

# Annual Conference 2025



## Report on Affirming and Advancing Te Tiriti o Waitangi 2024 – 2025

A REPORT FOR THE NZPPTA ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2025

The constitutional objective of PPTA Te Wehengarua – to affirm and advance Te Tiriti o Waitangi – continues to be realised through deliberate action, member-led initiatives, and strong organisational commitment. Over the past year, the Association has advanced this objective across many fronts, combining principled intent with practical action.

### **Supporting Māori Teachers and Learners**

Supporting Māori teachers and learners remains central to the Association's work. Members continue to be informed and connected through *Manukura*, the kaupapa Māori-centred publication, and through the Association's longstanding role in organising and supporting the regional and national Ngā Manu Kōrero speech and kapa Haka competitions. These initiatives reinforce Māori education leadership while affirming te reo Māori and tikanga Māori in secondary education.

### **Member-Led Submissions and Advocacy**

The current coalition government has sought to demote and remove Te Tiriti o Waitangi from education policy and practice. Members have responded strongly, exercising their democratic right to oppose reforms that undermine Te Tiriti. To support this response, the Association developed submission-writing guides and delivered webinars to assist members in preparing both individual and collective submissions.

<https://www.ppta.org.nz/submissions-page#sub24>

<https://www.ppta.org.nz/campaigns/toitu-te-tiriti>

Through Te Huarahi Māori Motuhake and Te Reo ā Rohe, members have made significant submissions on policies affecting Māori education. These have included responses to the Treaty Principles Bill, proposed changes to Resource Teacher: Māori funding, the Education and Training Amendment Bill, amendments to school board objectives and the National Education and Learning Priorities, the Regulatory Standards Bill, and proposals to replace NCEA. Each of these contributions has helped to ensure Māori perspectives and Treaty obligations remain visible in national education debates.

### **Structural Commitments**

Beyond submissions, the Association has taken structural steps to uphold Te Tiriti. In 2024, PPTA Te Wehengarua lodged a claim with the Waitangi Tribunal addressing systemic breaches of Te Tiriti in education. This claim, which identifies nine breaches, highlights the need for the Crown to meet its obligations to Māori learners and educators.

At the same time, the Te Tiriti o Waitangi Komiti was established, composed of six voluntary members of Te Huarahi. This Komiti provides leadership on Treaty-related matters across the Association and ensures that decisions reflect a commitment to shared governance and genuine Tiriti partnership.

### **Strengthening Te Reo Māori**

Calls from members for a dedicated subject association for te reo Māori have been answered. Following several years of development, the Te Reo Māori Subject Association Aotearoa was officially handed over to its Komiti Whakahaere in 2025. In its first year, the Association ran workshops at the Māori Teachers' Conference in Rotorua, began recruiting members, and prepared an application for funding. This work ensures that te reo Māori as a subject is given structural support and visibility in secondary education.

## Treaty Principles Bill

The Treaty Principles Bill has been a major concern for Māori leaders, opposition parties, and civil society. Many have opposed the Bill on the grounds that it is not based on a factual interpretation of Te Tiriti, is divisive, undermines Māori rights, and damages the relationship between Māori and the Crown. At its August meeting, the Executive acknowledged the leadership of Te Huarahi and the Te Tiriti o Waitangi Komiti, who authored the Association's formal response to the Bill.

Te Tiriti expert Janelle Riki-Waka has played a crucial role in supporting members to respond to these challenges. Through workshops, webinars, and resources, members have deepened their understanding of why the Crown is obligated to Te Tiriti, particularly in education, and have been equipped to prepare submissions. Campaign materials such as *Toitū Te Tiriti* flyers, t-shirts, flags, and other resources have enabled members to express their stance visibly in schools and communities.

