Te Rūnanga o NGĀI TAHU

25 July 2025

Freshwater National Direction Consultation
Ministry for the Environment
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By email: freshwaterND@mfe.govt.nz

Tēnā koe,

TE RŪNANGA O NGĀI TAHU RESPONSE ON FRESHWATER NATIONAL DIRECTION

1. Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu (**Te Rūnanga**) is a Treaty partner, major landowner, primary sector leader, and environmental investor across the Te Waipounamu. Te Rūnanga experience shows that environmental protection and economic growth can go hand in hand.

2. Innovation flourishes when regulation is well-designed — but it stalls when systems are unclear, rigid, or disconnected from real-world needs. Poorly implemented regulations have often failed to deliver for both communities and ecosystems.

3. We are concerned that the current proposals risk undermining progress, fragmenting implementation, and eroding the trust required to deliver long-term improvements in water quality and water use.

4. Our key messages on the proposed freshwater national direction are:

    a. **Retain Te Mana o te Wai hierarchy:** Te Mana o te Wai is a flexible and effective framework developed over more than a decade. It anchors decisions in freshwater health and enables iwi, councils and landowners to work together with confidence. Weakening or removing it now would waste public investment, increase legal risk, and damage Treaty relationships.

    b. **Reject the "balancing" model:** The proposed balancing approach will take us back to the failed trade-off model under the Resource Management Act (**RMA**). It invites case-by-case disputes, reduces clarity for councils and investors, and undermines environmental ambition. The hierarchy of obligations in Te Mana o te Wai is clearer, more stable, and better aligned with Treaty and public expectations.

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c. **Retain national bottom lines:** Removing mandatory values and attributes weakens the foundations of freshwater management. National consistency is vital for fairness, innovation, and consent certainty. These standards are the foundation of tools like water markets and ecosystem reinvestment, which Ngāi Tahu is actively developing. Exceptions should be limited to naturally occurring environmental characteristics.

d. **Avoid fragmented, short-term reforms:** Multiple major reforms, including freshwater farm plans, the Water Services Act, and RMA replacement, are all happening simultaneously. Introducing piecemeal direction under the existing RMA will increase confusion, costs, and delay. Efforts should be put into building a coherent system under the new legislation.

5. **Instead, we recommend the following focus:**

    a. Retain and implement Te Mana o te Wai;
    b. Pause national direction changes until the new legislative framework is in place;
    c. Partner with Ngāi Tahu on targeted pilot catchments to co-design practical implementation models;
    d. Support national investment in freshwater data, guidance, and delivery capability - rather than weakening direction.

6. National direction is a chance for Ngāi Tahu and the Crown to co-design practical solutions, combining rangatiratanga and kāwanatanga. Ngāi Tahu brings proven investment, local insight, and on-the-ground action to improve freshwater outcomes across Te Waipounamu.

Nāku noa, nā

Ben Bateman,
Kaihautū | Chief Executive Officer

Encl. Appendix One: Detailed feedback on freshwater national direction
Appendix Two: Freshwater case studies
Appendix Three: Ngāi Tahu rangatiratanga and Takiwā map

APPENDIX ONE: DETAILED FEEDBACK

1. Our detailed views on specific proposals within the Freshwater Package (**FP**) and Primary Sector Package (**PSP**) are outlined below.

The state of freshwater in the Ngāi Tahu Takiwā

2. Freshwater is a taonga of utmost importance to Ngāi Tahu – it is central to our whakapapa, identity, wellbeing, and mahinga kai. However, across much of our takiwā freshwater is in crisis. Decades of over-allocation, contamination, and inappropriate modification of freshwater ecosystems have caused devastating harm to our people, lands, and waters. Our whānau have witnessed this decline firsthand – with the most rapid deterioration occurring in the past two decades.

3. 62% of surface water and 81% of groundwater are within Ngāi Tahu's takiwā - this is where degradation is most severe and where change must begin. To illustrate the scale and nature of the freshwater crisis, four case studies are included in **Appendix Two**.

4. The failure of successive freshwater management regimes led Ngāi Tahu to take legal action against the Crown, seeking recognition of our rangatiratanga over freshwater and a genuine partnership with the Crown to restore and protect this vital taonga.

