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Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency
Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa New Zealand Government
rules@nzta.govt.nz

RE: Consultation on He Tohu Huarahi Māori bilingual traffic signs programme

“Ko te reo te mauri o te mana Māori – The language is the life force of Māori mana”

Sir James Henare, 2021.

Tēnā koutou,

To uphold our obligations under te Tiriti o Waitangi, and to show respect to Māori culture, Otago University Students' Association supports the implementation of the He Tohu Huarahi Māori bilingual traffic signs programme, and provides consultation below.

The use of colour to differentiate te reo Māori and English

By assigning yellow to te reo Māori and white to English, the contrasting colours serve as a clear differentiating method for bilingual traffic signs. This contrast allows road users to identify and comprehend the language which they are most confident in using. The proposed colour scheme is also consistent and familiar with existing traffic signs, and contrasts the background colours well.

However, it is imperative to consider accessibility in the design process. To ensure accessibility standards are met, collaboration with experts such as the NZ Association of Optometrists can provide valuable insights and guidance to ensure the chosen colour combinations are sufficient enough for all road users, particularly those with colour vision deficiencies. Further collaboration with experts such as at the Learning Disabilities Association of NZ could help to ensure whether the removal of graphics on the bilingual road signs are sufficient enough for all road users to understand, particularly those with dyslexia. These types of collaborations could help to abate concerns for those who are questioning the safety implications of bilingual road signs. In conjunction with the research already carried out by Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency, this would further help to address any potential risks and how to mitigate these.



Whether each family of signs represent a good opportunity to achieve the goal of incorporating more te reo Māori onto Aotearoa New Zealand's transport network

Each family of signs represents a powerful opportunity to incorporate more te reo Māori onto Aotearoa New Zealand's transport network. Including te reo Māori on road signs proactively contributes to promoting language revitalisation efforts, and reinforces that te reo Māori is an integral part of New Zealand's cultural identity which deserves recognition and respect.

Moreover, bilingual signage provides a unique learning opportunity for all New Zealanders. For Māori speakers, this is an opportunity to foster a stronger sense of belonging and cultural identity. For non-Māori speakers, this is an opportunity to engage with and appreciate te reo Māori, and to promote respect and understanding of Māori culture. This could encourage some people to start learning te reo Māori, and motivate all people to continue to build confidence in using te reo Māori in day-to-day life, nationwide.

Te reo Māori is a taonga (treasure) in Māori culture and is guaranteed protection under article 2 of Te Tiriti o Waitangi. It uplifts cultural identity, and connections to tūpuna (ancestors). It acts as a vessel for te ao Māori (Māori worldview), including transmitting knowledge, traditional practices, and more from one generation to the next. Supporting te reo Māori is of utmost importance in respecting, preserving, and revitalising Māori culture. Afterall, Te reo Māori is one of Aotearoa New Zealand's official language, whilst English is not.

The presence of te reo Māori signage honours te reo Māori's rightful place within the country's landscape. Bilingual signage encourages the public usage and preservation of te reo Māori for future generations. It not only symbolises the commitment to te Tiriti o Waitangi, but also showcases Aotearoa's rich cultural diversity.

“To show respect is incredibly important in any culture, and for the longest time for Māori people, we haven't felt that our language has been respected.”

Keri Opai, *Tikanga*, 2021.

Ngā mihi,

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