

Māori Data Sovereignty: Risks and Recommendations

The changes proposed by Stats NZ's Integrated Data Infrastructure (IDI) can, in its essence, undermine the core principle of Rangatiratanga (Authority) for Māori. The original format provided opportunity for Māori to self-identify with crucial data points like iwi (tribe), hapū (family), and whakapapa (genealogy). The current siloed approach serves specific purposes and is not consistently captured in the administrative records.

This disconnection poses a risk of loss of cultural and genealogical context for Māori data, dismissing historical background and simplifying their rich information. This approach can hinder iwi and Māori organisations' ability to make sound data-driven decisions based on their own data, harming the future of communities and impacting their right of self-determination.

To mitigate this risk and ensure Māori communities preserve their sovereignty, it is advised that Stats NZ transition from a consultation model to a partnership or alliance, including iwi leaders. Including Māori data experts as leaders in the design of the census can ensure accurate representation and provide greater benefits for data collection. A collaborative effort can uphold the principles of Māori Data Sovereignty promoted by Māori, giving them authority over their own data.

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