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Developments, cultural appropriation/taxation with Māori in AI and Data Governance; associated risks, benefits and solutions.

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Disclaimer

This presentation was entirely written by a human, me, Dr Karaitiana Taiuru. No content was generated by AI unless explicitly stated otherwise.

This presentation is about Artificial Intelligence (AI) which develops and changes daily. This presentation represents my personal views and expert opinions current as of **July 20, 2025.**

Recent Developments

Māori AI Representation

- Kāhui Māori Atamai Iahiko Māori Artificial Intelligence Advisory Panel at AI Forum NZ*
 - Māori in the AI industry from Spark, ANZ, Startups, Academia, Health.
 - Two governance seats on the Council
 - Māori representation at AI Researchers Association
- *<https://aiforum.org.nz/kahui-maori-atamai-iahiko-maori-artificial-intelligence-advisory-panel/>



Govt AI Strategy

- No mention of Tiriti = nor does Māori Data Sovereignty Principles
- OECD Principles are noted
Human rights and democratic values, including fairness and privacy

*AI actors should respect the rule of law, human rights, democratic and human-centred values throughout the AI system lifecycle. These include non-discrimination and equality, freedom, dignity, autonomy of individuals, privacy and data protection, diversity, fairness, social justice, and internationally recognised labour rights.**

<https://www.oecd.org/en/topics/sub-issues/ai-principles.html>

Te Tiriti and Data in New Zealand Legislation

- Education and Training Act 2020
- The Data and Statistics Act 2022
- Pae Ora (Healthy Futures) Act 2022
- Digital Identity Services Trust Framework Act 2023
- Customer and Product Data Act 2025

Govt AI Strategy – Legal Instruments

- He Whakaputanga/The Declaration of the Independence of New Zealand (1835)
- Te Tiriti o Waitangi 1840
- The Treaty of Waitangi Act 1975
- Māori Language Act 1987
- United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples 2007
- Wai 2252 and WAI 262
- Supreme Court Judgement
- Legal Personhood

Facial Recognition Technologies updates

- Privacy Commission releases findings within the Privacy Act

What Māori Communities Are Saying

- Māori are not fundamentally opposed to FRT
- A desire to see the technology co-designed with Māori to address potential bias before it is deployed
- Tikanga Māori should be respected in its development and application
- Ownership, human oversight, training data, and secure storage and access of biometric information are essential considerations.
- Trials by the Department of Internal Affairs (DIA) and Police showed inconclusive results for Māori and Pacific participants.
- DIA trials revealed inconsistencies when facial moko was present.

Gen AI for Ethical use of Mātauranga 1/3

Internally, any AI associated with translating Te Reo Māori or generated multimedia must have the result confirmed by a staff member approved by our ethics committee Māori representative.

Any mātauranga Māori that is used to train a Generative AI (te reo Māori, images, pūrākau, etc) is done with permission from the traditional knowledge holder/author. We do not use prompts or other ontology to generate mātauranga Māori.

Gen AI for Ethical use of Mātauranga 2/3

Knowledge that is considered tapu in te ao Māori is never used with a Generative AI. Tapu data includes but is not limited to:

1. Photos of the deceased, marae, carvings.
2. Whakapapa of individuals or collectives including pūrākau, waiata and whāikōrero.
3. Any data that is deemed tapu by the kaitiaki of the content of the data.

Gen AI for Ethical use of Mātauranga 3/3

Any dispute of plagiarism will be assessed by the ethics committee Māori representative and/or kaitiaki of the topic.

Where AI generated material such as text, images, video etc., is used, it must be acknowledged.

The following information should be included when acknowledging the use of AI tools:

AI tool (e.g. Chat-GPT, Copilot, Claude, Midjourney)

A description of how you used the tool (e.g. brainstormed/corrected/edited/planned)

Prompt(s) used

Date.

Accurate as at the time of publication (July 23, 2025).

Māori language

- Māori language is an official language of NZ - Māori Language Act
- It can't be stolen or colonised
- Was once legislated against until 1969
- Māori Trade Marks Advisory Committee with legislative authority to advise the Commissioner.
- Gen AI is very good at reo Māori causing fears and opportunities as well as its own dialect.



Kupu Māori for Artificial Intelligence

- Hinengaro Hiko (Community)
- Hinengaro Rorohiko (Māori Language Commission)
- Hinengaro hori (Ian Cormack)
- Atamai lahiko (AI Forum)
- Atamai hangahanga (Royal Society)

Cultural Appropriation/Appreciation of te reo Māori

- **TradeMarks**

- Abandoned - AI Aotearoa, AI-WAKA (Poutini)
- Others include: W.ai, AI Tearoa

Dot AI Domains

- ai zone May, 2025 70,926
- **15** cybersquated Māori names including: Aotearoa, iwi, marae, tereo, kura, koha, taonga, reo, hapu, tameiti. Precenting Māori groiwth in the ai domain space

NZ AI Companies use of reo Māori

- At least 7 non Māori companies
- At least one spelt incorrectly using wrong singular version but translated in plural.
- Data Centres use Māori names including:

Mātai GCSB data center “A key partner in this build has been with mana whenua Ngati Whātua o Kaipara who have generously gifted the name Mātai to the building. The name comes from the site of an ancestral Pā, Rangi Mātai at Ōtakanini in South Kaipara and from where you can see in all directions.”

