



Connecting Social Policy & Research Conference, April 2003
Survey of Attitudes towards, and Beliefs and Values
about, the Māori Language
27 May 2003

Connecting Social Policy & Research Conference, April 2003
Survey of Attitudes towards, and Beliefs and Values
about, the Māori Language
April 2003

Prepared for: Connecting Social Policy & Research Conference,
April 2003

Prepared by: Emanuel Kalafatelis, Director & Mati Fryer, Māori &
Pacific Research Unit, BRC Marketing & Social
Research
Craig Walkman, Māori Language Monitoring Unit,
Te Puni Kōkiri

For further information
please contact: Emanuel Kalafatelis
BRC Marketing & Social Research
Phone 04 499 3088

17 April 2003

Contents

Abstract	4
Relevant background information to the Survey	5
Methodology	6
The Pilot Study	7
Purpose	7
Development of hypotheses	8
The pre-research	10
The design of the survey methodology & questionnaire	16
Final recommendations	19
The National Survey	20
The results for Māori	20
Overall findings for non-Māori	23

Abstract

The *National Survey of Attitudes towards, and Beliefs and Values about, the Māori Language* was conducted between 2000-2001 by BRC Marketing & Social Research for Te Puni Kōkiri. The survey represents the first significant measure of New Zealanders' attitudes to the revitalisation of the indigenous language of Aotearoa.

Completed in accordance with the monitoring and evaluation requirements of the Government's Māori Language Strategy, the *National Survey*:

- Was based on an **intensive pre-survey stage** (the *Pilot Study*) which took approximately 6 months to complete. Significant components of this Pilot Study included, a review of relevant literature on the measurement of attitudes to indigenous languages, the development of a theoretical basis or framework, the completion of a pre-research stage to identify the range of attitudes, beliefs and values and the pre-testing and piloting of some 17 iterations of the survey questionnaire involving interviews with n=220 respondents.
- The **research team** for the *National Survey* included a wide range of specialist qualitative and quantitative researchers. In accordance with Te Puni Kōkiri's published guidelines relating to the design and completion of research involving Māori, **Māori researchers** were involved fully in all stages of the research process.
- Because of different strategic imperatives for Māori and non-Māori as they relate to the Māori Language Strategy, the results of the *National Survey* have been analysed and reported separately. In this regard, Māori and non-Māori have been **segmented** into discreet group, based on their attitudes, beliefs and values about the Māori language.
- Last, but by no means least, the *National Survey* was a **collaborative effort** in the true sense of the word between BRC and Te Puni Kōkiri.

Relevant background information to the Survey

In the early 1970s, Māori began to express concern about the rapid decline in the knowledge and use of the Māori language. Driven by this concern that Māori had become an endangered language in risk of 'dying' within one or two generations, Māori groups and communities developed a range of community initiatives to revitalise the language.

Government has responded to Māori revitalisation efforts in a number of ways since then, and has outlined its objectives for the language in its **Māori Language Strategy**.

This Strategy has different objectives for Māori and non-Māori:

- For Māori, the objective is to encourage as many Māori as possible to learn and speak te reo.
- For non-Māori, the objective is to be supportive of these efforts.

A Māori language monitoring and evaluation unit has been established within Te Puni Kōkiri to measure and monitor the health of the Māori language over time. This unit was responsible for commissioning the *National Survey of Attitudes towards, and Beliefs and Values about, the Māori Language* that is the subject of this submission.

The primary objectives of the survey were to:

- Establish a **benchmark** for future monitoring purposes, of the attitudes, values and beliefs of New Zealanders towards the Māori language.
- Identify target areas for **policy initiatives**.
- Inform the **development and prioritisation of policies and programmes** aimed at promoting and fostering support for Māori language revitalisation.

Methodology

The *National Survey of Attitudes towards, and Beliefs and Values about, the Māori Language* was completed in **two** distinct, but inter-related stages:

1. A Pilot Study, involving some 20 distinct, but inter-related tasks, completed in approximately 6 months in August 2000.
2. The National Survey itself was subsequently undertaken between 13 November and 8 December 2000, by telephone, with nationally representative samples of Māori (n=615) and non-Māori (n=725).

The Pilot Study

Purpose

The *Pilot Study* **informed the design and scope** of the *National Survey*. More specifically, the purpose of the *Pilot Study* was to ensure the *National Survey* produced results which would be regarded by all major stakeholder groups as an **accurate indicator** of the attitudes towards, and beliefs and values about, the Māori language.

