

# 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

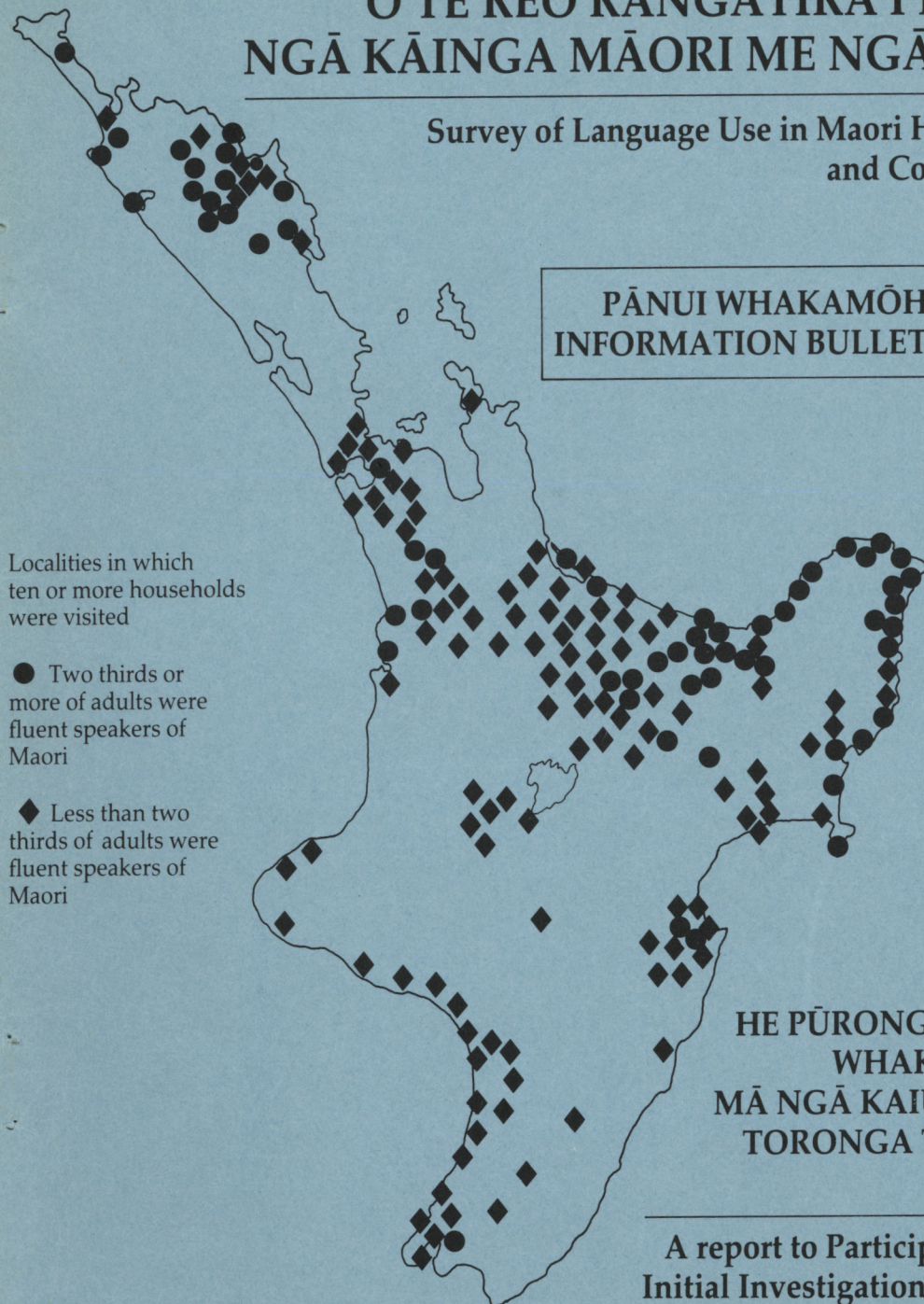
PĀNUI WHAKAMŌHIO  
INFORMATION BULLETIN

85

Localities in which  
ten or more households  
were visited

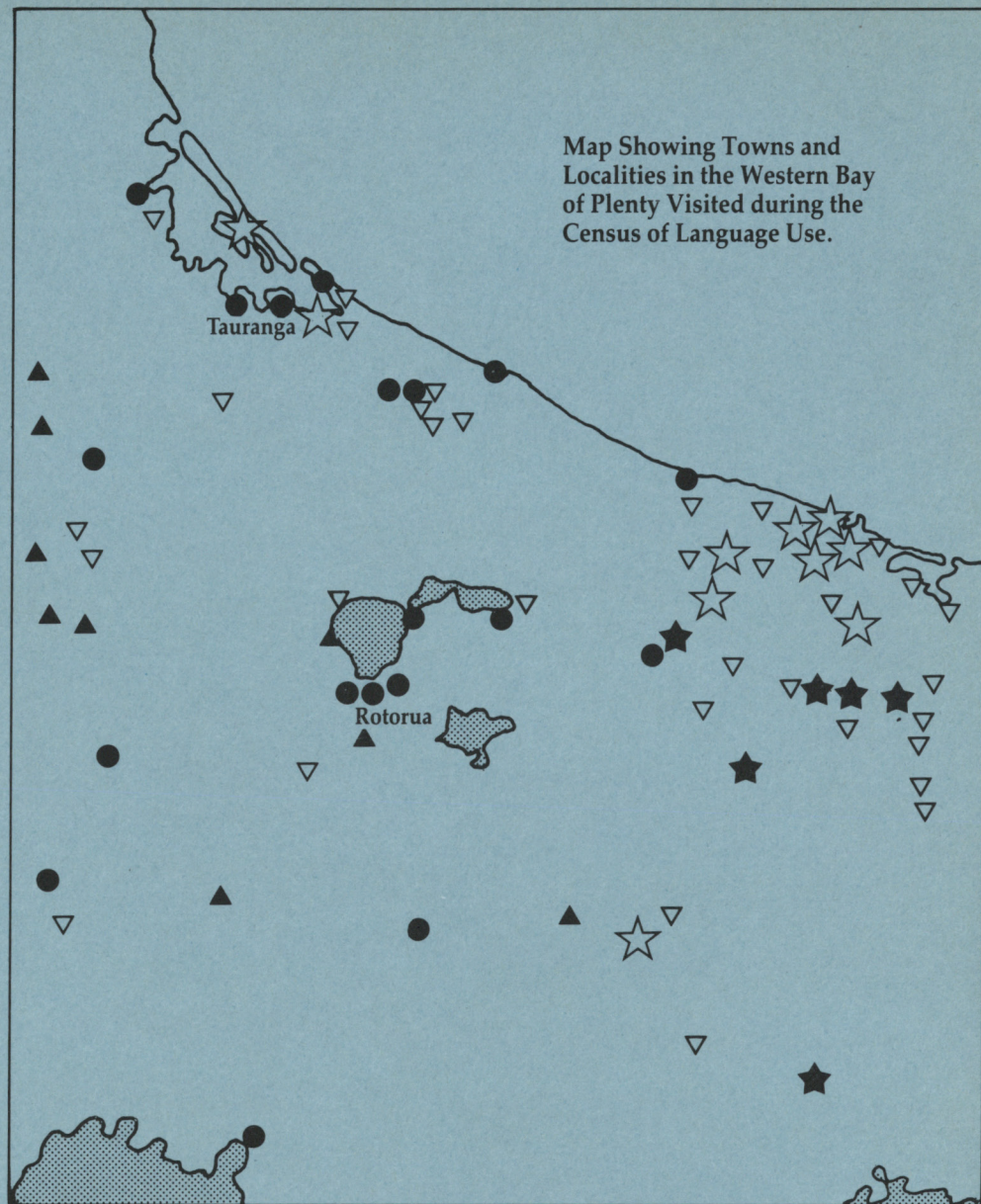
● Two thirds or  
more of adults were  
fluent speakers of  
Maori

◆ 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



Percentage of Fluent Speakers of Maori among Persons Aged 25 and over in Households Visited.

- ★ 90% or more
- ☆ 66% to 89%
- 46% to 65%
- ▲ 45% or less
- ▽ Fewer than 10 households visited

## THE MAORI LANGUAGE IN MURUPARA AND GALATEA

Fieldwork for the census of Language use in Maori communities took place in 54 households in Murupara in January 1974. The interviewers were William Martin (Ngati Manawa/Te Aupouri), Bronco Te Kiri (Tuhoe), Helen O'Donoghue, Ripeka Koopu (Te Whanau-a-Apanui), Charee Ogle (Ngapuhi) and Joe Rua (Te Whanau-a-Apanui). Fifty-three interviews were carried out in English; only one interview was in Maori.

