

**Shadow Report -  
New Zealand Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD)  
Review 2025**

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ohchr-cerd@un.org

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**Executive Summary**

Imagine a world free of racism. Before the pandemic, the Tangata Whenua, Indigenous Maori People of Takahiwai, on the southern shore of the Whangarei Harbour, Aotearoa New Zealand were optimistic about progress as confiscated land was returned and Matariki, the Pleiades star cluster that rises in late June, became a public holiday.

Currently, the government is making empty promises to ease the cost-of-living crisis while dismantling the Treaty of Waitangi, cutting public services, and prioritizing infrastructure projects that exploit the Te Parawhau tribe, the Maori people of Takahiwai, the Maori people across Aotearoa New Zealand, the environment, and Nature. Despite a centre-right government being elected, far-right policies dominate due to the influence of the minority political parties. Aotearoa New Zealand is not alone!

**Submission**

If the Covid-19 disease has taught me anything, it is that it is possible to act swiftly and decisively when faced with alerts to the health and happiness of citizens, residents, relations, neighbours, friends, and colleagues, and the joint effort of many, matters when responding to several issues and concerns simultaneously. People in Takahiwai witnessed this in the way that our neighbours, friends, relations, and colleagues responded to the Covid-19 infection. Several Maori organisations showed speed and agility in their response to the disease. (1)

While the New Zealand government's focus is the necessity to build better health, social, and economic systems, just as important for all of us is to exterminate the inequities such as racism. Maori individuals and collectives knew that there would be a vaccine for the corona virus; but there is no vaccine for racism.

During the Level 4 lockdown, Maori TV rallied to the call for support by Takahiwai to oppose the notion of "direct access to One Tree Point" through the rural village, without talking with the Maori residents along the road of the same name.

Aotearoa, New Zealand's citizens, residents, and the government must continue to eradicate racist beliefs and practices. There is no vaccine for racism!

Then, there's the question of traffic congestion on Takahiwai Rd as more and more folk return from the city out of work, homeless, and poor. Increased vehicular emissions are, of course, the companion of global warming from too much carbon dioxide in the atmosphere due to the burning of fossil fuels. It's just not carbon, though, but some very elemental functions that are out of whack! Climate change is best apprehended as the manifestation of disrupted carbon, water, nutrient, and energy cycles. There is too much carbon in the atmosphere and the ocean and not enough in the soil and living organisms where carbon belongs. For this we can thank fossil fuels, internal combustion, years of chemical agriculture, and over the last several decades during which the pace of mining the soil has been rapidly sped up by industrialists, scientists, and developers. (2)

Obviously, there is no vaccine for climate change. Reaching New Zealand's goal of changing to a zero-carbon economy by 2050 requires more effort from the councils, members of parliament, oil, timber, agriculture, and transport industries. We must urgently and enthusiastically address societal change to prevent catastrophic climate change. We must address the industrial development on confiscated Maori land.

One thing is sure; Covid-19 death by asphyxiation has changed most of the world. One plus of living in the lowly populated kainga of Takahiwai has meant that life goes on as usual—walking and talking to neighbours and relations along the road; observing who is burning toxic rubbish and leaving fires untended; whose stock is suffering from malnutrition, and who has moved in where.

More importantly, though, is the fact that the Maori residents of the kainga are blood kin—family, extended family, and groups of extended family. We share more than one ancestor in common; we share the soil, air, and water. We share good health, sickness, and death. For all these reasons, our responsibility, as an individual who belongs to a massive family is to make sure that the COVID-19 vaccination is part of the plan to live well, today, and in the days, months, and years ahead. (3)

There is no vaccine for pest control. Cattle and piglets roam the hills, forest, and mangrove forest. Rubbish is brought into Takahiwai to be dumped or burned; More water bottles, lolly wrappers, empty cans of alcoholic beverages, drug paraphernalia, and plastic wrapping galore are collected from the drain and the roadside. Some residents are not securing their rubbish in the waste management containers; hence, plastic bottles, bottle tops, wrapping, etcetera blow all over the kainga. Messy. On the good side of environmental activities in Takahiwai, some of the kaumatua, older people are collecting the roadside litter and cleaning the wetland. The space is beautiful. (4)

Since the last police raid, the kainga has been peaceful and safe. According to the gossip, though, the peace may not be too long lasting! Already, law abiding family members have been contacted by Crown agents to consider paying bail for their

incarcerated relations; as well to act as their security guard during their probation. How can this be? Is the kaainga the new prison? Do the residents and citizens have a say in the possibility of our village becoming a space of incarceration?

