



**Far North
District Council**



TŪHONOTANGA MINITI ATTACHMENTS MINUTES

Extraordinary Council Meeting

6 September 2024

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Far North District Council
Private Bag 752
Kaikohe 0440

Tuesday, 3 September 2024

Tēnā koutou katoa

Re: Te Kahu o Taonui support the continuation of Māori Wards

Te Kahu o Taonui formally convey our support for the continuation of Māori Wards within the Far North District Council. This stance is rooted in our deep commitment to honouring the aspirations of our Tupuna as envisaged in He Whakaputunga me Te Tiriti o Waitangi. The establishment and continuation of Māori Wards are a tangible expression of these aspirations, bringing the mana of Te Tai Tokerau Iwi and Hapū to be upheld in a manner that reflects our historical, cultural, and political rights as guaranteed under Te Tiriti.

We view the Māori Wards as a crucial mechanism for bringing the voices of our people into the governance of our district. It allows for meaningful participation and representation, ensuring that the decisions made within our communities are reflective of the diversity and richness of Te Tai Tokerau. In doing so, it enhances the role of the Far North District Council as a good Tiriti partner, committed to fostering a relationship based on mutual respect, equity, and shared governance.

We make it clear that we do not support the proposal for a poll regarding the continuation of Māori Wards, for such a poll would undermine the progress that has been made in recognising the rights of Māori to self-determination and the equitable representation within Local Government. The decision to establish Māori Wards is a matter of partnership and respect for the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, not one that should be subjected to a majority vote.

We trust that the Far North District Council will continue to uphold its responsibilities as a Tiriti partner and support the ongoing activation of our Tupuna's aspirations through the maintenance of Māori Wards.

We look forward to continuing work together in a manner that honours our shared commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi and the principles of equity and justice it embodies.

Ngā manaakitanga, nā

Harry Burkhardt

Te Kahu o Taonui Co-Chair

Aperahama Edwards

Te Kahu o Taonui Co-Chair



NGĀTI RĒHIA

5 September 2024

Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Rēhia
2 Aranga Road
PO Box 202
Kerikeri 0245

Te Kaunihera o Te Hiku o Te Ika
Far North District Council
Democracy Advisor – Democracy Services

Attention: Imrie Dunn
CC: Kahika Mayor Moko Te Pania, Kōwhai Deputy Mayor-Kelly Stratford

RE: EXTRAORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING – MĀORI WARDS AND MĀORI CONSTITUENCIES

Tēnā koe,

On behalf of Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Rēhia and our hapū, Ngāti Rēhia please find this letter of support for the retention of the Māori Wards.

Today was the burial of Kiingi Tuheitia Potatau Te Wherowhero te Tuawhitu. He was known as te Kiingi o Te Kotahitanga and based on the principles of Kotahitanga, he believed there is room for everyone at the table.

Kotahitanga is about being inclusive and working together.

Here we are today and the table that we are talking about is the Far North District Council and the concept of Kotahitanga is once again, being fought for by te iwi o Te Tai Tokerau.

Ngāti Rēhia support the retention of the Māori Wards, “Ngā Tai o Tokerau” and want to take the opportunity to acknowledge the decision made by this council in 2021 to establish these Wards.

We believe this decision was made based on the opportunities the Council can see in our communities working together and the benefits we can all see in the concept of Kotahitanga which brings our voices and Māori representation to our Council.

We believe the Māori Wards are reflective of the community we live in and acknowledges the iwi of Te Tai Tokerau.

Ngā mihi kia koutou katoa Hilda Halkyard-Harawira, Babe Kapa, Pene Tauī Kleskovic and Tāmami Rākena, tēnā koutou.

Since 2021, and with the introduction of the Māori Wards, our Council have progressed a number of initiatives that have shown leadership in creating positive relationships within our communities and in particular with Māori.

Just one of these initiatives has been the Aotearoa Reorua kaupapa that the Council are working closely with Ngāti Rēhia for the Kerikeri area.

For Ngāti Rēhia, this has always been a major focus. Working together with everyone in our community, and we strongly believe, is forward focussed and creates unity and pride in being from Te Tai Tokerau.

The Government's introduction of the new legislation that requires Councils to revisit your decision, is divisive and can only be detrimental to our communities, and a backward step in the mahi we have done to build our relationships and ultimately, the future of Te Tai Tokerau.

We urge the Council to vote in favour of retaining the Wards today.

We also urge the Council to voice your opposition to a Māori Wards referendum and the coalitions clear intention to get rid of Māori representation on all Councils within Te Motu.

