



2000/4, 14 March 2000

Te Reo Māori - the Māori language

Part 1: Overview, Government funding, broadcasting, overseas comparisons

(Part 2 will cover Māori language education and will be published later)

Executive summary

- Use of Māori as a living language has declined dramatically this century, in part through early Government policy in schools. An estimated 63% of Māori adults have medium to high listening comprehension of Māori, but only 16% have medium to high fluency in spoken Māori.
- The Waitangi Tribunal and the Courts have found that active protection of the Māori language is a Government responsibility under the Treaty of Waitangi. Cabinet recognised this obligation in 1997.
- In 1999 the Government announced a comprehensive Māori language strategy with the objective of increasing proficiency and use of Māori and fostering an environment in which Māori-English bilingualism is accepted.
- Government appropriations specifically related to Māori language are not fully detailed in published accounts. Two estimates yield \$53.8 m and \$91.8 m for 1999/00, or 0.1% to 0.2 % of total appropriations.
- Opportunities to promote and use Māori as an everyday language outside the marae and some schools and homes remain limited. For example, Māori content broadcasting was 1.2% of TVNZ broadcast hours in 1998.
- Immersion language education and increased language usage opportunities are starting to reverse the decline of some indigenous languages overseas.

A brief history

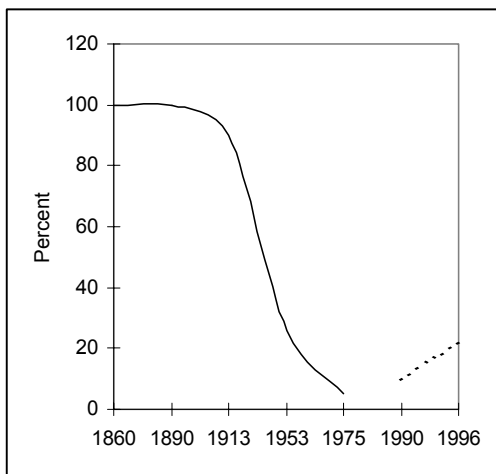
Ko te reo te hā o te mana Māori *(the language is the essence of Māori mana).*

For every culture, language plays a central part. It reflects the cultural environment and ways of viewing the world; provides access to valued beliefs, knowledge and skills; and provides its speakers with a unique cultural identity. Language is both part of a culture and the medium through which that culture is transmitted.

Immigration of European settlers last century supplanted Māori as the majority of the population and te reo Māori as the dominant language. The Native Schools Act 1867 required schools to instruct in the English language "as far as practicable" to the school inspector's satisfaction in order to receive funding. By the 1890s virtually all schooling, legal and commercial transactions, government, and social interactions outside of Māori communities were in the medium of English.

Māori leaders such as Sir Apirana Ngata encouraged education in English and parents encouraged use of English by their children so as to improve their success in the Pākehā mainstream as well as in the Māori world. As long as the Māori people remained largely in rural and isolated communities, the Māori language was very much in fluent everyday use. However, with large-scale urbanisation of Māori people from the late 1940s and “pepper-potting” integration of Māori families into predominately Pākehā communities from the 1950s, the overwhelming influence of English meant that there was a dramatic loss of fluency in all generations of Māori and especially with young school children (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Percentage of Māori school children able to understand the Māori language, 1890 to 1990.



Sources: Solid line: Waitangi Tribunal 1986, *Report on the Te Reo Māori Claim*, section 3.3.2. Dotted line; Ministry of Māori Affairs 1991, *Te Reo Māori o Ngā Tamariki*, p.8 and Te Puni Kōkiri 2000, *The Māori Language and Education*, p.2 (1996 Census data).

