

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

Survey of Language Use in Maori Households  
and Communities

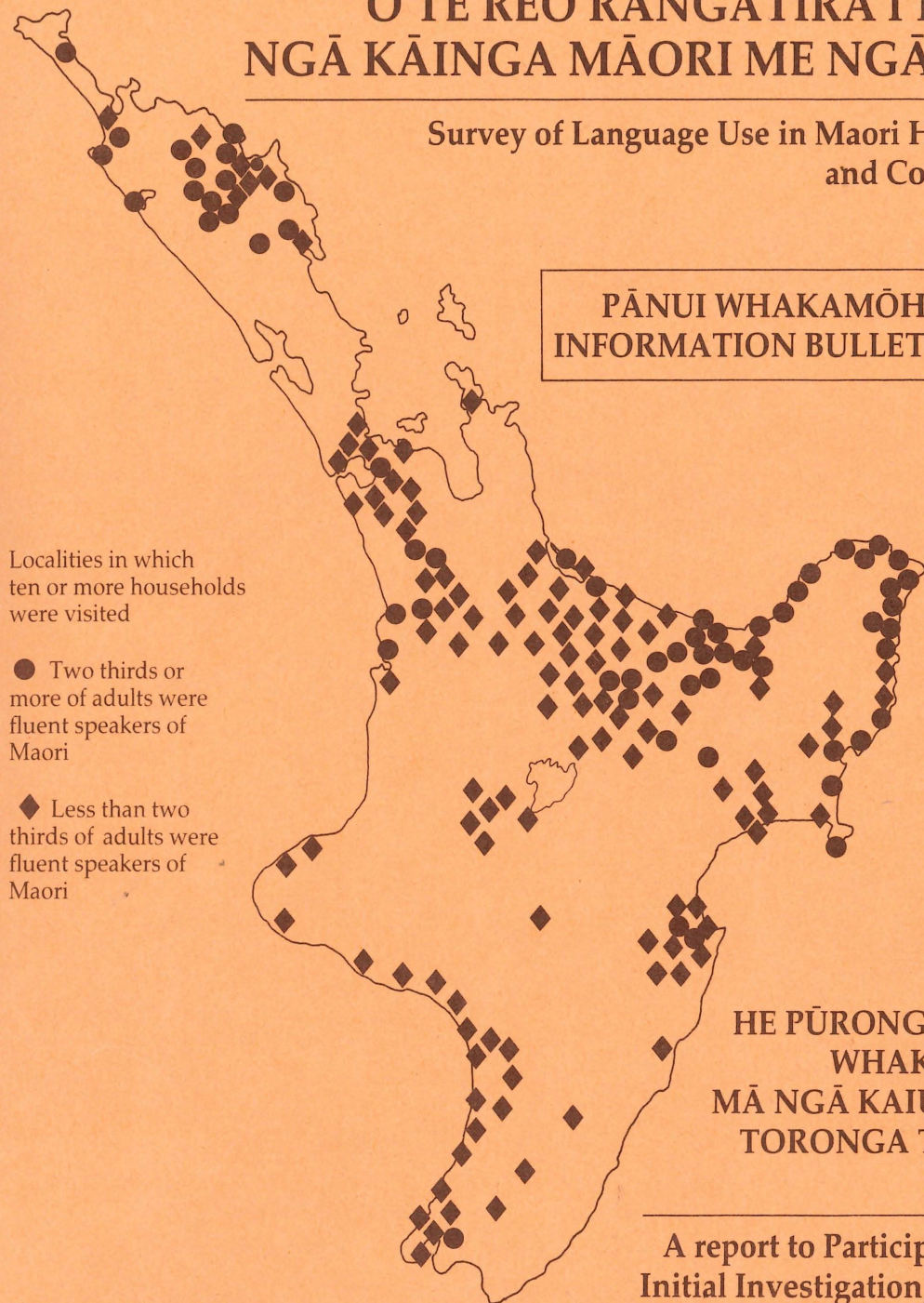
PĀNUI WHAKAMŌHIO  
INFORMATION BULLETIN

107

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 Te Awamutu and District

Fieldwork for the survey of language use in Maori communities was carried out in Te Awamutu, Kihikihi, Owairaka and Parawera in February, May and August of 1976, and May 1977.

