Use of Māori and Pacific languages

Māori language

Under the Māori Language Act 1987, Māori became an official language of New Zealand. This Act also established the Māori Language Commission Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori to promote the language and encourage correct usage. Māori words and expressions in both English and Māori documents must be written in accordance with guidelines from Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori.

[He Puna Kupu Māori / the Māori Wordnet](#) is a database available through the National Library of New Zealand. It contains subjects, terms and concepts, is a standard for spelling conventions and also has a section of place names and geographical features.

Māori/English, English/Māori language dictionaries:

Williams, H W (1992) *A Dictionary of Māori Language*, W Williams, GP Publications.

Māori Language Commission (1996) *Te Matatiki, Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori – Contemporary Māori Words*, Oxford University Press, Auckland.

Ngata, H M (1993) *English-Māori Dictionary*, Learning Media Ltd, Wellington.

Ngata www.learningmedia.co.nz/ngata/

The Māori Language Commission's booklet, *Māori for the Office*, is a useful reference. It is available from the Information Centre.

Salutations

If someone writes to you using Māori salutations be sure to respond in the same manner. When writing to Māori organisations, it is acceptable to use Māori salutations. The following should be used when appropriate:

Tēnā koe/Tēnā kōrua/Tēnā koutou are formal salutations used in place of Dear Sir/Dear Madam/Dear Mr x.

For example, "Tēnā koe, Mr Mohi"

Note: Tēnā koe is used to address one person. Tēnā kōrua is used to address two people. Tēnā koutou is used to address three or more people.

Kia ora is a less formal greeting than the series beginning tēnā koe can be used to address any number of people.

Closings

The following should be used when appropriate:

- Nāku noa, nā – yours faithfully or yours sincerely.

- Kāti ake nei – enough said or goodbye for now.

Macrons

Macrons are the little marks above a vowel in a Māori word and are used to help with pronunciation. Use where appropriate in Māori words.

Note: To insert a macron above a letter (or other special characters) in Word: Position the cursor where you want to insert the character. Select Insert menu, then click Symbol. When the dialogue box comes up, choose the required macron from the display and click Insert.

Names of organisations

Some organisations prefer to be known by their Māori name, such as Te Puni Kōkiri and Te Taura Whiti i te Reo Māori.

Te Puni Kōkiri	Ministry of Māori Development
Te Tari Taake	Inland Revenue Department
Manatū Wahine	Ministry for Women
Te Tari Tatau	Statistics New Zealand
Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori	The Māori Language Commission

Frequently used Māori words

Aotearoa	New Zealand
hapū	subtribe
iwi	tribe
rohe, takiwa	area/district
kaumatua	old man/elder/old people

kaunihera	council
kōhanga reo	kindergarten
kuia	female elder
kura kaupapa	school
mokopuna	grandchild
tamariki	children
tari	department
waka	canoe
whānau	family

Note:

"Te" is the singular definite article (Te Puni Kōkiri), and replaces "the".

"Ngā" is the plural definite article, eg ngā tamariki – the children

Always check the spelling.

Plurals

Never use "s" to denote a plural following a Māori word. Māori words are both singular and plural.

Right way:

There were groups of Māori from several different iwi in Ruatahuna.

Wrong way:

There were groups of Māoris from several different iwis in Ruatahuna.

Pacific languages

Greetings used by Pacific peoples include:

Malo e lelei	(Tongan)
Fakaalofa lahi atu	(Niuean)
Kia orana	(Cook Islands)
Ni sa bula	(Fijian)
Talofa lava	(Samoan)
Malo ni	(Tokelauan)