

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

Survey of Language Use in Maori Households  
and Communities

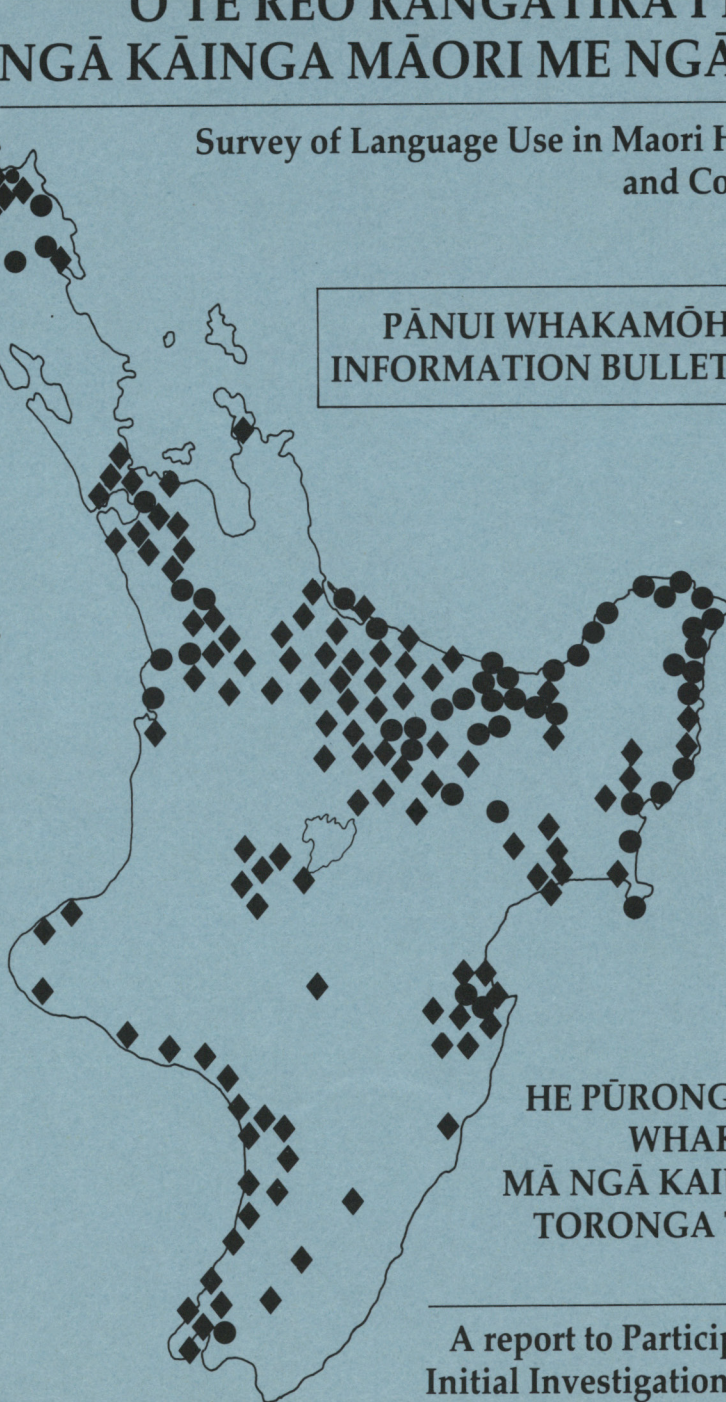
PĀNUI WHAKAMŌHIO  
INFORMATION BULLETIN

95

Localities in which  
ten or more households  
were visited

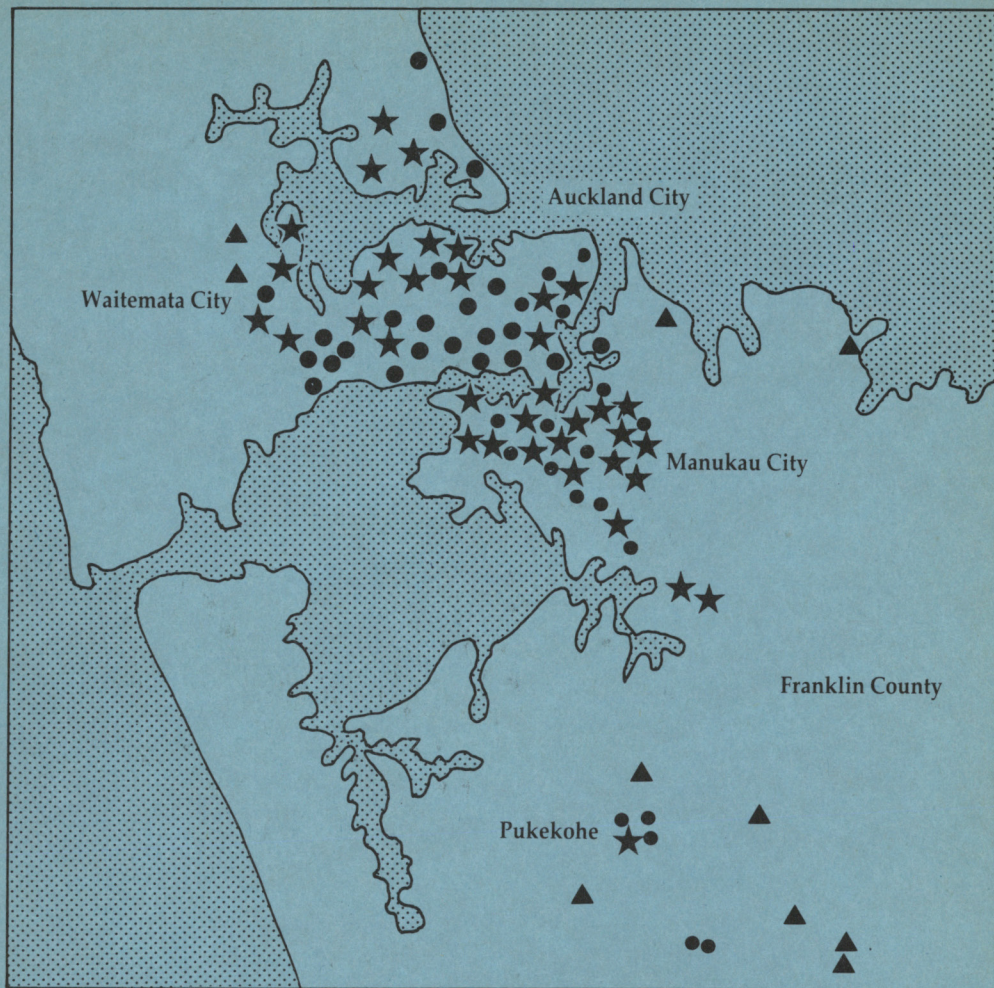
● Two thirds or  
more of adults were  
fluent speakers of  
Maori

◆ 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 Mangere, Papatoetoe and Otahuhu

Fieldwork for the census of language use in Maori communities took place in Otahuhu in August and September of 1974, in Papatoetoe in January 1976 and in Mangere in September of 1975 and again in 1978.

Sixteen interviews were carried out in Maori, nine in both Maori and English and 167 in English.

Altogether 185 households were visited in the three districts : 133 in Mangere, with a total of 820 people (790 of Maori descent, about a tenth of the Maori population of the area at that time); 34 in Papatoetoe with 182 people (177 of Maori descent, about one tenth of the Maori population; and 18 in Otahuhu with 82 people (79 of Maori descent, about five percent of the Maori population).

