

**Title:**

Risk to Māori Data Sovereignty and Governance (MDS/G) from Scrapping the Census.

**Body:**

If you - the Government Statistician want to try a new form of Census based primarily on administrative datasets through Stats NZ's Integrated Data Infrastructure (IDI), there are some potential risks that will impact on Māori Data Sovereignty and Governance. One of the key risks is the loss of Whakapapa-Relationships information, particularly Māori descent and iwi affiliation. This principle emphasizes that all Māori data has a whakapapa (genealogy), so it must be disaggregated in a way that increases its relevance for Māori communities and iwi.

The traditional Census asks specific questions about descent and iwi, providing reliable whakapapa data at a national scale, whereas most administrative datasets in the IDI do not consistently collect, or collapse into a single ethnicity choice. If these connections are lost, iwi and hapū cannot accurately trace their people, undermining their ability to plan for resources, uphold identity, and sustain relationships. This causes a long-term harm to future generations in Māori identity as the current collected data where whakapapa is missing will shape the decision-making.

To mitigate this, Stats NZ must co-design the administrative dataset with Māori ensuring that iwi and descent data are collected, disaggregated, and governed under Māori authority.

**Total word count in body:** 195 words