The Governments agenda goes against everything we do here in the North, it is in breach of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, it is a takahi on our Mana Motuhake, Rangatiratanga and it is not something that this Council should support.

While we understand that holding a poll or referendum at the next election is now a requirement, imposed by the Coalition Government, we believe taking a public stand and voicing this opposition will show the Coalition Government the impacts their decisions are having on our communities as a whole.

We trust you will make the right decision for the people you serve.

Finally, to our Iwi within Te Tai Tokerau, me poti. Over 50% of the people that live within our rohe – are our Māori people.

We can make a change if we come together, kia whakakotahi. We need to vote to keep the Māori Wards so that we can continue working together to support our people, our communities and the future for our taitamairiki, mokopuna.

That responsibility now lies with us to vote in the upcoming referendum to keep our Māori Wards.

Tēnā koutou katoa,



Kipa Munro

Chair, Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Rēhia

6 September 2024

Te Rau Arena Tiamana Te Whiu Hapu – Retaining Māori Seats in the Far North District Council

Tēnā koutou katoa

I stand before you today to speak in support of the retention of the Ngā Tai o Tokerau Māori ward within the Far North District. Our district's decision to establish a Māori ward in 2022 was a significant step towards honouring the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and recognizing the unique place of Māori within our community. To now consider disestablishing this ward or subjecting it to a binding poll is not only a step backward but one that undermines the progress we have made toward equity and inclusivity in local government.

Recognizing Our Treaty Obligations

First and foremost, it is essential to acknowledge the Te Tiriti o Waitangi (The Treaty), as the founding document of our nation. The Treaty is more than a historical artifact; it is a living covenant that continues to shape the relationship between Māori and the Crown, and by extension, between Māori and all governing bodies in Aotearoa. The Māori seats within our council are a tangible expression of this partnership. Removing them would be a step backward in our commitment to upholding the principles of Te Tiriti, which calls for partnership, participation, and protection of Māori interests.

Ensuring Equitable Representation

Māori seats are not about giving special privileges; they are about ensuring equitable representation. Māori perspectives, values, and needs are unique, deeply rooted in the history, culture, and whakapapa of this land. These perspectives can often be overlooked in mainstream decision-making processes, not because of intentional exclusion, but because of the systemic imbalances that exist within our society. Māori seats help to level the playing field, ensuring that they are not drowned out or sidelined.

Strengthening Community Cohesion

Retaining Māori seats also strengthens community cohesion. When all members of our community see themselves reflected in local government, it fosters a sense of belonging and trust. The presence of Māori seats on our council sends a powerful message that we, as a community, value diversity and inclusion. It signals that we are committed to working together, honouring each other's perspectives, and building a future that respects and upholds the rights of all.

Fostering Better Decision-Making

Diverse representation leads to better decision-making. When we include Māori voices in the council, we gain insights that enrich our understanding and lead to more holistic, well-rounded decisions. Māori have a profound connection to the land, a deep understanding of sustainability, and a long history of governance that predates European settlement. Their perspectives on resource management, social equity, and community wellbeing are invaluable.

By retaining Māori seats, we ensure that these perspectives continue to contribute to the decisions that shape our district's future.

Upholding the Principles of Democracy

Some might argue that Māori seats are undemocratic, but I would challenge that view. Democracy is not just about majority rule; it is also about protecting the rights of minorities and ensuring that all voices are heard. The Māori seats are a mechanism that helps achieve this balance. They are a recognition that, in a society with a colonial history, special measures are sometimes necessary to ensure that everyone has a fair go. Removing these seats would undermine the very principles of fairness and justice that our democracy is built upon.

Polling on the existence of Māori wards further exposes the issue of unequal power dynamics. A binding poll could allow a majority, who may not understand the importance of these wards, to decide the future of Māori representation. This poses a real threat to the spirit of partnership that Te Tiriti o Waitangi embodies.

To disestablish the Ngā Tai o Tokerau ward would send a message that we, as a council and a community, do not value the principles of manaakitanga, kaitiakitanga, and tino rangatiratanga—principles that guide and enrich our governance.

In the 2022 election, we showed that we are willing to take bold steps to create a more inclusive and representative future. Let us not turn back on that decision now. By retaining the Māori ward, we uphold our commitment to equity, to partnership, and to building a future where all voices are heard.

It is my firm belief that retaining the Ngā Tai o Tokerau Māori ward is not only the right thing to do but the necessary thing to do for the health and future of our district. This ward provides a foundation for deeper understanding, better decision-making, and a stronger community.

Ngā mihi nui