

23 June 2025

Regulatory Standards Bill

We are pleased to provide comment to the Finance and Expenditure Committee on the Regulatory Standards Bill.

About Te Rito Maioha Early Childhood New Zealand

Te Rito Maioha Early Childhood New Zealand (Te Rito Maioha) is an Incorporated Society of members committed to high quality early childhood education for every child. Established in 1963, the organisation is an influential leader in shaping today's early childhood sector through advocacy, policy, tertiary education qualifications and professional development programmes.

We advocate for early childhood education services and the teachers | kaiako who provide education to thousands of infants, toddlers, and children | tamariki. Our members are drawn from a diverse range of community-based, privately-owned, kindergarten and homebased early childhood education services.

Te Rito Maioha is also a registered Private Training Establishment (PTE) with the highest Category One rating for a tertiary provider. We are accredited and approved by the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) to deliver a range of undergraduate, graduate, and postgraduate qualifications (levels 4-9), including specialist kaiako education, both nationally and internationally.

We are committed to achieving high-quality teaching and learning by:

- increasing teachers' | kaiako knowledge of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and Aotearoa New Zealand's dual cultural heritage;
- providing access to blended delivery through online and face-to-face, with practical real-life exposure and experiences through undergraduate, graduate, and postgraduate tertiary education programmes leading to recognised and approved initial teacher education and other qualifications;
- promoting quality teaching and leadership through ongoing professional learning and development programmes;
- providing advocacy and a range of unique resources and services to our early childhood education members;
- collaborating with New Zealand and international partnerships to strengthen research and teacher education.

We are proud to honour Te Tiriti o Waitangi

We are a proud mainstream bicultural organisation, committed to Te Tiriti o Waitangi, practicing tikanga, local kawa and embedding te reo Māori into our daily mahi. We honour Te Ao Māori by ensuring that Te Tiriti o Waitangi, Aotearoa's founding document, is acknowledged, respected, and remains central to all our efforts. We embed its principles in every aspect of our organisation, ensuring it guides us in everything we create, integrate and support.



Tikanga, kawa, and other Māori concepts are woven throughout our programmes, with our Māori teaching staff leading the delivery of the mātāuranga Māori components and combined with the best in international education research and practice.

Each of our 11 regional education centres throughout the country has a Pouako, Kaumātua and Kuia who support and advise on protocol to enhance the understanding of Te Ao Māori, ensuring the integrity of our mahi is upheld. Our regional education centres reflect the kawa and dialect of their region and undertake practices in accordance with mana whenua.

We oppose the Regulatory Standards Bill

We support the development of high-quality legislation and regulatory systems; but not at the expense of upholding Te Tiriti o Waitangi, which is recognised as the foundation of our legal and social framework.

The proposed Regulatory Standards Bill (the Bill) is fundamentally inconsistent with Te Tiriti o Waitangi and should not proceed.

The Bill does not recognise Te Tiriti o Waitangi, rights guaranteed to Māori such as rangatiratanga and the exercise of kaitiakitanga. It disrespects and undermines the historical and cultural significance of Te Tiriti o Waitangi. As such, it risks undermining Māori tino rangatiratanga and ignores the role of regulation in protecting shared resources. This will further marginalise Māori rights and values.

Māori – Crown relations

It is concerning that the Crown has pursued this Bill without genuine engagement or consultation with Māori. Māori and the Crown are equal partners under Te Tiriti o Waitangi. By excluding Māori voices from the development and decision-making process, the Bill fails to uphold the partnership between Māori and the Crown, disregarding the spirit of partnership that the Treaty is built upon.

The Waitangi Tribunal found that the Crown breached the Treaty principles of partnership and active protection of Māori in its development of the bill. The Tribunal go on to say that proceeding without meaningful consultation with Māori would be a further breach of those principles. This risks eroding trust in the government and deepening divisions between Māori and the Crown.

Education leaders unite against the government's moves to downgrade place of Te Tiriti o Waitangi in education

We are proud to support an education system that *honours Te Tiriti o Waitangi and supports Māori-Crown relationships* (s4(d) Education and Training Act 2020). We do not support any changes that downgrade Te Tiriti o Waitangi in this - or any - legislation.

On 18 September 2024, we, together with other national education leaders across Early Childhood Education, Primary and Secondary School, called on the government to not downgrade Te Tiriti o Waitangi in the Education and Training Act 2020.

Early childhood providers, teachers, school leaders, school boards and peak education bodies have worked hard over many years to understand and enact practices that give life to Te Tiriti o Waitangi. We have put an enormous effort into learning and change processes to meet this obligation and to therefore ensure that early childhood and schools better meet the needs of ākonga Māori.