The *Pilot Study* achieved this goal by:

- Refining of the information requirements identified by Te Puni Kōkiri for the National Survey.
- Developing survey questions reflecting these information requirements (meaning and vocabulary were the major issues here).
- Designing and piloting the questionnaire (question flow/ordering and questionnaire length were the major issues here).
- Informing decision-making relating to the sampling frame and sample size.
- Informing decision-making relating to the sample selection method.
- Informing decision-making relating to the recruitment and training of interviewers.
- Informing the development of briefing documentation for interviewers.
- Informing decision-making relating to the best way to monitor progress, and particularly interview quality while the interviewing was underway.
- Informing decision-making relating to the best way to analyse the results following the completion of the interviewing.

Development of hypotheses

The *Pilot Study* commenced with a briefing by Te Puni Kōkiri about the Māori Language Strategy and the importance of the *National Survey* in that context, and a review of a literature review that had been conducted by Te Puni Kōkiri on measuring attitudes towards indigenous languages.

Following this, the research team at BRC developed a number of hypotheses around the issue of measuring New Zealanders' attitudes to, and beliefs and values about the Māori language.

These hypotheses were as follows:

- That attitudes to, and beliefs and values about the Māori language are linked.
- That New Zealanders' attitudes to, and beliefs and values about, the Māori language should not be considered in isolation, but in a wider cultural and socio-political context.
- That there is a wide range of attitudes to, and beliefs and values about, the Māori language within the New Zealand population.
- That attitudes to Māori language are linked to attitudes toward the people who use the Māori language (here it is important to recognise the variety of settings in which people use the Māori language).
- That the issue of the Māori language and the possibility of fostering or increasing its usage, might be a controversial, highly provocative, concept for some New Zealanders.
- That New Zealanders will have diverse opinions as to what is acceptable to them, in terms of fostering or increasing the usage of the Māori language in New Zealand.
- That New Zealanders will tend to use certain phrases and words to express their attitudes to, and beliefs and values about, the Māori language.
- That many people will not speak openly (or truthfully) about their real attitudes to, and beliefs and values about, the Māori language, especially if they feel that they can be judged by others for their comments.

Given these hypotheses, the research team made several decisions impacting on the development of the questionnaire and survey methodology for the *National Survey*. They determined:

- That because individuals' perceptions about the Māori language will be diverse, quite personal to the individual, and probably 'hidden' beneath a 'politically correct' facade, the method used would need to be both **non-judgemental as well as sensitive enough to tease out real information.**
- That there would have to be **two distinct phases** as far as the *Pilot Study* was concerned; the first an information collecting phase to develop a detailed understanding of this complex issue (i.e. pre-research), the second a design phase to develop a survey methodology and questionnaire capable of accurately collecting the information required.

The pre-research

The specific objectives of the pre-research were as follows:

- To identify the **range** of attitudes to, and beliefs and values about the Māori language. This included both the breadth (what the extremes were), as well as the depth (the complexities within the range).
- To identify and understand the **context** in which attitudes to, and beliefs and values about the Māori language are expressed.
- To understand **how** attitudes to, and beliefs and values about the Māori language are expressed (i.e. what vocabulary and what actions/behaviour people use to express themselves on this issue?).
- To understand people's **'tolerance' to change in the future** in terms of the usage of the Māori language (i.e. how they would feel if it were lost totally, or if its use was fostered and increased?).

All interviewing for the pre-research was carried out as **one-on-one, face-to-face** interviews. This method was used for several reasons:

- For potentially sensitive subjects, one-on-one interviews are generally recognised as being more appropriate than group interviews (such as focus groups or group discussions).
- Attitudes that might not be shared easily because of the sensitivity of the subject they relate to, require a face-to-face approach and the use of particular interviewing techniques. Techniques selected in this case were projective techniques¹ rather than simple elicitation interviewing (i.e. direct questions and answers).
- Using projective techniques, in a one-on-one setting, meant that we were able to avoid, or mostly avoid, socially-acceptable answers, and were able to quickly get into sensitive issues surrounding the subject in question.

