Cloak or Skin: Perceptions of Māori Responsiveness in Auckland Council's Research and Evaluation Unit, RIMU
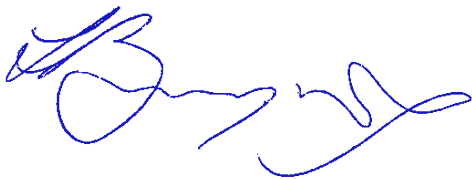
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Cloak or Skin: Perceptions of Māori Responsiveness in Auckland Council's Research and Evaluation Unit, RIMU

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Acknowledgements

Executive summary

The Research and Evaluation Unit (RIMU) is Auckland Council's environmental, social, economic and cultural research centre and shares the organisation's commitment to becoming more responsive to Māori. Alongside the Māori Responsiveness Plan Literature Review (Gooder, 2015), this report on the current state of perceptions and attitudes to Māori responsiveness provides the foundation on which to build a Māori Responsiveness Plan for RIMU based on Whiria Te Muka Tangata, The Māori Responsiveness Framework.

Two complimentary methods were used for the research: an online survey of RIMU staff to canvas the breadth of perceptions around Māori responsiveness (n=40, a response rate of 75%) and in-depth, one-on-one interviews to enable a more nuanced examination of the subject (n=12, with representation from across RIMU's four teams). Although the survey responses and the interview transcripts indicated broad support for the development of Māori responsiveness in RIMU, this sentiment cannot be extrapolated to every member of the unit.

RIMU staff are diverse in terms of their work hours, tenure, location, relationships and tasks. Moreover, they understand their role, and the unit itself, in different ways. It is important to keep this diversity in mind when considering the findings of this report, discussed in brief below and in greater detail in the body of the report.

Survey respondents generally rated poorly their skills and abilities in areas related to Māori. This was particularly the case with respect to conversing in te reo Māori; knowledge of Auckland's iwi and hapū; and knowledge and understanding of how their work contributes to Māori outcomes.

The majority of survey respondents agreed that RIMU's work is important for delivering on Māori responsiveness for Auckland Council (73%) and that it was important to have an understanding of Māori culture, issues and values in their work (78%). Although just over half (53%) disagreed that they maintain strong and sustainable relationships with Māori in their professional capacity, there was considerable support for improvement in this area, with 82 per cent agreeing that RIMU should invest in the development of effective relationships with Māori in Tāmaki Makaurau.

While many interviewees found it difficult to articulate what Māori responsiveness meant to them, most focused on ideas of listening, consulting and engaging with Māori, as well as notions of inclusion and participation, of 'bringing them in'. The narrative of transformation – the imperative to adjust every phase of the research process - was also prominent, as was its counter-narrative, the idea that Māori responsiveness might not require the dismantling and rebuilding of research and monitoring projects but instead involve incremental change.

Interviewees discussed a number of projects, activities and tasks that were illustrative of RIMU being responsive to Māori. These included Whenua Rangatira;[1] Māori representation on Auckland Council's Human Participants Ethics Committee; the identification of Māori values in relation to water; the analysis and provision of existing data sets; and a project on the Māori economy. A range of suggestions were proposed to further develop these areas, the most common of which

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[1] Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei is returning Whenua Rangatira and nearby land at Ōkahu Bay and Pourewa Creek to native bush. RIMU staff are involved in this work.

was the need for excellent liaison between RIMU and iwi/hapū. Other suggestions included the need to develop our own skills; integrating Māori needs into existing programmes and the counter-narrative of re-examining how we do our research; devoting sufficient resources to the project; and the nurturing of collaborative, co-operative relationships with Māori.

The most notable finding with respect to perceptions of RIMU's current responsiveness to Māori is the depth and breadth of the consensus on two issues: that RIMU is currently largely unresponsive to Māori; and that the unit is willing, well-meaning and trying hard to change this for the better.

Overall, very few respondents agreed that there were examples of Māori leadership or mentoring in RIMU, and many did not know if there were any. Similarly, although a third (33%) stated they did not know whether there are programmes to promote Māori skills in the research areas RIMU is involved with, just over half (51%) disagreed that these programmes are available. Moreover, 72 per cent of participants disagreed that Auckland Council had prepared them well to work with Māori.

It is difficult to reach a definitive conclusion on the issue of racism in the workplace from the responses to the survey. Seventy-eight per cent of participants disagreed that they had witnessed or experienced racism in the previous 12 months, however, 13 per cent agreed. In addition, comments written in the free text box associated with this question suggest that the notion of 'racism' means different things to different people.

Most interviewees agreed in principle that some measures of responsiveness to Māori should be included in the assessment of staff performance but there was some uncertainty about the following: who would select these measures; whether or not it should be compulsory and universal; and, if it were implemented, whether it should involve a checklist or some more qualitative measure. Many of these narratives reveal a sense of uncertainty, ambivalence and concern about the implications of such a change, in particular that it might impact negatively on staff members' willingness to engage with the Māori Responsiveness Project.

While almost half (49%) of the respondents to the survey agreed that they understand issues of significance to Māori in their research areas, and 35 per cent agreed that RIMU supports Māori initiated research, only five per cent felt that relationships with Māori stakeholders set the platform for conversations about the projects their team works on. These results reflect one of the main themes of the research: most participants agreed that it is important for RIMU to be more responsive to Māori, but many are uncertain or generally negative about the extent to which the unit is currently engaged in the kinds of activities that would enable this.

When asked to imagine 'perfect' responsiveness to Māori, interviewees talked about a broad range of attributes, positions, processes, activities and methodologies. The most prominent theme was the narrative of Māori responsiveness as a modification of existing practices and processes, or integration; and the counter-narrative of Māori responsiveness as a more transformational endeavour. Other themes included a focus on relationships, engagement and collaboration; the need for the right people, processes and support; the importance of recruiting more Māori staff; and the need to improve the skills of current RIMU staff. Resistance to the idea of responsiveness

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to Māori was also evident in some of the survey comments, most commonly expressed as a reluctance to focus only on Māori rather than all ethnic groups and/or perceived need.

In response to questions of measurement and evaluation, respondents noted both how important it is to get a sense of progress made but also how difficult it will be to do so. Several ways of measuring progress were proposed - some involved the implicit or explicit endorsement of Māori while others entailed different forms of external validation. Respondents also suggested a high-level objective of Māori responsiveness as 'business as usual'; the quality of RIMU's relationships with Māori; and the addition of Māori staff to the unit.

The main challenge that interviewees anticipated in the implementation of RIMU's Māori Responsiveness Plan was securing the many and varied resources required to ensure better responsiveness to Māori: time, money, skills, liaison support and overall capacity. Other challenges included: the diversity of staff roles, disciplinary backgrounds, work hours, tenure, location and relationships; staff attitudes towards Māori responsiveness specifically and towards Māori generally; and understanding and working with iwi and hapū, especially in relation to internal conflicts and groups that are overwhelmed by the demands of consultation. The final challenge articulated by respondents focused on communicating, implementing and embedding the plan in ways that enabled the sustainable development of Māori responsiveness across the unit.

Some of the strengths RIMU brings to the Māori responsiveness project were linked with individuals while others were associated with the unit as a whole. Empathy, openness and agility were most frequently mentioned but interviewees also talked about RIMU's strong team spirit and the breadth of staff specialist knowledge; the strength that derives from a supportive management team; and the unit's reach and influence across the organisation. RIMU's diversity, while considered a challenge by some, was perceived as a strength by others.

Interviewees' hopes and fears in relation to the Māori responsiveness plan process were, to some extent, two sides of the same coin. The most frequently mentioned expectation was that colleagues across the unit genuinely embraced the plan; were able to articulate its value; and that it became a natural part of the way we work. Participants also talked about increasing skills and awareness at an individual and a collective level; and the development of good relationships with Māori. The most commonly expressed fear was that nothing would change as a result of the work undertaken in this area. Other anxieties included concerns about adequate resourcing for the project; a lack of commitment at levels of the organisation higher than RIMU; and that the plan might be poorly written, communicated and implemented.

Overall, several key themes emerged from this research. The foundation on which they sit is the theme of diversity – RIMU staff are diverse and understand their role, and the unit itself, in different ways. There are significant gaps in staff skills and knowledge related to Māori, and a lack of overall responsiveness to Māori, but considerable support for addressing those skill deficits and improving the unit's responsiveness. There is some uncertainty about what responsiveness might mean, both for individual staff and for the unit as a whole, but there is a strong belief that RIMU plays an important part in delivering on Auckland Council's obligations to Māori. Some view the path to perfect responsiveness to Māori as one of incremental change while others argue for the rebuilding

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of what we do and how we do it from the ground up. There are important differences between these approaches but they are neither insurmountable nor mutually exclusive.

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1.0   Introduction

Auckland Council is committed to becoming more responsive to Māori. The changes required to support this objective are informed by the Independent Māori Statutory Board's Te Tiriti o Waitangi Audit;[2] Te Tiriti o Waitangi principles established in case law and through the Waitangi Tribunal; and the priorities and issues of significance for Māori in Tāmaki Makaurau identified in The Māori Plan (2012; 2014). As Auckland Council's environmental, social, economic and cultural research centre, the Research and Evaluation Unit (RIMU) shares this commitment and is in the process of developing a Māori Responsiveness Plan (MRP) based on Whiria Te Muka Tangata – The Māori Responsiveness Framework (MRF).

The Independent Māori Statutory Board's Treaty Audit Response Work Programme identified the need for a better understanding and integration of Māori values, outcomes and responsibilities into council processes and practices. Departmental Māori Responsiveness Plans are a key tool in delivering this. The main objective of RIMU's Māori Responsiveness Plan (the Plan) will be to increase RIMU's responsiveness to Māori and deliver on the Māori Responsiveness Framework.

The RIMU Plan will therefore apply the Māori Responsiveness Framework to the department's business, culture, thinking and practices. The Plan will help to ensure that the policies and actions that RIMU owns and influences consider the protection and recognition of Māori rights, needs and interests within Tāmaki Makaurau. The Plan will also support RIMU in delivering the goals of the framework: to foster more positive and productive relationships between council and Māori; to develop the ability of council to respond more effectively to Māori; and to contribute to Māori well-being by developing strong Māori communities. Articulating and fulfilling the goals of the RIMU Māori Responsiveness Plan will also support the work of our colleagues across Auckland Council and its CCOs, including our partners in the development of the plan, Te Waka Angamua.

Before we can begin to articulate what future state(s) of responsiveness RIMU might aspire to, how we might get there, and how we might know when we had, however; it is necessary first to achieve an understanding of the current state of Māori responsiveness within RIMU. This is the overarching purpose of the primary research presented in this report.

The research scope includes RIMU's policies, processes, relationships – internal and external, as well as research, evaluation and monitoring programmes and projects. The research project's key objectives are to:

- establish current RIMU staff values, beliefs and attitudes towards Māori

- articulate staff perceptions in general across RIMU; and to explore emergent key themes

- map the current human and institutional capacity of RIMU for Māori responsiveness

- articulate staff understandings of an ideal state of responsiveness to Māori and how such a state might be achieved

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[2] Te Tiriti o Waitangi Audits (2012, 2015) were initiated by the Independent Māori Statutory Board to support its role in ensuring that Auckland Council acts in accordance with statutory provisions referring to the Treaty of Waitangi.

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- achieve an enabling and enabled research practice of engagement with staff and stakeholders as part of developing the RIMU MRP.

In short, this project will generate an overview of the 'terrain' of current Māori responsiveness within RIMU, a document that will sit alongside the Māori Responsiveness Plan Literature Review and provide a foundation for the development of the RIMU Māori Responsiveness Plan.

We begin the report by describing the research methods used and their limitations, turning then to one of the key themes to emerge from the survey and interviews - the diversity of RIMU staff tenure, hours, work environment, tasks and relationships. Section Four examines staff perceptions of their skills related to Māori while Section Five outlines perceptions of RIMU responsiveness to Māori, including an analysis of existing work and the ways in which this might be further developed. RIMU's current Māori responsiveness is discussed in Section Six, and includes a subsection looking specifically at the unit's processes and policies. We look next at RIMU research before envisaging perfect Māori responsiveness and how we might know once we get there. Sections Nine and Ten examine our challenges and strengths and our hopes and fears and finally in Section Eleven we focus on what would be helpful or reassuring for RIMU staff during this process.

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2.0 Method

In order to fulfil the objectives listed in the previous section, we chose two complimentary methods: a survey of RIMU staff to canvas the breadth of perceptions around responsiveness; and in-depth interviews to enable a more nuanced examination of the subject. See Appendix One and Two for copies of the survey questions and interview schedule. Ethical approval for the research was granted by Auckland Council's Human Participants Ethics Committee.

2.1 Survey

The first phase of the research comprised a confidential online survey delivered via Surveymonkey.[3] An invitation to participate was sent by email to all RIMU staff on the group email list as at February 2015. The survey went live on 23 February 2015 and closed on 12 March 2015. Two reminder emails were sent to staff: one week before the close of the survey and one day prior.

Of the 63 potential respondents, 40 completed the survey, resulting in a response rate of 63 per cent. However, of the 63 potential respondents, six were summer students who had left RIMU; three were transport modelling staff 'temporarily' located in RIMU; and one was transitioning out of the unit. If we remove these non-responders the survey response rate rises to 75 per cent.

2.2 Interviews

Participants were recruited for the semi-structured interviews through the survey. The survey Participant Information Sheet (PIS) was emailed to all potential participants along with the link to the survey: both the PIS and survey provided contact details for those interested in finding out more about the interviews and/or participating. In total, 12 hour-long interviews were conducted. Men and women were equally represented among the participants and there was also a fairly even representation across all of RIMU's four teams, as illustrated in Figure 1.

Some participants asked for copies of the questions before their interviews and these requests were accommodated. The interviewer felt that having access to the questions enabled participants to prepare, note relevant examples and record comments they wanted to cover in the interview. The interviews were transcribed and the resultant transcripts sent through to participants. In addition to redacting sections of their interview, some participants also chose to expand on or clarify their responses. These additional comments were then collated along with the original interview data. Overall, this iterative exchange most nearly resembles a form of 'co-production' that, in the interviewer's opinion, resulted in participants having a sense of ownership, confidence and involvement in the process.

A number of safeguards were put in place to protect the confidentiality of participants in the context of RIMU's small, intimate working environment. Electronic interview transcripts and digital recordings were securely stored and password protected. The interviewer was the only person to have access to the folder of raw and identifiable data, and this was destroyed at the end of her

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[3] https://www.surveymonkey.com/

contract with RIMU. De-identified transcripts were the basis of all the analysis presented in this report and every effort has been made to ensure that the verbatim comments contain no information that might identify individual participants.
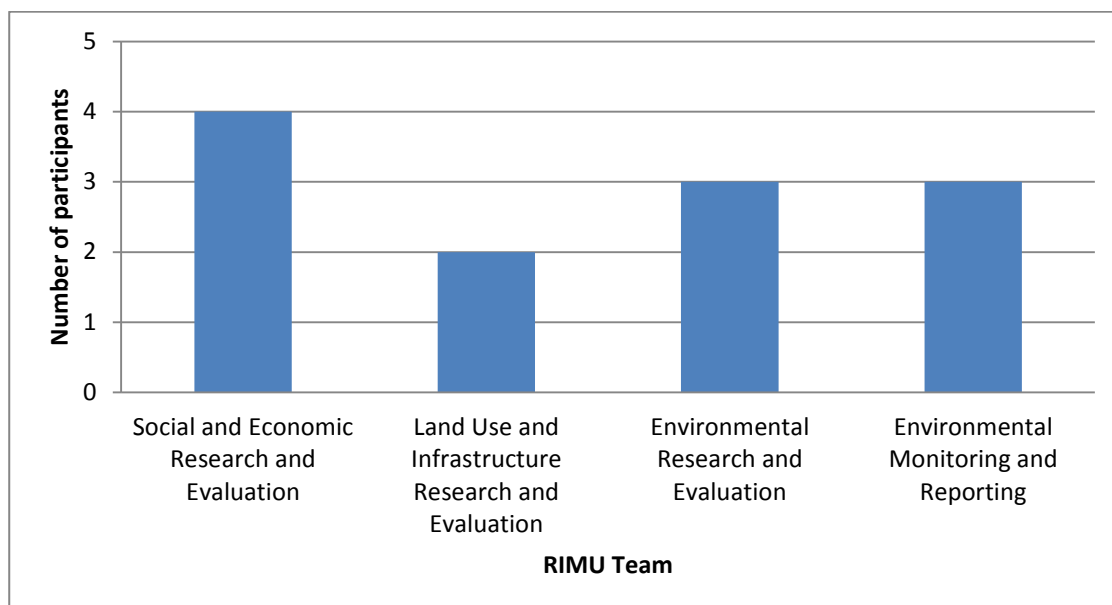
Figure 1 Interview participant distribution across RIMU teams

2.3   A caution

Overall, the survey responses and the interview transcripts suggest that RIMU staff are broadly supportive of the concept of Māori responsiveness and are prepared to adjust the ways in which they work in order to embed this responsiveness into RIMU's policies, processes and relationships. It is important to note, however, that we cannot assume that this sentiment can be extrapolated to every member of the unit. The interview participants, in particular, were overwhelmingly positive in their attitude towards increasing RIMU's responsiveness to Māori; given that these were individuals with sufficient interest and engagement to volunteer to be interviewed this is not necessarily representative. While the views expressed in the survey are probably more representative than those articulated in the interviews, it is not known why some staff members chose not to respond.

Two of the authors of this report were or are members of the Māori Responsiveness Project team and have been visible in the development of RIMU's Māori Responsiveness Plan. Many members of staff are aware of our views about this work and we acknowledge that this may have shaped participants' responses. Even though the survey was anonymous and the interviews were conducted by a summer student in order to protect participants' identity, it is hard to maintain true confidentiality in a small unit. Knowing that we would be working with the anonymised data may also have led people to feel constrained in what they could say.

