

Advice on Māori Data Governance and Sovereignty

The New Zealand Census is the official count of the people and dwellings. Traditionally, census is a full enumeration national survey. However, this approach is being replaced by an administrative dataset through Stats NZ's Integrated Data Infrastructure. This scrapping of traditional census poses a significant risk to Māori Data Sovereignty, specifically in relation to iwi/hapu (their data). The census is the only national source where Māori can self-identity their iwi affiliation. The Administrative dataset rarely captures iwi/hapu.

This links to the violation of the *principle of Rangatiratanga*, which states that Māori must have control over their own data, it's storage and usage. This also violates the *principle of Whakapapa* which highlights data has a genealogy (origin & purpose). It must be traceable and designed to avoid harm for future generations.

The impact of this risk could be serious. Without meaningful iwi data, their organisations cannot plan effectively for health/education/housing/treaty-related initiatives. Government policies being misinformed and Māori communities under-served as decisions are being made using inappropriate data.

To mitigate this, Stats NZ could implement a standard iwi field, run regular Māori-focused supplementary surveys, establish a Māori Data Governance Board, and provide an online portal where indigenous people can update their affiliation.