**Impact of ending the census on Māori data sovereignty**

Stopping the Census and relying only on government records is a risk for Māori Data Sovereignty (MDS). The Waitangi Tribunal has said that Māori data is a taonga, and Māori have the right to control it. One of the key principles of Māori data sovereignty is rangatiratanga, which roughly translates to Māori authority over their own data.

The Census has been very important for Māori because it asks about ethnicity, descent, and iwi. These measures link to whakapapa (relationships) and allow Māori to plan for their people. Administrative records were not made for Māori purposes and often miss iwi information when it is being collected. If this data disappears, Māori become less visible in national decision-making, and the government may risk breaking Te Tiriti promises of partnership.

In order to prevent this from happening, Stats NZ should design the new Census approach in collaboration with Māori. Māori need to help decide what identity data is collected and how it is governed. This would respect rangatiratanga and make sure that the data being collected supports Māori needs.