3.0 RIMU: who we are and what we do

At the time the survey and interviews were undertaken, RIMU comprised 53 staff divided into four teams: Environmental Research and Evaluation (ERE), Environmental Monitoring and Reporting (EMR), Land Use and Infrastructure Research and Evaluation (LUIRE), and Economic and Social Research and Evaluation (ESRE). In order to contextualise the analysis of the survey and interview data that follows, it is important first to understand and appreciate who we are and what we do: our areas of focus; our tenure, hours and the environments within which we work; the tasks we perform; and our relationships, internal and external.

3.1 Areas of focus

RIMU is frequently described as an inter-, trans- or multidisciplinary research unit and the interview transcripts paint a vivid picture of this intellectual diversity. Participants' descriptions of their areas of focus included: housing costs and prices; water quality - lakes, streams, saline and ground water; economic costs and benefits; ecology - terrestrial, marine and fresh water; biodiversity – plants, animals and the land; and indicators of well-being.

3.2 Tenure, hours and work environment

Diversity similarly characterised staff tenure, working hours and the environments within which we work. Interviewees had been employed in local government for periods of several weeks to many years; worked as permanent, temporary and contract staff; were both full- and part-time; and were based in a wide range of field environments as well as in the office. The latter difference was perceived by interviewees as particularly significant and was articulated in two distinct ways: as a specific relationship to place; and as a qualitative difference in the relationships between team members that is derived to some extent from this relationship.

Staff articulated quite specific connections to 'the field' and 'the office', most commonly when making distinctions between 'social' researchers in the ESRE and LUIRE teams and 'environmental' researchers in the ERE and EMR teams. Interviewees who were more office based had a dense sense of place; the office context was strongly connected with how they understood their role within RIMU. Staff who spent a considerable number of work hours in the field, however, understood their employment space in more diffuse terms and were less tightly connected to office social structures. Participants who spent relatively more time outside of the office also demonstrated a different sense of personal connection to their team members. Respondents suggested that working closely together 'outside' and relying on team members to keep each other safe enabled a different type of bond.

> *… we spend a lot of time in the field so we are not really in the office … we probably spend 60 per cent plus of our time out and about. So yeah you don't really know what's happening back here aside from just your team dynamic … unless it's RIMU wide meetings we are very rarely kept in the loop.*

3.3   Tasks

The monitoring, research and evaluation activities undertaken by RIMU staff comprise a wide range of tasks including geospatial analysis; data management processes and systems; the development of student programmes and the supervision and mentoring of those students; editing and peer review; the employment of contractors; the provision of advice and support on research with human participants; and administrative responsibilities such as budget management. In turn, these feed into the development and monitoring of an array of Auckland Council plans, policies and strategies (Proposed Auckland Unitary Plan, Long Term Plan, Economic Development Strategy); the fulfilment of council's regulatory obligations (under the Resource Management Act, for example) as well as the work programmes of colleagues from across the council whānau.

> *… we not only collect the data and analyse the data but we also interpret that data so people can understand what it means in the broader context as well …[4]*

> *… providing support to anyone in council who requires assistance …*

> *… we provide a lot of information … to council … there's all the policy teams that need the information and science [to] underpin a lot of the policies' direction and so we provide them with that knowledge in regards to science and what it means and interpret that into a policy kind of sense or framework…*

3.4   Relationships

Our relationships, like the other aspects of who we are and what we do discussed in this section, vary considerably. Some interviewees were connected mainly to fellow staff in RIMU, while others worked with colleagues from a small number of other departments. Yet others, in contrast, had broad contact via extensive networks inside and outside Auckland Council.

> *My main relationships are within my team.*

> *At the moment I'm not hugely involved with many people outside of RIMU to be honest. Most of the work I currently am doing requires working with other RIMU staff members…*

> *We work across council and also with external central government agencies, with community groups, with tertiary training providers.*

> *Provide a lot of guidance and information to other parts of council, so within council but also other groups associated with council, so some are local boards, members of the public but also universities as well.*

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[4] Verbatim quotes are presented in italics throughout the report. Missing words are denoted by … and those words or phrases we have inserted into the text to improve their readability appear in square brackets.

Overall, participants' responses to questions about the work they do reveal a skilled and diverse body of staff with varied work hours, tenure, location and relationships that work across a wide range of focus areas and tasks and whose work feeds into multiple council strategies, plans, policies and programmes.

> *We are such a diverse group and everyone does such different things.*

> *RIMU to me, yes we are one unit but we are also four teams, quite separate teams with different activities.*

Adding to this diversity, RIMU staff understand their role and the unit in different ways: with respect to subject matter; in relation to perceptions of individual roles within teams and in RIMU more broadly; and in terms of the wider remit of the unit. In addition to providing context to the analysis of interview and survey data that follows, it is important to understand and take into account these diversities because they will have an impact on our ability to engage with and relate to each other; as well as the way we develop, implement and review our Māori Responsiveness Plan.

4.0   Staff perceptions of their skills related to Māori

This section examines answers to survey questions focusing on staff views of their current skills and responsiveness to Māori, as well as responses to interview questions that provide insight into what responsiveness means to RIMU staff; how they view the unit's current responsiveness; and what they imagine perfect responsiveness to Māori might look like. Although 40 respondents is not a large sample size, the results of the survey questions are presented using percentages so that readers can get a sense of the spread and depth of responses.

Many of the survey questions involve Likert scales between '1' and '5', representing poor to excellent or agree to disagree responses. We report on the results of these questions by grouping '1' and '2' responses and '4' and '5' responses together, except where a more detailed analysis is required to make sense of the results.

Figure 2 illustrates respondents' perceptions of their skills in a range of areas related to Māori, with the first three questions focusing on perceptions of facility in te reo Māori. Respondents generally rated their ability to correctly pronounce words most highly, with 48 per cent choosing '4' or '5' (on a scale where '1' is poor and '5' is excellent) while only 10 per cent rated their ability as poor. The capacity to understand basic phrases in te reo was rated less positively; 73 per cent chose either '1' or '2' and no-one rated their ability as either '4' or '5'. The ability to converse in te reo Māori, however, was rated most poorly, with 98 per cent of participants selecting '1' or '2' in response to this question.

The second set of questions (Figure 2) focuses on respondents' knowledge and/or understanding of Māori culture and values, protocol and key issues and aspirations. Respondents rated their understanding of Māori culture and values most positively, with almost a quarter (23%) selecting '4' or '5'. Although similar proportions rated their knowledge of key issues and aspirations for Māori (13%) and their understanding of Māori protocol (10%) in the same way, a greater percentage of respondents rated their knowledge in the former area as '1' or '2' (63%) compared with the latter (54%). This suggests that although a small proportion of participants rate their knowledge of key issues, concerns and aspirations for Māori relatively highly, overall a greater proportion felt that they had little knowledge in this area compared to the issue of protocol.
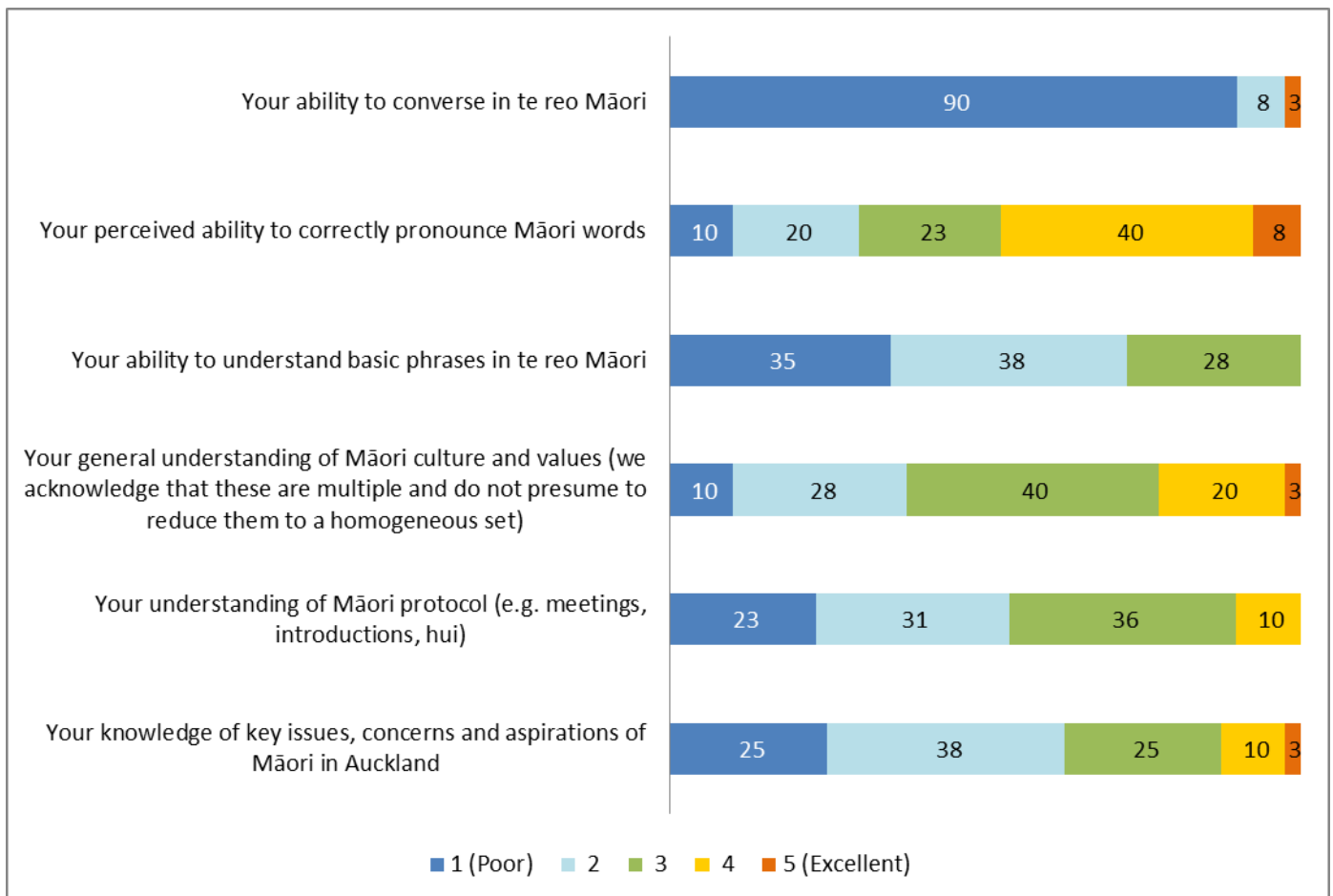
Figure 2 Staff perceptions of their abilities in a range of skills related to Māori Part A

Figure 3 shows respondents' perceptions of their skills in a number of additional areas related to Māori. The first question focused on their awareness of Auckland iwi and hapū, about which 85 per cent of respondents said they knew little, selecting either '1' or '2'. The next two questions address Māori history in New Zealand and in Auckland more specifically. Although 66 per cent rated their knowledge of the former as either '3' (63%) or '4' (3%), only one third (33%) rated their awareness of local Māori history at similar levels.

Almost two thirds (63%) of respondents rated their understanding of council's legal obligations to Māori as '1' (28%) or '2' (35%), while larger proportions rated their knowledge of how these obligations relate to their work in the same way, with 33 per cent selecting '1' and 40 per cent selecting '2'.

The last question in this series focused on respondents' understanding of the relationship between their work and Māori outcomes. Although smaller proportions of respondents selected '1' or '2' in response to this question compared to the previous one, more than half of respondents rated their understanding of the relationship between their work and Māori outcomes as either '1' (28%) or '2' (38%).

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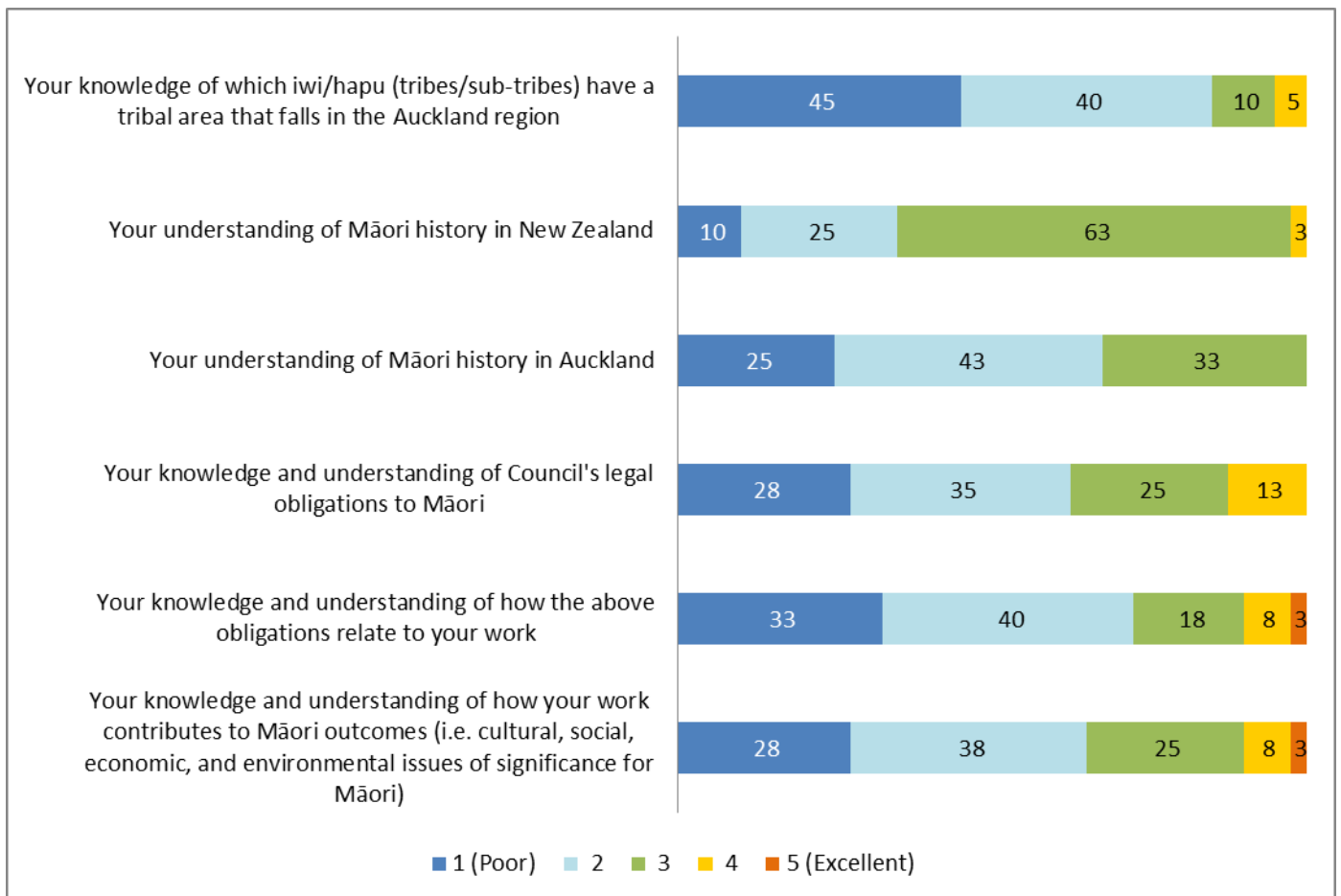
Figure 3 Staff perceptions of their abilities in a range of skills related to Māori Part B

The next series of questions focused on staff perceptions of their abilities in a range of skills related to Māori (Figure 4). Respondents were asked about the extent to which they agreed or disagreed that they are confident and competent in three specific areas. In line with the results of the question about te reo presented in Figure 2 (where 98% rated their ability as either '1' or '2' on a scale of 1 to 5), 93 per cent of respondents disagreed that they were confident and competent communicating in te reo Māori. Larger proportions agreed that they were confident and competent engaging with te reo Māori (29% agreed) and enabling Te Tiriti o Waitangi (18% agreed).
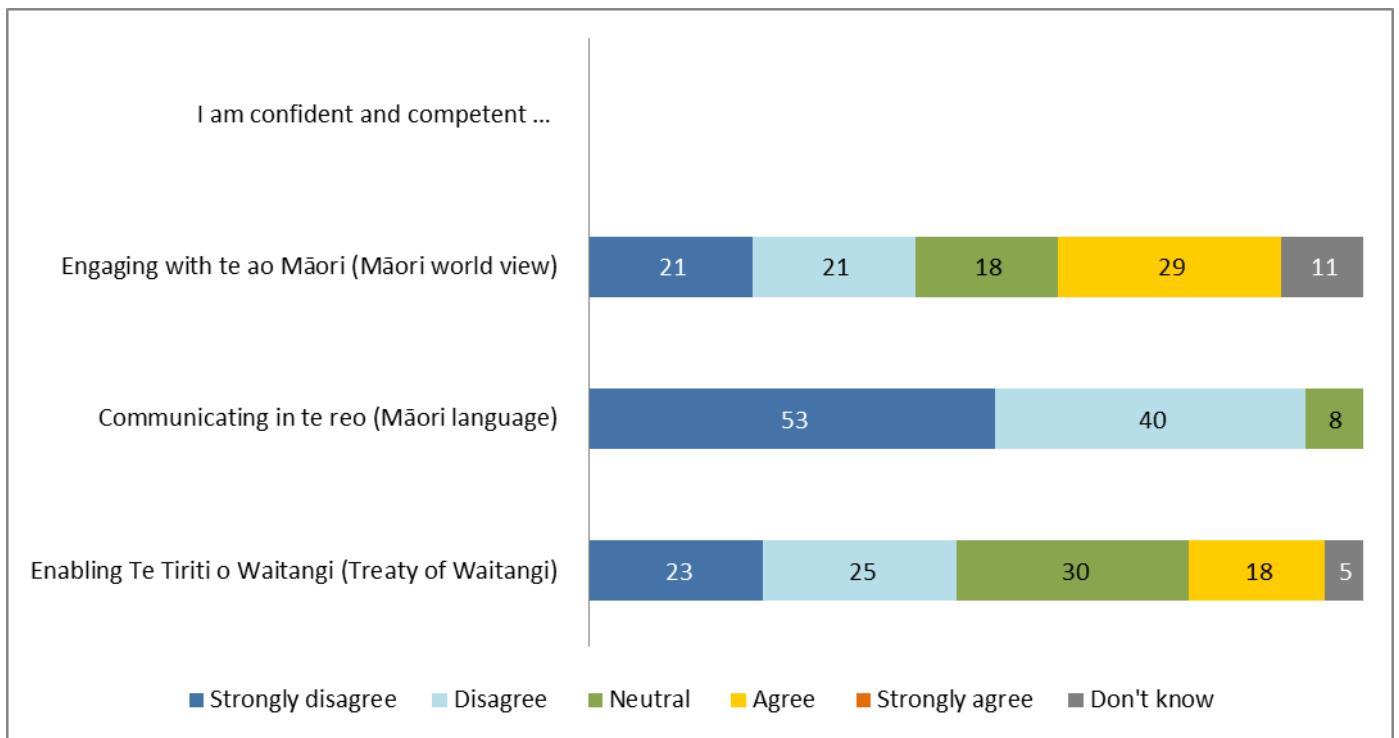
Figure 4 Staff perceptions of individual competence and confidence in three areas

The comments participants made in the free text box at the end of this series of questions suggest the key role that learning and support are perceived to play in developing confidence and competence in these three areas.