Timing of national direction reform (FP, p. 11)

5. Te Rūnanga opposes making new freshwater national direction now under the RMA.

6. This is not an efficient use of time and resource for three reasons:

    a. There are already **multiple reforms impacting freshwater** that are currently underway for resource management, water services, and freshwater farm plans. There is engagement fatigue across all sectors seeking to influence and understand the multiple system changes. There is a real lack of cohesion among all the changes which will only undermine implementation.

    b. The replacement **RMA legislation will include new system shifts** (such as the concept of externalities, environmental limits, and new allocation policy) that this national direction is not designed within. Making changes now that do not integrate into the new system only creates more uncertainty and disruption if further changes are needed later.

    c. There has **not been sufficient opportunity to demonstrate the effectiveness** of the NPS-FM (2020) and Te Mana o te Wai for managing and improving freshwater. A great deal of good will has been built up to improve freshwater outcomes, but bureaucracy and political whims risk undermining progress and the certainty and stability required for economic investment into the environment.

Re-balancing with multiple objectives (FP, part 2.1)

7. Te Rūnanga **opposes** introducing multiple objectives and **supports** retaining Te Mana o te Wai hierarchy as the sole objective.

8. The hierarchy is simple, clear and sets a framework and vision for what the health of freshwater should be. The proposed "balancing" approach risks taking us back to a

fragmented, case-by-case model that lacks clear direction. It invites inconsistency, increases litigation risk, and undermines certainty for investors, iwi, and councils alike.

9. The hierarchy is a tool to help decision makers navigate competing demands – not a rigid requirement for "pristine water" everywhere. Professionals, experts and tangata whenua understand how to apply it in practice, and there is no evidence of this being applied incorrectly. Where minor issues may arise, they can be addressed through targeted guidance and training - not legislative overhaul.

10. The hierarchy puts freshwater health first, not to the exclusion of other water users, but to ensure the longevity of all levels of the hierarchy, including the economy, which is premised on resource use. The hierarchy helps to avoid the long-term social, ecosystem and ultimately economic costs of having entire ecosystems becoming externality sinks.

11. Embedding "pace and cost of change" as an objective risks shifting the focus from outcomes to excuses, enabling delay and protecting poor practice. These are implementation issues, not policy goals. While it's important to be transparent about the freshwater crisis and the barriers to fixing it, adding these considerations as objectives will only emphasise current affordability constraints and be counter-productive for achieving better outcomes. Such considerations are premature ahead of resource management reform with new allocation policy, markets and resource charging tools to distribute revenue back into the environment.

Re-balancing Te Mana o te Wai (FP, part 2.2)

12. Te Rūnanga **strongly opposes** all three options to re-balance Te Mana o te Wai and **supports** retaining Te Mana o te Wai in its current form, including the hierarchy. Removing Te Mana o te Wai will cost more than it saves. It will weaken policy integrity, invite legal risk, waste public and private investment, and undermine Treaty partnership. Improving implementation, rather than erasing direction, is the smart path forward.

13. Te Mana o te Wai is the product of ten years of conversations about the need to agree on an overarching objective for freshwater management. There is no rationale for abandoning it, and disingenuous to exclude it as an option in the freshwater package. Retaining Te Mana o te Wai in its current form is likely to lead to the best outcomes for freshwater:

    a. Te Mana o te Wai is nothing new and a significant amount of work has been undertaken by our Rūnanga and councils in the Takiwā to recognise and implement it over the years.

    b. Te Mana o te Wai is flexible and simple as it can be adapted to the unique needs and resilience of ecosystems and communities.

    c. The six principles provide much-needed guidance for council-iwi relationships. Working through Te Mana o te Wai can provide a platform for this to happen.

14. While retaining Te Mana o te Wai in its entirety is the strong preference of Te Rūnanga, of the three options in the freshwater package, option one is preferable for the reasons above. Option two is regressive while option three removes the rationale for national direction entirely – they both significantly risk the future of New Zealand's freshwater.

Flexibility in the National Objectives Framework (FP, part 2.3)

15. Te Rūnanga **opposes** the removal of mandatory values, attributes and bottom lines and **opposes** exemptions that are not based on naturally occurring characteristics. Te Rūnanga supports retaining action plans to respond to breaches of bottom lines.