The households surveyed had a total population of 331, and 326 of these people were of Maori descent. This was about 15 percent of the Maori population of Murupara at the time. In addition, two households in Galatea, with ten people, all of Maori descent, were visited by the same interviewers.

### RESULTS OF THE LINGUISTIC SURVEY

#### *Iwi Affiliation*

The people interviewed in Murupara mentioned 18 main iwi to which they or members of their households belonged. Tuhoe with 142 members or 44 percent of the total was the largest iwi in the survey. The next largest group was Te Arawa, with 28 members (just under 9 percent of the total). The ten people in Galatea said they were members of a total of six different iwi; three said they were just "Maori".

#### *Ability to Speak and Understand Maori*

The table on the next page shows that one quarter of the people surveyed in Murupara could speak Maori fluently while almost half of them understood the language well. About four-fifths of

these good speakers were adults over 25; few school children spoke Maori well, but just over one quarter of them had a good understanding of the language. Of all the people we visited in Murupara and Galatea almost two-fifths (half of them under the age of 15) did not understand the language at all.

*KNOWLEDGE OF SPOKEN MAORI IN MURUPARA*

Age Group	Fluent Speakers		Understand Easily		Limited Understanding		No Knowledge	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
45 & over	24	92	24	92	1	4	1	4
25-44	43	58	58	78	6	8	10	14
15-24	12	24	18	37	14	28	17	35
2-14	4	2	45	28	35	20	98	55
Overall	83	26	145	44	56	17	126	39

(Numbers and percentages refer to those interviewed in January, 1974; percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number).

*Use of Maori Language in the Household*

There were 51 households with dependent children visited in Murupara, and in only two of them did people talk about everyday things entirely or mostly in Maori. Both of these families had grandparents living with them. In five homes, Maori and English were used about equally, while in 19 other households only English was spoken. In the other 25 households English was the main language spoken. In two of the three childless households only English was used and in the other one Maori was spoken to visitors. English was the main language used by the families in Galatea.

*The Maori Language in the Community*

Although English was the language spoken most often among the families we visited in Murupara and Galatea, Maori was still widely used in the community. Nearly two-thirds of the people over 25 spoke the language well and more than four-fifths of them understood it well. They were, therefore, the people most likely to use Maori with friends, neighbours and workmates of the same age. When with younger people, however, they usually spoke English, as only about a quarter of the people under 25 could understand Maori well.

Maori still remained important in certain religious ceremonies and in ceremonies on the marae, but several people mentioned that powhiri and whaikorero given on the marae were now often translated into English if Pakeha were present.

If any two members of the Maori community in Murupara and Galatea met unexpectedly the chances were about one in five that they could understand each other in Maori. If both people were over the age of 25 the chances were as high as one in two, but children under 15 would probably not be able to speak Maori with each other.

*Attitudes towards the Language*

At least half of the parents and grandparents interviewed said they had been strapped or reprimanded for speaking Maori as school children. This does not seem to have stopped anyone from speaking Maori but it may have led some people to believe that it was better to speak English.

Several of the people we spoke to said that they supported the teaching of Maori in schools as a way of holding on to the language, and one parent commented that he would rather have his children learn Maori than French as Maori would be of more use to them.

Another person mentioned the importance of the presence of kaumatua in the community in encouraging younger Maori speakers to actually use the language.