> [*Council] provides a number of helpful training courses (that most of us don't make use of) and [Te Waka Angamua] provides a good service for those who seek out help. All of this required me and others to actively seek out self-improvement. This isn't necessarily bad, as forcing 'responsiveness' on people might backfire, but perhaps these options for training could be made easier to access and integrate into my work schedule.*

> *All new staff should have to participate in some kind of induction – a responsiveness discussion etc. could be part of this.*

> *I think resources … are available should you need advice/help in correct protocols.*

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5.0 Staff perceptions of Māori responsiveness

Figure 5 presents the results of a series of questions related to respondents' perceptions of their individual role and the role of RIMU in delivering Maori responsiveness. A large proportion (73%) agreed that the work RIMU does is important for delivering on Māori responsiveness for Auckland Council. No one selected strongly disagree or disagree in response to this statement. There was also strong agreement (78%) that an understanding of Māori culture, issues and values is important to their job.

In the same way that respondents were not fully aware of the connection between council's legal obligations to Māori and their work, and of how their role contributes to Māori outcomes, participants were less likely to agree or were neutral about the relevance of their role to the delivery of Māori responsiveness at Auckland Council. These results suggest that there is some disconnect between participants' understanding of their obligations and their endorsement of the importance of responsiveness to Māori, and their understanding of the way their particular role contributes to this overall outcome.
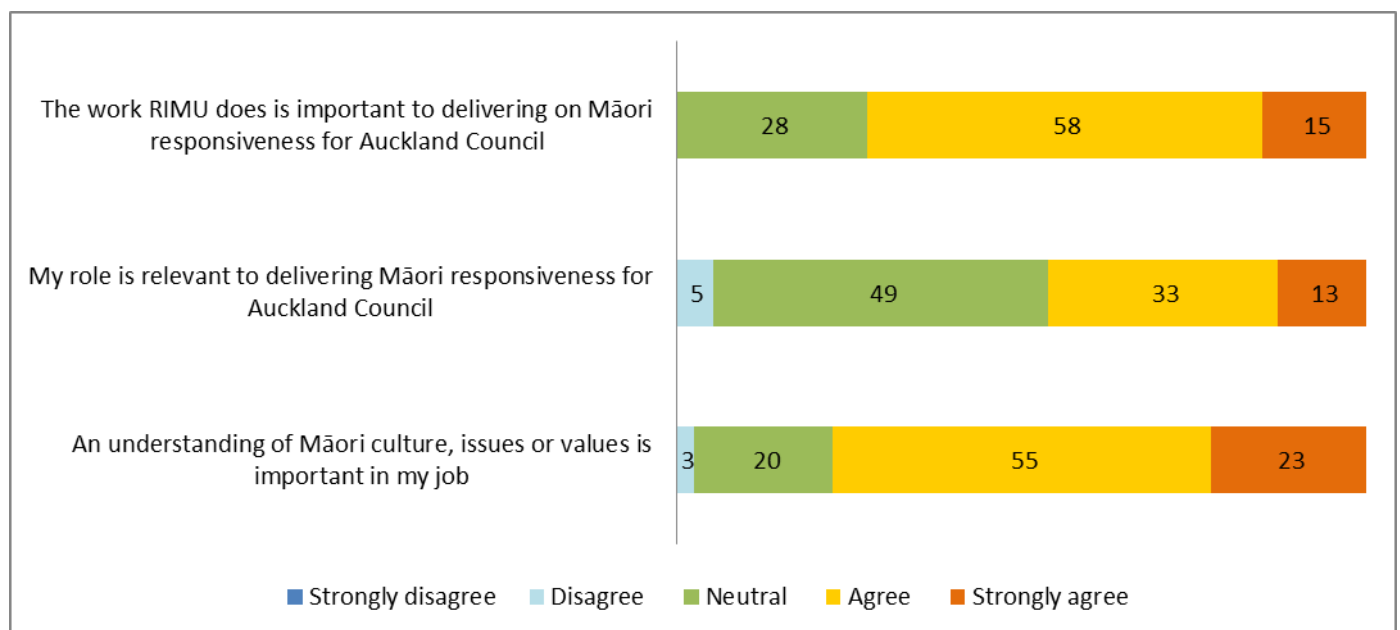
Figure 5 Staff perceptions of their role and the role of RIMU in delivering Māori responsiveness

The responses to the next set of questions, illustrated in Figure 6, provide an insight into the extent to which respondents had engaged with Māori and Māori issues as part of their work during the 12 months before they completed the survey. Less than a quarter (23%) had visited a marae or a place of significance to Māori in the previous year (although it is important to note that this proportion would have been considerably higher had the question been posed after the RIMU visit to Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei that took place in March 2015).

Similar percentages had met face to face with Māori stakeholders (38%) and engaged or consulted with Māori (40%), while only 20 per cent had engaged or consulted with the Independent Māori Statutory Board and 23 per cent had participated in Ngā Kete Akoranga (learning and development workshops provided by Te Waka Angamua). Just over half of respondents had worked on a project where there was a clear link to an issue, event or outcome for Māori (51%) and had any other interaction with Māori (54%).
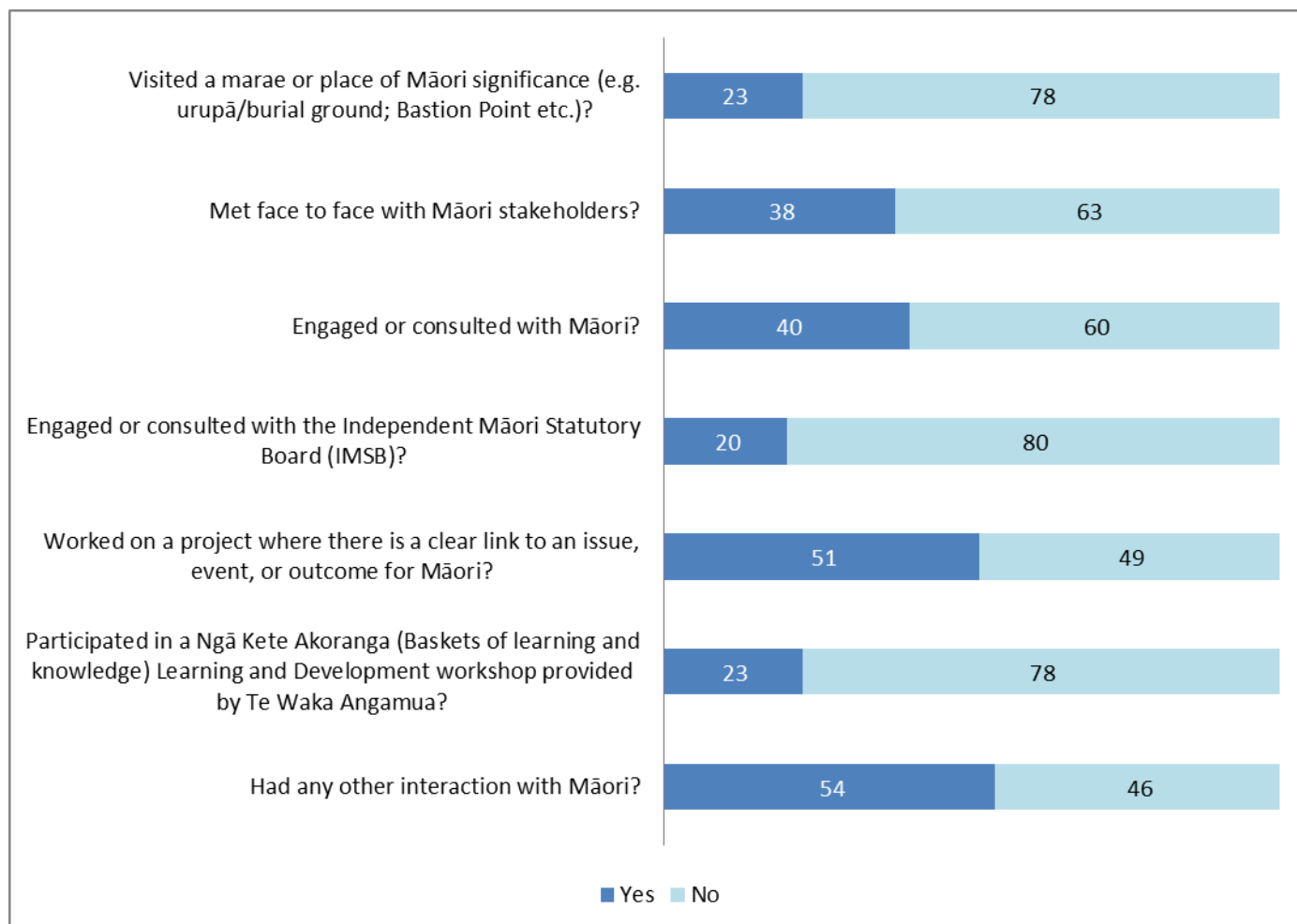
Figure 6 Staff interactions with Māori

Respondents' perceptions of the RIMU office as a welcoming and/or appropriate environment for Māori and others are presented in Figure 7 and Figure 8. Sixty-five per cent agreed that the RIMU office is a welcoming place for all those who visit, while 53 per cent are comfortable meeting Māori in the RIMU office during the course of their work. The fact that more than one in ten (13%) disagreed that the RIMU office is a welcoming place for all who visit is an area that merits further discussion during the development of the unit's responsiveness plan.

Just over half (53%) the respondents disagreed that they maintain strong and sustainable relationships with Māori as part of their work with RIMU and 29 per cent disagreed that the unit as a whole has strong and sustainable relationships with Māori. The responses to the last question in

Figure 9, however, show strong support for an improvement in this area, with 82 per cent agreeing that RIMU should invest in the development of effective relationships with Māori in Tāmaki Makaurau.
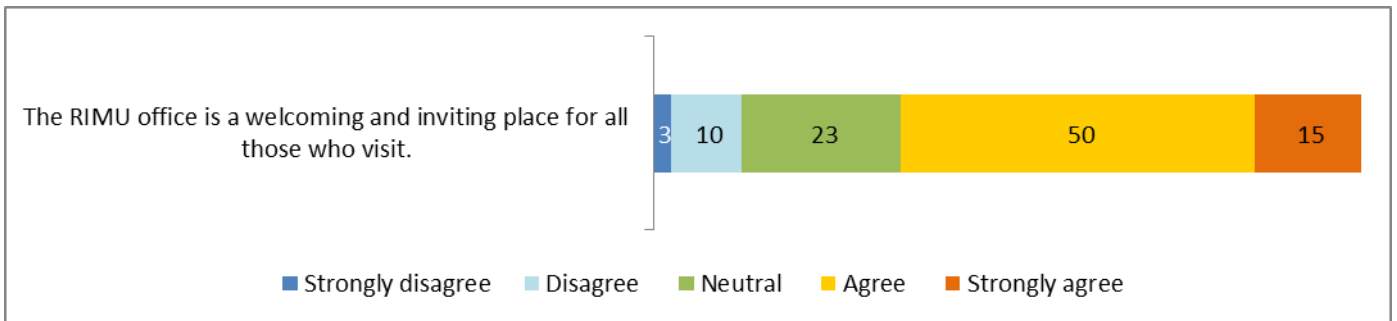
Figure 7 Staff perceptions of the RIMU office as a welcoming place to visit
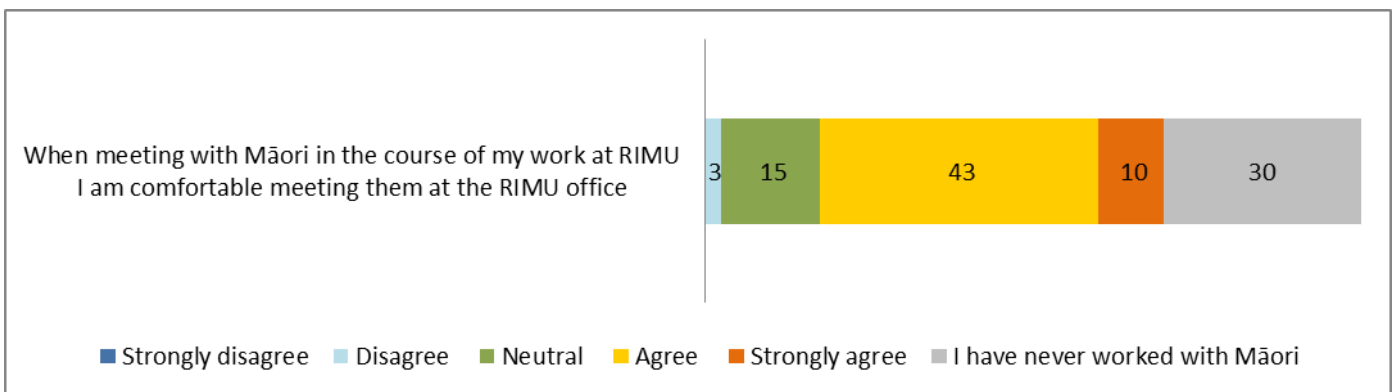
Figure 8 Staff perceptions of comfort when meeting Māori at the RIMU Office
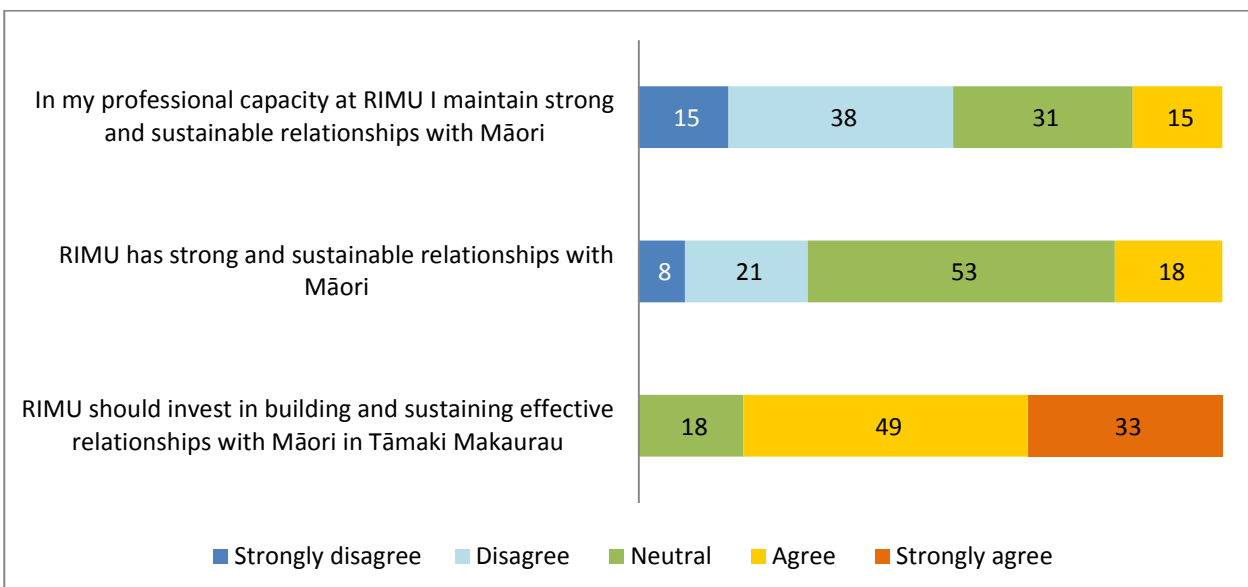
Figure 9 Staff perceptions of individual and RIMU relationships with Māori

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5.1   The meaning of responsiveness at RIMU

During the interviews participants were asked what Māori responsiveness meant to them,[5] a question that many found difficult to answer. Some expressed uncertainty or said that they did not know.

> *So I guess in all honesty I don't really know what it means in terms of my role because there hasn't been any like 'this is the protocol' or 'this is what's expected'.*

Others offered an explicit endorsement of the notion of responsiveness to Māori and to the development of the Māori Responsiveness Plans:

> *I think this is a really good initiative. It's definitely got huge potential value.*

> *I think it's really worthwhile and … [that] Māori have a lot to offer.*

Yet others claimed that the notion of responsiveness to Māori was in itself problematic.

> *I think responsiveness is the wrong word. It should be more proactive as opposed to a response. So that's one small issue I have with that terminology.*

The majority, however, implicitly expressed approval of the importance and value of Māori responsiveness and focused instead on how the concept might be defined or articulated. The most frequently mentioned attribute focused on the ideas of listening, consulting and engaging with Māori as well as the more active notions of inclusion and participation, of 'bringing them in'.

