

# TE TIROHANGA I TE KŌREROTANGA O TE REO RANGATIRA I ROTO I NGĀ KĀINGA MĀORI ME NGĀ ROHE

Survey of Language Use in Maori Households  
and Communities

PĀNUI WHAKAMŌHIO  
INFORMATION BULLETIN

63

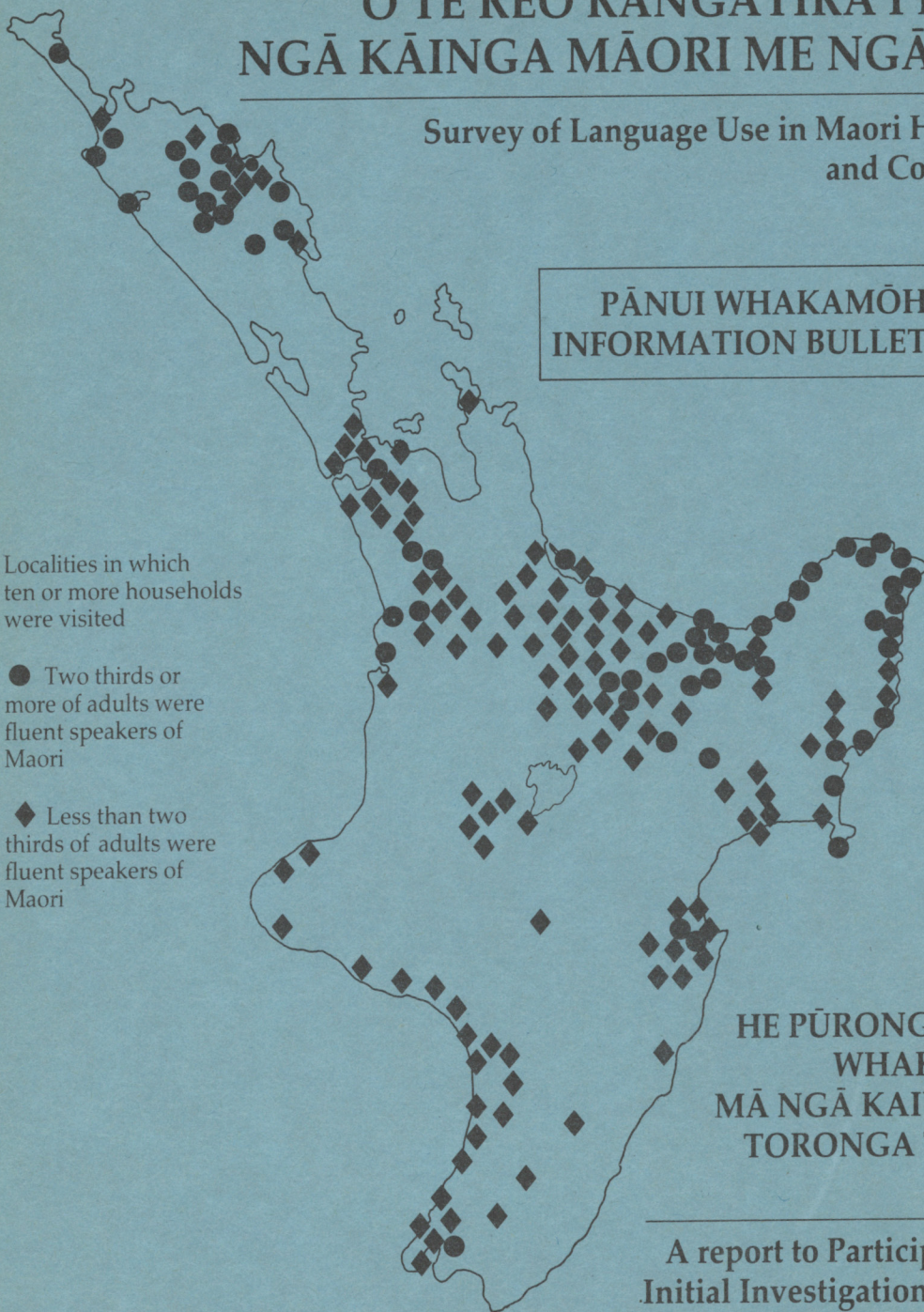
Localities in which  
ten or more households  
were visited

