

# HONOURING TE TIRITI O WAITANGI

Read the joint statement by the NZVA, VCNZ and Massey University on inclusivity in the veterinary profession.

*Honouring te Tiriti o Waitangi, together we will enable an inclusive, culturally safe veterinary profession representative of Aotearoa New Zealand, in which all members thrive and feel supported and valued for who they are.*

THE NEW ZEALAND VETERINARY ASSOCIATION – TE PAE KĪREHE

THE VETERINARY COUNCIL OF NEW ZEALAND – TE KAUNIHERA RATA KARAREHE O AOTEAROA

MASSEY UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF VETERINARY SCIENCE – TĀWHARAU ORA

**A**s part of our ongoing commitment to honour te Tiriti o Waitangi, the NZVA Te Pae Kīrehe, VCNZ Te Kaunihera Rata Kararehe o Aotearoa and Massey University's School of Veterinary Science Tāwharau Ora have issued a collective statement on inclusivity in the veterinary profession.

The statement was the key outcome of a hui held in 2022 with representatives from the NZVA, VCNZ, Massey University and the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI). As a part of the public service, MPI has its own commitment to te Tiriti. The four organisations are working closely to support a sustainable veterinary profession that is truly representative of Aotearoa New Zealand.

The joint statement signifies a profound commitment to creating a safe, inclusive environment for all current and future veterinary professionals – including tangata whenua.

This work aligns with the NZVA's current strategy and vision. "Our vision is to build a vibrant and diverse veterinary profession," says NZVA President Dr Kate Hill. "The NZVA has values of inclusivity and collegiality at our core. We endeavour to foster an environment where every NZVA member thrives and feels genuinely supported and valued for who they are.

"By honouring the principles of te Tiriti o Waitangi, we strengthen the bonds of trust and partnership, striving for a profession that actively embraces the rich tapestry of identities and backgrounds that make up Aotearoa New Zealand.

"This collaborative statement marks a significant step towards shaping a profession that not only addresses the evolving needs of our communities, but also recognises the rich cultural heritage that underpins the fabric of our nation."

Similarly, VCNZ recognises it has a responsibility to be a good Treaty partner. "We are committed to working with tangata whenua to realise the promise of te Tiriti o Waitangi," says VCNZ CEO and Registrar Iain McLachlan.

"This statement marks that commitment and the start of a journey for us. Te Tiriti o Waitangi needs to become a fundamental part of our values and underpin our work.

"Getting there will take time, patience and self-reflection across our organisation. Short-term work will include developing a VCNZ policy on te Tiriti and growing the cultural competence of our team and council. This will involve improving our understanding of te Tiriti o Waitangi, te reo and tikanga Māori, and improving cultural safety.

"We are also committed to supporting the wider veterinary profession on this journey, including finding ways to develop and improve cultural safety in practice."

Massey's School of Veterinary Science shares this sentiment. "The veterinary profession in Aotearoa New Zealand is not representative of our society, so we are delighted to be working alongside our colleagues at the NZVA and VCNZ on this important issue," says Head of School Professor Jon Huxley.

"At Te Kunenga ki Pūrehuroa Massey University, the BVSc VetMAP pathway has led to a transformation in the number of Māori and Pacific students applying for and successfully gaining entry to the programme, and we look forward to welcoming them into the profession when they graduate. This pathway honours our commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi and Pacific partnerships and aligns with the school, university and government initiatives for Māori and Pacific student success."

By honouring te Tiriti o Waitangi, we unlock the potential for positive change and lay the foundation for a brighter, more compassionate and culturally rich future for the veterinary profession. The NZVA's work in this space is being led by our Te Tiriti o Waitangi working group. If you are a Māori NZVA member and you would like to help shape this work, please get in touch with us at [nzva@vets.org.nz](mailto:nzva@vets.org.nz). 