



**TE TAURA WHIRI
I TE REO MĀORI**
MĀORI LANGUAGE COMMISSION



Te Puni Kōkiri
MINISTRY OF MĀORI DEVELOPMENT

Maihi Karauna Strategy Refresh Recommendations Report

June 2026

Produced for Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori and Te Puni Kōkiri
by Dale Karauria, Dakota Visions Limited

DISCLAIMER

This document was produced for the purpose of informing the Maihi Karauna refresh. It is intended to inform the policy development process and does not represent the official views or policy of the government. The information is provided on an 'as is' basis. Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori and Te Puni Kōkiri exclude all liability for any error, inadequacy, or deficiency in the information.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Minister for Māori Development:

Tier 1 Recommendations (for this refresh process)

1. **Agree** that the refreshed Maihi Karauna include an action plan detailing individual (responsible agency), collective (multi-agency) and complementary (in partnership with Te Mātāwai) actions for the next two years.
2. **Agree** that, in accordance with good practice, the Maihi Karauna (action plan component) be reviewed and reported on annually, to ensure the measurement of progress and impacts/outcomes – and to inform adaptation choices/refinement of commitments.
2. **Agree** that the Maihi Karauna refresh include:
 - a. Reconsideration of whether the English text of the **Vision** is too big and therefore not shared.
 - b. Sharpening the **Role**, with a clearer definition of the role and responsibilities of the Crown (distinct from iwi and Māori) in protecting te reo Māori and supporting its revitalisation.
 - c. Reframing the **Outcomes** to more clearly reflect the language planning and policy elements (Critical Awareness, Status, Acquisition, Corpus and Use).
 - d. Removal of the **Approach** detail, which will be reflected in other parts of the strategy.
 - e. Retention of the **Audacious Goals**, whilst recognising that there are no precise measures for any of these; and, until such time as there are, these goals are directional guides rather than actual targets.
 - f. Consideration of the removal of the artificial age limit of 15 years+ in **Audacious Goal 3**.
 - g. Reconsideration of whether the **Priorities** and **Priority Groups** are separate or included in the Action Plan.
3. **Agree** that the refreshed Maihi Karauna be produced as an A3 document (with the action plan on a separate A3 if necessary) to ensure it can be understood ‘at a glance’, rather than having to be supplemented with explanatory text.
4. **Agree** that a cross-agency action be included in the refreshed Maihi Karauna (action plan), to identify options for improving te reo Māori data and Māori data governance.
5. **Agree** that Te Puni Kōkiri and Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori, in consultation with contributing agencies, report to the Minister of Statistics, Minister for Māori Development, and other contributing agency Ministers, on te reo data and Māori data governance improvement options – before the end of 2026.
6. **Agree** that Te Puni Kōkiri and Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori, and other agencies if desired, work with Te Mātāwai to identify complementary action(s) for inclusion in the refreshed Maihi Karauna – focused on increasing opportunities to be involved in community reo immersion initiatives and te reo Māori domains (evidenced as being most likely to increase the number of Māori speaking te reo).
7. **Agree** that continued implementation of, and reporting on, language plans (informed by Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori insights) be included as a public service-wide action in the refreshed Maihi Karauna.

Tier 2 Recommendations (for beyond this refresh process and subject to Ministerial approval)

8. **Agree** that a review of the Maihi Karauna be undertaken following advice and Ministerial approval, within 2-3 years.
9. **Agree** that Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori and Te Puni Kōkiri clarify their respective roles and responsibilities in regard to the policy and monitoring aspects of the Maihi Karauna.
10. **Agree** that Te Puni Kōkiri and Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori provide joint advice to the Minister for Māori Development on the future co-leadership roles of both agencies in the Maihi Karauna, including any potential resource impacts (that may be subject to the Budget process).

Purpose

1. The purpose of this report is to:
 - a. (initially) support targeted engagement with contributing public service agencies and Te Mātāwai to seek feedback on the identified recommendations; and
 - b. (eventually) provide recommendations to the Minister for Māori Development to enable his consideration of a Maihi Karauna refresh.
2. It is informed by:
 - a. The *Maihi Karauna Review of Evidence Report* completed by Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori (Te Taura Whiri) and Te Puni Kōkiri in February 2026.
 - b. Other relevant materials, including good practice guidance on strategy elements and refresh approaches.
 - c. The language planning and policy elements, derived from international evidence and adapted for the Aotearoa New Zealand context (applied herein as an analytical framework):
 - i. **Critical Awareness (Mārama Pū):** Aotearoa whānui know that te reo is a threatened language, accept the need for language revitalisation, and understand the roles of individuals and organisations to support revitalisation.
 - ii. **Status (Mana):** Aotearoa whānui understand the value of te reo Māori and accept that it is part of our national identity.
 - iii. **Acquisition (Ako):** Aotearoa whānui have increased opportunities to acquire te reo Māori at a level that supports their use.
 - iv. **Corpus (Puna):** Quality new words, terms and standards are developed and available to support the use of te reo Māori.
 - v. **Use (Whakamahi):** Aotearoa whānui can speak, listen to, read, write and comprehend te reo Māori at a level that supports their use and have access to reo-rich environments and domains.

Background

3. In December 2025, the Minister for Māori Development approved the *Maihi Karauna (Crown's Māori Language) Strategy Refresh Terms of Reference*, with an overall objective of refreshing the Maihi Karauna (2019-2023) to ensure progress on its vision, outcomes and goals – supporting the enactment of Te Ture mō Te Reo Māori 2016.³

¹ For the purpose of this report, 'public service agencies' include Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori, Te Māngai Pāho and Whakaata Māori (often referred to as the Māori language entities).

² Te Mātāwai issues the Maihi Māori, which focuses on revitalisation within communities and whānau. Engaging with Te Mātāwai will ensure both Maihi complement each other.

