

One in Six? The Rapid Growth of the Māori Population in Australia

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Abstract

From the earliest times of colonial settlement in Australia, Māori have travelled there to seek out opportunities and experience the world beyond New Zealand. Large-scale migration from New Zealand in the second half of the twentieth century led to around 4,000 Māori living in Australia by 1966 and 27,000 by 1986. Recent census practice has improved the quality of data, but still undercounts the number of Māori in Australia by a considerable margin. Taking into account a range of factors, it is likely there were around 105,000 Māori in Australia in 2001 and 126,000 in 2006, up from the official counts of 72,956 and 92,912 respectively. With around 15,000 Māori in all other countries besides New Zealand and Australia, as many as one in six Māori now live in Australia.¹

There are today a considerable number of Māori in Australia. This fact alone commands a significant amount of interest in New Zealand. It has, at times, lead to all manner of conjecture as to their actual number, their proportion of the entire Māori population, and how that proportion may change in the future. While some of this speculation has arisen during periods in which there was a genuine lack of census information, the recent Australian census results of 2001 and 2006 have not provided definitive answers. These returns in fact require close scrutiny, much as did the earlier Australian census figures from 1986 and before. The key objective of this paper, therefore, is to engage with the official statistics to decipher something of the rise in the Māori population in Australia and make some informed comments as to its current size. The paper also considers the number of Māori likely to be in all other countries

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and concludes by estimating the proportion of all Māori who now live in Australia.

Calculating the number of Māori overseas is not just an academic pursuit, for there are important policy implications that arise from the existence of a Māori diaspora (Hamer 2009). For example, Māori migration from New Zealand will often stem from pressures in New Zealand, be they social or economic.² If the rate of out-migration is greater than has been recognised, so probably too were the pressures. Given the current global economic conditions, what work Māori in Australia have (alongside whom they are partnered with) will also have implications for the likelihood of their return to New Zealand, with all the impact on social services that might bring. Also, Māori who leave New Zealand often take with them the accumulated education capital of the Māori language revival movement over the last 20 years. How and whether they put that to use abroad may have implications for the ongoing health of te reo.³

In setting out the difficulties in calculating the number of Māori in Australia it is important to note that, of course, such challenges will always exist when ethnicity data are being relied upon. They certainly exist in New Zealand, where inter-ethnic mobility, multiple ethnicity responses, the different responses to ethnicity- and descent-based questions, and the varying methodologies of collecting ethnicity data all combine to create a changing and at times confusing picture (Callister 2004; Kukutai 2004). As Ian Pool (1991:11-25) has commented, the differing legal, statistical and popular usages of “Māori” inevitably lead to the question “When is a Māori a ‘Māori’”? In Australia the census question is one of ancestry. The purpose of this paper is not to rank this method against other approaches to gathering ethnicity data, but rather simply to discuss the nuances that arise from the Australian approach.

Pre-1986 Population

The first Māori to set foot on Australian soil are likely to have been two men kidnapped by British sailors from the Bay of Islands in 1792 on the instruction of Lieutenant Philip Gidley King, who believed they would be able to teach his Norfolk Island convicts to dress flax (Hughes 1988:101).⁴ Their involuntary encounter with the Australian colonies was followed in the coming years by many willing visits by Māori eager to acquire new

technology, be exposed to European ideas, and forge relationships with Australian colonists. Historian James Belich (1996:145) guesses that, by 1840, as many as 1,000 Māori had travelled overseas, most of whom will have visited Sydney. By this time Māori had become part of the Sydney landscape, with a narrow lane in The Rocks named after its resident Māori whalers. In short, the Māori connection with Australia is practically as old as the colony of New South Wales itself. The ongoing Māori name for Sydney, Poihākēna, dates from when the settlement was still commonly known as Port Jackson.

It is difficult to say whether Māori formed distinct or particularly lasting communities in pre-Federation Australia, and their numbers will have been few.⁵ The New South Wales census of 1856 included the comment that “As the natives of New Zealand did not exceed 40-50 souls, they were thrown under the general heading of Australasia and New Zealand” (Merchant 1980). There were groups of Māori living in fishing camps along the shore of the Mornington Peninsula near Melbourne in the second half of the nineteenth century (Massola 1969:155-156), but they do not seem to have remained beyond 1900, perhaps (like the whalers of The Rocks) leaving “Māori Street” in Rye as their legacy. The Yearbook of the Commonwealth of Australia recorded the number of Māori entering Australia during the first three decades of the twentieth century, including a peak of 108 in 1909 (Merchant 1980), which seems clearly to relate to the troupe of Māori performers taken to Sydney that year by the famous guide Maggie Papakura (Diamond 2007:94). These were visitors, however, rather than settlers. Census figures put the number of Māori in Australia at 134 in 1911 and 83 in 1921 (Jupp 2001:592).

