

TE RŌPŪ WHAKAMANA I TE TIRITI O WAITANGI

Wai 3553

E PĀ ANA KI
CONCERNING

te Treaty of Waitangi Act 1975

Ā,

te Education and Training
Amendment Act and Te
Mātaiaho Urgent Inquiry

AND

HE PĀNUI WHAKAHAU A TE RŌPŪ WHAKAMANA I TE TIRITI

*MEMORANDUM-DIRECTIONS OF THE PANEL CONCERNING THE RELEASE DATES
FOR THE UPDATED NATIONAL CURRICULUM FOR YEARS 0–10*

7 Ākuhata 2026

Hei tīmatanga kōrero / Introduction

1. This memorandum-directions responds to claimant counsel's request for the Tribunal to urgently release its findings on the curriculum in light of the Government's recent announcement of the release dates for the updated national curriculum for Years 0–10.

Horopaki / Background

2. On 3 July 2026, the Minister of Education, the Hon Erica Stanford announced the release dates for the updated national curriculum for Years 0–10, including the New Zealand Curriculum (NZC) and Te Marautanga o Aotearoa. In summary (Wai 3553, #3.4.27(a)):
 - (a) the full national curriculum for Years 0–10 will be released by 9 September 2026;
 - (b) Science and Social Sciences will be released first, on 12 August 2026, on the basis that schools must begin using them from 2027;
 - (c) Pūtaiao and Pūmanawa Tangata, the corresponding wāhanga ako in Te Marautanga o Aotearoa, will be released on 26 August 2026; and
 - (d) the draft curriculum for Years 11–13 remains in consultation and is to be finalised later in 2026.

Sykes & Co. memorandum

3. On 6 July 2026, the Tribunal received a memorandum from Annette Sykes, Jack Potaka, Kalei Delamere-Ririnui and Rangipurei Manley on behalf of Ripeka Lessels and O'Sonia Hotereni for and on behalf of kaimahi Māori of the New Zealand Educational Institute – Te Riu Roa (Wai 3503), notifying the Tribunal of the release dates for the updated national curriculum and seeking the urgent release of the Tribunal's findings in advance of 12 August 2026 (Wai 3553, #3.4.27 at [2] & [11]).
4. Counsel note that during the hearing, and in closing submissions, the timing of the finalisation of the updated curriculum was raised as a matter directly bearing on the utility and urgency of the Tribunal's stage two report. Accordingly, counsel submit the timetable is directly relevant to the Tribunal's consideration of when, and on what basis, it issues its stage two report, and 'whether any further directions are needed to protect the utility of that report' (Wai 3553, #3.4.27 at [8] & [10]).

Whakataunga / Decision

5. In this inquiry, we have heard concerns from witnesses representing kaiako, tumuaki, subject-matter experts, academics, iwi, whānau, and kaumātua about the Crown's reforms to make the national curriculum 'knowledge-rich' and 'underpinned by the science of learning'. We summarise points raised by witnesses below, but note they are not a comprehensive summary of parties' positions.
6. Regarding the Crown's process for developing the knowledge-rich national curriculum, we heard that the Crown has not engaged adequately with Māori and the education sector on its reforms, and that a lack of transparency had undermined trust in the process (Wai 3553, #4.1.1 at 115-116, 118).
7. Witnesses told us that flaws in the Crown's approach to developing the knowledge-rich national curriculum manifested in flaws in the curriculum content produced for consultation (Wai 3553, #4.1.1 at 100-101, 118-120). Among other issues, we heard the volume of prescribed curriculum content would inhibit teachers' capacity to localise curriculum

content and meaningfully incorporate teachings from te ao Māori (Wai 3553, #4.1.1 at 200-201 and Wai 3553, #A16 at 4). We also heard concerns regarding issues of omission and framing in the draft Social Sciences content, such as the absence of the kōrero and experiences of the those from Parihaka, and the removal of essential context from the teaching of the treaty - to name but two (Wai 3553, #4.1.1 at 205-206, 212).

