

**Australia and Aotearoa:
Lessons and Comparisons from across the Tasman
By Troy Reynolds
Goldfields Aboriginal Language Centre Aboriginal
Corporation
October 2025**



*Presented at the Language Sovereignty: Reclaim the Rights conference,
Karlkurla Western Australia 21-23 October 2025*

Abstract

There exists a prevailing idea in Australasia that Aotearoa has experienced markedly greater outcomes for the vitality of its First Nation languages and cultures. The comparison is regularly made, prompting the question, ‘Why is Māori language and culture in such a different position in the 21st century to the First Nation languages and cultures of Australia?’. While some factors are obvious, such as the relative homogeneity of Aotearoa’s First Nation language and culture and Australia’s considerable diversity, the legislative frameworks and governmental structures of the two countries play an important and often overlooked rôle in the history of the two countries’ First Nation language and culture narratives. This article explores the structural distinctions in the background of the two countries, demonstrates that the two countries are less similar than may be believed, and that the path to linguistic and cultural sovereignty is not the same on either side of the Tasman.

Contents

1. Introduction.....	3
2. Divergent Histories.....	5
3. Contrastive Language Landscapes.....	6
4. Population, the ‘Dying Race’ Myth and its Consequences.....	7
5. Misconceptions.....	9
6. Official language status.....	9
7. The outcomes of Aotearoa’s language policies.....	10
8. Treaty, Constitutional Recognition, and Legislative Representation.....	12
8.1. Government Structure.....	12
8.2. Foundational Documents.....	14
8.2.1. Treaty.....	14
8.2.2. Constitution.....	15
8.3. Political Representation.....	16
8.3.1. Australia.....	16
8.3.1.1. Federally-registered parties.....	16
8.3.1.2. State and territory parties.....	17
8.3.1.3. Individuals.....	18
8.3.1. Aotearoa.....	18
8.3.1.1. Individuals.....	21
9. Conclusion.....	21
References.....	22

1. Introduction

Although guaranteed to prompt objections from citizens from either side of the Tasman, from the perspective of the rest of the world, Aotearoa and Australia are often seen as barely distinguishable. Similarly objectionable comparisons exist elsewhere between Canada and the USA, Éire¹ and the UK, Singapore and Malaysia, as international pairings which can be dismantled fairly easy by highlighting contrasts of culture, language, or history that are obvious to the citizens of those countries. For those of us working with First Nation languages, one of the clearest contrasts between Australia and Aotearoa is their historic and contemporary language landscapes, and the attitudes of their populations towards language and nationhood.

From a global perspective, the two countries of Australia and Aotearoa² are often perceived with little distinction, and in the broader Anglo-Celtic colonial era, the two societies indeed function along very similar lines. The perception of Australia and Aotearoa as having a largely similar history is in fact embedded in the colonialist settler's narrative: seeing their stories as beginning with European contact, and leaving the extraordinarily different histories of the two regions pre-contact as mere footnotes. In the modern colonialist social makeup of the region of course, there are clear differences in dialect and certain aspects of culture, however on a world scale these are negligible, however much the two respective citizenry may wish to emphasise the marginal contrasts. The most salient contrast that separates the two countries is the historical and contemporary differences in First Nation languages and culture, both in the pre-colonisation periods, and the colonial period which includes today.

Beyond these simple and reductive over-generalisations, there simultaneously exists an understanding held on both sides of the dividing sea, that Aotearoa has at large a far more advanced and sophisticated relationship with its traditional culture and language than in Australia. Closely related to this idea is that for Māori people, the outcomes for health, education, employment, incarceration, and general wellbeing are greater than those for Australian First Nation people. All of these social factors are inseparable from feelings and facts of sovereignty

At the time of writing in late 2025, the 2023 Australian Indigenous Voice referendum has largely faded from public discourse, and the unknown next stage of Australian First Nation history is being formed in the minds and hearts of people around the country. In Aotearoa, in June this year, three Māori members of parliament were suspended for 21 days over a protest in parliament last year which involved the spontaneous group performance of a Haka during a parliamentary vote (RNZ Online, 2025). More recently, in the wake of this event, parliament was temporarily suspended on the 9th of October after a Haka was performed after the maiden speech of Te Pāti Māori MP Oriini Kaipara.

At the time of writing in October 2025, a discussion point in Australian media is the inclusion of Welcomes to Country at events. Multiple criticisms levelled at the inclusion of this procedure are voiced, ranging from the conservative to the outright ignorant and hateful; they are performed too frequently and have lost significance; they are costly; they are often performed by people not qualified to do so, e.g. Elders, agreed representatives of a Country; they are modern inventions³; it

1 *The Republic of Ireland*

2 *New Zealand*

is insulting to be welcomed to one's own country⁴, etc. Such opposition is prominent in Australian media, with calls for the reduction or even abolition of Welcomes to Country made regularly. While objection to the Haka and its inclusion at major events is also sometimes voiced, wide scale national pride and acceptance of the Haka is notably greater, with these objections comparably minimal.

This article is by no means a glowing appraisal of Aotearoa and a damning condemnation of Australia, nor a begrudging whinge at what one country might have that another does not. Such a publication would fail to capture exactly what opportunities and challenges are at stake, and be disrespectful to both countries. To say that Aotearoa has 'had it easy' as some might seek to do would be an insult to the people who have fought over centuries for Māori language and culture. Likewise, depicting Australia's First Nation language and culture context as less successful insults the work of First Nation Australians and their allies over the last two and half centuries. Rather, this article is written for readers in either country that are frustrated at the clear differences in the strength, celebration, and integration of First Nation culture and language in the wider national communities in either country.

A deeper understanding of the enormous differences between the two countries demonstrates that a shallow comparison is unhelpful. This paper is intended to highlight the differences in areas of history, society, and governmental structure that underpin the reasons why the two countries differ in their respective First Nation linguistic and cultural sovereignty. For readers of either country, or indeed any country unfamiliar with the cultural, historical, and governmental realities of Aotearoa and Australia, it is hoped that this paper will be illuminating. Neither is this paper an apology for Australia's social and legislative mistakes and neglect, nor a blanket condemnation. Such arguments would themselves be equally as unfair, and would simply proliferate shallow understandings of the hows, whys, and whens of First Nation people's struggles. This article is also written for those who unfavourably compare Australia to Aotearoa, and demand that Australia adopts the identical practices employed there. A deeper understanding of the legislative, historical, and cultural background to the two countries, it is hoped, will demonstrate that this is not as simple as it may seem.

The differences in outcomes for First Nation people in either country cannot be reductively evaluated as simply good or bad decision making, but need to be understood in the more multifaceted contrasts between the two countries. Not only has policy and legislation differed substantially between the two countries, but the processes of legislative decision-making, and scope of any given legislation differs immeasurably between the two countries legislating bodies. I argue that broad comparisons of the two countries are actually unhelpful, and that a better solution is to recognise what works in either country, and to evaluate if the same approaches are appropriate for export, and if not, how can they be tailored to the needs of the importing country.

This article began with the general idea of a comparison between the status of First Nation languages in the two countries, and a general overview of why outcomes may differ. Over time however, the deeper the investigation went, the deeper the roots of difference became apparent. The scope of this enquiry has expanded exponentially, and far exceeds the boundaries of a simple

3 Often referring to Ernie Dingo and Richard Walley's development of a single ceremony designed to welcome a group of Māori performers to Noongar Country in 1976.

4 This claim is based on a deliberately ignorant misinterpretation of the concept of Country (the land and waters of a single First Nation rather than a global nation-state), and of who is being welcomed (visitors to the Country rather than its citizens).

article. A far more extensive exploration delving into the complex relationships between First Nation language, culture, and modern colonial society in either country is a fertile ground for deep investigation in future, however for the purpose of this article, the governmental structures of the two countries have been selected as one focus of many.

2. Divergent Histories

The two countries' early colonial histories may seem at first to be broadly similar, as British colonies encountered during Captain James Cook's 1768-1771 voyage, invaded as British colonies, remaining part of the same colony until 1840, and continuing as part of the Commonwealth of Nations until today. Such an account grossly ignores the radically different histories of the two countries, both pre- and post- invasion, which a simplified comparative historical snapshot demonstrates:

50,000+ ya		Australia first inhabited by First Nation Australians.
c.1300	Aotearora first inhabited by Polynesian people.	
1606		Willem Janszoon makes the first documented European landing in Australia.
1642	Abel Tasman sights the South Island.	
1769	James Cook makes the first definitive European landing in Aotearora.	
19th century onwards		Various state acts and laws were passed that established protectorates, government bodies, and legal frameworks designed to intervene in the lives of First Nation Australians.
1835	He Whakaputanga o te Rangatiratanga o Nu Tireni / <i>The Declaration of the Independence of New Zealand</i> signed.	
1840	Te Tiriti o Waitangi / <i>The Treaty of Waitangi</i> signed.	
1840	Royal Charter determined the Colony of New Zealand as separate colony from the Colony of New South Wales.	
1852	The New Zealand Constitution Act determines self-governance.	
1867	The Māori Representation Act establishes four Māori seats in the Aotearoan Parliament	
1901		Federation of Australia and establishment of the constitution. Section 127 explicitly exempted First Nation Australians from population counts for constitutional purposes, e.g., calculating senate seats.
1967		<i>Australian Referendum (Aboriginals)</i> gave the Commonwealth government the power to make laws for First Nation Australians, and to include First Nation Australians in population counts for constitutional purposes.