### Results of the Linguistic Survey

#### Iwi Affiliation

Of all the major iwi to which the informants said they or the members of their household belonged, Ngapuhi was the iwi to which over half the people included in the survey belonged. Just over one fifth of the people were from Waikato; many of these lived in Mangere, a traditional Waikato settlement.

Knowledge of Spoken Maori in Mangere  
Otahuhu and Papatoetoe (1974)

Age Group	Mangere		Papatoetoe		Otahuhu	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
Fluent Speakers						
45+	61	74	21	78	6	86
25-44	78	42	18	58	14	56
15-24	11	10	3	6	0	0
2-14	10	3	0	0	4	14
Overall	160	21	42	25	24	32
Understand Easily						
45+	67	82	23	85	6	86
25-44	115	62	21	68	18	72
15-24	25	22	8	16	3	19
2-14	25	6	6	9	10	33
Overall	232	29	58	33	37	47
Limited Understanding						
45+	8	10	2	7	1	14
25-44	37	20	6	19	4	20
15-24	32	28	23	45	3	19
2-14	102	25	28	42	10	33
Overall	179	23	59	34	18	23
No Knowledge						
45+	7	9	2	7	0	0
25-44	33	18	4	13	3	12
15-24	58	50	20	39	10	63
2-14	282	69	33	49	10	33
Overall	380	48	59	34	23	29

