



Ngāti Kahungunu Iwi
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Te Tiriti petition saddles up for Parliament: Ngāti Kahungunu to ride on horseback to Pōneke

A strong statement on horseback is heading to Parliament

The petition “Do not remove or amend Te Tiriti Principles or references in legislation” will be carried on horseback from Waimārama Marae to the steps of Parliament.

The horse trek will bring together tangata whenua, whānau, hapū, iwi and supporters from across the lower North Island in a highly visible journey to deliver a simple message: Te Tiriti o Waitangi must be protected.

Barber says the trek is about sending a message that cannot be ignored.

“We want to send a message to this Government that we are serious about protecting Te Tiriti o Waitangi, the founding agreement of this country. Not only to this Government, but whoever is there come November 7.”

“The message is simple: Te Tiriti o Waitangi is what makes our country unique - the coming together of two peoples, Māori and Pākehā, working for the benefit of all - and it must be upheld. If you haven’t already signed the petition, please do.”

The journey will also challenge organisations and lobby groups supporting policies that Barber says undermine Te Tiriti.

“We also want to send a message to lobby groups such as Hobson’s Pledge, Federated Farmers and others that supporting actions and policies that undermine the sanctity of Te Tiriti o Waitangi will not be tolerated.”

And the choice of transport is deliberate.

“When farmers are unhappy with governments, they protest with their tractors. We, as tangata whenua—the people of the land—will take our horses to the steps of Parliament so that our message is crystal clear: protect Te Tiriti o Waitangi.”

A ride through the heart of the motu

The trek will leave Waimārama Marae early on Friday, 11 September. This is significant as it was the home of Harawira Mahikai Te Tātēre, Ngāti Kurukuru chief and ancestor of Barber, who signed Te Tiriti of Waitangi at Waipūreku in 1840. From Waimārama, connecting with Heretaunga, Ahuriri and Wairoa riders at the Tukituki River.

From there, the riders will travel through Havelock North, a location with particular significance given that it was where Don Brash and Casey Costello first promoted the Hobson's Pledge movement in March 2017.

The trek will continue to the Hastings Civic Centre, home of Ngā Pou o Heretaunga, where kōrero, waiata and karakia will mark the journey before they head south to Pakipaki and onto Kahurānaki Marae in Te Hauke. This is significant as Te Hapuku Te Ika nui o Te Moana, ancestor of kaumātua Jerry Hapuku, also signed Te Tiriti alongside Mahikai.

From there, the riders will continue through the Ngāti Kahungunu heartland, travelling past Pukehou marae, where the third signatory to Te Tiriti, Hoani Waikato, was from and on to Waipawa, Waipukurau, Rākauātahi, Tāmaki-nui-a-Rua (Dannevirke) and Te Whakaoriori (Masterton).

Te Taiwhenua o Tāmaki nui a Rua representative and NKII Deputy-Chair, Hayden Hape adds, "This petition is especially important as we have experienced continued attacks on Te Tiriti o Waitangi within government legislation, basically absolving the government of its responsibility to uphold Treaty precepts and principles."

Along the way, the trek will connect with riders across our Kahungunu takiwā, including our Rangitāne whanaunga.

The trek will then cross the Remutaka arriving in Te Awakairangi and Waiwhetū amongst our Te Ati Awa and Ngāti Toa neighbours on Tuesday morning, 15 September, culminating in the trek to Parliament and presentation of the petition to Ikaroa-Rāwhiti MP Cushla Tangaere-Manuel at noon on the steps of Parliament with the intention of her presenting it to the House later that afternoon.

The trek will also purposely coincide with Te Wiki o Te Reo Māori, when in 1972 the Petition for Te Reo Māori gathered over 30,000 signatures. Says Barber, "Ko te reo o Te Tiriti, koia ko te reo Māori."

"We invite tribal riders from ngā iwi o te motu who want to join us to do so, especially for the ride through from Pito One to Te Whare Paremata" says Barber.

“Enough is enough”

Barber says the trek is also a direct response to policy changes he believes threaten iwi rights and the wellbeing of the taiao.

“We have new bills to replace the RMA, the sudden cessation of Ngā Mana Whakahono ā Rohe agreements, the Regulatory Standards Act, and a host of other changes during this coalition government that are stripping away the rights of Iwi Māori under Te Tiriti o Waitangi.”

“This trek is our way of saying: enough is enough.”

But the journey is not only about protest—it is also about participation and the power of the Māori vote.

Barber hopes the sight of Māori riders travelling hundreds of kilometres to Parliament will inspire whānau, particularly young Māori, to take part in the democratic process.

“If our young people can ride their horses from Waimārama to Pōneke, then surely our whānau can get along to the polling booth and vote.”

“This is the most important election for this country, especially for Māori, in our generation.”

Te Taiwhenua o Wairarapa representative and Board member, Melissa Ihaka also adds, “Wairarapa supports this petition. Any move to weaken Te Tiriti principles is a political choice, and we encourage our whānau to be ready to vote and make their voices heard in the upcoming election.”

The message from horseback to Parliament is simple: Te Tiriti o Waitangi is not up for political bargaining. It is the founding agreement of Aotearoa, and it must be upheld.

Click on the link to sign the Petition - [Petition of Ngāti Kahungunu Iwi Incorporated: Do not remove or amend Te Tiriti principles or references in legislation.](#)

Ngāti Kahungunu Ngāti Kahungunu Iwi Incorporated is a Mandated Iwi Organisation/Authority. Ngāti Kahungunu is the third largest iwi. Geographically the tribe has the second longest coastline in the country from Paritū in the North to Turakirae in the South. Ngāti Kahungunu Iwi Incorporated maintains an independent position to provide research, advice and advocate for the interests, rights, values, beliefs and practices of Ngāti Kahungunu alongside our whānau and hapū. Our mission is to enhance the mana and well-being of Ngāti Kahungunu.

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