

Boosting Māori resources

“The importance of having more Māori teachers to match the ever-growing demand of Māori kaupapa within our society and more specifically, education is at an all-time high. It’s one thing to have a vision of a nation that is bilingual, but this cannot happen without kaiako in our schools being able to kōrero Māori. Our latest snapshot shows two issues relating to this.

Firstly, that Māori teachers are under-represented within the teaching workforce for both primary and secondary schools. Secondly, there are very few Kura Kaupapa Māori which means less immersion opportunities for whānau and tamariki.” - Noah Meggitt, Kaitūhono Māori – Te Hononga Akoranga COMET

In the 2022 Budget, the Government announced plans to add an additional 1,000 teachers – sourced from overseas (700) and domestically (300) to the teaching workforce. Their long-term goal is to improve the supply of domestic teachers and have announced a number of initiatives that would ease and accelerate the teacher training process (for more information on these initiatives see <https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/government-investing-1000-more-teachers-and-student-learning-affected-covid-19>).

The question remains, out of this focus to increase the supply of teachers - is enough being done to increase the number of Māori teaching staff, especially to match the demand of an increase in the number of students in Māori medium education?

The Budget 2022 supported the success of ākonga Māori with a specific boost for funding targeted towards the growth and development of te reo Māori. To help build the teacher workforce with a focus on te reo Māori, the Government has several pathways including:

- A \$10 million operating fund to establish Te Tahua o Te Reo Kairangi (the High Proficiency Fund) in the tertiary sector. This will be another lever that the Government can use to support the outcomes of Maihi Karauna, Tau Mai Te Reo, Ka Hikitia and the Tertiary Education Strategy. The Fund is intended to support the development of programmes that support high levels of te reo Māori language proficiency, as outlined in Te Taura Whiri I te reo Māori (Māori Language Commission) proficiency framework. This fund is intended to support providers to develop and deliver the programmes
- A \$5 million support package for approximately 50 iwi-Māori scholarships focused on supporting and growing the Māori education workforce. This initiative permanently establishes the existing pilot which was initially set up during Budget 2019. It partners with iwi-Māori to grow the Māori teaching workforce (including te reo Māori and Māori medium teachers) by supporting uri/descendants who show the right qualities to become teachers through the scholarships which provides access to mentoring and other support needed.

The below represents the present-day view of Māori teacher student ratios in a variety of environments. It highlights the urgent need for these Government initiatives to begin having an impact.

Do we have enough Māori teachers to sustain Māori as a subject, as well as in Māori medium / bilingual schools?

The number of students studying in reo Māori as well as studying te reo Māori as a subject has been increasing – yet the number of future teachers who identify as Māori do not match this growing demand.

Number of Students in Māori Medium by Māori Language Immersion Level in Aotearoa (2017-2022)							
Māori Language Immersion Level	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Change 2017-22
Level 1: 81-100% of teaching time	14,373	15,043	16,020	16,746	17,313	17,621	+3,248
Level 2: 51-80% of teaching time	5,065	5,468	5,469	5,645	5,848	6,745	+1,680

Number of Students in Māori Language in English Medium by Māori Language Immersion Level in Aotearoa (2017-2022)							
Māori Language Immersion Level	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Change 2017-22
Level 3: 31-50%	6,695	7,111	8,442	9,685	10,200	10,986	+4,291
Level 4(a): up to 30%	6,539	6,901	7,897	10,585	14,491	16,336	+9,797

Number of Students in Māori Language in English Medium by Māori Language Immersion Level in Aotearoa (2017-2022)							
Māori Language Immersion Level	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Change 2017-22
Level 4(b): As a subject -At least 3 hours	23,423	25,866	30,042	35,441	44,776	51,596	+28,164
Level 5: As a subject - Less than 3 Hours	128,944	130,695	133,429	132,337	139,418	141,409	+12,465

In 2021, Māori made up **21%** of those completing their initial teacher education (ITE). The number of students enrolling in initial teacher education gives us a sense of the number of people who may be available to join the teaching workforce for the first time in the future.

Total number of Maōri enrolled in Māori medium ITE qualifications in Aotearoa (2016 -2022)							
Bilingual/immersion	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Change 2017-2021
Bilingual	250	195	210	195	180	170	-80
Immersion	320	335	340	330	360	335	+15
Total	570	530	545	525	540	505	-65

Source of data: Education counts

(<https://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/statistics/initial-teacher-education-statistics>)

The above data shows us an urgent need to find a solution to the overall teaching issue within Aotearoa, specifically within te reo Māori and Māori medium schools. The Government has put an emphasis on increasing supply and supporting this career path for all teachers and specifically those that identify as Māori and want to teach te reo Māori.

References:

Education counts (<https://www.educationcounts.govt.nz>)

<https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/government-investing-1000-more-teachers-and-student-learning-affected-covid-19>)

Ministry of Education

(<https://www.education.govt.nz/our-work/publications/budget-2022/maori-education-investment/>)