

NEW ZEALAND'S PUBLIC CULTURE

AN ESSAY

Professor Elizabeth Rata
31st May 2026

What it it to be a New Zealander – Who do we believe ourselves to be?

New Zealand has a public culture grounded in Enlightenment principles of universalism, secularism, freedom, and individualism. The exclusivity of ethnicity is rejected for this inclusive New Zealand identity.

The social contract which binds civil society allows free individuals of various heritages to express liberal-democratic principles in public practices. In politics and community life; in literature, art, music, and sport; in work and education. Public culture connects civil society to its democratic governance with the citizen as the point of state–society connection. English provides the integrating language.

From 1867 Māori parents who requested schools for their villages, asked that their children be educated in Englishⁱ. They wanted their children to be bilingual, to enter the new world on equal termsⁱⁱ. Recognising Māori as the heritage language of the first settlers has long ensured its support from other New Zealanders. It was in the Public Service Examinations from 1934 and a subject for the Teachers Certificate from 1941ⁱⁱⁱ. In 1944, the Department of Education recommended that in as many schools as possible the study of Māori be fostered, saying “if it is taught full advantage should be given of the opportunities that here exist to reveal it as the ‘living language of a living people’ and to use it as a vehicle for the understanding of the culture that it expresses”^{iv}.

In 2018, an event occurred which radically altered the language's role. Rather than a heritage language for a contemporary and vibrant cultural life, Māori language became a formidable weapon in the co-governance strategy for fundamental constitutional change. The remarkably effective co-governance strategy has been in play since 1986 following the insertion of newly invented Treaty principles into all organs of the state.^v Civil society was specifically targeted by the language strategy.

The strategy was called the Te Matawai Maihi Māori Strategy and Implementation Approach (abbreviated to Maihi Karauna)^{vi}. Approved by a Labour-NZ First Coalition Cabinet Directive in December 2018, it was launched on Waitangi Day 2019.

Language has a dual role as the instrument of thought and the means of communication. Maihi Karauna took on both these roles. The intention was to change not only how New Zealanders communicated, but to go deeper – into thought itself.

Constitutional change from liberal-democracy to tribal sovereignty requires deep ideological penetration into peoples' minds. Changing policy is one thing. Changing minds is quite another. No wonder the architect, Nanaia Mahuta called Maihi Karauna's goals audacious – the audacity was indeed literal.

Audacious Goal 1: Eighty-five percent of New Zealanders (or more) will value te reo Māori as a key part of national identity.

Audacious Goal 2: One million New Zealanders (or more) will have the ability and confidence to talk about at least basic things in te reo Māori.

Audacious Goal 3: One hundred and fifty thousand Māori aged 15 and over will use te reo Māori as much as English by 2040.

The policy's intended outcomes are Aotearoatanga (Nationhood); Matauranga (Knowledge and skills); Hononga (Engagement).

From 2019, the Labour-NZ First Government commissioned He Puapua document coordinated the tribal sovereignty agenda. It detailed compliance with legislated Treaty principles and emphasised the Iwi-Crown Special Relationship to replace that of democracy's Parliament-People relationship. Maihi Karauna led the cultural change to ensure widespread public support for this treatyist approach. Although Audacious Goal 1 fundamentally altered the language's role from heritage status to public status equal to English, the policy's rationale was framed as heritage language revival.

The Māori Language Commission, Taura Whiri i te Reo, coined words to make new meanings for the new purpose. Te Tiriti, as the replacement for the Treaty, was the most effective of these coinages. It creates confusion about what the Treaty means despite the clarity of the 1840 three Articles: The British Crown is sovereign. Property ownership is secured. Māori have the rights of British subjects^{vii}. Maihi Karauna's Aotearoatanga outcome is making notable inroads into changing New Zealand's name.

Highly paid cultural commissars in government departments directed new observances: karakia, waiata, noho marae, te reo lessons, meeting procedures, name gifting practices; obligatory pepehas of introduction establishing race as a person's primary identity and tikanga as the justifying order. The newly mandated behaviours were modelled on public television and radio to take the lessons out to the people.

New Zealanders who blinked in 2019 woke in 2020 to discover Maihi Karauna firmly in place. Many recoiled, neither from racism nor opposition to the Māori language. Indeed five decades of widespread support for its revival as a heritage language gives a lie to such accusations.

