



# Everyone's voice should be heard.

How utilising FranklyAI allows you to reach indigenous populations  
and listen more to our native communities.

# FranklyAI

Frankly (<http://frankly.ai>) is a conversational agent that enables users to provide their feedback in various languages. The FranklyAI technology uses artificial intelligence for an engaging style and multilingual capabilities, including Te Reo Māori and Samoan. Multiple language options are tailored to reflect the cultural nuances of each language and enable respectful engagement. The technology processes the conversation in real-time, allowing follow-up questions and a real-time secure insights dashboard to be produced during the consultation.

Our goal is to listen to 10 million voices by 2030.

We are guided by our values of Pākiki (Curiosity), Houtupu (Authenticity), Hihiri (Agility) and Mana taurite (Equity).



# FranklyAI Philosophy

## Translating Concepts, Not Words

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A focus of FranklyAI is the revitalisation of indigenous languages and this is reflected in our translation processes. Our clients and users take a lot of pride in their language and culture. It is of the utmost importance that translations are of high quality for users, especially for individuals wanting to learn these languages. FranklyAI employs a team of talented translators and reviews every translation to ensure the highest possible accuracy and quality.

Often, our translators must translate technical terms which do not exist in these languages. In these instances, we work closely with the clients to make sure that any terminology adequately captures the concepts while remaining as transparent to the users as possible.

More than just translating conversations, the design of Frankly is also heavily influenced by the translators. Conversation style and flow are unique to each language, and we work closely with our translators to ensure the conversations are as natural as possible. Engaging and accurate conversation is only achieved through cultural co-design between the translators and the FranklyAI team.

# Indigenous Conversational AI

## University of Auckland

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FranklyAI is working with The University of Auckland (UoA) to develop multilingual and multicultural equivalents of their student services virtual assistant (English) in Te Reo Māori, Gagana Sāmoa and Mandarin. The team is developing multiple AI skills to complement existing assistants and cater for a wider range of the University of Auckland community through multilingual capabilities. The non-English conversations will engage with the user in a culturally appropriate way, while maintaining the same capability as the existing English assistants.

There are important concepts in Te Reo Māori and other indigenous languages that do not have direct English translations. Engaging in native dialects allows speakers to engage confidently, be heard and improve their experience navigating lots of university specific information.

As a public institution, UoA is required to provide accessible resources in Te Reo Māori; as well as actively promote and incorporate Te Reo and tikanga Māori through all of their activity. UoA and FranklyAI's partnership has enabled these goals to become reality.

*“You guys  
[at FranklyAI]  
are real nerds at this.  
I am glad that the language  
is in safe hands”*

**Lemoa Henry S Fesuluai**  
Cultural Advisor,  
University of  
Auckland

*“Such a  
GREAT moment  
[launch]! Only possible  
because we're such a great  
team. Thank you everyone for the  
joy and energy you've brought  
to this mahi. RESPECT!”*

**Matt Poole**  
Strategic Programme  
Mgr. University of  
Auckland

# Indigenous Conversational AI

*“The Talanoa Chatbot enabled me to feel culturally at ease and relaxed when responding to questions asked in my home language.”*

*“The innovation of the Talanoa Chatbot as a platform to pass cultural, community related information is uniquely creative and successful in its delivery.”*

*“A Samoan chatbot would be awesome. Islanders, specifically the older generation, are distrusting of technology. We need to get over that ‘technology is evil.’”*

Feedback from  
Talanoa Project users

## Talanoa Project

The Talanoa Project focused on developing a public consultation conversational agent tailored to Sāmoans and the wider Sāmoan community. This agent, named *Tala*, features full support for conversations in the Sāmoan language through the use of real-time language translation. This allows clients to continue developing Tala in English, while end users can fluently converse with the agent in Sāmoan.

The Sāmoan language has two types of ways in which people may converse - traditional Sāmoan which is used in more formal situations, such as speaking to Elders, and more common modern day conversational Sāmoan. For this conversational agent, we maintained a respectful and appropriate tone as not to offend anyone, but also to keep the language as informal as possible so that the conversation feels real and natural.

Despite the majority of users not having used a chatbot platform previously, interaction with Tala was overwhelmingly positive. This was attributed to users enjoying the opportunity to use their mother tongue in daily life, feeling more comfortable speaking in their native language and therefore more inclined to answer questions.

The Talanoa Project has been successful in developing a conversational AI that can aid consultancy in community engagement and gain input from harder to reach (non-English speaking) communities. It is a very positive step towards improving traditional methods of public consultation and developing the use of real time translation.

# Indigenous Conversational AI

## Torres Strait Creole

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The Torres Strait, locally known as Zenadh Kes, is a stretch of water between Queensland in Northern Australia and Papua New Guinea and contains at least 270 islands.

Similar to many indigenous Australian languages, Torres Strait Creole is primarily a spoken language. With 90% of Indigenous Australian languages being classified as “endangered”, tools like FranklyAI can help languages adapt to the modern era and ensure that more people are exposed to these languages. To our knowledge, no such technology exists for an Indigenous Australian language.

In our study the conversational agent was utilised to ask the user their views on their community’s nature, waterways, littering and pollution. The vast majority of users responded highly positively to their experience with the conversational assistant.