16. The National Objectives Framework (**NOF**) is key to connecting policy direction to substantial change at a catchment level. The current proposals introduce significant uncertainty and will likely entrench and further increase existing variability in regional practice (and opening the door to more lobbying). Flexibility will be used to lower thresholds and weaken freshwater rules, particularly when there is existing degradation.

17. Simply because something is a challenge, does not mean standards should be lowered or done away with completely. There must be minimum standards, otherwise it will only create more work for councils, complicate the implementation process, and increase litigation risk.

18. It is common sense to maintain the four compulsory values. For example, if the value of mahinga kai was optional and a catchment was already suffering from severe mahinga kai loss or extinction, the NOF could exclude mahinga kai as a value because it is not present in the catchment. This would not only breach the Crown's Treaty of Waitangi obligations, but shows how the NOF process could be unduly narrowed, removing values if they are idealistic or historical. It is useful to have these ideals tracked under the NOF in all catchments, to support progressive improvement over time.

19. The current set of attributes (mandatory and optional) should all be retained. Aquatic ecosystems are complex and are driven by the interactions across multiple attributes. Removing attributes or allowing a pick-and-choose approach lacks scientific justification and will undermine freshwater restoration and protection. There is already sufficient flexibility in the NOF. Increasing flexibility will significantly weaken environmental bottom lines, will make it more difficult to monitor the performance of the system.

20. Te Rūnanga agrees with the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment that data-driven decision-making is the key to unlocking better outcomes. There must be sufficient baseline information and a level of consistency in catchment management to enable this innovation. The Government must be the one to invest in obtaining and tracking good environment data. Such data would aid the consent process, requiring fewer individual case-by-case assessments, because there would already be consistent and accessible data across the board. Bottom lines should remain because they draw a line in the sand by signaling minimum performance expectations.

21. Exemptions for bottom lines should be limited to only naturally occurring characteristics (NPSFM clause 3.32). For example, in situations where there is a naturally high sediment load or underlying geology that leads to elevated levels of phosphates. Allowing exemptions on social, and economic lines will weaken freshwater rules where contamination is most acute, or lead to inconsistencies in freshwater management at local, regional and national scales. NPSFM clause 3.11 already enables appropriate flexibility in for timeframes to achieve target attribute states. Achievement of bottom lines may take several generations, but this is not sufficient justification to enable exemptions. Te Rūnanga supports retaining action plans as a mechanism to promote accountability.

Addressing water security and enabling storage (FP: part 2.5)

22. Te Rūnanga conditionally supports enabling off-stream water storage under strict and clear standards that ensure this infrastructure maintains or enhances the environment.

23. Te Rūnanga is supportive of off-stream solutions which generally have a lower environmental impact than in-stream storage and can open opportunities for landowners to consider changing to less harmful land use activities. The purposes for storage should be defined to reflect best practice and encourage good environmental outcomes. Storage should be enabled when it enhances efficiency, ecosystem resilience and improved land use, but should not be enabled to intensify land use that leads to further issues such as increased contaminants in the catchment.

24. The standards proposed in Appendix Two of the discussion document are a good starting point. Standards must control scale and minimise the impact of water storage on:

    a. geomorphological processes as a result of loss of flood flows, which reduce sediment mobilisation downstream, impacts on river mouth and coastal processes, can result in pool isolation and changes in riverbed height;
    b. loss of braiding and branching in big rivers;
    c. periphyton growth (as a result of decreased flushing flows and increased nutrients);
    d. wetlands or riparian areas associated with the river;
    e. vegetation buildup;
    f. changes in aquatic ecosystem behaviour;
    g. natural hazard risk; and
    h. specific sites identified in a district plan or proposed district plan including Sites and Areas of Significance to Māori, Significant Natural Areas, and significant natural hazards.

Wetland development and mapping (FP, part 2.6)

25. Te Rūnanga **supports** enabling the construction of new wetlands, **requests clarity** on the proposal for permitted farming activities, and opposes removing the requirement to map wetlands by 2030.

26. Wetlands are a critical part of freshwater systems and play important hydrological, water quality and ecological roles. Healthy wetlands are important for the resilience of the catchment as a whole; they moderate the effects of floods and droughts, and trap sediment and other contaminants. They sustain many taonga species and mahinga kai. The primary concern of Te Rūnanga is to ensure that wetlands are protected and the regulatory system appropriately manages and controls adverse impacts.