We are concerned that the learning of children and young people, and particularly ākonga Māori, will be negatively impacted if these changes are to progress.



We have committed to working together in opposing any downgrading of Te Tiriti o Waitangi in the Education and Training Act 2020 and continue to instil in each child and young person an appreciation of the importance of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and te reo Māori.

Our kaiako are bound by a professional code to recognise and honour Te Tiriti o Waitangi

Ngā Tikanga Matatika Ngā Paerewa: The Code of Professional Responsibility and Standards for the Teaching Profession sets high standards for ethical behaviour and effective teaching for every kaiako in Aotearoa. Kaiako are committed to honouring Te Tiriti o Waitangi and understand its implications in their practice.

By way of example, the Code includes commitments to:

- the teaching profession: “I will maintain public trust and confidence in the teaching profession by demonstrating a commitment to tangata whenuatanga and Te Tiriti o Waitangi partnership in the learning environment.”
- society: “I will respect my trusted role in society and the influence I have in shaping futures by demonstrating a commitment to a Tiriti o Waitangi based Aotearoa New Zealand.”

The Standards also recognise Te Tiriti o Waitangi, demonstrating a commitment to tangata whenuatanga and Te Tiriti o Waitangi partnership in Aotearoa.

- Understand and recognise the unique status of tangata whenua in Aotearoa New Zealand.
- Understand and acknowledge the histories, heritages, languages and cultures of partners to Te Tiriti o Waitangi.
- Practise and develop the use of te reo and tikanga Māori.

Te Tiriti o Waitangi is woven into our national curricula

Te Whāriki: He whāriki mātauranga mō ngā mokopuna o Aotearoa Early childhood curriculum (Te Whāriki) is the curriculum used in Aotearoa's early childhood education settings and provides guidance for its implementation. Te Whāriki is a bicultural curriculum that envisages a culturally competent child who is able to move confidently between te ao Māori and te ao Pākehā.

Te Tiriti o Waitangi has implications for our education system, particularly in terms of achieving equitable outcomes for Māori and ensuring that te reo Māori not only survives but thrives. Early childhood education has a crucial role to play here, by providing mokopuna with culturally responsive environments that support their learning and by ensuring that they are provided with equitable opportunities to learn and have access to education. The importance of such provision is underscored throughout *Te Whāriki: He whāriki mātauranga mō ngā mokopuna o Aotearoa Early childhood curriculum*.

New Zealand is increasingly multicultural. Te Tiriti o Waitangi is seen to be inclusive of all immigrants to New Zealand, whose welcome comes in the context of this partnership. Those working in early childhood education respond to the changing demographic landscape by valuing and supporting the different cultures represented in their settings.

The *New Zealand Curriculum* sets the direction for teaching and learning in English-medium New Zealand schools (years 1–13). Te Tiriti o Waitangi is identified as an underpinning principle, part of the legislative framework that informs and shapes the curriculum. All students have the opportunity to acquire knowledge of te reo Māori me ōna tikanga.



Drilling into the curriculum content, Te Tiriti o Waitangi features in Aotearoa New Zealand's histories, within the social sciences learning area. The New Zealand Curriculum supports students' knowledge and understanding, deepening as they progress through their schooling, that:

- Māori history is the foundational and continuous history of Aotearoa New Zealand.
- Colonisation and settlement have been central to Aotearoa New Zealand's histories for the past 200 years.
- The course of Aotearoa New Zealand's histories has been shaped by the use of power.
- Relationships and connections between people and across boundaries have shaped the course of Aotearoa New Zealand's histories.

E kore au e ngaro; he kākano i ruia mai i Rangiātea

*We know who we are and where we come from;
therefore we can move forward with confidence*

Te Tiriti o Waitangi is at the core of our education system. It is not just our legislation, which seeks to *honour* Te Tiriti o Waitangi and Māori-Crown relationships, Te Tiriti o Waitangi is embedded in every aspect of our education system. Te Tiriti o Waitangi informs how our teaching profession conduct themselves as culturally competent, inclusive, and responsive kaiako. Through our national curricula, kaiako support students to understand Aotearoa New Zealand's unique dual cultural heritage while building their own sense of identity and acquiring knowledge of te reo Māori me ōna tikanga.

We urge the select committee to abandon this Bill to ensure it does not progress to a second reading.

Make submission to RegulatoryStandardsBill@parliament.govt.nz by Monday 23 June 2025.

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