

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

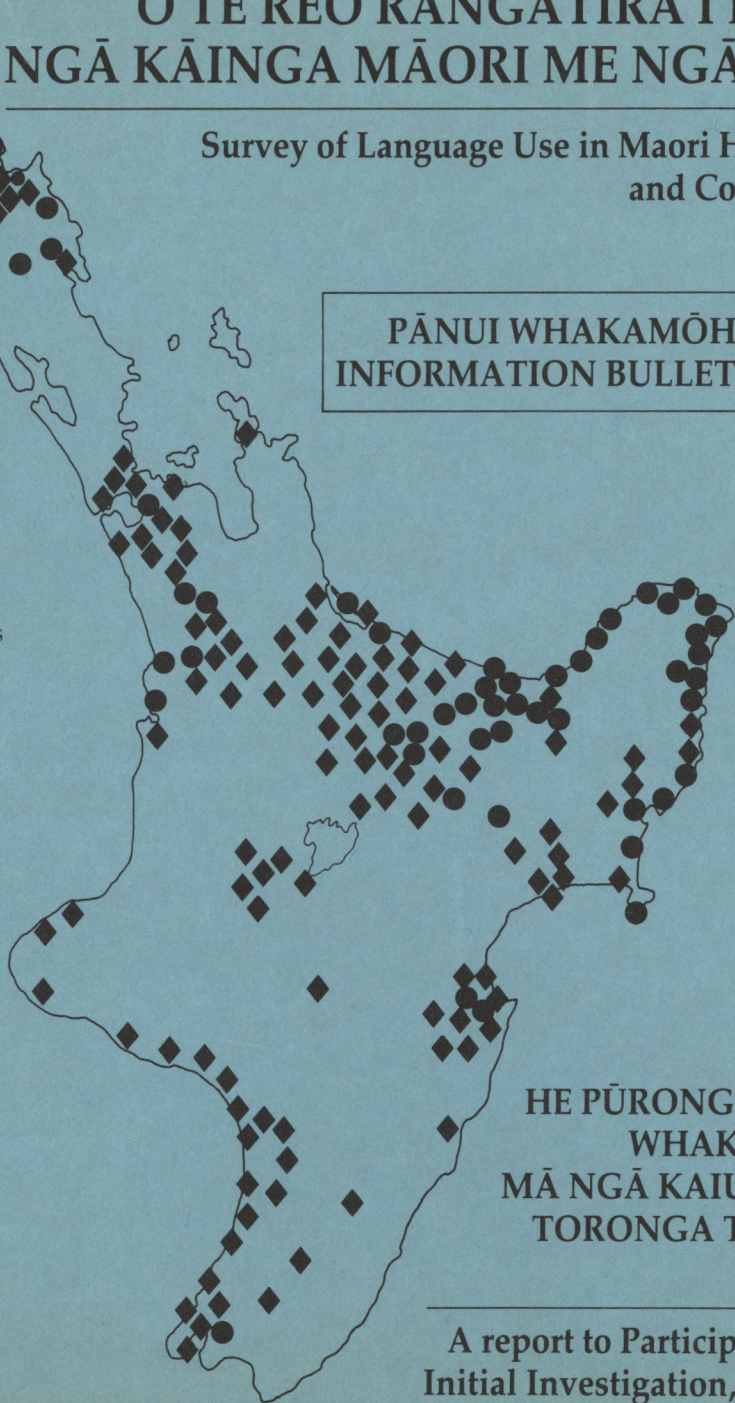
PĀNUI WHAKAMŌHIO
INFORMATION BULLETIN

92

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

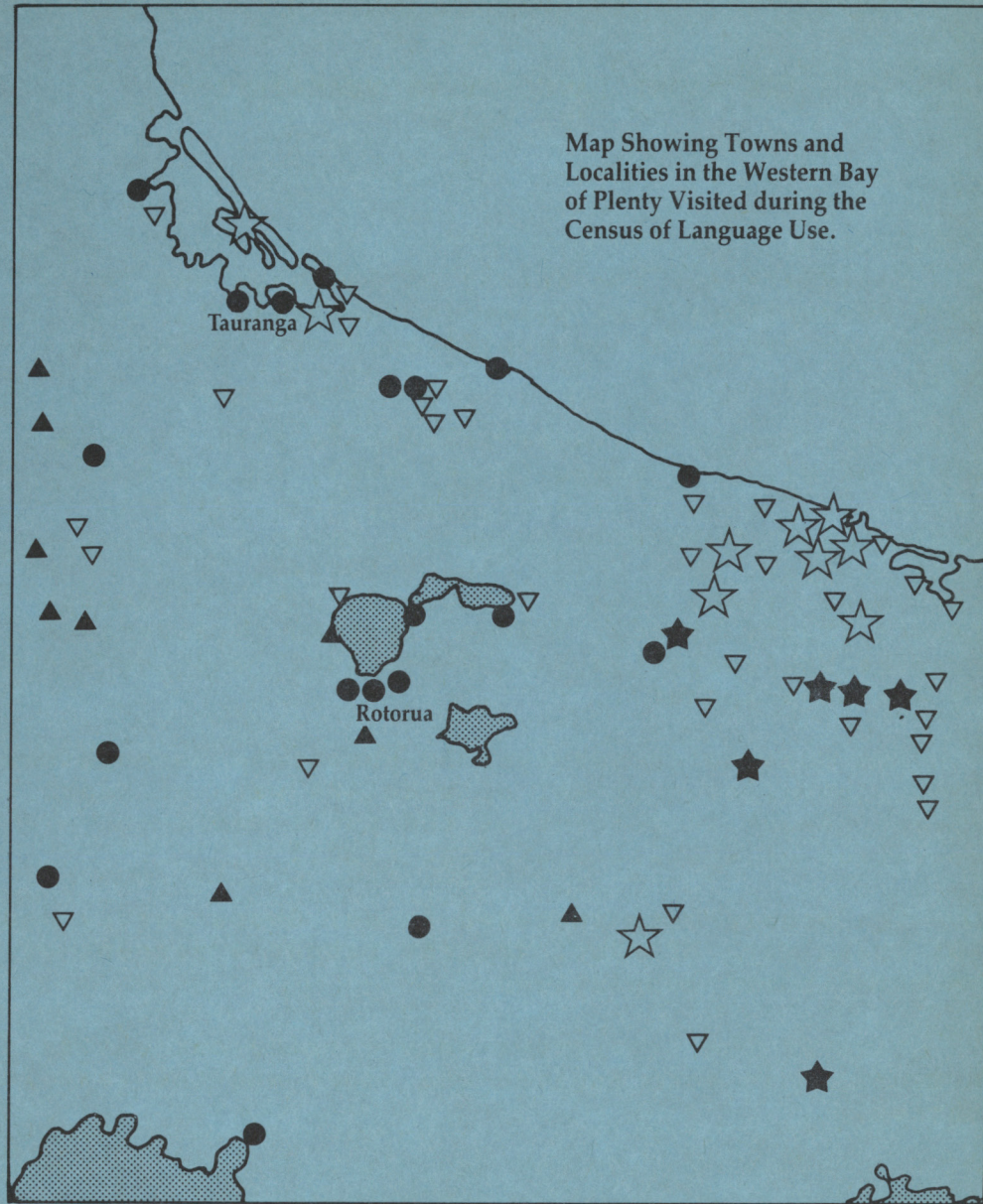


HE PŪRONGORONGO
WHAKAMŌHIO
MĀ NGĀ KAIURU KI TE
TORONGA TUATAHI,
1973-1978

A report to Participants in the
Initial Investigation, 1973-1978

THE MAORI LANGUAGE IN WHAKATANE
AND OHOPE

Map Showing Towns and Localities in the Western Bay of Plenty Visited during the Census of Language Use.



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

Fieldwork for the survey of language use in Maori communities took place in Whakatane in 75 households and in 4 households in Ohope in January 1974.

The interviewers were Broncho Te Kiri (Tuhoe), Meremaihi Williams Koopu (Ngati Awa), Ripeka Koopu Martin (Te Whanau-a-Apanui), Lynda West, William Martin (Ngati Manawa/Te Aupouri), Helen O'Donohue, Clare Slatter, Maku Potae (Ngati Porou), Peter Wensor (Ngapuhi), Iriaka Wensor (Ngapuhi), Carol Hindmarsh Ngawati (Ngati Porou), Yvonne Sigglesko (Ngaiterangi), Merepeka Wharepapa (Te Whanau-a-Apanui) and Joe Rua (Te Whanau-a-Apanui).

The households surveyed in Whakatane Borough had a total population of 441 of whom 424 were of Maori descent (about 14 percent of the total Maori population of Whakatane at that time.)