What many New Zealanders fear is the subversion by stealth of the nation's public culture. This includes the role of English^{viii} as the language of civil society integration and in the state's enactment of liberal-democracy's principles.

Sparking those fears is the ongoing effects of New Zealand's 2010 endorsement of the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). In 2018, Maihi Karauna^{ix} justified its audacious ambitions in terms of UNDRIP's heritage language protection intention. However it provided a new interpretation which changed the role of the Māori language. It was now to be the language of the state and society.

In 2026 the far-reaching hand of UNDRIP, is again in full view. Clause (13.2.2a) in the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with India^x has emerged as the latest sleight of hand tactic^{xi} – an

audacious insertion by an official captured by Maihi Karauna perhaps? If ratified by Parliament, New Zealand will move from simply noting to affirming the Declaration. In this way, the nation will be legally bound to recognise Māori as indigenous^{xii} with rights to self-determination, ie. tribal sovereignty.

It is possible that five decades of legislative evasion will end when the Government enacts the Coalition's Agreement to remove references to the Treaty principles from legislation. Seven pieces of legislation are identified for removal. However it is intended to include the phrase *taking into account* in another ten statutes. History provides a lesson in the unintended and dangerous consequences of using such an elastic phrase.

The 1990 Education Act required university councils to *acknowledge* the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi. The elasticity of acknowledgement was quickly stretched to mean give effect to^{xiii}. The extremely comprehensive 2003 Maori Tertiary Framework^{xiv} and its uptake by the Ministry of Research, Science and Technology (MoRST) in 2006 set out detailed policies and practices that changed New Zealand's public universities in profound ways. These include making it almost impossible to undertake and publish research which criticises the nature and extent of the universities' capture by treatyist ideology.^{xv}

Three examples from the Framework suffice to show how the foundation was laid. Principle Two, *tino rangatiratanga* (sovereignty) is concerned with supporting aspiration for Maori self-determination, enabling provision by Maori and enshrining Maori ownership in and authority over tertiary education. "The third principle, *toi to mana*, means empowering Maori to influence the tertiary system at all levels". Priority Seven, "Maori-centred knowledge-creation" includes the goals that: "Maori guardianship of knowledge is recognized and embraced by the system and government agencies support the development of Maori intellectual independence and Maori knowledge according to *tikanga Maori*".

The accelerating decolonisation and indigenisation of the country's public universities adhere to the Framework. For example, in 2026 Waikato intends to integrate *mātauranga Māori* as a defining feature of curriculum design.^{xvi} Auckland maintains its compulsory Waipapa Taumata Rau course for all professional degrees^{xvii}. The consequences of the course's treatyist curriculum will contribute to the ideological capture that is increasingly the fate of professional regulatory bodies.^{xviii}

It is unsurprising that the universities were the first target in the tribalists' long-term strategies for constitutional control. It is these institutions which produce the lawyers, academics, teachers, doctors, journalists, professionals and public service officials, who in turn become judges, professors, and senior professionals and government officials.

The seemingly unstoppable road to tribal sovereignty generated the confidence, even arrogance, of Maihi Karuna's Audacious Goals. It explains tribal activists' extreme reaction to the 2025 Treaty Principles Bill^{xix}. The Bill made the reasonable point that the principles should be defined and the definition be put to the people for their agreement – even if fifty years after the 1975 Treaty of Waitangi Act's first mention of principles. Bizarrely, it was this democratic principle of consulting the people that is now regarded as audacious.

However, the extremism, to the point of fanaticism, of the reaction to the Treaty Principles Bill did serve a useful purpose. It exposed the extent of the constitutional penetration of the post-1987 Treatyist agenda, its acceleration from 2019 by He Puapua, and Maihi Karauna's post-2018 ideological strategy. Little wonder then it ignited the fury of those who assumed that the path to tribal rule was unstoppable.

The Bill revealed the extent of both constitutional and language strategies, their relentless momentum, and their ultimate goal. Whether the momentum will be halted depends on the Government fulfilling its Coalition Agreement. The stakes are high, something that many New Zealanders are increasingly aware of as they contemplate what tribal sovereignty will mean in fact.

Neither the co-governance/sovereignty strategy nor Maihi Karauna are ends in themselves. Propelling both, and numerous accompanying forces, including activist judges, radicalised academics and the grossly inflated Waitangi Tribunal, is the 2040 Treaty of Waitangi bicentennial. The culmination of Aotearoa is full constitutional change, from liberal-democracy to co-governance; leading ultimately to tribal sovereignty^{xx}.