● Two thirds or  
more of adults were  
fluent speakers of  
Maori

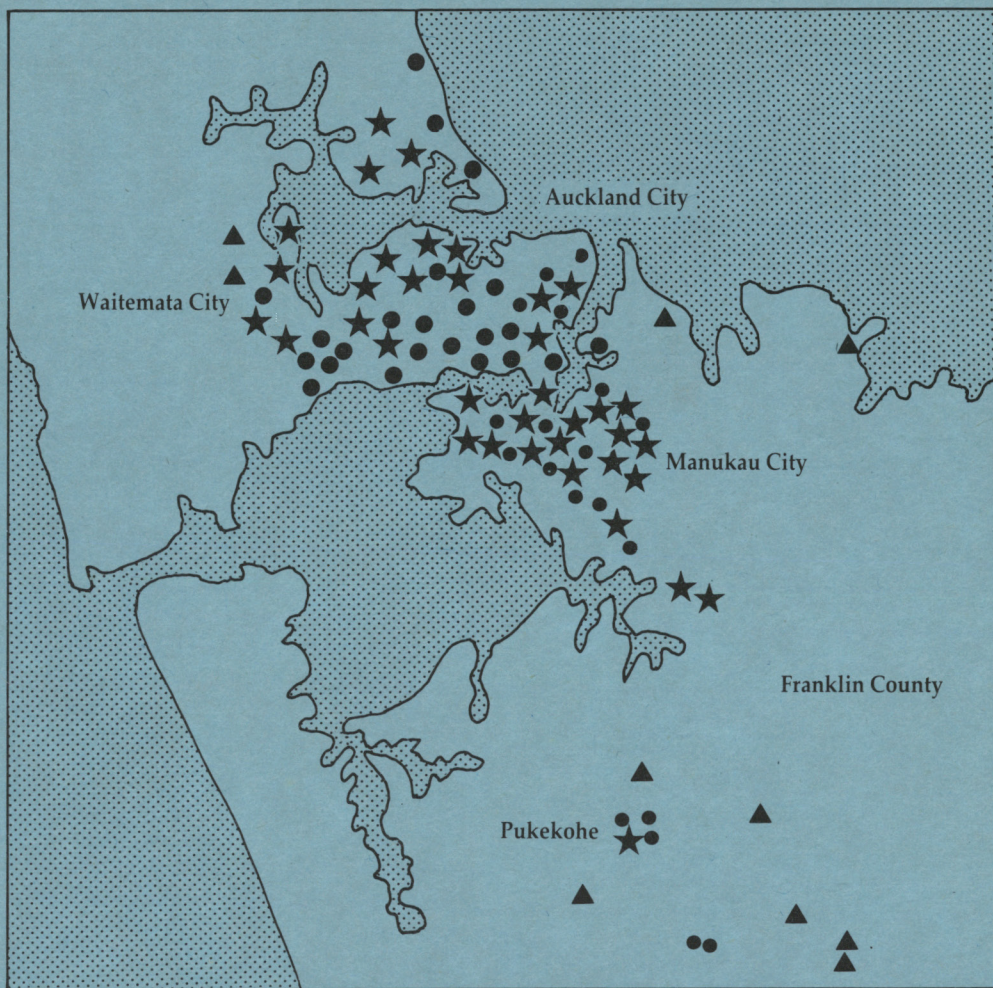
◆ Less than two  
thirds of adults were  
fluent speakers of  
Maori

HE PŪRONGORONGO  
WHAKAMŌHIO  
MĀ NGĀ KAIURU KI TE  
TORONGA TUATAHI,  
1973-1978

A report to Participants in the  
Initial Investigation, 1973-1978







### Maori Speakers in the Greater Auckland Area

This map shows the approximate number of people able to understand Maori with ease in the Greater Auckland Area, based on the results of the Socio-Linguistic Survey (1974-76). Each star ★ represents 500 people, and each dot ● a further 100 people. Small towns and rural localities visited in the survey with less than 100 speakers are represented by a triangle ▲.

