

Rangatiratanga and Manaakitanga in Data Use

A major risk in replacing the Census is that decisions may occur without proper Māori consultation, and administrative data repurposed for Census use was never gathered for this function. This raises serious concerns under the Maori Data Sovereignty principles of Rangatiratanga (Authority) and Manaakitanga (Reciprocity). Rangatiratanga recognises the inherent right of Māori to control the collection, access, management, use and reuse of their data. Manaakitanga requires respect, including free, prior and informed consent when collecting or using Māori data.

Proceeding without meaningful Māori involvement breaches Rangatiratanga by denying Māori the authority to make decisions about how their data is collected and used. It also breaches Manaakitanga by failing to uphold the reciprocal obligation to engage respectfully and the need to seek prior and informed consent. Using administrative data without oversight risks misrepresenting Maori priorities, undermining trust, and producing data that does not support Māori self-determination or tikanga.

To address this, Stats NZ must establish Māori-led oversight and governance for any Census replacement. Designing solutions along with iwi and other Māori representatives is essential to ensure that data collection, storage and use follow tikanga, and support Māori wellbeing and self-determination.

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