Rangatiratanga o Hinengaro Hiko - Māori Sovereignty AI Principles 1/2

- **Pou 1. Data sovereignty and Data Governance** - Our data, our protocols. Control over data creation, access, and use. Our AI must be built upon tikanga and mātauranga using intergenerational consent and values, not just western ethics.
- **Pou 2. Control over infrastructure and code**- If we don't own it, we don't control it. From code and algorithms to servers and models, infrastructure and models must be built and operated under rangatiratanga.

Rangatiratanga o Hinengaro Hiko - Māori Sovereign AI Principles 2/2

- **Pou 3. Skilled workforces** - Rather than relying on external agencies, governments and external countries, Māori need to be able to leverage their own skilled workforce to deploy AI agents and models and innovate new solutions. This often means upskilling professionals with AI and machine learning (ML) education or encouraging students to pursue careers in the industry.
- **Pou 4. Economic Reinvestment** – Redirecting digital value to strengthen the Māori economy and uplift more Māori into well paying tech jobs.
- **Pou 5. Investment in innovation** - Iwi, hapū, marae and Māori organisations need to be committed to investing in their own AI initiatives. Building sovereign AI means supporting local talent to fund state-of-the-art research tailored to unique challenges and intergenerational wealth and knowledge preservation .

Māori AI and Data Sovereignty

Methodology - OIA requests

31 Government Departments – Excluded: Government Communications Security Bureau (GCSB), Ministry for Pacific Peoples, and New Zealand Security Intelligence Service (SIS)

6 Crown agents

1 executive branch - Police

1 Departmental Agency (Independent Children's Monitor)

5 questions

1. How does your organisation define Māori data as opposed to non-Māori data?
2. Does your organisation have Māori Data Sovereignty and or a Māori Data Governance policy or strategy? If yes, I request a copy.
3. I also request a copy of your organisation Data Governance strategy/policy/policies?
4. Has your organisation had with any success or no/limited success, implementation of any Māori Data Sovereignty Principles or Māori Data Governance? If yes, please provide details of the implementation and how you measured its success.
5. How many .fte are allocated to Māori Data practices in your organisation?
6. What country/countries are the majority of your organisation's data stored?
7. Which Cloud Provider(s) do you use?

Some Definitions of Māori Data

Wai 2252 The Report on the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership- E Commerce Chapter (2020/2021/2023)

Digital or digitisable information or knowledge that is about or from Māori people, language, culture, resources, or environments. **Māori Data is a Taonga and subject to Māori Governance.**

Te Mana Raraunga Māori Data Sovereignty Network (2023)

Māori data refers to digital or digitisable information or knowledge that is about or from Māori people, our language, culture, resources or environments.

Te Kāhui Raraunga Māori (2023)

Māori data refers broadly to digital or digitisable data, information or knowledge (including mātauranga Māori) that is about, from or connected to Māori. It includes data about population, place, culture and environment

Definitions of Māori Data

16 have no definitions

10 have unique definitions of Māori Data

5 Te Kāhui Raraunga

3 Refer to StatsNZ definition. While most likely they are referring to the Iwi classification list by StatsNZ, because “*Stats NZ does not have a set definition of Māori data*”. While they do not have a set definition they say “*we think about it in terms of the definition provided in the Māori Data Governance by Te Kahui Raraunga*”.

2 Refer to an outdated DIA document

2 Te Mana Raraunga

1 Is tagging content in their internal Digital Media library with metadata to identify which hāpu, iwi, iwi trust, whānau or any other relevant group.

.fte to Māori Data Governance

- **28** entities have **0.0** fte allocated to Māori data
- **9** government entities make up 47.5 fte **1** entity has **15** fte with Māori Data governance
- **2** organisations did not answer the question

Government Data Jurisdiction

Hosting Locations	Entities
New Zealand and Australia	21
Australia only	11
New Zealand only	3
New Zealand, Australia and Canada	1
New Zealand, Australia and the United States of America	1
With held information. Citing commercial sensitivities and national security	3

How many government organisations have a Data Strategy or Policy?

Status	Number
Have a data strategy or policy	24
Developing a data strategy	3
Withheld	1
None	11

What Māori Data Frameworks have the 24 government organisations implemented?

Status	Number
Have Māori and Te Tiriti rights	16
Do not recognize Māori and Te Tiriti	8

Which Māori Data Governance Frameworks are being implemented?

