**Written Advice Santiago Banda Lozano 65251047**

**Preserving Māori Data Sovereignty in Census Reform**

According to Stats NZ and RNZ, from 2030, Stats NZ will no longer run traditional half-decade census surveys. Instead, population data will be drawn from administrative datasets in the Integrated Data Infrastructure (IDI), supplemented by smaller surveys and data (including Māori data) accessible to Stats NZ. Whilst cost-savings and efficiency are the main objectives, it introduces significant risks for Māori Data Sovereignty and Governance.

Scrapping the census risks undermining Rangatiratanga (Authority). Māori control over data creation, collection, interpretation, and use is violated when Māori are not meaningfully involved in shaping these systems. Without census counts, smaller iwi’s and hapū’s may vanish from datasets as they may not be accounted for in NZ’s IDI, thus reducing evidence for informed Māori decision making. Administrative data that is collected without our informed consent often lacks the granularity and cultural framing essential to reflect Māori realities/environments. To mitigate the risks on Rangatiratanga, Stats NZ and Te Mana Raraunga must implement a Māori Data Governance Model designed, mandated, and involved in the IDI, preserving Māori authority over all Māori data throughout its lifecycles. This reinforces control over data collection and relevance, as well as being culturally grounded and responsive to the aspirations of Māori Rangatiratanga.

**Word Count: 200**