

Te Whānau Tupu Ngātahi, Playcentre Aotearoa is the second largest Early Childhood Education provider in Aotearoa, New Zealand, with 400 ECE centres throughout the country, and more than 14,300 tamariki aged from 0 to 6 years old enrolled. Furthermore, Playcentre is the largest Aotearoa-based volunteer organisation with more than 14,000 Playcentre volunteers.

Te Whānau Tupu Ngātahi, Playcentre Aotearoa, on behalf of our 14,300 enrolled tamariki, 14,000 adult volunteers, 400 Playcentres, hundreds of operational staff, Rōpū and Regional governance representatives and the trustees, **strongly oppose** the Principles of the Treaty of Waitangi Bill 2024 No 94-1 (the Bill).

Te Whānau Tupu Ngātahi, Playcentre Aotearoa **asserts** the proposed Bill represents a direct breach of the binding agreement between Māori and the Crown as set out in Te Tiriti o Waitangi, a foundational element of the constitutional structure of Aotearoa.

Playcentre is a movement unique to New Zealand that champions the role of parents and whānau as children's first and most important teachers. Now a national institution, Playcentre was established in the 1940s and continues 80 years later, to operate as a parent-led cooperative where whānau are actively involved in the learning and development of tamariki, fostering a collaborative, play-based environment for tamariki and their whānau.

In 1989, the New Zealand Playcentre Federation passed a remit to publicly endorse the Treaty of Waitangi. This was followed in 1994 by a formal, public acknowledgment of Te Tiriti o Waitangi as the founding document of Aotearoa. Over the past three decades, Playcentre has demonstrated a steadfast commitment to honouring Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

In 2012, this commitment was further evidenced through the adoption of Dr. Whatarangi Winiata's Two House governance model, a Tiriti-based co-governance framework that exemplifies the principles of equitable and meaningful treaty partnership. The Two House Model is central to Playcentre's commitment to equitable co-governance and shapes its distinctive approach to community building grounded in partnership between tangata whenua and tangata tiriti.

This treaty-based partnership and commitment, supported by educational training opportunities and more importantly, positive experience behavioural norms integrates mātauranga Māori, culturally competent practices, mutual respect, co-governance and robust understandings of the rights of tangata whenua and tangata tiriti into all aspects of Playcentre.

This ensures that a genuine partnership that honours rangatiratanga, mana ōrite and manaakitanga is pervasive best practice for our 14,000 volunteers and 14,300 tamariki in 400 early childhood centres, hundreds of operational staff, regional and rōpū governance representatives and the trustees of the organisation.

As such, Te Whānau Tupu Ngātahi Playcentre Aotearoa is **optimally positioned to oppose the bill** and **strongly assert** that the existing Treaty principles, having evolved over time through various branches of government, reflect the spirit and intent of Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

The Treaty principles embody the shared obligations and responsibilities between the Crown and Māori. These principles are firmly established and represent settled law. The existing status of Treaty principles within the current constitutional framework supports consistency and coherence with legislation, the legislative branch of government, and the Waitangi Tribunal, thereby guaranteeing that treaty obligations are upheld as they presently stand.

Te Whānau Tupu Ngātahi Playcentre Aotearoa **strongly asserts**:

- The Bill disregards core principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi such as partnership, mutual respect, active protection, equitable treatment, redress, and, critically, the guarantee of rangatiratanga under Article 2.
- By retroactively altering the intent of Te Tiriti o Waitangi the Bill denies the historical and colonial injustices faced by Māori and dismisses the Crown's past breaches of its obligations.
- There has been a clear lack of meaningful engagement or consultation with iwi and hapū nationwide which is a failure to uphold the Crown's duty to act in good faith.
- The Bill erodes the Crown's relationships with iwi and hapū.
- The Bill misuses Parliament's legislative authority to modify the constitutional framework of Aotearoa, attempting to unilaterally reinterpret Te Tiriti o Waitangi.
- The Bill contravenes protections affirmed in the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990 and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, raising concerns that should be addressed by the Justice Select Committee during the submission process.
- The proposed referendum outlined in section two of the Bill unfairly disadvantages Māori, as its design creates significant barriers to participation, while privileging the larger general population in the decision-making process.

Te Whānau Tupu Ngātahi Playcentre Aotearoa **endorses and affirms** the legal and ministerial opinion outlined by:

I. The Waitangi Tribunal Report, Ngā Mātāpono - The Principles: The Interim Report of the Tomokia Ngā Tatau o Matangireia – The Constitutional Kaupapa Inquiry Panel on The Crown's Treaty Principles Bill and Treaty Clause Review (WAI 3300)

ii. The letter to the Prime Minister and Attorney General from the 42 Crown's Kings Council opposing the Bill.

iii. Ministerial advice from the Ministry of Justice regulatory impact statement to the Associate Justice Minister.

Iv. The submissions opposing the bill by the Human Rights Commission, Te Hunga Roia Māori, Te Kohanga Reo National Trust.

Playcentre 

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our village*

Te Whānau Tupu Ngātahi Playcentre Aotearoa **maintains** that the Justice Select Committee should not advance the Bill to a second reading.

Te Whānau Tupu Ngātahi Playcentre Aotearoa, **firmly rejects** the objectives of the Bill, as it diminishes the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and the rights granted to both Māori and non-Māori.

Submission opposing the Principles of the Treaty of Waitangi Bill 2024 No 94-1 (the Bill) from Te Whānau Tupu Ngātahi Playcentre Aotearoa. Submitted by Heather Ruru, Manutaki Maurua, on behalf of the Te Whānau Tupu Ngātahi Playcentre Aotearoa Board.
