

# 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

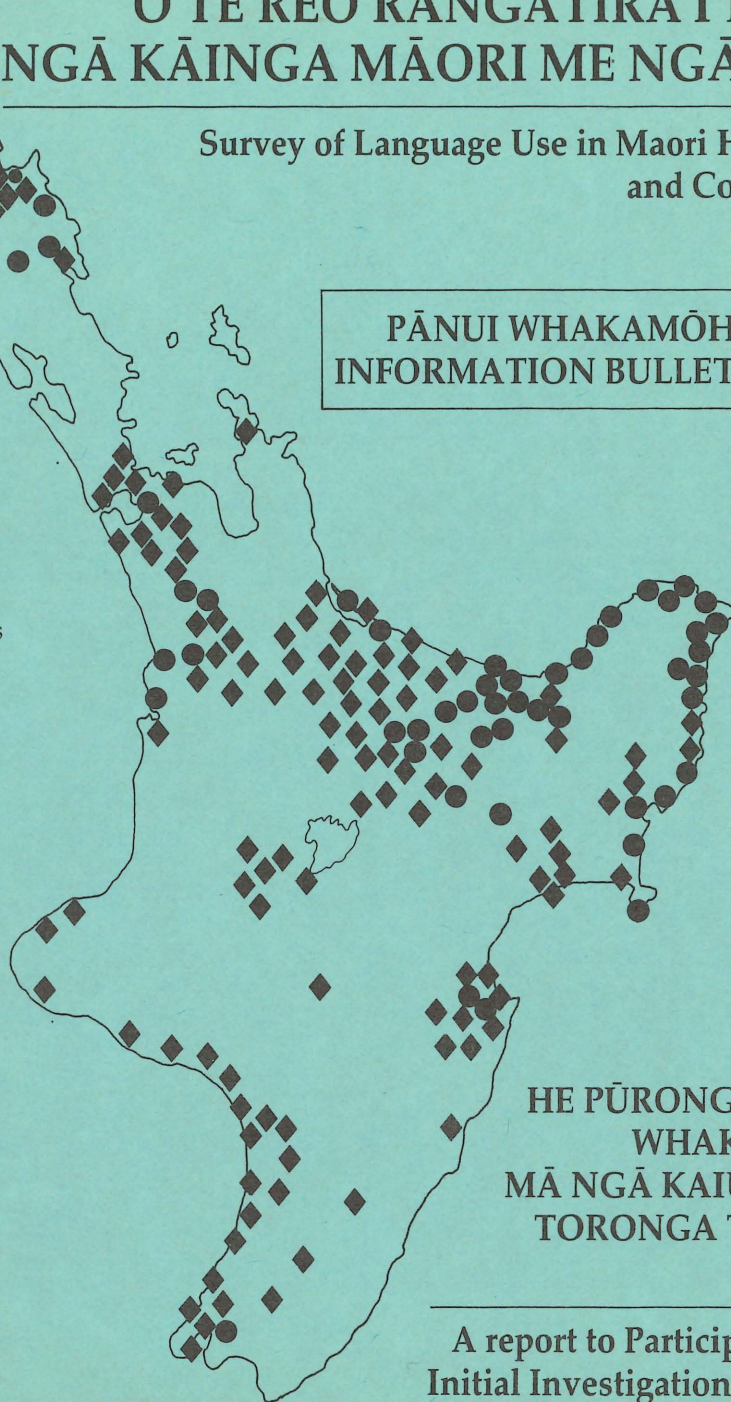
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ISSN 0113-3063