The 1840 Treaty of Waitangi and the 1852 Constitution Act, are considered by many New Zealanders to be our founding documents. The original three Treaty Articles are consistent with the liberal-democratic principles of universalism, individual freedom including private ownership rights, and equal citizenship. This already allocates the Treaty a symbolic place within the nation's public culture, in both state and civil society. The post-1975 Treaty principles are for an anti-democratic agenda. New Zealand's public culture has no need of them.

ENDNOTES

i

Dissatisfied with the missionary schools, Māori sought government funding for village schools under parental control and teaching in English. "Upon the memorial of any considerable number of the male adult native inhabitants of any locality or district where no native school already exists praying for the establishment of a school". (1867 Native Schools Act, section 5). By 1898, 74 native village schools were established in response to requests.

That English language instruction in the schools was a paramount concern is shown by at least 4 major petitions to Parliament in the 1870s.

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"It is satisfactory to report that corporal punishment is sparingly resorted to in most of the schools. In many schools corporal punishment is not resorted to at all, as the teachers exercise a strong moral influence over their pupils. There is particularly noticeable in several schools where women are in charge."

(1924, E.-3, p. 6)

ii

"In the progress made by the Maori people the influence of the schools and of the teachers has played no unimportant part. The following interesting and pertinent remarks were made recently at the general meeting of the Waiapu Farmers' Association—a Maori concern of very considerable magnitude—by the Hon. Sir Apirana Ngata, M.P, chairman of directors: 'Lastly, the tribe (Ngati Porou) had arrived at that stage in its development where persistent patronage of the schools and colleges for a generation and a half had leavened it through and through with men and women who aimed at higher standards of living, and who were more than conscious, were confident, of their ability to translate their acquired knowledge into flourishing farms, better houses, healthier villages, and a greater share of the benefit of civilization.'"

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The secondary departments of Māori district high schools included Māori language as an examinable subject from 1934. (Barrington and Beaglehole, 1974, p. 207.)

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1949 – 117 students were taking Māori for School Certificate (88 in 1948) (Education: Native Schools, AJHR, 1949. Education of Maori Children, E-3.)

iv

Department of Education (Thomas Report), 1944, p. 70.

v

Section 9 of the State-owned Enterprises Act 1986: "Nothing in this Act shall permit the Crown to act in a manner that is inconsistent with the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi". It resulted from the Deputy Prime Minister, Geoffrey Palmer's trip to meet Sir Hepi Te Heuheu of Ngati Tuwharetoa at his home. The two agreed to include section 9.

The following year, in 1987 one of the five judges in the Court of Appeal lands case made the "akin to partnership" statement (Casey J, [1987] 1 NZLR 641, at 704.) Another, Justice Robin Cooke, noted that "The Treaty signified a partnership between races" but also stated that "the basic terms of the bargain were that the Queen was to govern and the Maoris were to be her subjects" (at 663-664). However, the term 'partnership', without any qualification, was quickly picked up by the Waitangi Tribunal and Iwi lobbyists as the basis for a 'Special Relationship of Iwi and Crown'. From that time successive governments succumbed to the increasingly powerful tribal lobby, the Iwi Leaders Forum, by including Treaty principles and the Special Relationship into legislation. 'Special relationship' language found throughout legislation is remarkedably effective in concealing that the Iwi Leaders Forum is in fact a lobby group. 'Partnership' was rapidly promoted as the main Treaty principle to justify first, the Special Relationship, and following from that, constitutional change.

With reference to the National Government's incorporation of treaty principles into legislation through the highly influential 1991 Resource Management Act (RMA), MP Simon Upton commented. "I am quite sure that none of us knew what we meant when we signed up to that formula". Upton added that "when it framed the Resource Management Act, the National Government was aware of treaty 'principles' developed by the Court of Appeal in 1987 and by the Waitangi Tribunal in dealing with Maori land Claims. "But given the extraordinary wide reach of the act, handing over its implementation to local councils with no clear guidance on how those principles might intersect with the claimed rangatiratanga of any particular group amounted to a legislative evasion". (Simon Upton quoted in the New Zealand Herald, 22 – 23 Feb. 2003.)