> *What I think we should be doing more of is … having more of a discussion with Māori stakeholders about how we can use our expertise to assist them with the things that they need to work through.*

> *Māori are particularly strong in the natural and environmental resources area and yeah that idea of co-management of the region's natural assets … bringing them into that.*

The imperative to adjust every phase of the research process from the formulation of research questions through to the selection of methods and the dissemination of results was also mentioned by many interviewees. However, the counter-narrative, that responsiveness may not in fact require the dismantling and rebuilding of research projects, was also discussed.

> *So in the design you are talking about methodology, you are talking about questions … when it comes to data collection people would be included because they bring different things to the table. The methodologies would be intertwined or partnered or potentially parallel if they can't be the former two, you know, the analysis would then be run based on … the methodology, the data collection and the reporting is then put out to a range of stakeholders including the science folk who are involved in the beginning.*

> *It would be better if Māori responsiveness was integrated into the way we work rather than proposing that everything you are doing now must change from the bottom up. So rather than redesign just try and integrate more.*

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[5] A diagram depicting the Māori Responsiveness Framework was also shown to interviewees as a prompt.
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Other themes included the need for RIMU staff to understand te ao Māori (the Māori worldview), tikanga and Te Tiriti; that responsiveness to Māori should be genuine; that prioritising Māori outcomes is important; and that a cultural shift is a necessary prerequisite to Māori responsiveness.

> *What it means to me is … how Māori view the world and being able to incorporate that into what we do.*

> *… when they first released the conversations with leaders … they talked about using Māori ideas and branding Auckland as the Māori city and that type of thing which didn't sit well with me because I feel like the relationships need to be more than superficial. Yeah they need to be deeper and more focused on what the actual aims and outcomes of Māori actually are rather than just what we may like to think they might be or just you know compartmentalising them into a sort of a marketing tool …*

> *It means making a choice that whatever that actually entails that it is more of a priority than maybe other things.*

> *I think it probably means all sorts of things you know for the organisation as a whole ok so you know it's behaviours and it's reporting probably some quite definite structural things as well as sort of cultural changes and stuff like that.*

5.2   RIMU work that is responsive to Māori

Interviewees were also asked what if anything they were currently doing that was illustrative of RIMU being responsive to Māori. Responses fell into three main categories: the naming of specific projects; descriptions of broad areas or tasks that constituted responsive activities; and descriptions of engagement with Māori, either internally or externally.

The most commonly identified project was Whenua Rangatira at Bastion Point (where Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei is restoring native bush with the involvement of RIMU staff) but the following were also named: Katherine Bay, the cadet programme, Māori representation on Auckland Council's Human Participants Ethics Committee, the identification of Māori values in relation to water, issues of significance for Māori developed during the Unitary Plan process, analysis of Statistics New Zealand's first survey of Māori well-being (Te Kupenga)[6] and RIMU Insights presentations.

> *[The] project up at Bastion Point is pretty key. It shines really well as a project that not only takes into account biodiversity utilising our standard methodology, but it's on Bastion Point and it involves the local iwi and they've got an interest in assessing the restoration work they are doing and assessing their current biodiversity status and how it is tracking. It's got some excellent educational components to it, it's really inclusive. So that's definitely one.*

Tasks or areas considered responsive to Māori included the analysis of existing data sets and the provision of data; a project on unemployment generally and youth and Māori unemployment specifically; and work undertaken in support of a project on the Māori economy. Interviewees also

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[6] http://www.stats.govt.nz/tekupenga

described a range of engagement activities with Māori, internally and externally, that were framed as part of a broader responsiveness project.

> *We are certainly trying to strengthen our relationships with Te Waka Angamua and the Independent Māori Statutory Board. Also with Māori researchers more specifically, at Waikato we have a strong relationship with [   ] and [   ].[7]*

> *On a personal level it's talking with Māori groups more, letting them know what we do in terms of the monitoring and the research projects we are undertaking.*

> *So mainly at the moment it's just talking with Māori communicating around what we do, what it means and hopefully that's a stepping stone to bigger and better things.*

Some participants expressed uncertainty – they found it difficult to think of tangible examples, felt that there were some but couldn't name them, or emphasised that at the moment such projects were ad hoc despite the fact that we were trying.

> *I guess the short answer would be it's difficult to think about tangible examples … it's not an explicit focus of what we do but that doesn't mean it's not done in other ways.*

> *I'm sure there is but not I'm aware of [anything specific].*

> *It's ad hoc but we are trying.*

5.2.1 How this can be further developed

Interviewees had a range of suggestions for how RIMU might encourage or further develop work that is responsive to Māori. The most commonly mentioned strategy focused on the need for excellent liaison between RIMU and iwi/hapū. These connections, they explained, would serve a number of different purposes: evading the poor reputation that local government has among some iwi; helping to find the right person in the right iwi or hapū; and providing specific guidance about appropriate ways of engaging with Māori.

> *One key part for us … is a decent liaison process … between our folks who are trying to do the research and iwi or land owners or a blend of both. In the past we have had real issues by being 'tarred with a brush' which is "you are local government we don't want that much to do with you".*

> *In addition, we have been requested by [   ] to consult and to gain access … we have to tick all those boxes… but we've got no idea who to go to … the current team are saying "well it's not really our job to put council staff in touch with the right iwi" in which case we are left with a request we can't fulfil. I think that's really key.*

> *I think it's more about providing the resources for people to be able to do [engagement]. I was really on the back foot because I had a) no idea whether I should go down you know it was potentially a little bit touch and go and b) whether there was any kind of formal … representation that I should have from our side or, you know, it was all a bit unclear. I was a*

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[7] These brackets are placeholders for names. They are used to protect the confidentiality of participants and their contacts.

bit cautious. So yes having key liaison people and making that really accessible to us would be great for sure.

It was also important, participants suggested, to work on our own capacity for responsiveness by building foundations and developing our own skills.

So it's like foundations. We've got to build those foundations, it's not going to happen overnight but it's something we need to chip at and work at all the time.

Building capability in the team is a major stumbling block: we don't have a grasp of the language, we don't have a grasp on protocol, we really don't have the skills to engage.

Other strategies included integrating Māori needs into existing programmes, as well as the counter-narrative of re-examining how we do our research identified on Page 22.

I guess I mean most of the monitoring programmes I wouldn't imagine too much would change with engagement because unless they have some real radical ideas on how you measure water quality or something like that, [the] actual protocol of the programme wouldn't change. It would perhaps just be integrating more science or more focused on some things.

It's not what we research it's how if we are doing primary research, how we might approach that.

I think we need to look at methodologies and just the way we look at how we do our research.

Having the right resources was also considered key, whether this involved project champions, adequate budgets or sufficient time.

I think the fact that we've got some champions is a good thing.

Of course all these things need to be supported … budget, time, resource is required. RIMU staff and council staff are wildly keen to help – and will often take on more than is reasonable, just because we believe in it. And Māori responsiveness … if we draw a comparison between that and health and safety … we need an organisational commitment "we are going to pay you to do this project / develop this capability", so we need to put our money where our mouth is.

Relationships were the common thread in the remaining strategies for encouraging or further developing work that is responsive to Māori. These suggestions included co-creation, developing work from newly established relationships such as those with Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei, and sharing our existing work in new and responsive ways.

In terms of co-creation of knowledge together with Māori where appropriate, we haven't really done that at all and I think possibly we should think of a research project [or] design one to see just how we might do that.

What I'm hoping is [that other iwi will] look at what Ngāti Whātua is doing and get a bit jealous or whatever. Want to have their own kind of thing like that and sort of get stuff going that way.

I haven't assessed our plot network in terms of which of the sub-hapū or whatever area it's in, you know, we've got 10 plots in this hapū and 15 in that one and that kind of stuff. That's on my list of things to do in the future but I haven't looked at that yet.

Sharing the work we're already doing.

6.0 RIMU's current responsiveness to Māori

The most notable finding with respect to interviewees' perceptions of RIMU's current responsiveness to Māori is the depth and breadth of the consensus. Almost without exception participants focused on two central and related themes: that the unit is currently largely unresponsive to Māori and that it is willing, well-meaning and trying hard to change this.

Looking first at the issue of a lack of responsiveness, interviewees named it as an historical issue; explained that it hasn't been a focus since amalgamation; noted the ways in which Māori do not feature in RIMU's work; and gave the unit a score of 0.1/10.[8]

> *Historically our programmes have been lacking in any responsiveness - they are formed to answer scientific questions about environmental "state, pressure and response".*

> *I guess we are focused on doing a bunch of other things in the past four years and that has not been one of them.*

> *… when you look at the major percentage of what we do in our daily work I don't think Māori feature very highly. We don't include Māori in programme design, we haven't asked iwi for information that is important to them, we don't communicate our findings and results very widely to Māori.*

> *On a scale of one to ten I'd give it 0.1 … I think it is just because the needs of Māori haven't been communicated well to RIMU … so we have not been overly aware of what … their aspirations are.*

The second theme speaks more about a positive attitude towards Māori responsiveness which interviewees described as well-meaning, genuine, as 'trying hard' and having our hearts 'in the right place'.

> *We are making genuine attempts … we are spending time, we are doing things, there's encouragement from my managers.*

> *I feel like it's generally quite positive especially within my team I feel like … it's positive and people are aware and willing and interested in incorporating Māori.*

> *We need to do better but yeah our hearts are in the right place and we are trying things…*

Related to both these main themes is the idea that RIMU does not know how to progress responsiveness.

> *The way I would describe it at the moment is well-meaning in that we are trying really hard to do things but we don't really know how.*

> *I think we are all a little bit cautious and maybe little bit, not nervous, but a little bit unsure of how to progress and how to interact meaningfully with iwi.*

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[8] This interviewee was not the only person to give the unit a score; RIMU was also awarded a D minus, a restricted pass and a four out of ten by other participants.

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Responsiveness, participants also noted, is embraced passionately by some but not all within RIMU.

> *I think it's really clear that there are a bunch of people that are really passionate about it and there are a bunch of people who .. kind of go "I don't know, that's cool" and there's a bunch of people who in some ways have got a legitimate thing to say "well actually, it's not really my responsibility".*

> *RIMU wide I feel that there's probably a lot of lip service to it but I don't feel that it's something which has been embraced by the whole unit.*

6.1　Considering our own processes and policies

Our own processes and policies, internally within RIMU and more broadly within Auckland Council, are an integral aspect of our current responsiveness to Māori. We asked respondents to the online survey about their perceptions of Māori leadership and mentoring; the promotion of Māori skills; the extent to which staff are acknowledged and appreciated for providing specialist support; their experience of racism in the organisation; and the support provided to work with Māori.

Fifty-eight per cent of respondents disagreed that Māori are represented in effective and visible leadership roles within RIMU, as shown in Figure 10. Only 13 per cent agreed with this statement while the same proportion stated that they did not know.

Participants were then asked to respond to a series of questions about mentoring prefaced by the following statement: there are examples of effective Māori mentoring practises at RIMU. Sixty-one per cent disagreed that Māori were mentoring other staff and/or Māori at RIMU, with only 10 per cent agreeing with this statement and 18 per cent selecting 'don't know'. An even greater percentage of respondents (26%) chose the 'don't know' option in response to the statement about mentoring for Māori staff specifically, while 56 per cent disagreed and the remainder were neutral. More than half (53%) disagreed that there was mentoring for staff to better engage with Māori; only 13 per cent agreed that there were examples of this kind of mentoring, while eight per cent did not know. Overall, these results suggest that participants perceive few examples of Māori leadership or mentoring at RIMU.
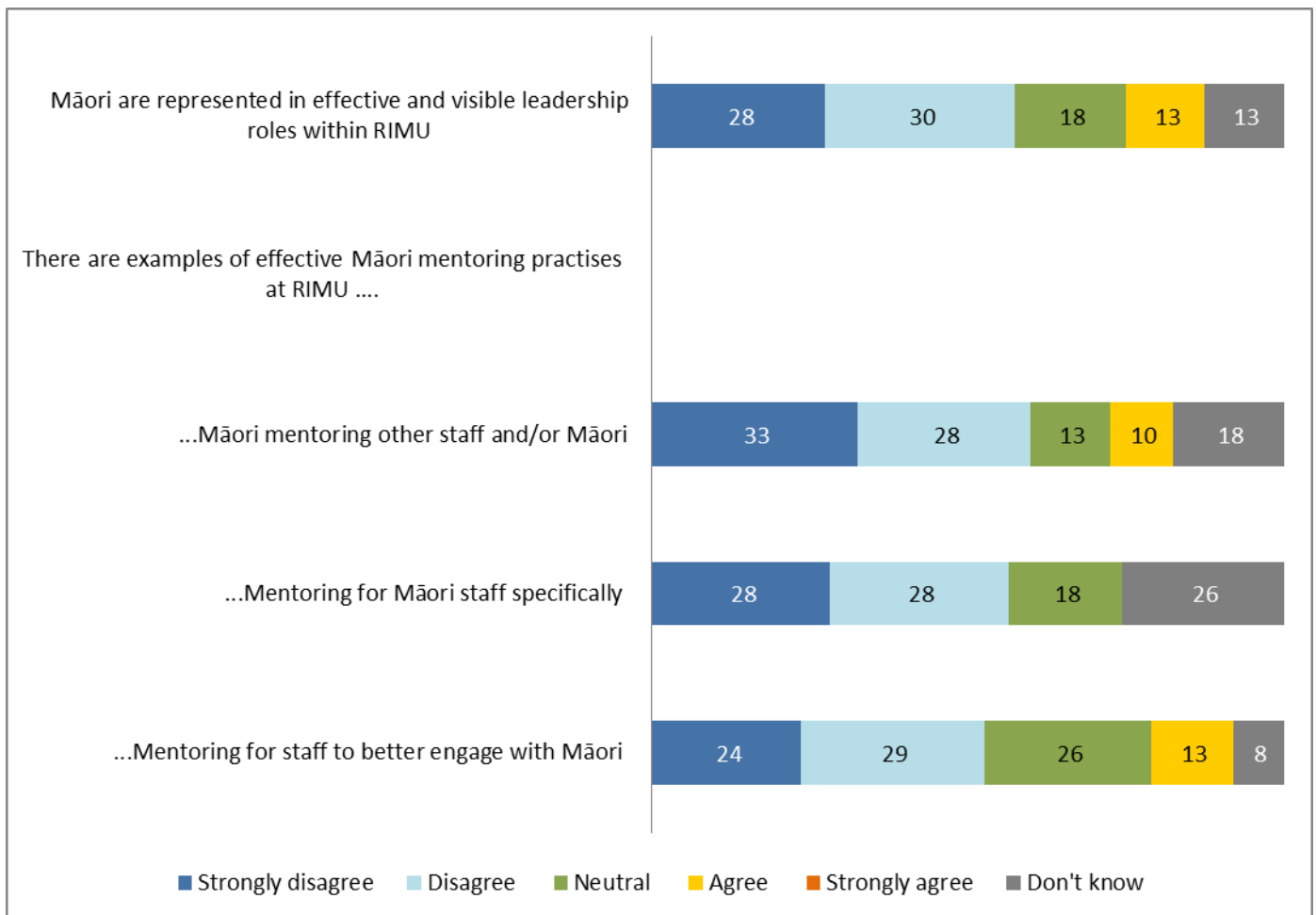
Figure 10 Staff perceptions of Māori leadership and mentoring in RIMU

About a third of respondents selected 'did not know' in response to the first two statements presented in Figure 11: that there are programmes to promote Māori skills in the research areas RIMU is involved with; and that Auckland Council staff are acknowledged and appreciated for providing specialist support in tikanga and te reo. A greater proportion of respondents disagreed (51%) that there are programmes to promote Māori skills than that staff are appreciated for providing specialist skills, with which 26 per cent of respondents disagreed. The greatest level of disagreement, however, was registered in response to the statement about racism in RIMU, where 78 per cent disagreed that they had witnessed or experienced racism in the previous 12 months. However, in reaching a conclusion about the significance of these results it is important to note two things: firstly, that 13 per cent said that they agreed with the statement; and secondly, that the comments written in response to this set of questions suggest that the notion of 'racism' may not mean the same thing to those completing the survey.

> Question 42 [about racism] is curly. I am actually quite opposed to the notion that there is racism in the workplace in RIMU! I guess it depends on what the meaning of 'racism' is here, but I think that what I would call racism might be different than what others do.

As an immigrant myself I can honestly say I have felt very welcomed and accepted at RIMU [and] have never witnessed or been subjected to any form of racism.