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

Ability to Speak and Understand Maori

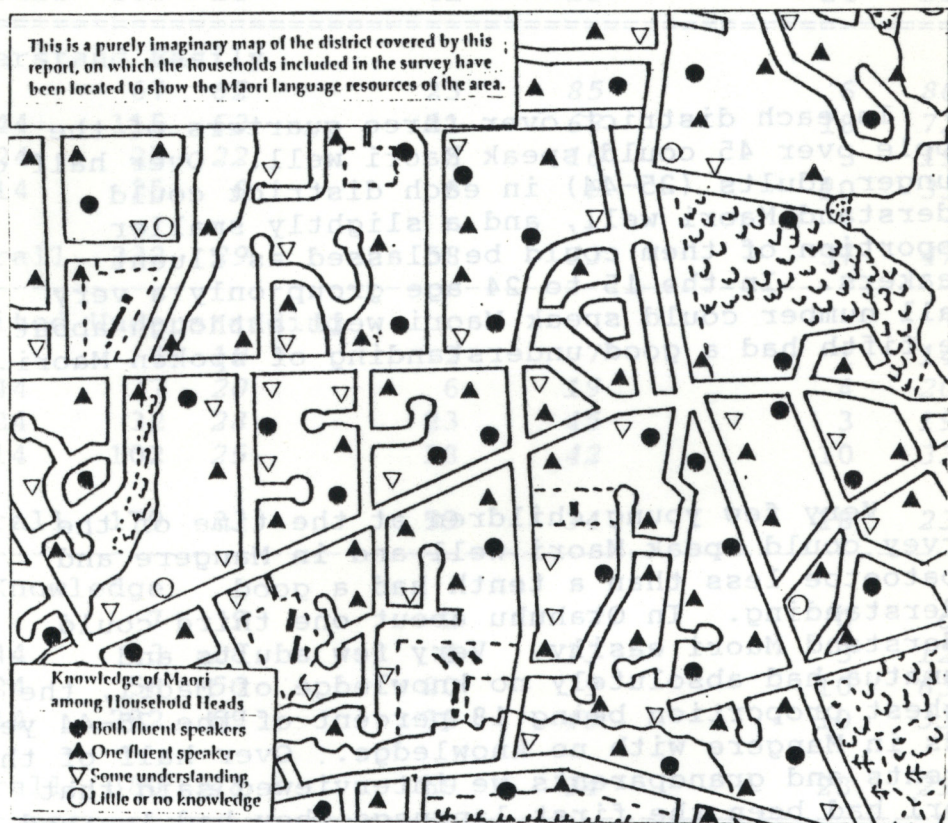
As the table shows, overall the proportion of people who could speak Maori well ranged from about one fifth to about one third of the population in the homes we visited in the three districts. Otahuhu had the highest overall proportion (32 percent) while Mangere had the lowest (21 percent) although the differences between the communities are really quite slight.

In each district over three quarters of the people over 45 could speak Maori well. Over half of younger adults (25-44) in each district could understand Maori well, and a slightly smaller proportion of them could be classed as fluent speakers. In the 15 to 24 age group only a very small number could speak Maori well although about one fifth had a good understanding of spoken Maori.

Very few young children at the time of the survey could speak Maori well and in Mangere and Papatoetoe less than a tenth had a good understanding. In Otahuhu about one third could understand Maori easily. Very few adults and kaumatua had absolutely no knowledge of Maori, the highest proportion being 18 percent of the 25-44 year olds in Mangere with no knowledge. Over half of the parents and grandparents we interviewed said that Maori had been the first language they had learned to understand. On the other hand, most of the people we spoke to said that English had been the first language they had learned to read and write in.

### The Maori Language in the Household

Most of the families we visited used at least some Maori. English was more likely to be used in households with dependent children - only two out of 156 households with dependent children used entirely or mostly Maori compared with three out of 28 households without children. Households in our Otahuhu survey were more likely to use at least some Maori than were those in Mangere.



