

DATA201 Written Advice on Māori Data Governance and Sovereignty

The Census' transition from survey data to primarily admin data has risks of negatively impacting Māori. This is because, as referenced in Te Tiriti o Waitangi, Māori have sovereignty over Māori data, meaning that Māori have the right to control the data about themselves, exercising the MDS principle of Rangatiratanga. The Census' traditional form of collecting survey data allowed for Māori data to be collected in ways that the data represents their identity – such as their descent, ethnicity, and iwi – through consultation in the survey. If the Census were to change to a new form based on admin datasets, this would likely decrease the rights for Māori to govern over their data and the ability for the Census to accurately identify and reflect Māori themselves in general. To reduce the risks of this happening, an adjustment could be made so that the survey data holds a larger influence on the Census in contrast to admin data, which may still perhaps have a noticeable, but only minor impact. This would enable Māori to still have substantial control over their data and the current Census to accurately reflect the Māori population.

Word count: 189