1986	Constitution Act completely removed the ability of the British Parliament to pass any laws for Aotearora.	Australia Act completely removed the ability of the British Parliament to pass any laws for Australia.
1987	Māori Language Act 1987 - gave Māori language official status and established the Māori Language Commission.	
2016	Te Ture mō Te Reo Māori 2016 <i>Māori Language Act 2016</i> - Established Te Mātāwai , an organisation of iwi , urban, and Crown representatives. This	
2017	legislation reaffirmed the 1987 Act, and added a government obligation to protect te reo Māori .	Aboriginal Languages Act (NSW) established the Aboriginal Languages Trust.
2023		Australian Indigenous Voice Referendum seeking to establish and advise Federal Parliament on ‘matters relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples’ fails to secure a double majority.

3. Contrastive Language Landscapes

The comparative linguistic landscapes of the two countries are one of the most striking yet well-known features of difference between the two countries, and provide the most salient distinctions which must be understood before any comparison can be made.

The exact number of languages in use at the time of first contact will never be known, and is an inherently meaningless idea based on outdated assumptions of languages being discrete. Factoring in the abstract and artificial idea of countable language boundaries alongside the poverty of early colonial records on Australian languages due to indifference or outright linguistic violence, only a broad estimate can be made, which generally hovers somewhere around 250 (Dixon, 2002, p. 2), tending to vary upwards from there.

In stark contrast to Australia, Aotearoa’s First Nation language is famously singular, with all evidence indicating that Māori is the sole First Nation language of the country. Undeniable variation both linguistically and culturally between Māori **iwi**⁵ undeniably exists, however all varieties are mutually intelligible and constitute a single language.

4. Population, the ‘Dying Race’ Myth and its Consequences

A factor often overlooked in the colonial histories of Australia and Aotearoa is the ‘Doomed Race’, or ‘Dying Race’ hypothesis popular in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The prevailing belief among primarily anthropologists, but also among some linguists, missionaries, and government officials influenced by their work, was that both Australian and Aotearoan First Nation people would effectively become extinct within a few generations (Belich, 2011, p. 4; Holland, 2013, p. 17). The concept emerged from a combination of factors:

5 **Iwi** - loosely an independent Māori nation.

- A Social Darwinist approach that saw ‘stronger’, more ‘civilised’ ethnic groups as thriving through virtue of their racial superiority while other groups would decline towards extinction (Belich, 2011, p. 4; Holland, 2013, p. 16). The concept of Social Darwinism was a pseudoscientific belief system that emerged after the death of naturalist Charles Darwin, based on a perversion of his observations of natural selection and applied to human populations.
- Rapidly declining population counts of First Nation populations after European contact. Estimates of First Nation populations in either country are at times vague until accurate census systems were implemented, however the rapid declines in population count are startling over the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Caldwell et al., 2001, p. 3). In Australia, the pre-1788 population was estimated to be 750,000 people, dropping shockingly to around 95,000 by the end of the nineteenth century. In Aotearoa, the decline over the same time was from an estimated 100,000 people to roughly 45,000 at the turn of the century, a figure less dramatic in comparison to Australia, nevertheless representing a drop of over 50% in one hundred years.

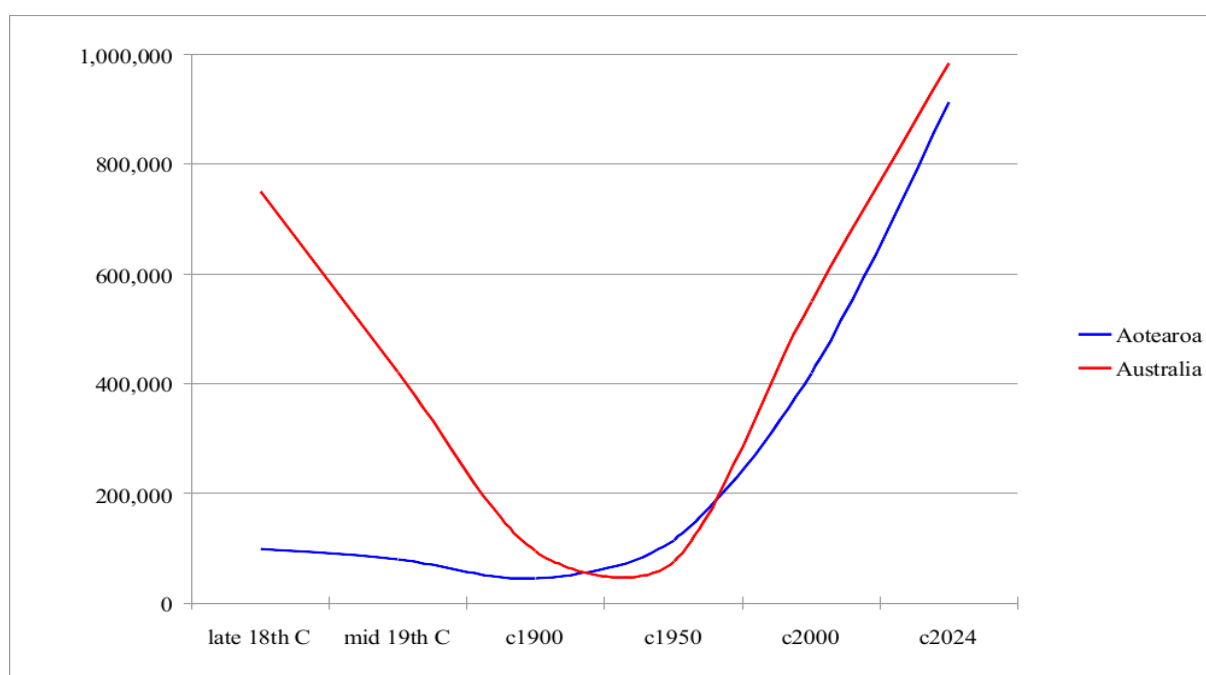


Figure 1: Estimates of population sizes for First Nation people post-contact, demonstrating the rapid decline and subsequent growth in the 20th century

Indeed, the belief was even held by such prominent figures as Daisy Bates, and the belief that her generation was one of the last that could study living Australian First Nation people influenced the direction of her work (Bates, 2004, p. xi). While the idea promulgated primarily in Australia, officials and anthropologist in Aotearoa were not immune. The idea that the Māori and Australian First Nation population would decline to the point of ‘extinction’ faded from prominence from the beginning of the twentieth century as the populations increased, as they have continued to do since (Caldwell et al., 2001, p. 3; Tauranga Aotearoa - Statistics New Zealand [TA - SNZ], 2015, 2024). This prevailing idea of the ‘dying race’ illuminates an often-overlooked reason why so little was done in regard to promotion or preservation of Australian or Aotearoan languages in the 19th century, as colonialists believed that there was little point to such an endeavour.

Current government estimates of the total population of people identifying as First Nation in either country sit just near the one million mark, with 984,000 in Australia, and 914,400 in Aotearoa. It is important to note that these figures are simply indications, and that for a variety of reasons, data on populations of First Nation people are difficult to capture, and in Australia in particular are likely to be significantly different from the published estimates. With this in mind, although the populations of the two countries are comparable in pure numbers, factoring in total population size reveals a different picture (see Figure 2).

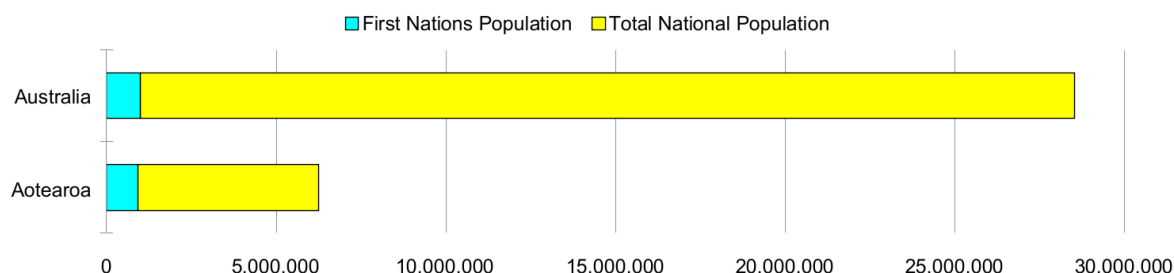


Figure 2: Comparative population estimates of First Nation people and total national population. (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2025; 2024, p. TA-SNZ, 2025).