The ad hoc nature of governments' reaction to tribal demands continued throughout the 1990s. In 2000, Helen Clark, acknowledged that "there is no one in Cabinet actually co-ordinating the insertion of treaty clauses into new legislation" (Listener, 2000, p. 22). Yet, in response to a survey's findings (New Zealand Herald, 28. Nov. 2000, p. A3) that "two out of every three people believe references to the Treaty of Waitangi should not be included in legislation", Clark argued that "strong leadership will reverse New Zealanders' views on this contentious issue", locating the problem in the "not very great public understanding". But the people did understand.

The 1999 survey had found that the treaty "is a major point of division within the country". Only five percent of those surveyed "think that the Treaty should be strengthened and given the full force of law". "About 34 percent want the Treaty abolished" (Perry and Webster, 1999). This contradicted the Labour Party position. According to Margaret Wilson "It is accepted that it is only a question of time before some form of constitutional recognition is given to the Treaty of Waitangi".

The consequences of this disdainful attitude to the wishes of the people, combined with the Parliament's evasion of its responsibility to define the principles that it was inserting into all legislation are ongoing – one of the latest being the 2026 intention by tribal sovereignty activists to install Mana Whakahono ā Rohe agreements into local Councils throughout the nation prior to the Coalition Government's intended RMA reform.

In a interview on The Platform posted 26 May 2026, Dr Michael Bassett traced the "very little care" taken with the principles to their first reference in the 1975 legislation. He pointed out the absence of a definition was recognised as a problem even then. He remembers a 1986 Cabinet Policy Committee discussion of Palmer's intention to include Section 9, saying that no Ministers were enthused. However Palmer assured them to trust in the Courts to define the principles. So they did – politicians trusted and judges defined. This initiated decades of judicial activism and decades of Parliament's failure to provide leadership by defining the principles despite putting them into legislation. The Deputy Prime Minister, the Hon David Seymour, is the notable exception to 50 years of politicians' pusillanimity. If the tribal sovereignty agenda is defeated in coming years, he will be recorded in the nation's history as the only politician with the courage to actively champion liberal-democracy, most notably through his Treaty Principles Bill. The Bill may have failed to secure support from his Coalition partners but it succeeded in alerting many NZers to how 'words without meaning' invite others to supply the meaning. Thus ideology is created.

vi

Final Maihi Karauna Strategy And Implementation Approach, Office of Te Minita Whanakatanga Maori, Cabinet Maori/Crown Relations: Te Arawhiti Committee, December 2018

vii

The last Article is what sparked the desire from those who had been slaves or were of non-chiefly descent (whakapapa) to seize the new opportunities provided in the emerging new public culture. W. Rolleston, Inspector of Schools, undertook the first inspection of the Native Schools following the 1867 legislation. He noted parents' slavery fears and the desire for schools situated in the villages, rather than the missionary schools which were not in the villages.

"Most of them have been in slavery in olden times (I mean those of this Province) when they had to practice compulsory industry, under terror of their master's wrath, and when they see their children and young people practising industry under the authority of their (missionary) teachers, and too often under the justly merited displeasure of those teachers, they are reminded of their own former days of bondage, and do not care to distinguish between the two cases. 'We thought' say they, 'We thought you took our children from us to give them schooling, but instead of that you are making slaves of them'."

Papers Relative To Native Schools. Appendix to the Journals of the House of Representatives, 1867 Session I, A-03.

viii

The willingness to abandon English in this role is particularly strong amongst some in education. An example which troubles me to this day occurred during a recent involvement I had with teachers of

English. Incredibly several did not want the word 'English' used to name the subject. Instead they reduced its content richness to skills, preferring the term 'literacy' instead. I have written about the attempted erasure of English in an article submitted some time ago to the *New Zealand Journal of Educational Studies*. I live in hope that it will be published. If not I will post it on my website. (Also see Endnote xv.)

ix

No 87, Final Maihi Karauna Strategy And Implementation Approach, Office of Te Minita Whanaketanga Maori, Cabinet Maori/Crown Relations: Te Arawhiti Committee, December 2018, p. 14

x

Two excellent analyses of the UNDRIP clause in the FTA are by Graham Adams (Brash and Mitchell, 25 May 2026) and Gary Judd KC (Brash and Mitchell, 28 May 2026). In early June, Mr Judd will present a submission to the Select Committee on behalf of Hobson's Pledge, an important liberal-democratic thinktank which, along with the NZ Centre for Political Research, tracks retribalising actions in both the state and public culture.

