

TE RUNANGA O NGATI RUANUI TRUST



Friday 28 February 2014

Māori Language Strategy Consultation
Te Puni Kōkiri
PO Box 3943
Wellington 6011.

Tena koe e te Rangatira Minita Pita Sharples

RE: Maori Language Strategy Submission

Ngati Ruanui welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission in relation to the government's proposed Maori Language Strategy 2013.

While Ngati Ruanui generally supports the aspirations as set out in *ngā whāinga* (key results) and *ngā mātāpono* (key principles) of the proposed strategy we do hold some reservations with respect to how these aspirations will be implemented through *ngā mahi* (key initiatives).

In recognizing the immense importance of this taonga, Ngati Ruanui makes the following recommendations and comments:

Increasing the relevance of Te Reo Maori

"For any language to be spoken by the masses it must be normalized and easy to access and widely used in not only the family but also in all aspects of society. There is a myriad of research that proves this to be the only successful solution for a language to survive." Ngati Ruanui agrees wholeheartedly with this statement. We, furthermore, believe that the proposed strategy lacks creating ongoing relevance for Te Reo Maori, particularly for our younger generations. Tools such as Instagram, Twitter and Facebook are all just a few examples of where this strategy needs to be infiltrating.

In Ngati Ruanui it is not uncommon for our kaumatua to now be facebook members as it is becoming the tool of choice for contact with both their tamariki and mokopuna who no longer live at home. This is just one example of how our uri overcome the day to day challenges of staying relevant and keeping in contact with each other. This said, Ngati Ruanui would like to see this strategy lead initiatives that adopt this similar way of thinking as our kaumatua that "what got us here isn't going to get us there"; and this means linking Te Reo Maori with forms of communication that already have proven success rates. It was not so long ago that Māori Television was a distant reality and this as a tool in itself has significantly normalized Te Reo Maori. Te Reo Maori faces a host of ongoing challenges, from globalization right through to simple acts such as moving away from home to find better employment, that will all continue to the relevance of our language which is why Ngati Ruanui urges the government to explore 'new age' measures for how we can increase the relevance of our language and taonga.

Recommendation One: Ngati Ruanui urges the government to explore ‘new age’ measures for how we can increase the relevance of our language and taonga.

Strengthening our focus on whānau Māori, hapū and iwi.

Ngati Ruanui supports, in principle, more emphasis on whānau, hapū and iwi language planning and development. However the proposals in this strategy appear to give Ngati Ruanui the impression that the initiatives in this area is largely or building on ‘business as usual.’ This approach somewhat concerns Ngati Ruanui and we therefore suggest that the government needs to conduct an exercise whereby:

1. First, we need to take stock of where iwi are at in terms of how they are progressing with Te Reo Maori; and
2. We need to develop action and support plans according to the vision that whānau, hapū and iwi aspire to.

We understand that this concept is briefly addressed in the proposals on page 11 under ‘Strengthening Crown-Iwi and Māori Relationships.’ However we also understand that the “devil lies” in the detail of how, in promoting Maori leadership, this concept will be delivered.

Ngati Ruanui believes that the government needs to act urgently on this matter to enable existing iwi organizations to strengthen Te Reo Maori within their respective takiwa. For some iwi this will mean assistance with implementing existing Te Reo Maori and Education strategies and for others this will mean assisting iwi to *create* these strategies based upon their unique and tailored visions. For many iwi, like Ngati Ruanui, maintaining and enhancing our unique dialect is also a priority. Ngati Ruanui have very recently released our own iwi education strategy that incorporates our aspirations in respect to Te Reo Maori. This strategy is named ‘Te Paepae o Aotea’ and is available on our website www.ruanui.co.nz.

Recommendation Two: On top of the existing proposals, Ngati Ruanui urges the government to take urgent stock of iwi organizations that already exist in the communities in terms of how they are progressing iwi aspirations for Te Reo Maori and develop action and support plans accordingly.

Māori Language in Education

Ngati Ruanui believes the strategy lacks connection with the role that the education system plays in upholding Te Reo Maori. This is demonstrated on page 15 of the document whereby ‘Maori Language in Education’ is presented as a box in isolation away from the rest of the proposals. Given that the government, for the past 20 years, has placed a huge emphasis on the education system in revitalizing Te Reo Maori Ngati Ruanui would expect this strategy to complement measures, including education measures, to date. This means recognizing the different stakeholders, how they interrelate, the gaps, the opportunities and so on. For example, in Ngati Ruanui, we have recognized a gap where our tamariki have the opportunity to be immersed in Te Reo Maori (through kohanga reo and kura kaupapa) until Year 8. However as soon as our tamariki reach Year 9, in order to be educated locally, they must attend a mainstream education institute where Te Reo Maori is only taught as an optional subject. Therefore in order for our uri to to be immersed in Te Reo Maori from Year 9 onwards they must move away from home which also requires an adequate provision of funding. This is just one example of the many challenges, including the issue of transition, which our iwi face in terms of upholding Te Reo Maori.

Recommendation Three: Ngati Ruanui urges the government to explore how the proposed measures interrelate with the role of the education system in upholding Te Reo Maori.

Recommendation Summary

1. Ngati Ruanui urges the government to explore 'new age' measures for how we can increase the relevance of our language and taonga.
2. Ngati Ruanui urges the government to take urgent stock of iwi organizations that already exist in the communities in terms of how they are progressing iwi aspirations for Te Reo Maori and develop action and support plans accordingly.
3. Ngati Ruanui urges the government to explore how the proposed measures interrelate with the role of the education system in upholding Te Reo Maori.

Ngā mihi,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Debbie Ngarewa-Packer
Kaiarataki