

Information Sheet: Government Proposed New Māori Language Strategy

Background

Successive Governments have accepted that the Māori language is a taonga guaranteed to iwi and Māori, and that the Crown has an enduring responsibility to take active steps to support its growth and development.

Currently, the Government spends approximately \$220m per annum to support Māori language programmes and services, mainly through Vote: Māori Affairs and Vote: Education. These programmes and services are coordinated through the Government's Māori Language Strategy (MLS).

There have been two reviews of the MLS 2003 in recent years: *Te Reo Mauriora* (2011) produced by an independent panel; and *Ko Aotearoa Tēnei* (2011), the Waitangi Tribunal report of the WAI 262 claim that included a chapter on the Māori language. In addition, the Office of the Auditor-General published a performance audit of the MLS in 2007. The reviews indicate that the MLS has become outdated over time, and needs to be overhauled and updated.

The Minister of Māori Affairs has a mandate to consult with Māori language stakeholders about *Developing a New Māori Language Strategy*. He has developed a suite of proposals to guide this consultation, including:

- confirming the results for the Māori language that we are seeking;
- strengthening the focus on whānau Māori, hapū and iwi language development;
- establishing a new purpose-built entity, Te Mātāwai to assume ownership of Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori (the Māori Language Commission) and Te Māngai Pāho, and to undertake ownership functions with regard to the Māori Television Service together with the Minister of Māori Affairs and the Minister of Finance;
- confirming the roles of government in supporting the Māori language; and
- amending the Māori Language Act 1987 and related legislation to give effect to these changes.

Consultation

A short series of 4-6 hui will be held during early 2014 to consult on proposals for a new Māori Language Strategy. Following these, the Minister of Māori Affairs will report back to Cabinet with the results of consultation and a final proposal for a new Māori Language Strategy.

FAQ

1. What is ‘new’ about the Government’s proposed new Māori Language Strategy?

The proposed MLS envisages significant changes to the Māori Language Act 1987 to establish Te Mātāwai, a purpose-built iwi entity that will assume ownership responsibilities for Te Taura Whiri and Te Māngai Pāho, and will assume the roles and responsibilities of Te Pūtahi Pāho with regard to the Māori Television Service. There will be a greater focus on Crown-Māori/iwi relationships in this sector, and more emphasis on whānau, hapū and iwi language planning and development. There will also be an ongoing requirement for government agencies to plan, implement and report on their Māori language programmes and services.

2. The recent Census results show a decline in the proportion of Māori people able to speak the Māori language. How will this proposed new Strategy address this?

The Census results highlight the urgency of our work to support the revitalisation of the Māori language. The new MLS will set targets for Māori language acquisition, status and use, and will require government agencies to develop, implement and report on the results of their Māori language programmes and services as we pursue the targets and results.

3. Does the proposed new Māori Language Strategy apply only to Māori people or does it apply to all New Zealanders?

The proposed new Māori Language Strategy is particularly focused on results for Māori people in the first instance. This is to reflect that (a) the Māori language is a taonga of iwi and Māori people and (b) based on research undertaken by Te Puni Kōkiri, Māori are most likely to be motivated to learn and use the Māori language to the necessary levels to support its growth and development.

However, other New Zealanders will be able to participate in Māori language programmes and services as they choose, and will be encouraged to do so. As with all language revitalisation models, we need all New Zealanders to be on board and create and support environments where speaking Māori is encouraged.

4. Why do we need another/a new Māori language entity?

The proposed establishment of Te Mātāwai will recognise that the Māori language is a taonga of iwi and Māori people and that iwi are kaitiaki of the Māori language on behalf of their people and should be leading the revitalisation of the Māori language

5. How much will the proposed new Māori language entity cost? Who will pay for it?

Te Puni Kōkiri is currently working on estimated costings for Te Mātāwai's establishment and operations. Funding for Te Mātāwai will be provided from Vote: Māori Affairs.

6. What will Te Mātāwai do?

Te Mātāwai will assume ownership responsibilities for Te Taura Whiri and Te Māngai Pāho. This will mean that it will be responsible for appointing all of the board members of these entities. It will determine how the entities will operate. Te Taura Whiri and Te Māngai Pāho will continue to provide their current programmes and services, and Te Mātāwai will negotiate with the Crown for funding for these Māori language programmes and services. Te Taura Whiri and Te Māngai Pāho will no longer be Crown Entities (as defined by the Crown Entities Act 2004).

Te Mātāwai will also assume ownership responsibilities for the Māori Television Service, in conjunction with the responsible Ministers. In short, it will take over the functions currently performed by Te Pūtahi Paoho, and Te Pūtahi Paoho will be disestablished. This approach will ensure that there is a common platform for iwi and Māori participation in the governance and accountability arrangements of the Māori language entities. This will provide for a consistent and coherent iwi-led approach across these entities.

7. What will happen to the television broadcasting spectrum which has been transferred to Te Pūtahi Paoho?

It is proposed that Te Mātāwai would take over all of the roles and functions of Te Pūtahi Paoho. This would include responsibility for managing the UHF spectrum management rights recently transferred by the Crown to Te Pūtahi Paoho.

8. Where do I find out more information about the proposed new Māori Language Strategy?

Consultation documents that describe the proposals will be available on the Te Puni Kōkiri website at www.tpk.govt.nz from Monday 16 December 2013.

9. How will people be able to provide feedback on the proposals for the Government's new Māori Language Strategy?

A series of targeted consultation hui will be held in February 2014.

People will also be able to provide written feedback through the Te Puni Kōkiri website at www.tpk.govt.nz.