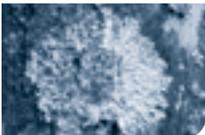




Te Puni Kōkiri
REALISING MĀORI POTENTIAL

Te Hanga Whanaungatanga mō te Hononga Hāngai ki te Māori

Building Relationships for Effective Engagement with Māori



Over the last decade there have been important changes in the way government seeks to engage Māori in the policy process. The most significant change has been the recognition of a need to move away from 'one-off' consultation to developing lasting and meaningful relationships with Māori. Engaging with Māori on an ongoing basis is key.

■ INVESTING IN RELATIONSHIPS

It is the experience of Te Puni Kōkiri that the most effective way to engage with Māori is by investing in relationships with Māori – rather than by making the task of engagement the focus of the investment.

WHY ENGAGE WITH MĀORI?

In addition to legislative and Treaty of Waitangi obligations, it is important for agencies and councils to be aware that effective engagement will help them achieve quality outcomes for Māori, which in turn, will benefit all New Zealanders. In addition, by acknowledging the contribution being made by Māori to New Zealand, agencies and councils can play their part in contributing to an inclusive society.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY ENGAGEMENT?

Engagement is the range of activities that central and local government undertake in order to interact and communicate with Māori. It includes, for example, information sharing, consultation, seeking perspectives and receiving feedback.

HOW DOES A RELATIONSHIPS FOCUS BENEFIT GOVERNMENT AND MĀORI?

By adopting a focus on relationships agencies and councils are likely to build a better understanding of Māori perspectives and as a result be better informed when providing advice and delivering services that accommodate Māori aspirations. Only Māori themselves can say what their interests and aspirations are and how their cultural preferences affect their day to day lives.

■ DESIGNING A STRATEGY FOR EFFECTIVE ENGAGEMENT

Agencies and councils should develop a strategy for engagement. There are four phases in the creation of any engagement strategy:

PHASE ONE: CLARIFYING SCOPE AND PURPOSE

The first step is always to determine what an agency or council wants to achieve by engaging with Māori. For example, it is important to consider whether the purpose is to enhance the operation of a service; to receive input into policy development; or simply to test an idea.

PHASE TWO: IDENTIFYING WHO TO ENGAGE

Identifying the appropriate Māori groups, communities or individuals to engage with will have a significant influence on the shape of the engagement strategy. Stated at its simplest, agencies and councils should be engaging with all Māori who will be affected by the outcome of their work. In reality, this will most often mean working with organisations and collectives that represent Māori interests.





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PHASE THREE: PLANNING THE DETAIL AND BEING AWARE OF CONSTRAINTS

Taking into account the needs of particular groups and individuals to be engaged, agencies and councils can then consider the best forums for engagement. It is important that the formats considered achieve the outcomes sought by the agency or council and enables Māori to participate in the most effective way.

Forums might include any one or combination of the following: hui on a marae or at some neutral venue; workshops or forums; the setting up of advisory groups or panels; the use of surveys and other market research techniques; paid advertising; or information sent directly to people either in print or via email or websites.

PHASE FOUR: COLLABORATION BEFORE FINALISING THE STRATEGY

Agencies and Councils are strongly encouraged to collaborate with Māori about the approach they propose to take. This would include working to agree outcomes of the engagement and planning aspects of the engagement strategy, for example, timeframes.

IMPLEMENTING THE STRATEGY

Agencies and councils will be off to a strong start if they acknowledge Māori as a Treaty of Waitangi partner, respect the people they talk to, respect the various cultural values and differences, and make real efforts to enable direct participation by Māori. Likewise, if agencies and councils are up front and honest throughout the engagement process and are clear and transparent, trust will be built into the relationship. By doing this, agencies and councils are likely to be successful in establishing rich, enduring relationships that are of mutual benefit.

VALUES UNDERPIN ENGAGEMENT

The core principles underlying all good relationships are trust, respect, honesty, openness and integrity – all of which take time to develop and require on-going investment. These principles should underpin any engagement with Māori.

HOW TE PUNI KŌKIRI CAN HELP

Te Puni Kōkiri is available to help with different aspects of engagement strategies. They have particular skill at ensuring the right people are sitting at the table. Agencies and councils may wish to draw on Te Puni Kōkiri's understanding of:

- The most appropriate people to consult in national, regional or urban settings
- The most appropriate level of engagement for certain issues
- Local issues arising in Māori communities
- What engagement techniques may or may not have worked in previous engagement with groups or individuals
- The best way to engage specific Māori individuals or communities
- When to involve Māori to maximise the effectiveness of engagement
- Government/Māori relationship building techniques
- What to expect during the consultation process

Te Puni Kōkiri will consider requests for assistance based on a number of considerations.

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