

The effect of changing the census system on Māori Data Sovereignty
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Shifting to an administrative datasets census via the Integrated Data Infrastructure (IDI) raises significant Māori Data Sovereignty issues. A major problem is that this change has been proposed without any Māori consultation, and the new process results in a system that never gets any input or feedback from the Māori population. This is a major issue because it breaks the principle of Kaitiakitanga. This is because using administrative datasets treats Māori data the same as non-Māori data. Lumping data together in this way disallows Māori to actively protect their data or have any say in how it is used or stored.

This issue has high potential to undermine Māori trust in the official statistical system. This will result in lower Māori participation in official data collection and other government projects. Less Māori data will skew statistical models even more against Māori, creating a vicious cycle.

The easiest solution to this problem is to ask for Māori feedback before the new system is put into place. It will be crucial to involve Māori leaders and representatives to work on the design of the system, to allow for Māori to protect their data and keep the principle of Kaitiakitanga intact.

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