



# Market analysis for translators and interpreters of te reo Māori

Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori

Here-turi-kōkā 2025



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



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## Executive summary

This report delivers a comprehensive market analysis of the workforce for te reo Māori translation and interpreting (T&I) to guide Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori – Māori Language Commission (TTWh) in planning certification growth over the next decade. It sits alongside a model that identifies current and projected demand, aligned with Māori and national demographic trends, as well as the ambitious Maihi Karauna language revitalisation goals.

Findings reveal that demand for competent T&I will grow steadily, but in a complex, non-linear manner shaped by population dynamics, policy settings, and technological advancements such as AI. While AI tools may reduce routine translation needs, they increase the value of culturally knowledgeable, highly skilled T&I practitioners.

Remuneration in the sector remains inconsistent, undermining workforce stability, with limited, fragmented data available. Market domains, such as public health, justice, and education, offer significant opportunities for impact on language revitalisation, but they also reveal challenges, including domain-specific vocabulary gaps, institutional readiness, and workforce visibility.

This report reframes these challenges as opportunities for TTWh to provide leadership through setting robust certification standards, advocating for pay equity, enhancing workforce recognition, and advancing strategic collaborations. Ultimately, TTWh's role is crucial to supporting a thriving and sustainable te reo Māori T&I workforce to further Māori language revitalisation and societal participation.

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# 1 Introduction

Business and Economic Research Limited (BERL) was commissioned by Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori (Māori Language Commission) to undertake research to support strategic planning and workforce development for te reo Māori translation and interpreting (T&I). The project aims to provide a robust evidence base to inform future investment, policy, and programme design in alignment with the revitalisation goals of Te Taura Whiri.

The overarching purpose of this research was to:

- Identify the current and future market value for translators and interpreters of te reo Māori
- Identify the required volume of te reo Māori translators and interpreters over the next 10 years, in line with Māori and national demographics and the three Maihi Karauna “audacious goals”
  - The market analysis will help determine the number of translators and interpreters required for the next decade. It will also inform the remuneration and professional opportunities available to them
  - The cost of this will help with the planning of T&I certification resourcing
- Identify key domains where te reo Māori T&I may be developed to maximise impact on Māori language revitalisation (e.g., education, private and public sector)
- Compare te reo Māori T&I market with the general T&I market for all other languages throughout Aotearoa New Zealand.

The methodology for this research comprised three main components. First, a literature scan was undertaken to review academic studies, industry and government reports, and publications relevant to the T&I market in Aotearoa New Zealand and internationally, with a particular focus on te reo Māori. This provided context and informed the development of the analytical model.

Second, data collection drew primarily on Statistics New Zealand sources and findings from the literature scan, supplemented by limited stakeholder engagement via email to address data gaps and gather additional evidence.

Finally, a bespoke market analysis model was developed, based on standard supply and demand frameworks but adapted to account for unique factors influencing the te reo Māori T&I market beyond typical industry variables.

This analysis is based on a number of assumptions and has some important limitations. Official occupational and demographic data was used to estimate the size of the workforce in te reo Māori T&I, but this may miss many people who work part-time, have multiple roles, or have trained through informal or community pathways. There is also limited data on volunteer interpreters and informal education, which makes it challenging to get a full picture.

The model assumes steady growth in te reo Māori speakers, typical turnover rates, and certification requirements. Limitations include data gaps in informal education and the distinct nature of the te reo Māori T&I market. It also uses overseas data to estimate the impact of technology, which may not accurately reflect the situation in Aotearoa New Zealand. These gaps mean the findings should be seen as a starting point, and highlight the need for improved data collection and workforce mapping in future to support planning and policy.

This report is designed to serve both strategic and operational purposes for Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori and its stakeholders. The narrative direction reflects a kaupapa Māori approach to research, emphasising opportunity, complexity, and revitalisation.



## 2 Market supply and demand model

To answer the core research questions – how many te reo Māori translators and interpreters are needed over the next decade, and what value do they bring to revitalisation efforts – we begin with a market supply and demand model. This model provides a structured, evidence-based foundation for understanding the current and projected dynamics of the translation and interpreting (T&I) workforce.

It quantifies the relationship between population growth, language proficiency, and service demand, while also accounting for supply-side factors such as education pathways, certification, and workforce turnover. By starting here, we can identify the scale of need, anticipate future gaps, and inform strategic planning for certification, remuneration, and sector development. The model is not a static forecast but a flexible tool that reflects the complexity and non-linear nature of the te reo Māori T&I ecosystem.

### 2.1 Drivers of supply and demand

The diagram presents a flowchart explaining the dynamics of supply and demand for te reo Māori translators and interpreters in Aotearoa New Zealand (Figure 1). Here is a breakdown of how the components interact:

#### 1. Demand drivers (green)

- Increasing Māori population leads to more te reo Māori speakers
- More speakers leads to greater demand for te reo Māori content and services from both government and private sectors
- This demand is further reinforced by:
  - Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori goals for language revitalisation, which aim to increase the number of highly fluent speakers.

#### 2. Supply chain (orange)

The **future supply** of translation and interpreting services depends on:

- The number of registered te reo Māori translators and interpreters
- This number is shaped by: (pink)
  - The availability of education and training to become registered

- The current workforce and turnover (people leaving the profession).

### 3. Feedback loops (blue arrows)

- The **provision of services** affects **wages and salaries**, which in turn influence the attractiveness of the profession and thus the **future supply**
- **Government laws and policies** mandating access to services in te reo
- Arrows show:
  - **Black:** General influence paths
  - **Pink:** Direct influence on future supply and clear relationship.

## 2.2 Model parameters

The model parameters (or limits) define the key assumptions behind the model. As of 2023, there were approximately 1.21 translators per 1,000 te reo Māori speakers and 3.03 interpreters per 1,000 highly fluent te reo Māori speakers. This equates to 830 te reo Māori speakers per translator and 330 highly fluent speakers per interpreter.

The model incorporates the impact of technological disruption, projecting a 0.71 percentage point reduction in annual growth for translation roles due to AI. This estimate is derived from a US-based study, which has limitations, particularly as the projected job losses were concentrated in marketing-related translation and may not fully reflect the Aotearoa New Zealand context. Further details on this impact may be found in section 0.

To be able to reach Maihi Karauna revitalisation goals,<sup>1</sup> the model assumes that te reo Māori proficiency must increase by 2.8 percent annually, and highly fluent proficiency by 1.9 percent annually. This target is embedded in the population growth forecasts and language acquisition pathways.

The relationship between the growth in the Māori population and the supply and demand for te reo Māori translators and interpreters is closely connected through demographic and language revitalisation factors. As the Māori population in Aotearoa is projected to grow significantly, potentially reaching close to 20 percent of Aotearoa New Zealand's total population and one-third of

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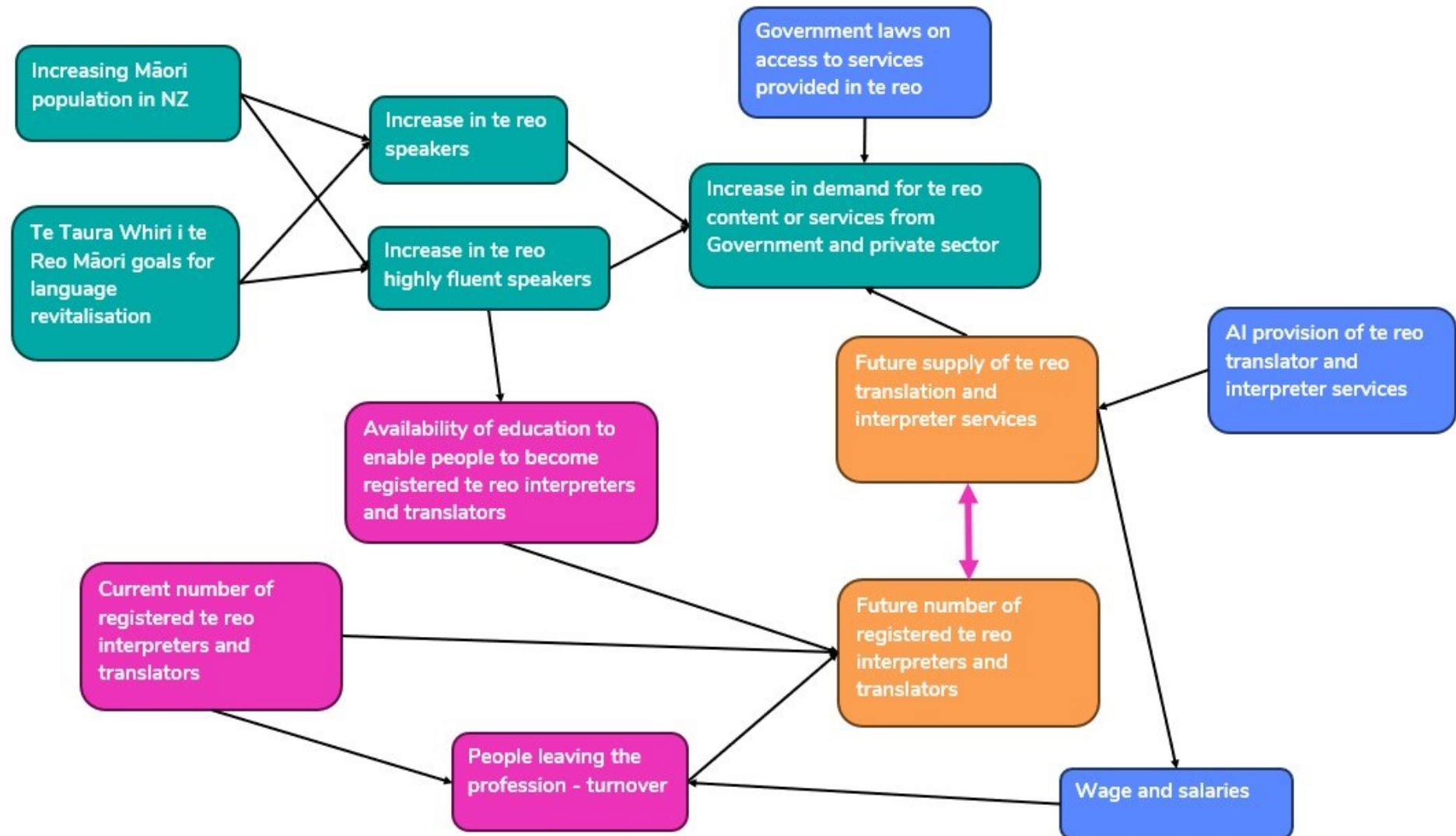
<sup>1</sup> <https://www.tpk.govt.nz/en/a-matou-whakaarotau/te-ao-maori/maihi-karauna>

its tamariki by 2038, this demographic expansion naturally increases the demand for culturally and linguistically appropriate services, including T&I in te reo Māori.