Localities in which  
ten or more households  
were visited

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

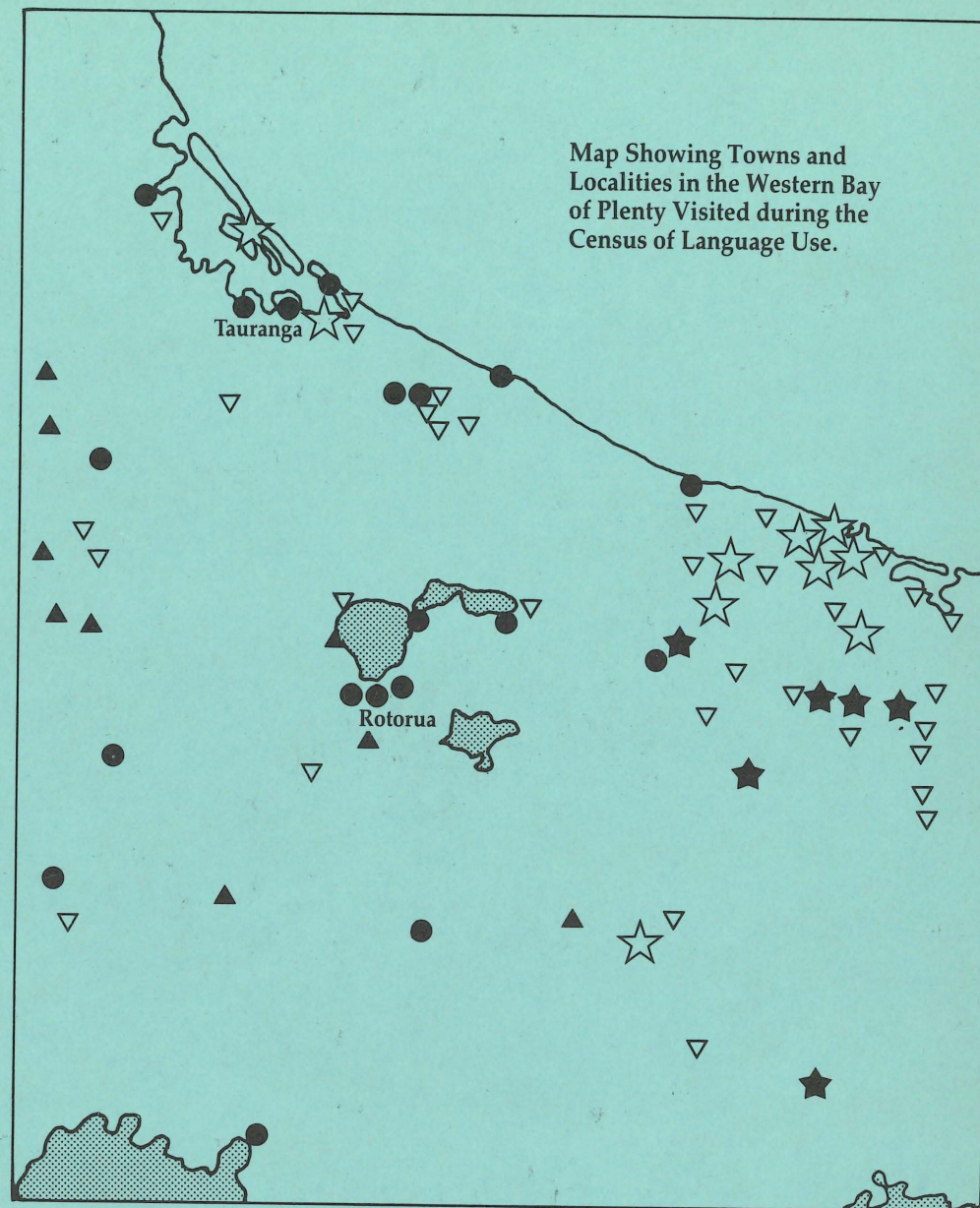
◆ Less than two  
thirds of adults were  
fluent speakers of  
Maori



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 Edgecumbe and District

Fieldwork for the survey of language use in Maori communities took place in Edgecumbe in January 1974. Our interviewers visited 16 households in Edgecumbe, three in Awakeri, one in Otakiri and eight in Thornton.

The interviewers were Maku Potae (Ngati Porou), Joan Walker (Ngapuhi), Charee Ogle (Ngapuhi), Sheena Purdie, Jennifer Watson, Lynda West, Meremaihi Williams Koopu (Ngati Awa), Wally Koopu, Iriaka Wensor (Ngapuhi), Peter Wensor (Ngapuhi), Merepeka Wharepapa (Te Whanau-a-Apanui), Joe Rua (Te Whanau-a-Apanui), and Carol Hindmarsh Ngawati (Ngati Porou).

In Edgecumbe, a total of 87 people were included in the survey, 83 of whom were of Maori descent - about 17 percent of the total Maori population of the area at that time. The households visited in Awakeri, Otakiri and Thornton had a total of 73 people living in them, 70 of Maori descent, about 40 percent of the Maori population of those three districts.

Altogether, two interviews were carried out entirely in Maori, two in Maori and English, and the rest in English.



