



# Social Cohesion for Everyone in New Zealand

August 2021

## Submission of Te Rūnanga o Ngā Toa Āwhina o Te Pūkenga Here Tikanga Mahi

***Our Vision: to create intergenerational wellbeing for whanau, hapu, iwi – through sustainable education, employment, and enterprise***

### Who we are

1. Over 80,000 people are members of Te Pūkenga Here Tikanga Mahi, the Public Service Association (PSA). More than 8500 PSA members are Māori, working in the Public Service, the wider State services, District Health Boards, Local Government and contracted Community Public Services in all parts of Aotearoa. Founded in 1913, the PSA is the largest trade union in New Zealand and is an affiliate of Te Kauae Kaimahi The New Zealand Council of Trade Unions.
2. This submission has been prepared by Te Komiti o [Te Rūnanga o Ngā Toa Āwhina](#), the body that represents and coordinates Māori members within the structures of the PSA as part of advancing the Te Tiriti o Waitangi principles of partnership, protection and participation in activities to achieve the purpose and objects of the union as they relate to the working lives of PSA members.
3. We are proud to share the way in which we have created Ngā Kaupapa as a framework for Māori by Māori that encapsulates the essence of Te Ao Māori within our union. These are the core values that Māori live by in our everyday lives as whānau, hapū and iwi. Rangatiratanga, Manaakitanga, Kotahitanga, and Whanaungatanga are a few of which are expressed by our members in dealing with their public service mahi.

### This submission

This document records the responses submitted via the consultation online survey form.

## Question 1. What does social cohesion mean to you and what would Aotearoa New Zealand look like if social cohesion was improved?

### **Ka whakamana tangata – A Life of Dignity for All**

Across the employment system, structural and institutional racism shapes the experiences for Māori. This is an opportunity to reset and re-affirm Te Tiriti o Waitangi principles to develop an inclusive society that embraces Māori culture, diversity and the fundamental changes that is needed to transform the systems and government policy.

Members of Te Komiti o Te Rūnanga o Nga Toa Āwhina have provided the following comments:

- I enjoy the harmonious integration & interaction with *tauiwi* (non-Māori) social cohesion outcomes depends on how well we treat each other. All interaction must be based on mutual respect and a realisation of each other's cultural differences.
- Diversity is important. Discrimination is its enemy.
- It is true that diversity includes diversity of culture, ethnicity, gender equities and expressions, religions, values, beliefs, ages, disabilities, sexual orientation and whanau structures.
- We must be open to celebrating our diversities and this will unite us on many fronts such as COVID 19, disasters and anything else that is sent to test our endurance and resistance.
- As a norm we must all work collectively and collaboratively with common and achievable goals in mind.
- In life, we should avoid discrimination and encourage diversity. What is important to me is my *Māoritanga* (Maori worldview and application) and *tikangā* (traditional values). *Kaupapa Māori* (principles, behaviours) passed down help me to be a decent, genuine person.
- As a proud *Hinonga Māngai Māori* (Māori delegate) of The Public Service Association - *Te Pukenga Here Tikanga Mahi* we understand the importance of diversity. We weave in ***Ngā Kaupapa*** to help achieve among other things diversity. Our organisation encourages it across New Zealand's Public Service where our membership of 80,000+ people works.
- ***Ngā Kaupapa*** within the PSA: are instruments by which we conduct ourselves. They are universal **values** and beliefs centred around the mana of our people. These are essential ingredients of life that are to be respected, cherished and sustained.
- Good discussion points in the preamble leading to the Questions 1/2/3/4
- Definition of 'Diversity' is a good start in the opening paragraphs by the Associate Minister for Social Development and Employment Hon Priyanca Radhakrishnan.
- I agree the importance to have Te Tiriti o Waitangi acknowledged is to have the strong base the Community deserves. The acknowledgement should emphasise Te Tiriti o Waitangi is a 'living document', that it is still relevant since its signing. As it is, there is no written Constitution on which Aotearoa is founded; Te Tiriti o Waitangi would appear to be the only document to start the respecting of one another's cultures, and the celebrating of diversity. This I believe is its intention.

- I want to feel my whanau, like everyone else is safe in their skin with a firm understanding of what Te Tiriti o Waitangi was set to do. I want my whanau feel comfortable about being Tangata Whenua, that their worth is valued and respected.
- Whose Community is it? It is OUR's as determined by Te Tiriti, Tangata Whenua and Others.
- The completion of land settlements and equal rights to land for tangata whenua - We need to recognise the injustices that have occurred to Māori over the last 170 years. To eliminate discrimination from the workplace through educational programmes at Ākonga and with the employer through campaigns such as equal pay & Mana Wahine claim at the Waitangi Tribunal

## Question 2. How will we know if we are making progress? What does success look like?

At the moment we don't know but evidence suggests it's getting worse.