A growing Māori population generally means a larger base of te reo Māori speakers and learners, increasing the need for T&I services across health, justice, education, and the private, public, and community sectors. This in turn drives demand for more qualified translators and interpreters fluent in te reo Māori.

In short, increasing Māori population growth amplifies the demand for te reo Māori T&I services, requiring a corresponding growth in supply through workforce development and sector support to ensure equitable language access and service provision consistent with population dynamics.

Figure 1 Supply and demand diagram



### 3 Future forecasts and modelling insights

The dynamics governing the supply and demand of te reo Māori translation and interpreting (T&I) services are inherently complex and non-linear. This complexity means that linear forecasting models may oversimplify the sector's evolution, and strategic planning must remain adaptive and responsive.

Rather than following a simple linear path, this market is shaped by interacting feedback loops involving demographic changes, workforce participation, policy levers, and technological shifts. For example, population growth and increasing uptake of te reo Māori raise demand, while certification and professional development influence supply quality and availability.

Advances in AI translation tools exert a nuanced effect: while routine translation tasks may decline slightly, the need for skilled interpreters and culturally fluent translators remains strong, especially for high-stakes domains where nuance and cultural competence are critical.

Moreover, the workforce includes many part-time practitioners and individuals with informal education pathways who often balance T&I with other roles. These factors complicate supply estimation and highlight the importance of recognising non-traditional practitioners in certification and workforce planning.

#### 3.1 Projected supply and demand (2024-2040)

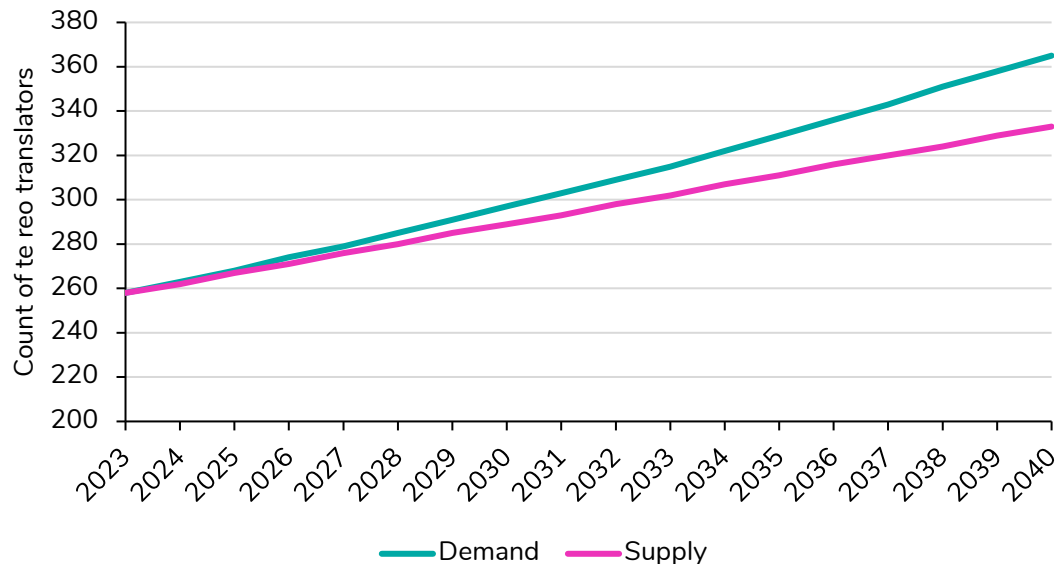
The model forecasts a steady increase in demand for te reo Māori translators and interpreters over the next decade, driven by population growth, increased language proficiency, and rising service needs across government and private sectors.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> The model forecasts represent median values, and the uncertainty increases the further we project into the future. To maintain clarity, these margins of error are not depicted in the figures presented in this section.

## Translators

Figure 2 Projected supply and demand of te reo translators to 2040



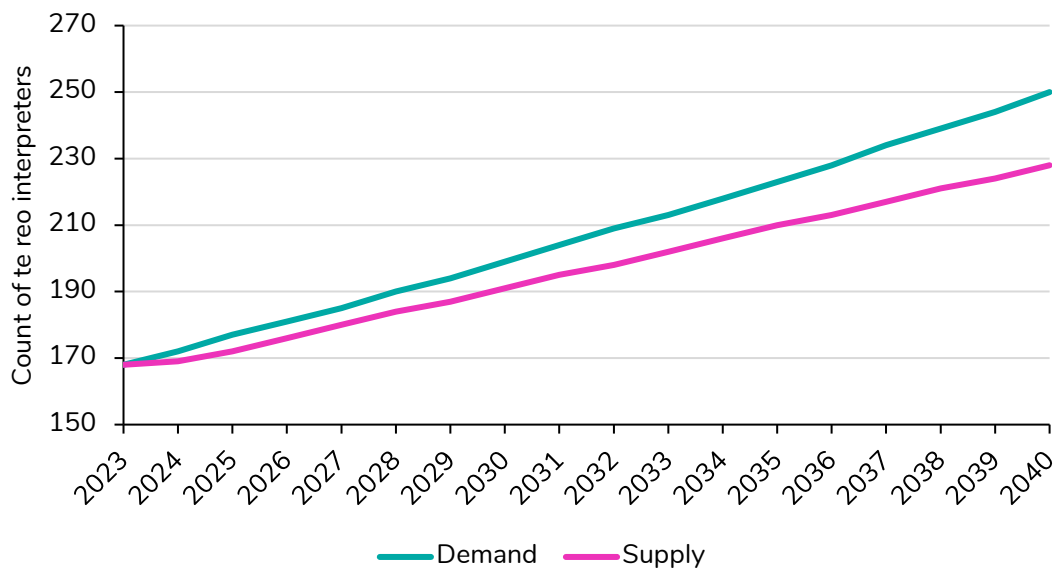
Source: BERL analysis

Demand is projected to grow from 263 translators in 2024 to 365 by 2040, reflecting a 39 percent increase (Figure 2). Supply is expected to rise more slowly, from 262 in 2024 to 333 in 2040. The gap between supply and demand widens progressively, reaching a shortage of 32 translators short by 2040. This widening gap highlights the urgency for proactive certification planning and targeted workforce development to meet future service needs.

## Interpreters

The model also forecasts increasing demand for interpreters, from 172 interpreters in 2024 to 250 in 2040 (Figure 3). Supply rises from 169 in 2024 to 228 in 2040, with demand outpacing supply by a growing margin. The gap is likely to be most pronounced in high-need domains such as health and justice, where interpreter access directly affects equity outcomes.

Figure 3 Projected supply and demand of te reo interpreters to 2040



Source: BERL analysis

## Key growth areas

The model uses demand growth across the following areas:

- Government services: Annual demand growth of five percent for T&I services
- Private sector (including community sector demand): Even stronger growth at 20 percent annually, indicating expanding interest in te reo Māori integration across business and community communications.

The growing number of highly fluent speakers, projected to increase from approximately 55,000 in 2023 to over 76,000 by 2040, contributes to this demand, and expands the potential supply of qualified translators and interpreters.

## 3.2 Scenario planning

To support strategic planning, the model enables exploration of key scenarios:

### 1. Surge in demand

If demand increases beyond current projections, e.g., due to legislative changes mandating interpreter access or a cultural shift towards bilingual service delivery, the gap could widen significantly. For instance, a 10 percent increase in demand above baseline would result in a shortfall of over 60 translators by 2040.

This would require accelerated investment in training, certification, and recruitment pathways. Conversely, if government support for te reo continues to lag, demand could also rise as communities seek to preserve and promote the language independently, further exacerbating the shortfall.

## **2. Drop in supply**

If supply growth slows due to turnover, lack of funding, or barriers to certification, even maintaining current demand levels could result in service bottlenecks. Additionally, the model accounts for workforce turnover, estimating that eight percent of translators or interpreters exit the profession each year. This estimate is based on average attrition rates in comparable professional sectors such as accounting and law. The annual turnover could be exacerbated by burnout or lack of career progression.

## **3. Technology disruption**

The model includes a 0.71 percent annual reduction in translator demand due to Artificial Intelligence (AI) and automation. However, this is offset by growth in nuanced, culturally grounded services that AI cannot replicate.

A hybrid model, combining human expertise with smart systems, may mitigate supply constraints without compromising quality. Sensitivity testing showed that each 0.1 percent change (up or down from the 0.71 percent annual reduction rate) resulted in around six more/fewer translators in 2040, which is a negligible impact given the overall number of translators and the timeframe.

Importantly, the supply and demand dynamics do not follow a simple linear trend; various factors, including population growth, policy decisions, technology, and workforce participation, interact in ways that can amplify or dampen demand. For instance, while AI-driven translation tools may reduce routine translation needs, they also heighten the demand for culturally adept, highly skilled interpreters and translators who can navigate domain-specific and cultural complexities beyond machine capacity.



### 3.3 Demand for T&I services in other languages

Between 2023 and 2040, demand for non-Māori translators and interpreters is projected to grow steadily, driven by population increases and expanding service needs. Translators face a particularly sharp imbalance: while demand rises from 870 to 1,162, supply remains nearly flat, increasing by only 14 positions. This results in a widening gap that reaches 278 by 2040.

Interpreters are likely to experience a similar trend, with demand growing from 1,045 to 1,545, and supply increasing more substantially, but still not enough to close the gap, which is projected to reach 258 by 2040. These figures highlight a structural shortfall in workforce planning for language services.

The model suggests that without intervention, the supply of non-Māori language professionals will increasingly fall short of demand. Translators are especially vulnerable due to stagnant supply growth, while interpreters benefit from a more responsive pipeline but still face a growing deficit. Addressing this imbalance will require targeted workforce development, including expanded training and recruitment pathways.

## 4 Remuneration

Remuneration for te reo Māori translators and interpreters (T&I) remains inconsistent across sectors and experience levels, compounded by limited, fragmented data and a large portion of freelancers or part-time workers. This variability poses a significant barrier to workforce retention and professionalisation. Without standardised remuneration, the sector risks losing skilled practitioners to more stable professions, undermining long-term sustainability.

To address this, Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori is well positioned to develop recommendations for standardised remuneration frameworks that recognise the unique cultural and professional value of te reo Māori T&I services. Such frameworks would support equitable pay, help attract qualified practitioners, and contribute to stabilising and growing the workforce.