In a report published by the Planning Council in 1990 on the Māori population in Australia, demographer Jeremy Lowe began by setting out the limited historical data he had located. The 1966 Australian census gave the number of those of Māori race in Australia as 197 in 1933, 247 in 1947, 257 in 1954, 449 in 1961, and 862 in 1966. Since these included only those “full blood or half-caste”, Lowe estimated that – on the basis of the 1966 New Zealand census result that showed the number of those not counted as Māori who nevertheless reported Māori ancestry – the figure of 862 Māori in Australia in 1966 was at least 25 percent too few (1990:4). Moreover, Lowe noted that the 1986 census result, which he analysed in depth, revealed that no fewer than 2,154 people of Māori ancestry living in

Australia had been born there before 1966, thus suggesting that the understatement of the Māori population in earlier censuses had been “substantial”. He attributed this to many Māori having recorded themselves as more than half European (1990:4-5, 23).⁶

Lowe concluded that there had in fact been around 4,000 Māori in Australia in 1966 (1990:24). There may be some corroboration of this in contemporary observations – in 1963, for example, the Department of Māori Affairs magazine *Te Ao Hou* commented on the “Māori Club” in Sydney, which it said catered for “the considerable Māori population there” (1963:9). Of those Māori born in Australia before 1966, 443 had been born before 1931, including 189 before even 1921 (Lowe 1990:53), thus showing again the inadequacies of the earlier race-based census returns. These figures also indicate that the Māori population in Australia in the early part of the twentieth century was much more substantial than has commonly been thought. They also suggest unbroken Māori settlement in Australia since the nineteenth century, rather than simply an initial period of (early nineteenth-century) encounter followed well over 100 years later by a new wave of migration.

Despite the problems with the 1966 and earlier censuses, the three Australian censuses from 1971 to 1981 can yield no data on Māori in Australia whatsoever. In 1971 and 1976 those not “European”, Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander were asked to record their race, but Lowe was told by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) that no data on Māori was obtainable. The 1981 census simply asked respondents whether they were Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander (Lowe 1990:5). The number of New Zealand-born in Australia, however, essentially doubled between 1976 and 1981 (Carmichael 1993:37), and net Māori migration (based on arrival and departure card information) resulted in significant losses to New Zealand in the years ended March 1980 and March 1981 (Lowe 1990:26).⁷ In the absence of any hard information, ideas of the size of the Māori population in Australia varied considerably. Philippa Merchant, who compiled information on Māori in Australia in 1980, wrote that estimates of their population that year ranged “from 2,000 to over 10,000”.

The 1986 Census

After two decades of intensive immigration by “new Australians”, in 1986 the ABS introduced an ancestry question to the Australian census. According to the ABS (2002), the question was designed to “measure the ethnic composition of the population as a whole”. Lowe pointed out that ancestry was thus seen “as an alternative way of enquiring about ethnicity, rather than a different concept in substance” (1990:6). Indeed, the ABS had also contemplated, as an alternative to ancestry, capturing data on ethnicity using the “self-perceived identification approach” (Kunz & Costello 2003:5). The eventual census question asked “What is each person’s ancestry?” and the examples provided were “Greek, English, Indian, Armenian, Aboriginal, Chinese etc”. The accompanying guide explained that:

Ancestry means the ethnic or national group from which you are descended. It is quite acceptable to base your answer on your grandparents’ ancestry. Persons of mixed ancestry who do not identify with a single group should answer with their multiple ancestry. Persons who consider their ancestry to be Australian may answer “Australian” (Lowe 1990:6).

The official result was that 26,035 people reported being of Māori ancestry, but for a variety of reasons this figure is unreliable. The first is that, although respondents were encouraged to consider their ancestry back as far as their grandparents, and three lines were provided for their answers to be entered, only a maximum of two ancestries were counted for any one person. As Lowe observed, this predetermined approach would have been evident to “sharp-eyed computer-literate people” by the inclusion of only two coding boxes underneath the question (1993:61). It is unknown how many responses of “Māori” were thereby lost. Bearing in mind the propensity of Māori in Australia to state multiple ancestries, as well as the improbability of many Māori entering “Māori” last out of three ancestries, Lowe estimated a total of 500 (1990:7, 33).

More seriously, the Māori tally included 1,048 people who were either born in the Cook Islands or both of whose parents were born in the Cook Islands, and who were thus quite unlikely to be of New Zealand Māori ancestry. Lowe was advised by the ABS that New Zealand Māori and Cook Island Māori had been included in the same code. Taking into account the

need to exclude from the 26,035 total these 1,048 Cook Island Māori as well as the 538 Māori usually resident overseas, but to add in numbers for census undercounting, Australian-resident Māori temporarily overseas, and those with lost Māori ancestries, Lowe concluded that “the Australian-resident (New Zealand) Māori population at the end of June 1986 was around 26,000 persons – much the same as the original census figure but a different 26,000 persons” (1990:8). He later revised this estimate up to 27,000 after the Australian post-census enumeration survey revealed above-average undercounting of the New Zealand-born population (1992:97).

The ancestry question was dropped from the 1991 Australian census because of both “a high level of subjectivity and confusion about what the question meant” and “[v]ery little use” being made of the data. A refined version of the question was tested in the lead-up to the 1996 census, but it too gave unsatisfactory results and was not used (Kunz & Costello 2003:1-2). With the dropping in 1986 of the ethnic origin question on New Zealand arrival and departure cards, the size of the Māori population in Australia suddenly became very difficult to establish. In the absence of official data there were many exaggerated accounts. Paul Bergin, who in 1998 completed a doctorate in anthropology on Māori in Australia, wrote in 2001 that, if he added the highest estimates he had been given for each state and territory by Māori community leaders in 1995 and 1996, he arrived at a total of 135,000 Māori in Australia. The degree of overstatement at work is apparent from the fact that this would have represented a 500 percent increase on Lowe’s calculation of 27,000 in 1986 (2001:42).