Figure 2: Māori adult fluency in speaking the Māori language, 1995

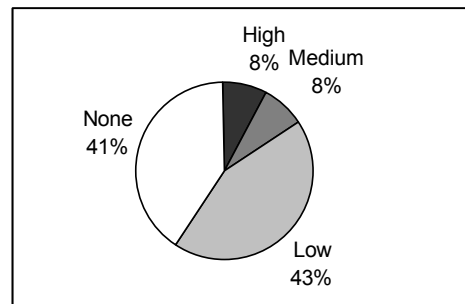
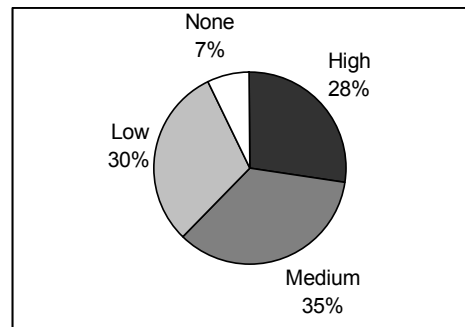


Figure 3: Māori adult listening comprehension of the Māori language, 1995



Source for Figures 2 and 3: Te Puni Kōkiri, Te Taura Whiri I Te Reo Māori and Statistics New Zealand, 1998, *The National Māori Language Survey - Te Mahi Rangahau Reo Māori*, Tables 3 and 10.

Government law and policy, including punishment of students in schools for speaking Māori, contributed to this outcome. While such punishment ceased to be the official policy of the Department of Education head office in the 1930s, it continued to be practised in schools in some areas for decades. A mid-1970s survey of Māori language use found that 40% of the adult respondents had been punished personally for speaking Māori when they were at school, in some cases as late as the 1950s and 1960s.

The Māori language today

In 1995 an estimated 16% of Māori adults or about 44,000 people had medium to high fluency as speakers of Māori, and 63% had medium to high listening comprehension of spoken Māori (Figures 2 and 3). Most of the highly fluent speakers in 1995 were 45 years old or more, with nearly half aged 60 years or more. The majority of medium and low fluency speakers were under 35 years old. With the loss of an estimated 500 to 750 kaumātua (elders) each year, the opportunities for language transmission from the experienced to the young are declining.

The 1995 survey covered those aged 16 or older, so detailed information on the fluency of younger children is not available. Survey data available for 1990 and 1996 suggest that there may be a revival in the number of Māori schoolchildren able to understand basic Māori (dotted line, Figure 1). However, these surveys used different definitions and methods than the

earlier data, making comparison problematical. The data also does not indicate whether the children maintained, improved, or lost their proficiency in the Māori language by the time they left school.

To thrive, a language must be used in everyday life, not just in school or on ceremonial occasions. Only 14% of the 1995 survey respondents tended to have whole conversations in Māori in the home on a daily basis, and 48% never did. The proportion of survey respondents who reported speaking Māori 'about half the time' or more in other domains were: at the marae 57%, in school or kōhanga 47%, at church 38%, at work 22%, in a club or pub 17%, while shopping 6%, and at sports 0%. The corresponding data for speaking Māori 'a little of the time' or more ranged from 36% (shopping) to 92% (marae).

A recently announced Massey University study of the barriers to maintaining Māori language proficiency in households concluded that Māori language initiatives need to be better coordinated across both formal and non-formal sectors, and that further energy and resources are needed to help families establish and maintain Māori language use.

A 1992 survey found 58% of non-Māori and 89% of Māori agreed Māori should survive as a spoken language. A 1996 survey found 65% of the general public agreed that the Māori language was something worth preserving for the sake of all New Zealanders. In the same survey, 45% believed that attempts to increase the use of the Māori language would lead to division among New Zealanders.

Survey data is not available to demonstrate the investment made in Māori homes and communities to maintain and revitalise the Māori language through such initiatives as kōhanga reo, kura kaupapa Māori, Te Ātārangi adult education, wānanga, curriculum development, kapa haka, iwi radio, and submissions to Government and the Waitangi Tribunal. People involved in these activities are aware of the commitment, energy and respect for the language that is involved. For outside observers, such events as the recently televised Ngāruawāhia 2000 kapa haka competitions may give some insight into the vital role of the Māori language in the Māori community. Despite their commitment however, in many instances Māori do not yet have sufficient resources to do on their own all that is required to ensure the future of their language.

Unlike other minority languages in New Zealand, the Māori language is indigenous only to this country, and its survival as a living language is dependent on actions or omissions of people in New Zealand.