I consider privileging Māori to be racist … I believe we do a good job of not being racist towards Māori staff.
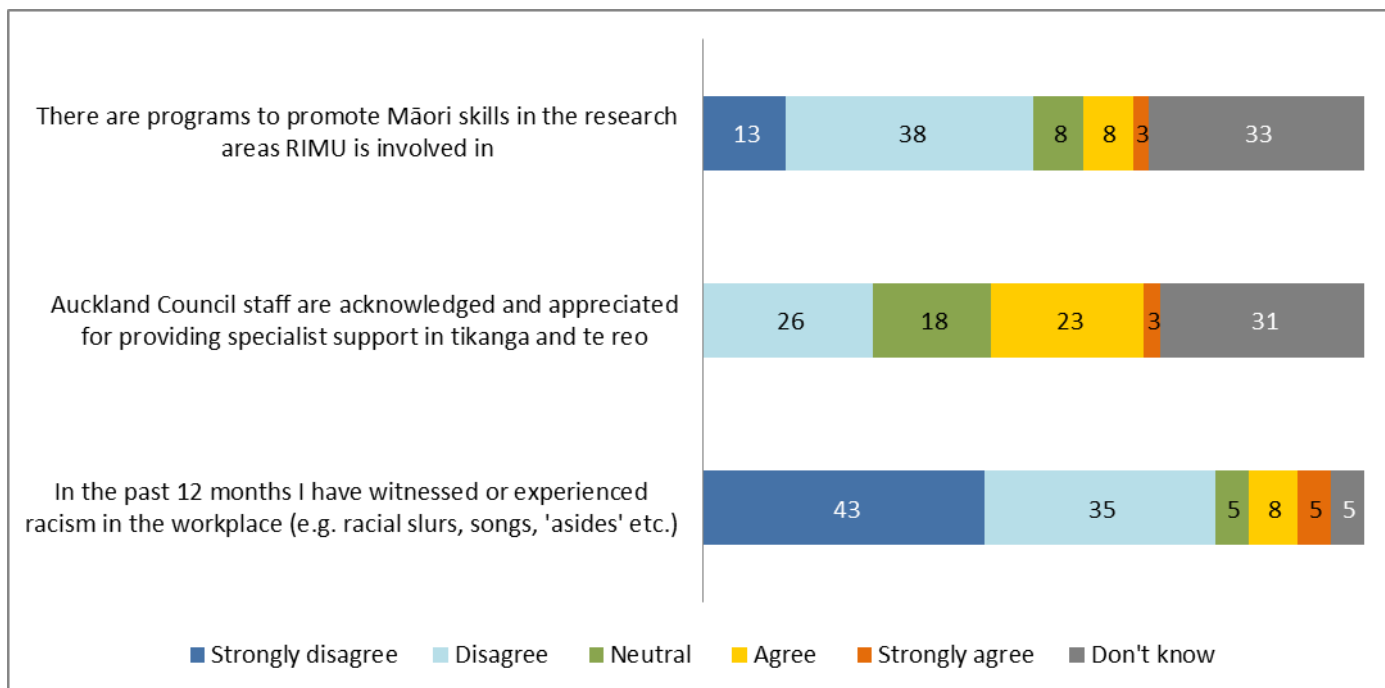
Figure 11 Staff perceptions of the promotion and appreciation of Māori skills and racism in the workplace

A similar level of consensus is found in Figure 12 which shows that 72 per cent of participants disagreed that Auckland Council prepared them well to work with Māori. Only five per cent agreed with this statement while 23 per cent were neutral.
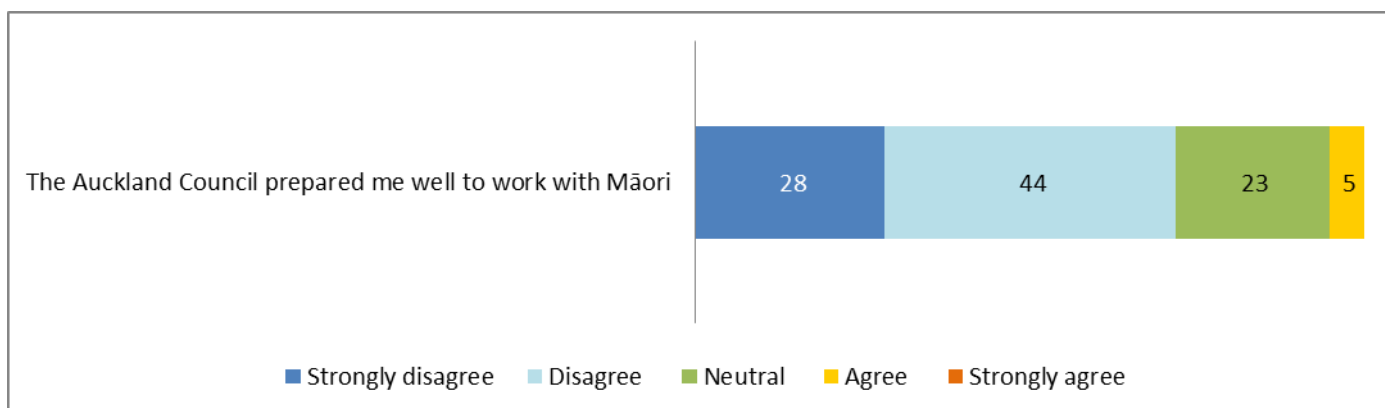
Figure 12 Staff perceptions of organisational support provided to work with Māori

During the in-depth interviews participants were asked how they would feel if some measures of Māori responsiveness, such as competence in te reo and/or an awareness of te ao Māori, were linked with staff performance. Although performance development processes have been significantly overhauled recently with the launch of My Time, it is nonetheless important to consider participants' responses to this question. Our goal is to improve RIMU's responsiveness to Māori and this will inevitably have an impact on individuals and the way their performance is understood, measured and managed.

While most interviewees agreed in principle that some measures of responsiveness to Māori should be included in the assessment of staff performance, there was some uncertainty about who would select these measures; whether or not it should be compulsory and universal; and, if it were implemented, whether it should involve a checklist or some more qualitative measure. The tone and content of many responses also reveals a sense of uncertainty, ambivalence and concern about the possible implications of such a change, including that it might impact negatively on people's willingness to engage with the Māori responsiveness project.

Interviewees expressed their approval of the idea in a range of ways:

> *My sense would be that giving someone something to start with is better than not having [anything].*

> *No problem at all and I would myself have to put my money where my mouth is.*

> *So yes I fully, fully, fully support it.*

> *Part of me thinks it's a really good idea and the other part just wants to run a mile.*

Many interviewees felt that any measures of responsiveness to Māori should be developed by individuals for their specific work context.

> *[You would] want to have like a say in terms of what the goals were that were set … like maybe you have a conversation with your team leader … ok for the next six months I'm going to set these goals related to Māori responsiveness and building that into my work.*

> *Oh I have mixed feelings. I think it would depend on a few things. It would depend on the extent to which I got to select what that measure was … and how I was engaged with that or not.*

Others believed that measures should be neither universal nor compulsory.

> *Some people might not be comfortable learning another language or they've got their own culture and they are not interested in that and I think that should be fine you know.*

> *As long as it's flexible I think, I don't think it would be necessarily fair to make people all go on a course you know, that kind of thing.*

Some participants felt that a checklist was the best way of approaching the issue, while others felt that qualitative measures would be more appropriate.

I think the outcomes of this project will be a checklist for some people, there is no way of avoiding that. All you can hope to do is scoop up some of the people along the way who share the vision and are actually going to put in an effort to change their perceptions.

… if we leave Māori responsiveness up to the individual, without a checklist, then we run the risk of all those perceptions meaning totally different things to different people and the result being a set of totally different processes. We need to form a bit of a process to start with, even though it might be a bit tricky and hard to pin down.

I really struggle with tick boxes because that's what we've been doing. We've had these cultural clip-ons, it's always been like a cultural clip-on all the while and it's to move to the next stage that is so important and it's difficult.

It's an intangible thing. I hate ticking boxes. You can have it as a box that will be ticked in our project plan but it's more than that.

Although most interviewees expressed approval for including measures of responsiveness to Māori in staff performance appraisal, many expressed concern about the effectiveness of such an initiative; its possible impact on the overall responsiveness project; and the extent to which the project has support at an organisational level.

You know what I think is that [on] a level it's very useful but if it's too much it would be destructive and we need to make sure that we don't get to that level that people say "oh my god I don't want to have this Māori responsiveness anymore".

I'm not sure that would be very effective. I don't think in my area anyway.

I see potentially the need to measure how much engagement RIMU has at a unit level [and] also a staff level but … if we are doing it then we are doing it, you can always argue as to how well we are doing it but my gut feel at an organisational level this whole responsive framework is a bit of a box ticking.

7.0 RIMU research and Māori

This section considers staff perceptions of the relationship between Māori responsiveness and research at RIMU. Results presented in Figure 13 show that although almost half of survey respondents (49%) agreed that they understand issues of significance to Māori in their research areas, only five per cent agreed that relationships with Māori stakeholders set the platform for conversations about the projects their team works on.
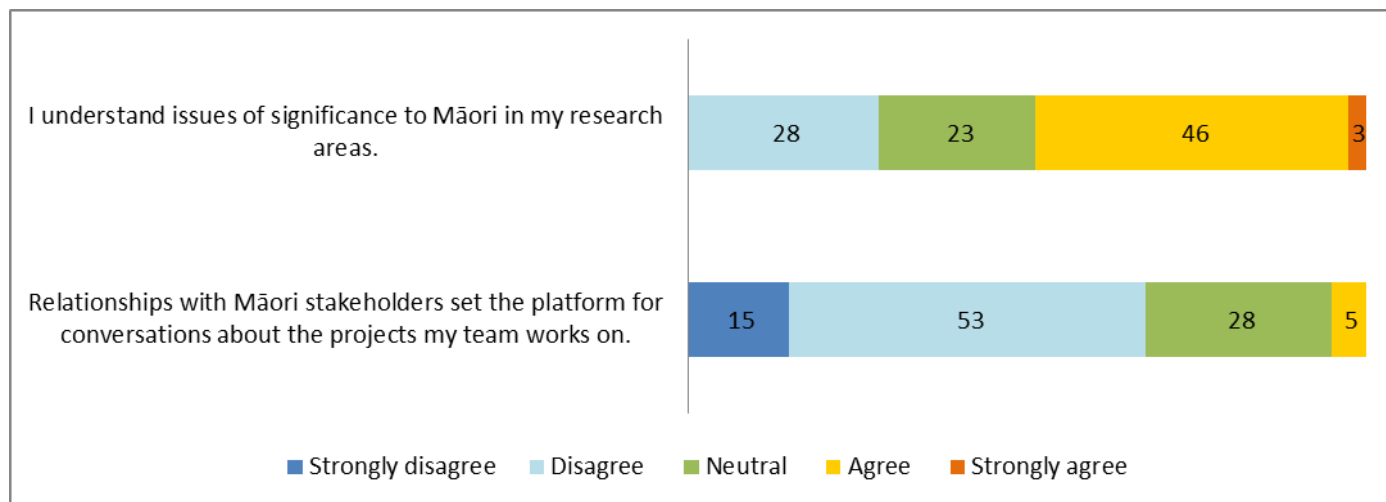
Figure 13 Staff perceptions of Māori and Research in RIMU Part A

Despite the latter finding, however, 35 per cent of respondents agreed that RIMU supports Māori initiated research, as illustrated in Figure 14. It is interesting to note the relatively large proportions of neutral responses to the survey questions presented below. There are a number of possible explanations for this, including that participants did not have enough information to answer the questions more definitively; that the concepts included in the questions could be interpreted in a number of ways; or that respondents knew about what occurred in their teams but were hesitant about responding for the whole unit. Comments written in the free text boxes below those survey questions provide support for all these accounts:

> This is interesting to consider and the more I think about it as I am trying to answer these very broad questions is that both the terms 'Māori' and 'RIMU' incorporate an incredibly diverse range of peoples, activities, goals, cultures and frameworks … who/where are these 'Māori communities'? Are they really discrete units? Would there be a difference across iwi and whānau with regards to how, when and why RIMU engages? A lot of this is, to my mind at least, contextual in practise. It depends on the project, the particular iwi or 'Māori community' we are engaging with and the place and time.

> You should have had a 'don't know' at the end of these questions, I reckon.

> Some projects I've worked on have involved talking with Māori stakeholders and considering the worldview etc. but most of the work that happens in my team doesn't involve much engagement with or consideration of Māori.

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Overall, the relatively large percentages of neutral responses together with the low proportion of positive responses suggest that participants are uncertain or generally negative about the extent to which RIMU disseminates research to Māori communities; engages positively and competently with Māori communities in ways that enhance their learning; and engages with kaupapa Māori principles to enhance Māori participation and outcomes.
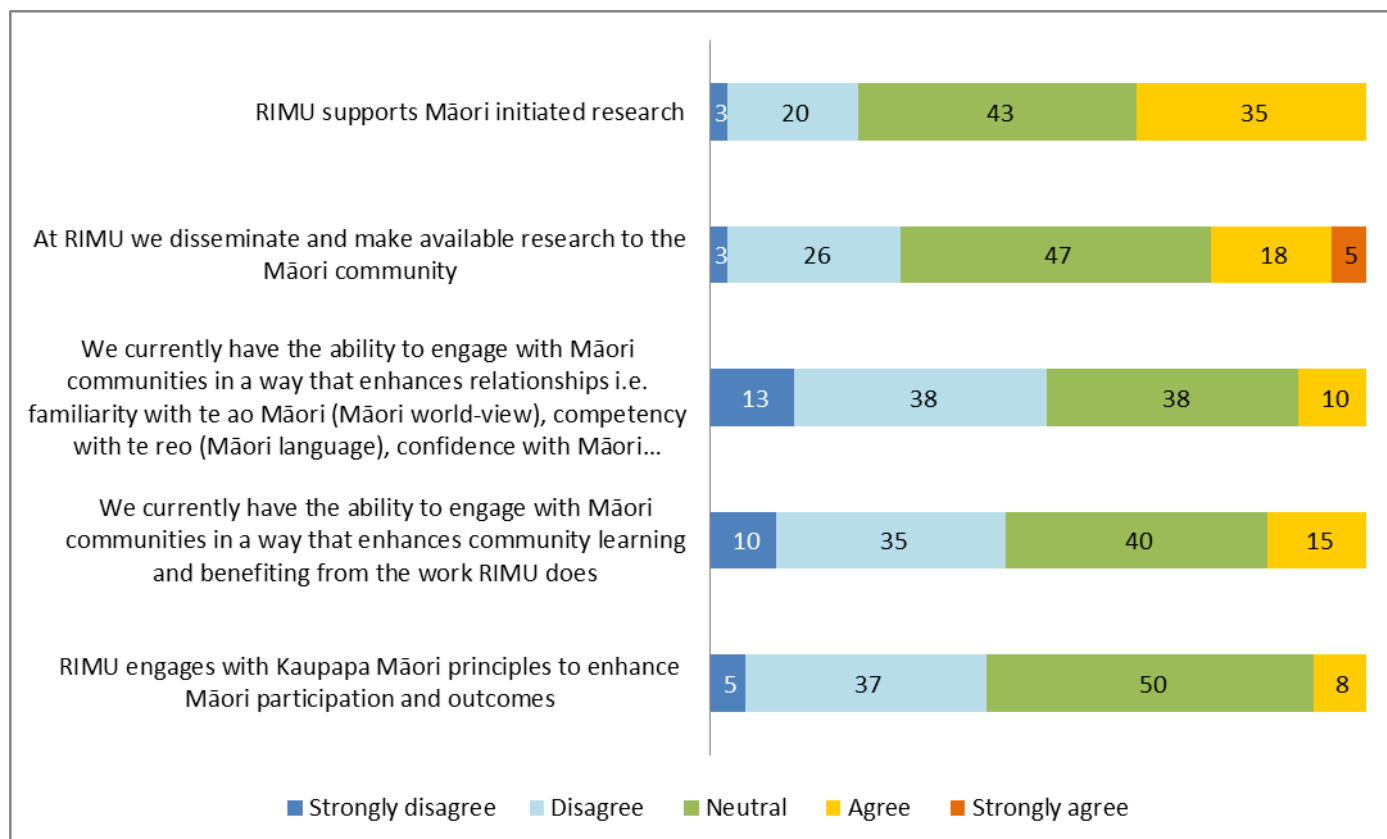
Figure 14 Staff perceptions of Māori and Research in RIMU Part B

The results presented in Figure 15 suggest that most respondents agreed (68%) that it is important for RIMU to incorporate a Māori worldview in the development of our research and monitoring activities. Similarly, 56 per cent agreed that research contractors to RIMU should engage meaningfully with Māori and leverage capacity within their own organisations or teams. One participant, however, wrote in the free text box:

> RIMU cannot expect contractors to engage with Māori, they are [the] supplier for work and work only.

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	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
It is important for RIMU to incorporate a Māori worldview in the development of its research and monitoring programmes		10	23	48	20
We should expect research contractors to engage in a meaningful way with Māori and leverage capacity within their own organisations/teams	3	15	26	46	10
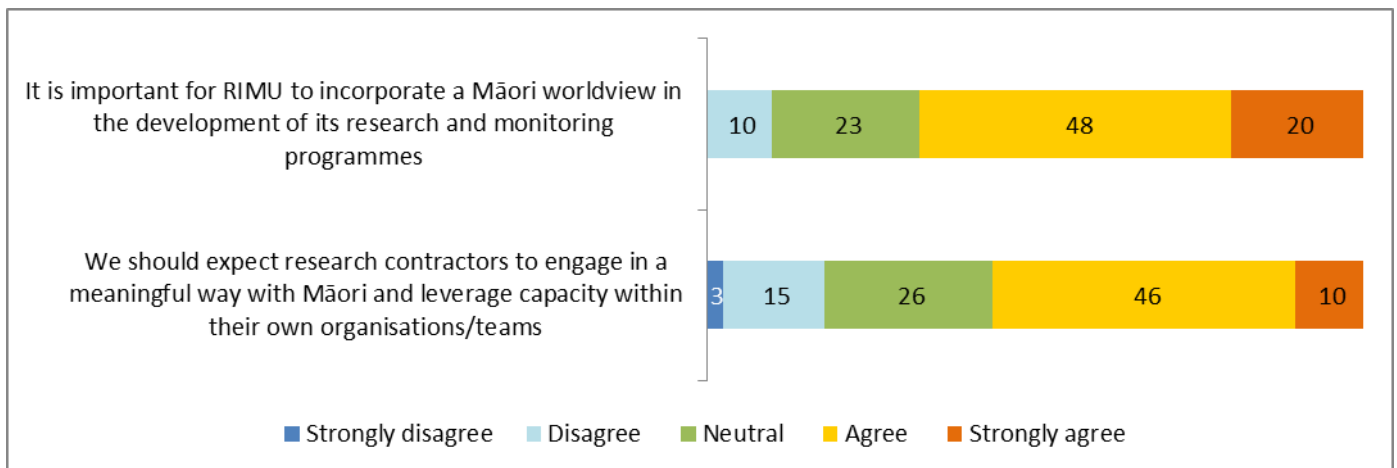
Figure 15 Staff perceptions of Māori and Research in RIMU Part C

Only a small proportion of respondents agreed with the statements about research and Māori presented in Figure 16. Only 18 per cent of participants agreed that they take into account Māori aspirations and issues when they design and implement their research, monitoring and evaluation programmes. We found the preponderance of neutral responses to this question (38%) a little surprising given that it refers to participants' own activities. After some consideration of the results presented in earlier sections of the report, however, the following are two possible explanations: participants may have varying degrees of control or awareness of the origins of the research, monitoring and evaluation projects they contribute to; and/or there may be a degree of uncertainty about the nature of Māori issues and aspirations.