While estimates of the Māori population indicate that roughly 17.1% of the total population of Aotearoa (5,325,000), with Australia's total population being close to five times that of Aotearoa (27,537,000), the Australian First Nation population makes up only an estimated 3.6% of the population. This relative difference has a significant impact on the public knowledge and perception of First Nation language and culture in both countries. While it would be absurd in Aotearoa for someone to claim that they knew no Māori people, there are sections of the Australian urban population who might claim that they know no Australian First Nation people at all. Such a phenomenon reinforces the perception in the minds of some Australians that as the First Nation population makes up such a small proportion of the total population, that First Nation Australian language and culture must also be given proportionally less attention.

5. Misconceptions

The monolingual mindset has often been observed and critiqued, with plentiful examples to be found in Australia. I have spoken to several people in recent years who have expressed a frustration with the number of First Nation languages in Australia, This stems from several sources:

- Linguistic diversity is a hindrance to national unity and social cohesion. This idea may take two forms, both the language-historically ignorant, and the language-historically informed:
 - ▷ Some are genuinely unaware that linguistic diversity is the standard situation around the world, and perceive the 'one nation, one language' concept to be the natural state of any country. The ignorance of the socio-political reasons why, for example, standardised Mandarin became the overwhelmingly dominant language in the People's Republic of China despite hundreds of Chinese languages existing, results in an assumption that all countries

globally use a single language as a matter of course. Based on this assumption, the idea that Australia has hundreds of languages is seen as an aberration, which must be overcome in order to consolidate Australian national unity and social cohesion.

- ▷ The same conclusion can be reached via an informed understanding of the socio-political reasons why ‘one nation, one language’ may be preferred. This argument comes from the accurate observation that nation-states across the globe have often consciously sought to eradicate all linguistic diversity bar one prestige form, and that this should be done in Australia to foster social cohesion and national identity.

I have on at least two occasions been confronted with an argument from members of the public who have proposed that Australia’s first nation people select a prominent language with a strong population of contemporary speakers, e.g. Pitjantjatjarra, Warlpiri, or Arrernte, and adopt this as a national First Nation language. To speakers, and those who work with and respect them, this is an outrageously misguided and ignorant perspective. Such an endeavour would be simply the next iteration of a centuries-old drive by people trying to wipe Australian languages from the face of the planet, and would naturally be resisted by speakers, and would fail if tried. Regretfully, the example of Aotearoa is sometimes used as an example, and in an ironic echo of those who wish more rather than less support for Australian languages, the question is raised, ‘If they can do it, why can’t we?’. Although shocking to anyone with a scrap of understanding of Australian languages, from the perspective of this idea’s adherents, this is a nation-building, progressive solution to a perceived cultural problem.

6. Official language status

While many assume that English enjoys official status in both Australia and Aotearoa, neither country has ever made English official.

With the passing of the Māori Language Act in 1987 (superseded by **Te Ture mō Te Reo Māori** 2016 the Māori Language Act 2016), **Te Reo Māori** became the official language of Aotearoa, joined in 2006 by New Zealand Sign Language with the passing of a similar act in 2006 (Māori Language Act [176], 1987; New Zealand Sign Language Act [18], 2006; Te Ture Mō Te Reo Māori - Māori Language Act [17], 2016). With the establishment of official statuses, the right to use both languages in legal proceedings is protected by law. Despite English being the primary language of somewhere around 90% of the Aotearoan population, English remains merely a de facto official language with no legislated role.

In Australia however, no official language has ever been legislated, either at federal or state level.

7. The outcomes of Aotearoa’s language policies

Despite what may appear due to shallow depictions to be an ideal situation in Aotearoa, it is always necessary to remind ourselves that language survival is a continuous process with no finite endgame, rather incremental steps and both short and long-term goals that lead to the next. The outcome of a legislated protection of languages rights does not automatically lead to increased language health, and may actually foster a feeling of complacency. Dame Iritana Tāwhiwhirangi,

prominent Māori language and culture advocate put the psychological outcome of official language status bluntly:

Making the language official has anaesthetised our people in regard to valuing the language as if it is all done and dusted and there is no need to worry anymore. (2014, p. 47)

As a nation-state which actively engaged with its decolonisation process after independence from British rule a century ago, Éire⁶ can serve as an example of a decolonising sovereign nation which has enacted legislative and educational promotion of a First Nation language for the best part of a one hundred years. In Éire, government policy and funding of language programs, infrastructures, and protected rights have been in place for a century, however public perception has in some cases evolved over time towards a feeling that the work is done. In the Éire, Gaeilge⁷ is a compulsory subject in publicly-funded schools, is a required training component of the police force, and is a requirement of entry into many higher education courses. Yet this active promotion has not been a magic bullet of revitalisation. While Gaeilge remains a symbol of Irish national pride and attitudes to its promotion and use are generally very favourable, individual efforts outside of basic compulsory education are often non-existent. As long ago as 2010, Fine Gael education spokesman Brian Hayes called for compulsory education of Gaeilge in schools to be cancelled, citing it as a waste of time for those with no interest in the language, and claiming that it would ‘liberate the language’, and increase its use amongst those who have an active interest (Regan, 2010).

Attitudes to Gaeilge in Éire remain favourable regarding its promotion, with a 2015 study (Darmody & Daly, 2015, p. xi) indicating that four in five people support compulsory education in schools, while two-thirds would consider the loss of Gaeilge to equal the loss of identity for Éire (2015, p. 80). With this in mind, the realities of Gaeilge competence and use paint a different picture. Self-reported census data indicates that roughly 40% of the population over three years old claim some Gaeilge competency, while less than 4% of these reported speakers claim to use the language daily outside of an education setting, and one in four reported speakers claim to never use the language at all (An Phríomh-Oifig Staidrimh - Central Statistics Office, 2023). These figures indicate a contradiction: Gaeilge is seen as an essential part of country that must be protected, while after a century of compulsory Gaeilge education, only a small fraction of the Irish population have embraced the language as a significant aspect of their lives. Some have even described the modern Irish connection with the language as a ‘love-hate relationship’ (Neasa, 2020).

The protected status of Māori in Aotearoa is by comparison much more recent, having only gained legislative traction in the 1980s. Nevertheless, in this space of time the statistics in Aotearoa have been encouraging. From 2021 self-reported census data (2022, p. TA-SNZ), 7.9% of the total population over fifteen reporting that they speak Māori ‘at least fairly well’, while 34% of those identifying as Māori themselves report speaking it ‘fairly well’. Importantly, the cross-generational aspects of language transmission are reflected positively in the proportion of Māori people reporting Māori as one of their first languages rose from 17% in 2018 to 23% in 2021. Most promisingly, the proportion of Māori people reporting that their language competence extended only to a handful of words or phrases has declined from 36% in 2016 down to 29% in 2021.

Estimates for the number of people that confidently speak an Australian language are difficult to determine, due to the complexities inherent in self-reporting and participation in national surveys

6 The Republic of Ireland

7 Irish language

and censuses. The most recent Australian statistics come from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS). Both reports clearly acknowledge the difficulty of capturing any accurate figures due to the difficulty of self-reporting and encouraging participation in surveys and censuses. In any case, both reports indicate a decline in Australian language use over time.

ABS estimates are based on the 2021 census, and the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey (NATSISS) was last conducted by AIATSIS in 2015 (ABS, 2022). The 2022 report recognises that although the total number of Australian First Nation people self-reporting speaking Language at home had increased since 2016 from 63,754 to 76,978, that the proportion of the First Nation population speaking Language at home has declined since 1991 from 16.4% to 9.5%. Over 200 Australian languages were recognised in the study, with 150 reported as spoken to some degree, and 50 not at all, while importantly, 78 were not recorded as being spoken by children under fourteen. Of the reported speakers, two thirds spoke traditional Australian languages, one fifth spoke a contact variety (e.g., Kriol, Light Warlpiri), with the remaining speakers unspecified or specifying Aboriginal English.

The third National Indigenous Languages Report (NILS3) was published by AIATSIS in 2019 with some differing estimates, nevertheless echoing the same declines of use in modern Australian. Only twelve Australian languages were classified as relatively strong, down slightly from the thirteen recorded in the previous NILS2 in 2014 (AIATSIS, 2021, p. 8). NILS3 repeats the ABS report of decline in the proportion of First Nation people speaking Language at home from 16.4% to 9.5% since 1991, but also records that at least 31 languages are being actively revitalised (AIATSIS, 2021, pp. 43, 52). The AIATSIS report received responses regarding 141 language varieties, and acknowledges that additional languages with strong speech communities also exist but were not representing in the participant pool (AIATSIS, 2021, p. 43). The most significant difference in methodology with the ABS report is that the AIATSIS study uses a more restrictive benchmark of language proficiency, and estimates a smaller figure of somewhere from 25,647 to more than 34,620 people with Language proficiency rather than simple vocabulary (AIATSIS, 2021, p. 43).