### THE MAORI LANGUAGE IN PUKEKOHE AND VICINITY

Fieldwork for the census of language use in Maori communities took place in 23 households in the Pukekohe Borough and in 4 households in Paerata and Puni in January 1976. The interviewers were Kathleen Grace (Ngati Tuwharetoa), Maku Potae (Ngati Porou), Evelyn Te Uira (Waikato), Audrey Cooper (Waikato), Raiha Smith (Ngati Kahungunu), Candy Scrimshaw (Ngati Kahungunu) and May Adlam (Ngapuhi). Twenty-six interviews were carried out in English; 1 was partly in English and partly in Maori.

The households surveyed had a total population of 164, and 162 of these people were of Maori descent. This was about 10 percent of the Maori population of the district at the time.

### RESULTS OF THE LINGUISTIC SURVEY

#### *Iwi Affiliation*

The people interviewed mentioned nine main iwi to which they or members of their households belonged. Waikato with 106 members, or two-thirds of the total, was the largest iwi in the survey, while Ngapuhi with 40 members, nearly a quarter of the total, was the next largest tribal group.

#### *Ability To Speak And Understand Maori*

The table on the next page shows that a fifth of the people surveyed spoke Maori fluently, while more than two-fifths of them understood the language well. All the fluent speakers, except one, were adults over the age of 25. More than three-quarters of this age group also understood Maori well. Although over half the people under 25 knew hardly any Maori at that time, a quarter of them could easily understand people talking in the language.



KNOWLEDGE OF SPOKEN MAORI IN PUKEKOHE AND VICINITY (1976)

Age Group	Fluent Speakers		Understand Easily		Limited Understanding		No Knowledge	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
45 & over	19	79	21	88	3	13	0	
25-44	13	52	19	76	3	12	3	12
15-24	1	3	11	33	5	15	17	52
2-14	0		16	21	14	18	46	61
Overall	33	21	67	42	25	16	66	42

(Numbers and percentages refer to members of households visited; percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number).

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*Use Of Maori Language In The Household*

English was the main language for everyday use in most households visited. There were 21 homes with dependent children, and in 16 of them people spoke mostly or only in English. In four homes more English than Maori was spoken, while in the remaining household both languages were used equally often.

There were six childless households visited and the people in five of them spoke mostly or only in English themselves or with visitors. In the remaining home, Maori and English were spoken equally often.

*The Maori Language In The Community*

English was also the main language spoken in the community. While two-thirds of the adults over 25 could speak Maori well, the people in the area most likely to use the language were kaumatua over 45. However, most people they spoke with could speak only English, and even in their own families they nearly always spoke English with people under 25.

The Maori language, however, still remained important in ceremonies on the marae and in certain religious services. Many people also said private prayer and grace in Maori.

If any two members of the Maori community in Pukekohe were to meet unexpectedly, there was one chance in ten that they could understand each other in Maori. If both of them were adults over 25, the chances were one in two, while the chances of Maori being spoken between people under 25 were practically nil.

*Attitudes Towards The Language*

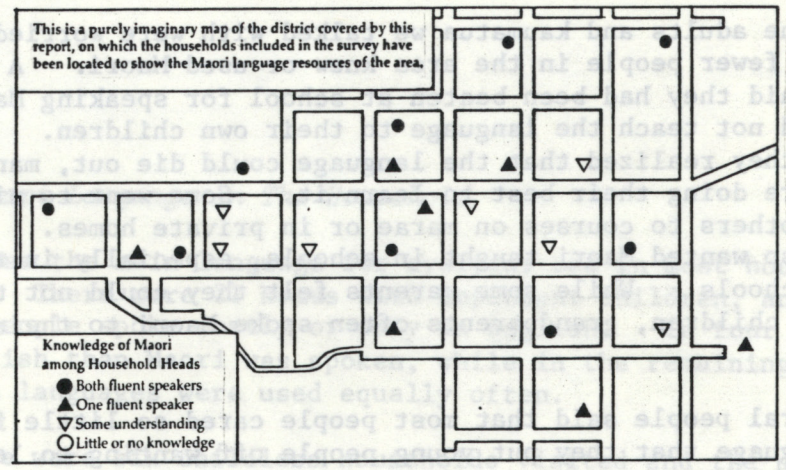
Many of the adults and kaumatua we talked with were worried that fewer and fewer people in the area knew or used Maori. A quarter of them said they had been beaten at school for speaking Maori, and so did not teach the language to their own children. But now that they realized that the language could die out, many people were doing their best to learn it. Some went to night classes, others to courses on marae or in private homes. Many people also wanted Maori taught in schools, especially in the primary schools. While some parents felt they could not teach their own children, grandparents often spoke Maori to their mokopuna.

