

18/12/2024

Committee Secretariat
Justice Committee
Parliament Buildings
Wellington 6160

Submission on: Principles of the Treaty of Waitangi Bill

Tēnā koe

Age Concern New Zealand (ACNZ) welcomes the opportunity to provide input on the Principles of the Treaty of Waitangi Bill.

Age Concern New Zealand recognises and respects Te Tiriti o Waitangi as the founding document for Aotearoa. Our Strategic Plan 2023-2026 has five strands, one of which is Te Tiriti o Waitangi with a focus on how it influences our work and relationships with kaumātua and older New Zealanders.

We are committed to diversity and inclusion, as reflected in our constitution and governance documents. Age Concern New Zealand's constitution emphasises the importance of respecting and promoting the rights and freedoms of choice of older people, including Māori. The organisation works in partnership with older people and their whānau, ensuring that their services benefit the older person and minimise the risk of harm or exploitation. This commitment to partnership and protection aligns with the existing principles of the Treaty of Waitangi.

Age Concern New Zealand's strategic leadership and governance also focuses on embracing the diverse cultural heritage of Aotearoa, including Māori perspectives. By preserving the current principles of the Treaty, ACNZ ensures that Māori receive the support and recognition needed to achieve equitable outcomes, which is crucial for the wellbeing of kaumātua and their communities.

About Age Concern New Zealand

Age Concern New Zealand is a trusted charity working in local communities throughout Aotearoa New Zealand to support older people, their friends and whānau. We have 29 local

Age Concerns operating in 40 locations throughout the country and a national office based in Wellington.

Our strategic goal is:

Every older person feels connected, has positive choices and can age well.

Our values of Dignity. Wellbeing. Equity and Respect for older people are our guiding lights and underpin everything we do.

Our core services include advocacy and public awareness, social connection, health promotion, elder abuse and neglect prevention, and providing support through expert information, advice and referrals.

Introduction

There are a growing number of people aged 65 years and older in Aotearoa New Zealand. Within ten years the over 65 population is expected to reach 1.2 million, with the over 85 age group being the fastest growing.¹

Over 65s are also increasingly diverse with Māori, Pasifika and Asian older populations growing at a faster rate than European / Pakeha seniors. Within ten years there is expected to be approximately 928,000 older European or other New Zealanders and 109,400 older Māori.

Our comments:

1. Age Concern New Zealand is **strongly opposed to the Principles of the Treaty of Waitangi Bill**. We oppose the Bill as it: does not reflect the intent of Te Tiriti o Waitangi or the principles outlined in the articles in either the English or Te Reo versions. We are concerned at the divisiveness already caused by the Bill and do not see its introduction as positive for Māori or non-Māori New Zealanders.
2. We **support preserving the current principles** which have been examined and clarified through robust democratic processes within the Courts and the Waitangi Tribunal for many years. The existing treaty principles outline the fundamental concepts of partnership between the Crown and Māori, protection, good government, redress and equity. We support this status quo where the Courts and the Waitangi Tribunal give effect to the principles in practice.

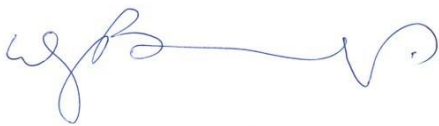
¹ <https://officeforseniors.govt.nz/better-later-life-strategy/> po

3. Our focus as an organisation is on **positive outcomes for kaumātua** and the communities, whanau, hapū and iwi who support them. We want to see kaumātua thrive and enjoy all the rights, health and wellbeing that they deserve as treasured members of our communities. We do not believe the Principles of the Treaty of Waitangi Bill will support and enhance positive outcomes for kaumātua.

Closing comment

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide our feedback on the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi Bill. We have a keen interest in the outcome of the feedback process and hope that rather than this Bill proceeding that tangata whenua and tangata Tiriti continue to work together to make Aotearoa a great place to live and to age, where commonalities and differences are celebrated and valued.

Nāku Noa, nā,



Karen Billings-Jensen
Chief Executive
Age Concern New Zealand