MANGERE

### The Maori Language in the Community

English was the main language used in the community although over half our informants mentioned using at least some Maori with their visitors. However, English language usage was most noticeable with neighbours where only four people out of 18 (two percent) mentioned using mostly Maori and 157 (83 percent) said they used only English.

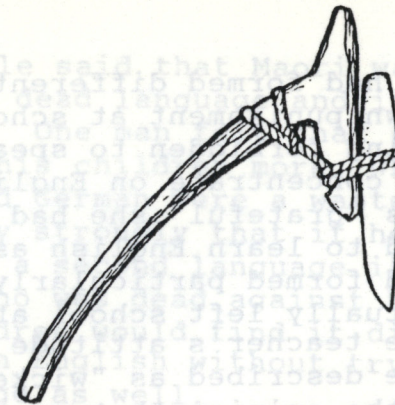
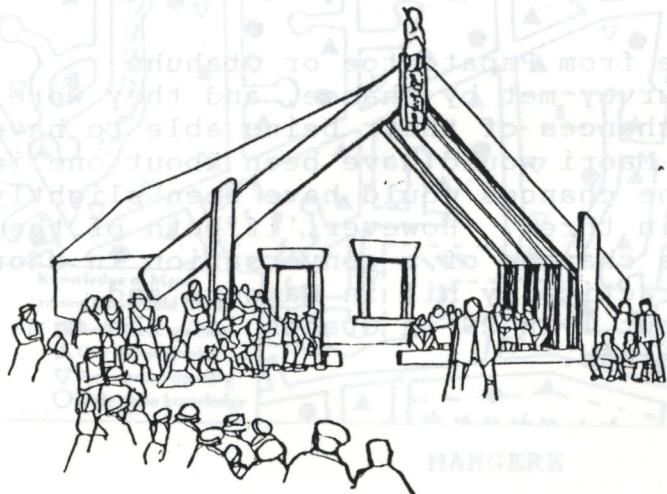
Maori was the main language used in formal situations on the marae such as whaikorero and Maori was also used for informal conversation much more on the marae than in other everyday situations.

Maori was also used frequently in certain religious ceremonies with perhaps the highest proportion of English being spoken during Grace, and the most Maori being spoken during sermons, services and in the opening prayer at meetings.

If two people from Papatoetoe or Otahuhu included in our survey met by chance, and they were both adults, the chances of their being able to have a conversation in Maori would have been about one in two; in Mangere the chances would have been slightly less - about one in three. However, if both of them were children, the chances of a conversation in Maori would have been practically nil in Mangere and Papatoetoe and about 1 in 20 in Otahuhu at the time we visited these areas.

## Attitudes Towards the Maori Language

Although Maori was the first language understood by over half the household heads we interviewed and a majority said they preferred to use Maori for conversations, the effects of city living in reducing the amount of Maori spoken were clearly demonstrated. Many people commented on the fact that with a move into the city where there were fewer people to talk to in Maori, a feeling of isolation developed and many people found themselves gradually losing their ability to speak Maori. However, two of our interviewers noticed a pattern emerging, in this respect, that people who came to the cities from the country seemed to have lost what Maori they had but these same people were also very keen for their children to learn Maori so that they could become bilingual. There did seem to be, however, a greater likelihood of people from Northland and the East Coast who had come to the city retaining their Maori language, than of those from other districts.



Consequently, there was a great deal of support for the teaching of Maori in schools, although at the time of the survey many people had concerns about how dialect differences would be catered for. Some people said that the schools had a specific responsibility to help revive the Maori language as it was because of the punishment previous generations of children received that people stopped using it and several people said that they had decided not to teach their own children Maori because they themselves had been punished at school. Others regretted that they had not been able to hold onto their language at school and were glad that their children would perhaps have an opportunity to learn Maori as they were unable to teach them themselves.

Other people we spoke to stressed that language learning should begin in the home and that it was preferable for children to learn Maori there. Some people were already teaching their children or grandchildren to speak Maori or making an effort to use it more in the home. One man said that school should be the place to learn English and that his children would pick up Maori because he spoke it at home.