Many respondents stated that they were more likely to use the Creole assistant as it was an opportunity to help them learn the language of their people. Regardless of their level of fluency, many participants made comments regarding a sense of pride in their heritage and excitement by being represented in modern technology as reasons for why they would use the Creole assistant.

*“Feels like I'm talking to a Torres Strait Islander”*

*“Many students were not as comfortable talking to me in English but when I start talking Creole, they are much more open and speak much more freely I'd expect that this type of technology would have a similar effect”.*

*“Lost for words. This will go a long way”*

Feedback from  
Torres Strait Creole Project users

# Māori Data Sovereignty

## Kete Mātauranga

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**Mātauranga** is Māori knowledge. FranklyAI could be considered an AI platform that allows for the exchange of knowledge and the expression of Te Ao Māori (the Māori worldview).

**Māori Data Sovereignty** recognises that Māori data should be subject to Māori governance. Māori data sovereignty supports tribal sovereignty and the realisation of Māori and Iwi aspirations.

At FranklyAI we have considered pathways and options for enabling Māori data sovereignty during the flow of Māori.

# Future Integrations

## Te Reo Māori APIs

Te Reo Māori was the only language in Aotearoa until the 19th century. There was no written word; therefore, they communicated through speech and symbolism initially.

At FranklyAI we recognise the importance of being able to converse verbally in Māori. We utilise 'text to speech' and 'speech to text' APIs developed by Te Hiku Media allowing users to converse directly with Frankly without the need for written text.

We are able to use this technology in a format that user's may be more comfortable with. In Figure 1. below the user can navigate through a hospital ward using just their voice in Te Reo Māori. Poor Māori experience in healthcare is a known issue in New Zealand. By using FranklyAI individuals can interact with the virtual environment and learn more about medical practices in a setting that would likely put the user at ease.

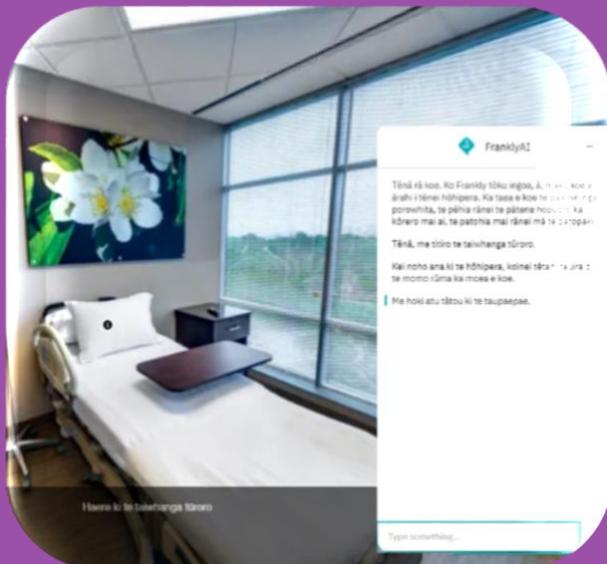


Figure 1. Frankly Te Reo Māori Voice assistant

## Google Maps

Another method under development at FranklyAI is utilising Google Maps for **direct community consultation**.

Figure 2 below demonstrates our platform's ability to engage visually with the audience. In our initial study we focussed on the Waikato region, which is of particular importance to Iwi. It is paramount to offer the option of receiving their feedback in Māori to ensure accurate insight.

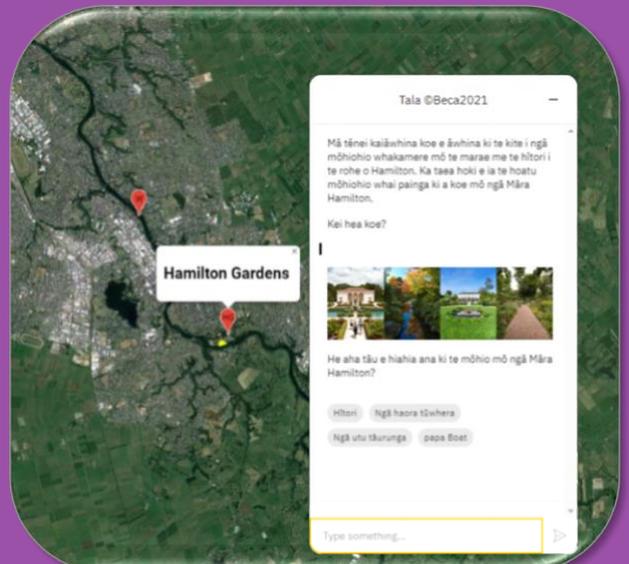


Figure 2. Google maps view with Frankly Te Reo Māori assistant

# What FranklyAI Offers You



## Connection

Removing the barriers to engagement to reach a wider community.



## Inclusivity

Embracing and including all kinds of diversity, whether cultural, language, financial or simply a scarcity of time.



## Authenticity

Capturing every word and every sentence to build a more honest, more authentic picture.



## Rich Data

Processing live data with real-time insights, reaching the customers, communities, and employees that you really care about.



## Community

Connecting with communities in dozens of languages using an approachable, accessible conversational style.



## Expertise

Analysing and responding to qualitative feedback using AI, identifying key trends in real-time.

# franklyai

NO VOICE LEFT BEHIND

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For more Information visit us at <https://frankly.ai/>  
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