The interviewers were Phillip Hawera (Tuhoe/Ngai te Rangi/Ngati Awa), Judith Brown Hawera (Waikato), Joe Rua (Te Whanau-a-Apanui), Ameria Ponika (Tuhoe), Maku Potae (Ngati Porou), Kathleen Grace Potae (Tuwharetoa) and Raiha Smith (Ngati Kahungunu).

Ten households with a total population of 49 were visited in Te Awamutu's total Maori population at that time. 16 households in the surrounding district were also included in the survey. These had a combined population of 79, 77 of whom were of Maori descent (about 16 percent of the area's total Maori population at that time).

Two interviews were carried out entirely in Maori, one in both Maori and English and the remaining 23 entirely in English.



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#### Knowledge of Spoken Maori in Te Awamutu (1976)

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Age Group	Fluent Speakers	Understand Easily	Limited Understanding	No Knowledge
45 years & over	3 (75%)	3 (75%)	0 ( 0%)	1 (25%)
25-44 yrs	2 (14%)	5 (36%)	7 (50%)	2 (14%)
15-24 yrs	0 ( 0%)	1 (14%)	4 (57%)	2 (29%)
2-14 yrs	0 ( 0%)	2 ( 8%)	6 (25%)	16 (67%)
Overall	5 (10%)	11 (22%)	17 (23%)	21 (43%)

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

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#### Results of the Linguistic Survey

##### Iwi Affiliation

The people interviewed in Te Awamutu mentioned a total of seven major iwi to which they or the members of their household belonged. Ngapuhi, with 12 members (or 25 percent of the total) was the largest iwi mentioned. The second largest was Ngati Raukawa with 10 members (20 percent), while six people (12 percent) were from Waikato and five (10 percent) from Maniapoto.

In the surrounding area seven major iwi were mentioned, Waikato being the largest with 35 members (44 percent). The second largest was Maniapoto with 18 members (23 percent), while 14 people (18 percent) claimed affiliation with Ngati Raukawa.

### Ability to Speak and Understand Maori

The information in the tables shows that most people over 45 included in the survey could speak and understand Maori well. We did not come across anyone under the age of 15 in these districts who could speak Maori fluently, although there were a few who could understand it with ease. Just over a third of adults between the ages of 25 to 44 in Te Awamutu had a good understanding of spoken Maori and in the surrounding districts the proportion was nearly two thirds. In Te Awamutu itself about two in five of the people included in our survey and about one in six in the surrounding area had absolutely no knowledge of Maori. In all areas the vast majority of these people were under the age of 15.

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#### Knowledge of Spoken Maori in Kihikihi, Parawera and Owairaka (1976)

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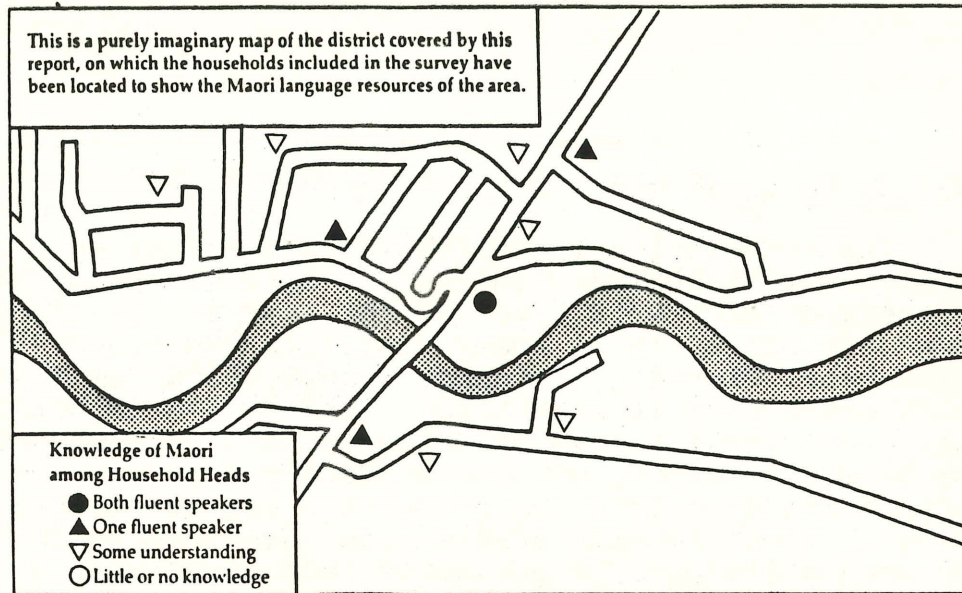
Age Group	Fluent Speakers	Understand Easily	Limited Understanding	No Knowledge
45 years & over	13 (87%)	14 (93%)	1 ( 7%)	0 ( 0%)
25-44 yrs	3 (21%)	9 (64%)	4 (29%)	1 ( 7%)
15-24 yrs	1 ( 6%)	5 (28%)	12 (67%)	1 ( 6%)
2-14 yrs	0 ( 0%)	1 ( 4%)	17 (61%)	10 (36%)
Overall	17 (23%)	29 (39%)	34 (45%)	12 (16%)