Other people had formed different attitudes as a result of their own punishment at school. Several mentioned that being forbidden to speak Maori meant they were able to concentrate on English and one woman said she was "grateful" she had been strapped as she had managed to learn English as a result of it. One woman had formed particularly interesting opinions. She actually left school at a very early age because of the teacher's attitude towards Maori language which she described as "wicked". However, she is firmly of the opinion that no one is to blame for people not being able to speak Maori except the person themselves, and says that if a person cannot speak Maori it is pure laziness on their part.

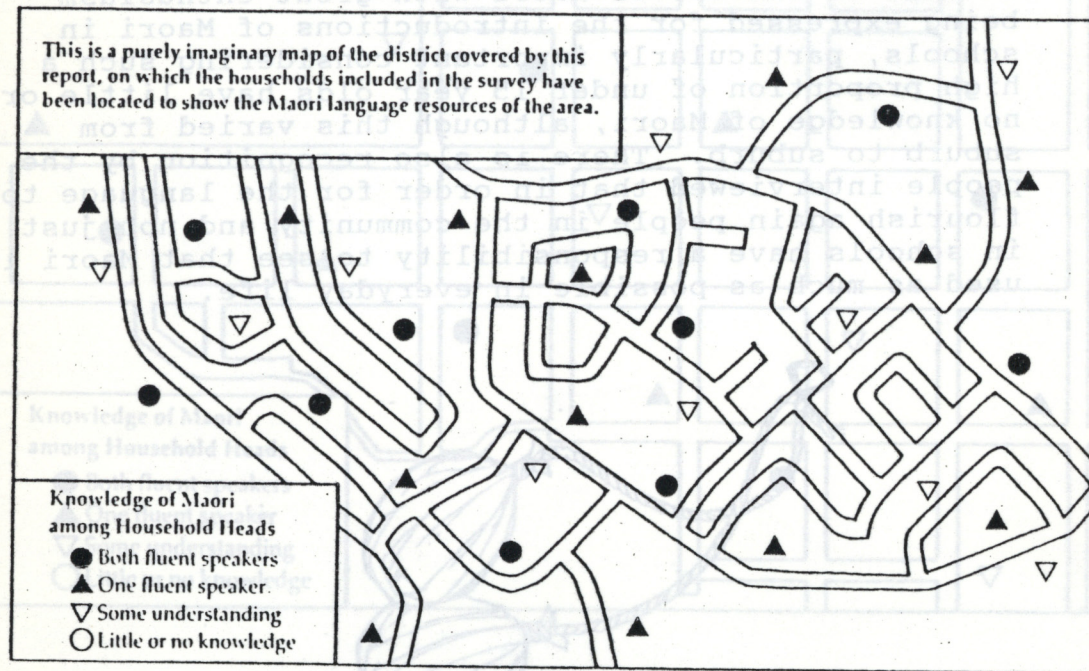
Another woman who was not punished but who was ridiculed so much by her classmates that she stopped speaking it and eventually forgot Maori, said that is the fault of the Maori people if their language and culture are lost. She is now doing her best to relearn her Maori as she feels so ashamed that she cannot speak it.

Several people mentioned the embarrassment they feel because of their lack of knowledge of Maori especially when mixing with Pakeha people who were fluent in the language.



Some people said that Maori was just a waste of time, it was a dead language and is of no use for getting a job. One man felt that some other language would benefit his children more, while others said that French and German were a waste of time. One woman felt very strongly that if her children were going to learn a second language it would be Maori. Another man, who was dead against Maori in schools said that children would find it difficult enough trying to learn English without trying to cope with another language as well.

Some people, especially older ones seemed to feel that trying to learn Maori was too difficult as the influence of English were too great. However, as one man said, "it is better if they know only a little bit, rather than nothing at all".



