

Councils and the Treaty of Waitangi

What this is about...

Te Tiriti o Waitangi/the Treaty of Waitangi underpins relationships between central and local government and tangata whenua.¹⁷⁸ The Councils of the six largest cities in New Zealand are all committed to developing their relationships with tangata whenua under the Treaty of Waitangi. While all have expressed commitment to this, they are at different stages in the development and implementation of these relationships.

What did we find ?

Auckland City Council consults with eight tangata whenua groups on all resource management issues through their Tangata Whenua Consultative Committee, to ensure that Council decisions reflect the views of iwi and comply with the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi, its statutory obligations and the kaitiaki role of tangata whenua.¹⁷⁹ As part of measuring Council's performance and progress on strategic outcomes, iwi satisfaction with Council consultation and communication will be measured. As part of its commitment to working in partnership, Auckland City Council has established a bicultural unit - Pae Herenga Tangata.

Christchurch City Council has a strategic objective in its Annual Plan that Council will recognise the Treaty of Waitangi through maintaining mutually acceptable consultation procedures with the tangata whenua. Christchurch has established a Maori Liaison Officer position to implement this.

Manukau City Council has been working with tangata whenua since the time of the Manukau claim in 1986. More recently Council has been holding discussions with six mana whenua groups with the aim of developing formal relationships with these groups.¹⁸⁰ One of Council's key goals in its Annual and Strategic Plan is to improve its response to tangata whenua and to the Treaty of Waitangi and the quality of this response is one of Council's key performance indicators. There is also a focus within Manukau City Council on developing organisational understanding of the Treaty and of Maori needs and culture in order to provide better services and build on existing relationships with Maori groups. This is being done through means such as Council's Treaty of Waitangi Team (an internal staff team focusing on Treaty issues), staff training and the work of the Maori Liaison Officer.

North Shore City Council recognises five iwi as being tangata whenua of North Shore City. It established a tangata whenua Working Group in 1999, which aims to establish a memorandum of understanding with iwi. The Council's Annual Plan contains a key objective of ensuring that Council policy and services incorporate the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi. North Shore City Council also works with Awataha Marae on community projects.

Waitakere City Council has formal agreements in place with two iwi, Te Kawerau a Maki and Ngati Whatua. Council also works with Te Whanau o Waipareira Trust and other Maori organisations in Waitakere, including funding and service contracts to facilitate Maori input into Resource Management Act processes. In addition, Waitakere City Council has established a Maori standing committee, Te Taumata Runanga, to help ensure that the needs of Maori citizens are addressed. Te Taumata Runanga includes representatives from iwi, marae, urban Maori authorities, and key Maori organisations. In its Annual Plan, Waitakere City has specific measures for assessing iwi and pan-tribal Maori organisations' satisfaction with Council's performance.

Wellington City Council has passed a resolution recognising that it has moral and ethical obligations under the Treaty. The Council has memoranda of understanding with the Wellington Tenth Trust and Te Runanga o Toa Rangitira, through which mana whenua groups are resourced to provide advice on issues. The Council has a Maori standing committee, Te Taumata o Poneke, which assists it in dealing with issues relevant to Maori. Wellington's Strategic Plan also contains specific outcomes around Council and mana whenua partnerships. Wellington City Council has recently appointed a Maori Issues Director, reporting to the Chief Executive.

178 Tangata whenua refers to people of the land.

179 Kaitiaki refers to guardian.

180 Mana whenua refers to Maori who are tied culturally to the area by whakapapa and ancestors who lived and died there.