### 4.1 Wage modelling

Establishing clear pay guidelines aligned with certification levels could also create transparent career pathways, incentivising ongoing professional development and commitment within this vital sector. While publicly available remuneration data for te reo Māori T&I remains limited, indicative wage modelling offers a useful starting point for understanding current market conditions.

According to the 2022 NZ Income Survey, the national median income for translators (ANZSCO 272413) was \$40,100, with entry-level professionals (0–2 years' experience) earning around \$32,300 (Table 1). Translators typically work an average of 29.3 hours per week, with an estimated hourly rate of \$26.33. For interpreters (ANZSCO 272412), the national median income was lower at \$33,200, with entry-level earnings at \$22,900 and an average hourly rate of \$33.59 based on 19 hours of work per week (Table 2).

More recent 2025 data from service providers shows interpreting rates ranging from \$30 to \$140 per hour depending on domain and delivery mode, with Court and Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) interpreting averaging \$35–\$40 per hour, and telephone or video interpreting reaching up to \$84 after hours (Table 3). Translation rates vary by language and complexity, with te reo Māori translations typically priced at \$0.60 per word, compared to \$0.40 for Pacific languages and \$0.20 for standard text.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> "Standard text" generally refers to documents or content that does not contain specialised terminology or technical language and is usually intended for general use or personal purposes.

Table 1 Wage modelling, translators (2022)

<b>Translator – ANZSCO 272413</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>Hours</b>
<b>NZ Income Survey national median</b>	40,100	
0-2 years' exp	32,300	
2-5 years' exp	32,400	
5+ years' exp	40,100	
Hourly rate	26.33	
Average hours of work per week		29.3
<b>From the AUT report:</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>Rate</b>
Te reo Māori	0.6	per word
Pacific languages	0.4	per word
Standard text	0.2	per word

Sources: Counties Manukau DHB, Department of Justice, MBIE, and Connecting Now

These figures suggest that remuneration varies significantly by domain, experience, and delivery format, and that te reo Māori translation commands a premium relative to other languages. However, the absence of comprehensive, standardised data on earnings, contract structures, and career progression limits the ability to establish robust remuneration benchmarks or design targeted professional development pathways. Further research and sector-wide data collection are needed to inform equitable pay structures and support sustainable career development for te reo Māori T&I professionals.

Table 2 Wage modelling, interpreters (2022)

Interpreters – ANZSCO 272412	\$	Hours
NZ Income Survey national median	33,200	
0-2 years' exp	22,900	
2-5 years' exp	26,800	
5+ years' exp	33,200	
Hourly rate	33.59	
Average hours of work per week		19

Sources: Counties Manukau DHB, Department of Justice, MBIE, and Connecting Now

Table 3 Pay rates for interpreting (2025)

Interpreters	\$	Rate
Court interpreting	35	per hour in Auckland (minimum of 3 hours)
Interpreting for MBIE	40	per hour
Healthcare interpreting	30	per hour during daytime hours
Telephone interpreting (Connecting Now)	60.6	per hour within business hours, \$84 after hours
Video interpreting (Connecting Now)	56	per hour within business hours, \$75 after hours
Pay rates range from	\$30 to \$140	per hour

Sources: Counties Manukau DHB, Department of Justice, MBIE, and Connecting Now

## 4.2 Market value

Based on the current 2025 workforce data and 2022 wage modelling, the estimated market value of te reo Māori T&I services is as follows:

- Translation services: Approximately 105 dedicated translators and 153 individuals who perform both translating and interpreting roles

- Interpreting services: Approximately 15 dedicated interpreters and the same 153 dual-role professionals.

Considering that many practitioners perform both translating and interpreting, it is more accurate to account for a combined hourly rate. Assuming an average composite rate of \$29.20 per hour for those working around 40 hours per week across both roles, the total market value is estimated at approximately \$14 million annually.

These figures are derived from limited publicly available data and reflect an effort to avoid overestimation by recognising workforce overlap. However, actual market value may fluctuate due to regional variations, freelance and part-time work arrangements, and demand changes.

These estimates should be interpreted cautiously, as they do not account for informal contributions, regional disparities, or the cultural value embedded in te reo Māori T&I work. Enhanced data collection is recommended to improve accuracy for future workforce planning and remuneration benchmarking.

## 5 Market comparison: Te reo Māori and the general language market

Comparing the markets for te reo Māori translation and interpreting (T&I) with Aotearoa New Zealand's broader T&I sector reveals distinctive characteristics shaped by differing demand drivers and workforce dynamics. Whereas the general T&I market responds largely to immigration patterns and the linguistic diversity of migrants, including Mandarin, Samoan, Hindi, and refugee languages, the market for te reo Māori T&I is deeply embedded in indigenous language revitalisation efforts, guided by national strategies like Maihi Karauna, and is supported by the growth of the Māori population.

Certification requirements and pathways for professional development vary markedly between these sectors. Te reo Māori T&I practitioners often come from diverse educational backgrounds, including substantial informal learning, contrasting with the more standardised qualification expectations typically found in other language T&I services. These differences highlight the importance of tailored strategies to effectively nurture and support the workforce for te reo Māori T&I.

Demand for non-Māori language T&I in Aotearoa New Zealand centres on facilitating communication for migrants and refugees with limited English proficiency accessing public services like healthcare and government agencies. Estimates indicate that between 89,000 and 751,000 people may require such interpreting assistance, with a significant concentration of demand in Auckland. This T&I work spans a wide range of languages, reflecting migration trends, yet service provision remains uneven, particularly in smaller towns and primary care settings.

Unlike the general T&I market, which is reactive to immigration, demand for te reo Māori T&I is proactive, driven by language and cultural revitalisation priorities and te Tiriti obligations. This focus shapes the distribution and nature of interpreter services, highlighting different sectoral challenges and opportunities for workforce development and resourcing.

## 6 The opportunity landscape

The sector for te reo Māori translation and interpreting (T&I) plays a vital role in supporting language revitalisation and enabling access to services across government, health, justice, and private domains. Despite a passionate and steadily growing workforce, significant challenges persist in workforce visibility and development.

Many practitioners work part-time or freelance alongside other roles, resulting in limited data and a fragmented understanding of the sector's size, composition, and quality standards. This lack of visibility hampers efforts to map and support the workforce effectively.

Education and certification pathways likewise remain underdeveloped and somewhat opaque. While the resurgence of te reo Māori through educational initiatives has expanded the pool of proficient speakers, the transition to formal certification and professional practice is not well defined. There is a strategic opportunity to co-design education and certification frameworks that embody kaupapa Māori values, recognise diverse lived experiences, and provide multiple entry points into the profession, ensuring a sustainable flow of qualified T&I.

At the same time, sector demand is evolving, with growing needs in critical areas such as justice and health. However, persistent systemic barriers limit the supply and effectiveness of T&I services. These include significant gaps in domain-specific vocabulary, particularly legal terminology rooted in Western traditions, and institutional environments that lack the cultural competencies and infrastructure to support te reo Māori interpreting adequately. Addressing these linguistic, cultural, and structural challenges is essential for meeting the unmet needs of reo Māori-speaking communities and enabling equitable access to vital services.

Together, these interconnected issues of workforce visibility, education pathways, and sector demand highlight both the progress and ongoing barriers within the ecosystem of te reo Māori T&I. Addressing the barriers through collaborative, culturally grounded approaches will be key to strengthening the profession and fully realising its contribution to language revitalisation and social equity.

### 6.1 Workforce visibility and gaps

The workforce for te reo Māori T&I is active, passionate, and steadily growing. However, it remains largely invisible. Many professionals in this field work part-time, as freelancers, or balance T&I work alongside other roles, making it difficult to capture an accurate or comprehensive picture of the

workforce. This lack of visibility is not just a data collection issue; it represents a strategic challenge and opportunity for the sector.

There is a pressing need for robust mapping of the workforce, including mechanisms for recording and recognising informal entry pathways and contributions outside formal certification. Ensuring that every contributor to te reo Māori T&I is visible, valued, and appropriately supported is critical for workforce development and sector sustainability.

Research by Kelly and Poyser (2020) underscores that most translators are self-employed, typically securing work through personal networks or agencies. As of 2025, 272 T&I practitioners were registered with Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori (TTWh), but there is still little transparency around how contracts are allocated, workforce earnings, or the specific nature of the work undertaken. The absence of systematic oversight and comprehensive data hampers consistent quality assurance and leads to variable professional standards across the sector.

Since 2023, demand for te reo Māori T&I has experienced a notable decline, largely due to decreased government spending and fewer public sector contracts.<sup>4</sup> This shift has significantly impacted established translators and interpreters, many of whom previously relied on public sector work for stable income and ongoing professional engagement. Consequently, T&I work has become increasingly fragmented and sporadic, often undertaken alongside other employment or in a freelance capacity.

While the private sector continues to sustain a steady level of demand, softening the effects of declining public sector contracts, the overall shrinkage in government investment has resulted in fewer opportunities and decreased earning potential for experienced T&I practitioners.<sup>5</sup> This environment has compelled many to diversify their work portfolios or transition into more secure roles outside the sector, exacerbating challenges around workforce visibility, continuity, and the long-term sustainability of the profession.

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<sup>4</sup> This insight was shared by TTWh staff during a sense-making hui held as part of the research process.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.



## 6.2 Education and certification pathways

There is currently no single, clearly defined pathway to becoming a te reo Māori translator or interpreter. The revitalisation of te reo Māori within education, particularly through Kohanga Reo and Kura Kaupapa Māori, has expanded the pool of proficient speakers and potential T&I practitioners. Yet, the progression from language education to formal certification and professional practice remains unclear, largely due to limited data on graduate outcomes and the rates at which new speakers actually enter the T&I workforce.

While this creates real challenges for workforce planning and sector development, it also presents a unique opportunity: the chance to co-design an education and certification framework that is firmly grounded in kaupapa Māori values and that recognises the diverse skills, lived experiences, and community contributions of te reo Māori speakers. Rather than focusing narrowly on formal qualifications, such a system could provide multiple entry points and prioritise empowerment, recognition, and support for all prospective translators and interpreters.

Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori (TTWh), under the Māori Language Act 2016, has statutory authority to certify translators. This certification process currently includes training in translation theory, orthographic conventions, and practical translation skills, culminating in both written and oral examinations.

However, the connection between the education system, community language revitalisation initiatives, and formal certification remains poorly understood. Comprehensive data on graduate and practitioner outcomes is lacking, making it difficult to assess how effectively current pathways are supporting the sector's needs.

Strengthening and clarifying education and certification pathways is essential to ensure a steady and well-supported stream of qualified professionals. A responsive, kaupapa Māori-aligned framework would help ensure the sustainability and growth of the T&I workforce, aligning sector standards with the aspirations and realities of te reo Māori communities.

