

Summary of the Māori Language (Te Reo Māori) Bill and the Ministerial Māori Language Advisory Group Draft Proposal

Māori Language (Te Reo Māori) Bill

The key provisions of the Māori Language (Te Reo Māori) Bill have to do with the establishment of Te Mātāwai, a governance-focused entity accountable to iwi and Māori. Te Mātāwai would be an independent statutory entity with seven members selected by regional groups of iwi, three by Te Reo Tūkūtu (Māori language stakeholders) and two by the Crown.

Te Mātāwai would have a number of functions, but the most significant involves it overseeing the two Crown entities focused on Māori language revitalisation, Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori and Te Māngai Pāho. To enable Te Mātāwai to have oversight of these entities, the Bill changes their status from Crown entities to independent statutory entities.

The Bill also provides Te Mātāwai with other functions including: advising on the Government's Māori Language Strategy; negotiating purchase agreements; and taking over the responsibilities of Te Pūhaki Pāho (the Māori Television Electoral College).

The Bill also recognises that the Māori language is a taonga of iwi and Māori and iwi and Māori are the kaitiaki of the Māori language.

Overview of submissions

Public submitters raised a number of concerns with the Bill. The major issues raised were:

- a perception that the Crown is stepping back from its responsibility;
- the narrow focus of Te Mātāwai;
- the membership of Te Mātāwai. Concerns included heavy weighting toward iwi, absence of urban Māori, and Crown appointments;
- insufficient focus on improving the cross-government response; and
- unclear lines of accountability for the entities in the Bill.

Māori Language Advisory Group Proposal

The Māori Language Advisory Group considers that the purpose of the Māori Language (Te Reo Māori) Bill should be to:

- establish clear direction and strategies for te reo Māori;
- create opportunities for Māori to determine and drive outcomes;
- clarify the roles and functions of both Māori and Crown; and
- encourage and support greater collaboration.

The draft proposal establishes Te Mātāwai with a broader focus, with roles in governance, funding, strategy and coordination. It also proposes the creation of a Rautaki Reo: Crown to focus on language planning at the national level and a Rautaki Reo: Māori, a strategy focusing on language planning at the community level, both guided by the same vision for te reo Māori.

To support Rautaki Reo: Crown, a governance group comprising members of Te Mātāwai and relevant Crown Ministers would be created (Te Rūnanga Reo).

Te Mātāwai's functions would include:

- leading the development and implementation of Rautaki Reo: Māori;
- advising members of Te Rūnanga Reo on, and progressing opportunities for, cross-sector collaboration;
- reviewing statements of intent and annual work-plans for Government agencies with a responsibilities to the Māori language;
- allocating funding to enable community language development;
- appointing two of five members to the each of the Boards of Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori, Te Māngai Pāho;
- taking over the responsibilities of Te Pūtahi Paoho; and
- holding a Hui Taumata (wider forum) every 12-18 months

Representation on Te Mātāwai from Te Reo Tukutuku would be increased to four, with one member appointed to represent each of four sub-groups: education, community, broadcasting and urban. The Crown appointments would be replaced by appointments made by Te Mātāwai itself.