³ *Maihi Karauna (Crown's Māori Language) Strategy Refresh Terms of Reference*, Te Puni Kōkiri and Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori, 10 December 2025.

4. The *Maihi Karauna Strategy Refresh Terms of Reference* identified the following as:

In Scope:

- a. A review of evidence (focused on the currency and relevancy of the existing Maihi Karauna) to inform potential changes through the refresh. While the focus of this review is to inform the refresh, it may also identify more substantive considerations for future updates to the Maihi Karauna.
- b. Targeted engagement with key stakeholders (such as Te Mātāwai, the Māori language entities, Maihi Karauna agencies, and other national Māori organisations) to inform potential changes through the refresh.
- c. Changes to the components of the current Maihi Karauna (Vision, Outcomes, Approach, Audacious Goals, Priorities and Priority Groups) that:
 - i. will achieve the objectives set out in paragraph 3 above; and
 - ii. do not constitute significant policy issues or controversial matters, or that would require additional financial resources, public consultation, or new legislation.
- d. Development of a new Monitoring and Evaluation Framework, including consideration of data needs and sources.

Out of Scope:

- a. Changes to Te Ture mō Te Reo Māori 2016.
 - b. Changes to the components of the current Maihi Karauna (Vision, Outcomes, Approach, Audacious Goals, Priorities and Priority Groups) that would constitute significant policy issues or controversial matters, or that would require additional financial resources, public consultation, or new legislation.
 - c. New funding for the work to refresh the Maihi Karauna, as this will be met from within the baselines of Te Puni Kōkiri and Te Taura Whiri.
5. The 2025/26 policy work programme for Te Puni Kōkiri commits to providing the Minister for Māori Development a refreshed Maihi Karauna by 30 June 2026. The refresh process includes⁴:
- a review of evidence, a recommendations report, and targeted engagement (by 31 March 2026);
 - a refreshed Maihi Karauna Strategy document (by 30 June 2026);
 - an action plan, informed by targeted engagement (by 18 December 2026); and
 - a monitoring and evaluation framework (by 31 March 2027).

⁴ Ibid.

Maihi Karauna Strategy

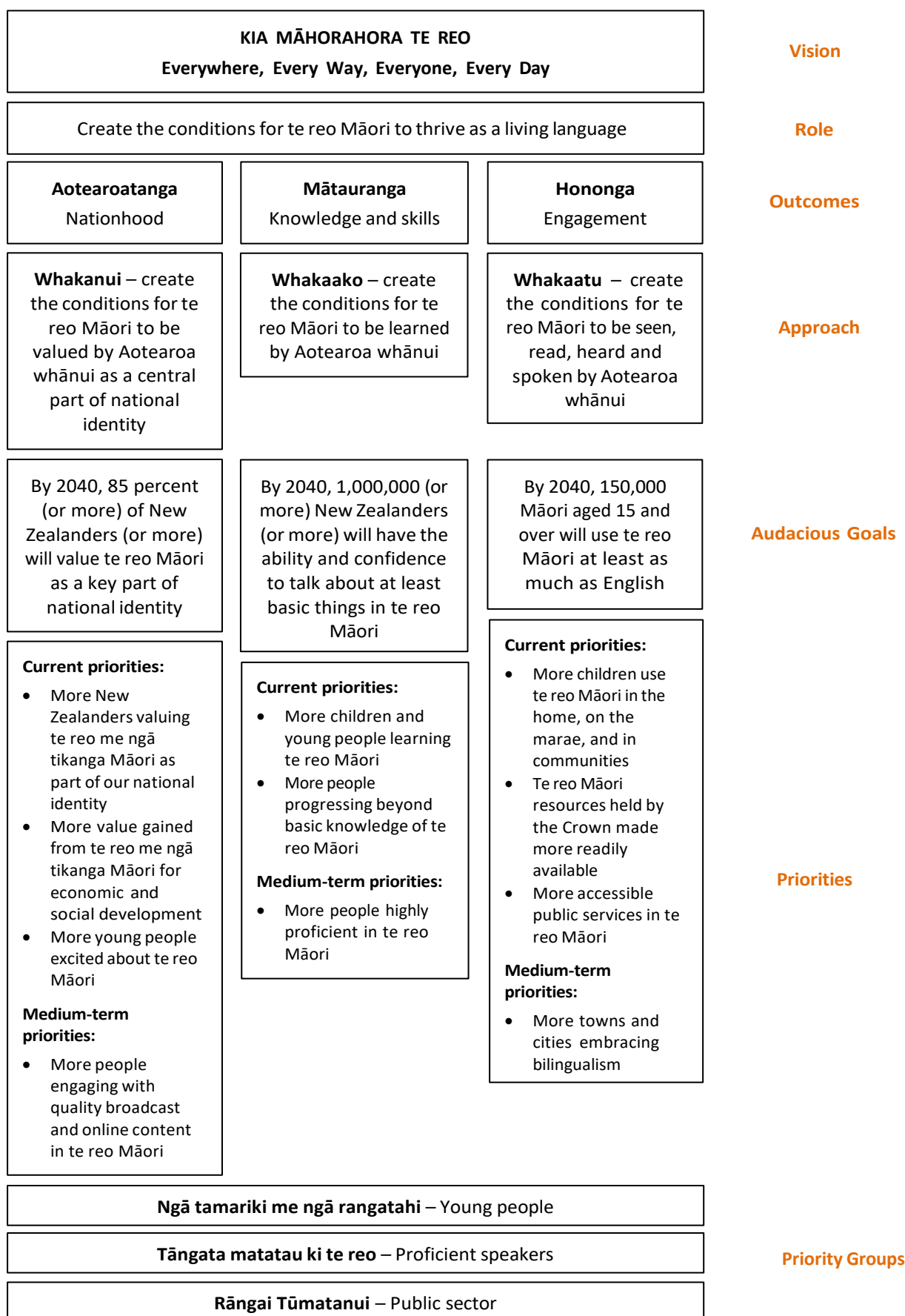
6. The Maihi Karauna Strategy (key components of which are shown in Figure 1) was approved by Cabinet in December 2018.
7. Its purpose, as detailed in Te Ture mō Te Reo Māori 2016 (to be issued by the Minister for Māori Development, on behalf of the Crown), is to set out the Government's:
 - objectives and policies, and related matters, relevant to the revitalisation of the Māori language; and
 - long-term strategic direction, as well as the current and medium-term priorities, to support that revitalisation.⁵
8. The Maihi Karauna strategy takes a 'macro' perspective, by focusing on creating the societal conditions for te reo Māori to thrive and ensuring that government systems support that. The Maihi Māori, issued by Te Mātāwai, takes a complementary 'micro' role that focuses on revitalisation within communities and whānau.⁶ These maihi (bargeboards) represent the two sides of the partnership⁷ on each side of a metaphorical/conceptual Te Whare o te Reo Mauriora.
9. The Minister for Māori Development launched the first Maihi Karauna strategy in February 2019, which covered the period 2019-2023.

