

Statement on the Proposed Treaty Principles Bill

12th November 2024

The Australasian Epidemiological Association stands with the [New Zealand College of Public Health Medicine](#), the [Royal Australasian College of Physicians](#) (RACP), and [Health Coalition Aotearoa](#) in opposing the government's proposed Treaty Principles Bill. Equitable access to the determinants of good health is a fundamental human right, however such access is not evenly experienced within the New Zealand population. The systemic inequities in health outcomes experienced by Māori are not only avoidable, but also unfair and unjust. In unison with the [Waitangi Day Statement](#) of the Public Health Association of New Zealand, we urge the government to honour its [own definition of Health Equity](#). This acknowledges that different approaches are required for different populations to achieve health equity, including approaches that require an unequal distribution of resources and power (i.e., to address the broader determinants of health).

We strongly oppose and seek reconsideration of the argument that Māori specific health initiatives are designed to privilege Māori over others. Rather, we recognise that Māori rights to the determinants of health have been breached, resulting in higher needs, and Māori-specific pro-equity measures are required to rectify this. The bill is not justified by robust policy analysis and will embolden racism - a key determinant of health, and a major cause of inequitable health outcomes for Māori. Te Tiriti o Waitangi provides a solid structure for how inequities in health outcomes can be undone – both at a broad societal level, and with respect to how our health system is organised and operated. We urge the government to abandon the Treaty Principles Bill by not voting to refer it to Select Committee. We are united in fostering a future where health inequities are justly addressed, and all can flourish.



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Dr Abbey Diaz
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On behalf of the Council of the Australasian Epidemiological Association