Waitangi Tribunal and Court actions, and the Crown response

In 1985 a claim was lodged with the Waitangi Tribunal asking that the Māori language receive official recognition and its use be encouraged in government at all levels, broadcasting, education and health. The Tribunal found that te reo Māori is a *taonga* (valued possession) protected by Article II of the Treaty of Waitangi and that there is an obligation under the Treaty to take action to remedy the situation.

The Tribunal made five recommendations. Government at that time did not fully accept the recommendations relating to increased language use and improved education, but gave effect to the others through the Māori Language Act 1987. This recognised Māori as an official language and set up Te Taura Whiri i Te Reo Māori (the Māori Language Commission).

The Broadcasting Amendment Act (No 2) 1988 enabled the creation of commercial assets from public radio and television resources. Injunctions were sought by Māori to restrain the transfer of assets as this would restrict the ability of the Crown to adequately safeguard the Māori language under the Treaty. An interim injunction was granted and upheld by the Court of Appeal. In 1991 the Court allowed the transfer of radio assets, but proof of a mechanism for protecting the Māori language was required of the Crown before transfer of the television assets was subsequently allowed. In 1993 Te Māngai Pāho (the Māori Broadcasting Funding Agency) was set up to distribute funds for Māori language and culture broadcasting.

Crown efforts to redress breaches of the Treaty generally intensified in subsequent years, and in September 1997 Cabinet agreed that the Crown and Māori have a duty, derived from the Treaty of Waitangi, to take all reasonable steps to actively enable the survival of Māori as a living language. Following the Waitangi Tribunal findings on the radio spectrum management and development claim in 1999, Cabinet noted that the Crown has an ongoing Treaty obligation to promote Māori language and culture.¹

In 1999 Government announced objectives and monitoring indicators for its Māori Language Strategy (Table 1). These will be monitored by Te Puni Kōkiri, and will include a sociolinguistic survey of the Māori language after the 2001 census. Government agencies are to have Māori language policies and implementation plans in place by 1 July 2000.

Recently Transit New Zealand announced that over the next few years 220 state highway signs in the South Island would be replaced with road signs showing the Māori names for places as well as the existing English place names. This initiative is an example of a Government agency response, and relates to the 1998 Ngai Tahu Treaty of Waitangi settlement with the Crown.

The Māori Language Strategy is evolving, and its implementation involves an active Crown-Māori partnership to give practical effect to the declaration of Māori as an official language and “its use as a living language and as an ordinary means of communication”.²

Table 1: Government’s Māori Language Strategy: policy objectives and proposed indicators.

Policy objectives	Proposed policy indicators
1. To increase the number of people who know the Māori language by increasing their opportunities to learn Māori.	1. The number of people who know Māori.
2. To improve the proficiency levels of people in speaking Māori, reading Māori, and writing Māori.	2. Opportunities to learn Māori.
3. To increase the opportunities to use Māori by increasing the number of situations where Māori can be used.	3. Proficiency in Māori.
4. To increase the rate at which the Māori language develops so that it can be used for the full range of modern activities.	4. The visibility of the Māori language.
5. To foster amongst Māori and non-Māori positive attitudes towards, and accurate beliefs and positive values about, the Māori language so that Māori-English bilingualism becomes a valued part of New Zealand society.	5. The availability of the Māori language.
	6. The use of the Māori language.
	7. The production of Māori language material.
	8. Behaviour towards the Māori language.
	9. The attitudes toward, and beliefs and values about, the Māori language.

Source: Te Puni Kōkiri 1999, *Te Tūāoma, The Māori Language: The Steps That Have Been Taken*, p. 12.

¹ Te Puni Kōkiri post election brief 1999.

² Maori Language Act 1987 s 7(b).

Broadcasting

A majority of the respondents in the 1995 language survey listened to Māori on the radio or television when the opportunity arose (91% of high fluency and 75% of low fluency speakers), and a majority wanted to see more Māori programming on TV (89% of high fluency and 75% of low fluency speakers). A 1996 attitude survey also found that 50% of all New Zealanders either supported or had no opposition to more Māori language on TV. In addition, 53% of the general public wanted English subtitles on the Māori news.

