

The Impact of Scrapping Census Based on Māori Data Sovereignty and Governance

This written advice outlines the effects that scrapping the Census can create for Māori Data Sovereignty and Governance (MDS/G), focusing on the Rangatiratanga and Kotahitanga principles.

Replacing the Census with a new form based on administrative datasets risks increasing data gaps and poorer data quality for Māori. This undermines Rangatiratanga by weakening the control Māori have over how their data is created, collected, accessed, and used for analysis. Additionally, jurisdiction would be affected. For example, if administrative data is stored on overseas servers, Māori would have less control over who can access and use their data. Self-determination is limited when Māori lack the data necessary to govern and make informed decisions.

The new approach threatens Kotahitanga as it limits Māori collective benefit, which can impact the development of the Māori data workforce. This can affect connections across iwi and hapu, reducing opportunities to share strategies and the alignment of common goals.

To address these risks, a solution would be to establish a Māori data workforce to lead the collection, management, and use of Māori data. This ensures data is accurate, secure, and under Māori governance. In addition, building a secure, Aotearoa based data infrastructure would strengthen Māori Data Sovereignty.

Word count: 199