¹ A projective technique used in this research. Photos of people were used as a vehicle for participants to project their thoughts onto. The photos were used so that respondents could more easily communicate on a deeper level to reveal their "true" feelings/thoughts about the subject of Māori culture/language. Respondents were asked to choose, for example, a picture of a person who would think, act, or feel in a certain way.

Respondents were selected on the basis that they were:

- Either Māori or non-Māori.
- They sat at the extremes of a continuum reflecting their involvement with the Māori language/the Māori culture. That is, they were either;
 - “**Low involvement**” individuals - people who claimed to have **no contact** with the Māori culture in daily life, did not use the Māori language in any way, and who indicated that the Māori culture and the Māori language had little relevance to their lives.
 - “**High involvement**” individuals - people who indicated that they had involvement with Māori people and Māori culture (through life experience, family/whānau and friends, or education or occupation), used Māori organisations in some way, and who might be a speaker of te reo (although not necessarily a fluent speaker).

Key findings of the pre-research

The pre-research provided learnings well beyond the stated objectives. The most significant of these in terms of their potential impact on the *National Survey* included:

- Researchers noted strong, emotional reactions to the subject in general (i.e. the Māori language/culture) and the topics (e.g. the revitalisation of the Māori language) covered during the interviews. Importantly, some respondents, both Māori and non-Māori, expressed the desire to be more involved even when they currently had very **limited** knowledge or involvement with the Māori culture and language.

In fact, perhaps contrary to popular belief, some **non-Māori** respondents portrayed a sense of a very strong link to the Māori culture; describing a sense of belonging to “things Māori” and that this was an integral part of their own identity as New Zealanders.

- This highly varied range of responses led to the formulation of the **four distinct qualitative segments**, based on people’s attitudes, beliefs and values. This segmentation was ultimately carried through to the National Survey to become the central analysis tool.
- A final, yet extremely important observation was made about the reaction some respondents (particularly “low involvement” Māori and non-Māori) had to a Māori researcher being in the room during the interview, or doing the interviewing. This was to impact on both the method and the characteristics/qualities of the interviewers for the National Survey.

Those less involved in the Māori culture (i.e. those who had limited exposure to cultural events, who did not speak any (or much) te reo, whose children did not go to kohanga reo or kura kaupapa, etc.) felt **uneasy** discussing the topics covered in the interview when the person interviewing them was Māori, or even when a note-taker, who had a very limited part in the interaction, was Māori.

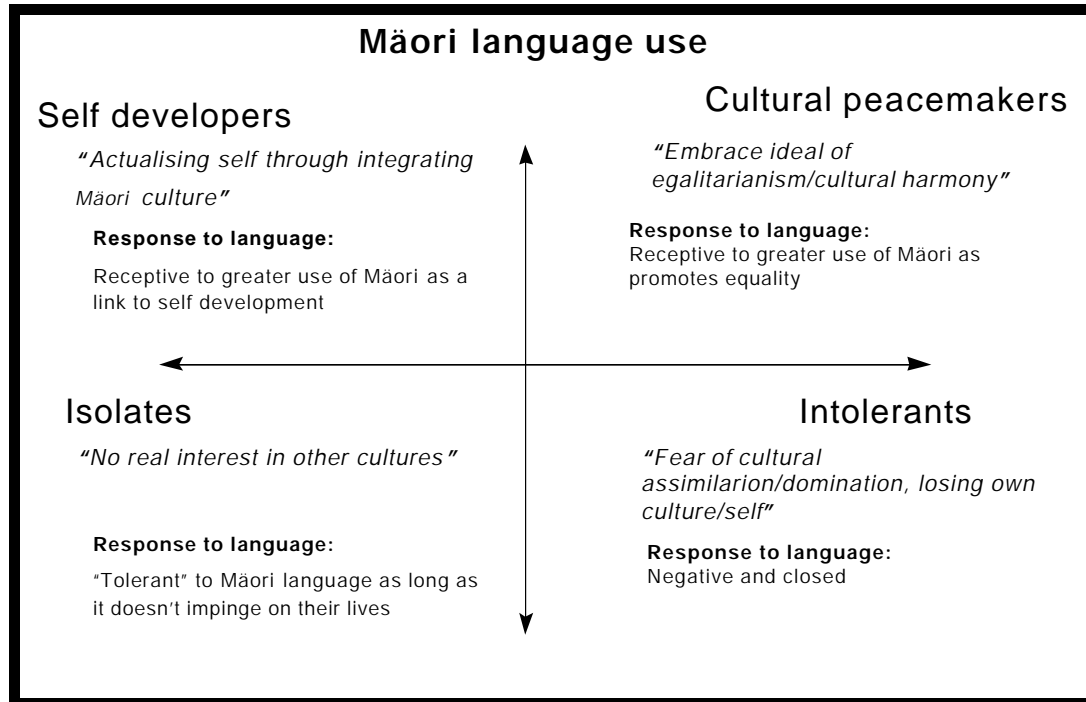
Some respondents made assumptions about the researchers and clearly felt that their own opinions would be at odds with the interviewers’ opinions. This led to socially-acceptable answering, where the respondent at times said what they thought the researchers ‘wanted to hear’. This was evident when they later made contradictory comments; such as during the photo sort² when they projected their true opinions onto the photos.

