

The Treaty of Waitangi

Te Tiriti O Waitangi

The Treaty of Waitangi is an important document of New Zealand. It is an agreement, an exchange of promises, between the British Crown and a group of about 500 Māori rangatira (chiefs).

In the 1830s, the British government decided they needed to protect Māori people, British settlers and trade, especially from the French who had an interest in taking over New Zealand.

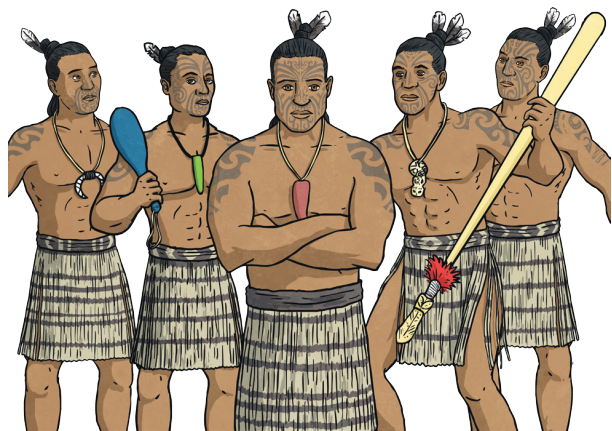
Lieutenant-Governor William Hobson began writing the treaty, with advice from James Busby, to secure British power. The treaty was translated by missionary Henry Williams and his son. The treaty was written in both English and Māori, but the translation was not exactly the same.

The Māori version of the treaty was signed on 6th February, 1840 by about 40 chiefs in the Bay of Islands. Many more chiefs signed copies of the Māori version of the treaty throughout New Zealand.

The British announced supreme power over New Zealand on 21st May, 1840.

There were misunderstandings over the translations of words between Māori and the Crown. This misunderstanding and disagreement over the Treaty was the main cause of wars between some Māori tribes and the government in the 1860s.

In the 1900s, there was not much importance put on the Treaty; it wasn't until the 1970s that Māori began to protest and march for their land. In 1975, the government created the Treaty of Waitangi Act and the Waitangi tribunal to negotiate the treaty. There have been many claims, and settlement continues to happen with these today.



Questions

1. Who was the Treaty of Waitangi between?

2. When did the government decide that they needed a treaty?

3. Why do you think the treaty needed to be translated?

4. How many chiefs signed the treaty on the 6th of February 1840?

5. What was the main cause of the wars in the 1860s?

6. What happened in the 1970s?

7. Research and find out what a 'tribunal' is.
