

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

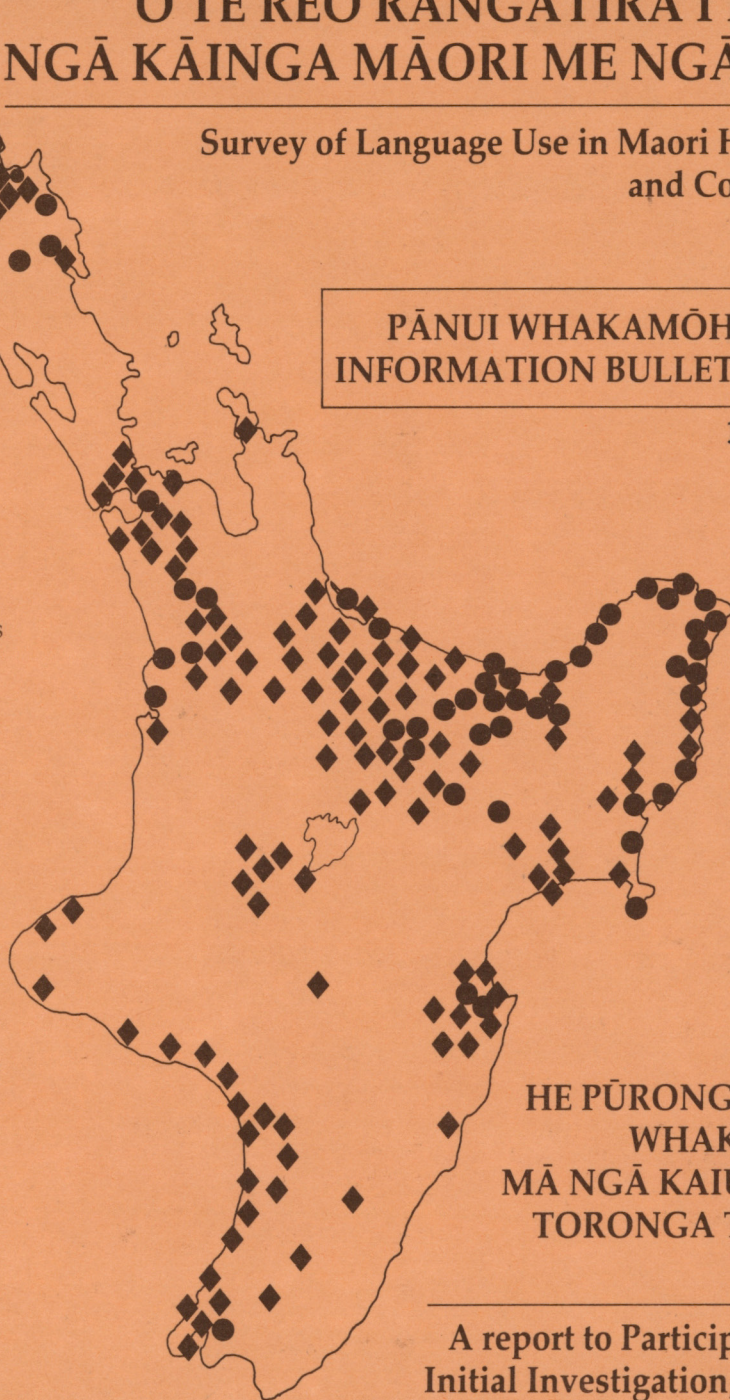
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Localities in which
ten or more households
were visited

● 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



Map showing Towns and Localities of the Waikato Region of the North Island visited during the Census of Language use

Percentage of Fluent Speakers of Maori Among Persons Aged 25 and over in Households visited

- ★ 70% or more
- ◆ 55% to 69%
- 40% to 54%
- ▼ Less than 40%
- Fewer than 10 households visited

THE MAORI LANGUAGE IN MEREMERE AND NEIGHBORING DISTRICTS

Fieldwork for the survey of language use in Maori communities was carried out in and around Meremere, Tauwhare and Taupiri in March and April 1978. The interviewers were Hiria Tumoana (Tuhoe), Ian Tawhiro Maxwell (Ngai Tai), Tawini Rangihau (Tuhoe) and Sharon Moerkerk (Maniapoto).

Fourteen households were visited in Meremere itself as part of the survey. These had a total population of 65, all of whom were of Maori descent. This was about a third of Meremere's total Maori population at that time. Fifteen households were included in our Tauwhare survey. These had a total population of 80 (all of Maori descent- about a third of Tauwhare's total Maori population). Our interviewers also visited 14 households in Taupiri with a total population of 70. 69 of these people were of Maori descent- once again about a third of the area's Maori population at the time. Another 14 households with 68 people were visited in Maramarua. Sixty-five of these 68 were of Maori descent (about 70 percent of Maramarua's total Maori population). In Kopuku six households were included in the survey; all 30 of the people in these homes were of Maori descent and represented about 40 percent of Kopuku's total Maori population.