⁵ *Final Maihi Karauna Strategy and Implementation Approach* Cabinet Paper, December 2018.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ For the revitalisation of te reo Māori between the Crown and iwi and Māori, as established through Te Ture mō Te Reo Māori 2016.

Figure 1: Key Components of the Maihi Karauna Strategy



Review of Evidence

10. The *Maihi Karauna Review of Evidence* examines the current state of the Maihi Karauna, its progress to date, and areas requiring renewed focus as the strategy is refreshed. Drawing on monitoring and evaluation findings, survey data, demographic trends, and modelling tools, the review assesses whether the strategy's components remain current and relevant. It primarily focuses on the:
- three audacious goals;
 - priority groups;
 - priorities (for Crown action), including the associated measures and indicators.

In addition, where relevant and possible, the *Review of Evidence* comments on the remaining components of the Maihi Karauna:

- vision;
 - role;
 - outcomes; and
 - approaches.
11. Key findings of the *Review of Evidence*, in relation to the specific Maihi Karauna components, are included in Part 2 of this report.
12. At a general level, the *Review of Evidence* found that, despite fiscal constraint, a challenging environment, and capability issues, agency appetite for te reo Māori remains strong, as evidenced by:
- agencies now have a good understanding of the Maihi Karauna and how they can contribute to it;
 - improved collaboration, with agencies sharing more tools and resources, and Te Taura Whiri playing an important coordination and support role;
 - most agencies having adopted Māori language plans, with implementation becoming more consistent; and
 - key forums continuing to provide coordination and 'system-level leadership', although there is still room for improvement.
13. The *Review of Evidence* also found that:
- the Maihi Karauna has increased the visibility and everyday use of te reo Māori across the public service and pockets of wider society, with normalisation occurring in workplaces, media, and public communications; and
 - much of this progress has occurred despite capacity constraints, driven by committed staff within existing baselines.
14. The single most significant issue that the *Review of Evidence* identified is te reo Māori data remaining inconsistent and fragmented.
15. In the absence of single datasets that perfectly measure progress (e.g. there are no datasets that precisely measure progress towards the Audacious Goals), proxy measures (with comparatively small samples) or estimated projections have had to be used.

16. Some measures have been impacted by COVID interruptions, and others by mid-stream survey question changes. And some strategy components have no indicators/measures at all. Working with Statistics NZ and other agencies to improve te reo Māori data collection was proposed as a response to this.

Comment on the Maihi Karauna Strategy Refresh Scope and Process

Strategy Refresh Practice

17. Good practice in relation to strategy refreshes involves reviewing and updating an existing strategic plan annually to ensure alignment with current market conditions, operational realities, and organisational (or, in this case, public sector, on behalf of the Crown) purpose. Unlike a full top-down, from-scratch plan, a refresh is often a bottom-up process that updates key performance indicators (KPIs) and tactics to re-energise teams and maximise impact.
18. A strategy refresh should be undertaken when:
- the strategy feels outdated, or execution has slowed significantly;
 - leadership is pulling in different directions;
 - a major unexpected change or disruption occurs in the operating environment; and/or
 - the 'organisation' has achieved its previous goals or needs to align with a newly clarified purpose.
19. Key components of a strategy refresh include the following actions:
- a. **Review existing strategy** – Assess the current plan's validity, identifying gaps and what remains relevant.
 - b. **Ensure bottom-up input** – Involve team members who execute the strategy to gather practical insights on what is working and what is not.
 - c. **Reconfirm priorities** – Realign the core mission, vision, and critical success factors.
 - d. **Identify external shifts** – Analyse changes in the market, such as funding volatility, AI or regulation, which affect the long-term outlook.
 - e. **Update operating plan** – Adjust, sequence and refine initiatives for better execution.

⁸ Generated through AI; multiple sources including through the International Association for Strategy Professionals and Strategy Management Group, and past and current members of McKinsey & Co., Boston Consulting Group, Monitor Deloitte, Strategy&, KPMG Global Strategy Group, EY-Parthenon, Accenture Strategy et al.