8. Treaty, Constitutional Recognition, and Legislative Representation

The cultural and linguistic diversity of Australia in comparison to Aotearoa certainly makes consolidated national frameworks for linguistic rights complex, although not impossible, however a deeper and less-recognised difference is in the comparative legislative structures of the two countries. While both remain Commonwealth realms and constitutional monarchies with the same head of state represented by an individual governor-general, and a Westminster parliamentary legislature, the deeper structures and distributions of power are in stark contrast. The structure of the two governments and their defining documents and histories have major implications for First Nation sovereignty. Although by no means the outcome of Australia's First Nation diversity, the structure of the system of legislation in Australia echoes by a great magnitude the more multilayered and divided system than that of the relatively simple Aotearoan model. The establishment of First Nation political electorates and suffrage for Māori people and women decades before other countries were even debating the idea also established Aotearoa as a country in which political engagement and the notion of sovereignty for First Nation people are essential features of the country's political makeup, while in Australia First Nation political representation has far too often struggled to gain a foothold.

8.1. Government Structure

The government of Aotearoa is unitary, comprised fundamentally of a single national government with responsibility for the nation as a whole, from which all smaller local government bodies are granted their power. Local government is divided into a two-tier independent system of larger regions with regional councils, and smaller territorial authorities with mayor-council governments. The smaller territorial authorities are not subsections of the larger regions, and are independent local governments covering an area that may fall under two territories. The Aotearoan parliament is also unicameral, with a single House of Representatives holding overarching power over all government affairs in the country. Aotearoa therefore is a single unified state, with a single legislative body which exercises power throughout the entire country.

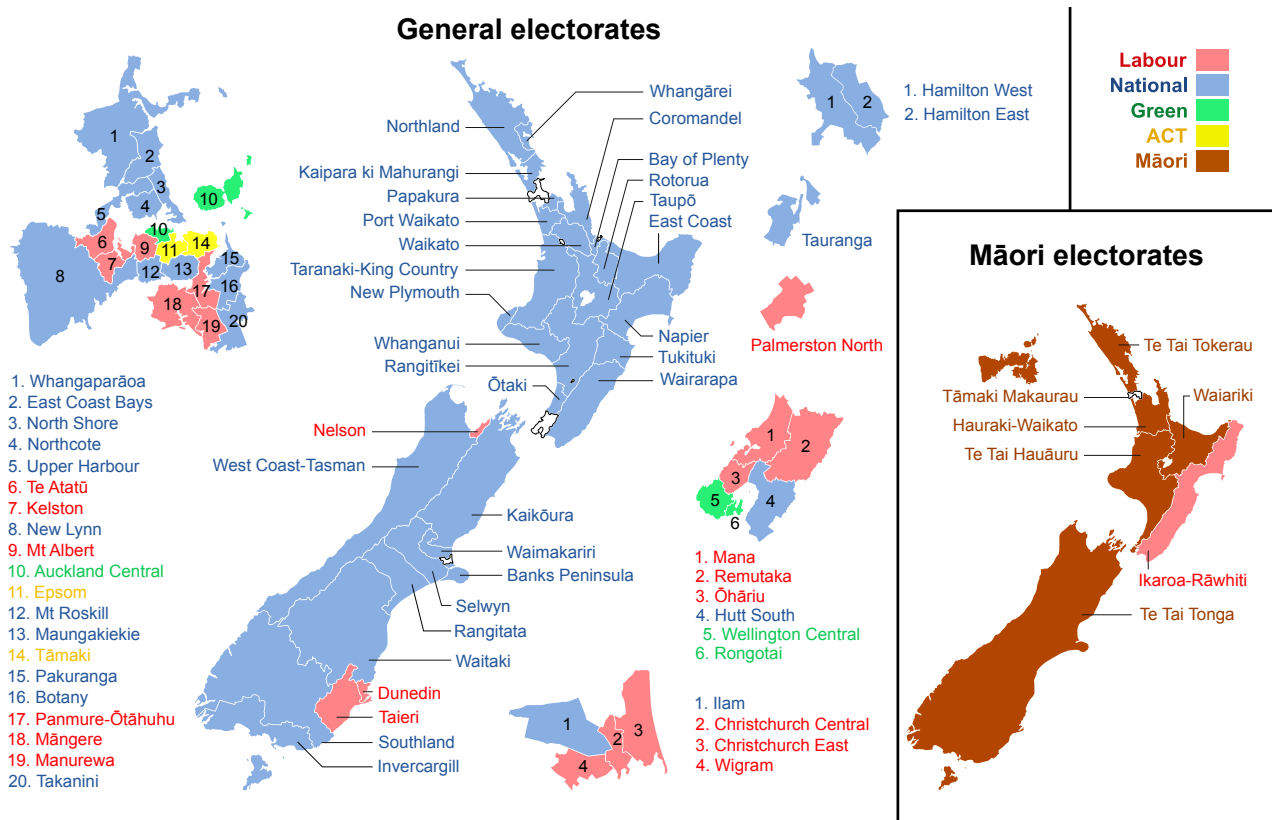


Illustration 1: Electoral map of Aotearoa with election results from the 2023 general election (Korakys, 2023).

The Australian system however retains significant divisions of power on several levels. Australia is in contrast a federation, with a national federal government existing in parallel to the subdivisions of states and territories. The federal government's powers are explicitly coded in the federal constitution, and are either exclusive or shared with the states, while the states retain the separate remaining rights and responsibilities and a significant degree of autonomy. While territories function similarly and exercise similar powers, they remain subordinate to the federal government on paper. Within each state and territory, local government bodies are generally governed by an elected council, and may take the form of cities, areas, towns, municipalities, shires, regional

councils, rural cities, district councils, Aboriginal councils, or boroughs, depending on the conventions of their overarching state or territory. Both the federal and state governments are headed by parliaments which may enact legislation, with the federal parliament and most states comprised of a bicameral lower and upper house, and the state of Queensland and territories a unicameral single house. Both the Commonwealth and the states have their own separate constitutions, while the territories do not have formal constitutions, instead exercising power based on federal acts of self-governance.

The relative singularity of the Aotearoan government in comparison with the diverse and far less concentrated nature of the Australian system has key implications for any legislation regarding First Nation languages and sovereignty. Whereas in Aotearoa, the national government can enact legislation which is paramount and can be implemented at all governmental levels, The Australian federal government is less powerful, with states retaining considerable independence and legislative capacity. As a result of this relative complexity, each state and territory may have legislation and policies that can contrast with each other significantly, while also having their own relationships with federal policy.

At present, the most significant legislation focusing on Australian languages is the state-level Aboriginal Languages Act 2017. The eastern Australian state of New South Wales (NSW) passed the bill into law on the 24th of October 2017, and marks the first explicit law in Australia protecting Australian languages (Aboriginal Languages Act 2017 (NSW), 2017). Three parts constitute the act:

- An acknowledgement of the importance of the First Nation languages in the state, and the historical background to their current survival.
- A five-year strategic plan with the goal of growth and nurture of the First Nation languages of NSW.
- The establishment of the Aboriginal Languages Trust, a government agency created to oversee and facilitate the five year plan and further work surrounding First Nation languages in the state, and provide governmental guidance on matters related to these languages.

8.2. Foundational Documents

While the concept of treaty is still a hotly-debated topic in Australia in 2025, treaty and written recognition of First Nation sovereignty have been a central artefact of Aotearoan statehood for almost two centuries. At the same time in Australia, codified written constitutions determine the rules of power on both the federal and state levels, while Aotearoa's constitution remains unwritten.

8.2.1. Treaty

Arguably the most significant colonial-era artefact of Aotearoa is **Te Tiriti o Waitangi**⁸. While in 2025 the necessity of a First Nation and colonial government treaty is still hotly debated in Australia, the First Nation and colonial powers in Aotearoa agreed to a treaty almost two hundred years ago. **Te Tiriti** is a document signed over the course of 1840 by over 500 Māori leaders and representatives throughout Aotearoa, beginning in Waitangi, establishing codified agreements on the sovereignty of Aotearoa (Manatū Taonga - Ministry for Culture and Heritage [MT - MCH], 2025b). The precise nature of the rights and sovereignty retained by any party in **Te Tiriti** have been discussed and dissected in detail in the intervening two centuries, and scores of publications and articles have been published, expressing a broad variety of legal and social opinions on its exact

8 *The Treaty of Waitangi*

nature, intention, importance, and place in modern Aotearoa. This article has no intention of delving into the complexities of **Te Tiriti**, but a basic summary of the document for the purpose of this article is necessary. **Te Tiriti**, although not binding in any legal capacity, is referred to, or more specifically its principles are referred to in Acts of Parliament, and is a guiding document in Aotearoan law-making (MT - MCH, 2017). **Te Tiriti** broadly establishes: sovereignty and/or government being ceded by Māori people to the British Crown; the exclusive right of the Crown to buy land in Aotearoa; full ownership rights for Māori people over their land and possessions; and privileges and rights of British subjects for all Māori people. The terminology used, most significantly the differences between the original English language and **Te Reo Māori** versions are at the root of much discussion over what **Te Tiriti** actually provides, which lead to the establishment in 1975 of **Te Rōpū Whakamana i te Tiriti o Waitangi**⁹, an advisory commission of inquiry which investigates and passes non-binding judgements on claims raised by Māori citizens that the Crown has not acted in accordance with **Te Tiriti**.