Five of the interviews were carried out in Maori, 17 in both Maori and English and the remaining 42 in English.

Results of the Linguistic Survey

Iwi Affiliation

The people we spoke to mentioned a total of 15 major iwi to which they or the members of their household belonged. In nearly all the communities we visited, Waikato was the largest (a total of 91 members overall, 30 percent of the total). The next largest iwi was Ngapuhi, with a total of 56 members (or 18 percent). About half of the people from Ngapuhi lived in Maramarua. The third largest iwi had members only in Tauwhare - 55 or about 18 percent.

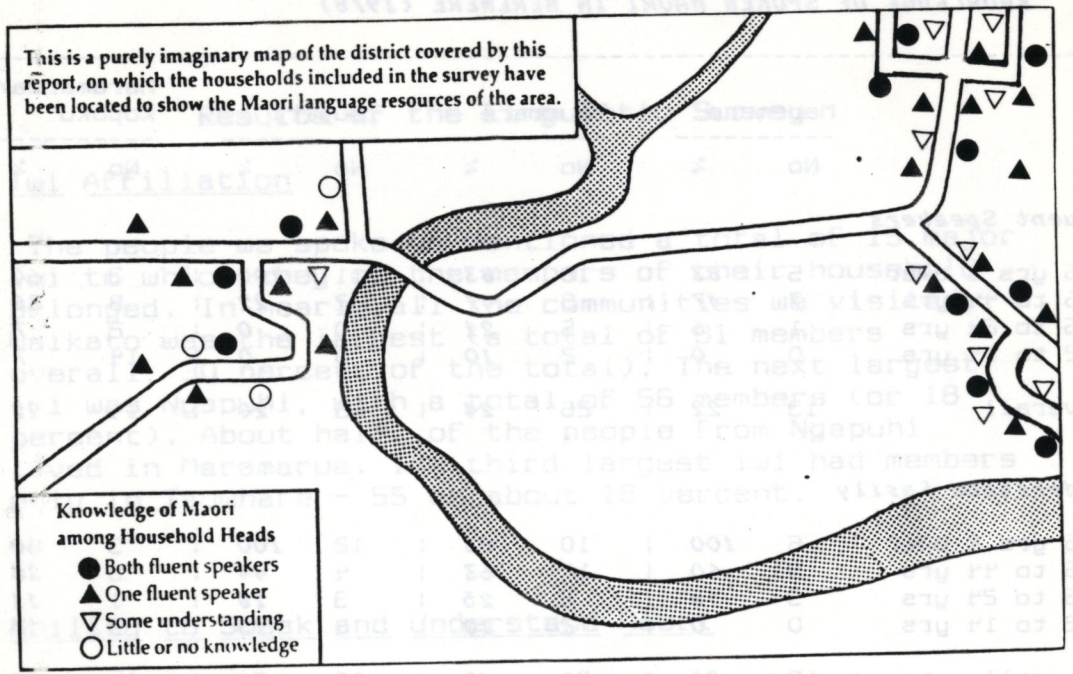
Ability to Speak and Understand Maori

The information in the table tells us that in three of the communities we visited about one fifth of the people included in the survey were able to speak Maori fluently. In Tauwhare this figure was over one third. In all of the communities, however, nearly all of these people were over the age of 25 and the majority by far were over the age of 45. Most people under 25 could not speak Maori. The highest proportion of under 25 year olds who could speak Maori well was in Tauwhare, where about one fifth of all fluent speakers that we came across were between the ages of 15 and 24. Overall, the proportion of people with absolutely no knowledge of Maori ranged from about one fifth in Tauwhare to about half in Meremere with most of these people being under 25. In Kopuku all the people included in the survey were under 15 or between the ages of 25 and 44. We did not come across anyone there who could speak Maori well and only four adults could understand it with ease.