## 6.3 Sector demand and unmet needs

While demand for te reo Māori T&I services continues to grow in critical domains such as justice and health, significant barriers remain, most notably, gaps in domain-specific vocabulary. For example, much of the necessary terminology in legal contexts is deeply rooted in Latin and Western legal traditions, making direct, culturally resonant translation into te reo Māori challenging, and at times, impossible. This linguistic challenge presents an opportunity for TTWh to lead the development of culturally resonant legal and health lexicons, enhancing service accessibility and sector credibility.

These challenges are compounded by systemic and structural barriers. Many courtrooms, legal processes, and health service settings have not been designed or adapted to accommodate te reo Māori interpreting. They often lack the necessary infrastructure, protocols, and cultural competencies to support high-quality T&I experiences. This environment not only limits demand, because institutions may be reluctant to offer services they cannot fully support, but also discourages interpreters from entering or remaining in the profession due to the risk of poor working conditions and compromised quality.

Importantly, this is not merely a question of vocabulary or technical language. It reflects deeper systemic, cultural, and structural issues within public institutions. The absence of equivalent concepts and culturally appropriate frameworks places a heavy burden on interpreters, who must navigate not only linguistic but also conceptual gaps. This can undermine accurate communication, the fairness of proceedings, and equitable outcomes for participants who speak te reo Māori.

Addressing these unmet needs will require collaboration across sectors to develop new terminology, invest in workforce and institutional capability, and embed te reo Māori considerations throughout justice and health systems. Only by confronting both the linguistic and systemic challenges can the sector ensure that T&I services are responsive to the diverse and growing needs of the reo Māori-speaking community.

## 6.4 Opportunities for Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori

Several challenges for te reo Māori T&I also represent vital avenues for transformative leadership by TTWh:

- **Domain-specific vocabulary gaps:** The shortage of specialised lexicons in areas such as legal and healthcare terminology offers TTWh a chance to spearhead the development of bespoke language resources and certification standards that enhance practitioner competence and sector credibility
- **Institutional readiness:** Many environments are yet to fully embed te reo Māori T&I, creating opportunities for TTWh to advocate for cultural competency training and make certification a recognised quality benchmark across sectors
- **Workforce visibility:** The prevalence of part-time and dual-role professionals makes the workforce less visible and harder to support. TTWh can develop mapping tools and pathways that formally recognise informal and diverse qualifications, increasing workforce cohesion and resource targeting
- **Inconsistent remuneration:** Varied pay scales threaten retention and recruitment. There is an opportunity for TTWh to lead initiatives establishing standardised pay frameworks that reflect both cultural importance and professional skill, encouraging workforce stability.

## 7 Strategic levers for growth

The future of te reo Māori translation and interpreting (T&I) is not a passive trajectory to be forecast but an active field to shape through deliberate policy and sectoral intervention. This chapter outlines three critical levers: policy and legislative frameworks, data sharing, and technology and innovation. Each of these levers is essential to building a sustainable, culturally embedded T&I sector that meets rising demand and enhances social outcomes.

These three levers are practical tools that translate strategy into meaningful impact for practitioners, policymakers, educators, and communities. Their activation responds directly to current gaps in the system and reflects a kaupapa Māori approach that centres opportunity, complexity, and revitalisation. The model's projections directly inform certification targets, helping Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori allocate resources efficiently and respond to changing demand.

### 7.1 Policy and legislative levers

Policy is a foundational mechanism for sustainable sector development. Despite the symbolic and constitutional recognition of te reo Māori, its T&I services remain poorly supported at institutional and legislative levels. Currently, there are no mandated rights to access professional te reo Māori interpreters within essential public services, no coherent accreditation or certification pathway tailored to kaupapa Māori principles, and no consistent funding model to enable workforce and capability development.

Policymakers must institutionalise access to te reo Māori T&I within core government sectors, particularly health, justice, and education, where language access significantly impacts outcomes. Drawing on international comparisons (Cabrera, 2017; Gray & Hardt, 2017), a legislative framework, akin to the United States' Title VI provisions, could guarantee language rights and interpreter access, adapted to the unique context of cultural revitalisation, rather than immigration-driven demand.

This requires mandated access to interpreters in healthcare and legal settings, supported by legislation that recognises language rights for te reo Māori speakers,<sup>6</sup> and the integration of interpreter services with health navigation and social support machinery. This will ensure role delineation, appropriate training, and accountability standards (Gray et al., 2017). These legislative

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<sup>6</sup> Māori Language Act 2016 (Section 7(3)) grants access in the Courts and legal proceedings only.

shifts are not just procedural; they are acts of mana-enhancing reform that uphold the rights and dignity of te reo Māori speakers.

The absence of a national standard to certify te reo Māori T&I professionals undermines workforce development and service quality. Current international certification models (e.g., NAATI from July 2024: AUT, 2022) put emphasis on formal qualifications but may not capture the cultural specificity required in te reo Māori contexts. An effective accreditation system for te reo Māori T&I could incorporate kaupapa Māori methodologies and community-based expertise alongside conventional professional competencies.

Unlike standardised international models, a kaupapa Māori accreditation system would centre te ao Māori principles and values, such as whanaungatanga, manaakitanga, and mātauranga Māori as core competencies. Such a system would ideally establish minimum standards for practice, ethics, and ongoing professional development, ensuring translators and interpreters are both technically skilled and interculturally competent. Collaboration with education providers and iwi would help maintain responsiveness to evolving community needs and support broader language revitalisation goals.

## **Securing sustainable funding mechanisms**

Sustained funding is essential for workforce growth, training delivery, and consistent service provision. Such funding models should be co-designed with iwi, education providers, and community leaders to reflect collective accountability for language equity. Funding arrangements should move beyond short-term or piecemeal grants towards:

- A national funding framework guaranteed by government, supporting both workforce development and operational T&I services
- Incentives to increase participation among fluent speakers and bilingual experts, including pay parity that reflects the cultural and professional value of te reo Māori T&I (Kelly & Poyser, 2020)
- Support for minority language services within mainstream budgets, ensuring te reo Māori services are embedded within broader public service funding envelopes rather than treated as add-ons.

## 7.2 Data sharing for workforce visibility and planning

Current data on te reo Māori T&I supply and demand is fragmented or non-existent, making it difficult to assess workforce capacity, service coverage, and sector trends. This data gap presents an opportunity to build a coordinated, kaupapa Māori-aligned workforce intelligence system that reflects the lived realities of translators, interpreters, and communities.

Cross-sector collaboration could help address this by establishing shared data repositories and coordinated workforce intelligence strategies. This might include standardising data collection on T&I supply and demand by sector, pay rates, and skill levels.

Improved data could then inform forecasting models and policy interventions, strengthening the evidence base for resourcing decisions. Greater transparency would also help identify workforce gaps and service inequities, particularly in high-need areas such as health and justice.

## 7.3 Technology and innovation

Technological innovation presents both opportunities and challenges for te reo Māori T&I. While Artificial Intelligence (AI) and digital platforms have transformed the global T&I industry, the cultural depth, relational context, and tikanga embedded in te reo Māori communication limit the applicability of automated solutions alone (Frey & Llanos-Paredes, 2025).

The nuanced nature of te reo Māori requires human expertise to ensure meaning is conveyed accurately and respectfully. However, technology can still play a valuable supporting role, particularly in training, service coordination, and terminology management.

Digital learning platforms and simulation tools could enhance T&I training and certification processes, while service portals may improve booking, scheduling, and quality assurance.

Specialised glossaries and terminology databases developed by Māori language experts could also support consistent, high-quality translations.

While AI has advanced in supporting basic language tasks, research consistently shows it is unlikely to fully replace the complex linguistic, cultural, and ethical skills required for professional te reo Māori T&I. Studies in the broader T&I sector indicate that AI often changes the nature of the work rather than eliminating it, leading to increased demand for skilled human post-editing and quality assurance to address nuances and contextual meaning that automated tools cannot reliably capture (Rehm et al., 2020).

Given concerns around data sovereignty and cultural integrity, investment in Māori-led technology solutions is essential. Partnering with Māori technology enterprises and language experts can help design tools that respect tikanga and safeguard community ownership of linguistic data and intellectual property (Kelly & Poyser, 2020).

Research and development of AI models trained specifically on te reo Māori, with appropriate cultural oversight, may offer further support to practitioners. A hybrid approach that combines human expertise with smart systems could extend the reach of T&I services, particularly in remote or underserved areas, without compromising cultural or linguistic quality. In this way, technology becomes a tool for empowerment, supporting te reo Māori T&I professionals to work smarter, maintain high standards, and expand their impact across Aotearoa.

## 8 Conclusion

This market analysis provides a foundational evidence base to guide Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori (TTWh) in developing a sustainable, culturally grounded certification system for te reo Māori translation and interpreting (T&I). The research has demonstrated that demand for T&I services will grow steadily over the next decade, driven by demographic shifts, increasing language proficiency, and expanding service needs across the public, private, and community sectors.

However, this growth is not linear. It is shaped by complex feedback loops involving population dynamics, policy settings, technological disruption, and workforce participation. The bespoke supply and demand model developed for this project reflects these complexities and offers a flexible tool for strategic planning.

The analysis highlights a widening gap between projected demand and available supply, particularly in high-impact domains such as health and justice. This gap highlights the urgency of investing in workforce development, certification pathways, and remuneration frameworks that recognise the unique cultural and professional value of te reo Māori T&I.

The current remuneration landscape is fragmented and inconsistent, posing a risk to workforce retention and professionalisation. TTWh is well positioned to lead the development of standardised pay structures that reflect both cultural importance and professional skill, helping to stabilise and grow the sector.

Challenges identified throughout the report, such as limited data, informal education pathways, domain-specific vocabulary gaps, and institutional readiness, are reframed as opportunities for TTWh to provide transformative leadership. By co-designing education and certification frameworks that align with kaupapa Māori principles, TTWh can ensure that diverse lived experiences and community contributions are recognised and supported. Similarly, by advocating for cultural competency across institutions and investing in lexicon development, TTWh can enhance the visibility, credibility, and impact of the T&I workforce.

Comparative analysis with the general T&I market reveals that te reo Māori T&I operates under distinct conditions, shaped by revitalisation goals rather than immigration-driven demand. This distinction reinforces the need for tailored strategies that reflect the cultural, linguistic, and professional dynamics of the sector.



The report also draws attention to the importance of improved data collection and workforce mapping to improve visibility, inform policy, and guide investment. Without accurate data, efforts to support the workforce risk being misaligned or ineffective.

