

### **Submission to the Review of the Maori Language Strategy**

1. This submission is made on behalf of the Takitimu District Maori Council (Council) one of 16 constituent district councils of the New Zealand Maori Council.

2. The New Zealand Māori Council is a body established by the Māori Community Development Act 1962 (1962 Act). It is pan-Māori, promoting the interests of all Māori, and in exercising its functions it contributes to Māori self-government. The members of the New Zealand Māori Council are democratically elected and accountable to Māori through the 1962 Act structures.

3. In respect of all Māori the New Zealand Māori Council is empowered to make representations to the Minister of Māori Affairs or any other person or authority on matters affecting Māori development.<sup>1</sup> This power has been delegated to the Takitimu District Maori Council with regard to all Maori who live within our rohe<sup>2</sup>.

4. Council holds a special responsibility towards Maori Language as set out in Clause 18 (1) (c ). We do not claim to be the only body which can represent Maori on issues regarding Maori language, however, we are the only body established by statute that has a particular set of broad responsibilities towards Maori language, arts, crafts, as set out in Section 18 of the 1962 Act :

18 (1)

(c) to promote, encourage, and assist Maoris –

...

(v) to preserve, revive and maintain the teaching of Maori arts, crafts, language, geneology, and history in order to perpetuate Maori culture:

...

(3) In the exercise of its functions the Council may make such representations to the Minister or other person or authority as seem to it advantageous to the Maori race.

5. The Environment Court found in Decision No (20113) NZEnvCC162 in July last year referring to Section 18 1 (c) and 3 that “There is no doubt that this constitutes a broad mandate to the Maori Council, and it has the power to undertake those functions generally, or through various other bodies including district Maori councils and committees.”

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<sup>1</sup> Section 18 of the 1962 Act.

<sup>2</sup> Sections 16(2) and 18(2) of the 1962 Act. 4 Section 16(5) of the 1962 Act. 5 He Maunga Rongo, p403.

## **The Process of Consultation**

6. There are several issues which we wish to raise in this submission. The first of which relies on the guarantee of Māori autonomy and self-government in Article 2 of the Treaty and which extends to (inter alia)<sup>3</sup>:

1.1 the right of Māori to constitutional status as the first people (tangata whenua);<sup>4</sup>

1.2 the right of Māori to manage their own policy, resources, and affairs within the minimum parameters necessary for the operation of the State;<sup>5</sup>

1.3 the right of Māori to enjoy cooperation and dialogue with the government;<sup>6</sup> and

1.4 the right of Māori to regulate autonomously their own internal affairs according to their customary law, and to establish, maintain and develop their own legal and political institutions.

7. These Treaty rights set out the constitutional status of Maori with rights to self-government and rights to a cooperative relationship with government.

They prescribe the terms of engagement as being between two sets of equals in which policy that is covered under the terms of the 1962 Act will include a significant input from Maori. This includes Maori Language.

8. The New Zealand Maori Council, which holds a particular broad responsibility for Maori language, could have expected to have been involved in early discussions. Instead of which no consultation has taken place. A short notice for consultation was given, the meetings collapsed into a few weeks and too few meetings held on such an important issue for Maori. In fact no consultation was undertaken within the Takitimu District. These processes have contributed to the Maori Language Strategy remaining a Crown construct without input and buy in from the Treaty partner.

## **The Formation of Te Matawai**

9. Given that the six entities which oversee various aspects of the former Maori Language Strategy have been unable to work together in any constructive way<sup>7</sup> and have developed varied responses to the former Maori Language Strategy, the idea of bringing the entities together makes sense.

10 .However, the weakness, possibly fatal, is that the bulk of the Maori language funding will remain outside of Te Matawai's control. That is it will remain in Education, where it is, according to every review since the 1980's, failing to support the language in ways that have created a growing and sustainable level of Te Reo among students and teachers. For example, Principals who wish to

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<sup>3</sup> He Maunga Rongo p 403

<sup>4</sup> Ibid p 403

<sup>5</sup> Ibid p 403

<sup>6</sup> Ibid p 403

<sup>7</sup> Implementing the Maori Language Strategy Office of the Auditor General 2007

support Maori language in their schools must take the funding from their operational budget, where for some unknown reason Maori language funding sits. Principals must choose whether to fix toilets, upgrade computers, upgrade security, install safety equipment or hire Maori language teachers. Not only does Maori language funding sit within operations, but schools are not eligible for funding for Te Reo which is being made available for Mandarin and which is being proposed for other languages such as Spanish, German, Russian, Samoan etc.