Several people said that most people cared so little for the Maori language that they put young people off wanting to learn it. Some adults who could speak Maori found themselves speaking mostly English which was the only language their neighbours, workmates and friends knew. This left only the kaumatua to speak Maori with each other.



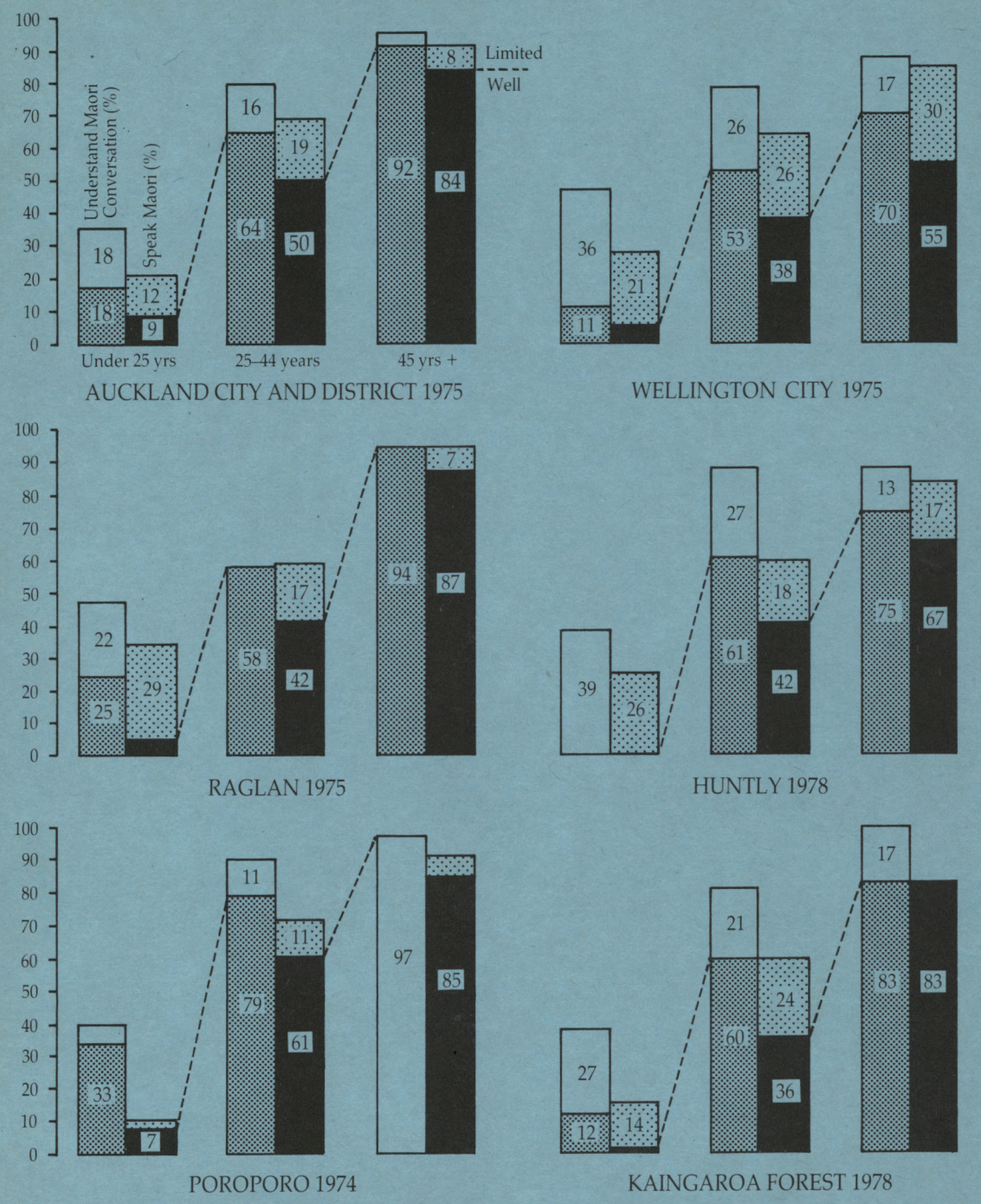
KNOWLEDGE OF SPOKEN MAORI AND LITERACY (1978) **CONCLUSION**

