

Submission

To: Hui Taumata
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At Successive hui at Tūrangawaewae Marae, Ratana Pā and Waitangi many Māori expressed anger toward the Coalition Govt. policies aimed at undermining established Māori initiatives to achieve equal outcomes in health, Justice, Education, Social Services. The Act Party's call for a referendum of Te Tiriti o Waitang Principles clearly struck a nerve with our people. As a means of calling the Coalition to account each of the hui voiced a strong call for kōtahitanga.

And if Kotahitanga is to be our key driver in presenting our case for equality, and being lifted out of poverty, we need to be clear about what it means and how we employ it to influence the Govt. to re-think the issues causing Māori grievances .

From my understanding, kotahitanga simply means to unite, paiheretia, whakakotahitia. In unity we have strength. Ma te kōtahi o ngā whakaaro ka whai kaha tātou. And there are a number of kiiwaha and whakatauki that support the idea of kotahitanga, *aka* unity. All very noble stuff but can it work for us? Our history shows that In reality we, te iwi Māori, are not united by any means. There are numerous reasons for that, for example, political differences, religious differences, social differences, waka/iw/ hapū differences, internal disagreements and idealisms that hinder Māori in presenting a rock solid united front. The Coalition Govt. know this so are confident that their age old tactics of divide and rule will work in their favor again as it did during colonization. So an important factor needed for the roopu we choose to lead us, eg. Iwi Chairs Forum or similar, is for them to maintain a common ground in dealing with kotahitanga kaupapa

What is our kaupapa?

No doubt the roopu we select to lead us will have firm ideas on the contentious issues facing us and will plan accordingly. From a lay person point of view the obvious stand-outs are;

- The threat of a referendum on the Treaty principles
- The proposed disestablishment of The Waitangi Tribunal
- The disestablishment of Te Aka Whaiora
- The proposed review of Local Authorities Maori wards
- Belittling te reo Māori - other

A crucial part of our immediate 'HOW' plan is for our leaders to develop strong and robust arguments to counter the Coalition degradation of established Maori initiatives. It seems certain that the Treaty Principles referendum will get a first reading in Parliament. So when it eventually goes to the Select Committee our leaders need to be there prepared to argue our case.

Winston Peters and Shane Jones have both mentioned democracy, *aka* majority rules, as their mandate and justification to do as they please with the people. Meaning the minority groups like us Maori can jump up and down, scream, complain and cry as much as we like, they don't care. Democracy therefore doesn't work for us Māori because we are always in the minority. All we can expect is crumbs of benevolence from those in power.

A more long term strategy for us is to plan to replace the current Coalition Govt. at the next election. Start working on that plan now. In spite of the previous Govt. weaknesses and all their hakihaki and mismanagement we Māori were still far better off than what we are and will be under the current regime.