The PSA can help lead, evaluate, monitor, and advise on social cohesion strategies applied within the Public Service. We have been advocating for fair and just treatment of our workers since our inception. We have proved ad-nauseam that discrimination occurs within the working environment. Discrimination leads to the opposite of social cohesion from people, organisations and some societies without repercussion and acknowledgement of anti-social behaviour.

The PSA must be used as a sounding board - A relationship with the Human Rights Commission – *Te Kāhui tika Tangata* must be established or strengthened. This is to ensure the effectiveness of:

- The Treaty of Waitangi
- The Human Rights Act 1993
- The Bill of Rights Act.

We will know we are making progress if increased equality is reflected in our education, health, and justice system. This is currently not the case. A disproportionate number of Māori are under achieving in our education system; and our justice system needs to adopt a restorative program using Te Ao Māori principles to remove the negative stigma for Māori incarcerated in the Prison system.

In terms of the education system, we recommend:

- Te Reo Māori to be taught at all schools including Te Tiriti o Waitangi and its history, the impact of colonisation.
- Improving Māori medium education and the workforce.
- Tamariki and Rangatahi being taught by people that share their values
- Providing akonga and their whanau with genuine pathway choices for their tamariki and mokopuna to attend quality Māori and English medium schools at all levels
- Enabling Rangatahi, and their whānau, hapu and iwi, to build strong connections with employers. Employer's support rangatahi and Māori workers to develop skills to thrive in the future.
- Supporting iwi/hapu/Māori organisations to lead and lift whānau.

## Question 3 - What does the evidence say about building social cohesion?

The evidence says that it's time - Kua tae te wā.

We Googled "workplace discrimination cases NZ. 790,000 results were found, although these are only the results that ended up at trial.

- “Around 300,000 employed people, or 11 per cent of workers, said they had experienced discrimination, harassment, or bullying in the past 12 months, Stats NZ said today.”
- Anecdotally the evidence is 30-40 per cent higher as is reported through anonymous forums.

It is true to say, Tangata Whenua are seen in the whole mix describing diversity across Aotearoa, from ages to sexual orientation. Tangata Whenua have a history of mixed marriages, a history with imported Creeds and Faiths, a history with other cultures, a history of values and beliefs, a history with foreign trade. Tangata Whenua must be seen as the common denominator for diversity in this country for which Te Tiriti demonstrates a model of cooperation.

#### Question 4. What actions should government take or support to build better social cohesion, and who could be involved in the work?

We must all make an effort to enable everyone to feel wanted, loved, respected and part of our communities.

Te Pūkenga Here Tikanga Mahi the Public Service Association (PSA) as a trade union listens to and acts on the voice of its membership. Government organisations must 'take heed' of our messages these may have repetitive themes that do not advocate and encourage social cohesion in the Public Service.

Tax is a powerful lever to address inequality and so increase social cohesion. We recommend building greater wellbeing through great social cohesion into the design of the tax system, in particular to support small Māori businesses and invest in public and community services to deliver income protection and support, active labour market policies and access to social and health services based on need, and to address inequities

Government procurement is another powerful lever, and the procurement rules urgently need further attention to ensure they deliver genuine social procurement and so help to create and support greater social cohesion. This must include guaranteeing a Living Wage and ensuring equitable distribution of procurement contracts amongst Māori organisations who meet these required standard industry standards and continue to deliver services for Māori by Māori.

The regulation of work – including of both the employment relationship and setting and enforcement of labour standards – also has a significant effect on social cohesion. An example of how this has worked directly and powerfully against wahine Māori, creating inequality that works against social cohesion is currently being worked through Wai 2700 – the Waitangi Tribunal Mana Wahine Inquiry, of which members of Te Rūnanga o Nga Toa Āwhina are claimants. The Crown must learn from the outcomes of this process and change the regulation of work to address these injustices.

The way in which work is currently regulated has resulted in embedded discriminatory and unequal pay for Māori and in particular wahine Māori. Government must do more to ensure the pay transparency needed to identify where such inequality exists, to support access for wahine Māori to the processes of the Equal Pay Act, and to support all public and private sector employers, including iwi organisations, to eliminate ethnic and gender pay gaps.

In terms of labour standards, investing in more capacity within the labour and health and safety inspectorates would assist and we note that Māori are highly represented in high-risk occupations such as forestry.

We welcome the Government's intention to introduce Fair Pay Agreements, which will help increase social cohesion by ensuring more equitable, higher and more consistent pay and conditions across industries.

The Government could also help through:

- Addressing barriers to employment
- Wiping student loans for courses that haven't delivered a quality qualification or jobs
- Delivering a school curriculum that includes students learning about their employment rights and what they can expect from a good employer.

Employers and Iwi organisations should provide pastoral care, training and upskilling of employees who have lost their jobs through the Covid 19 Pandemic.