KNOWLEDGE OF SPOKEN MAORI IN MEREMERE (1978)

	Meremere		Tauwhare		Taupiri		Maramarua/ Kopuku	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
<i>Fluent Speakers</i>								
45 yrs & over	5	83	10	83	11	100	3	60
25 to 44 yrs	7	47	9	47	2	22	8	38
15 to 24 yrs	1	6	5	21	0	0	2	7
2 to 14 yrs	0	0	2	10	0	0	14	7
Overall	13	22	26	24	13	20	14	22
<i>Understand Easily</i>								
45 yrs & over	6	100	10	83	12	100	3	60
25 to 44 yrs	9	60	12	63	4	44	8	38
15 to 24 yrs	3	18	6	25	3	18	1	11
2 to 14 yrs	0	0	2	10	4	15	2	7
Overall	18	30	30	40	23	35	14	22
<i>Limited Understanding</i>								
45 yrs & over	0	0	2	17	0	0	1	20
25 to 44 yrs	3	20	6	32	2	22	11	52
15 to 24 yrs	5	29	10	42	6	35	2	22
2 to 14 yrs	4	18	11	52	6	22	8	28
Overall	12	29	29	38	14	22	22	34
<i>No Knowledge</i>								
45 yrs & over	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	20
25 to 44 yrs	3	20	1	5	3	33	2	10
15 to 24 yrs	9	53	8	33	8	47	6	27
2 to 14 yrs	18	82	8	38	17	63	19	66
Overall	30	50	17	22	28	43	28	44

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



MEREMERE, TAUWHARE and TAUPIRI.

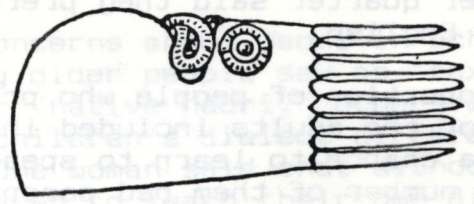
Use of the Maori Language in the Household

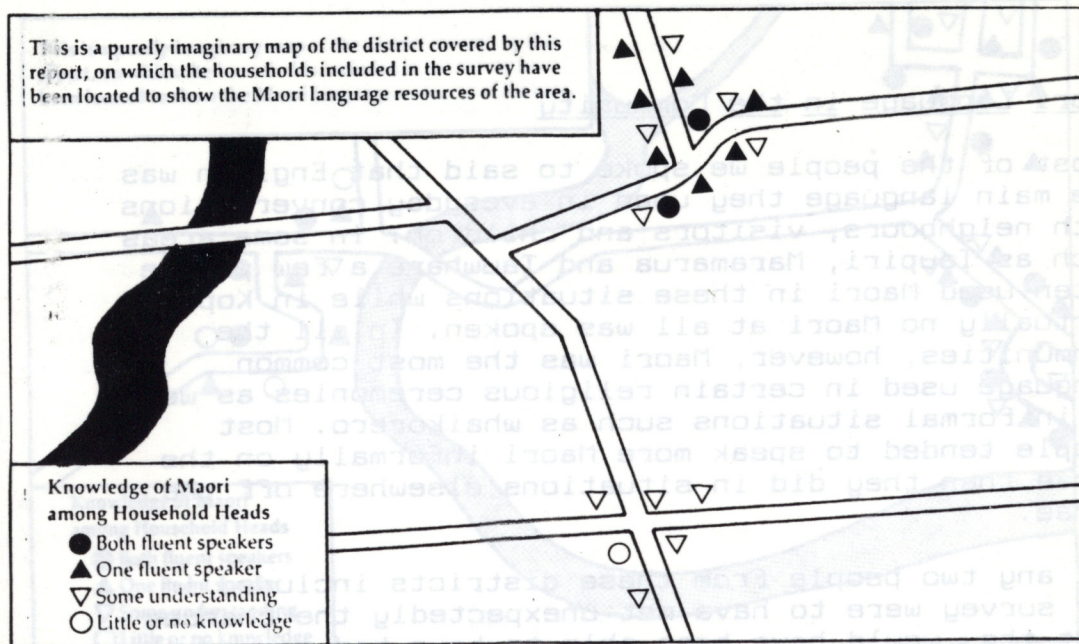
English was the main language spoken in most of the households we visited. Of the 50 households included in the survey with dependent children, Maori was the main language used in only one. All the rest used mostly or exclusively English. English or mostly English was also the only language used in all but one of the childless households, while Maori was used in one home for talking with visitors.

Maori Language in the Community

Most of the people we spoke to said that English was the main language they used in everyday conversations with neighbours, visitors and children. In some areas such as Taupiri, Maramarua and Tauwhare a few people often used Maori in these situations while in Kopuku virtually no Maori at all was spoken. In all the communities, however, Maori was the most common language used in certain religious ceremonies as well as in formal situations such as whaikorero. Most people tended to speak more Maori informally on the marae than they did in situations elsewhere off the marae.