27. A permitted activity pathway for the construction of new wetlands is supported, provided the right standards are in place. New wetlands could help to mitigate the significant wetland loss, which is continuing to occur in our Takiwā, especially in Murihiku Southland. The Office of Te Rūnanga and Te Rūnanga o Awarua, as part of Whakamana te Waituna, are collaborating on one example of where new wetlands are being constructed (see case study 3 in Appendix Two). However, there must be appropriate standards to ensure there are no adverse effects on the health and well-being of water bodies or indigenous ecosystems, and that this permitted pathway is not used perversely for wetlands that

primarily function as 'top up' instream water storage and can be partially or temporarily dammed.

28. In terms of permitting some farming activities in and around natural wetlands, much more detail is required. These activities could be significant and include taking, use, diversion or disturbance of the bed, and the nature of effects to be managed is unclear. For example, irrigation in or near wetlands can lead to modification of the wetland through changes in vegetation and hydrology, whereas fencing can be positive so long as it is appropriately sited. It is also unclear how this policy might interact with the new freshwater farm plan rules.

29. Ngāi Tahu has farming operations so understands the challenges and is open to a practical approach, particularly in places such as Tai Poutini where wetland habitats are more prevalent and expensive mitigation in remote areas provides negligible benefit. However, it comes down to the type of activity, its effects, and overall wetland loss or abundance in a catchment.

30. Te Rūnanga does not support removing the requirement to map wetlands. This baseline data is essential to support risk management, understanding trends over time, and ongoing protection. If there is a capacity issue for councils, there could be provision for prioritisation or the Government should step in and provide funding or resources to undertake this mapping, including centralising and standardising the methodology. It is a matter of national importance (section 6, RMA) and should not be abandoned simply because it is challenging. Technology such as satellite and drone imaging, as well as international approaches should be explored to support this task.

31. It is also critical that mana whenua are involved in accurately mapping wetlands in their takiwā (to the extent they wish for them to be mapped). The wetland mapping of Lake Kini on Māori reserve land during Plan Change 1 to the West Coast Regional Land and Water Plan led to an Environment Court appeal because inaccurate mapping was imposed that would have unduly restricted what could be done on that land.

Nitrogen fertiliser regulations (FP, part 2.8)

32. Te Rūnanga opposes removing the annual cap on synthetic nitrogen fertiliser application and proof of receipts.

33. Ngāi Tahu Farming is familiar with these regulations and from an industry perspective, these regulations are not onerous, are considered good practice and are already implemented. Removing the cap would only allow some users to deviate and undermine the work the industry is doing to improve nutrient management. Receipt records are also sensible to maintain data on potential inputs on land and outputs in freshwater.

Mapping drinking water sources (FP, part 2.9)

34. Te Rūnanga **recommends strengthening** the proposal for drinking water mapping to include ongoing monitoring and reviews and opposes a strict population threshold for mapping.

35. A one-off investment in mapping is not sufficient when freshwater environments are changing rapidly over time with land-use, water use and climate change. Ongoing monitoring and review of the maps should be mandated as it ensures that drinking water

safety remains aligned with catchment management thus retaining the value of this investment. Te Rūnanga also considers that a consistent methodology should be prescribed, rather than be provided as guidance.

36. The 100-person population threshold for triggering a mapping requirement appears to be arbitrary and should allow communities under that level to request mapping in their area. Drinking water is a significant issue for small communities, such as marae and papakāinga, especially in rural areas within the Ngāi Tahu takiwā (depending on how it is calculated, Koukourārata and Morven are examples of places that may be under the population threshold). Maps increase visibility of the issues and support local efforts to improve safety and performance.

National Environmental Standards for Commercial Forestry (PSP, part 2.2)

37. Te Rūnanga opposes the proposal to amend Regulation 6(1)(a) that enables councils to have greater stringency in their plans to give effect to objectives relating to the NPSFM.

38. Such an approach would prohibit councils from choosing to take action they determine is necessary for their own catchments to control the impacts of sediment from forestry activities on waterways, as well as the ability to limit afforestation that could reduce water yield in water-short catchments. These are significant concerns for Ngāi Tahu in some parts of the takiwā and a pathway for addressing such matters must be available.

Stock exclusion regulations (PSP, part 2.6)

39. Te Rūnanga recommends that further work is undertaken on the stock exclusion regulations, particularly the definition of non-intensive grazing.