Status	Number
Unique and custom to the individual organisation, reflecting appropriate Māori cultural values	14
Government organisations attempting to implement Te Kāhui Raraunga Māori Data Governance models: (a) one organisation states it is largely not applicable to their area (b) both state that only parts are trying to be implemented (c) Digital.govt.nz reference this document and its definition of Māori Data.	3*
Mention Te Tiriti in their Data governance strategies with no details	7
All of Crown ignore te Waitangi Tribunal Recommendations	

Māori Data Frameworks used by government organisations with data governance implemented.

Status	Number
Have Māori and Te Tiriti rights	16
Do not recognize Māori and Te Tiriti	8

Māori Data Governance Frameworks are being implemented?

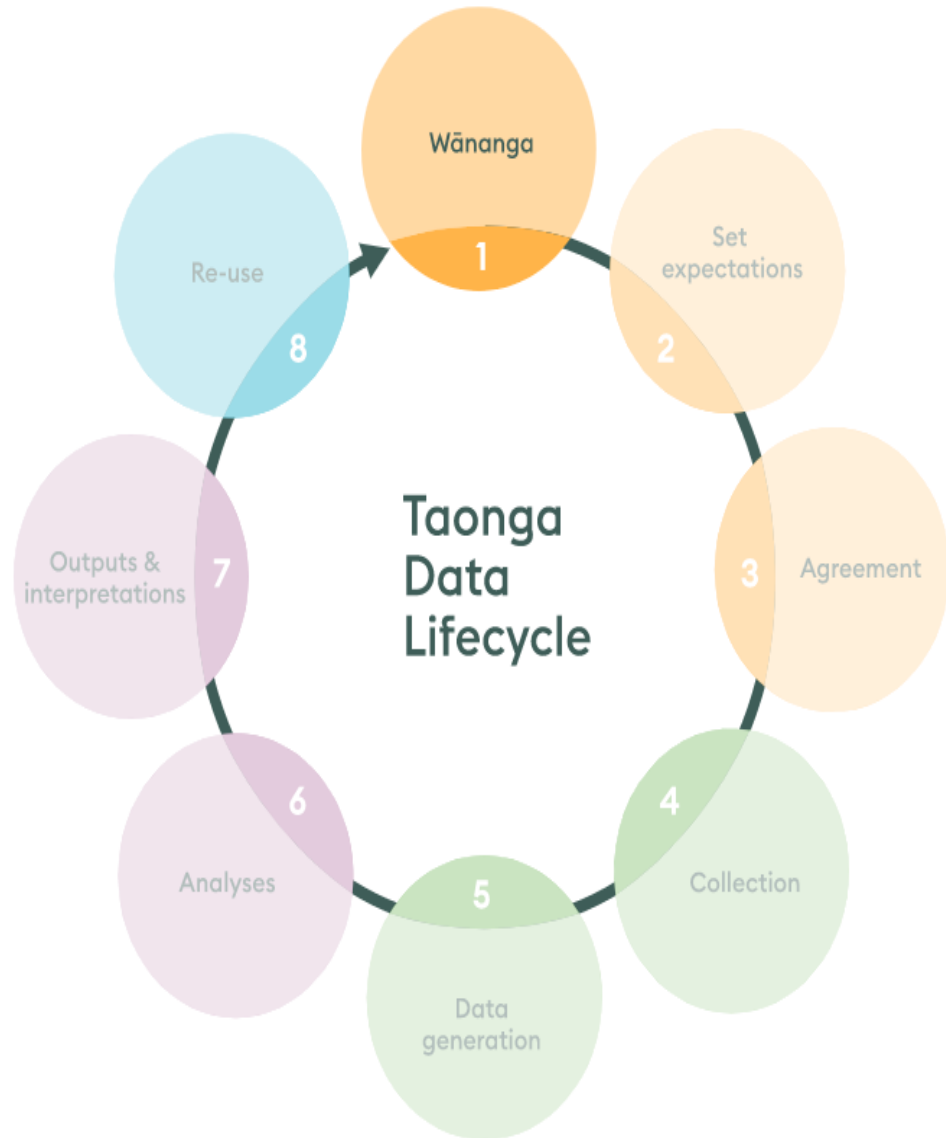
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Local Councils