If any two people from these districts included in our survey were to have met unexpectedly the chances that they would have been able to have had a conversation in Maori would have ranged from virtually nil in Kopuku and Maramarua to about one in seven in Tauwhare. However, if both people had been adults the chances would have been considerably higher in most places - still virtually nil in Kopuku up to better than two in five in Tauwhare and Meremere and nearly one in two in Taupiri.





MARAMARUA and KOPUKU.

Attitudes Towards the Maori Language

Maori had been the first language understood by over two fifths of the household heads we spoke to. At the time of the survey, however, it was the language half these people preferred to use for everyday conversation. A further quarter said they preferred to use both Maori and English.

Despite this high proportion of people who preferred to speak Maori, many of the adults included in the survey had never had a chance to learn to speak Maori. A considerable number of them had parents who were fluent speakers of Maori themselves but who had chosen not to teach their children Maori. Many of the

people we interviewed were very regretful of this fact and said they wished they were able to understand and speak Maori. Some felt that it was too late for them to ever learn but commented that they hoped their own children would have an opportunity to learn Maori that they themselves never had.

As many of the people who wanted their children to learn Maori were unable to speak it themselves, there was much support for the teaching of the language in schools. One woman said that she thought that if her children were learning Maori at school, it might give her some incentive to learn as well.

Although many parents commented that "Maori should have been brought into schools years ago", they thought the quality of the teaching and what was actually taught was very important as well. In particular, being able to pronounce Maori words correctly was one of the main criteria of a good teacher according to many parents. One woman who had complained about the way her children were being taught to pronounce words said, "If they can't pronounce the words properly, they can't speak the language." Another woman who had also had troubles with a teacher teaching incorrect pronunciation, told us she had ended up taking the class for action songs herself.

Other concerns about Maori in schools centred around what many older people saw as "text-book Maori" and "real" or "native Maori." Others were worried that all the children's dialect differences could not be taught. One woman said that although she would prefer her children to learn their own dialect, she realised that a lack of teachers made this impossible. Another man told us he wasn't concerned about what dialect his children learnt as long as they learnt Maori.



There was also a number of people who had known how to speak Maori at some stage in their lives, mostly when they were very young, but who had forgotten it over the years. For many people this had happened when they went to school where the language of the teachers and many of the other pupils was often English. Peer pressure and lack of use were often contributing factors to the loss of a person's language, and one person said that after being punished at school for speaking Maori he gradually lost his knowledge of it. Some had been discouraged by their own parents from speaking it. They were told that it was a handicap, and that they were better off learning English.

Other people lost their ability to speak Maori when they moved away from an area where Maori was the main language spoken or when they married a non Maori-speaking person. One woman said that her entire family used to speak Maori all the time until they moved away to a new area. The woman said that she and her brothers and sisters stopped using Maori then as did her parents and now she only has a basic understanding of the language.

Some people were still finding similar troubles in maintaining their language or teaching their children. One woman who had recently moved to Maramarua from Mangere said she was finding it very difficult to get her son to speak Maori as all the other children in Maramarua speak English. In Mangere it was no trouble at all as all their relations spoke Maori. Now she made a special effort to speak Maori for her son's sake.

In fact, many people expressed concern at how few people, especially young people, spoke Maori in this district. As one person said, "Everyone speaks English these days as it's easier and more convenient." Because of this, several people, particularly kaumatua were making a special effort to teach their children and mokopuna Maori. Many children, however, were not particularly interested. One man who was experiencing this with his children said that at least he made sure they can pray and say grace in Maori. The same man said that one of his sons had been able to speak Maori when he started school until one of the father's Pakeha friends asked him how he expected his child to progress at school if he couldn't understand and speak English. Within a year his son had become too shy to speak Maori and has since lost all knowledge of the language.



Other parents did not try to teach their children Maori because they just did not think it was important enough. One man who was a native speaker of Maori did not speak Maori at all to his children and only spoke Maori to anyone at all when he was "in the mood". Another woman, who although having no objection to her daughter's learning Maori, said that she couldn't see any purpose in this. "It's the Pakeha language which gives us our pay" was her comment.

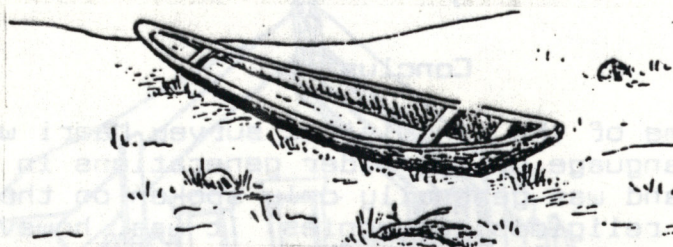


Conclusion

At the time of the linguistic survey Maori was very much the language of the older generations in these districts and was generally only spoken on the marae and during religious ceremonies. It was, however, the language that half of the parents and grandparents included in the survey preferred to use for everyday conversations.