A full review of the Maihi Karauna strategy is needed, but that will take time

20. There are three good practice components missing from the current process, which will be factored in as work continues; namely: bottom-up input; the identification of external shifts; and updating the operational/action plan. (The latter component is discussed below, under the heading 'A stronger action plan is important going forward').
21. Insights from those executing the strategy are critical in providing valuable context for some of the evidence, and in enabling the sharing of learnings and adaptation/improvement opportunities. Such a bottom-up approach also enables contributors to feel valued, have their efforts acknowledged and, most importantly, be re-energised to commit to taking action. A strategy that relies on people to execute it needs to have those people involved throughout.
22. The regular analysis of external factors is critical for any strategy, and possibly more so for one aimed at supporting the revitalisation of te reo Māori. Market changes, political, economic, social and technological (including AI) shifts, as well as language revitalisation theory and practice and international developments, can all help or hinder progress – but only if they are recognised and responded to.
23. As the approved *Maihi Karauna Strategy Refresh Terms of Reference* only included assessment of the existing strategy based on a review of relevant evidence (see the annexed list of sources), and the reconfirmation of priorities based on the work programme(s) of Te Puni Kōkiri and Te Taura Whiri, the recommendation below is offered as a 'Tier 2' recommendation (beyond this refresh process and subject to Ministerial approval).

Tier 2 Recommendation (referred to as Recommendation 9 in the full list of Recommendations)

Agree that a review of the Maihi Karauna be undertaken following advice and Ministerial approval, within 2-3 years.

A stronger action plan is important going forward

24. A strategy is fundamentally a plan of action to achieve goals. Though it was noted by Cabinet [MCR-18-MIN-0012 refers] that '*Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori will coordinate and monitor the implementation of the Maihi Karauna*', the strategy did not include any 'implementation' detail – aside from the requirement that all public service / departmental agencies develop language plans. Implementation plans were to be developed separately.
25. The *Review of Evidence* highlights the inability to attribute any gains made in relation to the Maihi Karauna (vision, role, outcomes, approaches, goals, priorities and priority groups) to public service efforts. Whilst a range of activities have been referenced, there is insufficient data or reporting to identify the (scale of) reach, impacts and return on investment from those activities – let alone how they have contributed to the Goals, Approach, Outcomes, Priorities and Priority Groups. This is not to say that there were no valuable contributions made; it is simply that there is

insufficient evidence to confidently make such statements.

26. The Maihi Karauna strategy, and the design/delivery, measurement and reporting of public service agency contributions to it, would be greatly improved by the inclusion (in the strategy, and not separately) of an action plan that contains:
- individual (responsible agency), collective (multi-agency) and complementary (in partnership with Te Mātāwai) agency activities and actions,⁹ including (where appropriate) any responses to WAI 3327 recommendations, and which outcomes these contribute to;
 - basic intervention logic detail (where appropriate), including activities/actions, target groups (and numbers/reach), short-term outcomes (increased knowledge/understanding), medium-term outcomes (improved actions/behaviours), and associated performance indicators (to report against); and
 - how progress and contributions/ impacts will be reported.

Tier 1 Recommendations (referred to as Recommendations 1 and 2 in the full list of Recommendations)

Agree that the refreshed Maihi Karauna include an action plan detailing individual (responsible agency), collective (multi-agency) and complementary (in partnership with Te Mātāwai) actions for the next two years.

Agree that, in accordance with good practice, the Maihi Karauna (action plan component) be annually reviewed and reported on, to ensure the measurement of progress and impacts/outcomes – and to inform adaptation choices/refinement of commitments.

A strategy without clear leadership

27. As identified by the Māori Language Sector Specialist Advisory Group, '*the Maihi Karauna leadership is ambiguous*'.¹⁰ Clear and authoritative leadership will be required to drive the refreshed Maihi Karauna forward, hold contributing public service agencies to account for individual, collective and complementary action plan commitments, and provide a clarity of reporting not seen thus far.
28. Consistent with findings from other reviews, there is a need to clearly delineate the respective roles and responsibilities of Te Taura Whiri and Te Puni Kōkiri in relation to the policy and monitoring aspects of the Maihi Karauna. While Te Taura Whiri already holds responsibility for coordinating the implementation of the Maihi Karauna, and is co-leading the Maihi Karauna refresh with Te Puni Kōkiri, we will also need to consider the co-leadership role of Te Taura Whiri in the Maihi Karauna. Considering whether Te Taura Whiri retains a degree of independence from the strategy, to enable it to effectively fulfil its te reo quality assurance role, will be an important factor to consider.

⁹ 'Activities' are existing functions that contribute e.g. supply of Māori medium education by the education system/Ministry of Education. 'Actions' are targeted initiatives/foci that will contribute e.g. establishing the nature and scale of unmet demand for Māori medium education, to inform the consideration of options to increase supply.

¹⁰ Specialist Advisory Group – Māori Language Sector Report, 23 June 2025.

The implications of any new arrangement, including potential resource impacts, would require further consideration and may be subject to the Budget process.

29. As strategy leadership is seen to be outside the scope of the *Maihi Karauna Strategy Refresh Terms of Reference*, the recommendations below are offered as Tier 2 recommendations (beyond this refresh process and subject to Ministerial approval).

Tier 2 Recommendations (referred to as Recommendations 10 and 11 in the full list of Recommendations)

Agree that Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori and Te Puni Kōkiri clarify their respective roles and responsibilities in regard to the policy and monitoring aspects of the Maihi Karauna.

Agree that Te Puni Kōkiri and Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori provide joint advice to the Minister for Māori Development on the future co-leadership roles of both agencies in the Maihi Karauna, including any potential resource impacts (that may be subject to the Budget process).

A strategy with too many layers?

30. The *Review of Evidence*:

- suggested that consideration be given to whether the current Maihi Karauna has too many layers and components, and whether the refresh is an opportunity to simplify both the strategy and its measurement; and
- highlighted that there is no visibility of how (if at all) the Maihi Karauna components guide efforts and progress/performance measurement, with many components having no specific indicators to enable measurement and reporting.