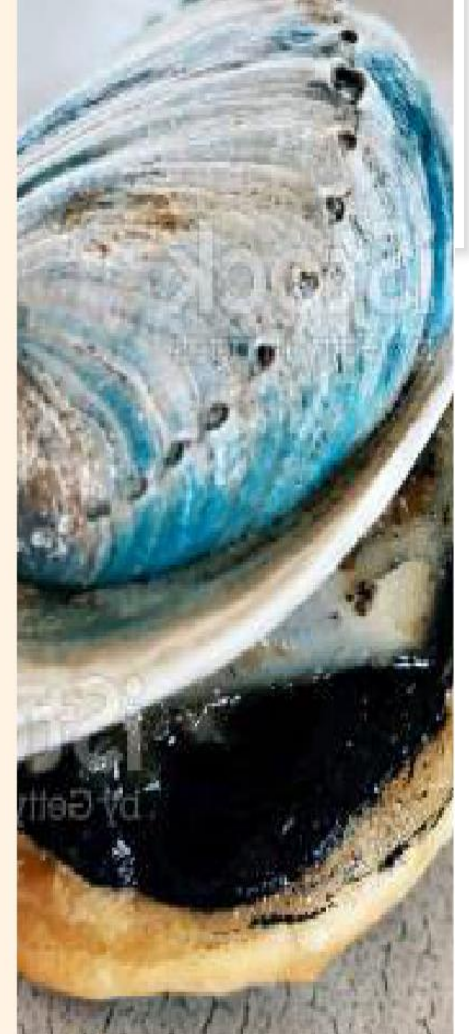
- 0 implementation

CRI's MDS implementation

- 0 have implemented in 2024
- In 2025 Plant and Food had a draft



- What are the research goals?
- What is the value?
- Who derives benefit from the value?
- What data is being generated?
- What samples are being used?
 - What protocols are needed e.g.,
 - Who can access the data,
 - Who can give permission?
- Who makes decisions about technical issues?
- What are the principles used to make decisions?



Māori and Iwi Data Sovereignty in practice

Māori Data and Sovereignty Advocates and Experts

- 2 out of 10 had NZ based email servers
- 7 out of 10 with .nz domains
- 1 fully sovereign web site hosting and emails

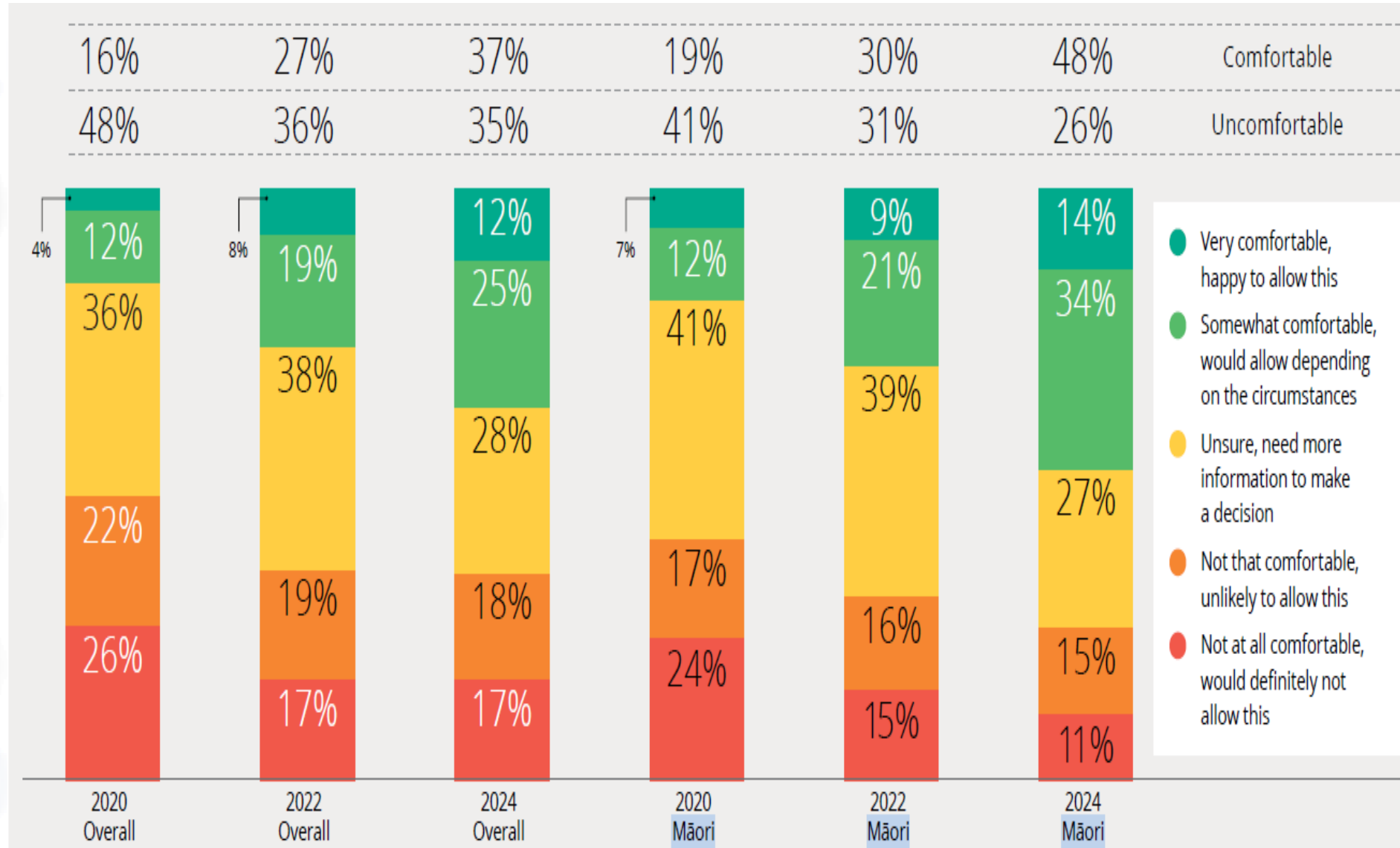
Tribal Groups (Iwi)

