

29 April 2020

Attorney-General

Ngāti Maru (Taranaki) Claims Settlement Bill — Consistency with the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990
Our Ref: ATT395/330

1. We have considered the Ngāti Maru (Taranaki) Claims Settlement Bill — **(the Bill)** for consistency with the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990 **(the Bill of Rights Act)**. We advise the Bill appears to be consistent with the Bill of Rights Act.
2. The Bill effects a final settlement of the historical claims of Ngāti Maru as defined in the Bill.¹ The Bill provides for acknowledgements and an apology as well as cultural and commercial redress. Measures for cultural redress include the vesting of cultural redress properties, protocols for Crown minerals and taonga tūturu, and a statutory acknowledgement by the Crown of the statements made by Ngāti Maru of their association with certain statutory areas. Commercial redress includes provisions dealing with licensed land, access to protected sites and rights of first refusal over land.

Discrimination – Section 19

3. The Bill does not *prima facie* limit the right to freedom from discrimination affirmed by s 19 of the Bill of Rights Act through conferring assets or rights on Ngāti Maru that are not conferred on other people. Discrimination arises only if there is a difference in treatment on the basis of one of the prohibited grounds of discrimination between those in comparable circumstances. In the context of this settlement, which addresses specified historical claims brought by Ngāti Maru, no other persons or groups who are not party to those claims are in comparable circumstances to the recipients of the entitlements under the Bill. No differential treatment for the purpose of s 19 therefore arises by excluding others from the entitlements conferred under the Bill.
4. Clause 116 reserves a special right of access to land on which a protected site is situated. This right of access applies to “Māori for whom the protected site is of special cultural, historical, or spiritual significance”. It is conceivable that this clause raises a section 19 issue if the protected sites also have significance to non-Māori. However, the reasoning in paragraph 3 above also applies to these clauses and, on that basis, section 19 is not infringed. To the extent that section 19 might be engaged, any infringement is justified by the objective of ensuring that related claimant groups are

¹ Clause 13 defines Ngāti Maru, clause 14 defines historical claims.

not prejudiced by the settlement in situations where the negotiation of cultural and commercial redress has to occur in a multi-iwi setting.

Privative Clause

5. Clause 15 of the Bill provides that the settlement of the historical claims is final. It excludes the jurisdiction of any court, tribunal or other judicial body to inquire into the historical claims, the deed of settlement, the Ngāti Maru (Taranaki) Claims Settlement Act (**the Settlement Act**) or the redress provided under the deed of settlement or the Settlement Act. Jurisdiction remains in respect of the interpretation or implementation of the deed of settlement or the Settlement Act.
6. The legislative determination of a claim ought not conventionally to fall within the scope of judicial review.² However, to the extent that any excluded matters could be susceptible to judicial review, clause 15 constitutes a justified limit on the right affirmed by s 27(2) of the Bill of Rights Act. This is because excluding subsequent challenge is a legitimate incident of the negotiated settlement of claims.
7. Any limit on minority rights under s 20 of the Bill of Rights Act would be justified on the same basis.
8. The United Nations Human Rights Committee upheld a similar exclusion under the 1992 Fisheries Settlement. The Committee found the exclusion was consistent with articles 14 and 27 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which are comparable to ss 20 and 27(2) of the Bill of Rights Act.³

Exclusion of remedy of compensation

9. Clause 26(3) of the Bill excludes damages and other forms of monetary compensation as a remedy for any failure by the Crown to comply with a protocol under the Bill.
10. This clause might be seen to raise the issue of consistency with s 27(3) of the Bill of Rights Act, namely the right to bring civil proceedings against the Crown and have these heard according to law in the same way as civil proceedings between individuals. However, clause 26(3) affects the substantive law and does not fall within the ambit of s 27(3) of the Bill of Rights Act, which protects procedural rights.⁴ Accordingly, no inconsistency arises.

² *Westco Lagan Limited v Attorney-General* [2001] 1 NZLR 40 (HC).

³ *Apirana Mahuika v New Zealand* Communication Number 547/1993 UN Doc CCPR/C/70/D/547/1993 (2000).

⁴ *Westco Lagan Limited v Attorney-General* [2001] 1 NZLR 40 (HC) at 55: “[s]ection 27(3) ... cannot restrict the power of the legislature to determine what substantive rights the Crown is to have. Section 27(3) merely directs the Crown shall have no procedural advantage in any proceeding to enforce rights if such rights exist.”

Review of this advice

- 11. This advice has been reviewed in accordance with Crown Law protocol by Helen Carrad, Crown Counsel.

Debra Harris

Debra Harris
Crown Counsel

/ **Noted / Approved / Not Approved** */*

Encl.

David Parker

Hon David Parker
Attorney-General
4 / 5. /2021