While **Te Tiriti** dominates Aotearoan discussions of First Nation rights, it was in fact the second document recognising sovereignty of Māori people over the islands. The first such document, **He Whakaputanga o te Rangatiratanga o Nu Tirenī**¹⁰ was signed five years earlier, also in Waitangi by a group of 34 North Island **rangatira**¹¹ who collectively identified themselves as **Te Whakaminenga o Ngā Rangatiratanga o Ngā Hapū o Nū Tirenī**¹² (Te Rua Mahara o te Kāwanatanga - Archives New Zealand, 2024). The document established a confederation of Māori groups that held the sole rights to governance and sovereignty of their lands, and that no other groups were to be permitted to make any laws or hold governance without their express appointment. The document also requested that the reigning British monarch at the time, King William IV was to remain the protector of the independent Confederation. The king, who had already acknowledged the Confederation's flag prior to the signing, received and publicly acknowledged the declaration in May 1836 (MT - MCH, 2025a). A further eighteen **rangatira** were to sign the declaration by 1839, however the document was overshadowed by **Te Tiriti** the following year. The strength and intention of **He Whakaputanga** have been debated for decades, with some arguing that it made no genuine impact on sovereignty and was designed as a step towards British dominion over Aotearoa, while others have considered it a fundamental document of First Nation sovereignty.

As of October 2025 the colonial state of Australia has never enacted any formal treaties with its First Nation people. On the ninth of September 2025, the Statewide Treaty Bill 2025 was read in the Victorian state Parliament, and if passed, will represent the first official treaty of any kind in the country.

8.2.2. Constitution

On federation in January 1901, the Commonwealth of Australia adopted the Constitution of Australia, approved by each colony through a series of referenda held over 1898-1900, and enacted by the Parliament of the United Kingdom in July 1900 (Australian Electoral Commission [AEC], 2011b; Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act [12], 1900). Alongside the federal constitution, each state (but not territory) has its own constitution, established independently at

9 *The Waitangi Tribunal*

10 *The Declaration of the Independence of New Zealand*

11 *Conventionally translated as 'chief', but also encompassing the rôles of Elders*

12 *The United Tribes of New Zealand*

various points in the state's history, e.g. Western Australia's constitution has been in place since it was a colony in 1890, while Queensland's current constitution has only been in place since 2001 (Constitution Act, 1889; Constitution of Queensland, 2001).

In contrast, Aotearoa has no formally written constitution, rather an 'unwritten' constitution based on: historical statutes, both from before and after Aotearoa's political independence; legal rulings; patents; and constitutional conventions (Palmer, 2012).

8.3. Political Representation

While individuals who identify as First Nation have held parliamentary seats in both countries, parties that campaign on an explicitly First Nation ticket are notably more successful in Aotearoa than in Australia.

8.3.1. Australia

Several political parties have been established in Australia with a focus on First Nation representation, albeit with limited electoral success:

8.3.1.1. Federally-registered parties

- ▶ Australia's Indigenous People's Party
The AIPP was registered in 1993 in the lead-up to the 1993 federal election, in which it contested nine seats in Queensland for House of Representatives, and in the senate, gaining no seats in either (Parliamentary Handbook, 1993). The party was deregistered in 1999 due to having less than the required 500 members (AEC, 2011a)
- ▶ Indigenous-Aboriginal Party of Australia (IAPA)
- ▶ Indigenous Party of Australia (IPA)
The IAPA (also IPA) is based in Wilcannia NSW, and was registered in 2021 (AEC, 2025). The party contested three NSW seats in the House of Representatives in the 2022 election, but gained no seats (Parliamentary Handbook, 2022).
- ▶ Australia's First Nations Political Party' (AFNPP)
The Australia's First Nations Political Party' (AFNPP) went undergone several name-changes, merges between parties and groups, and incarnations:
- ▶ Aboriginal Party
The Aboriginal Party was launched by Marianne Mackay and Glenn Moore on the 17th of November 2009 in **Boorloo**¹³, Western Australia, with a group of entirely Australia First Nation candidates (Korff, 2022).
- ▶ The Ecological and Social Justice Group (ESJG)
- ▶ Ecological and Social Justice Party (ESJP)
The ESJG was initially an organisation, launched by Western Australian activist Gerry Georgatos, which quickly became the foundation of the ESJP as a party focusing on First Nation civil rights, as well as social justice and ecological sustainability, with a stated one quarter First Nation candidacy goal (Korff, 2022).
- ▶ Ecological, Social Justice, Aboriginal Party (ESJAP)

The ESJAP was a federal party formed from a merger of the ESJP and Aboriginal Party in January 2010, but failed to register in time for the federal election in August later that year (Korff, 2022, 2025).

► First Nations Original Peoples Party (FNOPP)

The same year, the FNOPP was launched by Ken Lechleitner and grandson of Vincent Lingiari, Maurie Japarta Ryan, in the Northern Territory. The FNOPP likewise failed to register in time for the federal election in August (Korff, 2022).

► First Nations Political Party (FNPP)

► Australia's First Nations Political Party (AFNPP)

The ESJAP and the FNOPP merged in May of 2010 and became the First Nation Political Party, and while registration was not successfully granted in time for the forthcoming election, however independent candidates were backed on the party's behalf (Korff, 2022). The party was eventually registered in January of 2011 and unsuccessfully fielded two Northern Territory senate candidates in the 2013 federal election, before becoming the Australian First Nations Political Party (AFNPP), and finally deregistering in August 2015 (AEC, 2013a, 2013b, 2015).

8.3.1.2. State and territory parties

► First Nation Party (FNP)

► First Nations Party (FNP)

The First Nations Party was registered in the lead-up to the 2024 Australian Capital Territory election as the First Nation Party, with a platform centred on establishing a First Nation voice to parliament in the ACT (Australian Capital Territory Electoral Commission, 2025). The FNP nominated thirteen candidates for seats in the territory's unicameral Legislative Assembly, gaining no seats (Australian Capital Territory Electoral Commission, 2024).

► First Nations Political Party (FNPP)

The FNPP was a territory-level registration of the federal FNPP, which unsuccessfully fielded eight candidates in the unicameral Northern Territory Legislative Assembly election of 2012, and is no longer registered (Northern Territory Electoral Commission, 2012).

► Your Voice

The formation of Your Voice was announced by playwright, musician, and activist Richard Frankland, however the party was ultimately never registered, and the party dissolved in 2008 (Cultural Survival, 2004; Korff, 2022). Frankland did however stand unsuccessfully as an independent for a seat in the senate representing Victoria in the 2004 federal election (AEC, 2005).

As of October 2025, no seats have been won by any of the above parties in Australian federal, state, or territory elections since federation in 1901.

8.3.1.3. Individuals

While Australian political parties which place First Nation rights at their centre have not fared well in Australian elections, First Nation individuals have sat in various seats within federal and state parliaments. The 2022 federal election held the record for the highest number of First Nation candidates fielded, and the resulting eleven members, including two incumbent senators, represented a record number of elected First Nation members. This result also holds the record for the highest proportion of First Nation members in the senate at 10.5%, while the House of Representatives had membership of 1.9% (Zaunmayr, 2022). This result also meant that for the first time in Australian parliamentary history, the First Nation representative cohort of 4.8% of parliament was larger than the proportion of First Nation Australians in the total population: 3.3% (Zaunmayr, 2022).

Since the temporary federal senate vacancy position of Neville Bonner in 1971 and his subsequent election the following year, sixteen members identified as First Nation people have sat in federal parliament, while state and territory parliaments have all had elected First Nation members, ranging from just one in the Australian Capital Territory to 24 in the Northern Territory (Australian Parliamentary Handbook, n.d.). While many of these individuals may place First Nation culture, language, and rights at the forefront of their political ambitions, they have generally done so under the banner of a larger party with a broader political focus, primarily the Labor, Green, and Liberal parties, or as independents. As of October 2025, no seats have been won in federal, state or territory elections by candidates fielded under any of the fundamentally First Nation parties.

8.3.1. Aotearoa

Since the passing of the Māori Representation Act in 1867, designated Māori seats in the Aotearoan parliament have been a stable feature (Maori Representation Act [47], 1867 (sic)). Initially comprising four seats, extended periodically until 2002 when the current seven were established, these seats are a special electorate category which co-exist throughout the country with the general electorates (Taonui, 2015). Each area of Aotearoa therefore falls under two electorates, one general, and one Māori.

In Aotearoa, several political parties focusing on Māori representation have existed since the beginning of the twentieth century:

► **Te Pāti Māori** (*The Māori Party*)

Te Pāti Māori is the most consistently successful and prominent of the modern Aotearoan First Nation parties. The party was founded by Tariana Turia as The Māori Party after her resignation from parliament and the New Zealand Labour Party in 2004, changing its name to **Te Pāti Māori** in 2023 (Te Kaitiaki Take Kōwhiri - Electoral Commission [KTK - EC], 2023). With the exception of the 2017 election, in the eight elections held since the formation of the party, **Te Pāti Māori** has won seats in both the Māori electorates and the broader House of Representatives (KTK - EC, n.d.). Over this period, the party has been in opposition or in confidence and supply arrangements with the larger conservative National Party.