² A projective technique used during the interview.

The qualitative segments

The four qualitative segments identified by the pre-research can be summarised in the following diagram.

Figure 1: The qualitative segments



Each segment may be briefly described in the following terms:

- **“Self-developers”** - This people in this segment were described as “Self developers” because they value self growth/self actualisation through integration with the Māori culture.

“It’s a link to everything. The language is a necessity - you can’t really have a culture without a language...” (Female, Māori).

“With no Māori language we would lose our identity, part of me would be missing”. (Male, Non-Māori).

- **“Cultural peace makers”** – The people in this segment were described as “Cultural peace makers” because they believe that cultural harmony is the ideal. They embrace the ideal of egalitarianism in that it will lead to cultural harmony in New Zealand.

“It would be nice to have equal opportunities for both races. We are all as equal as each other”. (Female, Non-Māori).

“I think everyone should have the same opportunities. Pakeha should value Māori input, and Māori should value Pakeha, and work together rather than against”. (Female, Non-Māori).”

- **“Isolates”** – The people in this segment were described “Isolates” because they have no real interest in cultures other than the dominant culture in society (i.e. the European-New Zealand culture).

“Lack of understanding, does not interest him. He knows Māori culture is out there but he does not take any notice”. (Male, Non-Māori).

“She doesn’t find any value in it - to her it doesn’t affect her life, and it doesn’t make any difference”. (Female, Non-Māori).

“I think she’d know her stuff, about things Māori. Feels that it’s a hindrance to her, having to know about it. If she has Māori, it would be for professional reasons only”. (Female, Māori).”

- **“Intolerants”** – The people in this segment were described as “Intolerants” because they fear cultural assimilation and domination of their own culture. They see a revitalisation of the Māori culture as a threat to their own culture, and therefore their self identity.

“I am happy about learning another language, but don’t take away mine”. (Female, Non-Māori).

“Māori should have the language first. It shouldn’t be appropriated by educated white liberals”. (Female, Māori).

(If Māori was spoken as much as English) “I wouldn’t like that at all. I would just feel that Māori felt more important than us Europeans, and it would be awful. You would lose yourself and your heritage”. (Female, Non- Māori).

The design of the survey methodology & questionnaire

With the benefit of the results of the pre-research, BRC and Te Puni Kōkiri completed a review of the information requirements specified in the RFP. Some refinement of these requirements was undertaken and a survey questionnaire was subsequently developed covering the following areas:

- **Beliefs**

- Beliefs about **acquisition** of the Māori language.
- Beliefs about the **use** of the Māori language:
- Beliefs about the **proficiency of use** of the Māori language.
- Beliefs about the **visibility** of the Māori language.

- **Attitudes**

For example;

- Opinion as to whether the current situation (i.e. the number of people learning Māori, and the level of visibility and use of Māori language) is a good thing or not.
- Opinion of who or which organisations **should** be involved in revitalising the Māori language, if any.

- **Values**

Importantly, a set of 10 'value' statements was developed and included in the questionnaire; the intention being to use this set of statements to place each respondent in an appropriate segment. By this stage in the research process, it was obvious to both BRC and Te Puni Kōkiri that the relative size of the resulting segments (i.e. in population terms) would have a significant bearing on the development of policy and programmes.

- **Behavioural/Classification/Demographic**

Behavioural questions were included in order to have an actual record of respondents' involvement with the Māori language/culture. For example;

- Read/browse Māori magazines (e.g. To Mai, Mana).
- Listen to Iwi radio (Māori radio).
- Watch or listen to Māori news.
- Attend ceremonies or events with Māori welcomes and speeches.
- Visit Māori art, culture or historical exhibits.

