



*a vision for the future by conserving the past* matakite

[home](#) [about us](#) [resources](#) [shopping cart](#) [news](#) [pleiades](#) [program](#) [terms & conditions](#) [links](#) [contact](#)

[kāinga](#) [mō matou rā](#) [rauemi](#) [hoko](#) [ngā pānui](#) [matrariki](#) [whakaari](#) [ture me ngā hiahia](#) [hononga](#) [whakapā](#)

## TIRITI O WAITANGI ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF MĀORI TEXT BY PROFESSOR SIR HUGH KAWHARU

### TREATY OF WAITANGI 1840

Victoria, the Queen of England, in her concern to protect the chiefs and the subtribes of New Zealand and in her desire to preserve their chieftainship (1) and their lands to them and to maintain peace (2) and good order considers it just to appoint an administrator (3) one who will negotiate with the people of New Zealand to the end that their chiefs will agree to the Queen's Government being established over all parts of this land and (adjoining) islands (4) and also because there are many of her subjects already living on this land and others yet to come. So the Queen desires to establish a government so that no evil will come to Māori and European living in a state of lawlessness. So the Queen has appointed "me, William Hobson a Captain" in the Royal Navy to be Governor for all parts of New Zealand (both those) shortly to be received by the Queen and (those) to be received hereafter and presents (5) to the chiefs of the Confederation chiefs of the subtribes of New Zealand and other chiefs these laws set out here.

### THE FIRST

The Chiefs of the Confederation and all the Chiefs who have not joined that Confederation give absolutely to the Queen of England for ever the complete government (6) over their land.

### THE SECOND

The Queen of England agrees to protect the chiefs, the subtribes and all the people of New Zealand in the unqualified exercise (7) of their chieftainship over their lands, villages and all their treasures (8). But on the other hand the Chiefs of the Confederation and all the Chiefs will sell (9) land to the Queen at a price agreed to by the person owning it and by the person buying it (the latter being) appointed by the Queen as her purchase agent.

### THE THIRD

For this agreed arrangement therefore concerning the Government of the Queen, the Queen of England will protect all the ordinary people of New Zealand and will give them the same rights and duties (10) of citizenship as the people of England (11).

[signed] William Hobson Consul & Lieut. Governor

So we, the Chiefs of the Confederation of the subtribes of New Zealand meeting here at Waitangi having seen the shape of these words which we accept and agree to record our names and our marks thus.

Was done at Waitangi on the sixth of February in the year of our Lord 1840.

### Footnotes

- (1) "Chieftainship": this concept has to be understood in the context of Māori social and political organization as at 1840. The accepted approximation today is "trusteeship".
- (2) "Peace": Māori "Rongo", seemingly a missionary usage (rongo - to hear i.e. hear the "Word" - the "message" of peace and goodwill, etc).
- (3) Literally "Chief" ("Rangatira") here is of course ambiguous. Clearly a European could not be a Māori, but the word could well have implied a trustee-like role rather than that of a mere "functionary". Māori speeches at Waitangi in 1840 refer to Hobson being or becoming a "father" for the Māori people. Certainly this attitude has been held towards the person of the Crown down to the present day - hence the continued expectations and commitments entailed in the Treaty.
- (4) "Islands" i.e. coastal, not of the Pacific.
- (5) Literally "making" i.e. "offering" or "saying" - but not "inviting to concur".
- (6) "Government": "kawanatanga". There could be no possibility of the Māori signatories having any understanding of government in the sense of "sovereignty" i.e. any understanding on the basis of experience or cultural precedent.
- (7) "Unqualified exercise" of the chieftainship - would emphasize to a chief the Queen's intention to give them complete control according to their customs. "Tino" has the connotation of "quintessential".
- (8) "Treasures": "taonga". As submissions to the Waitangi Tribunal concerning the Māori language have made clear, "taonga" refers to all dimensions of a tribal group's estate, material and non-material - heirlooms and wahi tapu (sacred places), ancestral lore and whakapapa (genealogies), etc.
- (9) Māori "hokonga", literally "sale and purchase". Hoko means to buy or sell.
- (10) "Rights and duties": Māori "tikanga". While tika means right, correct, (eg. "e tika hoke" means "that is right"), "tikanga" most commonly refers to custom(s), for example of the marae (ritual forum); and custom(s) clearly includes the notion of duty and obligation.
- (11) There is, however, a more profound problem about "tikanga". There is a real sense here of the Queen "protecting" (i.e. allowing the preservation of) the Māori people's tikanga (i.e. customs) since no Māori could have had any understanding whatever of British tikanga (i.e. rights and duties of British subjects.) This, then, reinforces the guarantees in Article 2.

printed with permission