The majority of respondents disagreed with the next two statements: that building effective relationships with Māori is a significant part of their daily work (79%); and that measuring outcomes for Māori is a priority in their data collection and analysis (77%).

The next question referred to RIMU rather than to participants' individual work; only 15 per cent agreed that enabling Māori outcomes is a significant part of our research. The relatively large proportion of neutral responses to this question (36%) may be due to a lack of knowledge about the activities of RIMU as a whole, or it might also be related to a lack of understanding about exactly what is meant by 'enabling Māori outcomes'. Lastly in this series, 66 per cent of participants disagreed that engagement with Māori has a high importance in the communication of their research, monitoring and evaluation outputs.

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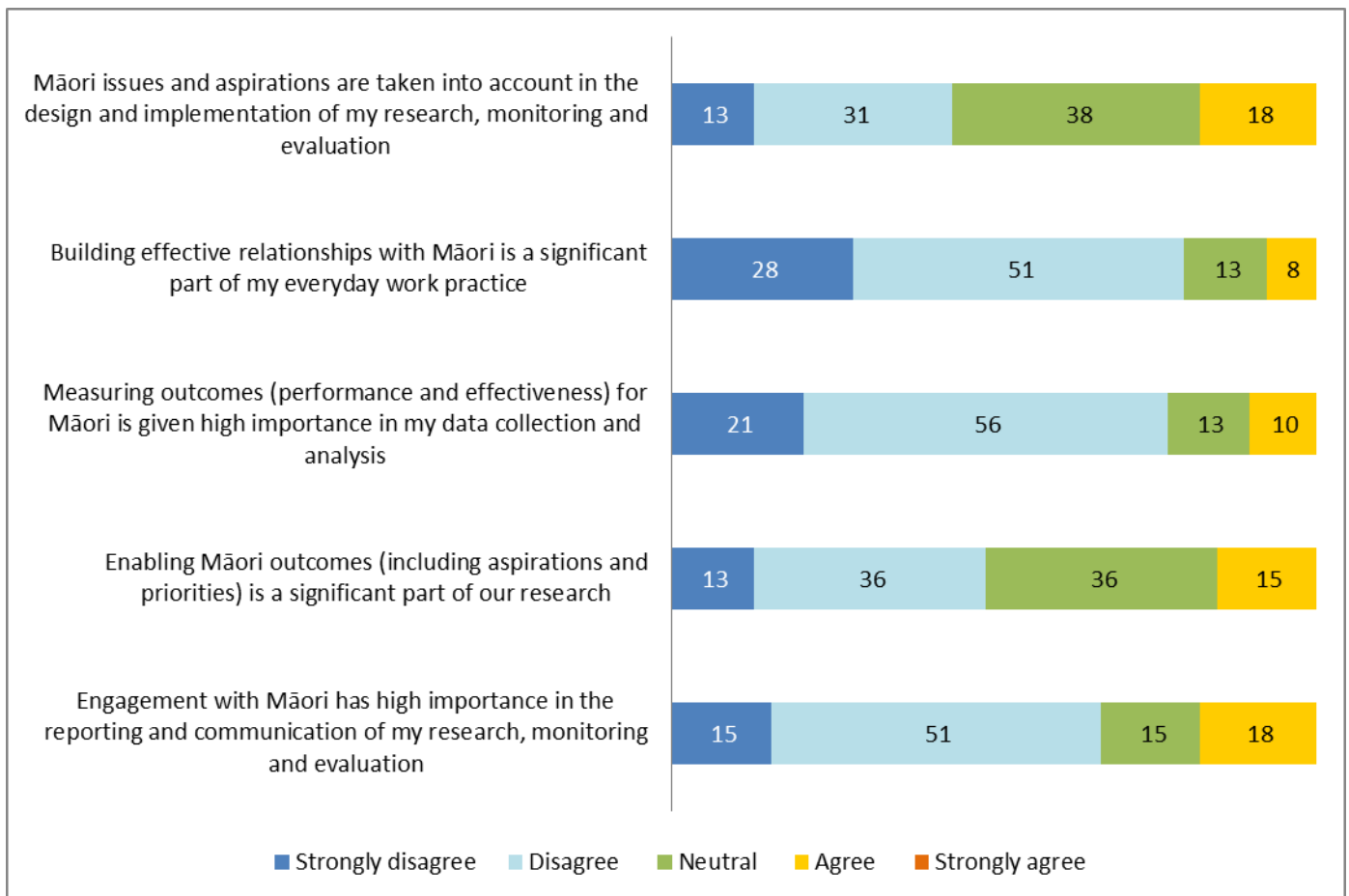
Figure 16 Staff perceptions of Māori and Research in RIMU Part D

In contrast to the previous set of questions, which focused on the way research, monitoring and evaluation is undertaken and communicated currently in RIMU, the next series focuses on participants' perceptions of how these activities *should* be undertaken. Seventy-four per cent of respondents agreed that Māori issues and aspirations should be taken into account in the way RIMU undertakes its research, monitoring and evaluation activities. Only 3 per cent disagreed with this statement.

Although 46 per cent agreed that building relationships to enable effective engagement with Māori should be an important part of their work day, 21 per cent disagreed. The results of the next three questions are very similar – between 56 and 59 per cent agreed that measuring outcomes for Māori, enabling Māori outcomes and engagement with Māori should be an important part of the way RIMU undertakes research. Approximately one third of participants chose a neutral response to these questions while only 8 or 10 per cent disagreed. Overall, the responses to these questions suggest that there is general support for engaging in a range of responsiveness activities that are not currently a fundamental part of what we do and how we do it.
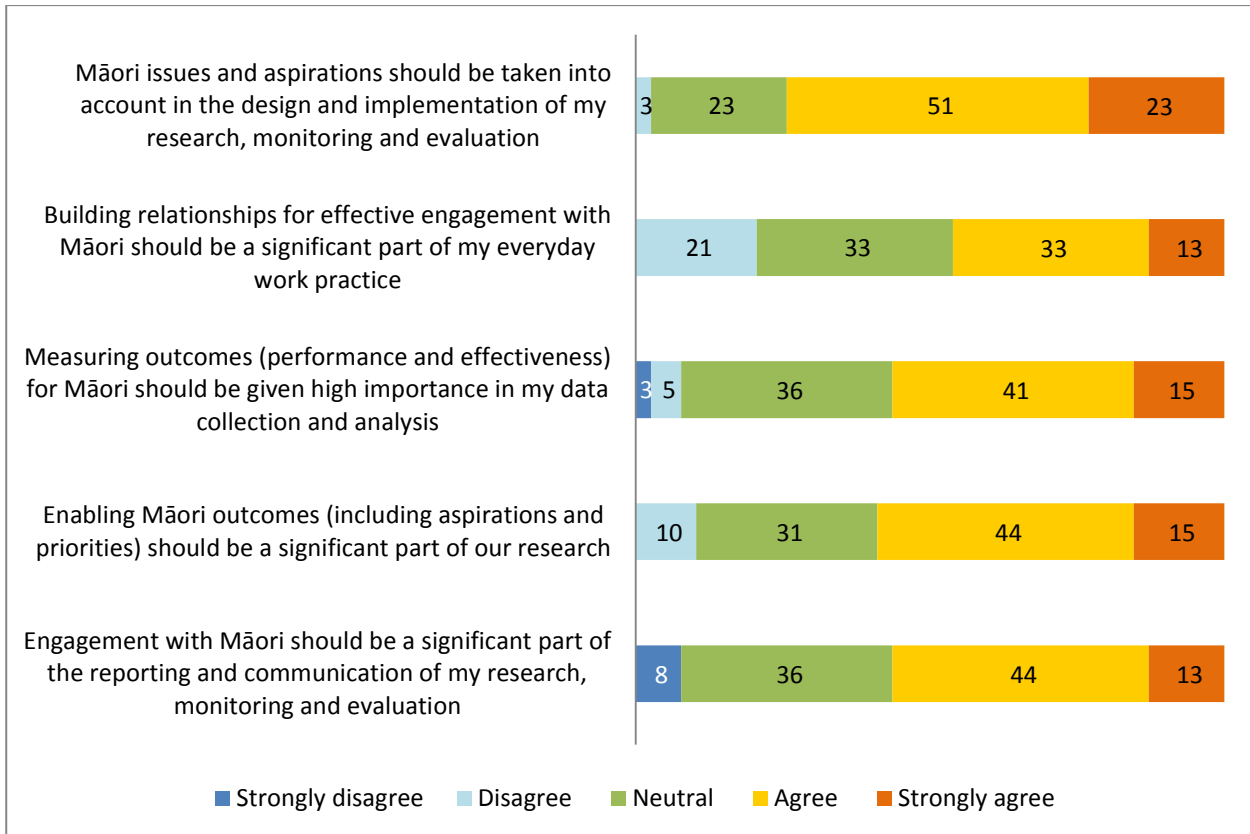
Figure 17 Staff perceptions of Māori and Research in RIMU Part E

8.0 Perfect Māori responsiveness

Interviewees and survey respondents were asked to imagine 'perfect' Māori responsiveness, either in terms of a project or programme, or with respect to the unit as a whole. The responses to these questions covered a broad range of attributes, positions, processes, activities and methodologies. The most prominent theme, however, was Māori responsiveness as a modification of existing practices and processes, or integration; and the counter-narrative of Māori responsiveness as a more transformational endeavour. While the latter was most commonly articulated explicitly, as a fundamental shift, for example, the former was often implicit in the participant's focus on Māori responsiveness as a specific activity that would be undertaken differently. The quotes below illustrate the integration and transformation themes.

> *Not necessarily too much different from our current projects, but making sure the project accounts for what is important to the relevant communities.*

> *I don't see it as being very different to how it is today but maybe just the outputs and what we can stand up and show … we've produced.*

> *We would be producing reports and information that was of relevance to … those organisations that are making the decisions in Māoridom and it would be timely. But also the other information that we collect about the wider environment and community and stuff like that would be being disseminated in a way that all of society was taking it on board a bit more and stuff like this. Yeah that's probably the nuts and bolts of it.*

> *You are talking about embedding the Māori responsiveness component or components into everything that we do: the design, the data collection, the reporting … lots more engagement. So it's not just "fire up" a project but let's ask "how does this relate to iwi?" and get iwi involved where possible.*

> *[It would be] inclusive and consultative - the monitoring/research programme would be developed in conjunction with Māori, and the project would satisfy research questions for all parties concerned. All parties would be involved throughout the project. The project would yield solid data, would showcase sound processes, utilise Māori and Western methodologies where possible, have clear outcomes, and be well-communicated through all communities, using a variety of media to present the findings at all levels. At the project completion, all those involved would have learned lots ... and not just about the topic, but much more!*

> *So it's like a fundamental shift.*

The integration versus transformation narratives mirror the most common themes presented in Section 5.1. When participants were asked what Māori responsiveness meant to them, some focused on the need to adjust every phase of the research while others noted that responsiveness was instead about changing specific parts of that process.

As authors, our personal view was that perfect Māori responsiveness could only be achieved by individual and collective transformation. In our enthusiasm for wholesale change, perhaps we

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underestimated the power of integrative activities to bring about that change. Over the course of the Māori responsiveness project, quite a few opportunities to integrate an understanding of te ao Māori (the Māori world view) have been seized: the unit has visited a marae and quite a number have taken up the opportunity to begin learning te reo. These small moments and activities have proved to have significant effects, transformative effects, even, for some people. Practising our reo at work has become commonplace and important to many of us, and for some singing together is now a regular occurrence. Many staff have started talking more about where they are from and places that are meaningful to them, developing a new level of understanding of each other and our shared and different experiences. These changes seem to us to reflect emerging personal transformations. As individuals, those of us participating in these integrative activities are being changed. This incremental, personal transformation is, we suggest, the flax roots of an organisational shift towards responsiveness.

The use of the terms cloak and skin, alluded to in the title of the report, really captured us as we were thinking about what our data meant. The difference between a cloak, that can be put on and removed at will, and a skin that is an integral part of us, seemed to provide a wonderful metaphor for the dichotomy between integration and transformation. Integrating Māori responsiveness would be the process of putting on a cloak – temporary and contingent – while true transformation would mean that responsiveness was embedded and embodied, our skin.

As we have reflected further, however, we have realised that perhaps it is not a dichotomy at all. Perhaps incremental, integrative moments and practices can move us as individuals and as a unit towards transformation. And indeed, when we re-examine the quote from which the cloak and skin images were drawn it is evident that the dichotomy we assumed was never present in this interviewee's comment:

> *I guess if we were a responsive unit [we] would probably be one that was kind of comfortable in wearing [a] responsiveness skin… I don't know what kind of form that would take but … it would just kind of feel fine, like, you know, it was fine. It's like we are fine to wear a science cloak, you know?*

Here the terms cloak and skin are used interchangeably; there is not a suggestion of difference between the two, and no sense that they represent varying levels of responsiveness or transformational change. Both skin and cloak are things to be worn, which implies a degree of agency and choice in putting them on, and an ability to take them off again. What really matters in this quote is not the difference between cloak and skin, but the fact that responsiveness would be signified by our comfort in wearing them. The interviewee is suggesting that a marker of success on RIMU's journey towards responsiveness would be the ability of staff to wear or embody responsiveness in the same way we wear and embody our particular disciplinary and professional personae.

Resistance to the notion of Māori responsiveness was also evident. When survey participants were asked what a research, evaluation or monitoring programme or project might look like if it were responsive and effective for Māori, one respondent simply wrote 'racist'. Comments written in other free text boxes expressed a reluctance to focus only on Māori, as illustrated in the quotes below:

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I believe we should address poverty, suffering and disadvantage regardless of race, to make Auckland liveable and value for money. I realise that this is not council policy.

I consider privileging to be racist.

My philosophy is that there is just what the world is, and then every individual's beliefs and desires, whether they happen to be Māori or not.

Two other themes emerged from the question of perfect Māori responsiveness: one that focused on relationships, engagement and collaboration and the kinds of projects and methodologies that might arise from these; and another that involved people, processes and support. Looking at the first theme, interviewees imagined that ideal responsiveness would entail more frequent, regular and purposeful engagement with Māori.

Some sort of … regular engagement rather than ad hoc engagement … I don't know if it needs to be something where everybody is involved or just perhaps a select few representatives throughout RIMU and perhaps touching base every couple of months, every three months or so, to make sure that nothing new has come up on their radar, nothing new has come up on ours and everybody is working to the same page.

We would all know … the key people like [   ] and [   ] at [iwi] you know … and I would know their equivalents from five or six other, I don't know whether hapū is the right word … we would know these people and we would be having conversations with them … a couple of times a year or something like that preferably sort of informally rather than … some sort of horrible structured enforced consultation kind of thing.

The relationships developed as a consequence of this kind of engagement would, in turn, be the genesis of responsive projects or methods, as these interviewees explained:

It would originate from a relationship with a particular community/group of communities/representative body (e.g. the IMSB), and would reflect their aspirations and concerns. The project would be co-designed and the research would be carried out in collaboration. Particular attention would be paid to the dissemination of the research and the implementation pathway in terms of advancing aspirations.

I think … our research methods would probably be slightly different or perhaps more accurately we would be … clearer about choosing the appropriate research methods given the questions. And it's not that we don't do that already but if we [were responsive to Māori] then we would have a discussion around, "is … this the right research method for these kinds of questions?" … So we would be having discussions about that … in the evaluation side of things as well.

Genuine engagement and relationship building would also, according to the quotes below, start at the beginning of a project, involve a range of collaborative activities, proceed from a point of collaboration and result in a higher level of responsiveness.

It would have to start from a collaborative point, so hard to for me personally to project what this looks like. It would be … to get to a point where everything we do is responsive from a programme point of view so that we don't start from scratch and consult on each new thing

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individually - we should be operating at a higher level than that and have relationships already in place for RIMU as a whole rather than working on a project by project basis.

I think it would probably come down to when there's a project being established. As part of the project design there would be certain criteria that you would have to factor in … [such as] value to Māori, is it providing any value? If not, is there a way to incorporate some form of value out of that for them?

Come up with research questions together, funding those particular research programmes together and also working on the research programmes together as well. Not only the design and implementation, but being able to hand over parts of the work to Māori for Māori to lead … it would be basically a 50/50 type thing where it would be doing the work together.

People, processes and support were also critical to the ideal responsiveness imagined by interviewees and survey respondents.

Yeah, I'd probably come back to … the flow chart of the research loop but widen that to all of our business processes. So a wise man once said to me "all you really need to do to get something happening in the right way is the right people and the right processes with the right support".

Interviewees explained that any shift towards responsiveness would need to be supported through access to the right resources – time, budget, skilled personnel – as well as through an organisational culture that enabled these changes to occur.

Of course all these things need to be supported … budget, time, resource is required. RIMU staff and council staff are wildly keen to help, and will often take on more than is reasonable, just because we believe in it. And Māori responsiveness … if we draw a comparison between that and health and safety… we need an organisational commitment "we are going to pay you to do this project / develop this capability", so we need to put our money where our mouth is.

So when you talk about [the right] people we need highly capable and very aware people.

There's the processes around what we do; embedding all those awareness steps or flags into our processes i.e. lists or check sheets … have you talked to these people? What are the key relationships here? Which iwi [is] interested in the outputs? Where will we present this info etc.? Then there's the right tools and support really.

And from a wider organisational perspective, we need an organisational culture where responsiveness is supported and an integral part of our daily work.

Interviewees and survey respondents also noted the importance of recruiting more Māori staff.