Pre-testing & piloting

A key finding of the pre-research was that respondents could be extremely sensitive to the ethnicity of the researcher interviewing them. That is, the presence of an easily identifiable Māori interviewer could result in bias.

Given this, a number of decisions were made about testing a range of methodological options during the *Pilot Study*; namely:

1. We would test the effect of completing the interviewing by telephone and on a face-to-face basis.
2. Given that a telephone interviewing approach might best control the interviewer bias risk, we would take particular steps to test how this approach could be optimised.

The pre-testing commenced with a full briefing of all interviewers. In accordance with the requirements and standards set by the Interviewer Qualification Standard. A total of n=220 interviews were completed with a sample stratified by ethnicity in the first instance, with age, gender and urbanicity as the secondary sampling variables.

Importantly, the interviewing was completed in stages, as different methodological approaches and some **17 iterations** of the questionnaire were pre-tested and piloted.

Final recommendations

As a result of this pre-testing and piloting, and the analysis that was completed of the results of the interviewing, 35 specific and detailed recommendations were made to Te Puni Kōkiri in the final report on the Pilot Study. These included recommendations in the following areas:

- The sampling frame for the National Survey (the structure of the sample for the survey).
- The survey method.
- Interviewer selection.
- The interviewing process.
- The questionnaire.
- Maximising response rates.
- The analysis of the survey results.

While all recommendations were obviously important, the recommendation that the National Survey be conducted by **telephone** was possibly the most important. This was not only justified on the basis of the results of the Pilot Study, but also on the basis of expert advice from the Director of Te Pūmanawa Hauora, School of Māori Studies, Massey University (Dr Chris Cunningham):

- The experience of the *Pilot Study* was of a diversity of Māori expectations in terms of face-to-face and telephone interviewing, as well as between Māori and non- Māori interviewers.
- The social and cultural obligations encountered when visiting a Māori person at their home sometimes severely impacts on finances and time frames, to the extent that these impacts outweigh the value of the information collected.
- The possibility of including a randomised, geographically spread sample of research participants, face-to-face, incurs extensive costs.

The National Survey

The results for Māori

Although the same questionnaire was used for both Māori and non-Māori, the results of the *National Survey* were analysed and reported separately, given the differences in the objectives of the Māori Language Strategy.

In this section, we present the overall results for Māori, given that the primary objective of the Government's Māori Language Strategy for Māori is for Māori to learn and speak te reo:

- Almost one third of Māori (31%) claimed they could already speak conversational Māori (about one third (34%) of these claimed they were currently learning).
- Almost two-thirds (63%) agreed that “all Māori should make an effort to learn to speak Māori themselves”, and over half (56%) claimed that “learning Māori (was) a very high priority” for them.
- Relatedly, over two thirds (67%) believed there has been a medium-large increase in the last five years in the number of people learning to speak Māori, and 88% believed more Māori being spoken was a “good thing”.