(Members speaking on Te Tiriti)

<https://www.facebook.com/reel/708461888431445>

Toitū te Mātauranga

## Waitangi Tribunal Findings

The Waitangi Tribunal's report on the Crown's treatment of Te Rūnanga Nui and Kura Kaupapa Māori during the Tomorrow's Schools review underscored serious breaches of Treaty obligations. The Crown failed to honour the Te Tauāki Kawa agreement, undermined the kaitiaki role of Te Rūnanga Nui, and neglected to implement key recommendations supporting Kaupapa Māori education. These findings reinforce the urgent need for the Crown to reset its relationship with Māori education providers and to resource autonomous structures that align with kaupapa Māori values.

The Executive considered the review and, following the recommendation of Te Tiriti o Waitangi Komite, endorsed Recommendation 4(a) of the Tomorrow's Schools Taskforce. This recommendation proposes the formation of an autonomous governance body to support Kaupapa Māori, which includes the educational organisations currently recognised as Kaupapa Māori—Te Rūnanga Nui o Ngā Kura Kaupapa Māori o Aotearoa and Ngā Kura ā Iwi o Aotearoa—and acknowledges and respects their distinct identities. Furthermore, the Executive agreed that the Crown failed to uphold the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi in its relationship with Te Rūnanga Nui and Kura Kaupapa Māori, as outlined in the Waitangi Tribunal's report on the Tomorrow's Schools review process.

## Māori Teachers' Conference

The Māori Teachers' Conference continues to be a cornerstone event. The 29th conference, held in Rotorua in July 2024, carried the theme *Ko au te taiao, ko te taiao ko au* and was oversubscribed, highlighting its significance. The 30th conference, also in Rotorua in July 2025, drew even greater participation under the theme *Ake, Ake Tonu Atu*. These gatherings affirm the strength of Māori teacher leadership and provide vital spaces for collective professional and cultural development.



### Kanohi Kitea – Visibility and Engagement



The Association's kanohi kitea strategy has ensured strong visibility and engagement across Māori contexts. Members and staff attended Hui Taumata in Kahungunu and Waitaha, Ngā Wāhine Māori Toko i te Ora at Tūrangawaewae Marae, Koroneihana, and for the first time, the commemorations at Waitangi in 2025. Presence at Te Matatini ki te Kāhui Maunga in Taranaki and the 50th anniversary celebrations of Te Tai Tokerau Festival has further strengthened connections.

This visibility is more than symbolic: many Māori members are performers, kaimahi, and cultural leaders. They value seeing PPTA Te Wehengarua present and engaged in spaces that affirm Māori identity and strengthen trust in the Association.

## **Honouring Māori Leadership**

In 2024, members and staff attended the Koroneihana for Kingi Tūheitia Pōtatau Te Wherowhero VII and later his tangihanga.

In September 2025, PPTA Te Wehengarua membership will also represent and attend the first reign of Te Ariknui Kuini Nga wai hono i te po, following the passing of her father.

The Association also attended the opening of Te Kura Kaupapa Māori o Te Wānanga Whare Tapere o Takitimu in Heretaunga, supported member events in Waitaha, and was welcomed at Haeata Community Campus with Graduate Diploma Teaching students. Each of these occasions reinforced the importance of supporting members in their schools and communities.

## **Cultural Succession and Development**

Succession planning has been a particular focus, especially in relation to karanga and whaikōrero. Wānanga were held to strengthen members' capability in these areas, ensuring that tikanga Māori practices at PPTA Te Wehengarua conferences and events are upheld to a high standard. These investments not only protect cultural integrity today but also develop future leaders in areas that are difficult to fill.

## **Professional Learning Opportunities**

The Association has continued to provide professional learning opportunities for members. One hundred vouchers for Te Tiriti o Waitangi modules were distributed in 2025, and workshops led by Janelle Riki-Waka provided members with structured opportunities to build their knowledge of Te Tiriti and their obligations as teachers and union members.

## **Conclusion**

Over the past year, PPTA Te Wehengarua has demonstrated an enduring commitment to affirming and advancing Te Tiriti o Waitangi. Through submissions, structural changes, cultural investment, visibility in Māori spaces, and the leadership of its members, the Association has both challenged government reforms and modelled cultural responsiveness in practice. These achievements highlight not only organisational accountability but also the pivotal role of members in ensuring that Te Tiriti remains central to education and to the work of the Association.