- 85 iwi.nz domains
- 6 iwi had New Zealand based emails and web sites hosted in New Zealand.
- 17 iwi had New Zealand based web sites, but not emails hosted in New Zealand.
- 62 iwi had both their emails and web site content including memberships databases hosted internationally.

Māori and Iwi Data Sovereignty in practice

- **Māori Businesses**
10% NZ based email servers
60% preference for .nz domains
- **Māori Education**
- 0
- **National Māori advocate organisations**
0% New Zealand hosted content and web sites
- **Iwi Media**
1 NZ content and email hosted in New Zealand

Comfort levels with data sharing



Step 1: Māori Data and Māori Data Governance

Wai 2252 The Report on the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership- E Commerce Chapter (2020/2021/2023)

- Data is: Digital or digitisable information or knowledge that is about or from Māori people, language, culture, resources, or environments. **Māori Data is a Taonga and subject to Māori Governance.**
- Māori Data Sovereignty is Māori Data Governance. **The principles, structures, accountability mechanisms, legal instruments, and policies** through which Māori exercise control over Māori data.

Step 2: Tapu and Noa

The kaitiaki of the data
have the knowledge

If in doubt, use Mead's
Tikanga Test

Noa data, once labelled can
be used

Māori Data label Sources

National Library
Māori Meta
Data Label Sets

K Taiuru Iwi,
hapū, marae
Data Label Sets

In house Data
Dictionaries

Create your
own custom
labels

Why do the common Māori Data models not work outside of academic publications

- Te Mana Raraunga Māori Data Sovereignty Network*
 - Ngā Tikanga Paihere*
 - Māori Data Governance Model Kāhui Raraunga Māori*
 - Māori Algorithmic Sovereignty: Idea, Principles, and Use*
-
- **Within NZ government the most successful Māori Data Sovereignty implementation is when the models are aligned to existing Data Governance and created with tikanga Māori and Data experts.**
-
- **Māori organisations and Iwi create their own – rangatiratanga.**

*Kaupapa Māori Researchers, and Māori communities widely note that these types of frameworks are often led by researchers and lack community accountability (Bishop, R 1999., Smith, L. 1999., Taiuru K, 2021, Rauika Māngai, 2022); Waitangi Tribunal Reports.

Māori Data Frameworks co designed with Māori communities

- AKO - <https://ako.ac.nz/programmes-and-services/collections/artificial-intelligence-ai-in-tertiary-education/practical-tips/ethics-and-ai-a-starter-guide-for-educators>
- AWS New Zealand
<https://aws.amazon.com/blogs/architecture/introducing-the-maori-data-lens-for-the-well-architected-framework/>
- Deloitte (PDF)
- Catalyst NZ <https://www.catalyst.net.nz/about-us/catalyst-and-te-tiriti>
- Payments NZ
<https://www.apicentre.paymentsnz.co.nz/standards/using-standards/nga-tohu-arahi-api-centre-data-handling-guidelines/>
- Iwi
- Microsoft New Zealand with Te Tumu Paeroa
- Spark

Ngāti Whakauae Iwi Data Sovereignty

Whakauae Research Services data sovereignty framework (Te Pā Raraunga o Whakauae) based on a model of a pā tūwatawata (fortified village) and benchmarked against one of Ngāti Hauiti's pā sites, Okahupokia.

Further work is being undertaken to ensure all parts of Te Pā Raraunga o Whakauae are functioning and that our staff are positioned as kaitiaki (guardians) of data within Te Pā Raraunga o Whakauae.

Te Pā Raraunga o Whakauae

Pātūtū (Outer Palisades) – Security & Defence

Represents data protection, cybersecurity, and external barriers against unauthorised access.

Pūwhara (Watchtowers) – Oversight & Monitoring

Symbolises data auditing, monitoring, and regulatory compliance.

Pātaka Kai (Storage Houses) – Data Repositories

Represents secure data storage, and structured governance frameworks.

Waharoa (Gateway) – Access Control & Ethics

Controls who can enter and engage with data, reinforcing CARE principles

Rua (Underground Storage) – Archival and Ancestral Knowledge

Represents protected repositories for historical data, cultural narratives, and intergenerational knowledge.