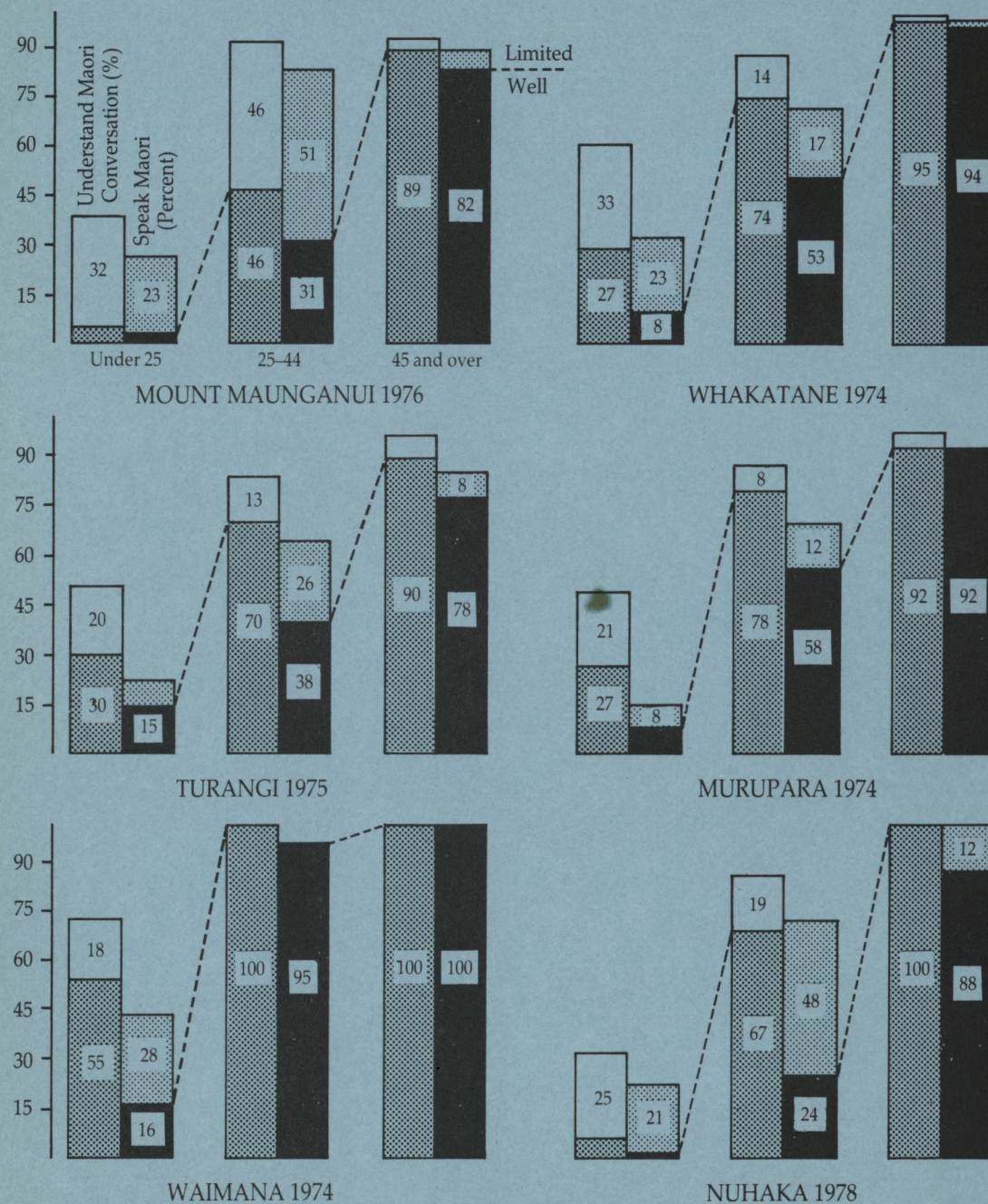
### CONCLUSION

At the time of the survey most Maori people in Murupara and Galatea over 25 spoke and understood Maori well, while there was a definite drop in the number of people under 25 who knew the language. In households with children English was being used more and more and the people most likely to use Maori often in the community were adults over 45. Most people, however, still regarded Maori as the proper language for ceremonies on the marae and for certain religious services, and many spoke it often with friends and relatives.

In the 1970's a fair number of teenagers and young adults in Murupara could at least understand Maori easily. Because of this, even in the 1980's there would be quite a few homes with young children where at least one parent had been brought up where Maori was spoken often. Parents of older children, and most grandparents, would be likely to know Maori well. This means that *kohanga reo* would probably be very helpful in Murupara if people wanted to let young children have the chance to become fluent speakers of Maori. Bilingual schools, where both Maori and English are used for teaching and learning about ordinary school subjects, would also have a good chance of success in Kawerau, if they were supported by parents and the rest of the Maori community. Maori people in Murupara have a special advantage, as it is the only borough in New Zealand where the majority of people are of Maori ancestry.

This report was prepared by Sharon Moerkerk (Waikato).

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.