PAPATOETOE

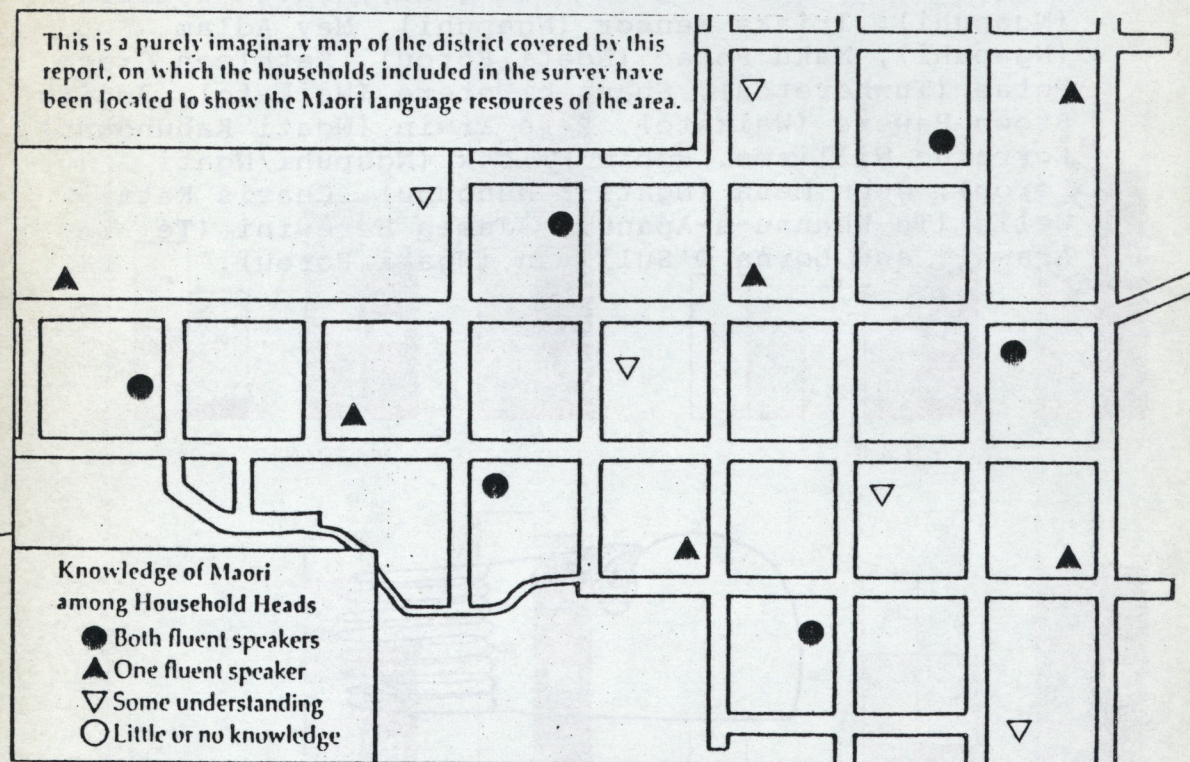
## Conclusion

The effects of city life on the maintenance and use of Maori language have been clearly shown in the linguistic census of these South Auckland communities. A high proportion of people felt they had lost their ability to speak Maori when they moved to the city, and many others who had actually managed to retain their language, were feeling the effects of isolation in communities where most of the people spoke English.

There was, however, strong support for the revival of the use of Maori with great enthusiasm being expressed for the introductions of Maori in schools, particularly important considering such a high proportion of under 15 year olds have little or no knowledge of Maori, although this varied from suburb to suburb. There is also recognition by the people interviewed that in order for the language to flourish again people in the community and not just in schools have a responsibility to see that Maori is used as much as possible in everyday life.



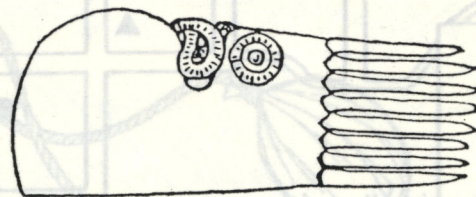
With the coming of kohanga reo, there is a chance that a combination of comments, action and support from the schools may change things so that Maori language will have a chance of surviving in these districts despite the trend in the 1970's, as shown in the information given to us by the Maori people at that time, towards the almost complete replacement of the Maori language by English in everyday life.



This report was prepared by:

