



THE NEW ZEALAND SOCIETY OF AUTHORS
TE PUNI KAITUHI O AOTEAROA (PEN NZ INC)

To Members of the Justice Committee,

The New Zealand Society of Authors Te Puni Kaituhi o Aotearoa (PEN NZ Inc), (NZSA), is an organisation that works across the sector to represent, support and raise the visibility of Aotearoa NZ books and writers. Founded in 1934 we are the pre-eminent organisation for over 1800 writers in Aotearoa.

The NZSA does NOT support the new bill seeking to redefine the Principles of the Treaty of Waitangi Bill.

In 2019 NZSA became a Te Tiriti organisation. In 2023 NZSA supported the establishment of Te Kaituhi Māori as an entity within its organisation.

NZSA's constitution and strategic plan supports and upholds The Treaty of Waitangi as Aotearoa's foundational constitutional document. NZSA supports the work of the Waitangi Tribunal to adjudicate the wrongs of the past and acknowledge the rights of Māori as signatories to that Treaty.

As an organisation of members who are fundamentally entwined with documenting and reflecting our unique cultural identity, and cultural history, language and legacy, NZSA acknowledges the importance of our stories, and advocates for increased investment in Māori writers in both te reo Māori and English.

NZSA supports language revitalisation and investment in Māori writers, language learning, books, educational resources and publishing. These represent the unique perspective of Aotearoa, and strengthen te reo Māori, an official language of Aotearoa. NZSA protests the removal of budget for teacher education and resources for teaching te reo Māori and purports this will have a further deleterious impact on literacy rates.

Books, reading and language are intrinsic to our nation's literacy, identity, social progress and legacy. It is critical to support a living language; te reo Māori is the backbone of te Ao Māori.

Experts say it takes one generation to kill a language and at least three generations to recover it, and NZ is 50 years down a recovery path, to the benefit of Aotearoa. The work of the Māori Language Commission, Māori broadcasting, the Māori Literature Trust and Huia, and the Kohanga reo movement has engendered a groundswell of language recovery and mana.

The political party that produced this bill, Act, received 8% of the vote which indicates they are fringe-dwellers. Eight per cent is a minority voice and does not bestow the mandate they claim. NZSA believes that allowing this Bill to be tabled as part of the Coalition agreement is detrimental to social cohesion and is reductive.

The NZSA celebrates Aotearoa's stories, culture and identity, and the diverse voices of all New Zealanders, while acknowledging the especial rights of Māori, as defined in our foundational document, Te Tiriti.

Yours sincerely,

Jenny Nagle

Chief Executive

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