Ten people were included in our Ohope survey and 9 of these were of Maori descent (about 4 percent of the total Maori population).

Five of the interviews were carried out entirely in Maori, 6 in both English and Maori and the rest in English.

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 Knowledge of Spoken Maori in Whakatane

Age Group	Fluent Speakers		Understand Easily		Limited Understanding		No Knowledge	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
45+	63	93	64	94	1	1	3	4
25-44	47	55	65	76	12	14	9	10
15-24	14	19	36	48	20	27	19	25
2-14	6	3	43	23	63	34	79	43
Overall	130	32	208	50	96	23	110	27

 (Numbers and percentages refer to members of households visited; percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole numbers)
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Results of the Linguistic Survey

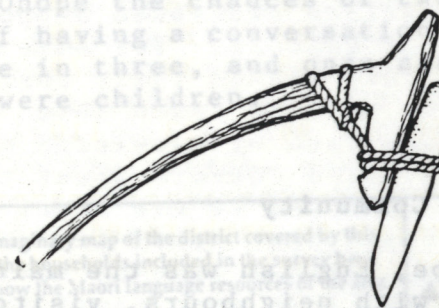
Iwi Affiliation

In Whakatane, the people interviewed mentioned 15 major iwi to which they or the members of their household belonged. Tuhoe with 97 members (or 22% of the total) was the largest iwi mentioned. The second largest was Ngati Awa with 91 members (or 21%).

Three major iwi were mentioned by our informants in Ohope. Of these Ngati Awa was the largest with 6 members (or 66%) while 2 people were from Te Whanau-a-Apanui and 1 from Ngati Porou.

Ability to Speak and Understand Maori

The information in the table on page 2 tells us that about one third of the people in Whakatane included in our survey could speak Maori well. However, over four fifths of them were over the age of 25, even though this age group made up about less than two fifths of all the people.



Most adults and kaumatua and about half of the 15 to 24 year olds could understand spoken Maori easily, while about a quarter of the under 15 year olds had a good understanding of Maori.

Few adults and kaumatua had absolutely no knowledge of Maori, while about one quarter of the young adults and over two fifths of the under 15 year olds had no understanding of spoken Maori at all at that time.

In Ohope, a similar situation occurred. We were told that most of the older people had a good knowledge of Maori and could speak it easily, while most younger people had only a very limited understanding of Maori.

Use of Maori Language in the Households

In the homes we visited which had dependent children, English was the main language used. Four households with dependent children, out of a total of 63, used Maori most of the time, and three more used Maori and English equally. Of the 15 homes without dependent children 4 used entirely Maori and only 2 used entirely English. 6 reported using Maori to visitors.

The Maori Language in the Community

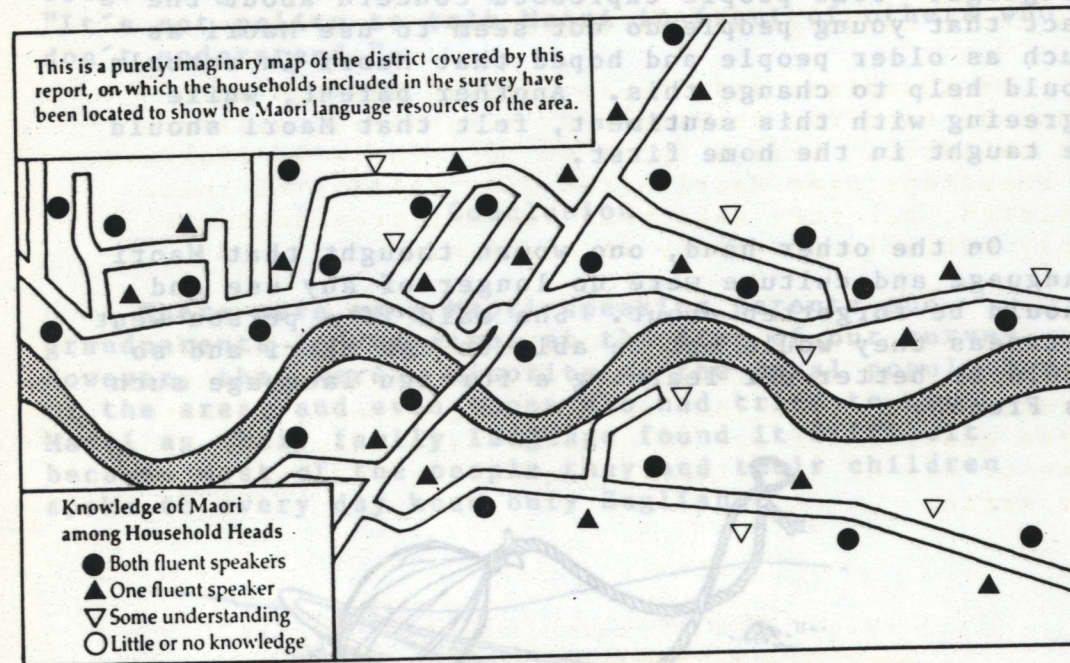
In Whakatane and Ohope, English was the main language used for talking with neighbours, visitors and children. Over a third of the people we spoke to in Whakatane used Maori often when talking to their children, but they said that the children tended to reply entirely or mostly in English.

