Percentage of Māori population proficient in te reo Māori

Māori proficiency in te reo has increased significantly since 2001, especially among younger Māori

Indicator Description
Percentage of Māori population proficient in te reo.

Why This Is Important
There is a need to raise foundation skills so that all people can participate in our knowledge society. Foundation competencies are a set of skills, knowledge and dispositions in the areas of language, literacy and numeracy.

Māori language is a key element of Māori culture, and constitutes part of the broader cultural identity of New Zealand.

There have been major efforts since 2003, when the Government released the revised Māori Language Strategy to consolidate and coordinate its Māori language programmes and policies, to revitalise te reo and increase the number of people who use it and the situations in which it is used. Te reo Māori education through the tertiary sector plays an important role in language revitalisation, as well as maintaining and developing the variety within the language in its use in different situations.
How We Are Going

Following both the 2001 and 2006 Census, surveys were undertaken of the Māori population aged 15 years-old and over, looking at the health of the Māori language. Both surveys included self-assessment of three components of language proficiency, namely: speaking, reading and writing, with the 2001 survey also assessing listening.

The 2006 Survey on the Health of the Māori Language found that 22.8% of the Māori population aged 15 and over were proficient in reading Māori (that is, they could read 'well' or 'very well'), a significant increase from the figure in 2001 (13.2%). The 2006 survey found that 16.8% and 14.0% of the Māori adults were proficient in writing and speaking Māori, compared with 11.6% and 9.8% respectively from the 2001 Census. The increase in proficiency levels from the 2001 Census was most marked for those aged 25 to 34 years-old.

Proficiency in te reo was highest for the oldest Māori, with 1.4 to 2.3 times the level of proficiency of Māori in the next most proficient age group. The 15 to 24 year-old age group had the second highest level of proficiency for speaking and writing, while the 25 to 34 year-old age group had the second highest level of proficiency over reading. This points to a level of success in improving language proficiency in younger speakers.

The vast majority of enrolments in te reo Māori courses were at the lowest NQF levels (level 1 to 3). There were a total of 12,251 enrolments at this level in 2006, followed by 2,997 enrolments at level 4, and 1,683 enrolments at diploma-level (level 5 to 6). There was a 5-fold increase in enrolments in te reo Māori at levels 1 to 4 from 2001 to 2003, reflecting the growth in enrolments at Institutes of Technology/Polytechnics and wānanga in these levels. However, from 2003 to 2006 the number of enrolments in
te reo Māori at these levels declined by 59%, with a
decline in enrolments at wānanga being a major
contributor to this reduction. In contrast, there has only
been a small decrease in enrolments in te reo Māori at
level 5 and above since 2003. Despite this recent
decline, there has been a substantial growth in
enrolments for te reo Māori courses since 2001 which has
helped produce the significant gains in proficiency in te
reo among Māori since 2001.

Where To Find Out More
This indicator, particularly for younger Māori, is to some
degree a reflection of both the level and quality of te reo
being taught to students, both Māori and non-Māori. The
following indicator provides information on quality
providers:
- Number of funded Kura Kaupapa Māori and Kura
  Teina.

References
- Kalafatelis, E., Fink-Jensen, K, and Johnson, M.
  Education Sector: Profile & Trends 2006. Wellington:
  Ministry of Education.
- Statistics New Zealand (2002). Final Report on the
  2001 Survey on the Health of the Māori Language.
  Wellington: Statistics New Zealand.

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1. Only includes students enrolled in te reo Māori courses for more than 0.2 EFTS during the year.
2. Students can be enrolled at more than one level during a year.