The party made international headlines in November 2024 when **Te Pāti Māori** MP Hana-Rawhiti Maipi-Clarke led a memorable protest against the Treaty Principles Bill (RNZ

Online, 2025). The bill was introduced with the intention of redefining the nature and principles of **Te Tiriti o Waitangi** / *The Treaty of Waitangi*. During a parliamentary vote on the bill, Maipi-Clarke tore her copy of the bill in half before beginning the Ka Mate¹⁴ Haka, in which she was joined by party members and allies who opposed the bill. Maipi-Clarke, along with party leaders Rawiri Waititi and Debbie Ngarewa-Packer were suspended from parliament for 21 days for the protest, and the bill ultimately failed to be passed (Principles of the Treaty of Waitangi Bill [94-1], 2024).

► The Hapu Party

The Hapu Party, named after the **Hapū**, the name for a subdivision of the larger **Iwi** in Māori society, was a party which unsuccessfully contested a single candidate, leader David Rankin, in the **Te Tai Tokerau**/*The North Coast* Māori electorate in 2008 (KTK - EC, 2008).

► Mana Māori Motuhake¹⁵

Mana Māori Motuhake was a party founded by ex-Labour Party Minister of Māori Affairs Matiu Rata in 1980 (R. S. Hill, 2009, p. 179). The party ran unsuccessfully in the four general elections until December 1991 when it merged with the New Labour, Democratic, and Green parties to become the Alliance, which won seats in the three elections of the 1990s, but was deregistered in 2015 (KTK - EC, 2015).

► Mana Māori Movement

The **Mana Māori** Movement was founded in 1993 by former **Mana Māori Motuhake** member Eva Rickard as a response to the latter party's entry into the Alliance coalition, considering the move to be a loss of an independent Māori voice in parliament. The Mana Māori Movement contested 18 candidates in the 1996 general election, and five in 2002, gaining no seats (KTK - EC, 1997, 2002). In the general election of 1999, the **Mana Māori** Movement had allied with the smaller **Te Tawharau**, and **Piri Wiri Tua** parties, fielding 28 candidates collectively but gaining no seats, leading to eventual deregistration in 2005 (KTK - EC, 1999, 2005).

► The Mana Party

► The Mana Movement

► Internet Party and Mana Movement

The similarly named but unrelated **Mana** Party was launched by former Māori Party MP Hone Harawira, triggering a by-election of **Te Tai Tokerau** seat, which he subsequently retained during this election and the later 2011 general election (M. Hill, 2011; Scoop, 2008; KTK - EC, 2011). The party name was changed to The **Mana** Movement in 2014, and in alliance with the Internet Party for the 2014 general election was known as the Internet Party and **Mana** Movement, in which no seats were won (Internet MANA, 2014; KTK - EC, 2014a, 2014b). After gaining no seats in the 2017 general election, the party did not contest the 2020 election, rather choosing to endorse the Māori Party, and deregistered in 2021 (Braae, 2020; KTK - EC, 2017, 2021)

► Mana Wāhine Te Ira Tangata (MWTIT)¹⁶

14 *It is Death.*

15 Not easily translatable into English, representing a meaning of *Māori authority, independence, and self-determination.*

16 Not easily translatable into English, representing a meaning of *women and their role in humanity.*

Like the **Mana Māori** Movement, earlier in the decade, **Mana Wāhine Te Ira Tangata**, was founded in 1998 by MP Alamein Kopu in response to **Mana Māori Motuhake** joining the Alliance (Taonui, 2015). The MWTIT unsuccessfully contested the Taranaki-King Country by-election in 1998, fielded 12 candidates in the following year's general election, and was deregistered in 2001 (New Zealand Gazette, 2001; KTK - EC, 1998, 1999).

► **Mauri Pacific**¹⁷

Mauri Pacific was established by five sitting ex-New Zealand First party MPs in 1999, led by former Minister of Māori Affairs, Tau Henare, and positioned itself publicly as a multicultural party, with three out of its five MPs having Māori heritage, and the remaining two European (New Zealand Gazette, 1999; Sullivan, 2016a). The party contested 20 seats unsuccessfully in the 1999 general election, with all five sitting MPs losing their seat, and was deregistered in 2002 (New Zealand Gazette, 2001; KTK - EC, 1999).

► **Nga Iwi Morehu Movement**¹⁸

The **Nga Iwi Morehu** Movement encountered difficulty in registering and as an unregistered party contested a single seat in the 1996 general election, and two in 2002, both unsuccessfully (KTK - EC, 1997, 2002). In the 1999 general election, the still unregistered party contested seats under the registered Freedom Movement party, again with no seats gained, and is assumed to have dissolved since (Te Kaitiaki Take Kōwhiri - Electoral Commission [KTK - EC], 1999).

► **The Young Māori Party**

An early organisation which while political and activist, was never a political party in any concrete sense, the Young Māori Party was an association of young Māori people who sought to more closely integrate Māori people into Pākehā culture and society and vice versa (R. S. Hill, 2004, pp. 43–44; Sullivan, 2016b).

► **Te Tawharau**¹⁹

Te Tawharau was established in August 1995, and had its sole seat in parliament when previous independent and New Zealand First MP Tuariki Delamere joined the party in 1999 (Delamere, 1999). In the election later that year, **Te Tawharau** joined with the **Mana Māori Movement** and **Piri Wiri Tua** parties, and after no seats were won, the party deregistered in 2007 (KTK - EC, 2007).

► **Piri Wiri Tua Movement**²⁰

The **Piri Wiri Tua** Movement was a party with its foundation in the **Rātana** religious movement (Piri Wiri Tua Movement, 2005). The party was not registered, with a significant objection from the **Rātana** church itself, which had not officially endorsed the group, that the name may lead the public to believe that the party represented the church. The party's only contested election was in 1999 when it fielded three candidates in the alliance with the **Mana Māori Movement** and **Te Tawharau** and won no seats (KTK - EC, 1999).

17 *Spirit of the Pacific.*

18 *The Surviving People.*

19 *The Shelter.*

20 Loosely translatable as *Billy bore through to the other side.*

8.3.1.1. Individuals

While Australia did not have an identified First Nation member of parliament until 1971, since 1868 with the election of four men to the newly-created Māori seats, Aotearoa's parliament has consistently comprised of a Māori cohort (Taonui, 2015). Until 1893, with the election of **Timi Kara**²¹ to the seat of Waiapu, Māori members of parliament were only elected to the designated Māori seats rather than the general electorates, a phenomenon that would continue until 1975 with the election of Rex Austin and Ben Couch to the Awarua and Wairarapa electorates respectively (Taonui, 2015). This was largely due to the 1967 removal of restrictions in place since the mid-1890s which meant that Māori seats could only be voted for and contested by Māori citizens, and general electorates could likewise only be voted for and contested by non-Māori citizens, i.e., **Pākehā** (Electoral Act [18], 1893; Electoral Act Amendment [49], 1896; Electoral Amendment Act [149], 1967). Since 1975, Māori representation in the general electorates has been common and increasing, reaching a record of 33 sitting members, just over a quarter of the parliament of 123 seats, surpassing the estimated 17% of the total Aotearoa population identifying as Māori (New Zealand Parliament, 2023; 2024, p. TA-SNZ).

9. Conclusion

Rather than Australia and Aotearoa being two countries with different recognitions of First Nation sovereignty rights due to pro-active decision-making in one case, and a lack of the same in the other, the cultural and governmental backgrounds to the two modern countries actually make the differences in sovereignty and any related outcomes inevitable.

While in Aotearoa, the single national legislative body could pass a single piece of legislation establishing a national curriculum for the country's First Nation language at all levels of education, such a process would be essentially impossible in Australia. Due to the relative homogeneity of First Nation language in Aotearoa, language resources can be produced that can be distributed throughout the country, and used locally without discrimination. Likewise, legislation can be enacted which supports the use of Te Reo Māori in national curricula, broadcasting, signage, and so forth, with government publications printing in the language and distributed to any part of the country. While federal legislation that protects and strengthens Australian First Nation language is necessary, a single national system would likely fail at the legislative level due to the diversity of experiences, language situations, and cultures of Australia's wide and varied communities. While it is perpetually necessary to seek approaches and examples both good and bad from outside our own space, it is equally as important to recognise that there are no one-size-fits-all models of language or culture work. Any programme designed to revitalise, maintain, or strengthen language or culture must be informed from the ground up by the historical and social events and contexts that have resulted in the challenges these programmes are intended to overcome. What might work as a language-work model in Kununurra, Western Australia, might be completely inappropriate in **Naarm**²². The community-led goals for language reclamation will by their very nature of being Australian differ significantly, and need to be supported at both the state and federal levels. Attempting to adopt an Aotearoan-style language policy would be to ignore these factors. Neither is Aotearoa's First Nations culture and language a single, universally-voiced set of fixed ideas and practices. Rather the diversity in Māori language and culture is enough to mean that different

21 James Carroll.

22 Melbourne, Victoria

perspectives, needs, and wants held by Māori people is supported by legislative structures, history, and a shared Aotearoan language in which heated discussion, compromise, and agreement can be reached.