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

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TE AWAMUTU

### Use of Maori Language in the Household

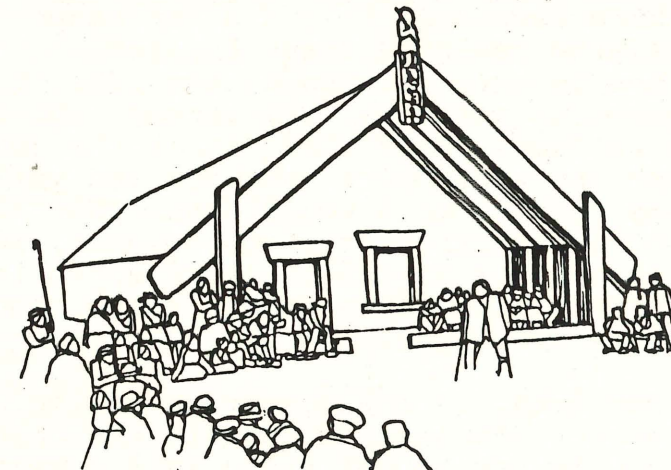
All of the households in Te Awamutu had dependent children and English was used exclusively in all of them. In the surrounding districts English or mostly English was used in all 12 of the households with dependent children. Two of the four childless households used Maori most of the time, while the other two used mostly English.

### The Maori Language in the Community

English was the main language used for talking with children, neighbours and friends. Several people told us they used at least some Maori when talking with friends and neighbours (up to three fifths), more so in Kihikihi and the other districts than in Te Awamutu itself. However, nearly everyone

told us that Maori was often used in religious ceremonies and most of the time in formal situations on the marae such as whaikorero. Most people tended to use more Maori in informal conversation on the marae than they did on other occasions. In fact one family told us that very little Maori is generally spoken in the community except at meeting and hui on their marae.

If any two people included in our survey of these places were to meet unexpectedly the chances that they would have been able to have a conversation in Maori would have been very slight, the highest being about one in eight in Parawera and Owairaka. However, if both people were adults the chances would be considerably higher - ranging from about one in eight in Te Awamutu to nearly three in five in Parawera and Owairaka.





## Attitudes Towards the Maori Language

Maori was the first language understood by half of our informants and about the same number told us that it is the language they prefer to use most for everyday conversation. Although a few people in Te Awamutu stated both Maori and English as their preference, Maori was nearly as popular for reading and writing, although most people said they had first learned to write in English.

