

Risk to Māori Data Sovereignty from the use of IDI

Moving from a full Census to IDI datasets risks undermining some of the key principles of the Māori Data Sovereignty and Governance (MDS/G): Rangatiratanga (authority) and Whakapapa (relationships). The Census is currently the only nationwide, comprehensive source for iwi affiliation, te reo Māori use, and other cultural indicators. Administrative datasets in the IDI often exclude or inconsistently record these variables, this is further worsened due to the small relative size of Māori in the overall population. This leads to skewed data, reduced visibility, and diminished authority over how Māori data is defined and used.

Loss of iwi and hapū representation in data further hinders the ability to disaggregate meaningfully, weakening both the policy relevance and cultural integrity of the data. Without culturally anchored data, Māori communities' risk being excluded from decisions that could affect them.

To prevent these issues, Stats NZ must collaborate closely with Māori governance bodies to ensure data practices align with Māori Data Sovereignty and Governance (MDS/G) principles. Such partnership helps safeguard iwi and hapū visibility, uphold Rangatiratanga, Whakapapa, and ensure that Te Tiriti o Waitangi obligations are met. Co-governance in data decisions is essential for equity, cultural integrity, and Māori led stewardship of their own narratives.

Word Count: 200