In 1997/98 211 hours of Māori content television programming were purchased by Government through Te Māngai Pāho for mainstream TV. The daily Māori language news (Te Karere) comprised 119 hours of this total. In 1998 Māori content programming was 1.2% of the total Television New Zealand broadcast hours (TVNZ had 70% of all viewers that year).

There are currently 21 iwi radio stations, which broadcast varying amounts in the Māori language. Te Māngai Pāho has established an incentive scheme to increase the Māori language content, and in 1997/98 funded the production of 2,211 hours of educational and entertainment programming in Māori for use by radio stations nationwide.

The initial model used for a pilot Māori television station, funded in 1996/97, was not successful, and in December 1998 the Government approved \$11.36 m (GST inclusive) for the establishment of a new Māori TV channel. With subsequent expenditure to set up Te Awhiorangi (Te Reo Māori Television Trust), the amount carried over to 1999/00 was \$11.1 m. This is principally for capital expenditure, and appropriations for Māori language programming are to be allocated later. Government background papers indicated that the new channel would be expected to move toward economic self-sufficiency. Māori broadcasting policy is currently under review, and the channel is unlikely to be on air by mid-2000 as originally proposed.

Education initiatives

'Taha Māori' has been an optional part of the national classroom programme for primary schools since the early 1970s. It is primarily geared toward giving students in mainstream classes an opportunity to learn some aspects of Māori language and tikanga (customary practices). Māori language became a UE subject in 1929, and has been an optional separate subject of study in some schools for many years.

The first official bilingual school (since the Native Schools last century) was established in Ruatoki in 1977. The first kōhanga reo (Māori language immersion pre-school) was established in 1982, and the first kura kaupapa Māori (primary school based on Māori philosophy and language) in 1985.

Student participation in Māori language instruction has increased over the last 30 years, as have student enrolments generally. In the 1998 school year, for all schools (primary, composite and secondary), 18.1% of schools offered some level of Māori-medium education (ranging from less than 30% to over 80% of instruction in Māori) and 11.3% offered Māori as a separate subject. Although 36% of all Māori students and 6.4% of non-Māori students were learning Māori in one of these formats, proficiency levels are unclear.

More information on Māori education will be provided in Part 2 of this Background Note.

Overseas comparisons

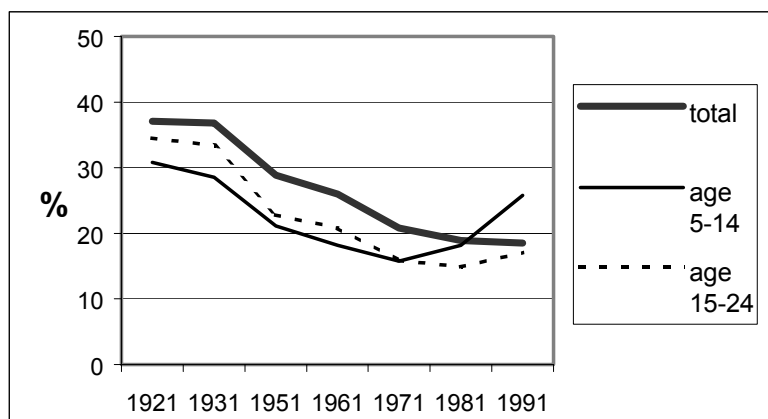
It has been estimated that of some 6,000 known living languages in the world, up to 50% are “moribund” (spoken only by elders) and another 40% are endangered (a declining number of children learning the language). Some examples of indigenous language revival are summarised below.

Wales

As with Māori, the Welsh language thrived as a community language in isolated rural areas until urbanisation accelerated in the 1900s. After decades of lobbying by Welsh language groups, the right to use Welsh in the courts was granted (1967), Welsh language preschools were established (1970s), a Welsh language TV station and Welsh Language Board were established (1982 and 1993), and Welsh was given equal status to English in the conduct of public business (1993). At present virtually all public signs are bilingual and Welsh is part of the curriculum for all children.