The lack of data also led to some understatements, of course. A 2001 account in a tome dedicated to setting out the detail of Australia’s population diversity stated that “With over 300 000 New Zealanders living in Australia by 2000 it is probable that the Māori population was about 30 000” (Jupp 2001:592). This simple method of dividing the New Zealand-born by ten of course failed to contemplate the existence of Australian-born Māori, but it also underestimated the Māori population in Australia by over 200 percent, as we shall see.

The 2001 Census

After a reconsideration of how the question should be asked, as well as a successful testing programme, the ABS reintroduced the census ancestry

question in 2001. The format of the question had changed significantly from 1986. The form asked “What is this person’s ancestry?” and gave as examples “Vietnamese, Hmong, Dutch, Kurdish, Australian South Sea Islander, Maori, Lebanese”. As can be seen, several of these were groups that exist across national borders or as minority groups within nations, which doubtless reflected a desire to show that the question aimed to capture ethnic origin or ancestry rather than nationality. Respondents may have been forgiven for assuming the latter since the seven most common ancestries from 1986 – English, Irish, Italian, German, Greek, Chinese and Australian – were listed to the right of the question with tick boxes alongside them. Under them were three lines (with space for 27 characters) for entering any “other” ancestries. Respondents were told on the form to “Provide more than one ancestry if necessary”. In the accompanying guide they were advised to “consider and mark the ancestries with which you most closely identify” and to “Count your ancestry back as far as three generations. For example, consider your parents, grandparents and great grandparents” (Kunz & Costello 2003:6-7, 54).

The official result was that the Māori population rose to 72,956, a 180 percent increase over the 26,035 in 1986. Just as with the earlier figure, however, this result needs significant deconstruction. While census counts had excluded temporary visitors since 1991 (Carmichael 2001:603), the main problem was the number of lost ancestries. Once again, respondents were not advised that only a maximum of two ancestries would be counted, but in fact this time were encouraged to trace their ancestry back a further generation than they were in 1986, to their great-grandparents. Because the tick-box options were counted first, in descending order from the most popular, this created an enormous bias in the results towards them – particularly to English and Irish, which were thus always counted.

In 2003 the ABS reviewed the results of the census ancestry question. By sampling and analysing 366,667 census forms (2 percent of the total) taken from a representative range of urban and rural collection districts, ABS staff Chris Kunz and Liz Costello were able to report on the estimated number of lost ancestries for each ancestry group. The number of lost ancestries in the sample was multiplied by 49.93 to give the estimated national total. A total of 351 cases of a Māori ancestry not having been counted thus led to an estimate of 17,525 lost Māori ancestries. This was

19.4 percent of the official total. The revised estimate for those of Māori ancestry in the census was thus 90,481 (Kunz & Costello 2003: 22, 57).

This figure must itself be treated with caution, however. The ABS sample of census forms was drawn from the states and territories on a representative basis, but the spread of Māori around Australia (see Table 1) does not match the national pattern. Thus while the 2001 census revealed that 29.7 percent of Māori lived in Queensland and 14.0 percent in Western Australia, only 18.8 percent and 10.2 percent of the sample respectively came from those two states. On the other hand, 24.7 percent of the sampled forms came from Victoria and 7.6 percent from South Australia, but the proportion of the Māori population in these two states was only 14.9 percent and 2.9 percent respectively. In other words, 63.4 percent of the sampled forms came from states and territories where 80.5 percent of the Māori population lived, and 36.5 percent came from states and territories containing only 19.6 percent of the Māori population. The estimate of 90,481 is for this reason alone somewhat too low.

Table 1: Australian-resident Māori population by census and state

State	1986		2001			2006		
	Total	%s	Total	%	% rise	Total	%	% rise
<i>Australia</i>	26,035	Na	72,956	Na	180.2	92,912	Na	27.4
NSW	9,759	39.2	25,902	35.5	165.5	29,817	32.1	15.1
QLD	6,103	25.0	21,643	29.7	254.6	31,078	33.4	43.6
Victoria	4,040	16.5	10,874	14.9	169.2	14,268	15.5	31.2
WA	2,639	10.8	10,180	14.0	285.3	12,552	13.7	23.3
SA	880	3.6	2,124	2.9	141.4	2,604	2.8	22.6
NT	567	2.3	951	1.3	67.8	1,003	1.1	5.5
Tasmania	359	1.5	706	1.0	96.7	878	1.0	24.4
ACT	282	1.2	567	0.8	101.1	708	0.8	24.9

Another problem with the 2001 census tally is the ongoing inclusion of Cook Island Māori in the total. While the adoption in 2000 of a new *Australian Standard Classification of Cultural and Ethnic Groups* placed Māori and Cook Island Māori within separate codes, there was – and remains – no way to prevent Cook Island Māori from being included in the Māori total where they simply enter “Māori” on the census form. The same of course occurs in the New Zealand census. Thus there were 654 people in the official 2001 Māori total of 72,956 who were born in the Cook Islands

(Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs 2003:65), as well, presumably, as some Cook Island Māori who were born in New Zealand or indeed Australia.