11. The Strategy as it stands focuses on whanau and hapu and is expected to achieve significant improvements with what is in reality a minor budget. Unless the \$150 + million in Education is brought into Te Matawai and it is given the power to contract Education or independent whanau/hapu/iwi providers, expect the same trends as the past 50 years. In other words Council believes Te Matawai should have the ability to tender the delivery of Maori language into schools. The Mandarin Language Strategy that is currently running in up to 300 New Zealand schools is managed from China.

### **Building the Pool of Basic Speakers**

12. In order to increase the number of fluent speakers, we need to build the number with basic conversational Te Reo. The fast and easy way to achieve this is for every child to learn Te Reo from preschool to secondary. That will do it. From this pool of speakers will come sufficient who will be inspired to take their reo further. Imagine the impact of making conversational speakers of every student in the country.

13. Failing this we could follow the Mandarin Language Strategy which is positioning Mandarin in schools across the world. Here in New Zealand there are more children learning Mandarin in mainstream schools than are learning Maori. And yet because one language assistant can cover many schools, the cost is manageable. The aim of the strategy is to have all students at the same level when they enter Secondary School so they are familiar enough with the language to tick Mandarin as their language option. In countries where it has been running for a while, the strategy is judged a success.

### **The Need for Ubiquity**

14. Council supports the intention of the Strategy to make Te Reo visible in public places. However, cautions, that this could be a superficial exercise unless the language is seen and heard in important places - mainstream preschools, schools, in every form of the media and in government and private workplaces.

15. Free Te Reo articles to newspapers, free Te Reo news services on the web; all public announcement to be made in Te Reo first, requirements for all public servants to engage in Te Reo, beginning with teachers who work in our 4,000 preschools and teachers in our 3,000+ schools. This list could be endless and needs to be to have the impact required.

16. The recognition of the importance of the role of the mobile phone and social media in the Strategy will be an invaluable adjunct to the work that must be initiated in preschools and schools, in the media, in workplaces. The danger is that too much reliance is made on technology, which has no power to motivate and to sustain interest. Maori Language apps and programmes must compete with the millions of options that bombard and distract learners from any particular focus.

Technology needs to be integrated into the kind of institutional capture that preschools, schools the media and workplaces represent.

### **Representation on Te Matawai**

17. Council's concern is that the iwi identified in Ngati Kahungunu are the few who have been mandated by the Crown, either through the Fisheries Settlement Act or through recognition of their claim by the Waitangi Tribunal and recognition of a mandating process imposed by the Crown without consultation with Maori. The six LNG's within our rohe were drawn up by the Office of Treaty Settlements and in fact bear little relationship to the major iwi and hapu of Ngati Kahungunu.

18. That very settlement process has produced corporate entities far removed from the control of the hapu upon whose losses the claims were based. They have become so compliant with the Crown as to resemble Crown entities.

19. To place the future of our language into their hands will not take it anywhere near whanau and hapu. Council believes that the 75 marae of Ngati Kahungunu would provide a more direct pathway to hapu and their whanau. The Crown constructs, pre and post settlement, exist only because of the breaches of the Treaty suffered by whanau and hapu. Yet, Council sees little recognition from iwi corporates that their wealth and power derive from the suffering and losses of the hapu and whanau.

### **Review of the effectiveness of Maori Language Providers**

20. The New Zealand Maori Council agrees that in order to halt the long slide into extinction, a vigorous, dispassionate review must be undertaken of all Maori language entities who receive any significant part of the Maori language spend.

21. Maori Television, Maori Radio, Tertiary level beginner programmes in particular have failed to demonstrate that they are providing value to Maori Language for the money. The question must be asked : would the \$50 million annual spend on Maori Television and Radio be better deployed on contracting whanau and hapu providers to work with their own people, supporting them with mobile and internet apps and programmes. Or would it be better deployed to Te Reo Tuatahi which could no doubt get language assistants into most preschools and most classrooms for that amount of money.

### **Conclusion**

The New Zealand Maori Council and the Takitimu District Maori Council believe that if the Crown keeps on doing what it has been doing for the past 20 years, for the past ten years, there is no way the inexorable decline in confident Te Reo speakers can be stopped.

Te Reo needs a game changer and this Strategy falls short.

Council wishes to remind Te Puni Kokiri that you are an agency of the Crown and represent only one of the Treaty partners. All Maori are represented, by statute, by the New Zealand Maori Council with whom you have not consulted on this critical issue.

It makes no sense for you as the Crown to impose your view of what is good for Maori without meaningful dialogue with both Council and with whanau and hapu. Neither the Draft Strategy nor the shadow consultation process provided for those opportunities.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Des Ratima', written in a cursive style.

Des Ratima  
Chair  
Takitimu District Maori Council