Whare Maihi (Carved Meeting House) – Decision-Making & Authority

Represents rangatiratanga (Chieftainship) over data governance, policy development, and iwi-led decision-making structures.

Tuaropari (Defensive Terraces) – Layered Governance Mechanisms

Symbolises different levels of data governance policies, from iwi-level controls to community-based regulations.

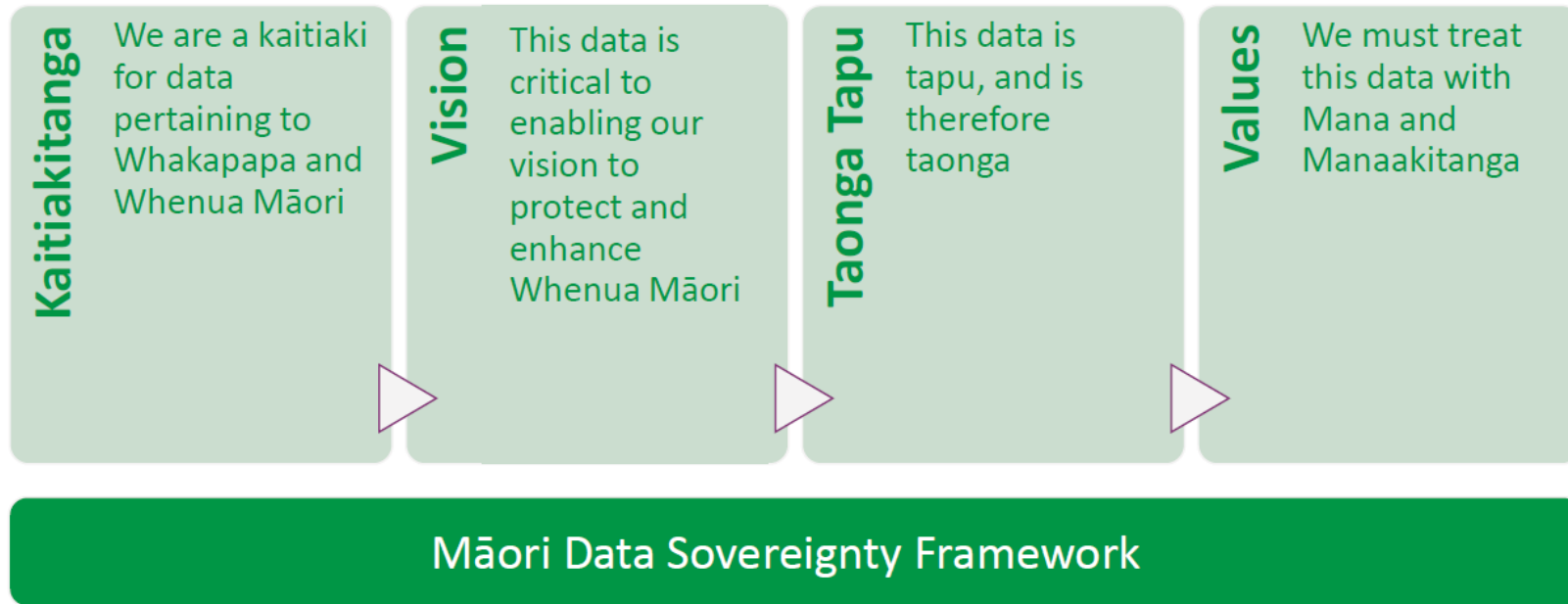


Rangitāne o Wairarapa Iwi Data Sovereignty Principles

1. Haputanga, whanautanga & ngā uri o Rangitāne
2. Whakapapa
3. Tino Rangatiratanga
4. Wairuatanga
5. Pūmau o te Mana
6. Aroha Manaaki
7. Kaitiakitanga
8. Mātauranga
9. Whakakotahitanga

Microsoft

Context



Microsoft

Māori Data Sovereignty Principles



Tōtika

- ✓ Part of our Information Governance structure
- ✓ Māori data stored in Aotearoa where possible
- ✓ Māori are empowered to maintain control over their data
- ✓ Information Security Strategy designed to protect the data we store



Manaakitanga

- ✓ We treat data as taonga
- ✓ We obtain consent to collect, store and use Māori data
- ✓ Our activities are designed to benefit Māori and whenua Māori



Kotahitanga

- ✓ Our systems benefit Māori
- ✓ Kaimahi are committed to protecting and enhancing Māori data
- ✓ We provide the correct information to the correct people
- ✓ We share information where appropriate and authorised



Mana

- ✓ We provide easy access for our clients to see and update data we hold for them
- ✓ Where appropriate we collect whakapapa data for owners
- ✓ We securely maintain data
- ✓ We confirm data is available and accurate

Microsoft 3

Rango-Whakahaere

Rango-whakahaere enable us to make decisions about how to protect information (which is Tapu, Noa or Rāhui) and with whom it can be shared.