Knowledge of Spoken Maori in Edgecumbe (1974)				
Age Group	Fluent Speakers	Understand Easily	Limited Understanding	No Knowledge
45 years & over	12 (92%)	13 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
25-44 yrs	7 (37%)	8 (42%)	10 (53%)	1 (5%)
15-24 yrs	0 (0%)	3 (25%)	2 (17%)	7 (58%)
2-14 yrs	0 (0%)	19 (44%)	7 (16%)	17 (40%)
Overall	19 (22%)	43 (49%)	19 (22%)	25 (29%)

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

## Results of the Linguistic Survey

### Iwi Affiliation

Altogether our informants mentioned 11 major iwi to which they or the members of their household belonged. Of these, the largest overall was Ngati Awa with 52 members (or 33 percent of the total). Ngati Porou was the second largest with 24 members (all in Edgecumbe) or 15 percent of the total. About two-thirds of the members of the families we interviewed in Thornton had Ngati Awa as their main iwi; there were also several Tuhoe families interviewed in Awakeri and Taneatua.

### Ability to Speak and Understand Maori

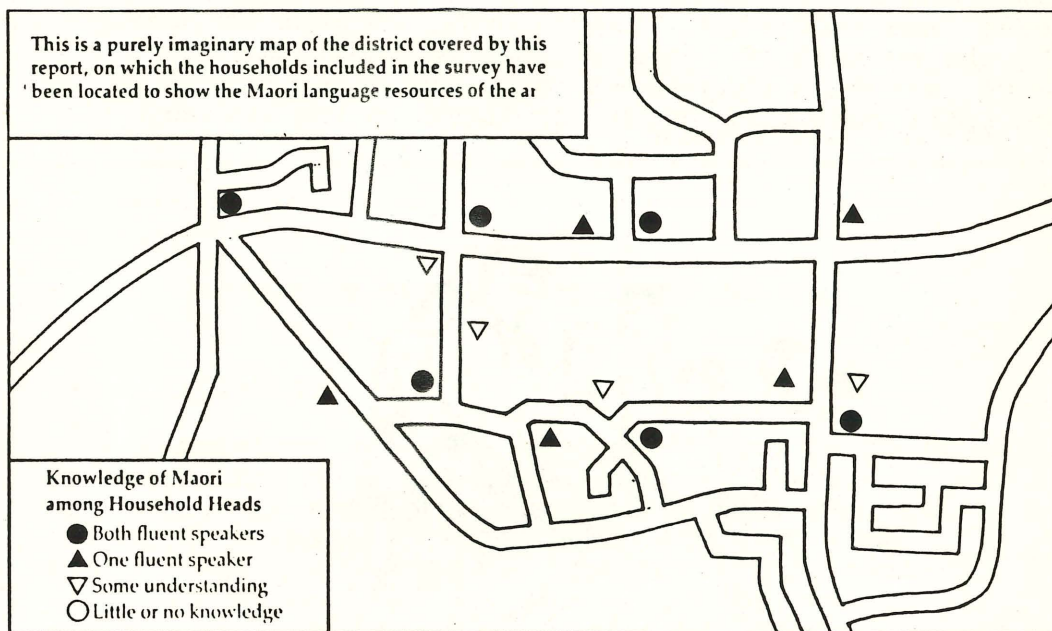
The information in the tables on pages two and three tells us that in Edgecumbe no one under 25 included in our survey could speak Maori well and only a few in Awakeri, Otakiri and Thornton were fluent in Maori. Nearly everyone over the age of 45 could speak and understand Maori well, although the numbers in Edgecumbe itself were slightly higher than in the surrounding area.

Only about two fifths of the adults in Edgecumbe could understand spoken Maori easily, but most had at least some knowledge. People under 25 made up nearly all the numbers of those who had no knowledge of Maori, although they formed only about two thirds of the total number of people included in the survey.

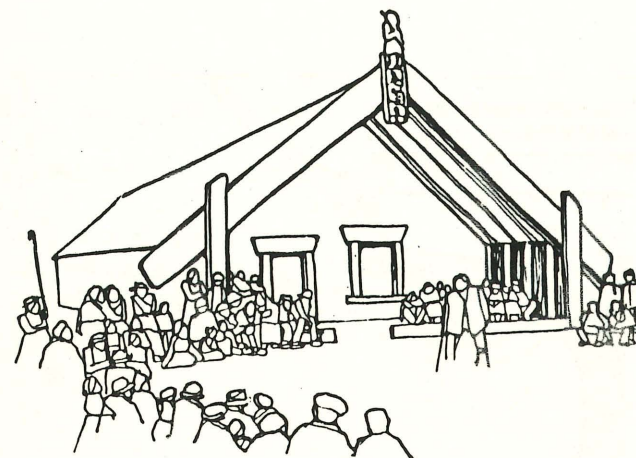


### Use of Maori Language in the Household

English was the main language used in most of the homes we visited. Of the 23 households with dependent children, Maori and English were used equally in only one - the rest used mostly or entirely English. There were five childless households included in the survey - Maori and English were used equally in one household, mostly Maori in another and only English in the remaining 3.