At the time of the linguistic survey, nearly all good speakers of Maori in the Pukekohe district were adults over 25. There was such a drop in the number of children who knew Maori that many people we spoke with in the area had made up their minds to hold on to the language. They agreed that English was important in today's world, but still felt that the Maori language had a special place in their lives. For example, Maori was still used in ceremonies on the marae and in other Maori meetings. But, in the home, because English is the language of TV, radio, newspapers and nearly all reading material, it is very difficult for Maori to keep going as a language for everyday use. Some people said that there should be more and better television programmes of special interest to the Maori people, including Maori language programmes for children.



This report was prepared by Lee Smith (Ngati Kahungunu).

Knowledge of Maori Language by Age Groups in Selected Areas at the Time of the Linguistic Census





## The Survey of Language Use in Maori Households and Communities

The census of language use on which this report is based is the first part of a general study of the place of the Maori language in Maori communities, its structure, how it is spoken and written under modern conditions, and its relevance to New Zealand as a nation. This study is being conducted by the Maori Unit of the New Zealand Council for Educational Research. Fieldwork for the census phase began in Whangaroa County and Te Tii in August 1973, and ended in August 1978. Follow-up studies and studies in additional communities will be undertaken from time to time (the first of these was conducted in Waverley in August 1979).

The map on the front cover shows the approximate localities in which ten or more households were visited between 1973 and 1979. Since the linguistic census was completed, the major task of the Unit has been the analysing and reporting of the information collected. At the same time, however, studies of the structure and usage of the Maori language have commenced; these will result in a series of handbooks and other materials for teachers of Maori (including parents), and for people wishing to learn the language. An example of this is *The First Basic Maori Word List*, published in 1982. Other publications have included background studies for bilingual education projects, and reports on policy issues affecting the Maori language and Maori speakers – for example, the legal status of Maori in New Zealand.

### The Purpose of This Report

This report has been prepared for the people who participated in the original survey and who provided the information on which it is based. It is hoped that it will encourage people to compare the situation now with that at the time covered by the report, and that this information will provide a basis for discussion and debate about what action, if any, each community might take to ensure that the Maori language is at least as important in the twenty-first century as it was in the 1970s.

### Further Information

One copy of this report is provided free to each person interviewed during the linguistic census in the area concerned, and to local schools, Maori Language Boards, and Maori Committees. Further information about the linguistic survey, and lists of publications, may be obtained from the Maori Unit, New Zealand Council for Educational Research, P.O. Box 3237, Wellington.



### Ngā Mihi/Special Thanks

Our first thanks must go to the 6,500 Maori families who entrusted us with the information presented in this series of reports. Fieldwork for the survey was funded substantially by contributions from the Lottery Board of Control, Fletcher Holdings Limited, the Maori Purposes Fund, and the Maori Education Foundation. The coding and analysis of the data was supported initially by a grant from Fletcher Holdings Limited, and further financial assistance for these purposes has been provided by Mobil Oil N.Z. Limited, the Post Primary Teachers Association, the New Zealand Educational Institute and the Raukawa Trustees. The writing of these reports was made possible by the generosity of the J.R. McKenzie Trust.