Some people were finding it difficult to maintain their ability to speak Maori in a predominantly English-speaking community and this also affected the opportunity for younger people to learn the language. There was, nevertheless, much support for the teaching of Maori in schools and many parents clearly had high standards about what their children were to be taught and were not prepared to settle for less than the best.

The introduction of Te Kohanga Reo and bilingual schooling along with the number of fluent speakers of Maori who are making positive efforts to pass on their knowledge to members of the younger generations, are encouraging signs that more young people will in the future have greater opportunity to themselves become fluent speakers of the language.

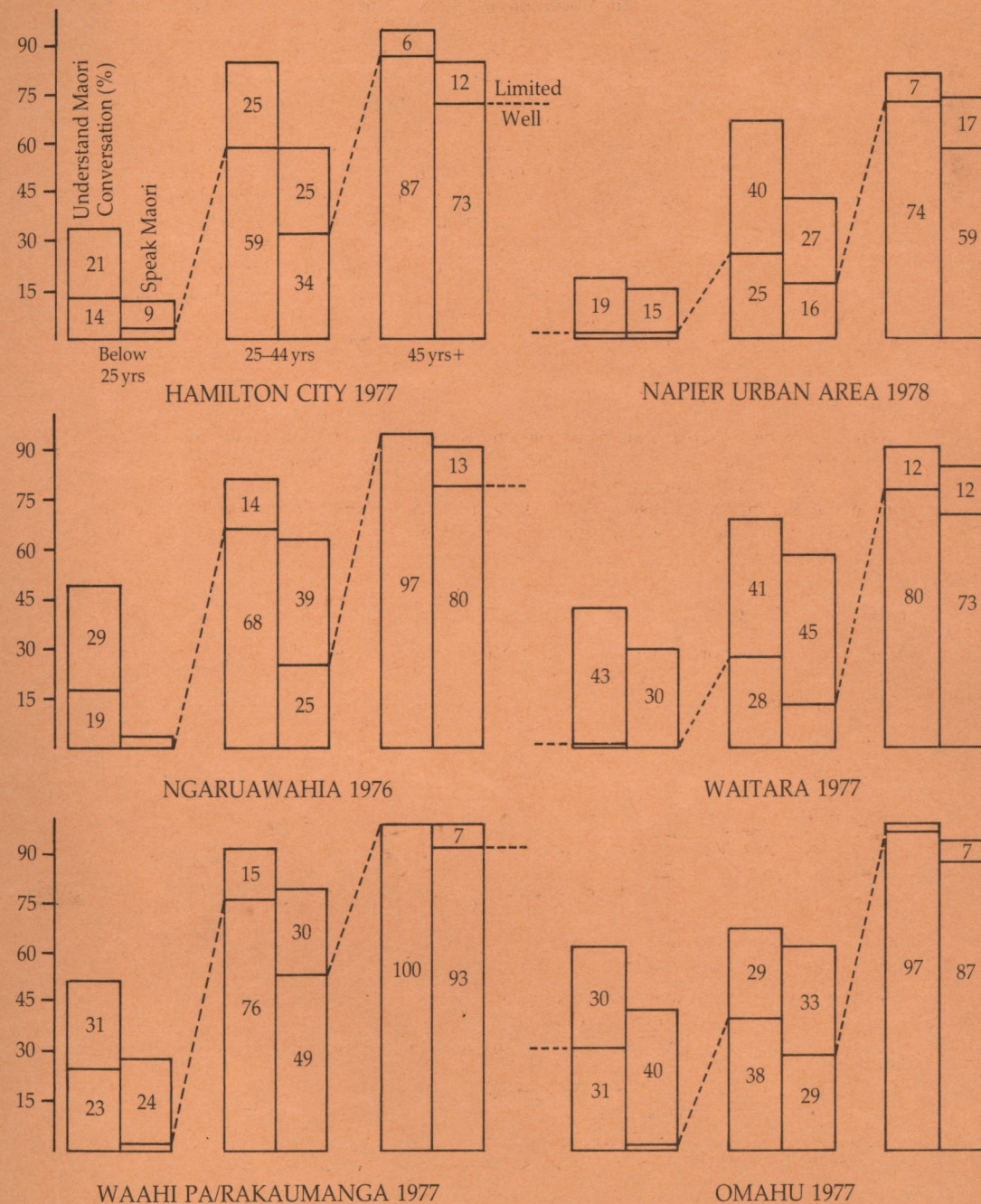


This report was prepared by

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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.