

**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).

I submit that the consultation period for this renewed Māori Language Strategy is too limited; the documents are difficult to find and/or access, and the period between the announcement on 3 February 2014 regarding the consultation and the hui themselves is too short;

I have not had enough time to think over the documents and discuss the implications with mywhānau/hapū. I therefore request that the consultation period for the Strategy be extended.

In 1994, Privy Council Lords found that “if, as is the case with the Māori language at the present time, ataonga is in a vulnerable state, this has to be taken into account by the Crown in deciding the action it should take to fulfil its obligations and may well require the Crown to take especially vigorous action for its protection. Because the language is still in decline I submit that:

The Crown must address the vulnerability of the language, including its low status among the wider population of New Zealand citizens, and must embark herewith on “vigorous action” for the protection of tereō Māori

The Strategy must state an ultimate goal, for example, to promote the development of Aotearoa NZ as a bilingual, Māori-English, bicultural (BEMB) nation.

The strategy must provide clarity as to how the Crown intends to meet this ultimate goal by providing in the Strategy, a comprehensive list of actions and a timeline of the Crown’s. These actions should include:

More te reo Māori in the public arena, particularly in areas where it has been relegated below foreign languages. I think rules should be put in place the putte reo Māori on an equal footing with English as per its official status in NZ law (E.g., ATMs have other languages, but not te reo Māori as an option);

Identification of gaps in Māori language education and subsequent moves to fill those gaps. E.g., (1) In areas where Māori-medium education is hard to access, provide government support for locals to set up Kura Māori; (2) make te reo Māori and bilingual theory a requirement of initial teacher education and teacher professional development.

A jobs and careers component for young people fluent in te reo Māori. Our efforts and taxpayers money are being wasted if there are no jobs to keep our young Māori speakers in our communities in Aotearoa.

Recognition that, in order to raise the status of te reo Māori in Aotearoa, it needs to be supported from the top. The PM, MPs, community leaders and broadcasters must commit to supporting te reo, beginning with correct pronunciation, and then by learning te reo.

Recognition that a language cannot be revitalised in a vacuum. The Strategy must therefore have links to, for example, the economic, health, and justice needs of Māori.

Recognition that, in order to thrive, te reo Māori needs to flourish in the hearts and minds of all our people. For this to occur, the Strategy must reflect that wider issues that need to be addressed by the Government. These wider issues include: a living wage for all, and making government agencies (such as police, health, education and WINZ) Māori and Māori language friendly.

He mihi nui ki a koe, ki a koutou

Na Te Tahī Rangihēua