Kunz and Costello recommended a number of reforms for the next application of the census ancestry question. These included recommendations that:

- “a minimum of at least four separately-stated Ancestries be coded”;
- “the maximum number of Ancestries to be coded must be stated on the Census Form, and in the Census Guide”;
- “‘Australian’ be the only listed Ancestry option ... in the mark box sequence”; and
- “a supplementary listing of Dual Ancestries [such as Italo-Australian] be created and then utilised in coding” (2003:47-48).

If adopted, these suggestions would certainly have assisted in the identification of the Māori population in Australia.

The 2006 Census

The only concession to these recommendations, as it transpired, was that the 2006 form, for the first time, asked respondents to “provide up to two ancestries only”, with the guide adding “For each person provide a maximum of two of the main ancestries with which they identify, if possible”.⁹ The other changes in 2006 were that the guide instructed people to consider their ancestry only back as far as their grandparents, an extra line was provided for entering written-in ancestries, and “Australian” was placed last in the tick-box options, where Scottish replaced Greek.¹⁰

The 2006 census result was an official Māori tally of 92,912. To the uninitiated this 27.4 percent rise appeared to be a major increase from 2001. Since there were probably at least 90,000 people who entered “Māori” in response to the 2001 ancestry question, however, it would in fact represent something of a contraction if the census instruction was duly adhered to. Given the 9.5 percent rise in the number of New Zealand-born in Australia from 2001 to 2006, it is certainly not explained by any slowing of out-migration from New Zealand.

On reflection, there are likely to have been two factors at work. First, some respondents probably overlooked or ignored the instruction to enter a maximum of two ancestries, with a number of responses of “Māori” thus being lost. In fact, unofficially at least, it seems that the incidence of lost ancestries may have been as high again as in 2001 (pers. comm. Robert Didham, 23 January 2009). Secondly, those with high rates of multiple ancestry such as Māori were doubtless forced to squeeze at least one of their ancestries out of their census response. The impact of the new instruction is clear when one considers the number of groups for whom the official 2006 totals were lower than their 2003 estimates by Kunz and Costello. Taking “New Zealander” as an example, the 2003 estimate was 161,361, up from the official 2001 total of 122,022. But the official 2006 total for this group was only 160,681, despite the inter-censal rise in the New Zealand-born population. The reality of multiple ancestries may yet force the ABS to rethink its rejection of Kunz and Costello’s recommendations.

The other matter to remember is that respondents are of course not consistent in their ancestry or ethnicity responses. Responses are fluid, and represent only the self-identification of a population at a moment in time. To that extent the 92,912 people who provided “Māori” as one of their two ancestry responses will doubtless both include some who chose not to in 2001 and exclude some who had provided a response of “Māori” in 2001 but who altered that response five years later.

“New Zealander” Responses and Under-Enumeration

Another important matter that must be factored in when calculating the approximate size of the Māori population in Australia is the tendency of many people to have Māori ancestry and feel strongly Māori but not to enter “Māori” on the census form at all. Something of this is apparent in the responses to Te Puni Kōkiri’s 2006 survey of Māori in Australia, which was completed by 1,205 (self-selecting) people, 94.9 percent of whom were New Zealand-born. Respondents were asked the following:

The Australian Census asks a question about ethnic ancestry. You are able to give more than one answer. If you were answering that question, which of these answers would you give?

Māori New Zealander Australian Other Don't know

Of the 1,189 who answered this question, 149 said they would answer as “New Zealander” only, nine as “Australian” only, and 11 as “Other” only. The Māori identity of these people cannot be questioned, as the very act of filling in this survey was an expression of Māori ethnic and cultural affiliation. Some interviewees explained that their primary frame of reference when overseas was as a New Zealander rather than Māori. Others may confuse the question for a nationality one, while some may be affected by the way in which Australians tend to group Māori and Pākehā together simply as “Kiwis” (Hamer 2007:31-32). Some observers are also convinced that Australian-born Māori answer only as “Australian” in similar proportions, with one commentator in Queensland suggesting that there could even be as many as 200,000 Māori in Australia if all those with any Māori ancestry were counted (Harvey 2007: 10).¹¹

It is of course impossible to know the extent to which Māori are not identifying as “Māori” in the Australian census. However, some verification of the practice at least could be gained from an assessment of the ancestries of those giving three particularly unique Māori census responses: speakers of the Māori language in the home and members of the Rātana or Ringatū faiths. Some non-Māori will give these responses, but they will be comparatively few. At this stage, to the author’s knowledge, this analysis has not been attempted.

There is of course some overlap between the “Māori” and “New Zealander” groups in the census, but it is surprisingly small: lost ancestries aside, it was in 2001 only 1,354 people (which compares to an overlap between “Māori” and “English” of 12,214 and “Māori” and “Australian” of 7,330 (pers. comm. Siew-Ean Khoo, 27 May 2008)). The overlap is bound to be much larger than this, however. Since “Māori” or “New Zealander” will often have been the part of a multiple-ancestry response lost, and “English” never was lost, one can assume that a much larger number of people than 1,354 named both ancestries. Methods of counting ancestry responses,

whether by computers or manual coders, will also have played a part. An entry of “New Zealand Māori” will often have been coded to “Māori” only, where the intention may in fact have been to enter two ancestries (Hamer 2007:24; Kunz & Costello 2003:13-14). Of the 2006 Te Puni Kōkiri survey respondents, 344 or 28.9 percent said they would answer the census with the “Māori-New Zealander” combination (Hamer 2007:31).