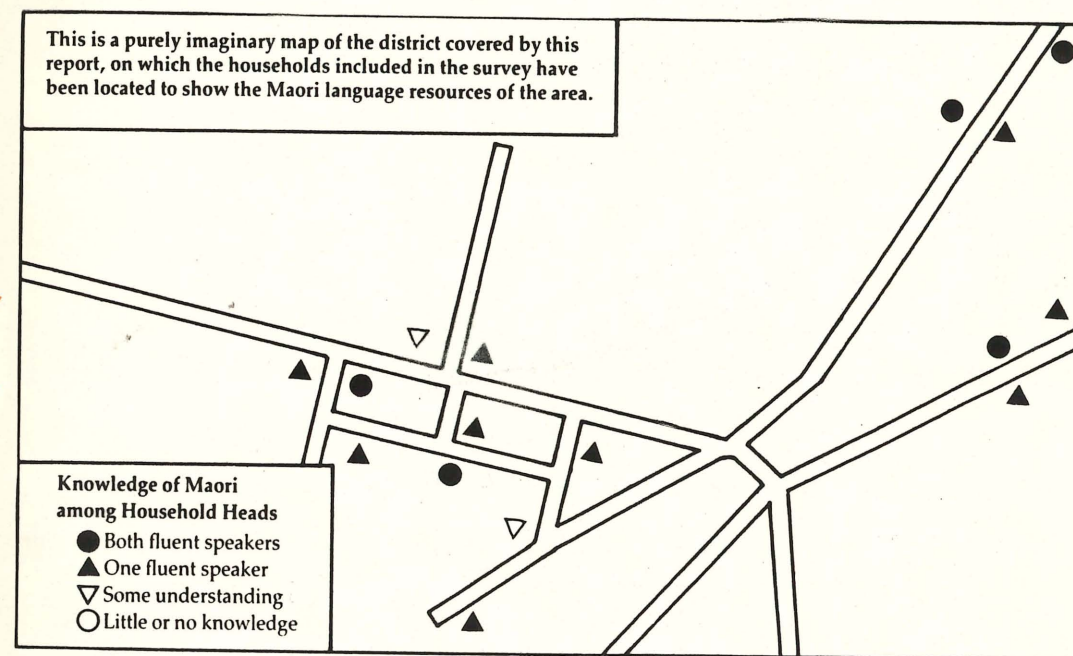
Opinions about the Maori language varied from area to area. In Te Awamutu and Kihikihi there was much enthusiasm expressed by many people for the teaching of Maori in schools, especially among parents who had been unable to teach their children Maori through their own lack of knowledge, or parents who had for one reason or another chosen not to and now regretted it. One woman told us she had been laughed at by Pakeha children when she spoke Maori at school. She then vowed that the same thing would not happen to her own children and so taught them only English, thinking they would somehow pick Maori up later on. Unfortunately, this did not happen and the woman's children can only speak English. Consequently, she is very pleased at the idea of Maori being taught in schools. One person, who was in fact fluent in Maori, said that "it is the job of schools to teach the kids Maori language and values" and someone else said schools would teach the "right" way to speak Maori. Another opinion, however, was that it is up to parents to see their children learn Maori and that ideally children should learn Maori at home when they are very small.

On the other hand, in one community in the surrounding district (Parawera), despite the high proportion of adults and kaumatua who were fluent speakers of Maori, there seemed to be a strong feeling that the Maori language was not very important. One woman told us that "many of the Maori

in the district don't really bother with Maori because they feel that English is much better, and that there is far too much difficulty in learning two languages." She seemed to think that this was the feeling of most people in the district. Indeed, this was confirmed by several other people we spoke to.

Consequently, there was not the same concern expressed by parents as in other areas about their children learning Maori or Maori being introduced into schools.

Ironically, for those who felt that Maori was important, their opportunities to actually use the language were restricted because no one else spoke it much.

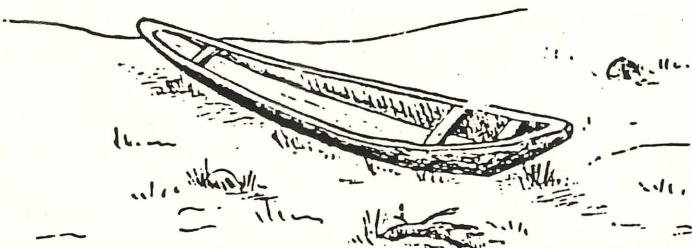


KIHKIHI, OWAIRAKA and PARAWERA



Conclusion

The majority of fluent Maori speakers in this area were over the age of 45. Maori was very much a ceremonial language, used on religious occasions and on the marae. Although, in some areas, many people were able to speak Maori well most preferred not to do so and were not particularly worried about whether or not their children learned. Others were most supportive of the teaching of Maori in schools and were making every effort to either learn the language themselves or encourage their children to do so. These people will no doubt be much encouraged by the success of the kohanga reo movement, the introduction of taha Maori into schools, and recent moves to give full official recognition to the Maori language.