31. The separate Maihi Karauna components are covered in Part 2 of this report, but the proposed treatment of these for refreshment purposes¹¹ is summarised as:

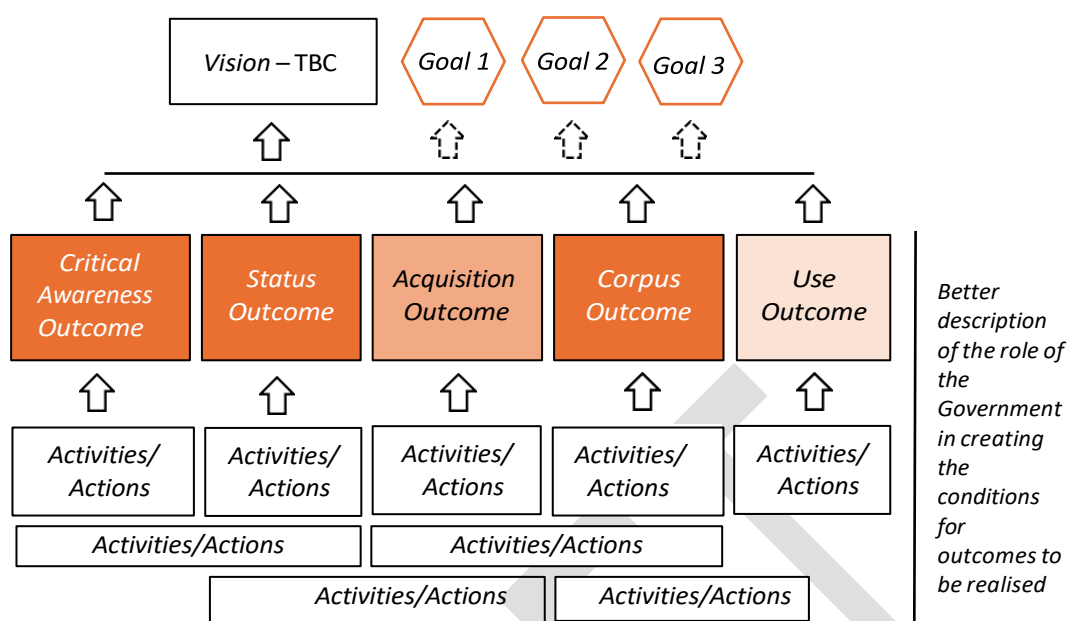
- Reconsider whether the English text of the **Vision** is too big. Although visions should ‘dream big’, they must also be attainable to avoid being demoralising, irrelevant/unrelatable or elective/not critical – and therefore not shared.
- Sharpen the **Role**, with a clearer definition of the role and responsibilities of the Crown (distinct from iwi and Māori) in protecting te reo Māori and supporting its revitalisation. And, as shown in Figure 2, make clear that the role is enabling of activities, actions and outcomes – rather than another layer.
- Reframe the **Outcomes** to more clearly reflect the five language planning and policy elements (Critical Awareness, Status, Acquisition, Corpus and Use). The current outcomes are too big and have no specific indicators for progress/contribution measurement and reporting.

¹¹ None of these proposed treatments is seen as being inconsistent with the *Maihi Karauna Strategy Refresh Terms of Reference* in that they do not ‘constitute significant policy issues or controversial matters’ nor do they ‘require additional financial resources, public consultation, or new legislation’.

- The language planning and policy elements include helpful descriptors and indicator-type statements from which good outcomes (in the long-term, improved conditions for people) can be shaped, enabling agencies to show their measurable contributions.
 - Remove the **Approach** detail, as the **Role** and **Outcomes** changes will make this redundant.
 - Retain the current **Audacious Goals**, whilst recognising that there are no precise measures for any of these. In that sense, the goals are directional guides rather than actual targets – until such time as they can be more confidently reported against (as te reo data issues are addressed).
 - Consider removing the age limit (15+) in **Audacious Goal 3**, as it creates an artificial split for measurement and targeting purposes.
 - Reconsider whether the **Priorities** and **Priority Groups** are separate or included in the Action Plan (which will detail activities to be progressed in the next two years, and who will be targeted to make measurable gains).
32. A refreshed Maihi Karauna strategy could then be indicatively depicted as in Figure 2 below¹² (noting that the number and nature of outcomes is yet to be determined).

¹² The different outcome shadings denote the degree of influence/extent of responsibilities that public service agencies (on behalf of the Crown) have in relation to that outcome.

Figure 2: Indicative Refreshed Strategy Components



Tier 1 Recommendations (referred to as Recommendations 3 and 4 in the full list of Recommendations)

Agree that the Maihi Karauna refresh include:

- Reconsideration of whether the English text of the **Vision** is too big and therefore not shared.
- Sharpening the **Role**, with a clearer definition of the role and responsibilities of the Crown (distinct from iwi and Māori) in protecting te reo Māori and supporting its revitalisation.
- Reframing the **Outcomes** to more clearly reflect the language planning and policy elements (Critical Awareness, Status, Acquisition, Corpus and Use).
- Removal of the **Approach** detail, which will be reflected in other parts of the strategy.
- Retention of the **Audacious Goals**, whilst recognising that there are no precise measures for any of these; and, until such time as there are, these goals are directional guides rather than actual targets.
- Consideration of the removal of the artificial age limit of 15 years+ in **Audacious Goal 3**.
- Reconsideration of whether the **Priorities** and **Priority Groups** are separate or included in the Action Plan.

Agree that the refreshed Maihi Karauna be produced as an A3 document (with the action plan on a separate A3 if necessary) to ensure it can be understood 'at a glance', rather than having to be supplemented with explanatory text.

