**Written Advice on Māori Data Governance and Sovereignty.**

To: Government Statistician

From: Intern Analyst

Re: Risks to Māori Data Sovereignty from the Administrative Census Transition

The transition from a traditional Census in Aotearoa to an administrative data-based Census poses significant risks to Māori Data Sovereignty and Governance. Administrative datasets fundamentally violate Te Kāhui Raraunga’s Māori Data Governance Model by removing Māori control over the collection of data, quality standards and data definition.

**Risk**: Administrative data often focuses only on measuring problems and is designed primarily for government service delivery. These systems use fixed categories and definitions created without Māori input. This removes Māori ability to define themselves and their communities according to their values and priorities.

**Impact:** Critical Māori data such as iwi affiliation, te reo Māori ability and whakapapa connections are not properly recorded in administrative systems. This undermines iwi capacity for evidence-based decision making and resource allocation, while contradicting Te Kahui Raraunga’s vision of “data for self-determination.”

**Solution:** Operationalise the existing Mana Ōrite Relationship agreement between Stats NZ and the Data Iwi Leaders group to ensure authentic Maori co-design of the administrative Census model. By co-designing Census processes and giving Māori equal authority over data definitions and quality, the new model can support Māori aspirations while meeting Treaty Obligations.