In both Whakatane and Ohope Maori was the main language used in certain religious ceremonies and in formal marae situations such as whaikorero. About three quarters of our informants said they used Maori some or all of the time when chatting informally on the marae.



If any two people included in our Whakatane survey were to meet by chance, the chances of their being able to have a conversation in Maori would be about one in six. However, if both were adults, the chances of a conversation in Maori would be considerably higher - about two in three. If they were both children, the chances would be practically nil - about one in one hundred.

In Ohope the chances of two adults who meet by chance of having a conversation in Maori would be about one in three, and once again, practically nil if both were children.



WHAKATANE BOROUGH

Attitudes Towards the Language

Over two thirds of the people interviewed in Whakatane and Ohope said their preferred language for conversation was Maori, or Maori and English. However, most people preferred to use English for reading and writing.

Several people in Whakatane expressed support for the teaching of Maori in schools. For some parents, this was because they wished their children to learn Maori but were not able to teach them themselves, due to their own lack of knowledge of the language. Some people expressed concern about the fact that young people do not seem to use Maori as much as older people and hoped that Maori in schools would help to change this. Another parent, while agreeing with this sentiment, felt that Maori should be taught in the home first.

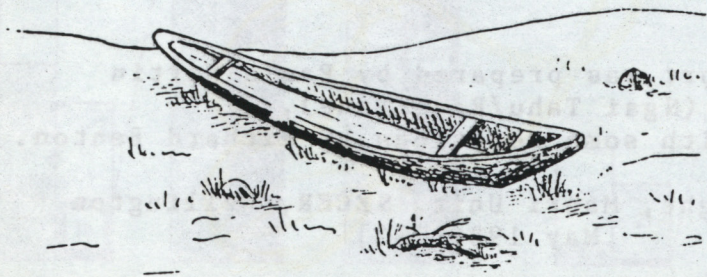
On the other hand, one woman thought that Maori language and culture were no longer of any use and should be forgotten about. She said if a person went overseas they would not be able to use Maori and so would be better off learning a foreign language such as French.



Another of the people we interviewed, while keen for her sons to learn Maori, felt that they should learn it at home and concentrate on English at school. This woman told us she had failed at school through not knowing English properly and did not want the same thing to happen to her sons. This same woman spoke of the loneliness and isolation she felt in not having anyone to speak Maori to, particularly since her husband is Pakeha and does not know Maori. Another woman, who expressed support for Maori in schools, (saying it is never too late to do this), told us how much she loved speaking Maori to her friends. Sometimes she said she "forgets herself" and launches into a long conversation in Maori forgetting that Pakeha people can't understand - "It's not polite to talk Maori in front of others who don't understand."

Conclusion

There were many Maori-speaking parents and grandparents in Whakatane at the time of our survey. However, they were a minority in the total population of the area, and even those who had tried to use Maori as their family language found it difficult because most of the people they and their children spoke to every day knew only English.



So, in the 1970's, it seemed likely that the Maori language was doomed to die out, even in such important Maori centres as Whakatane and its surrounding communities. (The situation was very similar in places such as Poroporo and Piripai; the results of our surveys there have been published in separate reports).

Partly because of this, Maori communities in this district and many others responded to the launching of the kohanga reo movement in 1982. This has given new life to the Maori language in many places, and a new generation of Maori-speakers is just starting to enter the primary schools. Whether these children will be able to continue to speak Maori as teenagers and as parents remains to be seen - it depends on lots of things, including changes in the school curriculum (to make it possible to learn in Maori as well as in English, through bilingual education), and the success of moves to gain more Maori language radio and television programmes.