In 1991 18.7% of the population could speak Welsh, half the level in 1921. However, the rate of decline has slowed in recent decades, and among young people the trend has been reversed (Figure 7).

Figure 7: Speakers of Welsh as a percentage of the population of Wales, 1921-1991; total, and younger age cohorts



Source: Grin and Vaillancourt 1998, *Language Revitalisation Policy: An Analytical Survey, Theoretical Framework, Policy Experience and Application to Te Reo Maori* Table 2.14, p. 117.

In 1996 the Welsh TV station *Sianel Pedwar Cymru* broadcast 23% of its programming in Welsh and the weekly hours available to viewers had increased from six to 32 since 1964. The operating cost was NZ \$170.7m, or about NZ\$60 per capita per year (in comparison the funding for Māori language broadcasting through Te Māngai Pāho in 1998/99 was \$23.9m or \$6 per capita per year). After three years of promotion bilingual advertising has become the norm (75% of local advertisers) and selling airtime provides 10.2% of the total income. An estimated 3,000 jobs have been created in the small companies which produce the programming.

Surveys show 88% of Welsh speakers are proud of their language and 68% of non-Welsh speakers support a secure and self-sustaining future for Welsh. The availability of and participation in Welsh-medium education continues to increase. In 1996, 26% of primary and 16% of secondary schools were Welsh-medium. Nonetheless, the future of the language is not yet secure and Welsh Language Board project funding to promote language use and education is ongoing (NZ\$14m in 1998/99, or about NZ\$5 per capita). Their current promotional theme is: “two languages, twice the choice”.

Spain

In Euskadi (Basque Autonomous Community, part of Spain) 26% of the population are active speakers of Euskera (Basque). Spain made use of the

language illegal for four decades until 1976, but now Castilian and Euskera have equal status under law. Voluntary enrolments in Euskera-medium and bilingual pre- and primary schools increased 25% 1983-1997, and government-sponsored language centres taught Euskera to over 43,400 adults in 1994. The proportion of the population competent in Euskera has remained steady since 1986 and the percentage of younger people able to speak Euskera has significantly increased. The estimated cost of fostering Euskera in school and community education programmes is NZ\$53.74 m per year, about NZ\$18 per capita per year (total population of three million).

Scandinavia

The Sámi people (previously known as Laplanders) are now only 3-5% of the population in their homeland in northern Scandinavia, and their language is endangered. Sámi parliaments have been established and their language officially recognised by Norway (1987), Sweden (1992) and Finland (1995). The Sámi parliaments allocate state and European Union funding for local language initiatives. Resources remain limited, but immersion and bilingual education and Sámi media broadcasting are slowly expanding.

USA

In the United States, there are federal laws supporting the protection of indigenous languages (1990 and 1992) but few federal resources have been allocated. Bilingual education efforts such as those by the Navajo and Hawaiians struggle with insufficient teaching resources. In January 2000, a demonstration was held at the Hawai'i state legislature to seek improved state funding for teaching the Hawaiian language.

Australia

In Australia there are a few state schools with largely Aboriginal staff which seek to integrate indigenous knowledge and values with the local school curriculum, and there are a number of local tribal language promotion initiatives. There is one independent Aboriginal school, Yipirinya in Alice Springs, which was refused registration and state funding for many years until the issue was resolved in court. In the Northern Territory, bilingual education in the local Aboriginal languages and in English was available in 20 of the 91 schools in remote Aboriginal communities, but from December 1998 the territorial department of education replaced them with ESL (English as a Second Language) programmes, a move condemned by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission. One bilingual programme remains in the Catholic school system, on Bathurst Island.

Ireland

In Ireland the survival of Irish as a living language is still very much at risk despite widespread teaching of Irish in schools for decades. Apart from in the small remaining *Gaeltacht* (Irish-speaking areas), Irish was taught only as a subject in a predominately English environment, and there was a general lack of opportunities to use the language outside the school domain. This situation is now being addressed, and the economic benefits from tourism in fostering greater active use of Irish in the *Gaeltacht* are also being recognised and encouraged.

