

Census Change on Māori Data Sovereignty

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Body

The government has announced a new form of census using the Integrated Data Infrastructure (IDI). This change poses risks to Māori data sovereignty (MDS) by removing control of data collection from individuals, potentially undermining the census's ability to reflect their needs (Whanaungatanga). IDI data is biased towards measuring individuals at their most vulnerable (Manaakitanga). Seeing things as isolated data points and lacking wider context.

The change to the census will reduce data quality on Māori descent, iwi, and ethnicity. Reducing the ability to invest in key areas to Māori. Potentially magnifying existing inequalities. This issue applies nationwide as the census is fundamental to the effective allocation of over \$100 billion of government spending.

Stats NZ has been provided recommendations by Māori and relevant experts to ensure the change to the census maintains MDS. It is unclear if these recommendations have been followed. The Data and Statistics Act means data collection must follow the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi. Stats NZ uses the Mana Ōrite agreement to solidify iwi authority over their own data (kangatiranatanga). Any change to the census must legally and ethically adhere to these to ensure that Māori maintain rangatiratanga and MDS.

Word Count

197 words