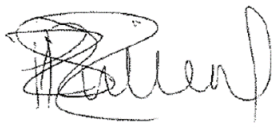
8. Witnesses also saw the curriculum changes as interrelated with, and even as 'compound[ing] the effect' of, the Crown's removal of school boards' treaty obligations (Wai 3553 and #A18 at 8-9 and Wai 3553, #4.1.1 at 28). Before its removal in November 2025, section 127(1)(d) of the Education and Training Act 2020 required school boards to (among other things) work to ensure their school's local curriculum reflected 'local tikanga Māori, mātauranga Māori, and te ao Māori'.
9. From the Ministry of Education, witness Pauline Cleaver acknowledged the Ministry had not co-designed the national curriculum with Māori or anyone else external to the Ministry, and that this was different to how it had worked previously (Wai 3553, #4.1.1 at 231). Instead, the draft curriculum content developed for consultation had been 'written by Ministry staff, with external expertise contracted in' (Wai 3553, 4.1.1, p 231). Ms Cleaver stated the draft curriculum was nevertheless 'still reflective of the work and input of many, and the prior work ... has been built on and carried forward' (Wai 3553, #4.1.1 at 232).
10. In terms of the draft curriculum content developed for consultation, Ms Cleaver stated the draft NZC would provide a base level of te reo Māori to be taught across schools for the first time and that content connected to te ao Māori had been incorporated into draft learning areas (Wai 3553, #4.1.1 at 237-238 and Wai 3553, A44 at 31). Schools could also 'choose to go beyond the base level' prescribed in the curriculum to 'include a wider range of knowledge and contexts from te ao Māori, including local mātauranga Māori working with hapū and iwi' (Wai 3553, #A44 at 32). In its closing submissions, the Crown stated the draft learning areas were still provisional, and that the Ministry would be considering views aired during the inquiry as part of the overall feedback received during consultation (Wai 3553, #3.3.32 at 98-99).
11. While work is underway, we note that our full stage two report will not be published in advance of the dates indicated by the Crown for the release of the revised Science and Social Sciences learning areas. We therefore make some high-level comments regarding the curriculum here.
12. Firstly, combined with the removal of school boards' treaty obligations, we are concerned the Crown's curriculum reforms may dilute prior emphasis on the importance of incorporating local content from te ao Māori into school teaching and learning.
13. Secondly, we share parties' concerns that flaws in the curriculum content may be symptomatic of insufficient engagement and input from Māori and the education sector. Whether the Crown has satisfied its treaty obligations of partnership and active protection of taonga Māori is a matter we are taking seriously.
14. Thirdly, while the Crown has indicated it would consider views aired in this inquiry as part of the overall feedback received during consultation, we are concerned there will have been insufficient time between the conclusion of hearings and the proposed release of the revised curricula for the Crown to meaningfully address claimants' concerns.
15. We agree with claimant counsel's concern regarding the importance of our report being considered by Minister Stanford in advance of the release of the revised national curriculum. Awaiting the Tribunal's report before releasing the revised curriculum content would enable the Government to have the benefit of the outcomes of the Tribunal's inquiry, including any associated findings and recommendations.

16. At this stage, we can advise parties that the Tribunal's stage two report is likely to be released in advance of 9 September 2026, the date on which the remaining Years 0-10 New Zealand Curriculum and Te Marautanga o Aotearoa content is scheduled for release.
17. Accordingly, in order to have the benefit of the outcomes of the Tribunal's inquiry, we urge the Crown to consider deferring the release of all updated NZC and Te Marautanga o Aotearoa content until after the Tribunal's stage two report has been released. I direct the Crown to provide an update on their ability to do this as early as possible.

Me tuku atu te Kairēhita i tētehi kape o tēnei whakahau ki ērā ki te rārangi whakamōhio mō Wai 3553, the Education and Training Amendment Act and Te Mātaiaho Urgent Inquiry.

The Registrar is to send a copy of this direction to all those on the distribution list for Wai 3553, the Education and Training Amendment Act and Te Mātaiaho Urgent Inquiry.

WHAKAPŪMAUTIA ki Kirikiriroa i te 7 o te Ākuhata 2026



Kaiwhakawā R Mullins
Te Mana Whakahaere

TE RŌPŪ WHAKAMANA I TE TIRITI O WAITANGI



Dr Paul Hamer
Mema o te Taraipiunara

TE RŌPŪ WHAKAMANA I TE TIRITI O WAITANGI



Gerrard Albert
Mema o te Taraipiunara

TE RŌPŪ WHAKAMANA I TE TIRITI O WAITANGI



Kevin Prime
Mema o te Taraipiunara

TE RŌPŪ WHAKAMANA I TE TIRITI O WAITANGI

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Derek Fox' with stylized, overlapping letters.

Derek Fox

Mema o te Taraipiunara

TE RŌPŪ WHAKAMANA I TE TIRITI O WAITANGI