
TE HONONGA AKORANGA
COMET



SUBMISSION

MAIHI KARAUNA CONSULTATION

Submission 093/18

Prepared on behalf of COMET Auckland, September 2018

Whakatauāki

E kore e taea e te whenu kotahi
ki te raranga i te whāriki
kia mōhio tātou ki ā tātou.
Mā te mahi tahi ō ngā whenu,
mā te mahi tahi ō ngā kairaranga,
ka oti tēnei whāriki.
I te otinga me titiro tātou ki ngā mea pai ka puta mai.
Ā tana wā, me titiro hoki ki ngā raranga i makere
nā te mea, he kōrero ano kei reira.

- Kūkupa Tirikatene

The tapestry of understanding
cannot be woven by one strand alone.
Only by the working together of strands
and the working together of weavers
will such a tapestry be completed.
With its completion
let us look at the good that comes from it
And, in time we should also look
at those stitches which have been dropped,
because they also have a message.

Contact for communications:

Susan Warren, chief executive, COMET Auckland

Email susan.warren@cometauckland.org.nz

Ph 09 307 2101, Mobile 021 757 048, Fax 09 379 5053

PO Box 3430, Shortland Street, Auckland 1140

www.cometauckland.org.nz

[COMET Auckland - Te Hononga Akoranga](#) is an independent charitable trust and Auckland Council's CCO focused on education, skills and lifelong learning across Auckland and, increasingly, other parts of the country. Our latest Statement of Intent is [here](#).

Introduction

Thank you for the opportunity to comment as COMET Auckland to the consultation on the Maihi Karauna.

This submission has been assembled by COMET Auckland based on our own knowledge and experience, and our ongoing engagement with education stakeholders, including educators, community leaders, employers, parents and students.

In particular, this submission reflects insights from our work in three areas:

- The Auckland Languages Strategy Working Group (ALSWG), a cross-sector group of language experts and community language representatives which we initiated and lead. The Auckland Languages Strategy aims to connect the various actions supporting languages in Auckland; and to advocate for a national languages policy. The strategy vision is a multilingual Auckland that benefits socially, culturally and economically from an increasing number of Aucklanders speaking more than one language. The kaupapa of the strategy is Te Reo Māori as a platform for all languages to flourish, including the special place of the Realm languages and supporting Aotearoa's community languages. More recently the ALSWG has also published a Languages in Education Strategy which sets out a 15-year pathway and workforce plan towards establishing te reo Māori as core curriculum for all children from year 1, and the opportunity for all children to also learn and use their heritage language or a community language of their choice.
- The Tāmaki Makaurau Education Forum (TMEF), a group of iwi leaders and educators who come together to share examples of effective practice for Māori learners and to discuss issues and opportunities towards enabling Māori to reach their aspirations through learning. COMET's role is convenor and coordinator of the TMEF. The TMEF's kaupapa is Whakamatauria ōu Whakaaro – challenging ourselves as educators and decision-makers to continually question and reflect on our practice to ensure it is as effective as possible for Māori learners. One of the themes that is often highlighted at TMEF hui is the central importance of te reo me ngā tikanga Māori in learning, and the lack of recognition for this in the English-medium majority of the education system.
- Talking Matters, a campaign to get us talking more and talking differently to babies and young children, in the language(s) and through the culture(s) of the whānau. Talking Matters is led by COMET Auckland, an independent education trust linked to Auckland Council, with funding from the NEXT Foundation. We work with strategic partners and a growing number of community organisations, plus more than 280 members of the Talking Matters Network. We are exploring what works for families in small-scale pilot projects in three Auckland communities (Māngere-Ōtāhuhu, Tamaki and Puketapapa) and supporting an initiative in Whanganui. We are looking for promising practices to replicate and scale up.

Comments on the strategic direction

We strongly support the proposed strategic direction. As the Maihi Karauna states, te reo Māori is a taonga of our nation. It is not only an official national language but also the indigenous language of Aotearoa. It is part of what makes us unique.

For too long te reo has been seen as a treasure to Māori only, with Māori alone left to preserve it. No language can thrive under those circumstances. We are therefore encouraged by the Maihi Karauna's recognition of the crucial role of government in te reo revitalisation, and the goal of kia māhorahora – for te reo to be a normal part of life for all New Zealanders.

