

New Zealand Waitangi Day

Historic treaty an enduring document in modern society

Waitangi Day is a public holiday held on Feb. 6 every year to commemorate the signing of New Zealand's founding document — the Treaty of Waitangi — in 1840.

The following excerpt on the treaty is from the official website of Tourism New Zealand. For more information, visit <http://media.newzealand.com/en>.

Maori have been in New Zealand since approximately A.D. 1350, based on tracing the navigational steps of their ancestor, Kupe, from his homeland of Hawaii.

Dutch navigator Abel Tasman, the first European discoverer, arrived in 1642 and named the islands New Zealand. In 1769, Captain James Cook stayed in New Zealand for seven months, recording his observations of the Maori and claiming it as a British colony.

Increased European settlement caused problems. In 1833, the British government appointed James Busby to act on its behalf and set up residency in Waitangi. During Busby's six-year tenure, his role was largely one of mediator and negotiator between the British and Maori. He had no power of arrest because he was appointed as a civilian and had little influence over the misconduct of the settlers.

By the late 1830s, the law-abiding settlers, traders and missionaries had become concerned about the land purchases that were taking place around the country and petitioned the British head of state for more effective governance in New Zealand.

Seeking to protect their trade and economic interests, the British relented and sent Lt. Gov. William Hobson to New Zealand with instructions to colonize the country. He arrived in January 1840.

Because Maori rights had been recognized in the 1835 Declaration of Independence, declaring Maori sovereignty and that the British would protect the country's independence, no claim could be made on New Zealand without Maori agreement.

The signing of the treaty

On Feb. 6, 1840, the British government signed the Treaty of Waitangi with a number of Maori chiefs at a Bay of Islands settlement called Waitangi.

The treaty was written in both Maori and English and handed over governorship of New Zealand to the British. It enabled the peaceful purchase of land for settlement and gave the British authority to establish rule in the country. In return, the British were to guarantee and actively

protect Maori tribal authority over their possessions.

The relevance of the treaty

The treaty has proved to be an enduring document. In 1988, when the Labor Government tried to sell off state-owned assets, the New Zealand Maori Council contested its right to do so in the courts.

The Maori Council's actions slowed down the government's sale program and forced it to enter into negotiations with the Maori. Its argument was based on the principle that the Maori ceded governorship to the crown or British in 1840 when they signed the Treaty of Waitangi, but not ownership of assets such as forestry. Forestry was part of the package of assets the government wanted to include in the sale program.

Over the years, there have been many settlements with Maori tribal groups based on the treaty that have forced governments to adopt a more consultative approach when developing new policies and regulations. Treaty considerations are now embedded in many official policies.

The treaty's impact on visitors

Most laws and policies have been developed, arguably, within the framework of

the treaty.

The Maori have long respected and welcomed overseas visitors to New Zealand. As *tangata whenua*, or the people of the land, the Maori command certain rights that are a consequence of the treaty and recognize their status as the indigenous people of Aotearoa (the Maori name for New Zealand).

This unique relationship has birthed a nation slowly maturing to a point where a number of races and cultures exist freely, but where the Maori retain a strong identity as the indigenous people.



The Waitangi Treaty Grounds, overlooking the beautiful Bay of Islands, is where the Maori and the Europeans came together to shape the nation of New Zealand. TOURISM NEW ZEALAND

Congratulations on Waitangi Day



Congratulations on the 178th Anniversary of Waitangi Day



SUMITOMO FORESTRY CO., LTD.

Keidanren Kaikan, 3-2, Otomachi 1-chome, Chiyoda-ku,
Tokyo 100-8270, Japan



Nelson Pine Industries Ltd

P.O. Box 3049, Lower Queen St., Richmond Nelson, New Zealand