Government funding for te reo Māori

The Estimates of Appropriations and other official publications do not go into sufficient detail to isolate all of the components of Crown expenditure that relate to promotion of the Māori language, particularly if one wishes to focus on expenditures that are additional to what would occur regardless of the language involved (e.g. significantly different from baseline school resources or broadcasting funding).

Appropriations particular to the Māori language that can be identified for the 1999/00 fiscal year for **Vote:Māori Affairs** add to **\$2.571 m**:

- Promotion of the Māori language, largely through Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori (Māori Language Board): \$2.371 m.
- Policy advice relating to the Maori Language Strategy, approximately \$0.2 m.

Appropriations particular to the Māori language that can be identified for 1999/00 for **Vote:Communications** add to **\$29.275 m**:

- Production of Māori language programmes for broadcasting, through Te Māngai Pāho: \$16.875 m for grants and \$1.3 m for administration.
- Establishment grant for a Māori language television station: \$11.1 m .

Appropriations in **Vote:Education** particular to the Māori language can be difficult to identify. The Māori Education Commission published a preliminary estimate for Māori education expenditure for 1998/99 of \$177.713 m, but this was for all education activity 'where to some extent Māori are highly represented', regardless of the subject or medium of instruction. Identifiable appropriations for 1999/00 which could be deemed to support Māori language instruction directly add to **\$59.98 m**:

- Kōhanga reo preschools: \$2.88 m (over and above sessional funding of \$45 m, provided to kōhanga reo on the same basis as other preschools).
- Kura kaupapa Māori schools: \$10 m in capital grants, and \$1.8 m in transport assistance (over and above operational funding of \$23.7 m, provided on the same basis as to other schools).
- Maori Language Resources component of operational funding for primary and secondary schools: \$13.7 m. Verification of Māori language immersion levels for funding: \$0.043 m.
- Creating Māori language learning and teaching materials: an estimated \$7 m. Māori language curriculum development: an estimated \$2 m.
- Māori Immersion Teacher Allowance: \$5.9 m. Provision of 53 itinerant teachers of Māori: an estimated \$3 m. Te Atakura teachers: \$1.6 m.
- Māori language teacher training programmes: \$14.41 m.
- Support for Māori language teachers in relation to workloads, management, classroom materials, and specialist skills: \$4.378 m.
- Development of assessment materials for Māori language proficiency: \$1.9 m; new literacy resources and Māori Books in Homes \$0.861 m.
- Not included: \$6.842 for EFTS places in wananga (Māori tertiary training establishments), as EFTS are available regardless of subject or language of instruction.

The above lists add to **\$91.825 m**, GST inclusive. This can be expressed as 0.2% of the total appropriations for 1999/00. This does not include a one-off appropriation of \$15 m to promote Māori language and culture announced before the election, as the timing, targets, and totals for appropriation are currently under discussion.

An alternative method of funding analysis would further restrict the definition of Māori language education funding. It has been argued that children need to be educated and teachers trained and supported regardless of the subject matter, and only expenditure over and above what would be spent for any other special subject (e.g. science) or medium of instruction should be counted. With this approach all funding for kōhanga reo, kura kaupapa Māori, and provision, training, and workload support for Māori language teachers would be excluded. Using this analysis, the Māori language component of Vote:Education for 1999/00 is only **\$22 m**. This reduces the total funding estimate to **\$53.846 m**, or 0.1% of the total appropriations for 1999/00.

Pending advice to Government

In its post-election brief to the Government, Te Puni Kōkiri noted the following reports to the Cabinet Strategy Committee due in 2000.

From Te Puni Kōkiri:

- Advice on best use for a one-off allocation of \$15 m to promote Māori language and culture;
- Report on the effectiveness of Government's current policies for promoting Māori language and culture;
- Advice on the feasibility of adding official Māori place names to road signs that currently have only official English names on them; and,
- Report on institutional and purchase arrangements to progress Government's Māori Language Strategy.

From the Ministry of Commerce:

- Advice on transfer of funding and policy responsibility for Māori broadcasting (including Te Māngai Pāho) from Vote:Communications to Vote:Māori Affairs.

Currently Māori language funding, including broadcasting and the proposed \$15 m special allocation, is under review by Cabinet.

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