

**Please select your ethnicity:**  
**Why accurate ethnicity data collection matters**

Remedying the systemic socioeconomic disadvantages of Maori cannot begin without accurate identification of Maori.

Using administrative datasets weakens whakapapa by attenuating Maori identity. Different departments classify ethnicity differently, and often survey only primary ethnicity, ignoring iwi and hapu, diluting genealogical provenance.

Scrapping the traditional census undermines rangatiratanga - Maori authority over Maori Data, and shifting from self-declaration to passive data collection shifts control from Maori to Stats NZ.

The proposed method endangers manaakitanga by bypassing Maori consent during collection. Demographic surveys done during government services rarely explicitly state their goals, whose context determines how Maori respond - some may declare themselves pakeha, fearing discrimination. Compounding this issue is that marginalised communities who distrust and avoid government services due to racial profiling and discrimination are completely excluded from data.

Inevitably, Maori will become statistically invisible, skewing demographic models to the median. Maori will consequently be overlooked by policymakers, whose decisions will be informed by incomplete and inaccurate data.

One solution is to implement Maori Data officers to identify gaps in the data collection process. This institutes rangatiratanga while achieving kotahitanga through more accurate and complete representation. A more equal society is a better society, and all New Zealanders will benefit from inclusive policies.

Word Count: 200