Measuring progress has been challenging

33. As identified in the *Review of Evidence*, measuring progress has been challenging. This reflects a combination of factors, including some strategy components lacking clear indicators or measures, a reliance on imprecise or proxy datasets, and data collection being disrupted by events such as COVID and/or changes to survey questions over time. These challenges highlight areas where the strategy refresh can support a strengthening of the evidence base and improved clarity around performance and progress.
34. Clear and measurable outcomes are essential to understanding what progress is being made, what is working well, and where adjustments may be needed. There is an opportunity to more explicitly articulate how activities are informed by, and contribute to, the language planning and policy elements. Doing so would strengthen the coherence of the strategy, recognising that these elements are well established enablers of language revitalisation; and providing a clearer line of sight between effort, contribution, and impact.
35. Whilst including more action-based indicators (through the action plan) will give more timely data on efforts and impacts, as highlighted in the *Review of Evidence*, there is a need for te reo data issues to be urgently resolved – particularly if progress towards the Audacious Goals is to be more accurately (and less expensively) measured, and the outputs of the Monitoring and Evaluation plan (to be completed by 31 March 2027) are to have any real substance. It is understood that Te Mātāwai is similarly interested in improving te reo data.
36. It is evident that new/different approaches will be required as ‘traditional’ national level/whole of population measurement tools become too expensive. Data modelling and measures enabling attribution are two key areas of obvious need.

Tier 1 Recommendations (referred to as Recommendations 5 and 6 in the full list of Recommendations)

Agree that a cross-agency action be included in the refreshed Maihi Karauna (action plan), to identify options for improving te reo Māori data and Māori data governance.

Agree that Te Puni Kōkiri and Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori, in consultation with contributing agencies, report to the Minister of Statistics, Minister for Māori Development, and other contributing agency Ministers, on te reo data and Māori data governance improvement options – before the end of 2026.

Vision

37. The *Review of Evidence* found that the current Maihi Karauna vision (*Kia māhorahora te reo/Everywhere, every way, everyone, every day*) is broad enough to remain relevant and current in a refreshed Maihi Karauna. However, it was suggested that if the vision was to be retained, the text describing the vision in the strategy document would need to be updated as some of the context and examples were no longer relevant.
38. Good practice guidance¹³ states that a good vision statement is a concise, inspiring, and future-oriented declaration (1-3 sentences) that defines the ultimate, long-term goal of an organisation (or in this case the public sector, on behalf of the Crown). It acts as a guiding star, motivating employees and aligning stakeholders toward a shared, ambitious, yet realistic future state. Effective visions are memorable, clear, and reflect core values.
39. The extent to which the current Maihi Karauna vision is understood, shared and (most importantly) inspiring of action needs to be tested with contributing agencies. Of specific importance is the need for a vision (even if only the English text) that is ambitious but realistic. While it should 'dream big', it must remain attainable to avoid being demoralising, irrelevant or seen as elective (rather than compulsory/critical). Most would agree that '*te reo Māori everywhere, every way, everyone, every day*' is the ideal, but it will not feel achievable in the average tenure of a public servant.
40. Refer to Recommendation 3 for the proposed treatment of this component for refresh purposes.

Role

41. The *Review of Evidence* found that the role of the Maihi Karauna (to create the conditions for te reo Māori to thrive as a living language) is also broad enough to be considered relevant and current in a refreshed Maihi Karauna. It was suggested that, if the current role is retained, consideration should be given to adding some explanatory text.
42. As currently expressed, the 'role' blends the role of a strategy (which is to drive action) with the role of the government (on behalf of the Crown). There is definite merit in providing a better description of government's role, particularly as this is becoming more blurred – as is evident in the Minister's shared ambitions (with Te Mātāwai) and the Māori Language Sector Specialist Advisory Group report.

¹³ Generated through AI; multiple sources including through the International Association for Strategy Professionals and Strategy Management Group, and past and current members of McKinsey & Co., Boston Consulting Group, Monitor Deloitte, Strategy&, KPMG Global Strategy Group, EY-Parthenon, Accenture Strategy et al.

43. Whilst the partnership between Iwi and Māori (as represented by Te Mātāwai) and the Crown can advance complementary interests, they have distinct roles and reach, as purposefully detailed in Te Ture mō te Reo Māori 2016.
44. Refer to Recommendation 3 for the proposed treatment of this component for refresh purposes.

Outcomes

45. As detailed in the *Review of Evidence*, the Maihi Karauna has three outcome statements, being:
 - i. **Aotearoatanga/Nationhood** – Te reo Māori is valued by Aotearoa whānui as a central part of national identity.
 - ii. **Mātauranga/Knowledge and Skills** – Aotearoa whānui has increased levels of knowledge, skill and proficiency in te reo Māori.
 - iii. **Hononga/Engagement** – Aotearoa whānui is able to engage with te reo Māori.
46. The *Review of Evidence* found that, in the Maihi Karauna Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (Te Puni Kōkiri, 2019), there are no distinct indicators for the Maihi Karauna outcomes. Rather, the framework uses the audacious goals' indicators to measure progress towards these outcomes. As the audacious goals have not yet been fully achieved, it is suggested that the outcome statements should be retained, and text describing the priorities within each of the outcomes be added.
47. It is understood that the Minister for Māori Development has commissioned the development of a shared outcomes framework, to be led by Te Mātāwai, supported by Te Puni Kōkiri, in early 2026. It is not yet known whether, and how, any of the shared outcomes will be reflected in the respective Maihi Karauna and Maihi Māori (which is reportedly not being reviewed or refreshed at this time).
48. Good practice guidance¹⁴ defines an outcome as the consequence, result, effect or measurable impact of a specific action, process, or event. The Maihi Karauna outcomes, as currently expressed, are too broad (whole of population). Consequently, it is difficult to measure any meaningful contribution to them. Outcomes that relate directly to the language planning and policy elements (Critical Awareness, Status, Acquisition, Corpus and Use) would provide clearer pathways for contributions. Moreover, these elements would enable the determination of combined and cumulative relativities (e.g. under-supply or over-supply) – where a re-balancing of contributions may be needed.