Meanwhile, gossip about gang or outlawed motorcycle clubs abound. There is a lot of talk about who does what, when, how, and why. Of course, all the gossip is about Maori people! The reality is that Maori people are the servants in the hierarchy of organised crime. Maori are in the jails. How do we change this old, old, old, old, old story of impoverishment and incarceration? Incarceration, in the kainga, is not a vaccine for racism.

The ancestral Maori village of Takahiwai is hidden at the end of the straight, narrow thoroughfare from One Tree Point Rd. Unlike Marsden Cove, trees can be seen in the paddocks and in the hills that follow the harbour, their tops sculpted by the hand of the wind which has blown ceaselessly throughout the centuries. The visitor soon gets an intimation of the remote spirit of the place. A cluster of fortified villages rise above the forest which embower them—the sea, blue and brilliant, stretches beyond the manawa forest. Takahiwai is the remotest spot on the harbour. It is an ancient village, made so by the hand of Maori as well as by Nature. Fortified villages are scattered over the land and monuments in the urupa cemetery remind the people of who we are. The Tangata Whenua, first people of the land. (5)

Walking along the narrow country road past the timeworn school and school house you are struck by the extraordinary calm of the village. There is an old-fashioned air of homeliness. In spite of the presence of the anti vaxxers and the criminals, the Maori residents have triumphantly succeeded in creating pocket gardens of native plants, adorned the bus shelters with the colours of the forest trees and stories of our forebears, and transformed the border of the wetland into a garden bursting with native trees. You could come away from the village with the feeling that, here, Maori people have succeeded against formidable odds in creating a symbol of safety and pleasure; a remote garden which to many of us is a vision of paradise. How many people can recall the excitement of a childhood experience and pinpoint it as the catalyst which inspired their vocations. Most of us in Takahiwai drift into our allotted courses more by coercion than inspiration. Coercion is not a vaccine for racism.

As the global COVID-19 infection transitions into our everyday living, Maori and our Treaty of Waitangi partner, the government and their agencies, industry and their businesses are no longer foregoing the most familiar traits of globalisation—open borders, reliance on international trade, ready access to immigration and emigration, and in the case of educational institutions like the university, the enrolment of large numbers of overseas students. The transition is not only the right thing to do, but also entirely necessary, to do some collective soul-searching about the decades ahead of us. (6)

Appropriately, Professor Marama Muru Lanning's Keynote speech entitled, *The Voices of our Harbours: Kawhia, Manukau and Whangarei* is a soulful reminder of a deeper understanding of kaitiakitanga. In the words of Marama:

While the word 'kaitiaki' has entered our legal system, it often stands in for 'stakeholder', which fails to recognise how deeply embedded the term is in Maori culture. Moreover, we seldom hear the voices of those with daily responsibilities for kaitiakitanga. Aotearoa's harbours are both historically significant and environmentally threatened.

Muru Lanning's focus on the stories that Maori talk about harbours, how kaitiaki understand these places, and how best to use or care for them embellishes and elaborates the sophisticated Maori customary practice of kaitiakitanga. The custom reminds me that development and progress on confiscated Maori land involves more dredging of the seabed, more beach nourishment, more containers, larger vessels including cruise ships, fewer public spaces, and more destruction of all forms of life. So, in a nutshell, development means its interminable contribution to wave action, sediment plumes, dune erosion, biodiversity loss, an unhealthy harbour and coast, and more land and Maori language and cultural loss! Progress is not a vaccine for racism.

