

**Umere Submission to the:
Māori Language Strategy Consultation 2014
Te Puni Kōkiri: PO Box 3943, Wellington 6011.
mlssub@tpk.govt.nz. (Due 28 February 2014)**

Tēnā rā koe Dr Pita Sharples

We, the undersigned submit the following in regard to the draft Māori Language Strategy (the Strategy).

Yesterday a friend of mine took her daughter to buy an ice cream. The lady who served her asked her what language she was speaking. My friend answered "I am speaking the Māori language, the native tongue of this land." The lady said "oh really, why?" My friend replied "because we're Māori." The lady seemed amused "oh, but you don't **look** Māori." My friend didn't know how to take that and asked the lady "what does a Māori look like?" The lady replied "oh your daughter is much prettier"

When she told me what had happened I didn't know how to respond to that as I was at the same ice-cream stall 10 minutes beforehand and was also speaking Māori to my tamariki yet she said nothing to me. Was it because we are darker therefore look more Māori? Was it because we looked rough and my girls are not as 'pretty' as my friend's daughter?

Comments like this grate me and there have been too many. I am often asked questions such as, what language are you speaking? Why do you speak Māori to your children when everything they will need in life is in English? I have people stare at us, a few people have slowed their speech as though we're tourists who can't speak English, I even had a woman at the grocery store try to take my girls from me for telling them to 'whakarongo!'

On top of dealing with attitudes from the wider community we deal with the lack of resources for our tamariki. We send our tamariki to Kohanga Reo, to Kura Kaupapa yet nothing is in place for them beyond kura, in fact some of the subjects in Kura have to be taught in English because there are no qualified reo Māori speaking kaiako to deliver them. There are no reo Māori after school programs, no reo Māori sports programs and the chance of our tamariki gaining employment immersed in te reo, outside of 'teaching' is improbable. Do we love te reo so much that we send our tamariki into immersion environments only for them to fail? Hell no! Te reo **should have** and **deserves to have** the same 'mana' as te reo Pākehā, therefore the fight for te reo continues and we must NEVER settle but demand more from ourselves and expect more of our leaders such as yourself.

Therefore, in regards to the Māori Language Strategy I ask for more time to process what little information has been made available and that the consultation period be extended.

I ask that the Māori Language Strategy be a strategy that identifies the gaps in Māori language education and Māori language in the community and moves to fill those gaps i.e

- professional development for kaiako reo Māori to develop their skills to teach subjects that are not available in Kura Kaupapa
- te reo Māori be a compulsory component in mainstream teaching studies starting with correct pronunciation
- moves to broaden jobs and career opportunities for our rangatahi kōrero Māori
- more reo in the community and PM, MPs, broadcasters leading by example also starting with correct pronunciation and then learning te reo
- not only raising the status of the reo but raise the status of Māori. Māori have

been portrayed as 'scum' for too long and our esteemed language seen by the wider community as the 'scum language.' Media have alot to blame for that and the Crown must rectify this.

For te reo Māori to be a 'reo rangatira,' and a 'taonga' in the hearts of all New Zealand citizens the Strategy must also address wider issues which include: a living wage for all, and making government agencies (such as police, health, education and WINZ) Māori and Māori language friendly.

Koia nei taku iti, tēnā koe, ā, tēnā koutou

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