¹⁴ Ibid.

49. Public service agencies have direct, or greater, influence on *Critical Awareness*, *Status*, *Acquisition* (to a degree) and *Corpus*. But they have limited influence on *Use*. They can support the creation of domains but have no reach (professionally) into households and across family members. Partnering with Te Mātāwai will be required in the *Use* space, to learn from their work with whānau and communities, and to determine whether public service agencies can support this element.
50. Refer to Recommendation 3 for the proposed treatment of this component for refresh purposes.

Approaches

51. As identified in the *Review of Evidence*, the theory of change underlying the original Maihi Karauna strategy has three key aspects. These are reflected as ‘creating the conditions for’ three approaches; namely:
- **Whakanui** - te reo Māori is valued by Aotearoa whānui as a central part of national identity.
 - **Whakaako** - te reo Māori is learned by Aotearoa whānui.
 - **Whakaatu** - te reo Māori is seen, read, heard and spoken by Aotearoa whānui.
52. The *Review of Evidence* found that Crown priorities for action indicators serve as the measures for the Maihi Karauna approaches above. No separate indicators exist beyond these (Te Puni Kōkiri, 2019). When looking across these indicators, many still require significant progress; and some cannot be measured due to missing data. It is suggested that, if the approaches are to be retained, descriptive text be included to signal priorities within the approaches.
53. Rather than adding any value to the Maihi Karauna, the approaches add an unnecessary layer/complexity. If the Outcomes can more clearly reflect the language policy and planning elements, the approaches would then be redundant. The language policy and planning elements provide the basis for how te reo revitalisation should be ‘approached’ in that they frame language revitalisation theory and practice.
54. Refer to Recommendation 3 for the proposed treatment of this component for refresh purposes.

Audacious Goals

55. In relation to **Audacious Goal 1** (85% of New Zealanders valuing te reo as a key element of national identity by 2040), the *Review of Evidence*:
- Found that:
 - Public support for te reo Māori remains strong, with 73% agreeing that te reo is an important part of national culture (Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori, 2025).

- Proxy indicators from the NZ General Social Survey (NZGSS) show long-term gains towards the valuing goal, although recent small declines (2021–2023) suggest a plateau.
- Younger people, Māori, Pacific peoples, and women show the highest levels of support.
- This goal is difficult to measure using currently available data; and more work with Statistics NZ and other agencies is needed to improve on indicators (and measures) for this goal.
- Suggests that Audacious Goal One remains relevant and achievable but may require targeted approaches for groups with lower levels of support.
- Notes that encouraging people to move from being supporters of te reo Māori to active learners and users of the language is important and will contribute to the achievement of Audacious Goals Two and Three.

56. In relation to **Audacious Goal 2** (One Million Basic Speakers by 2040), the *Review of Evidence*:

- Found that:
 - The NZGSS indicates 17% of New Zealanders can talk about basic things in te reo Māori (Statistics NZ, 2024), although recent changes to survey questions limit comparability with previous years.
 - Updated *He Ara Poutama mō te reo Māori* modelling forecasts 966,000 basic speakers by 2040, reaching one million by 2043, under current trends (Nicholson Consulting and Kōtātā Insight, 2025).
 - Progress to reaching this goal is ‘close to’ being on track, if current levels of support for te reo Māori are maintained or slightly accelerated.
 - There is currently no data collection that exactly measures basic speakers. *He Ara Poutama mō te reo Māori* has developed a work-around to measure basic speakers, but this tool is expensive to keep updated.
- Suggests that continued investment in data quality and modelling is essential.

In relation to **Audacious Goal 3** (150,000 Māori aged 15 years+ using te reo Māori as much as English by 2040), the *Review of Evidence*:

- Found that:
 - Current estimates indicate that approximately 27,200 Māori aged 15 and over, use te reo as much as English – well below the 2040 target (Nicholson Consulting and Kōtātā Insight, 2025).
 - On the current trajectory (based on modelling forecasts), the goal target is far from being reached.
 - Increasing opportunities to be involved in community reo immersion initiatives and te reo Māori domains have been evidenced as the actions most likely to increase the number of Māori speaking te reo, followed by participation in Māori medium education.
 - Whilst Māori medium education remains a key driver of increased language use, enrolments have declined across the educational pipeline; and ECE provision has decreased over 20 years.

- Suggests that:
 - Strategic shifts and expanded investment in immersion domains and initiatives (complementing Maihi Māori foci), and Māori-medium pathways, are needed.
 - It may be timely to consider the merits of amending the goal target to include all Māori rather than only those aged 15 years+ (noting that this would add approximately 25,000 speakers, taking the total to 52,000).
57. There is no point in making any changes to the *Audacious Goals* at this stage, but it should be recognised that there are no precise measures for any of these. Being measurable is one of the key characteristics of good-practice goals. In that sense, the Audacious Goals should be treated as directional guides rather than actual targets – until such time as they can be more confidently reported against. However, the proposed removal of the age limit (15 years+) in Audacious Goal 3 does appear worthy of consideration, as it creates an artificial split in a significant target group – which also complicates measurement.
58. Refer to Recommendation 3 for the proposed treatment of this component for refresh purposes; and to Recommendations 5 and 6 for addressing te reo data issues.

Tier 1 Recommendation (referred to as Recommendation 7 in the full list of Recommendations)

Agree that Te Puni Kōkiri and Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori, and other agencies if desired, work with Te Mātāwai to identify complementary action(s) for inclusion in the refreshed Maihi Karauna that is focused on increasing opportunities to be involved in community reo immersion initiatives and te reo Māori domains (as has been evidenced as most likely to increase the number of Māori speaking te reo).

