



16 December 2024

James Meager  
Chair  
Justice Select Committee  
[TreatyPrinciples@parliament.govt.nz](mailto:TreatyPrinciples@parliament.govt.nz)

Tēna koe,

### **Principles of the Treaty of Waitangi Bill – LGNZ submission**

We would like to thank you for the opportunity to submit on the Principles of the Treaty of Waitangi Bill.

Local Government New Zealand (LGNZ) is the peak body for councils across the country. Councils have spent decades building strong partnerships with iwi, hapū and mana whenua. These relationships are critical to delivering core council business in an efficient and effective way. There are also a number of pieces of core local government legislation that reference the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi. Councils require flexibility to partner with iwi, hapū and mana whenua in a way that delivers the right outcomes in their communities.

There are numerous examples of a strong relationship with Māori being a key element in a council being able to deliver critical outcomes for the community. Examples include the central role that Ngāi Tahu played in recovery following the Christchurch earthquakes; agreements for critical community infrastructure to be placed on Māori land (several state highways and local roads and water and energy infrastructure); outcomes such as Te Manawataki (a joint approach between Tauranga City Council and hapū for redevelopment in central Tauranga); and collaborative work with iwi, hapū and mana whenua in community housing and health, and large RMA planning and consenting processes.

The polarised conversations about the Bill are frustrating councils and iwi. They are a huge distraction to the good work that's happening on the ground. It would help councils keep their focus on delivering core infrastructure and services their communities need if this Bill does not progress to the next stage.

We are also concerned that, if the Bill is passed, working through the implications for existing partnerships and agreements would place significant burdens on councils and ratepayers. This is at a time when councils are going line-by-line to find savings and balance the long-term interest of ratepayers with financial sustainability.

Changing the nature of a partnership unilaterally poses risks. Councils understand and respect the Treaty principles as they have been developed to date and believe they enhance (rather than inhibit) progress for councils and communities. Councils want to maintain partnerships with iwi and keep delivering positive outcomes to their communities. The Bill will not bring clarity. Instead it will confuse and hamper the ability of local government to develop these relationships in a manner that reflects each local context.

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Ngā mihi

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'S. Broughton', written in a cursive style.

Sam Broughton  
President  
Local Government New Zealand