

Ko tā Te Wairoa Reorua urupare ki Te Rautaki Reo Māori a te Kāwanatanga

A Bilingual Wairoa 2040 response to the proposed government Māori language strategy

Submitted 5pm, Friday 28 February 2014

1. He Kupu Whakamihi

1. Mokori anō kia rere a mihi ki ngā tōpito o te motu, ki ngā kaupapa e whakatairanga nei i te reo Māori, arā, ko Te Ātaarangi tēnā, ko Te Kōhanga Reo tēnā, ko te Kura Kaupapa Māori tēnā, a wai ake, a wai ake. Me kī pēnei, tokomaha rawa koutou kia whakahuatia te ingoa o tēnā, o tēnā. Heoi anō, ko te mutunga iho ahakoa ko wai, ahakoa kei hea, ahakoa ko tēhea te waka ka hoea hei kawē i te oranga tonutanga o tō tātau reo kāmehameha – ka ora te reo, ka ora ngā tikanga, ka ora te iwi. Korou ora.

2. This submission

2. This submission on the proposed new government Māori language strategy has been prepared by Te Wairoa Reorua – Bilingual Wairoa 2040 whose affiliated organisations include:

- Te Kura Kaupapa Māori o Ngāti Kahungunu o Te Wairoa
- Te Kura Motuhake o Te Ātaarangi ki Te Wairoa
- Te Kōhanga Reo (Wairoa district)
- Wairoa District Council
- Wairoa Taiwhenua
- The Human Rights Commission.

It is acknowledged also that the organisations listed above may also be submitting their own responses to the draft proposal separate to this submission. Therefore, this submission does not presume to speak for those organisations as distinct entities, but rather this submission is based on common agreement on issues identified in the current draft proposal.

3. In principle Te Wairoa Reorua supports the intent of the four result areas for the new Māori language strategy these being (a) increasing the number of whānau Māori (and other New Zealanders) who can speak Māori; (b) increasing the status of the Māori language among whānau Māori and other New Zealanders and globally; (c) increasing the quality of Māori language use and supporting a focus on iwi dialect maintenance and transmission; and (d) increasing the use of the Māori language among whānau Māori (and other New Zealanders) in a range of domains, with a particular focus on intergenerational language transmission in the home. These result areas are in alignment with Te Wairoa Reorua's goals for the promotion and growth of te reo Māori throughout all facets of the wider Wairoa community. Therefore Te Wairoa Reorua recognises and acknowledges the intent of the proposed strategy to support and grow te reo Māori.

4. Reorua also supports the use of the three key principles outlined in the proposal these being (1) Whakamana, Whānau, Whakapiki Hapū Iwi; (2) Kia tū rangatira ai te ao Māori; (3) Mahi Tōtika. However, the definition given for 'Mahi Tōtika' should be re-phrased to ensure that it's meaning is easily and more quickly understood by the end-users (whānau/hapū/iwi). These principles are also in alignment with the Māori language aspirations of Te Wairoa Reorua.
5. Reorua acknowledges how the establishment of a new Māori language entity, Te Mātāwai, and the transfer of ownership of Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori and Te Māngai Pāhō to said entity may 'recognise 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'. However, the composition of Te Mātāwai and the representation model presented in the proposal arguably limits the ability of Māori, and in particular the reo Māori speaking sector, to contribute and guide Te Mātāwai in its activities. Currently the proposal states that there be strong iwi representation on Te Mātāwai (up to seven representatives derived from designated areas). However, the allocation of a small number of places to non-iwi specific language leader organisations such as Te Ātaarangi, Te Kōhanga Reo, Puna Reo, Wānanga, and others is concerning and should be seriously reconsidered. While the role of iwi is important in the revitalisation of reo Māori especially in regard to reo ā-iwi, a number of non-iwi specific organisations such as those named above have been instrumental in the past, and presently, in reviving, growing, and advancing te reo Māori throughout Aotearoa. For Te Wairoa especially such organisations have been at the forefront of language regeneration in this district and will continue to do so.
6. Te Wairoa Reorua strongly encourages the Minister and Te Puni Kōkiri to carefully consider the potential impacts of the proposed new Te Mātāwai structure on rural communities such as Te Wairoa. According to the 2013 Census, Māori are 59% of the population of the Wairoa district, of whom a significant proportion are reo Māori speakers. This is clear reflection of the strength of reo Māori initiatives throughout the Wairoa district. Te Wairoa Reorua is concerned that the proposed strategy and in particular the establishment of Te Mātāwai may result in the creation of a 'reo-ocracy', that is, an unnecessary bureaucratic structure more focussed on the management of Te Taura Whiri, Te Māngai Pāhō, and Māori Television rather than the key reason for its existence – the promotion and growth of te reo Māori. It has been shown time and time again that increased layers of bureaucracy do not benefit communities such as Te Wairoa. It is recommended that the manner in which communities like Te Wairoa will benefit directly from the proposed strategy be clearly demonstrated to assure our community that its efforts to revitalise te reo Māori are valued and supported in a meaningful way that will not be subjected to 'reo-ocracy'.
7. Te Mātāwai, as illustrated in the proposed strategy, appears to be a potentially influential entity in the future direction of te reo Māori. However, a critical question is who will Te Mātāwai ultimately be accountable and answerable to: The government? The Minister? Māori? There is a concern that if Te Mātāwai is answerable first and foremost to the government or Minister then who holds the mana of te reo Māori. Indeed the government does have a responsibility towards te reo Māori and that responsibility should never be abdicated. Furthermore, it is recognised that Māori (whānau, hapū, iwi, marae) may have a

role to play in the selection of representatives on Te Mātāwai. Beyond that, however, what real influence will they have? This needs to be clearly articulated to assuage fears about where the mana of te reo Māori will sit through the implementation of the proposed strategy. Te Wairoa maintains that the mana of its reo sits with Te Wairoa always.

8. The proposed brief for Te Mātāwai seems extensive in regard to it having oversight for Te Taura Whiri, Te Māngai Pāhō, and Māori Television. It is difficult to see how Te Mātāwai will be able to effectively preside over what are already three distinct and important organisations. The governance role of Te Mātāwai will need to be clearly defined to enable the organisations mentioned above to carry out their respective functions.
9. Reorua strongly supports the promotion and implementation of bilingual signage. This is consistent with Te Wairoa Reorua's own objectives to promote and encourage the creation and utilisation of bilingual (Māori/English) signage throughout the Wairoa community.
10. In order for the proposed strategy in its current form to come to fruition it is recognised that changes to legislation are required. Such amendments require time and a great deal of political will is necessary for the revision of legislation to be fast-tracked. Te Wairoa Reorua is concerned that the proposed reo Māori strategy – and ultimately, te reo Māori itself – will fall victim to political whims. Regardless of what does eventuate at a political level Te Wairoa Reorua and its affiliated members remain committed to te reo Māori – its revitalisation, promotion, growth, and development.

Nō reira ka herea ake tēnei ki te kōrero a taku tipuna a Tama Te Rangī, arā, 'he ao te rangī ka ūhia mā te huruhuru te manu ka rere'. Ka noho tēnei whakatauaiki hei tūāpapa mō tā mātau ko Reorua i whakawhāriki ai hei whakaarotanga, hei kōrerotanga mā koutou, otirā, ma tātau katoa e pā ana ki te hiki, te hāpai, te toko ake, te whakaora ake hoki i tō tātau reo rangatira. Hui te marama! Hui te ora e!

Nāku nei



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Tiamana/Chairman

Te Wairoa Reorua – Bilingual Wairoa 2040