A further factor to consider when assessing the size of the Māori population in Australia is under-enumeration. In part as a result of their youthful age structure, the New Zealand-born have traditionally been undercounted in Australia at a rate around twice the national average (Hamer 2007:69). The under-enumeration of Māori is likely to be even higher.¹² There are several reasons for this assumption. First, Māori in Australia are highly mobile: of those Māori in Australia in 2001 who had been there in 1996, only 26 percent had not moved to a new address (Bedford *et al.* 2004:138-139). Secondly, many Māori in Australia regard themselves as temporary residents. In the Te Puni Kōkiri survey, around 60 percent of the New Zealand-born (who remain the overwhelming adult majority) intended to return to New Zealand to live (Hamer 2007:151-152; Forrest *et al.* 2009). Thirdly, there is what one could describe as an unwillingness to partake in the Australian polity. For example, the take-up rate of Australian citizenship for overseas-born Māori in Australia in 2001 was very low at just 22.8 percent (Khoo & Lucas 2004:92-94).¹³ That this also translates into a comparatively low rate of participation in the census can be guessed at both from the comment of one of Bergin’s informants that “Our people don’t bother with those sorts of things” (2001:40) as well as from the Te Puni Kōkiri survey results. Of the 242 respondents who answered the survey in the two months immediately after the 2006 Australian census was taken, 58 gave no answer to the question on whether they had completed the census. Of the 184 who did respond, 14.7 percent said they had not answered it (Hamer 2007:69).

Calculating the Number of Māori in Australia

Starting with the 2001 census, where we are assisted by the 2003 Kunz and Costello estimates, one can begin to make some informed calculations about the size of the Māori population in Australia. To the official return of 72,956 Māori can be added the 2003 estimate of 17,525 lost ancestries, but

because of the concentration of the Māori population in certain areas it might be considered that this estimate is too low, perhaps by 2,000. To the running total could be added perhaps at least 4,000 people undercounted through absence overseas, avoiding the census or not answering the ancestry question, although from the total could also be subtracted at least 1,000 for wrongly included Cook Island Māori. Finally, an extra 10 percent could arguably (and perhaps conservatively) be added to cover those who identify strongly as Māori in most contexts but do not state it on the census form. This gives an approximate total of 105,000.¹⁴

If there were indeed a similar number of lost ancestries in 2006 to 2001, and Māori were similarly affected, then one could arguably treat the 2006 Māori ancestry result as reflecting a straight 27.4 percent increase in the size of the overall Māori population in Australia, meaning that the estimate of 105,000 in 2001 could be raised to 133,770. Given the 9.5 percent inter-censal rise in the New Zealand-born population, however, this may well be overstating matters.¹⁵

Nevertheless, one notable 2006 census result is the rise in the number of people who reported that they spoke te reo Māori in the home. This went up from 5,504 in 2001 to 6,617 in 2006, a rise of 20.2 percent (see table 2). This sits in sharp contrast to the New Zealand census, which instead asks about the languages respondents are able to hold a conversation in about a lot of everyday things. From 2001 to 2006 in New Zealand the number who answered “Māori” declined by 2.2 percent. Furthermore, while the number of those in the Māori ethnic group who spoke te reo increased by 2 percent, the proportion of Māori in New Zealand who spoke te reo declined from 25.2 percent to 23.7 percent.

What this suggests is that the rise in the Māori population in Australia must have been substantial to allow for such an increase in te reo speakers. Alternatively, Māori speakers might have been a significant proportion of New Zealand migrants, the Māori language may be being revived to some extent in Australia independently, or more te reo speakers were sharing homes and thus able to answer “yes” to the census question, but all of these seem inadequate explanations for such a rise.

Table 2: Te reo speakers and Māori ancestry in the Australian census, 1986-2006

Census year	Te reo	Ancestry
1986	3,979 ¹⁶	26,035
1991	3,615 ¹⁷	-
1996	4,156	-
2001	5,504	72,956
2006	6,617	92,912

The evidence for a significant influx of Māori from New Zealand is also to be found in the fact that the number of te reo speakers in the home in Australia has only doubled since 1986 while, officially at least, the number of Māori has risen 257 percent. The proportion of those of Māori ancestry (assuming most te reo speakers are in this group) who speak te reo in the home has also dropped markedly. A 20 percent rise in te reo speakers in the home from 2001 to 2006, therefore, should in theory reflect a rise in the total Māori population of *at least* that scale.

Another proxy measure for the growth of the Australian-resident Māori population can be found in the ongoing increases in the number of Australian-born Māori living in both Australia and New Zealand. While the New Zealand aspect of this is probably more reflective of patterns of return migration than actual population growth, the combination of the figures indicates significant growth in the Māori population in Australia. Indeed, the number of Australian-born Māori in both countries increased 44.6 percent from 2001 to 2006 (see Table 3).¹⁸ This consideration of ancestry, Māori language and country of birth figures is of course a limited analysis that has not factored in matters such as fertility and mortality rates amongst Australian-resident Māori. Nor has it engaged with the range of available evidence (such as duration of residence and residence five years previously) from the New Zealand and Australian censuses that can shed more light on Māori patterns of trans-Tasman migration.

