

## Submissions on Māori Ward Amendments by Pax Christi members.

**Peter Archer**

### **Electoral Legislation and Māori Wards and Māori Constituencies Amendment Bill**

Tēnā koutou.

Thank you for allowing me to provide a submission on the Local Government (Electoral Legislation and Māori Wards and Māori Constituencies) Amendment Bill.

#### **Introduction:**

My name is Peter Bernard Archer and I am strongly against the passing of the abovementioned Bill. As a past or present member of several social justice groups I have been disappointed at the lack of inclusivity still being afforded to Maori in Aotearoa.

#### **The Present Situation:**

Under the current law relating to local council Maori wards, Aotearoa has gone from having three councils with Māori wards to 49 councils that either have them, or will have them at the 2025 local elections, an increase by 16 times. By reversing this law, the government will make it harder for councils to retain their Māori wards in 2025, and will make it easier for people who oppose Māori wards to petition their councils to remove them in the future.

#### **Reasons that the Current Law should be Retained:**

1) I believe that the reintroduction of poll provisions will cause division and enable racist rhetoric of the kind experienced by Māori in earlier polls, such as in 2018 in Whakatane. Prior to the current legislation, few Māori were present on councils, not because Māori weren't standing for council but because the odds are highly against Māori in any environment where the majority of voters are non-Māori. The inclusion of Māori in all levels of decision-making goes some way for Councils to act honourably in terms of Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

2) Article 2 of te Tiriti guarantees tino rangatiratanga to Māori and as such, the right to be represented and to participate in decision-making at local and central government levels. Yet with this Bill, no consultation has been undertaken with Māori, thus breaching the Treaty principle of partnership. And surely the Crown is obliged to honour Te Tiriti and act in good faith towards the Treaty partner? The Crown does not have a unilateral right to redefine or breach the terms of Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

3) Regretfully, the policy process to proceed with this Bill has been carried out with what

seems to me, to be a haste as such to ensure a preferred result and complete one of the coalition's policy agreements.

Nga mihi nui,

Peter Bernard Archer

29<sup>th</sup> May, 2024

**Mike & Liz Beazley**

Submission on Māori Wards.

Tena Koutou,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission on the Local Government (Electoral Legislation and Maori Wards and Maori Constituencies) Amendment Bill.

Our names are Michael and Elizabeth Beazley. We strongly oppose the Local Government (Legislation and Maori Constituencies) Amendment Bill. The law change should not be reversed.

We belong to a peace and justice group based in Whangarei and are part of Pax Christi Aotearoa which is linked to an international organisation. Pax Christi is committed to working for peace and justice for all people everywhere. As members of Pax Christi Aotearoa we are actively involved in honouring Te Tiriti o Waitangi, providing peace education, seeking restorative justice, ensuring human rights for all and bringing about interfaith dialogue for all people.

Our reasons for opposition to the Bill are:

- There has been no consultation with Maori, breaching the Treaty Principle of partnership.
- Article 2 of Te Tiriti guarantees tino rangatiratanga to Maori and in this context the right to be represented and to participate in decision-making at local and central government levels.
- The reintroduction to binding polls will make it virtually impossible for Maori to have Māori Wards reestablished.
- The proposed Bill will cause division and racist rhetoric.

- Elected Tangata Whenua speak out for Maori and Pakeha alike and for the environment.
- The legislation is regressive and takes away human rights.
- There is ample evidence of Maori successfully sharing authority with Pakeha.
- The legislation is, in our view, structural racism. Maori should be guaranteed a voice in local Government.

We feel that communication between Māori and Pakeha have been strengthened by the introduction of Maori Wards. There have been improved and strengthened relationships between Maori and Pakeha and both have benefitted by coming together around the decision-making table.

Nga mihi,

Liz and Mike Beazley

### **Judith Crimmins**

Tēnā koutou

Thank you for providing me this opportunity to provide a submission on the Local Government (Electoral Legislation and Māori Wards and Māori Constituencies) Amendment Bill.

My name is Judith Crimmins. For many years I have belonged to Peace, Justice and Development organizations and have represented Pax Christi Aotearoa New Zealand and Caritas Aotearoa NZ at several International meetings. My background has been in the Teaching and Social Work professions. In the many years in leadership positions in the Dept of Social Welfare I had much interaction with both Maori and Pakeha folk and so experienced the difficulties folk had from limited representation on Councils.

I strongly oppose the Local Government (Electoral Legislation and Māori Wards and Māori Constituencies) Amendment Bill.

I am very concerned that no consultation has been undertaken with Māori. This

breaches the Treaty principle of partnership.

Article 2 of Te Tiriti guarantees tino rangatiratanga to Māori and in this context the right to be represented and to participate in decision-making at local and central government levels.

The increased number of Māori wards and constituencies has energised Māori, particularly rangatahi, as they can see themselves reflected in decision-making bodies. This is positive for civic and political participation.

There is no doubt that Māori wards have helped to bridge communication gaps and create trust across communities where previously there were gaps.

Whole communities have benefited because of the improved and strengthened relationships which have occurred between Māori and councils by having Māori represented around the decision-making table. It is through all this Te Tiriti is honoured.

As stated above I therefore strongly oppose any efforts to change the current legislation

Nga mihi

Yours sincerely

Judith M Crimmins

**Emeritus Bishop of Catholic Diocese of Palmerston North, Peter Cullinane DD (Co-Patron of Pax Christi Aotearoa New Zealand).**

Kia ora e tā ma, kahurangi mā

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission on the Local Government (Electoral Legislation and Māori Wards and Māori Constituencies) Amendment Bill.

My name is Peter James Cullinane.

I strongly oppose the Local Government (Electoral Legislation and Māori Wards and Māori Constituencies) Amendment Bill because the practice of giving extra help to individuals and groups that experience some serious

disadvantage – regardless of gender, race, religion... and just on the basis of need and fairness, is an enshrined aspect of Kiwi culture. It's often called levelling the playing field.

“One person one vote” is one component of democratic practice. But it is not the only one: turning it into a shibboleth, with the consequence of ensuring a minority group is indefinitely disadvantaged, is to misuse that democratic principle.

This is a main reason for my opposition to this Bill.

Yours sincerely

Peter Cullinane DD  
Emeritus Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Palmerston North  
Co-Patron of Pax Christi Aotearoa New Zealand

*This is a slightly edited version of the original submission.*