At the time of writing it is not known whether the clause will be withdrawn before ratification by Parliament. It is a test of the Coalition Government that the country will be watching keenly.

xi

The Minister responsible, the Hon Todd McClay, did not know of the FTA clause insertion.

xii

I analyse the post-1970s' concept of 'indigenous' and its politicisation by New Zealand activists in my own submission on the Free Trade Agreement.

<https://elizabethrata.com/wp-content/uploads/2026/05/Rata-FTA-Submission-2026.pdf>

xiii

A full account of how the universities were captured is available in Rata, E. (2013). Knowledge and the Politics of Culture: An example from New Zealand's Higher Education Policy and Practice. *Anthropological Theory*, 13 (4), 329-346.

I have posted a pdf of the article on www.elizabethrata.com

xiv

Tertiary Framework (2003) Maori Tertiary Education Framework. A Report by the Maori Tertiary Reference Group. Ministry of Education (November). Wellington. Available at:

<http://www.minedu.govt.nz/NZEducation/EducationPolicies/MaoriEducation/PolicyAndStrategy/MaoriTertiaryFramework.aspx> (accessed 4 November 2009).

Ministry of Research, Science and Technology (MoRST) (2006) Vision Mātauranga: Unlocking the Potential of Maori. Wellington: Ministry of Research, Science and Technology: People, Knowledge and Resources

xv

My own academic career contains many examples of this 'almost impossibility'.

xvi

The erroneous conflation of traditional knowledge (based on belief) and modern science (based on evidence) will alter New Zealand in fundamental ways. Modern science which led to the nation's 20th century prosperity and first-world status is characterised by its challengeable character. Its inclusion in the school curriculum from the 1880s ensured that NZ children acquired not only this critical attitude but the secondary cognition abilities needed to go beyond observation and experience by using abstract concepts to explain the 'how and why' of natural phenomena in ways that don't rely on appeals to spiritual causes, ie mauri or life force. This scientific thinking is under considerable threat by university indigenisation and decolonisation approaches with consequences not only affecting the content of university and school curricula, but more fundamentally, the way people think, and allow themselves to think. (The best exhortation for such courage is Immanuel Kant's 1784 essay, 'What is Enlightenment?') For a scholarly account of the difference between mātauranga Māori and science see Michael Matthews 'Why Mātauranga Māori should not be taught in Science Programmes: Philosophical, Political, and

Educational Arguments' in Ben Kotzee (ed.) *Harvey Siegel's Contribution to Philosophy and Education*, Springer, Synthese Philosophy Library, 2026.]

For an account of science in 19th century NZ education, see my video 'Science 1877-1899'. It will be posted on www.elizabethrata.com later in 2026.

xvii

Following public outcry in 2024-5, the university claimed that the Waipapa Taumata Rau (WTR) course was no longer compulsory. However it remains compulsory for students taking professional degrees in teaching, architecture, engineering, urban planning, health sciences, nursing, BSc pre-entry to medicine, surgery, optometry, medical imaging, pharmacy. The justification for its compulsory retention in professional degrees is that the WTR course is linked to the University's Graduate Profile capability which states that "Graduates are conversant with mātauranga Māori, kaupapa Māori, and Te Tiriti o Waitangi."

xviii

David Harvey. 'Disciplinary complaints against professionals and the rise of the ideologically motivated bystander', *Law News*, 21 May 2026.

<https://lawnews.nz/administrative-public/disciplinary-complaints-against-professionals-and-the-rise-of-the-ideologically-motivated-bystander/>

xix

See Endnote v

XX

This is the case because co-governance of two incompatible systems is impossible, an incoherent idea. New Zealand will be governed either by democracy based on liberal principles or by tribalism with its kinship hierarchies and racial ideology. New Zealand's future is either tribal sovereignty or liberal-democracy.

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With reference to the National Government's incorporation of treaty principles into legislation through the highly influential 1991 Resource Management Act (RMA), MP Simon Upton commented. "I am quite sure that none of us knew what we meant when we signed up to that formula". Upton added that "when it framed the Resource Management Act, the National Government was aware of treaty 'principles' developed by the Court of Appeal in 1987 and by the Waitangi Tribunal in dealing with Maori land Claims. "But given the extraordinary wide reach of the act, handing over its implementation to local councils with no clear guidance on how those principles might intersect with the claimed rangatiratanga of any particular group amounted to a legislative evasion". (Simon Upton quoted in the New Zealand Herald, 22 – 23 Feb. 2003.)