As outlined in the Auckland Languages Strategy, research shows that four things are needed for a language to thrive:

1. Valuing/celebration – public recognition of the value of the language, especially from leaders but also from the general public
2. Maintenance: Families and communities passing their language from one generation to the next, in the home and/or through formal and informal education
3. Learning: Opportunities for non-first-language speakers to learn the language, and for first-language speakers to further develop their fluency and depth (as English speakers do throughout their schooling via literature and communication study)
4. Use: Opportunities to use the language in multiple settings, for example language communities and media. These opportunities are essential as a motivator for people to learn and also as a support for people to maintain their knowledge. Ideally, it should be possible to use the language in everyday settings with a reasonable expectation of being understood, which requires a large proportion of the population to have at least basic knowledge.

We note that the Maihi Karauna includes a balance of outcomes and strategies relating to all four of the above aspects. We also note that the Maihi Karauna and the Maihi Māori complement one another, with the Maihi Karauna focusing mainly on valuing and learning, plus use within media and government; and the Maihi Māori focusing mainly on maintenance and on use in whānau and iwi contexts. This complementarity builds on the strengths and roles of each and provides greater likelihood of reaching the desired goals.

Comments on the outcomes and targets

We support the three proposed “audacious goals”. All three are challenging but potentially achievable if committed action is taken soon and is maintained. More importantly, if all three were achieved there would be significant benefits for the health of the language and also for the wellbeing of all New Zealanders, both Māori and non-Māori, and for the nation as a whole.

Clearly the measures for each of the three goals will need to be specified more exactly. In particular, there needs to be clarity about what being able to speak “basic te reo Māori” means – for example is this point 2 or 3 on the five-point scale in the Health of the Māori Language survey? And is the target only about adult speakers or will children and young people be included in the number also? Being clear about the goal will assist with planning to achieve it.

For example, NZCER's recent paper¹ and the Auckland language strategy working group's *Languages in Education Strategy* both recommend working towards te reo Māori being core curriculum in primary and intermediate schools by starting with year 1 in 2020 and then adding a year level in each subsequent year (as it will take time to train enough teachers who are fluent in te reo to provide quality instruction across all year levels). This process would mean that by 2028, the first cohort of students would have completed eight years of sequential language learning in te reo; and that by 2040, 12 cohorts would enter secondary school having had eight years of instruction in te reo Māori. With around 60,000 students in each cohort, this amounts to 720,000 teenagers and young adults who would have at least basic conversational reo by 2040.

In order to reach the 1 million target, these 720,000 young people would need to be joined by an additional 280,000 adults with at least basic te reo which means 14,000 people need to reach conversational level each year between 2020 and 2040. While data is hard to find on current rates of learning, we believe this would represent a very significant increase, especially as it is likely to take around four years of instruction before learners can hold a conversation beyond the most perfunctory level. The target will therefore require a significant focus on adult learning. There are several pathways that could be used for this:

- Continuing with funding for the face-to-face language courses currently being offered by tertiary providers and marae around the country for adults who are interested and committed to learn and able to attend classes.
- Encouraging and expanding online learning opportunities such as the recently launched Massey University offering which at least count had attracted 11,000 learners around the world. Online courses can reach large numbers but there is a need for more research on whether they result in enough depth of understanding to reach the desired "basic knowledge" measure.
- Capitalising on parents' desire to support their children's learning by offering night classes for parents of primary and intermediate children, ideally in the school and aligned to what the children are learning. This is being done successfully in several schools on Auckland's North Shore, where the organisation Te Reo Tuatahi is offering parent courses alongside their language assistant-led classes for children.

Priority actions

As stated above, the balance between valuing, maintenance, learning and use is crucial in order to reach the goals of the Maihi Karauna. The three key elements of whakanui, whakaako and whakaatu, alongside the maintenance focus of the Maihi Māori, will together create the changes the strategy aims to achieve.

We support the priority actions identified, with one key change to strengthen the whakaako actions.

In the diagram on page 21, instead of a goal of "more children learning te reo Māori", we would like to see a goal of "every child learning te reo Māori throughout primary schooling, starting in year 1 from 2020". Making te reo Māori core curriculum takes it from a "nice to have" that schools can choose not to offer, to a "must have" with as much legitimacy as maths or social studies. It also

¹ • 'Te Ahu o te Reo Overview Report'. NZCER. 2017

solves the problem of children learning the same few words and phrases every year, because schools would know what prior knowledge a child has and could build on it with sequential learning, even when children change schools.

Recommendations for implementation

1. Legislative change:

As discussed, we recommend that te reo Māori be made core curriculum for all learners from year 1 to year 8, to be staged in gradually between 2020 and 2028. This gives much greater mana to the language and also makes it possible to have sequential learning for children, so they reach the goal basic conversational level by the end of their primary schooling. This would require a change to the Education Act.