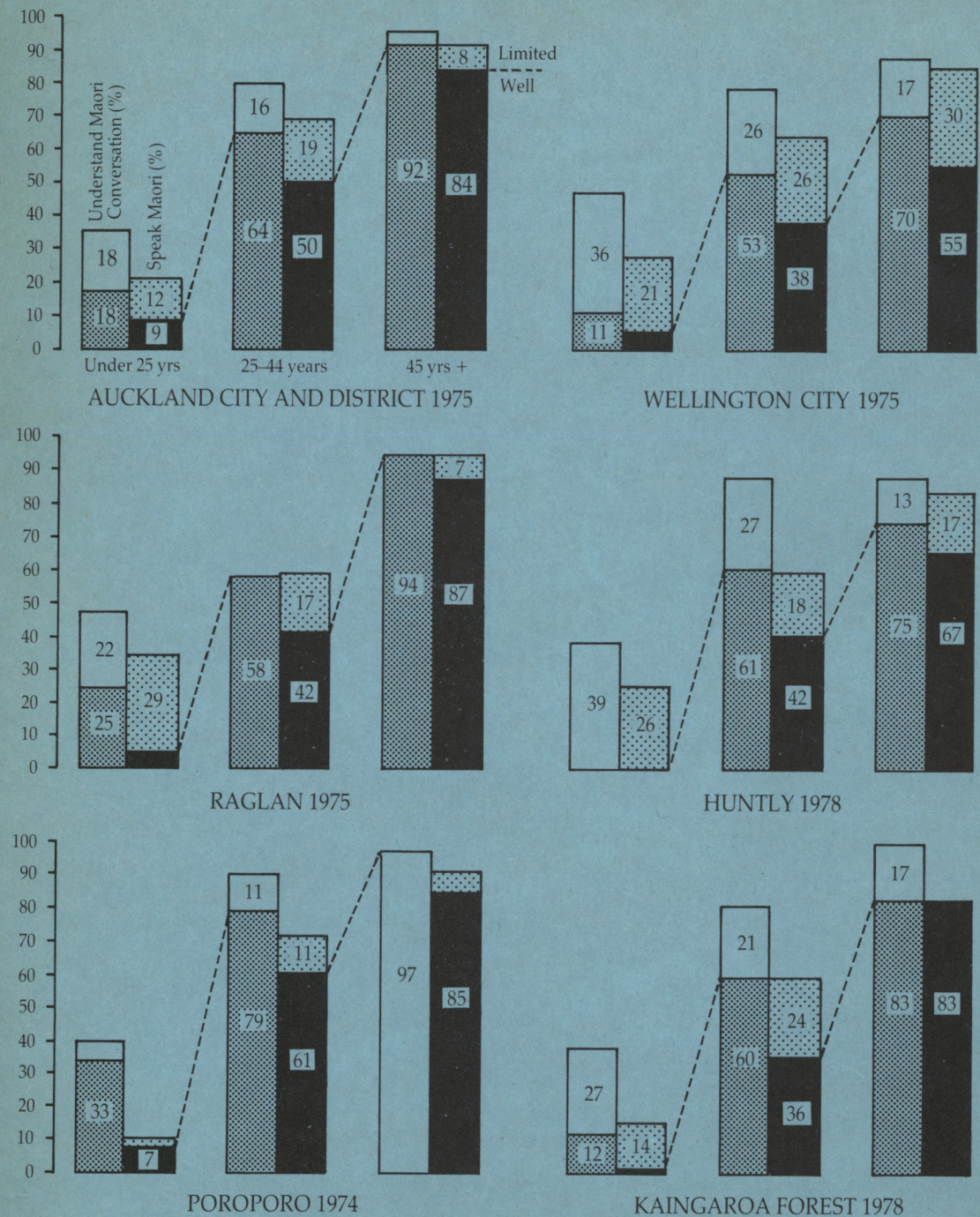
Paula Martin  
(Ngai Tahu/Rangitane)

The interviewers were Audrey Cooper (Waikato), Lynette Anderson (Ngati Awa/Ngati Manawa/Te Aupouri), Evelyn Te Uira (Waikato), Kahutiaterangi Waititu (Te Whanau-a-Apanui/Ngapuhi), Alicia White (Tuhoe), Candice Scrimshaw (Ngati Kahungunu), Peter Wensor (Ngapuhi), Iriaka Wensor (Ngapuhi), May Adlam (Ngapuhi), Maku Potae (Ngati Porou), Kathleen Grace Potae (Tuwharetoa), Shannon Wetere (Waikato), Judith Brown Hawera (Waikato), Pare Irwin (Ngati Kahungunu), Lorraine Williams, Robin Wilcox (Ngapuhi/Ngati Porou), John Meha (Ngati Kahungunu), Charis Rata Wells (Te Whanau-a-Apanui), James Herewini (Te Arawa), and Lorna O'Sullivan (Ngati Porou).



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June 1986 (95)

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.