Technology presents both challenges and opportunities. While AI may reduce demand for routine translation tasks, it cannot replicate the cultural depth and relational context required for high-quality te reo Māori T&I. A hybrid approach that combines human expertise with smart systems offers a promising path forward, particularly in underserved regions.

Ultimately, this report affirms that the future of te reo Māori T&I is not predetermined; it is a space to be actively shaped. TTWh has a critical role to play in enabling a thriving, visible, and well-supported workforce that contributes meaningfully to Māori language revitalisation and equitable service delivery. The findings and recommendations herein provide a strategic roadmap for that journey.

## Appendix A Methodology

Business and Economic Research Limited (BERL) utilised a bespoke methodology to undertake the market analysis for translators and interpreters of te reo Māori. This methodology was informed by a standard market analysis methodology. However, due to the lack of information and data on te reo Māori translation and interpreting (T&I) in Aotearoa New Zealand, the research developed some customised methods for determining present and future demand.

At a high level, the methodology and workflow were composed primarily of three components:

- 1. Literature scan** – An investigation of current literature on the market for T&I in Aotearoa New Zealand and internationally, with a focus on te reo Māori. This involved examining academic research, industry and government reports, and publications from relevant organisations. Literature was examined to give context to the research and to inform the model building.
- 2. Data collection** – Data collection was straightforward for this project, though assessing the usefulness and quality of the data was far more difficult. Most data used to inform the model originated from Statistics New Zealand (Stats NZ) or from the literature scan. Where data gaps were present, there was limited engagement with stakeholders via email to understand if they had any available data on T&I in Aotearoa New Zealand or could offer any evidence that would help us understand the gap and what could be done to fill it.
- 3. Model building** – A bespoke market analysis model was built around a standard market analysis, which explores supply and demand factors for the market. For a standard model, demand is determined from a combination of historic growth and expected industry demand, while supply would come from the graduates from the education sector plus known migration numbers. The bespoke nature of the model was in assessing and incorporating how supply and demand factors outside the standard factors influenced the market, given the unique nature of the market for te reo Māori.

As part of the methodological approach, a sense-making hui was held with staff from Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori (TTWh) to contextualise and interpret preliminary findings. This hui provided an opportunity to validate the findings from the literature and model building, and to ensure that the perspectives of those working closely with te reo Māori translation and interpretation were accurately reflected. The discussions informed several qualitative elements of the report, and played a critical role in shaping the narrative and ensuring cultural relevance.

## Literature scan

We conducted a literature scan to assess the current state of te reo Māori T&I in Aotearoa New Zealand. The scan aimed to support the development of a robust forecasting model by identifying key market characteristics, data sources, and methodological approaches. The literature scan had three primary objectives:

- To understand the current state of the Aotearoa New Zealand market (supply and demand) for te reo Māori T&I
- To gather information on education pathways, pay rates, speaker numbers, and T&I ratios across industries to inform the forecasting model
- To identify relevant market studies and methodologies to ensure best practice in our approach.

Due to limited targeted research on te reo Māori T&I, a broad scan was undertaken across government, academic, kaupapa Māori, and international sources. All potentially relevant documents were considered and then assessed for methodological quality and relevance. Searches were conducted using academic databases, general search engines, and AI tools (e.g., Perplexity) to ensure comprehensive coverage. Selected literature was reviewed for its contribution to understanding supply and demand, with a focus on informing the forecasting model.

## Highlights from the literature

### 1. A future in interpreting and translation (Auckland University of Technology, 2022)

- Findings: There is high demand for interpreters and translators of te reo Māori, Pacific, and refugee languages. National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI) certification will be required for public service interpreters from July 2024
- Implications: Te reo Māori T&I services require formal education and certification pathways tailored to kaupapa Māori principles. Workforce development must balance professional standards with cultural integrity and community-based expertise.

### 2. The European language technology landscape in 2020: Language-centric and human-centric AI for cross-cultural communication in multilingual Europe (Rehm et al., 2020)

- Findings: The European language technology ecosystem is diverse but fragmented, with AI advancing language services across multiple languages while highlighting the need for human-centric approaches that respect cultural nuances, minority languages, and

data sovereignty. Automation aids cross-lingual communication but cannot fully replace human expertise due to linguistic and cultural complexity

- Implications: Development of AI tools for te reo Māori T&I should prioritise culturally embedded, human-centred design, ensuring technologies complement rather than replace human interpreters and translators while safeguarding linguistic data and supporting minority language revitalisation.

### **3. Interpreter services and healthcare outcomes (Heath, Hvass, & Wejse, 2023)**

- Findings: Professional interpreters improve patient outcomes; relational interpreters may introduce risks
- Implications: Highlights the need for professional te reo Māori interpreters in health settings. Training must balance cultural familiarity with professional standards.

### **4. Lost in translation (Frey & Llanos-Paredes, 2025)**

- Findings: Machine translation reduced job creation; wage recovery occurred; demand for foreign language skills declined
- Implications: AI may reduce demand for general translation, but te reo Māori's cultural and contextual nuances limit automation. Investment in human expertise remains critical.

### **5. Mapping the te reo Māori translation ecosystem (Kelly & Poyser, 2020)**

- Findings: Translation is economically significant; industry lacks regulation and standard pay; cultural value is hard to quantify
- Implications: Reinforces the need for structured workforce development and recognition of te reo Māori's unique value beyond economic metrics.

### **6. Fair and accessible public services (Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, 2016)**

- Findings: Over 150 languages spoken; lack of accreditation; inconsistent interpreter use across agencies.
- Implications: Te reo Māori services face similar fragmentation. A national framework for accreditation and service standards is needed.

## **7. The translating and interpreting industry in the United States (Cabrera, 2017)**

- Findings: Growth driven by Hispanic population and legislation (Title VI); emphasis on certification and formal training
- Implications: Te reo Māori demand is driven by cultural revitalisation, not immigration or consumer economics. Certification pathways are underdeveloped and must be culturally grounded.

## **8. Integrating health navigation and interpreting (Gray et al., 2017)**

- Findings: Navigators often act as interpreters; overlap creates risk without training
- Implications: Te reo Māori health navigators need formal interpreting training to ensure safe and effective service delivery.

## **9. Comparison of interpreter use in New Zealand and USA (Gray & Hardt, 2017)**

- Findings: Aotearoa New Zealand lacks Limited English Proficiency (LEP) data and medical interpreter infrastructure; the USA has structured systems.
- Implications: Te reo Māori services require better data, infrastructure, and integration into health systems.

## **10. A fair chance for all (Gray, 2022)**

- Findings: LEP individuals face systemic disadvantage; calls for a Language Assistance Programme.
- Implications: Te reo Māori speakers may face similar barriers. A dedicated programme could support equitable access and workforce planning.

An annotated bibliography of the relevant research can be found in Appendix A.

## **Implications for te reo Māori services**

- Demand drivers: Unlike overseas markets, te reo Māori demand is rooted in cultural revitalisation, not immigration or economic consumerism
- Policy needs: Stronger legislative and institutional support is needed to embed te reo Māori services across sectors
- Professionalisation: Certification and training pathways must be developed but they must be aligned with kaupapa Māori principles

- Health sector priority: Professional interpreters are essential in healthcare; informal roles must be formalised and supported
- AI considerations: While AI may impact general T&I services, te reo Māori's cultural and linguistic depth limits automation, reinforcing the need for human expertise.

## Data collection

Data collection for the model was relatively straightforward, and the majority of the datasets required were able to be obtained from Stats NZ or came from the results of the literature scan undertaken in step one. The datasets obtained from Stats NZ include the following:

- Languages spoken by ethnicity, age, and gender from the 2013, 2018, and 2023 Censuses
- Percentage share of highly fluent te reo Māori speakers by age from the 2013 and 2018 te Kupenga survey
- National ethnic population projections by age and gender (2018 to 2043) for Māori
- National population projections by age and gender (2020 to 2050)
- Ethnicity by age and gender for the 2013, 2018, and 2023 Censuses
- Occupation (Interpreter and Translator) by ethnicity, gender, and age for the 2006, 2013, 2018, and 2023 Censuses.

While the data that came from the literature scan included:

- Reduction in annual job growth in translators from AI translation tools
- Benchmarks on the number of interpreters and translators per 1000 speakers of a secondary language.

In addition to these main data sources, we identified and approached several further potential sources of data on T&I, both of te reo Māori and other languages. These other data sources are as follows:

- Ministry of Education – Data on annual enrolment numbers between 2015 and 2024 for the field of study translating and interpreting, by ethnicity
- He Ara Poutama – Forecasts on te reo Māori speaker numbers from 2013 through to 2040 by ethnicity, age, and gender

- The Government's Language Assistance Service (LAS) – Some data on the number of calls for te reo Māori assistance in the last year and the total time spent providing the telephone and video assistance.

Lastly, when further data gaps were identified, we undertook a limited engagement phase with stakeholders via email. The aim of the engagement was to understand if they had any available data on T&I in Aotearoa New Zealand that could fill the data gap, if they knew of a data source that could fill the data gap, or if they could offer any evidence, context, or advice that would help us understand the data gap and what could be done to overcome it, whether that was via using an identified proxy or by using an assumption based on stakeholders' advice.

## Model building

The supply and demand model was built across three phases. The first was demand drivers for T&I services based on population and spoken language growth. The second phase was supply of services using formal education and current numbers of employed people. Finally, the third phase added in supply and demand factors that would influence the core demand or supply variables, such as AI tools and government policy.

### Phase one – Demand drivers

In phase one, we took the Stats NZ median annual growth population projections for both total population and Māori ethnic populations and applied them to the usual resident population numbers from the 2023 Census to establish the expected population growth in both the Māori ethnic population and the total population out to 2040. Population growth projections are required in the model to estimate the future number of speakers of both te reo Māori and other languages.

Once the population projections were determined, we used a combination of He Ara Poutama projections for both the number of te reo Māori speakers and highly fluent te reo Māori speakers, historic growth data from the 2013 and 2018 censuses, and historic growth in highly fluent te reo Māori speakers from the 2012 and 2018 te Kupenga surveys. With He Ara Poutama projections as the base and the additional supporting data from the historic changes, we were able to apply these growth projections to the population projections to estimate out to 2040 the number of te reo Māori speakers and highly fluent te reo Māori speakers. These projections were for both Māori and non-Māori populations. For speakers of other languages, we utilised the historic growth patterns and

share of total population and combined these with population projections to estimate the growth in the numbers out to 2040.

This work provided the main identified driver of demand for te reo Māori T&I services, individuals able to speak and use te reo Māori, as well as enabling us to estimate the main driver of similar services for other languages.