In order for support for te Reo Māori to be prioritised and sustained over time, we believe it should ideally be provided for as part of a wider national languages policy. Such a policy would set out the value of te reo Māori as our indigenous and national language and would provide for support across all areas of government. In addition, a national languages policy would recognise the value of all the languages of Aotearoa, with te reo Māori as the essential platform that then enables all our diverse languages to thrive. Such a policy would raise the profile of language diversity and mitigate the English-only attitude that currently limits public support for te reo Māori. A possible first step towards developing a national languages policy, as recommended by Professor Joseph Lo Bianco during his visit to Aotearoa New Zealand in 2017, would be a consultation on language issues, including attitudes towards te reo Māori.

2. Teacher workforce development:

The main barrier to ensuring every student can learn te reo Māori throughout primary and intermediate school is the lack of teachers who are fluent in te reo Māori and who know how to teach a language. It will take time to train enough teachers to cover all schools and year levels, but this will never happen unless there is a commitment now to work towards it. We have set out a plan for this in our *Languages in Education Strategy* and outline the key aspects here.

As mentioned above we support NZCER's recommendation to start with the year 1 cohort in 2020 and making te reo Māori compulsory/core curriculum for each subsequent year level each year thereafter, as more suitably trained teachers become available. In the early years it will be necessary to use language assistants to provide learning for classes and schools that do not have access to teachers fluent in te reo Māori.

To ensure enough teachers are available, changes will need to be made in initial teacher education and in ongoing teacher professional development. This should include:

- Explicit instruction in te reo Māori and in how to teach a language, as a compulsory part of initial teacher education. Anecdotally it appears that many teacher training courses include little or no opportunity to learn te reo, let alone how to teach it. A stocktake of te reo courses within initial teacher education would provide a basis for further action.
- Attracting more fluent speakers of te reo Māori into teaching. This will be a challenge as fluent speakers are sought-after in many professions. Scholarships and incentives would

help, as would more initial teacher education courses that are delivered in te reo Māori and from a Māori worldview and which deliberately lead towards teaching in “mainstream” education as well as in kura kaupapa Māori.

- Using language assistants alongside classroom teachers as an interim measure, where it is not possible to provide teachers who are fluent in te reo Māori. The model established by Te Reo Tuatahi is one way to do this and has the benefit of upskilling classroom teachers while providing learning for the children.

3. Strengthening the use of te reo Māori as a medium of instruction:

There is clear evidence² that language maintenance (for first- or heritage-language speakers) and learning (for second-language learners) are both enhanced when the language is used as a medium for learning other content, alongside explicit language-learning.

For this reason, we would like to see more emphasis on increasing the proportion of Māori students attending kohanga reo, kura Māori and wharekura. At present well over 90% of Māori students attend English-medium schools, which means they miss out on the opportunity to become fluent in te reo Māori. It may³ also mean they miss out on learning in other areas, given the data that Māori learners who attend kura kaupapa Māori achieve better than those who attend English-medium schools.

We recommend further research on the reasons why so many Māori parents choose to send their children to mainstream pre-schools and schools. This would provide a basis for future action to address the issues identified. Two possible reasons for investigation are a perception of variable quality and difficulty in meeting the entry requirements where kura select only students from families who speak te reo Māori at home. The former requires actions to change perceptions and to fund and support all kura to deliver quality learning; the latter may require (as one example) increased provision so there is less competition for places in kura.

Even in “mainstream” education, there is potential to use te reo Māori as a medium for instruction, using the content and language integrated learning (CLIL) model. This would strengthen learning for all students as they would have increased opportunities to use the language as they learn it.

4. Providing more materials for teachers and whānau

In order to support more people to learn and use te reo Māori, and especially to support the goal of all primary and intermediate students learning te reo as core curriculum, there is a need for more learning resources and more reading materials at different language and reading levels. For example, the Pacific Early Literacy Project is getting good results with parent engagement, children’s engagement and confidence; it is over subscribed. If there were equivalent Maori/English resources that include

² Pe´rez-Can˜ado M.L., 2012. *CLIL research in Europe: past, present, and future*. International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism, Vol. 15, No. 3, May 2012, 315341

³ We note that there are other factors at play here, including the greater parental commitment required in order to enrol in kura.

translations and teacher support audio files, this would provide a valuable support for teachers who want to teach te reo Māori but who are not specialist language teachers.

5. Regular reporting, broken down by region

To guide action towards the goals of the Maihi Karauna, all players will need access to quality data on progress towards the goals and on intermediate outcomes that contribute towards these goals. Because many people who will contribute to the actions work at a regional level, this data will need to be reported regionally as well as nationally.