Table 3: Australian-born Māori in Australian and New Zealand census totals

Census year	New Zealand census		Australian census		Total		Proportion of Australian-born Māori resident in New Zealand
	number	% rise	number	% rise	number	% rise	
1986	1,473	-	7,069	-	8,542	-	17.2
1991	2,370	60.9	<i>na</i>	-	<i>na</i>	-	<i>na</i>
1996	4,281	80.6	<i>na</i>	-	<i>na</i>	-	<i>na</i>
2001	4,932	15.2	20,595	-	25,527	-	19.3
2006	5,973	21.1	30,949	50.3	36,922	44.6	16.2

Without official confirmation, of course, the ongoing incidence of lost ancestries in the census is also a matter of some speculation. Be all that as it may, however, the identified 2006 Australian census results seem to indicate reasonably significant growth in the Māori population. If we conservatively nominated a growth rate of 20 percent (a figure that can easily be justified, it seems, by the combination of out-migration from New Zealand and natural increase in Australia due to the age profile of the population), the number of Māori in Australia in 2006 would have risen to at least 126,000. What proportion of all Māori this estimate may represent is taken up in the conclusion of the paper.

Finally, it is worth mentioning the geographic distribution of Māori in Australia, because significant changes have been taking place. As Table 1 shows above, Queensland has become the most populous state for Māori in Australia, while Victoria recorded a much higher rate of growth than Western Australia despite the supposed influx of Māori workers to the latter seeking employment in the mines. The quite dramatic movement, however, has been to south-east Queensland, and specifically to the Gold Coast.¹⁹ There the Māori ancestry population grew by a staggering 86 percent from 2001 to 2006²⁰, in comparison to the national average of 27.4 percent. This rate of growth was double the 42.8 percent increase in those identifying as “New Zealanders” on the Gold Coast. In Sydney, the traditional focal point for Māori living in Australia, the 12.3 percent increase was less than half the national average. Perhaps in keeping with this, the number of New Zealand-born in Sydney even decreased.

Counting Māori in Other Countries

In their 2004 article in this journal on trans-Tasman Māori migration, Richard Bedford, Robert Didham, Elsie Ho and Graeme Hugo estimated that there were likely to be “a further 15,000 [Māori] ... resident in all other countries” besides Australia and New Zealand. They included within this estimate the likelihood of “several thousand Māori in the United Kingdom and Ireland, as well as some hundreds of people who might claim Māori ethnicity in the Pacific Islands” (2004:133-134). Professor Bedford’s more recent advice is that the figure of 15,000 was a “guess based on an assumption that there might be around 8,000 in the UK, 3,000 in the US, 2,000 in Canada, and 2,000 elsewhere (mainly in Asia)” (pers. comm. Richard Bedford, 15 August 2007).

In fact the estimate of there being 15,000 Māori spread throughout the rest of the world was a very fair one. Treasury research in 2004 into recent census returns for 20 selected countries found there to be 459,322 New Zealand-born people living in them (Bryant & Law 2004:3), which would represent the minimum number due to the census practice of certain countries.²¹ While nearly 80 percent of these were in Australia, that still left at least 103,557 New Zealand-born people in all other countries. Since overseas-born Māori will of course have been absent from these figures, the total of 15,000 Māori living outside New Zealand and Australia seems a reasonable proposition.

Some other methods can be employed to guess at the size of the Māori population in other countries, or at the least to gauge the rate of its growth. For example, as Bedford *et al* noted, 2,493 Māori in New Zealand in the 2001 census had been born in countries other than New Zealand or Australia, as had 1,023 Māori in the same year’s census in Australia (Bedford *et al.* 2004:134). There are some problems with these figures, such as no fewer than 654 of the Australian total being born in the Cook Islands and thus likely to be of sole Cook Island Māori ethnicity (Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs 2003:65). A further 609 of the New Zealand total were born in the “Pacific Islands” and would thus have been largely in the same category. But while the Cook Island Māori proportion of the Māori ethnic and ancestry groups in New Zealand and Australia remains an issue, it is becoming less of one amongst those specifically born in third countries. The number of Cook Islands-born

Māori in Australia in 2006 was down to 540 (out of a group 27 percent bigger) (Department of Immigration and Citizenship n.d.:2) and the numbers of Pacific Islands-born Māori in the Māori ethnic group in New Zealand has declined from 1,059 in 1996 to 540 in 2006. Much of this change will reflect improved coding practices.

Otherwise, the country of birth of Māori in New Zealand born outside Australia and New Zealand certainly suggests the existence of sizeable populations (with fluctuations again likely to be as explicable by changing patterns of return migration as by the actual size of overseas communities). The figures are set out in the Table 4 below.

Table 4: Māori ethnic census group usually resident population born in countries other than New Zealand and Australia

Birthplace	Census year		
	1996	2001	2006
Pacific Islands	1,059	609	540
United Kingdom and Ireland	891	801	1,026
Other Europe	183	162	165
North America	348	462	480
Other	87	111	111
Total	3,141	2,490	2,760

Some countries have in fact published census ethnicity or ancestry data that indicate the number of Māori usually resident in them. For example, in Canada in 2006 there were 1,555 people of Māori ethnic origin, including 120 who gave “Māori” as a single response and 1,430 who gave it as part of a multiple response.²² This represented a 32.9 percent rise from the 1,170 recorded in 2001, a higher rate of increase than the 21.7 percent for “New Zealanders”.²³ On both occasions more than half the Māori tally lived in British Columbia, with other notable populations in Alberta and Ontario. Likewise, the United States census in 2000 asked respondents an open-ended question: “What is your ancestry or ethnic origin?” “Māori” was provided as a first response by 1,055 people and by 939 as a second, thus giving a total of 1,994 people. This contrasts with 16,628 “New Zealanders” and 22,872 New Zealand-born. It is likely that the largest number of Māori

were in California, where 29.4 percent of the New Zealand-born in the United States lived. The next highest number were in New York, with just 5.6 percent, followed by Texas, Washington (state), Florida and Utah.