## **Phase two – Supply drivers**

In this second phase of building the model, the focus was on the main drivers of the supply of T&I services, which are the current number of individuals supplying the market, how many individuals per year are leaving the market, and lastly, what is the number of individuals entering the market each year. The main data source has been the 2006, 2013, 2018, and 2023 Census counts of individuals whose main job was a translator (ANZSCO code 272413) or an interpreter (ANZSCO code 272412). Though due to Stats NZ not differentiating between languages for these occupations, we have used the ethnicity of the individuals as a proxy for the split between te reo Māori T&I and T&I of other languages.

In addition, Census data only records the main job undertaken by an individual, so translators and interpreters who undertake the work as their secondary job are missing from the datasets provided. Though to estimate the split between full-time (main job) and part-time (secondary job) translators and interpreters, we were able to match the occupation data for 2023 with the number of current official te reo Māori translators and interpreters from Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori and the results of a 2024 survey by the New Zealand Society of Translators and Interpreters (NZSTI), which found that a high proportion of translators worked part-time as freelancers, while a high proportion of interpreters were employed either part-time or fulltime. This work enabled us to use estimates of the changes in the full-time occupations to estimate the changes in the overall workforce.

Given that currently there is no formal pathway to becoming a translator or interpreter, such as mandated tertiary education, as there is for many professionals, for example, nurses, accountants, and/or real estate agents, it is difficult to robustly estimate the number of individuals entering the market. Therefore, to estimate the net number of people both entering and exiting the workforce, we need to use historic changes in the number of people employed in the occupation. This is because any changes in the number of people employed in the market are the results of the number of people entering minus the number of people leaving. If the number of people employed in the



occupation is growing, then the number of people entering is greater than the number of people exiting.

Using this, we determined the 10-year and five-year change in the number of Māori and non-Māori translators and interpreters. Using these growth patterns, we then estimated the likely change in the total number of people employed going forward.

### **Phase three – Additional drivers**

It is in this third phase of the model build that we add in further drivers of supply and demand that are unique to the market for T&I, both those that provide te reo Māori services and those that provide services in other languages. These additional drivers of demand include government policy drivers to ensure those individuals without adequate levels of English are able to access government services, government policy drivers involving the use and promotion of te reo Māori within Aotearoa New Zealand, businesses' demand for services in their operations (this includes a diverse range of activities such as signs in non-English languages, marketing, video games, export and import trade, etc.), and lastly the emergence of AI translation tools, which can drive down demand for T&I services.

For the first of these additional drivers, government policy drivers around ensuring access to government services for those without an adequate level of English, we contacted the Language Assistance Service (LAS), which was established in 2017 by MBIE and, as of 1 July 2025, was being run by the Ministry for Ethnic Communities (MEC). However, only a small amount of information was able to be shared by the LAS on the use of te reo Māori and other language services. This information showed that in particular te reo Māori was a small fraction of the programme service provision, undertaken via 10 contracted private sector agencies (of which three provided te reo Māori services), seven (including the three te reo Māori providers) provided services for other languages, and three separate agencies provided sign language).

This information provided by LAS, along with narratives gained from stakeholders, led us to assume that currently very little additional demand for te reo Māori services would originate from the government, though it was also assumed that higher demand would be occurring for T&I services in other languages. To cater for our assumption, a variable was added to the model to enable us to alter this additional demand driver.

The second additional driver involves government use and promotion of te reo Māori within Aotearoa New Zealand. While there has been a decline in the usage of te reo Māori across

government, there is no evidence that this policy change will lead to a change in the demand for te reo Māori T&I services in the future, which was reinforced through our discussions with stakeholders. Therefore, we have assumed that there will be no additional demand driver in the future from this source.

The third additional demand driver is businesses' demand for T&I services in their operations, which is widespread across industries. Discussions with stakeholders noted that businesses are the main purchasers of T&I services. Businesses purchase these services for a variety of reasons, such as marketing, inclusion within a service or product, documentation and other interactions with international buyers and sellers, and devising multilingual signs or other documents.

Domestic-focused use of T&I services is tied to the size of the target population of the business, and therefore increases in the number of speakers of a language would potentially lead to an increase in businesses purchasing these services. This does mean that we need to ensure that any additional demand growth attributed to business demand is separated from the growth in the number of speakers of a language, as this is already included in the model.

Overall, based on the anecdotal evidence and narrative provided, we have assumed a small additional annual growth in demand for T&I services over and above the growth in language speakers. To cater for this assumption, a variable was added to the model to enable us to alter this additional demand driver.

Finally, the last demand driver investigated for inclusion in the model is the emergence and proliferation of AI tools for T&I. In recent years, AI tools for translating and interpreting have dramatically improved along with their widespread availability. This will inevitably put downward pressure on the growth in demand for T&I services, as individuals, businesses, and government agencies can undertake routine or simple T&I services via these AI tools.

Within the literature scanned for this project, research from the United States (Cabrera, 2017) examined the impact AI tools then available were having on the Spanish language T&I market. The results of their study showed that AI tools were decreasing the annual percentage growth in the US by 0.71 percent or that, without access to AI tools, the annual growth in the number of individuals supplying T&I services would have grown 0.71 percent faster than it did. While the power of AI tools has improved and they are more widely available, languages such as te reo Māori, with its much smaller base of speakers than Spanish or other languages, limit the ability of such AI tools as they require extensive learning material to train on.

Therefore, we assumed that the 0.71 percent decline in annual demand for T&I services observed in the US for the Spanish market is relevant to the Aotearoa New Zealand market. Again, given this is an assumption for the model, a variable was added to the model to enable us to alter this additional demand driver.

## Limitations and assumptions

This section outlines the key limitations and assumptions that underpin the forecasting model and narrative presented in this report. These considerations are essential for interpreting the findings and understanding the scope of the analysis.

### Limitations

A significant limitation of this market analysis is the reliance on formal occupational and demographic data as proxies for workforce size and capacity. This approach may under-represent the te reo Māori T&I workforce due to the prevalence of part-time practitioners, dual-role individuals, and those with informal or community-based education pathways. Moreover, unlike many other language services, formal qualifications are less common in the te reo Māori T&I sector, complicating efforts to accurately estimate supply. Data gaps, especially in informal education and volunteer interpreting, add a layer of uncertainty. Recognising these methodological constraints, the report recommends future investment in robust data collection mechanisms and workforce mapping exercises, enabling a clearer picture of workforce composition and needs to inform certification and policy decisions more effectively.

**Data gaps in informal pathways:** There is limited data on informal education and training pathways for te reo Māori T&I, and these pathways are under-represented. This affects the ability to fully capture the supply pipeline, especially for those entering the profession outside formal tertiary channels. Future data collection should aim to capture these contributions.

**Distinctiveness of te reo Māori T&I:** The market for te reo Māori T&I operates differently from other language markets in Aotearoa. This includes unique cultural, linguistic, and professional dynamics that are not always reflected in generalised datasets or international comparisons.

**Unverified technological impact:** The assumed annual replacement rate of –0.71 percent due to AI and technological disruption is based on a study from the USA and has not yet been validated in the Aotearoa New Zealand context.

**Occupational classification challenges:** Stats NZ data does not distinguish te reo Māori T&I from other language professionals. Māori ethnic identifiers are used as proxies, which may not fully reflect the actual te reo Māori workforce.

**Workforce visibility:** There is a discrepancy between the number of certified professionals and those whose main occupation is translating or interpreting. This suggests a significant proportion of part-time or dual-role practitioners, which is verified by the results of a small workforce survey conducted by the New Zealand Society of Translators and Interpreters (NZSTI), complicating workforce estimates that rely on workers being employed in the occupation as their main source of employment.

## Assumptions

**Speaker growth projections:** The model assumes growth in te reo Māori speakers based on historic trends and He Ara Poutama forecasts. By 2040, it is projected there will be 317,400 speakers, including 76,730 highly fluent Māori speakers.

**Supply-demand balance:** The current market is assumed to be relatively balanced, with no significant over- or under-supply of services.

**Turnover rate:** An annual occupational turnover rate of eight percent is assumed, consistent with professional industry averages, though its applicability to this sector is uncertain.

**Certification and education pathways:** It is assumed that certification requires tertiary study in relevant fields, enabling the use of Ministry of Education enrolment data to estimate future supply.

**Workforce composition:** Approximately 40 percent of translators and 60 percent of interpreters are assumed to work full-time, based on the ratio of certified professionals to occupational data.

**Rate benchmarks:** Translator rates from AUT's "A future in interpreting and translation" report are assumed to reflect current market conditions.

**Government utilisation data:** Data from the Language Services Commission is assumed to accurately represent central government demand for te reo Māori T&I services.

## Appendix B Annotated bibliography

Title	A future in interpreting and translation
Date	2022
Authors	Auckland University of Technology (AUT)
Country and/or agency	Auckland University of Technology, Aotearoa New Zealand
Focus	Roles, responsibilities, and career prospects for interpreters and translators in Aotearoa New Zealand
Type	Informational and career document
Aim / objective	The document aims to provide comprehensive information and guidance for individuals considering a career in interpreting and translation in Aotearoa New Zealand.
Summary of key findings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Roles: Interpreters and translators help people communicate across language barriers in legal, health, educational, and social contexts</li> <li>• Certification: National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI) certification will be required for public service interpreters from July 2024</li> <li>• Demand: High demand for interpreters and translators of te reo Māori, Pacific languages, and refugee languages</li> <li>• Work Settings: Interpreters often work in police stations, courts, hospitals, and government departments; translators usually work from home</li> <li>• Skills: Requires bilingual proficiency, cultural sensitivity, and strong communication skills</li> <li>• Education: AUT offers a Bachelor of Arts in Interpreting and/or Translation, preparing students for NAATI certification</li> <li>• Salaries: Interpreting rates range from \$30 to \$140 per hour; translation rates vary based on word count and specialisation.</li> </ul>

Notes	Document published by AUT that covers key aspects of a career in translating and interpreting.
APA 7 reference	Auckland University of Technology. (2022). <i>A future in interpreting and translation</i> . <a href="https://www.aut.ac.nz/_data/assets/pdf_file/0018/136512/Interpreting-and-translation.pdf">https://www.aut.ac.nz/_data/assets/pdf_file/0018/136512/Interpreting-and-translation.pdf</a>