Microsoft 4

Manu Tukutuku / Kite



Aho roroa, uaua hautū, aho popoto, hautū mārika

A long string is difficult to control, a short string allows complete control

Microsoft 5

Position papers

Storage location

- Māori data is stored in Aotearoa where possible
- We may store data overseas in certain circumstances

Māori Data

- All data that we store is Māori Data
- Classified as Tapu, Noa, Rāhui (embargoed)

Sovereignty

- People connected to the data have sovereignty over it
- We enable sovereignty through living our values and implementation of this framework

Decision making

- Māori and those connected to the data are involved in decision making processes

Legislation

- The framework is aligned and compliant with legislation
- Legislative obligations take precedence should there be a perceived or actual conflict

Data lifecycle

- We collect, store, and use information pertaining to Whenua Māori and the people connected to it
- The way we share information with third parties protects the mana of the information

Physical files

- Some physical files contain data and information that is Tapu and culturally significant
- These files need to be treated as Tapu and we will uplift our physical controls

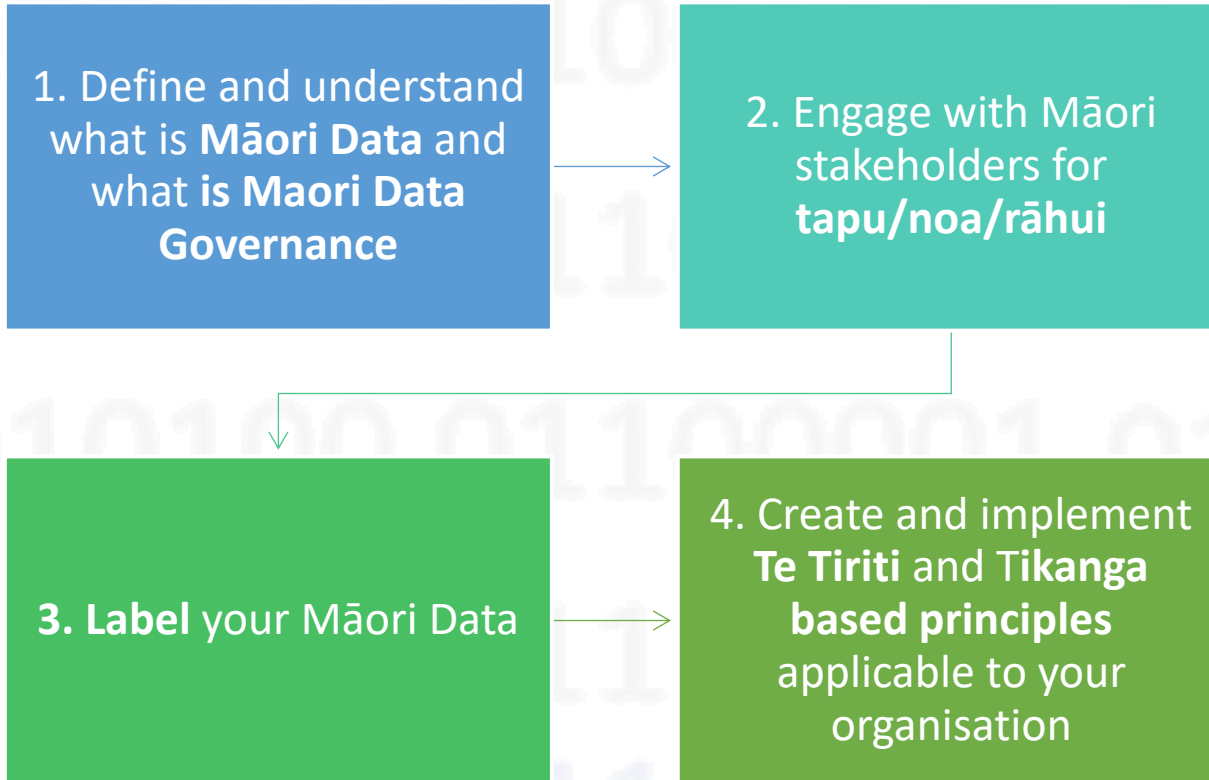
Microsoft 6

Key actions



Updated procurement, system selection and implementation processes
Identified information categories and classified these according to the framework
Implemented cloud monitoring, region locked cloud services, and developed file sharing guidance
Progressively increase the extent of owner involvement in decision making about data and information
Uplift information management processes, including physical file controls and treat files as Tapu
Incorporate Māori Data Sovereignty into process and procedure creation, update and review cycle

Steps to protect Mātauranga Māori with AI



Algorithm Charter Signatories

Algorithm Charter	Signed
Did sign	20
Have a Data Governance plan that recognises Māori, who signed	9
Do not recognise Māori in their Data governance but signed	6
Signed the charter but have no data governance plan	5

Algorithm Charter has 29 Signatories.