40. Te Rūnanga acknowledges that there are issues with the current exclusion in certain parts of the Takiwā, as it is difficult to enforce in high-country stations (using physical or virtual fencing with collars) and there may be benefits to light grazing for weed control in some areas. A case study on the Taiari Scroll Plains is included below in Appendix Two. Clarity is needed on the definition of ‘non-intensive grazing’ to ensure it reflects good practice, and exceptions should be evidence-based for specific areas (such as the high country). At a minimum:

    a. The healthy and integrity of wetlands must be the primary and overriding concern, without incremental reduction.

    b. Options must be based on objective information about the benefits and impacts of allowing grazing in the wetlands.

    c. Any option must sit within a clear regulatory framework so that compliance action can be taken.

    d. The implementation of any option must be monitored and any adverse effects be adaptively managed.

APPENDIX TWO: CASE STUDIES

Case Study 1: Te Waihora

Te Waihora (Lake Ellesmere) in Canterbury is regarded as one of the most polluted lakes in New Zealand. Described as Te Kete Ika o Rākaihautū – The Fish Basket of Rākaihautū; Te Waihora is an important Ngāi Tahu taoka and mahika kai site. Ngāi Tahu legally owns the lakebed, a provision that was part of the Ngāi Tahu Settlement. However, poor land management practices in the catchment and a lack of national environmental bottom lines has led to its severe degradation and undermined Rūnanga efforts to improve this resource.

Algae buildup in Te Waihora. Photo by Anne Noble.

- Te Waihora is in a **hypereutrophic** state (extremely rich in nutrients and minerals, leading to excessive plant and algal growth and poor water clarity), attributed to nutrient (nitrogen and phosphorous) runoff and agricultural land-use in the catchment. It has a Trophic Level Index score of **7.2** (with less than 2 being 'Very Good' and greater than 5 being 'Very Poor').

- Eutrophication can cause hypoxic (low oxygen) conditions, endangering species such as inaka/whitebait and pātiki/flounder, which are sensitive to low levels of dissolved oxygen. These population changes have flow-on effects to food web systems.

- A 2023 Land Water People report modelled an annual estuary load of total nitrogen for Te Waihora of 2,949.3 tonnes, despite the maximum allowable load being 396.2 tonnes. The maximum allowable load is a conversion of the NPS-FM nutrient concentration criteria into an equivalent annual load.

- Land Air Water Aotearoa (LAWA) have placed Te Waihora in **Attribute Band D** (the lowest possible band in the NPSFM) for total phosphorous, total nitrogen, chlorophyll *a*, and cyanobacteria.

Case Study 2: Ō Tū Wharekai

Ō Tū Wharekai (Ashburton Lakes) are small high-country lakes located in the Ashburton Basin and are one of the few remaining areas of native biodiversity in mid-Canterbury. The lakes include Ō Tū Wharekai (Māori Lake), Te Puna-a-Taka (Lake Clearwater), Ōtautari (Lake Camp) and Kirihonuhonu (Lake Emma), Ōtūroto (Lake Heron), other smaller lakes, and various wetlands. As part of the Ngāi Tahu Settlement, the Crown recognised Ō Tū Wharekai as a statutory acknowledgement, having significant cultural, spiritual and historical importance to Ngāi Tahu. It is an important seasonal mahika kai area and was a major travelling route between the settlements on the eastern coast of Te Waipounamu (the South Island) and those on Te Tai Poutini (the West Coast).

Ō Tū Wharekai. Photo from Environment Canterbury

- In 2023, the Ministry for the Environment released a report detailing how multiple aspects of the freshwater management system had led to the continued deterioration of the lakes. These included:
    - Environment Canterbury's setting of nitrogen loss limit being too high to drive the necessary reductions;
    - farmers and stakeholders incorrectly using tools such as Overseer and farm environmental plans;
    - a lack of regulation, monitoring and auditing to drive change; and
    - insufficient national direction.

- The report noted that the direct cause of the lakes' decline is too many nutrients entering the lakes from the surrounding land, with over 95% of this being from leaching and run-off from land use practices on the adjacent pastoral farms.

- The majority of Ō Tū Wharekai lakes have a high Trophic Level Index (TLI) between 4.1 – 4.9, which is eutrophic indicating some lakes are in danger of "flipping" – which means reaching a state of degradation from which it is very difficult to improve/recover.