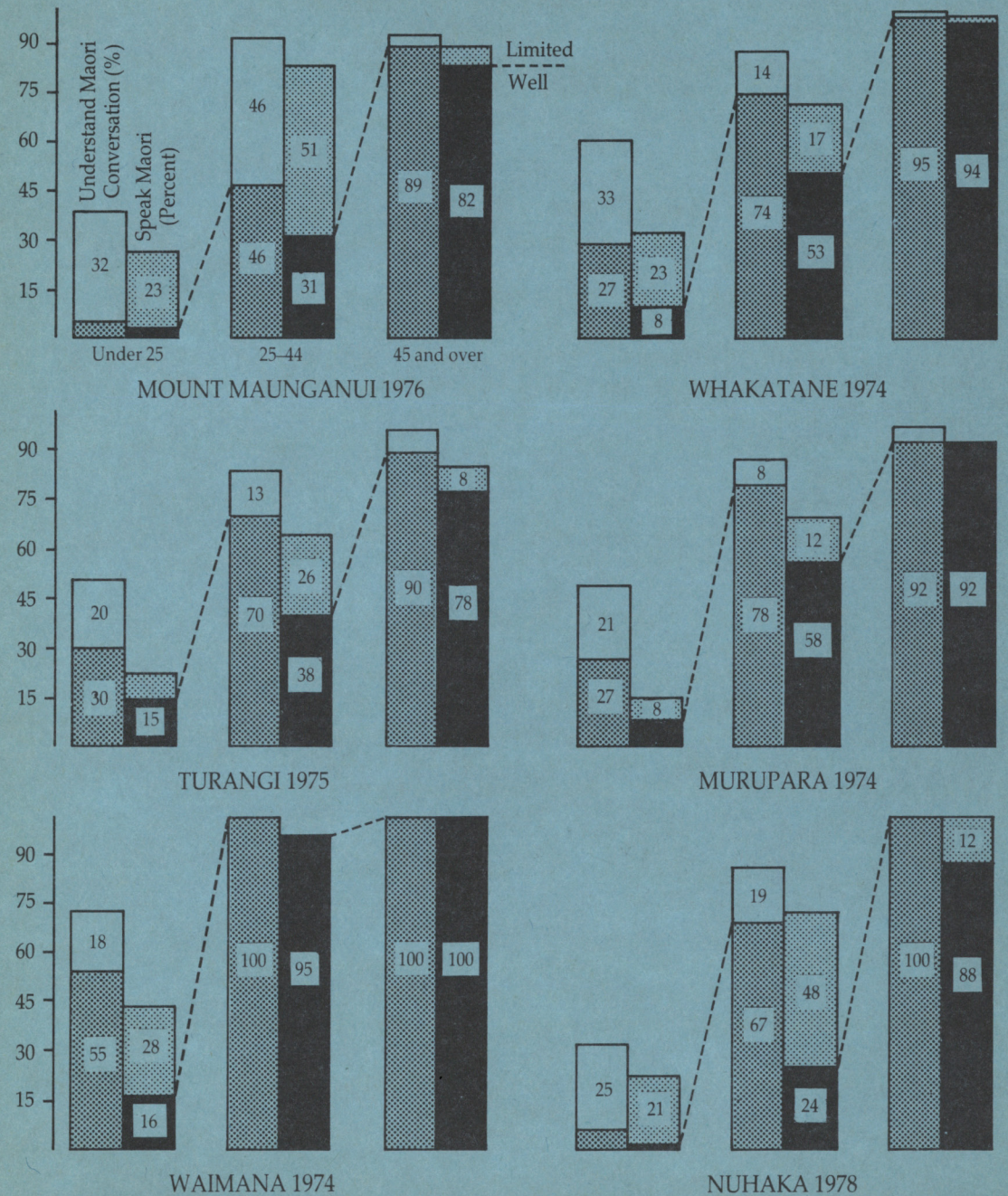
Some children from Whakatane are attending the bilingual school at Ruatoki, at great inconvenience to themselves and their parents. Developments such as this indicate that there is a determination on the part of many Maori people in the Whakatane area to reverse the trends towards the loss of the Maori language, so evident when our survey took place.

* * * * *

This report was prepared by Paula Martin
(Ngai Tahu/Rangitane),
and edited with some additions by Richard Benton.

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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.