While the on-paper outcomes in the two countries are in stark contrast, they hide the complex distinctions that separate and determine them. The sheer obstacles in the way of Australian First Nation language and culture custodians makes the successes that they have achieved all the more impressive, while the successes that their Māori counterparts have won through their own struggles are by no means diminished. The battles that either group have won are the result of their own hard, uncompromising work. The greatest similarity of all perhaps between Australian First Nation and Māori people, is the fact that are still fighting, and are showing no signs of giving up.

References

Aboriginal Languages Act 2017 (NSW) (2017).

<https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/html/inforce/2019-12-05/act-2017-051?query=%28%28Repealed%3DN%20AND%20PrintType%3D%22act.reprint%22%20AND%20PitValid%3D%40pointInTime%2820240430000000%29%29%20OR%20%28Repealed%3DN%20AND%20PrintType%3D%22reprint%22%20AND%20PitValid%3D%40pointInTime%2820240430000000%29%29%20OR%20%28Repealed%3DN%20AND%20%28PrintType%3D%22epi.reprint%22%20OR%20PrintType%3D%22epi.electronic%22%29%20AND%20PitValid%3D%40pointInTime%2820240430000000%29%29%29%20AND%20Content%3D%28%22aboriginal%20languages%20act%202017%22%29&dQuery=Document%20Types%3D%22%3Cspan%20class%3D%27dq-highlight%27%3EActs%3C/span%3E%2C%20%3Cspan%20class%3D%27dq-highlight%27%3ERegulations%3C/span%3E%2C%20%3Cspan%20class%3D%27dq-highlight%27%3EEPIs%3C/span%3E%22%2C%20Search%20In%3D%22%3Cspan%20class%3D%27dq-highlight%27%3EAll%20Content%3C/span%3E%22%2C%20Exact%20Phrase%3D%22%3Cspan%20class%3D%27dq-highlight%27%3Eaboriginal%20languages%20act%202017%3C/span%3E%22%2C%20Point%20In%20Time%3D%22%3Cspan%20class%3D%27dq-highlight%27%3E30/04/2024%3C/span%3E%22>

An Phríomh-Oifig Staidrimh - Central Statistics Office. (2023, May 30). *Education and Irish Language Census of Population 2022—Summary Results—Central Statistics Office*. An Phríomh-Oifig Staidrimh - Central Statistics Office; CSO.

<https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-cpsr/censusofpopulation2022-summaryresults/educationandirishlanguage/>

Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2022, October 25). *Language Statistics for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, 2021*. Australian Bureau of Statistics.

<https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-peoples/language-statistics-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-peoples/latest-release>

Australian Capital Territory Electoral Commission. (2024). *ACT Electoral Commission Report on the ACT Legislative Assembly Election 2024*.

Australian Capital Territory Electoral Commission. (2025, July 24). *Register of political parties*. Elections ACT; Chief Minister Treasury and Economic Development Directorate.

<https://www.elections.act.gov.au/funding-disclosures-and-registers/register-of-political-parties>

- Australian Electoral Commission [AEC]. (2005, November 9). *Senators Elected*. corporateName=Australian Electoral Commission. <https://results.aec.gov.au/12246/results/SenateSenatorsElected-12246-NAT.htm>
- Australian Electoral Commission [AEC]. (2011a). *Australia's Indigenous Peoples Party*. Australian Electoral Commission. https://www.aec.gov.au/parties_and_representatives/party_registration/Deregistered_parties/aipp.htm
- Australian Electoral Commission [AEC]. (2011b, March 24). *Federation Fact Sheet 1 – The Referendums 1898–1900*. Australian Electoral Commission. https://www.aec.gov.au/about_aec/Publications/Fact_Sheets/factsheet1.htm
- Australian Electoral Commission [AEC]. (2013a, November 4). *Party Representation—Seats Won*. corporateName=Australian Electoral Commission. <https://results.aec.gov.au/17496/Website/HousePartyRepresentationLeading-17496.htm>
- Australian Electoral Commission [AEC]. (2013b, November 14). *Application to change party name approved—Australia's First Nations Political Party*. Australian Electoral Commission. https://www.aec.gov.au/Parties_and_Representatives/party_registration/Registration_Decisions/2013/5279.htm
- Australian Electoral Commission [AEC]. (2015, August 12). *Australia's First Nations Political Party*. Australian Electoral Commission. https://www.aec.gov.au/parties_and_representatives/Party_Registration/Deregistered_parties/afnpp.htm
- Australian Electoral Commission [AEC]. (2025, September 1). *Register of political parties*. Australian Electoral Commission. https://www.aec.gov.au/Parties_and_Representatives/party_registration/Registered_parties/
- Australian Human Rights Commission. (2025, July 2). *Statistics about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people*. Australian Human Rights Commission. <https://humanrights.gov.au/education/stats-facts/statistics-about-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-people>
- Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies. (2021). *National Indigenous Languages Report* (p. 106). Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies. <https://www.arts.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/national-indigenous-languages-report-lowres.pdf>
- Australian Parliamentary Handbook. (n.d.). *BONNER, Neville Thomas, AO - Parliamentary Handbook*. Australian Parliamentary Handbook. Retrieved October 3, 2025, from <https://handbook.aph.gov.au/parliamentarians/0V4>
- Bates, D. (with Reece, B.). (2004). *My natives and I : incorporating The passing of the Aborigines: A lifetime spent among the natives of Australia* (P. J. Bridge, Ed.). Hesperian Press.
- Belich, J. (2011, 41). *European ideas about Māori*. Te Ara - The Encyclopedia of New Zealand. <https://teara.govt.nz/en/european-ideas-about-maori>
- Braae, A. (2020, June 20). *Rivalry over: Mana Movement throws its full support behind Māori Party for 2020*. The Spinoff. <https://thespinoff.co.nz/politics/20-06-2020/rivalry-over-mana-movement-throws-its-full-support-behind-maori-party-for-2020>
- Caldwell, J. C., Missingham, B., & Marck, J. C. (2001, January). *The Population of Oceania in the Second Millennium*. ResearchGate. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/267818571_The_Population_of_Oceania_in_the_Second_Millennium
- Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act [12], 12 (1900). <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/Vict/63-64/12/enacted>

- Constitution Act, WA (1889).
https://www.austlii.edu.au/cgi-bin/viewdb/au/legis/wa/consol_act/ca1889188/
- Constitution of Queensland, 80 Qld (2001).
https://www.austlii.edu.au/cgi-bin/viewdb/au/legis/qld/consol_act/coq2001288/
- Cultural Survival. (2004, July 2). *Australian Aboriginal Political Party Emerges Out of ATSIC Abolition* | Cultural Survival. <https://www.culturalsurvival.org/news/australian-aboriginal-political-party-emerges-out-atsic-abolition>
- Darmody, M., & Daly, T. (2015). *Attitudes towards the Irish language on the island of Ireland*. Economic and Social Research Institute.
https://www.esri.ie/system/files/publications/BKMNEXT294_Vol%201%20%281%29.pdf
- Delamere, T. (1999, September 1). *Speech—Delamere To Stand For Te Tawharau* | Scoop News. Scoop. <https://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/PA9909/S00037/speech-delamere-to-stand-for-te-tawharau.htm>
- Dixon, R. M. W. (2002). *Australian Languages: Their Nature and Development*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511486869>
- Electoral Act [18], Pub. L. No. 18 (1893).
https://www.nzlii.org/nz/legis/hist_act/ea189357v1893n18180/
- Electoral Act Amendment [49] (1896).
https://www.nzlii.org/nz/legis/hist_act/eaaa189660v1896n49324.pdf
- Electoral Amendment Act [149], Pub. L. No. 149 (1967).
https://www.nzlii.org/nz/legis/hist_act/eaa19671967n149210/
- Hill, M. (2011, May 1). *Harawira forces Te Tai Tokerau by-election*. Stuff.Co.Nz. https://buy-au.piano.io/checkout/template/cacheableShow.html?aid=hJGmGBJdpa&templateId=OT2IOH093D2V&templateVariantId=OTVBCQP070OW2&offerId=fakeOfferId&experienceId=EXYJRCBSL0LA&iframeId=offer_779f4c1b6b00585476a5-0&displayMode=inline&pianoIdUrl=https%3A%2F%2Fid-au.piano.io%2Fid%2F&widget=template&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.stuff.co.nz%2Fnational%2Fpolitics%2F4946646%2FHone-Harawira-launches-new-party
- Hill, R. S. (2004). *State Authority, Indigenous Autonomy: Crown-Māori Relations in New Zealand/Aotearoa 1900-1950*. Victoria University Press.
- Hill, R. S. (2009). *Maori and the State: Crown-Māori relations in New Zealand/Aotearoa, 1950-2000*. Victoria University Press.
<https://ndhadeliver.natlib.govt.nz/webarchive/20210104000423/http://nzetc.victoria.ac.nz/tm/scholarly/tei-HilMaor.html>
- Holland, R. C. (2013). *The impact of “doomed race” assumptions in the administration of Queensland’s Indigenous population by the Chief Protectors of Aboriginals from 1897 to 1942* [Masters thesis, Queensland University of Technology].
<https://eprints.qut.edu.au/61774/>
- Internet MANA. (2014, May 25). *Memorandum Of Understanding—Between the MANA Movement and the Internet Party Document*. Internet Party and MANA Movement.
https://docs.google.com/file/d/0B-OsCSmT5K89LUwxOExmUjJpN2c/edit?usp=embed_facebook
- Korakys. (2023). *A map, including urban breakouts, of New Zealand electorates, shaded according to which party won each one*. CC BY 4.0 [Map]. Wikimedia Commons; This file was derived from: 2020 New Zealand general election - Template.svg by Erinthecute.
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:2023_New_Zealand_electorates_A.svg