Title	<b>The European language technology landscape in 2020: Language-centric and human-centric AI for cross-cultural communication in multilingual Europe</b>
Date	11 May 2020
Authors	European Language Resources Association (ELRA) and collaborators
Country and/or agency	European research consortium under the European Commission
Focus	Overview of the European language technology landscape, including AI initiatives and their application to multilingual communication.
Type	Conference paper: Proceedings of the 12th Language Resources and Evaluation Conference (LREC)
Aim / objective	To map language technology projects, research funding, and strategic priorities related to AI and language resources in Europe.
Summary of key findings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AI is advancing language-centric and human-centric technologies to support cross-cultural communication in a multilingual Europe</li> <li>• Despite rapid AI development, challenges remain in fully automating complex language tasks due to linguistic diversity and cultural specificity</li> <li>• AI applications often require human oversight, especially when language preservation, minority languages, and cultural nuances are involved</li> <li>• Strategic recommendations focus on interoperability, ethical frameworks, and sustainable investment in technologies respecting linguistic rights and data sovereignty.</li> </ul>

Notes	The report provides evidence that AI complements rather than replaces human expertise in linguistically complex, culturally sensitive contexts.
APA 7 reference	Rehm, G., Marheinecke, K., Hegele, S., Piperidis, S., Bontcheva, K., Hajič, J., Choukri, K., Vasiljevs, A., Backfried, G., Prinz, Ch., Gómez-Pérez, J. M., Meertens, L., Lukowicz, P., van Genabith, J., Lösch, A., Slusallek, Ph., Irgens, M., Gatellier, P., Köhler, J., Le Bars, L., Anastasiou, D., Aukšoriūtė, A., Bel, N., Branco, A., Budin, G., Daelemans, W., De Smedt, K., Garabík, R., Gavriilidou, M., Gromann, D., Koeva, S., Krek, S., Krstev, C., Lindén, K., Magnini, B., Odijk, J., Ogrodniczuk, M., Rögnvaldsson, E., Rosner, M., Pedersen, B., Skadiņa, I., Tadić, M., Tufiş, D., Váradi, T., Vider, K., Way, A., & Yvon, F. (2020). The European language technology landscape in 2020: Language-centric and human-centric AI for cross-cultural communication in multilingual Europe. European Language Resources Association. <a href="https://aclanthology.org/2020.lrec-1.407.pdf">https://aclanthology.org/2020.lrec-1.407.pdf</a>

Title	<b>Interpreter services and effect on healthcare: A systematic review of the impact of different types of interpreters on patient outcome</b>
Date	24 January 2023
Authors	Morten Heath, Anne Mette Fløe Hvass, and Christian Morberg Wejse
Country and/or agency	Aarhus University, Denmark
Abstract	Utilisation of interpreters to facilitate communication between health care providers and non-native-speaking patients is essential to provide the best possible quality of care. Yet use and policy on the subject vary widely, as does knowledge on the effect of different types of interpreters. This paper systematically reviews the literature on the use of interpreters in the medical setting to evaluate their effects on the quality of care.
Type	Academic research paper
Aim / objective	Evaluate how different types of interpreters (professional, ad hoc, relational, any, and no interpreter) affect patient satisfaction, communication, utilisation of healthcare services, and clinical outcomes.

Summary of key findings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Professional interpreters: Provide the highest patient satisfaction and best communication outcomes</li> <li>Relational interpreters: Effective in private practice but may introduce issues like gatekeeping</li> <li>Utilisation and clinical outcomes: Generally better with professional interpreters, though more data is needed for ad hoc and relational interpreters</li> <li>Barriers: Availability and time constraints often lead to reliance on relational interpreters, or no interpreters</li> <li>Recommendations: Use in-person professional interpreters in all medical settings; consider relational interpreters with proper training.</li> </ul>
Notes	Indicates professional interpreters and translators lead to the best patient outcomes, indicating a potential increase in demand.
APA 7 reference	<p>Heath, M., Hvass, A. M. F., &amp; Wejse, C. M. (2023). Interpreter services and effect on healthcare: A systematic review of the impact of different types of interpreters on patient outcome. <i>The Lancet Regional Health – Europe</i>.</p> <p><a href="https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2666623523000120">https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2666623523000120</a></p>

Title	<b>Lost in translation: Artificial Intelligence and the demand for foreign language skills</b>
Date	7 March 2023
Authors	Carl Benedikt Frey and Pedro Llanos-Paredes
Country and/or agency	Oxford Internet Institute, University of Oxford, United Kingdom
Abstract	Rapid advancements in artificial intelligence (AI) have sparked debate over its employment effects, yet evidence on AI's labour market impacts remains scant. This study investigates the labour market effects of machine translation (MT) on a) employment and wages in the translation profession and b) the demand for foreign language skills across occupations and industries. Taking advantage of the heterogeneity



	in the use of MT across 695 local labour markets in the United States, we analyse its effects post-2010, when Google Translate was released as an app. Doing so, we document a negative relationship between Google Translate adoption and translator employment, corroborated by an instrumental variable approach and a host of placebo regressions. Similarly, improvements in MT reduced the demand for all foreign language skills investigated, including Spanish, Chinese, Japanese, French, and German.
Type	Academic research paper
Aim / objective	This document aims to investigate the impact of machine translation (MT) on employment and wages in the translation profession, as well as the demand for foreign language skills across various occupations and industries.
Summary of key findings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Translator employment: Google Translate adoption led to a significant decline in translator jobs, with around 28,000 fewer positions created</li> <li>• Wages: Initial wage growth slowed but recovered by 2016, with no long-term impact on wages to 2023</li> <li>• Foreign language skills: Demand for skills in Spanish, Chinese, Japanese, German, and French decreased, especially for Spanish</li> <li>• Occupational impact: Decline in demand for language skills across various job sectors, notably in healthcare and industry</li> <li>• Technological advancements: Impact intensified with neural machine translation (NMT) from 2016 onwards.</li> </ul>
Notes	Used job postings from Lightcast to measure demand and then local employment and wage statistics to measure the impact.
APA 7 reference	Frey, C. B., & Llanos-Paredes, P. (2025, March 7). <i>Lost in translation: Artificial intelligence and the demand for foreign language skills</i> . Oxford Internet Institute, University of Oxford. <a href="https://oms-www.files.svdcdn.com/production/downloads/academic/Frey_LlanosParedes_2025_LostInTranslation.pdf">https://oms-www.files.svdcdn.com/production/downloads/academic/Frey_LlanosParedes_2025_LostInTranslation.pdf</a>

Title	<b>Mapping the te reo Māori translation ecosystem: A socio-economic perspective</b>
Date	2 February, 2020
Authors	Hēmi Kelly and Andre Poyser
Country and/or agency	Te Kaharoa, Aotearoa New Zealand
Abstract	<p>The increased use of te reo Māori by the government and the corporate sector in Aotearoa has created numerous opportunities for te reo Māori translators who are engaged to translate voluminous te reo Māori documents, websites and apps, digital and social media messages, and public signage, which have proliferated in recent times. These translation works represent significant economic activity, as te reo Māori translators are awarded contracts valued at thousands of dollars. The economic ecosystem created by the increased opportunities in the use of te reo Māori translation is a dynamic one that requires detailed study and attention from te reo Māori scholars, given the need for quality assurance and maintenance of the standards of the language. To set the backdrop for the paper, a literature review on the history and development of te reo Māori translation will be presented. The historical antecedents of the te reo Māori translation economy will be traced and highlighted as the springboard for the current state of the te reo Māori translation economy, which will then be discussed. An in-depth analysis of the licensing process for te reo Māori translators will be presented, and arguments for an expanded role of Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori in providing oversight of translation contracts will be made. We will present a theoretical framework for the economic considerations surrounding the te reo Māori translation ecosystem and provide a narrative and schematic description of a te reo Māori translator's work as a paid economic activity. In doing this, we shed light on the growing economic importance of te reo Māori.</p>
Type	Academic research paper
Aim / objective	The aim of the document is to explore and analyse the economic and socio-cultural aspects of the te reo Māori translation ecosystem in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Summary of key findings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic contribution: te reo Māori translation work is a significant economic activity, with strong demand from government and corporate sectors</li> <li>• Quality assurance: There is a need for quality assurance and oversight of translation work to maintain language standards</li> <li>• Historical context: Revitalisation efforts, particularly through education, have been crucial in the resurgence of te reo Māori</li> <li>• Technological advancements: Technology, including machine translation, has enhanced translation work</li> <li>• Fragmented industry: The translation industry lacks standard pay rates and consistent regulation</li> <li>• Language economics: The te reo Māori translation economy is part of the broader field of language economics, emphasising the economic value of language usage.</li> </ul>
Notes	<p>Discusses at a high level the te reo Māori translation economy, including key stakeholders, translator regulations, wages, and demand, and touches on the theoretical value of languages. “The economic value of te reo Māori is therefore the sum total expenditure on te reo Māori through production and consumption of te reo Māori products and services.”</p> <p>The research acknowledges the difficulty in placing an economic value on an intangible cultural asset.</p>
APA 7 reference	<p>Kelly, H., &amp; Poyser, A. (2020). Mapping the te reo Māori translation ecosystem: A socio-economic perspective. <i>Te Kaharoa</i>, 15(1).</p> <p><a href="https://www.tekaharoa.com/index.php/tekaharoa/article/view/308">https://www.tekaharoa.com/index.php/tekaharoa/article/view/308</a></p>

Title	<b>Fair and accessible public services: Summary report on the use of interpreters and other language assistance in New Zealand</b>
Date	November 2016
Authors	Hēmi Kelly and Andre Poyser

Country and/or agency	Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE), Aotearoa New Zealand
Focus	The document focuses on identifying challenges and opportunities in the provision of interpreter and language assistance services for newcomers in Aotearoa New Zealand.
Type	Government report
Aim / objective	To evaluate the current state of interpreter and language assistance services, and propose improvements to ensure equitable access for newcomers.
Summary of key findings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diversity and language needs: Aotearoa New Zealand's population is increasingly diverse, with many residents from non-English-speaking backgrounds needing interpreter services</li> <li>• Current state: Over 150 languages are spoken; there are around 400 interpreters, mostly in Auckland; there is no formal accreditation process for interpreters</li> <li>• Challenges: Difficulties accessing interpreters for some languages; inconsistent use of interpreters across government agencies</li> <li>• International practices: Best practices from Australia, Canada, and the UK emphasise accreditation and professional standards.</li> </ul> <p>Proposals:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop whole-of-government guidelines and training</li> <li>2. Improve information about interpreter services</li> <li>3. Establish minimum standards for interpreters</li> <li>4. Create all-of-government purchasing arrangements</li> <li>5. Conduct a cost-benefit analysis for a nationwide telephone interpreting service</li> <li>6. Establish a language services portal</li> <li>7. Reassess funding for NGOs and consider purchasing services in first languages.</li> </ol>
Notes	Discusses areas of demand (mostly from government), as well as proposed regulatory changes in the translation industry.