The ad hoc nature of governments' reaction to tribal demands continued throughout the 1990s. In 2000, Helen Clark, acknowledged that "there is no one in Cabinet actually co-ordinating the insertion of treaty clauses into new legislation" (Listener, 2000, p. 22). Yet, in response to a survey's findings (New Zealand Herald, 28. Nov. 2000, p. A3) that "two out of every three people believe references to the Treaty of Waitangi should not be included in legislation", Clark argued that "strong leadership will reverse New Zealanders' views on this contentious issue", locating the problem in the "not very great public understanding". But the people did understand.

The 1999 survey had found that the treaty "is a major point of division within the country". Only five percent of those surveyed "think that the Treaty should be strengthened and given the full force of law". "About 34 percent want the Treaty abolished" (Perry and Webster, 1999). This contradicted the Labour Party position. According to Margaret Wilson "It is accepted that it is only a question of time before some form of constitutional recognition is given to the Treaty of Waitangi".

The consequences of this disdainful attitude to the wishes of the people, combined with the Parliament's evasion of its responsibility to define the principles that it was inserting into all legislation are ongoing – one of the latest being the 2026 intention by tribal sovereignty activists to install Mana Whakahono ā Rohe agreements into local Councils throughout the nation prior to the Coalition Government's intended RMA reform.

In a interview on The Platform posted 26 May 2026, Dr Michael Bassett traced the "very little care" taken with the principles to their first reference in the 1975 legislation. He pointed out the absence of a definition was recognised as a problem even then. He remembers a 1986 Cabinet Policy Committee discussion of Palmer's intention to include Section 9, saying that no Ministers were enthused. However Palmer assured them to trust in the Courts to define the principles. So they did – politicians trusted and judges defined. This initiated decades of judicial activism and decades of Parliament's failure to provide leadership by defining the principles despite putting them into legislation. The Deputy Prime Minister, the Hon David Seymour, is the notable exception to 50 years of politicians' pusillanimity. If the tribal sovereignty agenda is defeated in coming years, he will be recorded in the nation's history as the only politician with the courage to actively champion liberal-democracy, most notably through his Treaty Principles Bill. The Bill may have failed to secure support from his Coalition partners but it succeeded in alerting many NZers to how 'words without meaning' invite others to supply the meaning. Thus ideology is created.

^{vi} Final Maihi Karauna Strategy And Implementation Approach, Office of Te Minita Whanakatanga Maori, Cabinet Maori/Crown Relations: Te Arawhiti Committee, December 2018

^{vii} The last Article is what sparked the desire from those who had been slaves or were of non-chiefly descent (whakapapa) to seize the new opportunities provided in the emerging new public culture. W. Rolleston, Inspector of Schools, undertook the first inspection of the Native Schools following the 1867 legislation. He noted parents' slavery fears and the desire for schools situated in the villages, rather than the missionary schools which were not in the villages.

"Most of them have been in slavery in olden times (I mean those of this Province) when they had to practice compulsory industry, under terror of their master's wrath, and when they see their children and young people practising industry under the authority of their (missionary) teachers, and too often under the justly merited displeasure of those teachers, they are reminded of their own former days of bondage, and do not care to distinguish between the two cases. 'We thought' say they, 'We thought you took our children from us to give them schooling, but instead of that you are making slaves of them'."

Papers Relative To Native Schools. Appendix to the Journals of the House of Representatives, 1867 Session I, A-03.

^{viii} The willingness to abandon English in this role is particularly strong amongst some in education. An example which troubles me to this day occurred during a recent involvement I had with teachers of English. Incredibly several did not want the word 'English' used to name the subject. Instead they reduced its content richness to skills, preferring the term 'literacy' instead. I have written about the attempted erasure of English in an article submitted some time ago to the *New Zealand Journal of Educational Studies*. I live in hope that it will be published. If not I will post it on my website. (Also see Endnote xv.)

