



Ngāti Kahungunu Iwi
INCORPORATED

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Kahungunu to discuss its approach to the government's direction

Ngāti Kahungunu, like many iwi is concerned about the government's direction and will call a meeting across all of its six taiwhenua (regions) to discuss its approach moving forward.

The new government's first joint announcement included that they would remove the Māori Health Authority, Māori wards in local government, Māori involvement in the governance of natural resources, Māori language in government departments, the right of Māori children to be kept in their own whānau, government services being delivered to Māori, Smokefree New Zealand, the jurisdiction of the Waitangi Tribunal, and Māori rights under Te Tiriti o Waitangi and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Ngāti Kahungunu Iwi Incorporated Chair, Bayden Barber says, "Astonishingly, this government has focused so early on removing policies designed to improve Māori health and wellbeing outcomes. Our life expectancy is already 8 years shorter than non-Māori so their stance on smoke-free policy and the health reforms designed to improve this situation is disgraceful."

When asked about the review of Treaty principles within existing government legislation, Barber said, "My ancestor Harawira Mahikai signed Te Tiriti o Waitangi. As signatories to Te Tiriti o Waitangi we would expect that there would be clear engagement and that any "review" of Te Tiriti principles or anything like unto it would need to be agreed by all parties. This hasn't happened, so we will fight this to the highest court if need be."

The statements made by the government coalition have been seen by many as a frontal attack on Māori. "We will not stand by and let this just happen", says Barber. Politicians, iwi leaders, community organisations, marae and whānau are mobilising to take action.

Barber was part of the Kīngitanga's 165th-year commemoration in Auckland over the weekend. Kīngi Tūheitia took the opportunity to discuss with iwi leaders that attended how to best organise ourselves and resources to respond to the attacks. Barber says, "It's in our best interests that we meet as Ngāti Kahungunu to discuss how we move forward in light of the government's position statements thus far. We will look to call a hui-ā-iwi in the next few weeks with the hope that a larger meeting of all Māori will be called by Kīngi Tūheitia not long afterwards."

Barber is aware that Te Pāti Māori and others are organising protests against these government announcements. He says, "Protests will naturally form part of a multi-pronged response. Many people understandably have deep feelings already and are eager to express them."

In terms of where he sees things going, Barber says, "This is a three-year marathon, not a sprint. A sensible and wise government would sit down and talk to its treaty partner rather than unilaterally remove our hard-won legal rights. We invite this government to come to Ngāti Kahungunu and meet

with us. Mā te ihu me te rae ka tau te rangimārie, it is through face-to-face dialogue that solutions are best found.”

Ngāti Kahungunu is one of the largest iwi in Aotearoa, with over 85,000 people who trace their lineage to the tribe. It has over 100 hapū and 93 marae spanning from Wairoa in the north to the Wairarapa in the south. Within this iwi boundary, there are six Taiwhenua and seven Treaty Settlement Entities.

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