There are other censuses where one can make an assumption about the approximate number of Māori based on the ethnic classification of New Zealand-born people or New Zealand nationals. In England and Wales in 2001 there were 158,488 people born in “Oceania”, which largely comprised those born in Australia and New Zealand.²⁴ Anyone entering “New Zealander” (or “Australian”) in the census ethnicity question was coded as “other white” (as opposed to “white British” or “white Irish”), which problematically assumed that only Pākehā would self-identify as such. In any event, 94.7 percent of the Oceania-born were recorded as “white British”, “white Irish”, or “other white”.

Entries of “Māori”, along with those of “Aborigine” or Pacific ethnicities (as well indeed as Japanese, Afghanis, indigenous Americans and those nominating various south-east Asian nationalities), were coded as “other ethnic group”, of whom there were 2,571 individuals born in Oceania. Given the probability of some Māori having been coded as “other white” or being amongst the 37,163 United Kingdom-born people in the “other ethnic group” category, as well indeed as the likelihood of a reasonable number of Māori resident in England and Wales not answering the census, it seems that there may well have been at the very least several thousand Māori in England and Wales in 2001. What proportion they were of the 2,571 Oceania-born in the “other ethnic group” category can only be guessed, but in any event one would imagine they would be at least 5 to 10 percent of the 54,425 New Zealand-born recorded by the census.²⁵

The calculations are a little easier in the published statistics from the 2006 Irish census, in which there were 1,756 New Zealand nationals usually resident in Ireland counted on census night. Of these, 94 were recorded as “white Irish”, 1,259 as “any other white background” (presumably again including responses of “New Zealander”), 32 as either black or Asian, and 346 as “other including mixed background”.²⁶ It seems logical to conclude that a significant proportion of this latter group were Māori.²⁷

One or two other sources of information indicate something of the number of Māori overseas. The 2006 Kea “Every One Counts” internet survey of New Zealand expatriates was filled in by 18,000 people, including

1,418 Māori spread across 57 countries. The self-selecting nature of the survey, however, makes the number of responses per country an unreliable gauge of the relative numbers of Māori in them. For example, there were 621 Māori respondents in Australia, but 391 in England and 132 in the United States, even though these latter two countries combined are likely to have less than a tenth the number of Māori that reside in Australia. This disproportionate response rate will reflect a range of factors, such as migrants to Australia feeling they have made a permanent move rather than a temporary one, and thus disconnecting on some levels from their homeland. The proximity of Australia to New Zealand will certainly also have made people feel less motivated to complete a survey of expatriates.

Much the same applies to the electoral enrolment data held by the Electoral Enrolment Centre. Thus there were 3,871 enrolled Māori descent electors with an overseas address on election day in 2005, and 2,933 or 75.8 percent were in Australia. While more accurate than the Kea survey, this again cannot be taken as a reliable reflection of the location of Māori overseas, for much the same reasons that apply to the survey sample. Both the survey and the enrolment figures are of interest, however, in showing the range of countries that the Māori diaspora has reached, from Sweden to Syria and Colombia to Kenya. They also seem to suggest that, outside Australia, the United Kingdom, the United States and Canada, the largest numbers of Māori may be in Japan and Ireland. Other administrative data will doubtless tell a similar story, be it – for example – registered addresses of either iwi members or beneficiaries of the Māori Trustee.

Conclusion

The 2006 New Zealand census return for the Māori ethnic group was 565,329 people. After post-enumeration survey adjustments for those not captured by the census or the ethnicity question itself, as well as births and deaths since census night, the resident Māori ethnic group population was estimated at 30 June 2006 to be 624,000. If we combine this figure with the estimate of 126,000 Māori in Australia in 2006, as well as the further estimate of 15,000 Māori resident in all other countries, we arrive at a grand total of 765,000 Māori. This would mean that around 16.5 percent of all Māori were resident in Australia in 2006, a rise from the 14.8 percent reached from a similar calculation for 2001 (using the same 15,000 figure for

Māori in all other countries that year). On the basis of 413,500 Māori in Zealand and 26,000 in Australia in 1986, Lowe suggested that Māori in Australia that year were 5.9 percent of all Māori in the two countries (1990:8).

Put another way, in 1986 there were around one in 17 Māori in Australia out of the total number in Australia and New Zealand. By 2001 there were roughly one in seven of all Māori in Australia, and by 2006 there were around one in six. As Lowe pointed out in 1990, while just under 6 percent did not seem like a large proportion, it would only take a modest level of migration of Māori from New Zealand to Australia into the future for it to grow rapidly, given the youthful age profile of the Australian-resident Māori population and its associated high fertility and low mortality rates (1990:8). Few may have reflected at the time just how rapid this growth would be.

