

UNDERSTANDING THE TREATY TODAY

Network Waitangi Otautahi (NWO) supports the development of a multicultural, Treaty-based society. Because the intent and actual content of **Te Tiriti o Waitangi** are not well-known, let alone well-understood, we make our contribution through education to enhance understanding of the indigenous status of Tangata Whenua (people who whakapapa to a Maori ancestor) and the role of Tangata Tiriti (everyone else). We focus on what was happening both globally and locally in the period leading up to the signing of the Treaty and also on the importance of its five aspects – the Preamble and four Articles.

All 5 aspects of the Treaty need to be taken together as a whole and as a follow-on to the 1835 Declaration of Independence – He Wakaputanga o te Rangatiratanga o Nu Tireni.

Preamble: Peace with justice for all

Article 1: Practising honourable KAWANATANGA

Article 2: Promoting TINO RANGATIRATANGA by Tangata Whenua

Article 3: Maori participation in Kawanatanga in ways determined by Maori in relation to tikanga

Article 4: Everybody's belief systems upheld

This work supports the kaupapa of restoration of Tino Rangatiratanga by Tangata Whenua and the establishment of honourable Kawanatanga by the Crown. Through developing this understanding of the Te Tiriti o Waitangi we can assist in the process of working toward a Treaty-based, multicultural future. At the moment, Te Tiriti o Waitangi is seen as relating almost exclusively to Maori. In a Treaty-based future it will be relevant to all of us, with all political relationships between Tangata Whenua and Tangata Tiriti based on it.

In a speech in Wellington on 17 August 2006, Dr Pita Sharples referred to the words spoken by Captain William Hobson who signed Te Tiriti on behalf of the British Crown 'He iwi kotahi tatou' meaning 'now we are one people'. Dr Sharples notes:

“As Nelson Mandela had said, ‘It is difficult to negotiate with those who do not share the same frame of reference’.

If we are able to recognise and come to have a shared view of this political document called the Treaty of Waitangi, as our shared frame of reference, then and only then, can we perhaps say – He iwi kotahi tatou”.

NWO Main Activities

- Introductory and implementation workshops, with follow through
- Support of others who are developing their Treaty work
- Organising meetings on topics of interest
- Ensuring a commitment to accountability to each other and to Mana Whenua

NWO is an educational incorporated society with charitable status. We are part of a wider national network of groups and individuals. Apart from relevant legislative and some funding requirements, NWO is independent of government, business interests and political parties. We accept koha in recognition of our work on the basis of what individuals and groups can afford, while taking into account the need to ensure that any amounts paid to us will not disadvantage mana whenua planning and will not put people off engaging in the workshops and other activities.

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