It would be really good to see more brown faces in the unit. If you look around there's not many brown faces at all, particularly Māori. There's a distinct lack of Māori in science in general. Since we are the research [and] monitoring group and we do contain a lot of scientists it would be good if our unit was trying to promote greater representation of not only Māori but Pacific Islanders and other minor[ity] ethnic groups … so there's greater

representation of those groups in science. [Then] we can not only employ more people but also mentor students etcetera through universities … that would be a good thing to see.

[We] would have more Māori in our group … we would also not only have more Māori working in the unit but we would have Māori from external organisations working with us. So whether they are seconded or vice versa, it would actually be sitting alongside us learning [and] working.

Increasing the skills of current RIMU staff was also considered integral to the achievement of perfect responsiveness to Māori.

I think … the skills and capabilities would be … maybe greater than what they are now.

Everyone who works for RIMU would have a basic understanding of the Treaty and what that means in contemporary society. Everyone would have the ability to understand basic protocols and tikanga if they ever have to speak publically or walk onto marae or you know interview. I think everyone would have an appreciation and an understanding of the times when it's appropriate.

8.1 Ways of knowing when we get there

Interviewees were asked how we might know when we reach a state of perfect responsiveness to Māori, a notion that several problematised. Māori responsiveness, they explained, is a process rather than an outcome.

Goodness me I'm not really sure you ever would!

I don't know if you'd really be able to put a cap on that.

While some respondents talked about how difficult it would be to measure Māori responsiveness, others felt that it was nonetheless important to measure RIMU progress in this area.

So it's hard, I don't know if it's something you can just apply a strict measure to, you know, is that enough or is that an acceptable amount or is there? Yeah, I don't know.

I hate KPIs and that … sort of thing. It's quite problematic, but measures of responsiveness I suppose yes, it's the number of people who have been through the training, it's the number of people who have gone to te reo courses.

Monitoring frameworks are ok I think to have some targets or goals or some sort of outcomes that are generally agreed that are measurable.

A number of ways of measuring progress were suggested, many of which involved implicit or explicit endorsement by Māori.

If [Māori] are part of the research programme and coproducing those outputs and they are happy and are telling other people about it I think that would probably be the ultimate end goal.

I think if we are producing products, and I'm using [the word] products in a very large kind of sense, and iwi are happy with those products, I think that would be a good test of where

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we are because currently we are producing products i.e. reports [and] research outputs that iwi don't even know about.

Other forms of external validation included:

… one reference point for me … would be around seeing our stuff in things like iwi management plans.

… when we see our material being cited and cited appropriately in, you know, cabinet briefing papers.

One of the things that we could use as a kind of proxy for achievement is … external reviewers … they can tell us if we are on the right track.

I suppose a lot of it would have to come [from] Māori, like if it's the Independent Māori Statutory Board or those sorts of avenues, they could provide some sort of guideline on how we are doing.

In addition to these methods of external validation, participants also suggested the following measures: a high level objective of Māori responsiveness as 'business as usual'; the quality of our relationships with Māori; and the addition of more Māori staff to the unit.

… once it becomes a seamless conversation between two rather than a forced "you've got to sit down, you've got to consult with these people" … if it just becomes a seamless thing … I need to do this, these are the people I need to speak to, arrange a meeting, sort it out and once it just becomes ingrained as part of our every day practices I think you would probably say that you were there.

… being able to contact Māori better and understand them better.

I think we should … measure … and I hate the word collaboration it's so over used now in terms of our whole vision, but I think we need to almost quantify how that's improving and it's not just the number but it's the quality and the depth of those relationships. So it's not just gathering relationships and collaborations it's actually sustaining them and embedding them.

And I think another measure of success is if we could employ a Māori researcher or mentor…

The integration theme discussed in previous sections also emerged in participants' responses to this question.

… you can be responsive without necessarily having to change anything and in some instances that's ok would be my view.

… there is a sense [that] you can kind of be responsive without necessarily having to change anything … there's only one way of understanding the environment, for example.

9.0   A time of transition: challenges and strengths

9.1   Challenges

Interviewees were asked to consider the challenges RIMU might face when implementing its Māori Responsiveness Plan, and the strengths that they might individually and collectively bring to this process of transition. Looking first at the former, the main theme focused on the challenge of securing the many and varied resources required to ensure better responsiveness to Māori: time, money, skills, liaison support and overall capacity.

The resource mentioned most frequently was time: the time required to ensure that RIMU's research, monitoring and evaluation activities were responsive to Māori; the time required to build and develop relationships with the hapū and iwi of Tāmaki Makaurau; and the need to make sure that compliance with the plan was not too time-consuming for already busy staff.

> *I suppose the first part is just having the time to do it all. Currently we are under a lot of pressure to provide more and more monitoring and research expertise and projects.*

> *We could be the well-meaning Pākehā liberal do goodies going out there going "hi I want to work with you" and it might get totally ignored. So building those relationships … can take time. Yes, there can be the challenges of time.*

> *If it's a very involved plan that involves a lot of time consuming additions to our current already time constrained schedules there'd probably be a bit of resistance or you'd do bare minimum just to tick the box rather than putting in the extra effort and doing it properly. So I think that would probably be the biggest hurdle.*

Money was also mentioned frequently. Interviewees talked about the threat of budget cuts and the difficulty of stretching already constrained budgets to cover all RIMU's projects, processes and programmes.

> *There's a risk we won't have any money to do anything. What are we doing to do about that yeah?*

> *Now there's a budgetary constraint with everything. So we can't do everything with everybody.*

Being able to access liaison support for the implementation of the plan from Māori members of staff was also considered a challenge, as was having the skills to engage appropriately.

> *So the other challenges are around support from colleagues, colleagues in council, because there are so few of them and they are so stretched.*

> *How do we go out and engage? Who do we talk to? What do we talk about?*

Participants were concerned about RIMU's capacity to meet the needs of Auckland's iwi and hapū.

> *The other challenge is being able to service the needs of all the different iwi groups around Auckland. There's a lot of them. They may have generic questions or issues they want to*

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answer but there will be a number of them that have specific questions. Now to answer those you need to be having specific research projects to provide that information.

In addition to the challenges represented by inadequate access to necessary resources, interviewees described a series of potential difficulties that originate in the attitudes and attributes of RIMU staff. The diversity of staff roles, disciplinary backgrounds, work hours, tenure, location and relationships was perceived as a challenge, as this person explains:

… all of our roles are so diverse that I think especially, you know, you've got people who are going out and sampling things in the field and do field work all day every day and other people who like me are sitting around a computer screen researching lots of stuff. I think it's just so diverse … that could be a challenge.

Staff attitudes towards Māori responsiveness specifically, and towards Māori more generally, were also perceived as a challenge. With respect to the former, participants talked about the importance of getting staff buy-in to the project.

I think one of the challenges might be around getting buy-in a little bit.

We are the biggest challenge and I think we just have to start with how we do stuff and getting people on board.

In terms of attitudes towards Māori more broadly, anti- Māori sentiment at the unit and organisational level was also identified as a potential obstacle.

Organisationally I felt RIMU was quite positive in terms of that sort of anti- Māori kind of culture but you know there's still that "oh no we don't want any of this sort of stuff", you know. If that creeps in that can torpedo the whole thing as well.

Interviewees also discussed the challenges of working with Māori: understanding and working around internal conflicts between and within iwi and hapū; and accommodating the needs of groups that are often overwhelmed by demands for consultation. In addition to the extra time required to support responsiveness to Māori, participants talked about the challenge of prioritising research, monitoring and evaluation activities and meeting the expectations of Auckland's diverse mana whenua and mātāwaka groups.

So if … they want the same type of service in their particular area but we can't give it to them for whatever reason, we are going to have to handle that disappointment [and] also handle iwi perceptions of what they may be getting as opposed to what we can deliver. So research can only answer so much before you have another question then you need more information to answer that question.

The remaining challenges centre on the way the Māori Responsiveness Plan is communicated, implemented and embedded. Participants discussed the challenges involved in ensuring that each member of staff understands what responsiveness means for them in their specific role, as well as the implications for their team and for RIMU as a whole.

When the questionnaire asks, you know, "do you believe that a certain percentage or proportion of your daily work should be based around engagement with Māori?" Sure! But how does that work in reality?

So applying something that's actually going to be tangible and people understand how to implement it in their work practices, you know. It might need to be adjusted or specifics given so that people understand what it means. Because it's all very well to make … broad sweeping comments, it's easy to be cool "I'll do that", but how is it actually going to work? So making sure people actually understand what is required of them.

Implementing the plan, respondents explained, will involve the challenge of changing entrenched practices and processes.

It [will] be a challenge to change something that's been done the same way for the past 15 years or even longer. Some of the programmes date back to the 80s … and late 70s … It's not to say that it can't be done, it's just [that] it might be more of a challenge than establishing a new programme.

I think if it is a ground up rebuild … that's going to be challenging, very challenging.

Several interviewees discussed the challenges involved in embedding Māori responsiveness into RIMU's processes and practices, in ensuring that 'doing things differently' persists through time and personnel changes.

Like all things it's easy to do all this work and implement it and then you go "oh thank God that's done" and move onto the next thing and it doesn't get picked up. So the challenges I would say would be keeping the energy around it up and keeping it alive and relevant.

I think one of the challenges would also be just being consistent and persistent about it because often it would be easy to sort of just let it fall away and this thing it isn't something that happens tomorrow or next week or even in the next financial year, you know, this stuff [requires] a consistent genuine on-going commitment.

I think the challenge is that it is accepted and embedded rather than just put on a shelf somewhere. It's that we look at it and everything we do is meaningful and considered … that we keep building on it rather than having it as an end point "oh we've done it", we need to keep building on it.

9.2   Strengths

We turn now to the strengths we bring to the Māori Responsiveness Plan process. Interviewees' responses most commonly focused on particular attributes, some of which were linked to individuals while others were associated with the unit as a whole. A cluster of these attributes – empathy, openness and agility – was mentioned most frequently.

There's a strong core that is prepared and committed to driving this and making sure that we make every effort to try and implement it and [get] it accepted.

There seem to be a number of people who are very supportive of this responsiveness framework, so that is good. And there are a number of people that I could see being able to work with Māori and iwi very easily … we do have some very open and trustworthy people in our unit. So that's going to be a plus.

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I think our willingness to accept and just change … we are more agile I think than other teams … A lot of people are quite open minded, actually everyone is and really accepting [of] new things and new cultures. No one's really racist, no one's very closed minded about these sorts of things. So I think those are big values that might not be experienced across other teams within council.

In addition to the focus on these core attributes, participants also talked about RIMU's strong team spirit; the breadth of specialist knowledge we possess; and the strength that comes from having a supportive management team.

I think generally RIMU is a well-functioning unit with good team spirit and good heart and I think … there's enough spirit to make sure that we as a unit can all carry each other through because there will be possibly some individuals who go [makes noise like sheep] "bunch of nonsense, waste of my time". But generally speaking … the way we operate they tend to get carried along or re-convinced or shown that it's all right.

We've got a huge amount of specialist knowledge.

Managers tend to be really supportive of it and they also tend to be really encouraging … I think they actually understand where we are trying to go with the responsiveness. So I think that is also another strength.

RIMU's influence and reach across the organisation were also considered strengths, as these interviewees explained.

How do you actually get people who are writing these committee reports engaging properly? How do you get them to start with engagement rather than tack it on at the end, you know? That's the crucial thing and so I think that's why RIMU is so interesting because it's able to in some ways set the agenda … to essentially start thinking about responsiveness rather than tacking it at the end of our report.

The fact that we've got tentacles into … various parts of the organisation and generally have a fairly good reputation … I think that's going to help as well.

The diversity of RIMU staff, described by participants in the previous section as a challenge, was also considered a strength.

So I think that's a great advantage that we … bring a whole bunch of different views and opinions to the table and perhaps look at things from several different angles, yeah definitely.

I think it's really good that within our unit we have such a varied degree of skills already.

10.0 Hopes and fears

Towards the end of the interview, participants were asked to talk about their hopes and fears in relation to the Māori Responsiveness Plan process within RIMU, and in Auckland Council more broadly. The hopes and fears expressed by interviewees are, to a certain extent, two sides of the same coin, as well as reflecting several themes outlined in previous sections of this report.

10.1 Hopes

Looking first at hopes, the most frequently mentioned expectation was that colleagues across the unit genuinely embraced the plan; were able to articulate its value; and that it became a natural part of the way RIMU works.

> *My hopes are that people really embrace it, that my colleagues embrace it and the team leaders embrace it and that they see it for the value it's going to add and how it is going to … make the way they do things far more meaningful for themselves as well. Not just the way we do things but it's just going to add that dimension for us as researchers.*

> *I hope for a more … seamless approach to it and one that isn't so formalised where it feels like it's just a box tick with admin associated [with] it.*

> *I hope at the end when somebody asks us what's this Māori responsiveness process we can say "look it's this and it's useful and we do it because of this", not "I don't know, my manager asked me to do that, my manager asked me to put it in my performance review, that's why I'm doing it." [That's] my hope.*

Increasing skills and awareness at an individual and a collective level was also a common expectation. Liaison support was considered an important enabler of these qualities, reflecting the importance interviewees placed on these same attributes when discussing how RIMU might further develop work that is responsive to Māori, as presented in Section 5.2.1.

> *[I] hope that it's going to be clear who to ask, how to get help and that I can improve my understanding of things, yeah.*

> *I would like to see increased skills and capability come out of it. I think that's pretty key.*

> *I'm really keen to see some awareness inside our organisation of Māori and Māori issues, Māori questions, Māori needs.*

The development of good relationships with Māori, a key theme in participants' narratives of perfect responsiveness discussed in Section 8.0, was also an important aspect of respondents' hopes for the Māori Responsiveness Plan process.

> *It would be great if we could have like a good working relationship with Māori within Auckland, yeah.*

> *I'm hoping to build some really good long-term relationships … because, you know, [I've been] getting frustrated with the fact that these relationships haven't been built already and we are doing this great service for a community, most of the community, who don't know*

that it even happens and you are kind of missing out this huge section of people who could be your biggest advocates. So yeah, I would hope that it would build some really strong, good ties for the council.

10.2 Fears

As mentioned at the beginning of this section, participants' fears were closely related to their hopes for Māori responsiveness, in RIMU and in the wider organisation. The most commonly articulated fear was that nothing would change as a result of the work undertaken in this area, as these quotes illustrate.

> *… my fears are we are going to let it slide.*

> *So yeah, my fear is that [it] is just another exercise that sits on the shelf.*

Some interviewees connected this potential failure to inadequate resources, whether these were staff commitment, personnel or liaison support.

> *My fear is that without the right resource or the right commitment that will end up being a bit half-baked*

> *If people you know like [   ], [   ] and the core that are working on it stay that's fine. If they leave my fear is we've got to make sure we build capacity in people so that they continue on and just see it as really valuable.*

> *Fears, I guess would be around facilitation support. So you know there's an expectation that this happens and we go out to try and do that but we don't have those networks and [the] financial … backing to make that happen.*

Others were concerned that a lack of commitment at levels of the organisation higher than RIMU might impact on the success of the project.

> *I think it may have a bit more sway at the unit or a team level but at organisational level it's going to be lip service. I've already heard comments from iwi 'some of these responsiveness projects and initiatives are just yeah council just doing what they normally do and next week it's going to be the new buzz word and the new plan".*

The second cluster of fears focused not on the fact that the Māori Responsiveness Plan might not change anything, but that it would be poorly written, communicated or implemented and thus result in a number of negative outcomes.

> *My fear would be that we … say that kind of everything needs to be responsive rather than saying we need to think about responsiveness and be responsive where it's an appropriate response but where it's not an appropriate response or it doesn't fit with other things or whatever that we decide to not do that.*

> *That we end up with a MRP that is ethereal and really hard to pin down and we can't actually really apply that to our everyday [work].*

[My] fear is that [it] could consume a lot of time and require a lot of additional work which considering why we collect our data might not be necessary.

11.0 Looking ahead and getting real

The interview concluded by asking participants what they thought would be helpful or reassuring for staff and management during the next phase of the Māori Responsiveness Plan. Their responses focused on the need for assistance and guidance; on the importance of good information and communication; as well as the key role played by engagement, leadership and persistence.

In addition to the importance of liaison support from Te Waka Angamua discussed in Section 5.2.1, interviewees noted the need for their broader involvement with RIMU.

> *Yeah definitely Te Waka Angamua involvement … I think we need … TWA [to] … guid[e] us along the way.*

Continued professional development was considered important too.

> *… maybe some basic courses just on etiquette … would make a big difference when it comes down to the consultation. If you show that you've made an effort that's normally received quite well.*

Interviewees talked about the need for information in two distinct ways; they noted the importance of more and better information but also stressed the benefits of good working examples and the experience of other teams. The latter two in particular, they explained, illustrate how responsiveness might be operationalised in the work of individual staff members.

> *… seeing working examples is, I think, a really helpful thing … I think it's a little bit abstract, so being able to take each project or programme at a time and go "ok how can we?" and brainstorm each one, I think that would be really valuable.*

> *… what I've found really helpful just in the few meetings with Te Waka Angamua was actually how it's been going .. for other teams, their findings and their learnings from making plans.*

Communicating this information well and articulating its value and purpose clearly to staff were also considered helpful.

> *So maybe when it is implemented it's not just an email "hey guys here's the plan". Maybe it's on the agenda for managers to talk with everyone about. Maybe the team meetings, even one-on-ones … "what does it mean for me and what can I do?"… it's just clarity really and knowing where to go if you do need advice.*

> *For it to work it has got to be worthwhile.*

> *There may be the need for some reassurance around why the hell we are doing this.*

Engagement with Māori, good leadership and the importance of persistence were also mentioned.

> *Feedback from Māori as well I guess … it needs to be a positive relationship, we don't want it to be just us trying to get them to do things.*

If [the manager] is fully supportive of this … and has a real commitment to it then I think it would [go] a long way because the boss sets the tone and the culture … I think that would be really helpful in the longer term.