- 5 Government organisations:
- Bias system against Māori, Pasifika women.
- Facial Recognition issues
- Lack of consultation with communities/stakeholders with AI

Solutions

- Standardise/Centralise Māori Data/Governance/Sovereignty across your organisation
- Utilise the WAI 2252 Waitangi Tribunal Report findings
- Treat Māori Data/Governance/Sovereignty as a subsection or theme in data governance policies and strategies



Benefits

- Consistency of Data ontology across your organisation
- Reduced fte reliance
- Potential for significant economic returns when data is used with AI
- Greater accountability to your Board and Government
- Environmental impacts with AI and feasible for a NZ Sovereign AI

The Risks

- Māori will continue to face increasing inequities and bias with data as it is not labelled as Māori
- Treaty partnerships with Iwi and Māori organisations will continue to fail
- Artificial Intelligence (AI) will be a new form of digital colonisation if data is not recognised as Māori, hapū, whānau, hāpori and Iwi

Wai 3550 Waitangi Tribunal Claim

- Regarding inequities experienced by Māori in Aotearoa's digital and technology sector.
- world.
- Outlines several alleged breaches by the Crown:
- lack of support for Māori in career pathways
- insufficient inclusion of Māori suppliers in government procurement
- inadequate funding for Māori leadership in the technology workforce
- failure to address the digital divide affecting Māori
- lack of empowerment for Māori to participate actively in the increasingly technology-dependent

Cultural Taxation

Inclusion of Māori voices in their AI design and or development process

27.56 (43) include a Māori voice

72.44 (113) do not.

Engagement with Māori during their AI design and development process

41.54% (27) engage Māori **employees or contractors** in their design and development teams.

24.62% (16) engage with Māori **customers** during their design development process.

29.23% (19) engage with **Māori organisations** during design process

4.62% (3) engage in **other ways** (It varies a lot, Supporting resources regarding Maori knowledge in education or I do not know)

Employment Impacts caused by AI for Māori

Financial and Insurance Services; Administrative and Support Services.

- **3,700** Māori job positions would be affected by machine intelligence, with a possible total of **28,600** jobs disrupted.
- The likelihood, however, is that penetration by AI in these industries will be much higher.
- While it is hard to put exact numbers on job losses, employees who work in administrative and support services will be disproportionately and negatively affected when compared to other ethnicities.

Transport, Postal and Warehousing

- Māori are proportionately more highly represented than other ethnicities is in transport, postal, and warehousing.
- Additionally, in a number of jurisdictions, self-driving buses, trucks, trains and taxis are operating or being trialled overseas.
- Likewise, warehousing is being revolutionised by machine intelligence in logistics, storage, and distribution by robotics the jobs of approximately 4,600 Māori will be lost to AI

Public administration and safety

- Jobs such as budgeting, legal compliance, personnel management, and, at a lower level, data collection, analysis, and reporting
- Māori make up 14% of the workforce with an estimated job loss for Māori of 4,600 Māori

Financial and Insurance Services; Administrative and Support Services.

- **15,300** European and **5,900** Asian
- **3,700** Māori jobs positions would be affected by machine intelligence, with a possible total of **28,600** jobs disrupted.
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Concerns about Māori privacy and AI tools by Māori

- **Artificial Intelligence** (AI's) impact on society - **52%** of all New Zealanders and **51%** of Māori
- Concerns about bias from systems developed overseas that do not work accurately for Māori.
- Collection of Māori information without work to build relationships of trust, leading to inaccurate
- Representation of Māori taonga that fail to uphold tapu and tikanga.
- Exclusion from processes and decisions of building and adopting AI tools that affect Māori, whānau, hapū, and iwi, including use of these tools by the Crown.

Traditional Music and Sounds generated with AI* Key findings

- AI music creators have a negative impact on Māori sound artists
- Cultural misappropriation of music and art could devalue traditional knowledge and take income and knowledge away from traditional knowledge holders.
- AI often uses information without consent causing disrespect, financial losses, and mistrust...
- Public might not distinguish between authentic cultural works and AI generated content

[AI and Music market development of AI in the music sector and impact on music creators in Australia and New Zealand. August 2024](#) was commissioned by APRA AMCOS (Australasian Performing Right Association Limited (APRA) and Australasian Mechanical Copyright Owners Society (AMCOS)).

Traditional Music and Sounds generated with AI* Key findings

- Māori should decide how to use AI with Māori sounds and music, to protect their traditional knowledge and integrity.
- AI scrapes the web for Data with little respect for Indigenous peoples consent or cultural protocols leading to cultural misunderstandings and harming traditional music.
- a lack of accessible data for Māori music within AI applications can lead to inappropriate use without the necessary safeguards in place.
- A need to opt out and remove Māori knowledge from AI was emphasized and the critical need to manage AI copyright violation and to recognise the Māori as the rightful owners of their knowledge.

Questions

Ngā mihi