^{ix} No 87, Final Maihi Karauna Strategy And Implementation Approach, Office of Te Minita Whanaketanga Maori, Cabinet Maori/Crown Relations: Te Arawhiti Committee, December 2018, p. 14

^x Two excellent analyses of the UNDRIP clause in the FTA are by Graham Adams (Brash and Mitchell, 25 May 2026) and Gary Judd KC (Brash and Mitchell, 28 May 2026). In early June, Mr Judd will present a submission to the Select Committee on behalf of Hobson's Pledge, an important liberal-democratic thinktank which, along with the NZ Centre for Political Research, tracks retribalising actions in both the state and public culture.

At the time of writing it is not known whether the clause will be withdrawn before ratification by Parliament. It is a test of the Coalition Government that the country will be watching keenly.

^{xi} The Minister responsible, the Hon Todd McClay, did not know of the FTA clause insertion.

^{xii} I analyse the post-1970s' concept of 'indigenous' and its politicisation by New Zealand activists in my own submission on the Free Trade Agreement.

<https://elizabethrata.com/wp-content/uploads/2026/05/Rata-FTA-Submission-2026.pdf>

^{xiii} A full account of how the universities were captured is available in Rata, E. (2013). Knowledge and the Politics of Culture: An example from New Zealand's Higher Education Policy and Practice. *Anthropological Theory*, 13 (4), 329-346.

I have posted a pdf of the article on www.elizabethrata.com

^{xiv} Tertiary Framework (2003) Maori Tertiary Education Framework. A Report by the Maori Tertiary Reference Group. Ministry of Education (November). Wellington. Available at:

<http://www.minedu.govt.nz/NZEducation/EducationPolicies/MaoriEducation/PolicyAndStrategy/MaoriTertiaryFramework.aspx> (accessed 4 November 2009).

Ministry of Research, Science and Technology (MoRST) (2006) Vision Matauranga: Unlocking the Potential of Maori. Wellington: Ministry of Research, Science and Technology: People, Knowledge and Resources

^{xv} My own academic career contains many examples of this 'almost impossibility'.

^{xvi} The erroneous conflation of traditional knowledge (based on belief) and modern science (based on evidence) will alter New Zealand in fundamental ways. Modern science which led to the nation's 20th century prosperity and first-world status is characterised by its challengeable character. Its inclusion in the school curriculum from the 1880s ensured that NZ children acquired not only this critical attitude but

the secondary cognition abilities needed to go beyond observation and experience by using abstract concepts to explain the 'how and why' of natural phenomena in ways that don't rely on appeals to spiritual causes, ie mauri or life force. This scientific thinking is under considerable threat by university indigenisation and decolonisation approaches with consequences not only affecting the content of university and school curricula, but more fundamentally, the way people think, and allow themselves to think. (The best exhortation for such courage is Immanuel Kant's 1784 essay, 'What is Enlightenment?') For a scholarly account of the difference between mātauranga Māori and science see Michael Matthews 'Why Mātauranga Māori should not be taught in Science Programmes: Philosophical, Political, and Educational Arguments' in Ben Kotzee (ed.) Harvey Siegel's Contribution to Philosophy and Education, Springer, Synthese Philosophy Library, 2026.]

For an account of science in 19th century NZ education, see my video 'Science 1877-1899'. It will be posted on www.elizabethrata.com later in 2026.

^{xvii} Following public outcry in 2024-5, the university claimed that the Waipapa Taumata Rau (WTR) course was no longer compulsory. However it remains compulsory for students taking professional degrees in teaching, architecture, engineering, urban planning, health sciences, nursing, BSc pre-entry to medicine, surgery, optometry, medical imaging, pharmacy. The justification for its compulsory retention in professional degrees is that the WTR course is linked to the University's Graduate Profile capability which states that "Graduates are conversant with mātauranga Māori, kaupapa Māori, and Te Tiriti o Waitangi."

David Harvey. 'Disciplinary complaints against professionals and the rise of the ideologically motivated bystander', *Law News*, 21 May 2026.

<https://lawnews.nz/administrative-public/disciplinary-complaints-against-professionals-and-the-rise-of-the-ideologically-motivated-bystander/>

^{xix} See Endnote v

^{xx} This is the case because co-governance of two incompatible systems is impossible, an incoherent idea. New Zealand will be governed either by democracy based on liberal principles or by tribalism with its kinship hierarchies and racial ideology. New Zealand's future is either tribal sovereignty or liberal-democracy.