EDGEUMBE



### The Maori Language in the Community

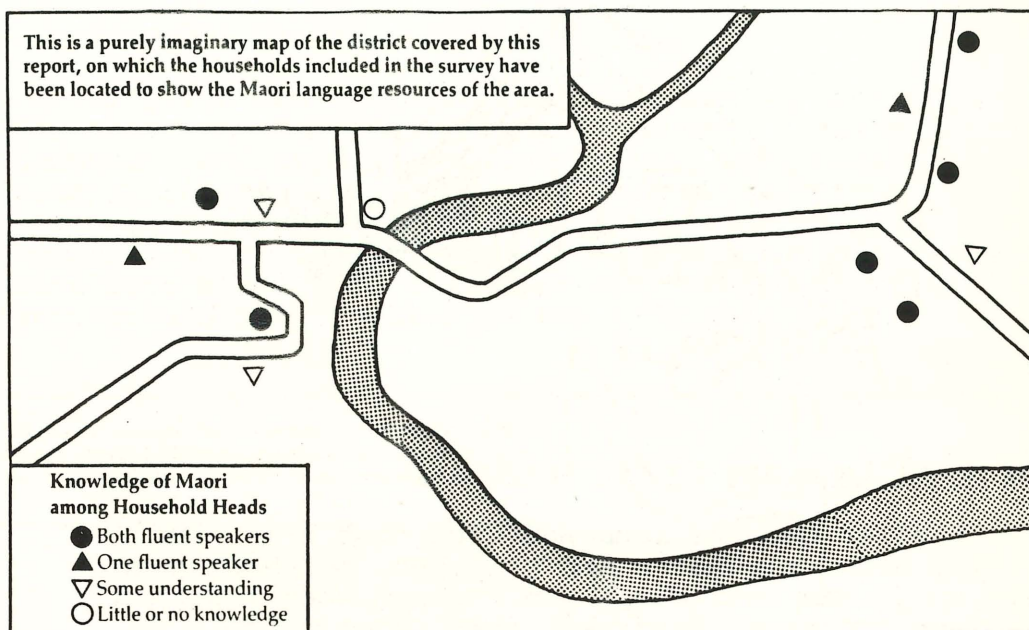
English was the language used most often for talking with neighbours and children, but most people said they used both Maori and English when they had visitors. Over a third used some Maori with neighbours and one person in Edgumbe used entirely Maori.

Maori was the most common language used in certain religious ceremonies and on the marae, in both formal and informal situations.

If any two people included in our survey of these districts were to meet unexpectedly, the chances of their being able to have a conversation in Maori would be about one in 10. If both of them were adults, the chances would be considerably higher - about two in five.

However, if both of them were children, the chances would practically be nil, due to the low numbers of children in the area who could speak Maori well.





AWAKERI, OTAKIRI and THORNTON.

### Attitudes to the Language

Over one half of our informants said that Maori had been the language they had first understood and about two thirds said they preferred to use Maori or Maori and English for conversations. Several others mentioned that they would like to learn to speak Maori or would like their children to learn. One woman was rather embarrassed by the fact that she could not speak Maori and was trying to learn. One man told us he had been able to speak Maori in the past but had lost his ability over the years.

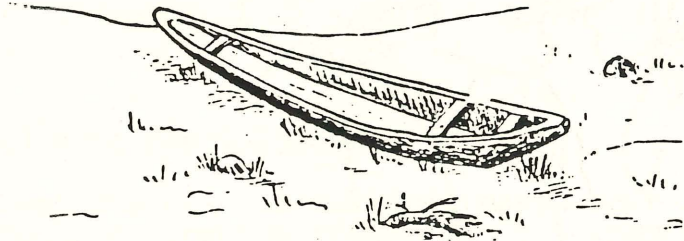
Not many people said that there was no point in learning Maori - one woman told us she thought Maori was "useless" although her husband said that bilingualism is the ideal. Two people said that teaching foreign languages, e.g. French or German, in schools is a waste of time. One of these men whose son is learning Maori at college said, "No use learning French as he is living amongst Maori."