We just can't give up on these things. We can't just make it another tick box option.

12.0 Conclusion

This report on perceptions of Māori responsiveness, together with the Māori Responsiveness Plan Literature Review (Gooder, 2015), provide a foundation on which to build a Māori Responsiveness Plan for RIMU based on Whiria Te Muka Tangata, The Māori Responsiveness Framework.

Several key themes emerged from the survey and interviews undertaken for this research project. The first theme is diversity – RIMU staff are diverse in terms of their work hours, tenure, location, relationships and tasks. Moreover, they understand their role, and the unit itself, in different ways. This matters because responsiveness to Māori in RIMU will likely involve different activities, learning opportunities, relationships and skills for staff across the unit's four teams.

The second theme is that although there are significant gaps in staff skills and knowledge related to Māori, and a lack of overall responsiveness to Māori, there is nonetheless considerable support for addressing those skill deficits and improving the unit's responsiveness. Similarly, despite the fact that there is considerable uncertainty about what responsiveness might mean for individual scientists and for the unit as a whole, there is a strong belief that RIMU has an important part to play in delivering on Auckland Council's obligations to Māori.

The third major theme focuses on the seemingly disparate pathways to Māori responsiveness proposed by interviewees and survey respondents – some articulated the need for changes here and there (integration), others believed that responsiveness requires a rebuilding of what we do and how we do it from the ground up (transformation).

It was our view as authors that these positions were divergent, even mutually exclusive pathways to Māori responsiveness. It was also our standpoint that responsiveness to Māori required the transformation of RIMU staff and of its strategies, policies and procedures. Ultimately, however, our stance on this issue has shifted. Through our involvement in a number of 'integration' activities, such as te reo lessons and a visit to Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei at Takaparawhau, we observed, in ourselves and others, quite 'transformational' change. Rather than seeing integration and transformation as two mutually exclusive approaches to the development of Māori responsiveness, it is instead our view that incremental, integrative moments and practices can move us as individuals, and as a collective, towards transformation. To this process RIMU brings a number of strengths: a diversity of perspectives and disciplines; a strong team spirit; agility, openness and empathy; and the ability to reach and influence the wider Auckland Council whānau.

13.0 References

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Independent Māori Statutory Board (2014) Schedule of Issues of Significance to Māori in Tāmaki Makaurau.

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14.0 Appendix one: RIMU Perceptions of Māori responsiveness interview schedule

Draft interview questions

This is a semi-structured interview. The interview will take about 40-60 minutes. (Note that the interview schedule may acquire a greater sense of direction following the initial findings of the anonymous survey questionnaire preceding it.)

INTERVIEW BEGINS

"For the record, this is Roseanna Spiers interviewing participant A on [insert date] regarding the Research, Investigation and Monitoring Unit and Māori Responsiveness. The time is x."

- Tell me a bit about the work you do at RIMU (purpose; sorts of information; policy; relationships etc.).

- In relation to what you've just told me, what does Māori responsiveness mean to you? (Have copy of MRF diagram to use as prompt; follow leads from their conversation). And the applicability of the model to the work you do at RIMU? Can you think of anything you are currently doing in your work that is illustrative of RIMU being responsive to Māori?

    o If yes – what? And how could they be encouraged or further developed?
    o If no – what might it be possible to do? What might Māori responsiveness look like in the context of your work? What kinds of things are preventing or acting as barriers to moving towards becoming more responsive? What might we do to begin addressing these?

- How would you feel/what would your response be if some measures of Māori responsiveness (e.g. competence with te reo; te ao Māori etc.; attainment of related professional learning and development goals; and performance) were linked with staff performance?

- Do you engage with Te Waka Angamua or the IMSB through your work? And if you do, tell me about these interactions.

- How would you describe RIMU's current responsiveness to Māori?
- What are some of the things RIMU does currently that might be of interest/'benefit' Māori?
- What do we do that impacts or should be on the radar for Māori? How might we communicate this?
- If RIMU were perfectly responsive to Māori, what do you think this might look like?
- How might we know when we get there?

- The Research and Evaluation Unit (RIMU) is Auckland Council's environmental, social, economic and cultural research centre. RIMU provides high-quality evidence that assists policy development, implementation and evaluation. In light of this, do you think there is anything particular to RIMU (as opposed to other Council departments) that might be significant when it comes to developing Māori responsiveness?

- What kinds of challenges do you think RIMU might face when we implement our MRP?
- Can you think of any strengths (skill sets; values; attitudes etc.) that RIMU has currently which might be useful during this implementation process?

- What are some of your hopes and fears about the MRP process within RIMU, and Auckland Council more generally?
- What do you think would be helpful or reassuring for staff and management during this process?
- Were there any additional issues, concerns, material you wanted to raise or talk about? Did the survey trigger any particular response for you?

- Would you like to provide any feedback on the anonymous survey? Or the interview?

15.0 Appendix two: RIMU perceptions of Māori responsiveness survey

RIMU staff perceptions of responsiveness to Maori

Survey participant information

Thank you for deciding to take part in this survey! Please read the following carefully.

"Being responsive is likely to be a journey rather than a jump from little or no responsiveness to full responsiveness" - this is the working assumption of the project team and RIMU management.

The purpose of the survey is to provide RIMU with information on the current state of staff awareness and understanding of Māori culture, issues and relevance with regards to the services we deliver. There are no right or wrong answers: we are looking for opinions and perceptions. Please note that this is not meant to be discriminatory or make people feel bad. Rather RIMU is trying to get a sense of current skills and capacity within the unit so we have somewhere to start from in the event we choose to go on to further develop that capacity in the future. This information will inform unit Māori responsiveness plans and be used to track their impact over future years. The outcome of the survey (and interviews)is not predetermined - they will provide the platform from which RIMU proceeds in discussions about responsiveness. Your participation is therefore very important and highly valued - you will determine what happens next. For more details, please refer to the Survey Participant Information Sheet.

The survey is not prescriptive. It does not presume to answer common questions such as 'what is "Māori responsiveness"?'; 'how do outcomes for Māori differ from those for any other population?'; and 'what does "Māori" mean? Is it every Māori person who we've met, or is it the Māori people we have met because they are Māori (i.e. being Māori was relevant to their role or our interaction). What if the Māori person we met with didn't consider their Māori identity to be relevant or important to the meeting - do we include them?' Rather the survey and interviews provide an opportunity for all of RIMU to think about what these questions might mean for RIMU; and to pool our knowledge and perceptions.

If you don't wish to answer a particular question, please leave the question blank.

At the end of each section is an optional comments box where you can clarify, expand or comment on your responses or the issues raised. You do not have to fill in every one if you don't want to! However, since it will not be possible to hold interview conversations with everyone, these open boxes are also intended to provide an opportunity for you to contribute your views, fears, and aspirations around a RIMU that is responsive to Māori in greater detail.

Thank you in advance for taking the time to complete the survey.

Note: There are justifiable concerns about responses being truly anonymous in any internally conducted research. RIMU has committed to conducting this primary research themselves, rather than contracting the work to a truly independent agency. All staff and participants are affected by this decision and in as much must acknowledge and accept that total anonymity cannot be guaranteed under these conditions. The project team and RIMU management are very conscious of this and this is reflected in every attempt to mitigate the risk as discussed throughout the relevant ethics application, including Participant Information Sheet (PIS) and Consent Forms (CF) (note there is no CF form for the survey - consent is given when you submit your survey responses). The project team and RIMU management are committed to maintaining the confidentiality of all participant responses.

RIMU staff perceptions of responsiveness to Maori

A. Personal capability assessment

Please rate your current abilities on a scale from 1 to 5 where 1 is poor and 5 is excellent.

1. Your perceived ability to correctly pronounce Māori words.

1 Poor	2	3	4	5 Excellent	I don't know
○	○	○	○	○	○

2. Your ability to converse in te reo Māori.

1 Poor	2	3	4	5 Excellent	I don't know
○	○	○	○	○	○

3. Your ability to understand basic phrases in te reo Māori.

1 Poor	2	3	4	5 Excellent	I don't know
○	○	○	○	○	○

4. Your general understanding of Māori culture and values (we acknowledge that these are multiple and do not presume to reduce them to a homogeneous set).

1 Poor	2	3	4	5 Excellent	I don't know
○	○	○	○	○	○

5. Your understanding of Māori history in Auckland.

1 Poor	2	3	4	5 Excellent	I don't know
○	○	○	○	○	○

6. Your understanding of Māori history in New Zealand.

1 Poor	2	3	4	5 Excellent	I don't know
○	○	○	○	○	○

7. Your knowledge of which iwi/hapu (tribes/sub-tribes) have a tribal area that falls in the Auckland region.

1	2	3	4	5	I don't know
○	○	○	○	○	○

8. Your understanding of Māori protocol (e.g. meetings, introductions, hui).

1 Poor	2	3	4	5 Excellent	I don't know
○	○	○	○	○	○

9. Your knowledge and understanding of Council's legal obligations to Māori.

1 Poor	2	3	4	5 Excellent	I don't know
○	○	○	○	○	○

10. Your knowledge and understanding of how the above obligations relate to your work.

1 Poor	2	3	4	5 Excellent	I don't know
○	○	○	○	○	○

11. Your knowledge of key issues, concerns and aspirations of Māori in Auckland.

1 Poor	2	3	4	5 Excellent	I don't know
○	○	○	○	○	○

RIMU staff perceptions of responsiveness to Maori

12. Your knowledge and understanding of how your work contributes to Māori outcomes (i.e. cultural, social, economic, and environmental issues of significance for Māori).

1 Poor	2	3	4	5 Excellent	I don't know
○	○	○	○	○	○

13. Comment (optional):

RIMU staff perceptions of responsiveness to Maori

Please indicate to what degree you agree or disagree with the following statements.

14. The work RIMU does is important to delivering on Māori responsiveness for Auckland Council.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
○	○	○	○	○

15. My role is relevant to delivering Māori responsiveness for Auckland Council.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
○	○	○	○	○

16. An understanding of Māori culture, issues or values is important in my job.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly
○	○	○	○	○

17. Comment (optional):

RIMU staff perceptions of responsiveness to Maori

In the last 12 months have you, as part of your work:

18. Visited a marae or place of Māori significance (e.g. urupā/burial ground; Bastion Point etc.)?

○ Yes

○ No

19. Met face to face with Māori stakeholders?

○ Yes

○ No

20. Engaged or consulted with Māori?

○ Yes

○ No

21. Engaged or consulted with the Independent Māori Statutory Board (IMSB)?

○ Yes

○ No

22. Worked on a project where there is a clear link to an issue, event, or outcome for Māori?

○ Yes

○ No

23. Participated in a Ngā Kete Akoranga (Baskets of learning and knowledge) Learning and Development workshop provided by Te Waka Angamua? (For example: Applying the Māori Responsiveness Framework to the work we do Part I and II; Te Tiriti o Waitangi, The Treating of Waitangi - An historical overview; Legislation, local governement and Māori; or Te Reo pronunciation for local government)

○ Yes

○ No

24. Had any other interaction with Māori?

○ Yes

○ No

25. Comment (optional):

RIMU staff perceptions of responsiveness to Maori

B. RIMU and Māori

Rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements:

26. I understand issues of significance to Māori in my research areas.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
○	○	○	○	○

27. RIMU supports Māori initiated research.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
○	○	○	○	○

28. Relationships with Māori stakeholders set the platform for conversations about the projects my team works on.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
○	○	○	○	○

29. At RIMU we disseminate and make available research to the Māori community.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
○	○	○	○	○

30. RIMU engages with Kaupapa Māori principles to enhance Māori participation and outcomes (e.g. whanaungatanga/relationships; rangatiratanga/autonomy and leadership; manaakitanga/to protect and look after; wairuatanga/spirituality and identity; kaitiakitanga/guardianship).

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
○	○	○	○	○

31. It is important for RIMU to incorporate a Māori worldview in the development of its research and monitoring programmes.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
○	○	○	○	○

32. We currently have the ability to engage with Māori communities in a way that enhances relationships i.e. familiarity with te ao Māori (Māori world-view), competency with te reo (Māori language), confidence with Māori protocol.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
○	○	○	○	○

33. We currently have the ability to engage with Māori communities in a way that enhances community learning and benefiting from the work RIMU does.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
○	○	○	○	○

34. We should expect research contractors to engage in a meaningful way with Māori and leverage capacity within their own organisations/teams.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
○	○	○	○	○

RIMU staff perceptions of responsiveness to Maori

35. Comments (optional):

RIMU staff perceptions of responsiveness to Maori

C. Processes and Policies

Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements:

36. The RIMU office is a welcoming and inviting place for all those who visit.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
○	○	○	○	○

37. When meeting with Māori in the course of my work at RIMU I am comfortable meeting them at the RIMU office.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	I have never worked with Māori
○	○	○	○	○	○

RIMU staff perceptions of responsiveness to Maori

Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements. When responding please keep in mind the following: we are interested in your opinion of RIMU's status NOT a test of if you know something in fact exists or is 'true'.

38. Māori are represented in effective and visible leadership roles within RIMU.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	I don't know
○	○	○	○	○	○

39. There are examples of effective Māori mentoring practices at RIMU.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	I don't know
Māori mentoring other staff and/or Māori	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Mentoring for Māori staff specifically	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Mentoring for staff to better engage with Māori	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

40. There are programs to promote Māori skills in the research areas RIMU is involved in. ('Māori skills' is loosely conceived of here to include approaches, tools, heuristics, values, and metrics derived from te ao Māori, a Māori worldview.)

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	I don't know
○	○	○	○	○	○

41. Auckland Council staff are acknowledged and appreciated for providing specialist support in tikanga and te reo.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	I don't know
○	○	○	○	○	○

42. In the past 12 months I have witnessed or experienced racism in the workplace (e.g. racial slurs, songs, 'asides' etc.).

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	I don't know
○	○	○	○	○	○

43. Comments (optional):

[text box]

44. I am competent and confident engaging with te ao Māori (the Māori world), communicating in te reo (Māori language), and enabling Te Tiriti o Waitangi (the Treaty of Waitangi).

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	I don't know
Engaging with te ao Māori (Māori world view)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Communicating in te reo (Māori language)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Enabling Te Tiriti o Waitangi (Treaty of Waitangi)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

45. RIMU staff are on the whole competent and confident engaging with te ao Māori, communicating in te reo, and enabling Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	I don't know
Engaging with te ao Māori (Māori world view)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Communicating in te reo (Māori language)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Enabling Te Tiriti o Waitangi (Treaty of Waitangi)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

46. The Auckland Council prepared me well to work with Māori.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
○	○	○	○	○

47. Comments (optional):

RIMU staff perceptions of responsiveness to Maori

D. Whanaungatanga/relationships - internal and external

Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements:

48. In my professional capacity at RIMU I maintain strong and sustainable relationships with Māori.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
○	○	○	○	○

49. RIMU has strong and sustainable relationships with Māori.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
○	○	○	○	○

50. RIMU should invest in building and sustaining effective relationships with Māori in Tāmaki Makaurau.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
○	○	○	○	○

51. Comments (optional):

E. Research, evaluation and monitoring programmes and projects

This next section refers to RIMU at the moment - how RIMU is/not performing now. Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements:

52. Māori issues and aspirations are taken into account in the design and implementation of my research, monitoring and evaluation.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
○	○	○	○	○

53. Building effective relationships with Māori is a significant part of my everyday work practice.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
○	○	○	○	○

54. Measuring outcomes (performance and effectiveness) for Māori is given high importance in my data collection and analysis.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
○	○	○	○	○

55. Enabling Māori outcomes (including aspirations and priorities) is a significant part of our research.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
○	○	○	○	○

56. Engagement with Māori has high importance in the reporting and communication of my research, monitoring and evaluation.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
○	○	○	○	○

F. Research, evaluation and moitoring programmes and projects

This next section refers to RIMU in the possible future - how you think RIMU should/not perform. Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements:

57. Māori issues and aspirations should be taken into account in the design and implementation of my research, monitoring and evaluation.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
○	○	○	○	○

58. Building relationships for effective engagement with Māori should be a significant part of my everyday work practice.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
○	○	○	○	○

59. Measuring outcomes (performance and effectiveness) for Māori should be given high importance in my data collection and analysis.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
○	○	○	○	○

60. Enabling Māori outcomes (including aspirations and priorities) should be a significant part of our research.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
○	○	○	○	○

61. Engagement with Māori should be a significant part of the reporting and communication of my research, monitoring and evaluation.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
○	○	○	○	○

62. What do you think a RIMU research, evaluation and monitoring programme and/or project that was responsive and effective for Māori might look like?

63. Comment (optional):

RIMU staff perceptions of responsiveness to Maori

Thank you and interview invitation

Many thanks from the RIMU Māori Responsiveness Plan research team and RIMU management for your participation in this survey.

Please contact Roseanna at roseanna.spiers@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz if you would like to participate in the interviews. If you have any queries regarding the interviews and would like further information, please refer to the survey Participant Information Sheet and/or contact Roseanna.

We are seeking people interested in taking part in the interviews which will constitute the second part of this primary research phase. The interview will take about 40-60 minutes. You will be asked to talk about RIMU's responsiveness to Māori; the parameters of RIMU's possible responsiveness; and what that responsiveness might look like. We would like to encourage a range of people to participate in order to get a sense of where RIMU is now in terms of perceptions of responsiveness to Māori. Please note that all primary data collection and analysis will be conducted by Roseanna. No one else within RIMU or Auckland Council will have access to any identifiable material (e.g. digitally recorded interviews; interview transcripts etc.) during or after project completion.

Remember that your participation will inform unit Māori responsiveness plans and be used to track their impact over future years. The outcome of the interviews (and survey) is not predetermined - they will provide the platform from which RIMU proceeds in discussions about responsiveness. Your participation is therefore very important and highly valued - you will determine what happens next.

Find out more: phone 09 301 0101
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visit www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz

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