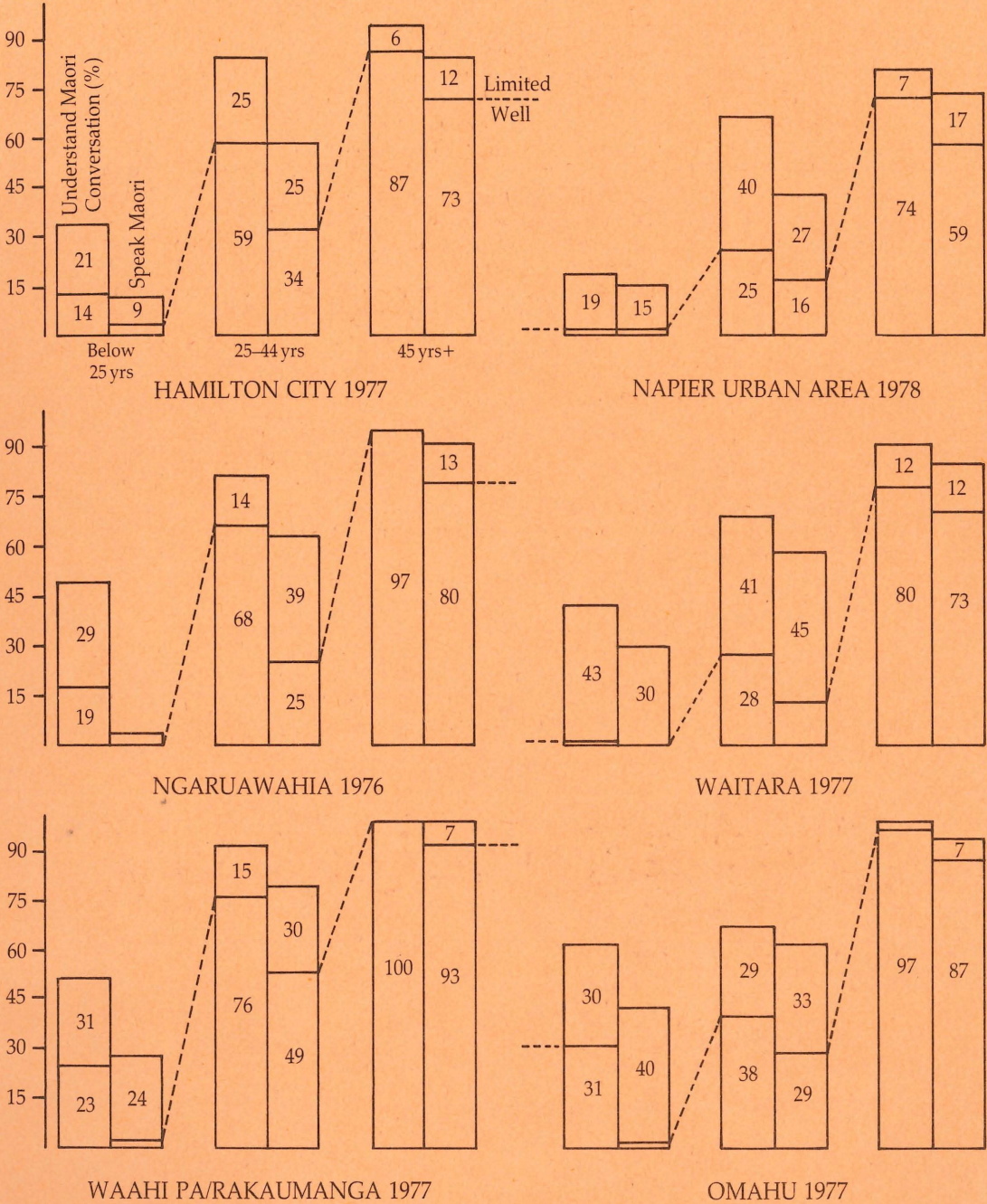


This report was prepared by:

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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.