The figures appear to confirm that Māori society has, in part, an increasingly Australian future. They suggest that the characteristics of the Māori ethnic group will need to be considered on a trans-Tasman basis more than ever before, with all the challenges for compatible data capture that will entail. At the same time the number and habits of Māori in other countries should also be monitored, in order to extend our understanding of the Māori diaspora and learn what social, economic and cultural impact it has on those Māori who reside in New Zealand.

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Notes

- ¹ The census data referred to in this paper were taken from information published and made freely available by Statistics New Zealand, the Australian Bureau of Statistics, the United States Census Bureau, Statistics Canada, the Office for National Statistics in England, and the Central Statistics Office in Ireland. The figures for Māori Kea survey respondents and overseas electors were provided directly by Kea in 2007 and the Electoral Enrolment Centre in 2008. The paper was not supported by the purchase of any census data. It draws heavily on chapters 3-6 of the author's 2007 report for Te Puni Kōkiri, *Māori in Australia: Ngā Māori i Te Ao Moemoeā*, and its structure follows for the most part a paper entitled "Tracking the Australian-Resident Māori

Population” presented by the author to the Population Association of New Zealand conference in July 2007.

- ² Of course such “push” factors could also equally be described as the “pull” factors that make life overseas attractive, such as better weather and relatively higher wages.
- ³ In forthcoming research the author will examine the impact on te reo of trans-Tasman migration.
- ⁴ Some historians (Binney 1987:15; Chappell 1997:36) refer to this abduction as taking place in 1793.
- ⁵ They doubtless continued to be a common presence as crew on trans-Tasman trading vessels, however.
- ⁶ Lowe did not consider the possibility of some Māori not having been counted by the census at all.
- ⁷ In fact the arrival and departure card data were not particularly reliable and, if anything, are quite likely to have understated the extent of Māori out-migration.
- ⁸ The state-by-state numbers and percentages for 1986 are based on a total of 24,449 rather than 26,035, after temporary visitors from overseas and those born in the Cook Islands or with both parents born in the Cook Islands are removed (Lowe 1990:8, 29).
- ⁹ The guide also introduced a new definition of ancestry, informing Australians that “Ancestry is not necessarily related to the place a person was born but is more the cultural group that they most closely identify with” (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2006:7). In similar fashion the 2006 New Zealand census guide stated that one characteristic of an “ethnic group” might be “a shared culture” (Statistics New Zealand 2006).
- ¹⁰ The effect of the tick boxes can be seen from “Scottish” increasing from 534,882 responses and an estimated 338,547 lost ancestries in 2001 to a 2006 total of 1,501,201.
- ¹¹ Of course many Australian-born Māori will have the census filled in for them by their New Zealand-born parents, and it is a moot point as to what kind of responses this will elicit.
- ¹² Māori are in any case more undercounted than non-Māori in the New Zealand census (Statistics New Zealand 2007:1).
- ¹³ The figures included only those who arrived in Australia prior to 1997, and had thus had time to become citizens.

- ¹⁴ In the author's report for Te Puni Kōkiri (2007:32) the figure of 101,000 was suggested, which was based on a simpler equation of the official count plus the 2003 estimate of lost ancestries and an extra 12 percent for those Māori not identifying as such in the census.
- ¹⁵ That the 2001 ancestry tallies for "New Zealander" and "Māori" were more affected by lost ancestries than in 2006 is suggested by the returns for a city like Adelaide. There the New Zealand-born population growth was negligible from 2001 to 2006, but the "New Zealander" and "Māori" totals rose 29% and 25.6 percent respectively. Indeed, if one took the view that the 2006 ancestry tallies suffered relatively insignificantly from lost ancestries compared to 2001, then the 12.3 percent rise in the number of Māori in Sydney (see below) would in fact represent a population decline.
- ¹⁶ This figure includes an unknown number of temporary visitors from overseas (Lowe 1990:16).
- ¹⁷ This figure excludes temporary visitors from overseas. The number including such visitors was 4,070.
- ¹⁸ While some of these people may have been counted in both the New Zealand and Australian censuses (held in March and August respectively) due to moving between countries, they are probably equalled out by those counted in neither country for the same reason.
- ¹⁹ Given the incidence of "fly in, fly out" working lifestyles, increased numbers of Māori "living" on the Gold Coast and working in West Australian mines are not necessarily different phenomena. Whereas one would imagine that most workers who commute in this way would live in Perth or somewhere nearby in the temperate, south-west corner of Western Australia, there are certainly cases of Māori flying "in and out" across the continent.
- ²⁰ This refers to the Gold Coast-Tweed statistical district.
- ²¹ Only those who have lived in the United Kingdom for a period of six months are obliged to fill in the census, for example (Balarajan and d'Ardenne 2008), thus meaning many expatriate New Zealanders living there do not.
- ²² Numbers do not add up evenly due to rounding.
- ²³ In Canada in 2006 there were also 10,465 "New Zealanders", a higher number than the New Zealand-born (9,415), which sits in contrast with Australia where the number answering "New Zealander" to the ancestry question has been well under half the number actually born in New Zealand.
- ²⁴ Out of the total 54,425 were New Zealand-born, 98,772 were Australian-born, and 5,291 were "other Oceania"-born.
- ²⁵ A 2007 approach by the author to the Office for National Statistics was met with the response that it was not possible to retrieve the number of people answering "Māori" to the census ethnicity question.

26. The remaining 25 people did not state an answer.
27. There were also 2,335 New Zealand-born people present, although a published ethnic breakdown for them has not been located.

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