The kainga of Takahiwai is rural but close to rapid urban development on the flood plain at Te Poupouwhenua and still has a majority Maori population. It's overall a less well-off community facing weather events we have no control over. At the Te Hopua channel, we are seeing taonga species being decimated by road metal, sediment, plastics, and human detritus that is washed on to the foreshore and into the manawa forests by the heavy rain falling. Rising seas, streams, and creeks mean that we will have to make choices to relocate places that are important to us, such as the burial site. The Takahiwai 9A Marae Reservation Trustees and Maori Committee, as well as our elected representatives must look at the long term solutions to sea level rise when they sit around the table, individually and collectively. (7)

Increasing stormy weather is an example of a new norm we don't want. We don't want one or two Maori to talk to business, to councils, to the Crown about the impacts of their old approaches to development, such as intense, luxury housing on a flood plain. We don't want the local deep-water port expanded simply on the grounds that it is logical, or on a study that has joined plenty of others gathering dust. We don't want our ancient Maori owned land confiscated under the public works act for a rail link for the 'greater good'. The public works act is not a vaccine for racism.

We must look after Papatuanuku Earth Mother Tangaroa Maori god of the sea, and Tane Mahuta Maori god of the forest as they take care of us. We must change the dominant consultation practices, we must draw in our people to our organisations who can communicate clearly. We must change our agricultural practices of mud grazing, overstocking, dosing the land with synthetic fertiliser and pesticides, and driving all over the farm. We must protect the climate and restore biodiversity. We must protect the ocean from plastics, and the beaches from vehicles that are a huge

problem for surf-clam species, such as tuatua and toheroa. You can imagine how many tens of thousands of juvenile surf-clam life that a ute, suv, truck, and dune bike driving the length of bay could crush at the wrong time of the year. It's no wonder those species have not recovered despite greatly reduced fishing for decades.

Indeed, all of us must ensure that the principle of partnership in Aotearoa, New Zealand is always considered and that the colonising practice requiring, for example, the tribe of Te Parawhau:

to forfeit 1,000 acres of the Whangarei headlands (known as Te Poupouwhenua) as payment for the January 1845 taua muru against the settlers Millon and Patten, the Governor acted inconsistently with its obligation to act with utmost good faith, in breach of te maataapono o te houruatanga/the principle of partnership (8).

is terminated. Confiscation is not a vaccine for racism.

Rangatiratanga is self-explanatory, clarifying land ownership. Colonial manipulation of the Treaty of Waitangi is at the root of social, cultural, and economic destruction of the Maori people. Manipulation is a moral issue, and moral issues have historically, been and still are easily discarded by greed and entitlement. The ultimate moral manipulation only requires a gun. (9) Guns are not a vaccine for racism.

Non-Maori New Zealand society distancing themselves from immorality is as ever present today as in the past. The racist under belly of New Zealand society is revealing itself without shame. Political deception about equal rights is at complete odds with the actual creation of the government. The Tangata Whenua were all but denied the power to vote in New Zealand's first "democratic election". Ever since that day, every law in New Zealand has been created according to non Maori' desires. Inequality enabled colonial control of society. The Treaty Principles bill is only part of that history that diverts us from the simplicity of rangatiratanga chieftainship and the blindness of justice.

No matter who proposes such legislation, these are still the mechanisms of colonial settlement, dominance, and immorality. New Zealand has been recognised internationally for its special relationship with the Tangata Whenua. A fraudulent document does not make New Zealand a special colony and neither does a Treaty Principals bill.

Bills like this are just another instance of the government's control of Maori individuals and collectives. It's a pretense that we can do without. Shame on New Zealanders again for the continuous and brutal colonial social controls being ignored in the Treaty Principals bill. New Zealanders need accurate historical education and awareness of convenient moral blindness. ...

Dig deeper and deal with the real issue that affect the Maori people. In the instance of the Te Parawhau Hapu, the issue is return Te Poupouwhenua and don't confiscate the

land block Kopuawaiwaha 2B2 for the rail link to Te Poupouwhenua and Te Koutu. The end of land loss by the Te Parawhau presents an unparalleled opportunity to lead the conversation and to dig deeper and deal with the real issue that affect the tribe. In this conversation, the government, their industrial corporations and private business interests position themselves as definitive leaders in shaping development at Te Poupouwhenua and Kopuawaiwaha 2B2 land block with the Te Parawhau Hapu. Definitive leadership without the Te Parawhau Hapu, without the kainga o Takahiwai, without Maori people is not a vaccine for racism.

In closing, it is forgivable to conclude that there must be grander law making to which the New Zealand government might devote themselves in political life. This law making has shown itself in some of its tragic colours—a disregard for beauty, happiness, and development and progress for all New Zealanders.

Naku noa na Mere  
(Dr) T. Mere. A. Kepa



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