

# Submission on the Proposed Government Māori Language Strategy

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**To:** Right Honourable Pita Sharples, Minister of Māori Affairs

**From:** Stephanie Pohe and Paora Tibble

**Date:** 28 Feb. 14

## **Ownership of the strategy**

There is some confusion about the ownership of this strategy. This strategy is informed by 'iwi' through previous consultation hui etc ... It is not owned by them.

Currently some iwi, Māori groups and whānau have their own Māori language strategy, others are on the way to developing one or are working through other priorities in their development. The purpose of this strategy is to support iwi aspirations and initiatives in regard to the language and to articulate what this Government will do to ensure the retention and revitalisation of the heritage language of this country. The Government must own this strategy.

The engagement/involvement of iwi in the development and implementation of this strategy recognises iwi expertise in this area, their status as the kaitiaki of the heritage language of this country, as well as their critical interest in the ongoing survival of the language.

Therefore it is recommended:

1. That this strategy be clearly defined as the Government's Māori Language Strategy and therefore sets out the Government's responsibility to the retention and revitalisation of the Māori language.

## **Vision of the strategy**

Every strategy needs a vision. An aspirational picture that provides inspiration and motivation for those leading and doing the work. For the Government, Māori language retention and revitalisation should be motivated by more than external factors (WAI reports, consultation findings etc). It is therefore recommended:

2. That a vision statement be developed that clearly articulates the aspirations of this Government for te reo Māori. Eg. Vision = *A bilingual, bicultural Aotearoa*

## Goals of the strategy

The proposed results of the strategy are currently high-level. There will eventually need to be clearly and simply articulated goals for this strategy. It is assumed these will be developed by the new entity.

## Te Mātāwai

The main concern about a new entity is increased bureaucracy = less understanding = less engagement = less effective. This submission supports the extension (or slight re-purposing) of the role of an existing agency to achieve Te Mātāwai goals. This agency already has relationships with stakeholders, is familiar with the environment and experienced in working at this level. It is submitted that:

3. Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori assume the proposed role of Te Mātāwai and become the lead entity for the development of te reo Māori amongst Government agencies as intended by the Māori Language Act 1987.

The following amendments are submitted to the Key Initiatives outlined in the strategy:

4. That the purpose of the annual Crown-Māori hui be clearly articulated and that themes are established for hui that ensure real purpose and benefit for participants and on-going Māori language revitalisation efforts.
5. That amendments to the Māori Language Act include the requirement that all Government communications include Māori language – including oral communications.

The following Key Initiatives are submitted as additions to those outlined in the strategy:

6. That this strategy include a Key Initiative which ensures the development of a Māori Language Plan by all Government agencies and public broadcasters which articulates how they will support the four whāinga – te ako i te reo, te mana o te reo, te kōunga o te reo me te kōrerotanga o te reo. (Other Vote areas to commit budget for their agencies to achieve this.)
7. That a Key Initiative be included which provides for non-Māori to lead the promotion of the language amongst non-Māori. This group will inform an approach for the engagement of non-Māori with the language. (Led by TPK)
8. That this strategy includes a Key Initiative which focuses on a structured Communications Strategy which supports the Key Results and simply and clearly conveys to all New Zealanders:
  - the history of Māori language decline in this country
  - the precarious state of the language today

- the unique place of the heritage language of this country
- the benefits of being bilingual
- non-Māori and Māori experiences with the language.

Furthermore, it is important that stakeholders and agencies understand their role in relation to each other. It is therefore recommended that:

9. The role of Te Puni Kōkiri, Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori, Te Māngai Pāho and other lead organisations be clearly defined by the new entity (or by the strategy) to ensure coordinated effort and effectiveness.
10. Finally, this submission supports the priority focus on Māori language in the home. It also advocates for continued support in the areas of broadcasting and education and supports the focus on Te Ao Hangarau as a new priority area where the language can be developed in terms of status, corpus, quality and use. The areas of Economics and Law are also submitted here for inclusion as supplementary focus areas of the strategy.

Otirā, ka waiho mai ēnei pitopito kōrero hei whiriwhiri mā koutou – me te whakaaro ake, kei te ngākau, kei te hinengaro, kei te arero o tēnā, o tēnā o tātau te orangatonutanga o te reo Māori.

Tēnā rā koutou i ngā mahi nui nei.