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Impact of census removal on Maori Data Sovereignty

The biggest issue is the violation of the Authority to Control principle. Administrative data is collected by other agencies such as health and justice for their own purposes; the principle observes that Maori should not have control over Maori data. The census is a direct way of collecting agreed upon data but admin data is created by other government agencies for their own reasons, for example health or taxes, not for or by Maori. This means that Stats NZ is building a picture of Maori from data that Maori never controlled or consented to provide for these purposes.

This would be a major risk to Maori Data Sovereignty; the data will likely be inaccurate for things like iwi affiliation or ethnicity, as these are recorded poorly in multiple admin systems. Thus, this leads to bad decisions and unfair funding for Maori communities because the information about Maori is flawed.

Stats NZ must actively partner with iwi to co-govern the IDI process so that Maori has a real say in what data is used and how Maori identity is defined and how the data is interpreted. This isn't just consulting and so it ensures governance aligns with Maori aspirations and priorities.