



Compulsory teaching of te reo Maori in schools

The Maori language has seen a revival in recent years and in 1987 it became one of the three official languages in New Zealand. However, 'the decline of the Maori language has only just been arrested. There is a resurgence of te reo, but to remain viable as a language, Maori needs a critical mass of fluent speakers of all ages, and it needs the respect and support of the wider English-speaking and multi-ethnic New Zealand community' (*New Zealand History on-line*).

Some would argue that the best way to demonstrate this support would be for te reo Maori to become a compulsory subject at school. Research New Zealand decided to test this proposition by asking New Zealanders whether the teaching of te reo Maori should become compulsory in all New Zealand schools.

Some 38 percent of New Zealanders support the idea that the teaching of te reo Maori in schools should become compulsory. A higher proportion of females than males support the idea (42 percent as against 35 percent. Only a small proportion (four percent) of respondents could not make up their minds and said 'don't know'

The support for compulsory teaching of te reo Maori in schools is highest among those in the 15-34 year age group at 50 percent, and lowest among those in the age group 55 years and over, at 24 percent. 'This reflects the very considerable change that has taken place in the last 30 years', Research New Zealand Director Emanuel Kalafatelis said.

Not surprisingly the support for compulsory teaching of te reo Maori in schools was highest among Maori and Pacific People at 71 percent, compared with 32 percent for New Zealand Europeans.

There was no difference of note by area, which shows that the support for the compulsory teaching of te reo Maori in schools is national rather than regional.

The Research New Zealand poll of 500 people aged 15 and over was conducted by telephone between 4 and 12 August. The maximum margin of error is +/- 4.9 % (at the 95% confidence level). The data has been weighted to ensure it is an accurate representation of New Zealand's general population. The poll was not taken on behalf of any organization, but as part of Research New Zealand's monthly survey of attitudes and opinions.



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Table 1:

Q9c. Now thinking about education, do you agree or disagree that teaching te reo Māori should become compulsory in all New Zealand schools?

Base =	Total 500 %	Male 250 %	Female 250 %
Agree	38	35	42
Disagree	57	62	53
Don't know	4	3	6
Total	100	100	100

Total may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Table 2:

Q9c. Now thinking about education, do you agree or disagree that teaching te reo Māori should become compulsory in all New Zealand schools?

Base =	Total 500 %	15-34 years 114 %	35 to 54 years 179 %	55 years and over 207 %
Agree	38	50	38	24
Disagree	57	46	59	69
Don't know	4	4	3	7
Total	100	100	100	100

Total may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Table 3:

Q9c. Now thinking about education, do you agree or disagree that teaching te reo Māori should become compulsory in all New Zealand schools?

Base =	Total 500 %	NZ European/ Pakeha		
		386 %	Maori/Pacific 58 %	Other 56 %
Agree	38	32	71	40
Disagree	57	63	27	56
Don't know	4	5	2	4
Total	100	100	100	100

Total may not sum to 100% due to rounding.



Table 4:

Q9c. Now thinking about education, do you agree or disagree that teaching te reo Māori should become compulsory in all New Zealand schools?

	Total	Upper North Island	Lower/Central North Island	South Island
Base =	500	221	113	166
	%	%	%	%
Agree	38	37	40	39
Disagree	57	59	55	56
Don't know	4	4	5	5
Total	100	100	100	100

Total may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

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