Māori can be segmented into three groups

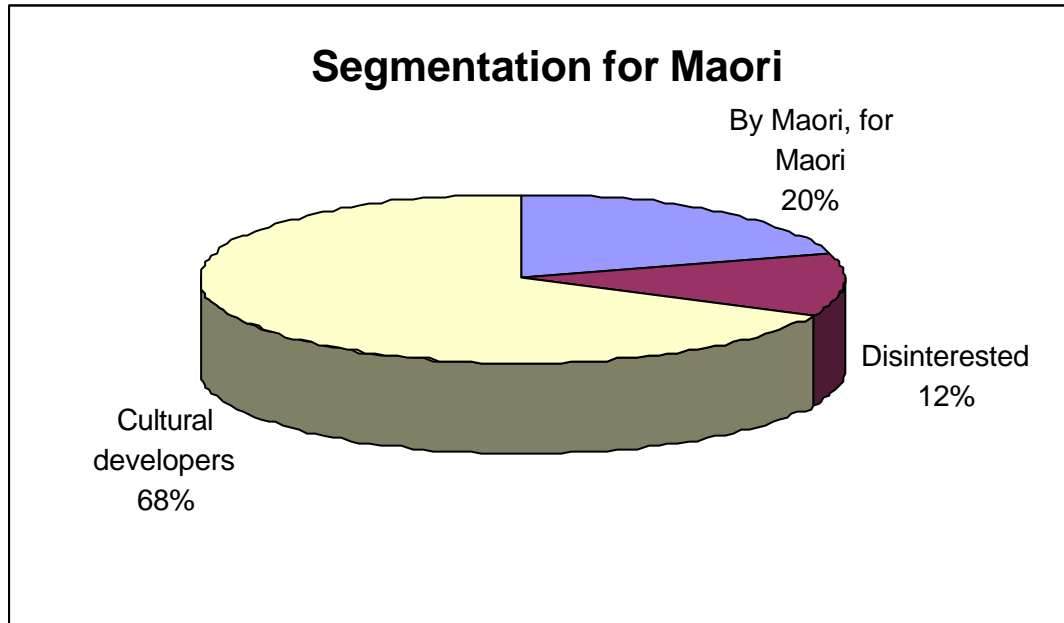
Against the background of these overall results, it is important to note that Māori may be segmented into **three discreet groups** based on the importance they place on the Māori language, and what determines this 'value' for them. It will be noted that the final approach to segmentation is based on a separate segmentation for Māori and non-Māori.

For ease of reference, each of the Māori groups was given a descriptive name:

- **'Cultural developers'** – These are Māori who, compared to other Māori, are willing to **share** and progress their knowledge of the Māori language and culture with all ethnicities. They value the concept of equality for everyone, no matter what ethnic group they belong to.
- **'By Māori, for Māori'** – These are Māori embrace all things Māori, but believe that Māori culture/language is **exclusive** to Māori.
- **'Disinterested'** – These are Māori who, in comparison to the other two groups, place relatively little importance on the Māori language.

Significantly, these three groups differ in terms of size, with the largest group ('Cultural developers') accounting for over two-thirds of Māori (68%). At the other extreme, the 'Disinterested' group is by far the smallest (12%).

Figure 2: Segmentation for Maori



Overall findings for non-Māori

Given that the primary objective of the Government's Māori Language Strategy for non-Māori is for non-Māori to be **supportive** of Māori learning and speaking te reo, the overall results for non-Māori may be summarised as follows:

- The majority (90%) claimed that they “could personally learn a lot from all races in New Zealand”.
- In fact, 59% claimed that “no matter if you are Māori or Pakeha, Māori culture is a part of everyone's heritage”. Supporting this, 57% claimed that “the more New Zealanders that understand the Māori culture, the less racial tension we would have”.
- One quarter (25%) claimed they “really wanted to be involved in things to do with the Māori culture”.
- In terms of the revitalisation of the Māori language, just over three quarters (76%) believed there had been an increase in the number of people learning to speak Māori, in the last five years. Just under two thirds (63%) believed that more Māori being spoken was a “good thing”.

Non-Māori can be segmented into three groups

As for Māori, the segmentation solution for non-Māori reflects the qualitative segmentation identified by the qualitative “pre-research” of the *Pilot Study*. Non-Māori can be segmented into three discreet groups, showing that they too differ in terms of the importance they place on the Māori culture and language. In many respects, the three groups reflect the three Māori groups.

For reporting purposes, each of these groups was given a label or name as follows:

- **‘Passive supporters’** – These are non-Māori who are receptive to greater use of the Māori language as they see this as a link to their own self-development and who also believe that knowledge of the Māori culture and language will lead to a greater understanding between cultures. These non-Māori are called ‘Passive supporters’ primarily because they are not greatly engaged in a behavioural sense with the Māori culture or language, despite their ‘values’ and attitudes.
- **‘Disinterested’** – These are non-Māori who have no real interest in other cultures. That is, they have no interest in cultures that are not personally relevant to them. As such, they are tolerant of the Māori culture and language, as long as it doesn’t impinge on their lives.
- **‘Extremists’** – These are non-Māori who, fundamentally, fear losing their own culture or self and relatedly, also fear the prospect of cultural domination/assimilation.

As for Māori, these three groups differ in terms of size, with the largest group (‘Passive supporters’) accounting for almost one half of non-Māori (49%). At the other extreme, the ‘Extremists’ group is by far the smallest (12%) rather than the ‘Disinterested’ group (39%) as was the case with Māori.

Figure 3: Segmentation for non-Maori