- Korff, J. (2022, March 27). *Aboriginal political parties*. Creative Spirits.
<https://stage.creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/selfdetermination/aboriginal-political-parties>
- Korff, J. (2025, September 22). *Aboriginal timeline: Politics*. Creative Spirits.
<https://www.creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/history/australian-aboriginal-history-timeline/politics?page=6&%3Bamp%3Bamp%3Bsa=U>
- Manatū Taonga - Ministry for Culture and Heritage [MT - MCH]. (2017, May 17). *The Treaty in brief*. Nga Korero a Ipurangi o Aotearoa - New Zealand History - Manatū Taonga — Ministry for Culture and Heritage. <https://nzhistory.govt.nz/politics/treaty/the-treaty-in-brief>
- Manatū Taonga - Ministry for Culture and Heritage [MT - MCH]. (2025a, July 11). *He Whakaputanga—Declaration of Independence*. Nga Korero a Ipurangi o Aotearoa - New Zealand History - Manatū Taonga — Ministry for Culture and Heritage.
<https://nzhistory.govt.nz/culture/declaration-of-independence-taming-the-frontier>
- Manatū Taonga - Ministry for Culture and Heritage [MT - MCH]. (2025b, August 5). *Ngā tohu – treaty signatories*. Nga Korero a Ipurangi o Aotearoa - New Zealand History - Manatū Taonga — Ministry for Culture and Heritage. <https://nzhistory.govt.nz/page/nga-tohu-treaty-signatories>
- Māori Language Act [176], Pub. L. No. 176 (1987).
<https://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/1987/0176/latest/whole.html#whole>
- Neasa. (2020, August 3). Irish Language: Deep-Rooted or Force-Fed? *EUSTORY History Campus*.
<https://historycampus.org/2020/irish-language-deep-rooted-or-force-fed/>
- New Zealand Gazette. (1999). *New Zealand Gazette* (Vol. 21).
<https://library.victoria.ac.nz/databases/nzgazettearchive/pubs/gazettes/1999/1999%20ISSUE%202021.pdf>
- New Zealand Gazette. (2001, February 22). *Amendments to Register of Political Parties*. New Zealand Gazette. <https://gazette.govt.nz/notice/id/2001-au1220>
- New Zealand Parliament. (2023, December 15). *Record number of Māori MPs elected to New Zealand Parliament*. Pāremata Aotearoa (New Zealand Parliament).
<https://www3.parliament.nz/en/get-involved/features/record-number-of-maori-mps-elected-to-new-zealand-parliament>
- New Zealand Sign Language Act [18], Pub. L. No. 18 (2006).
<https://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2006/0018/latest/whole.html>
- Northern Territory Electoral Commission. (2012, August 25). *Legislative Assembly Elections 25 August 2012*. https://ntec.nt.gov.au/elections/past-elections/legislative-assembly/pdf-results/2012_la_general_election.pdf
- Palmer, M. (2012, May 7). *What is a constitution?* Te Ara - The Encyclopedia of New Zealand.
<https://teara.govt.nz/en/constitution/page-1>
- Parliamentary Handbook. (1993). *Federal Election 1993 House of Representatives candidates: Australia's Indigenous Peoples*. Parliamentary Handbook.
<https://handbook.aph.gov.au/voting/elections/1993/238/rep-candidates?search=Australia%27s+Indigenous+Peoples>
- Parliamentary Handbook. (2022). *Federal Election 2022 House of Representatives candidates: Indigenous—Aboriginal Party of Australia*. Parliamentary Handbook.
<https://handbook.aph.gov.au/voting/elections/2022/404/rep-candidates?search=Indigenous+-+Aboriginal+Party+of+Australia>
- Piri Wiri Tua Movement. (2005, January 25). *Aims of the Piri Wiri Tua Movement*. Piri Wiri Tua Movement. <https://web.archive.org/web/20050125195805/http://kiwi.8m.com/piriwiritua/01party-2.htm>

- 23

- Te Kaitiaki Take Kōwhiri - Electoral Commission [KTK - EC]. (2005, April 15). *Party and logo registration decisions announced*. Te Kaitiaki Take Kōwhiri - Electoral Commission. <https://elections.nz/media-and-news/2005/party-and-logo-registration-decisions-announced-3/>
- Te Kaitiaki Take Kōwhiri - Electoral Commission [KTK - EC]. (2007, September 5). *Three parties less chasing party vote*. Elections. <https://elections.nz/media-and-news/2007/three-parties-less-chasing-party-vote/>
- Te Kaitiaki Take Kōwhiri - Electoral Commission [KTK - EC]. (2008). *Official Count Results—Te Tai Tokerau*. <https://Electionresults.Govt.Nz/>. https://electionresults.govt.nz/electionresults_2008/electorate-68.html
- Te Kaitiaki Take Kōwhiri - Electoral Commission [KTK - EC]. (2011). *Summary of Overall Results*. Te Kaitiaki Take Kōwhiri - Electoral Commission. https://www.electionresults.govt.nz/electionresults_2011/e9/html/e9_part1.html
- Te Kaitiaki Take Kōwhiri - Electoral Commission [KTK - EC]. (2014a). *Summary of Overall Results*. Te Kaitiaki Take Kōwhiri - Electoral Commission. https://www.electionresults.govt.nz/electionresults_2014/e9/html/e9_part1.html
- Te Kaitiaki Take Kōwhiri - Electoral Commission [KTK - EC]. (2014b, July 25). *Change of party name and registration of a substitute logo—MANA Movement*. Te Kaitiaki Take Kōwhiri - Electoral Commission. <https://elections.nz/media-and-news/2014new-medianews-folder/change-of-party-name-and-registration-of-a-substitute-logo-mana-movement/>
- Te Kaitiaki Take Kōwhiri - Electoral Commission [KTK - EC]. (2015, May 27). *Amendments to the Register of Political Parties | Electoral Commission*. Te Kaitiaki Take Kōwhiri - Electoral Commission. <https://web.archive.org/web/20150527063600/http://www.elections.org.nz/news-media/amendments-register-political-parties-2>
- Te Kaitiaki Take Kōwhiri - Electoral Commission [KTK - EC]. (2017). *E9 Statistics—Overall Results*. Te Kaitiaki Take Kōwhiri - Electoral Commission. https://www.electionresults.govt.nz/electionresults_2017/index.html
- Te Kaitiaki Take Kōwhiri - Electoral Commission [KTK - EC]. (2021, May 5). *Amendment to the Register of Political Parties*. Elections. <https://elections.nz/media-and-news/2021/amendment-to-the-register-of-political-parties/>
- Te Kaitiaki Take Kōwhiri - Electoral Commission [KTK - EC]. (2023, July 19). *Change to Te Pāti Māori party name*. Te Kaitiaki Take Kōwhiri - Electoral Commission. <https://elections.nz/media-and-news/2023/change-to-te-pati-maori-party-name/>
- Te Rua Mahara o te Kāwanatanga - Archives New Zealand. (2024, June 11). *He Whakaputanga o te Rangatiratanga o Nu Tirenī—The declaration of the independence of new zealand*. Te Rua Mahara o Te Kāwanatanga - Archives New Zealand. <https://www.archives.govt.nz/discover-our-stories/the-declaration-of-independence-of-new-zealand>
- Te Ture Mō Te Reo Māori - Māori Language Act [17], Pub. L. No. 17 (2016). <https://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2016/0017/latest/whole.html#DLM6174566>
- Zaunmayr, T. (2022, July 23). *FULL LIST: Record number of Indigenous MPs voted in to serve the Australian people*. National Indigenous Times. <https://nit.com.au/23-07-2022/3135/full-list-record-number-of-indigenous-mps-voted-in-to-serve-the-australian-people>