## Conclusion

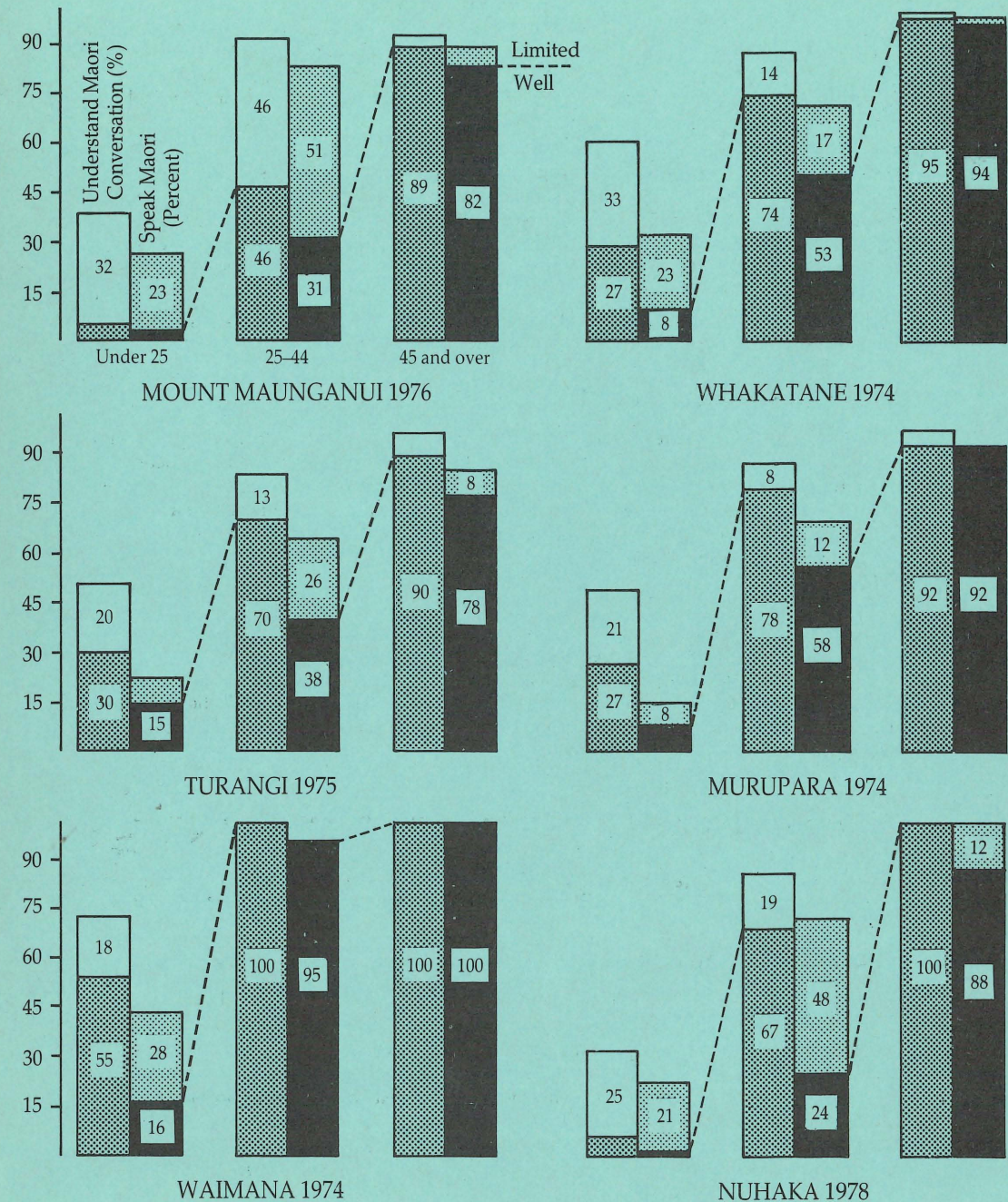
Although the Maori language had become a language for adults (rather than the language of the whole Maori community) in the Edgecumbe area in the 1970s, fluent Maori-speakers were present in most homes. Few children had no contact at all with Maori as a language for everyday conversation, even if they had little understanding of it themselves. With the encouragement of a more positive attitude towards Maori in the schools, and the support of the Ataarangi and Kohanga Reo movements, the trends of the 1970s could be reversed in the 1980s.



This report was prepared by:  
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June 1986 (102)

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.