Priority Groups

59. As detailed in the *Review of Evidence*, the Maihi Karauna identifies three priority groups as a way for the Crown to focus on people, rather than just institutions or ideas (Te Puni Kōkiri, 2018). These priority groups (young people, proficient speakers and the public sector) informed the setting of priorities for Crown action in the Maihi Karauna.
60. Whilst the *Review of Evidence* identifies activities and some gains/participation, the extent to which the priority groups have been actively targeted to achieve specific gains/shifts is not evident.
61. Most of the focus for the priority group of Tamariki and Rangatahi appears to be on their participation in Māori medium education – but that is fewer than 10% of Māori learners. Activities targeting or partnering with rangatahi are identified, but whether they are already ‘engaged’ (e.g. in Māori medium education) or ‘new’ cannot be determined.

62. Based on comparative size, under 25-year-olds make up nearly one third of the population. This includes the remaining 90+% of Māori tamariki and rangatahi who are not participating in Māori medium education (as well as non-Māori children and youth) – some of whom could potentially become reo champions and proficient speakers. Not all public service agencies have responsibilities for, or reach into, this market segment; so its retention as a priority group would effectively limit who can contribute to the Maihi Karauna.
63. A range of activities are identified for the priority group comprising Proficient Speakers, but there is no evidence of the extent to which these activities are enabling increases in the number of proficient speakers (including non-Māori). Nor is there evidence about what concurrent impact this may have on drawing others forward (e.g. from supporter to user, from beginner to intermediate). More proficient speakers will be an interest shared with Te Mātāwai; and options to combine efforts should be actively explored. Retaining proficient speakers as a distinct priority group will significantly limit which public service agencies can contribute – other than through their own support for staff development.
64. Within the Public Sector, the requirement for public service agencies to have language plans by 30 June 2021 has seen 33 out of 37 comply (with 3 departments having been established after the Cabinet deadline). These plans have given rise to various activities seen as contributing to gains in support for the learning, and use, of te reo Māori – as well as increased proficiency. Rather than retaining the public sector as a priority group, continued implementation of (and reporting on) language plans could be included as a public service-wide action in the refined Maihi Karauna, along with more fora for agencies to share learnings and inspire further performance lifts.

Tier 1 Recommendation (referred to as Recommendation 8 in the full list of Recommendations)

Agree that continued implementation of, and reporting on, language plans (informed by Te Taura Whiri i te reo Māori insights) be included as a public service-wide action in the refreshed Maihi Karauna.

65. The inclusion of priority groups in a strategy while not being linked to actions (as target groups) is not standard/good practice. It may have appeared necessary as a starting point but now it serves only to limit potential public service agency contributions. Inclusion of an action plan in the refreshed Maihi Karauna, requiring target groups to be identified, will provide more scope for agencies to contribute to te reo revitalisation efforts through their respective areas of responsibility.
66. Refer to Recommendation 3 for the proposed treatment of this component for refresh purposes.

Crown Priorities for Action

67. As identified in the *Review of Evidence*, the 11 Maihi Karauna priorities (for Crown action) represented where the Crown (more accurately some public service agencies) intended to focus its attention and resources over the first five years of implementation, to achieve collective impact. Each priority had one or two convening agencies, who were tasked with bringing together a working group of a range of wider government agencies to develop deliberate actions for that priority. The convening agencies are Ministry for Culture and Heritage, Te Puni Kōkiri, Te Māngai Pāho, Ministry of Education, Department of Internal Affairs, Public Service Commission and Te Taura Whiri.
68. Timeframes for the Crown priorities ranged from 0-2 years (current, from within agency baselines) to 3-5 years (medium, subject to future Budget processes).
69. Whilst the Maihi Karauna made several suggestions as to how lead agencies could approach and progress their respective priorities, the absence of any further clarity on how agencies should proceed may have contributed to progress being limited. The last Maihi Karauna implementation plan was produced in 2021/22, to cover until the end of 2023, with the expectation that an updated Maihi Karauna strategy would be in place by 2024. Since then, visibility on the status and progress of agencies' work on their priorities (and any associated work), and the results of interagency collaboration, has been limited.
70. Few priorities had indicators and measures; and most priorities were focused on 'more' people doing things, whilst only being able to report on what had been supplied/done.
71. Rather than allow 'implementation' to drift, or be subject to annual Budget processes, an action plan should be included in the refreshed Maihi Karauna to focus public service agency efforts for the next two years.
72. Refer to Recommendation 3 for the proposed treatment of this component for refresh purposes.

PART 3: CONCLUSION

73. Whilst the Maihi Karauna provided a helpful starting point in 2019 for public service contributions to the revitalisation of te reo Māori, it is well overdue for a review and update/refresh.
74. The recommendations and associated rationales in this report are intended to be constructive input into a refresh of the Maihi Karauna. There is no intent to be critical of anyone or anything that has occurred in the past. This report simply reflects where we have come from, where we are now, and what we need to do (with the benefit of experience/hindsight and good practice guidance) – to get real momentum in individual and combined agency efforts that promote the revitalisation of te reo Māori.
75. In terms of general observations, there is a real opportunity now to move from generic, national/whole population, whole demographic groups, to targeted efforts that enable measurable shifts.
76. While there are calls for ‘more’ bilingual signage, do we actually know how many public service agencies have it; and, more importantly, do they have it where it matters (e.g. customer/public-facing)? While there are calls for more Māori-medium education, do we know what the level of unmet demand is? And if Māori are unable to access Māori-medium education, what other options are available for them (e.g. digital resources, community-based learning centres)?
77. The point is, without good evidence we cannot make informed decisions about where best to apply our efforts and resources.