Case Study 3: Waituna Lagoon

Waituna is a large, brackish coastal lagoon which forms part of the Awarua wetland complex on the southern coast of Te Waipounamu. Waituna is highly valued by Awarua Rūnaka for the variety and reliability of the mahika kai it offers. Its significance was recognised by a Statutory Acknowledgment under the Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act 1998, and it was one of the first wetlands in New Zealand to be officially recognised as a wetland of international importance under the Ramsar Wetland Convention (an international treaty for the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands).

Waituna Lagoon. Photo by Katrina Robinson, Environment Southland.

- The Trophic Level Index (TLI) is 4.8 showing that the lagoon is eutrophic.

- Land use intensification, wetland drainage, the clearance of indigenous vegetation, and the altering of flow paths have all contributed to putting the health of the wetland and its tributaries under significant stress, threatening to flip the lagoon into an algae-dominated state due to the accumulation of nutrients and sediment.

- The lagoon is occasionally opened to the sea to disrupt toxic algal blooms. Active intervention and rāhui by the Awarua Rūnaka have helped stave off more serious degradation, although the lagoon is still under severe pressure.

- According to a 2024 NIWA report on the state of *Ruppia* (an important native plant species that safeguards water quality) within the lagoon, measures of lagoon-wide *Ruppia* cover, were amongst the lowest on record since 2009, and conditions for growth were poor even before the summer lagoon opening.

Case Study 4: Taiari Scroll Plain

The unique serpentine meander of the Taiari Scroll Plain makes it one of the most remarkable and visually spectacular wetland complexes in New Zealand. A taoka of Te Rūnaka o Ōtākou and Kāti Huirapa ki Puketeraki, the Taiari scroll plains are a valuable source of mahika kai, a habitat for threatened taoka species, and served as an ara tawhito (traditional trail) from the coast to the inland food baskets of the Upper Taiari. The wetlands have been degraded and diminished by drainage, irrigation, channelisation, grazing, and the introduction of exotic species.

Taiari Scroll Plains, in the Māniatoto Basin. Photo by Department of Conservation.

- The sinuous nature of the wetland poses challenges for livestock management, but also increases the risk of encroachment by exotic pasture into the wetland where grazing occurs.

- The inland nature of the wetland means it is particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change, given predicted warmer annual average temperatures and more extreme hot days. This will have a negative impact on the wetland and the species that inhabit it, including risk of habitat damage and erosion through extreme weather events.

- Tunaheketaka (Taiari Lake) near Waipiata was once a productive lake and mahika kai site within the wetland complex, but due to the historic effects of gold mining and ongoing effects of drainage and encroachment, it is now little more than a muddy depression beside the river. Restoration of this area is a priority for mana whenua.

- A 2023 Manaaki Whenua report showed low overall wetland condition scores for surveyed areas along the scroll plain, particularly for native plants. Animal access and introduced vegetation were ranked most highly as pressures affecting the wetland.

APPENDIX THREE: NGĀI TAHU RANGATIRATANGA

1. Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu (**Te Rūnanga**) is the representative tribal body of Ngāi Tahu Whānui who hold rangatiratanga within the Ngāi Tahu Takiwā. Te Rūnanga encompasses eighteen Papatipu Rūnanga who uphold mana whenua and mana moana in their respective rohe.

2. The Ngāi Tahu Takiwā covers most of Te Waipounamu and its surrounding islands, including Rakiura and the sub-Antarctic Islands (see map below). The Crown and Parliament have recognised and affirmed the enduring nature of Ngāi Tahu rangatiratanga it its Takiwā through:

   a. Article II of Te Tiriti o Waitangi;

   b. the 1997 Deed of Settlement between Ngāi Tahu and the Crown; and

   c. the Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act 1998 (**NTCSA**) in which Parliament endorsed and implemented the Deed of Settlement.

3. As recorded in the Crown Apology to Ngāi Tahu, the Ngāi Tahu Settlement marked a turning point in the Crown-Ngāi Tahu relationship and the beginning of a "new age of co-operation". The Crown confirmed that it "recognises Ngāi Tahu as the tangata whenua or, and as holding rangatiratanga within, the Takiwā of Ngāi Tahu Whānui".