APA 7 reference	Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment. (2016, November). <i>Fair and accessible public services: Summary report on the use of interpreter services and other language assistance in New Zealand</i> . <a href="https://www.mbie.govt.nz/dmsdocument/12344-fair-and-accessible-public-services-summary-report-on-the-use-of-interpreter-services-and-other-language-assistance-in-new-zealand">https://www.mbie.govt.nz/dmsdocument/12344-fair-and-accessible-public-services-summary-report-on-the-use-of-interpreter-services-and-other-language-assistance-in-new-zealand</a>
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Title	<b>The translation and interpreting industry in the United States</b>
Date	28 February 2017
Authors	Tamara Cabrera
Country and/or agency	Cervantes Institute at the Faculty of Arts and Sciences of Harvard University, United States of America (USA)
Abstract	This report provides a general overview of the translation and interpreting industry in the United States, with an emphasis on the Spanish-English language combination. It illustrates its steady growth over the past twenty years and identifies three causes for the expansion of this industry: (i) a more diverse demographical landscape, (ii) a changing economy, and (iii) the enforcement of language access legislation.
Type	Academic research paper
Aim / objective	The paper aims to provide insights into the factors contributing to the industry's growth, the challenges and opportunities it faces, and the importance of professionalisation and education in sustaining its development.
Summary of key findings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Industry growth: The industry has grown significantly and is projected to grow by 29 percent from 2014 to 2024</li> <li>• Spanish language: The Hispanic population is the largest minority in the USA, driving demand for Spanish translators and interpreters</li> <li>• Economic impact: Hispanics' increasing disposable income makes them a key consumer base, boosting demand for translation services</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legislation: Language access laws like Title VI of the Civil Rights Act increase the need for translation and interpreting services</li> <li>• Professionalisation: Certification and training are crucial for ensuring quality and professionalism in the industry</li> <li>• Training and education: Academic programmes for translation and interpreting are growing, meeting the demand for trained professionals.</li> </ul>
Notes	The report offers useful benchmarks and structural insights that were incorporated into our methodology for estimating demand and professionalisation pathways in the Aotearoa New Zealand context.
	<p>Cabrera, T. (2017, February 28). <i>The translation and interpreting industry in the United States</i>. Cervantes Institute at FAS, Harvard University.</p> <p><a href="https://cervantesobservatorio.fas.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/028_report_translation_2.pdf">https://cervantesobservatorio.fas.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/028_report_translation_2.pdf</a></p>

Title	<b>Integrating health navigation and interpreting services for patients with limited English proficiency</b>
Date	2017
Authors	Ben Gray, Maria Stubbe, and Jo Hilder
Country and/or agency	University of Otago, Aotearoa New Zealand
Focus	The focus of this document is investigating the interface between health navigators and interpreters in overcoming barriers to healthcare for patients with Limited English Proficiency (LEP).
Type	Academic research paper
Aim / objective	Investigating the interface between health navigators and interpreters in overcoming barriers to healthcare for patients with LEP.

Summary of key findings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Barriers to healthcare include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Health system barriers: Complexity, inflexibility, poor administration, and clinic locations</li> <li>○ Population characteristics: Language barriers, cultural differences, health literacy, and attitudes</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Role of navigators: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Holistic support: Navigators provide comprehensive support, focusing on the best outcomes for patients</li> <li>○ Key tasks: Navigating the health system, overcoming language barriers, educating, advocating, mediating, and liaising</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Overlap with interpreters: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Navigators often perform interpreting tasks, especially in hospitals</li> <li>○ They provide explanations in ways their community understands, beyond word-for-word translation</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Training and professionalisation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Navigators need formal interpreting training and accreditation</li> <li>○ Support for a combined navigator/interpreter role with appropriate training.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Notes	<p>Discusses demand for translators and interpreters from a healthcare industry perspective. The need for specific training specialised for healthcare may limit the potential supply of translators and interpreters.</p>
APA 7 reference	<p>Gray, B., Stubbe, M., &amp; Hilder, J. (2017). <i>Integrating health navigation and interpreting services for patients with limited English proficiency</i>. Wellington: Department of Primary Health Care and General Practice, University of Otago Wellington (ARCH Group).  <a href="https://www.otago.ac.nz/_data/assets/pdf_file/0027/331893/integrating-health-navigation-and-interpreting-services-for-patients-with-limited-english-proficiency-657055.pdf">https://www.otago.ac.nz/_data/assets/pdf_file/0027/331893/integrating-health-navigation-and-interpreting-services-for-patients-with-limited-english-proficiency-657055.pdf</a></p>

Title	<b>A comparison of the use of interpreters in New Zealand and the United States</b>
Date	02/06/2017
Authors	Ben Gray and Eric J Hardt
Country and/or agency	University of Otago, New Zealand
Abstract	Cultural competency in medicine is not possible unless language differences are addressed effectively. Many disparities that appear to be based on cultural, socioeconomic, demographic, and other differences can be reduced or eliminated with the use of qualified medical translators and interpreters in multilingual situations. The development of this precious resource varies from country to country around the world, as most developed countries face increasingly diverse groups of immigrants and refugees as well as the inclusion of more indigenous groups of patients. The US has been one of the leaders in this area since the 1980s. Countries like New Zealand are in different stages of development and on different pathways. Increased international collaboration may facilitate the evolution of cost-effective inclusion of professional medical interpreters as part of multidisciplinary health care teams.
Type	Academic research paper
Aim / objective	The aim of this paper is to investigate the differences in a healthcare setting for interpreters between New Zealand and the USA
Summary of key findings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultural competency: Addressing language differences is crucial for achieving cultural competency in healthcare. Qualified medical interpreters can significantly reduce disparities in healthcare</li> <li>• Human rights and patient safety: Qualified interpreters reduce adverse events and improve patient safety, addressing historical disparities in healthcare quality and access</li> <li>• Cost concerns: While concerns about the high cost of interpreter services have delayed their evolution, studies suggest that the cost of not using interpreters can be higher due to poor health outcomes</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited English proficiency (LEP) data: The US has detailed data on LEP from the Census, which helps in studying language-based disparities. New Zealand lacks such detailed data, making it difficult to study these disparities</li> <li>• Organisation of interpreter services: The US has state-wide and international organisations for medical interpreters, while New Zealand lacks dedicated medical interpreter organisations</li> <li>• Future directions: For New Zealand, a census question measuring LEP is essential, and medical interpreters should be integrated as professional team members. For the US, cost-effectiveness should be a priority, and clinicians need to develop skills to judge the quality of communication and use appropriate interpreting tools</li> </ul>
Notes	Brief overview document that contains some interesting methodology points to consider but does briefly discuss ways to increase supply by incorporating technology into medical practice (video call translators etc)
APA 7 reference	<p>Gray, B., &amp; Hardt, E. J. (2017, June 2). A comparison of the use of interpreters in New Zealand and the US. <i>The New Zealand Medical Journal</i>, 130(1456).</p> <p><a href="https://communityresearch.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Comparison-of-the-use-of-interpreters-in-NZ-and-US.pdf">https://communityresearch.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Comparison-of-the-use-of-interpreters-in-NZ-and-US.pdf</a></p>

<b>Title</b>	<b>A fair chance for all</b>
Date	06/10/2022
Authors	Ben Gray
Country and/or agency	University of Otago, Aotearoa New Zealand
Abstract	<p>There is a group of people who suffer significant disadvantage that tend to be absent in most documents, including this one...people who speak little English. Following are excerpts from a position paper that I wrote for Tū Ora PHO on interpreting for Primary Care. Similar arguments apply to access to an interpreter in every other facet of life. Without an ability to communicate, engagement is difficult.</p>

Type	Submission to the Productivity Commission
Aim / objective	The document is a submission and includes extracts from a position paper. It aims to highlight the significant disadvantages faced by people with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) in Aotearoa New Zealand and to advocate for better interpreter services to ensure equitable access to health care and social inclusion. It seeks to recommend systemic changes, including a centrally funded Language Assistance Programme to address these issues and improve the overall well-being of this population group.
Summary of key findings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LEP and disadvantage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ LEP individuals in Aotearoa New Zealand face major barriers to social inclusion and healthcare due to communication challenges</li> <li>○ They are often excluded from policy discussions on persistent disadvantage and should be explicitly included</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Language diversity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 2018 Census data shows growing linguistic diversity: 4.6 percent of the population doesn't speak English, and up to 16 percent may need interpreters</li> <li>○ Auckland has the highest LEP concentration, with at least 69,000 people needing interpreters</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Interpreter services in healthcare <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Interpreter provision is inadequate, especially in primary care</li> <li>○ Data on interpreter use is fragmented, with poor funding and lack of systematic collection</li> </ul> </li> <li>• International comparisons <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Australia and Switzerland offer strong models for interpreter services</li> <li>○ Aotearoa New Zealand is at phase 3–4 of Switzerland's framework, indicating progress but also significant gaps</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Social inclusion and equity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ LEP individuals struggle to access healthcare, legal, and community services</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ A centrally funded Language Assistance Programme is recommended to address fragmented government efforts</li> <li>• Institutional racism and unconscious bias <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The lack of interpreter services is seen as institutional racism and unconscious bias</li> <li>○ The Code of Patient Rights (Right 5) is weakly enforced, limiting LEP individuals' communication rights</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Policy recommendations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Include LEP individuals in disadvantage and inclusion policies</li> <li>○ Improve data collection on interpreter needs</li> <li>○ Promote use of trained, professional interpreters across sectors</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Progress and challenges <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ MBIE's Language Assistance Project is a positive step but excludes key services like primary care and midwifery</li> <li>○ More consistent and effective use of interpreters is needed across all sectors</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Conclusion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Urgent need for improved interpreter services and policy reform to support LEP individuals</li> <li>○ Systemic changes are essential for equitable healthcare access and social inclusion.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Notes	Submission to the Productivity Commission that covers supply and demand for interpreters in Aotearoa New Zealand. The demand methodology (who would need an interpreter in a healthcare setting) could be incorporated for languages originating outside of Aotearoa New Zealand.
APA 7 reference	Gray, B. (2022, October 6). <i>A fair chance for all</i> [Submission to the Productivity Commission]. The Treasury. <a href="https://www.treasury.govt.nz/sites/default/files/2024-05/pc-inq-fcfa-dr-095-ben-gray.pdf">https://www.treasury.govt.nz/sites/default/files/2024-05/pc-inq-fcfa-dr-095-ben-gray.pdf</a>