



Tūwharetoa Iwi Māori Partnership Board

Tūwharetoa Iwi Māori Partnership Board (TIMPB)

9 July 2025

Louisa Wall, Chair

Tēnā koutou e te Komiti,

The Tūwharetoa Iwi Māori Partnership Board (TIMPB) makes this submission in direct response to the recent amendments to Aotearoa's pay equity legislation. As a mandated entity with statutory responsibilities under the ***Pae Ora (Healthy Futures) Act 2022***, TIMPB exists to ensure the health and wellbeing priorities of Ngāti Tūwharetoa whānau are reflected and upheld in government systems, services, and policies.

We are deeply concerned by the implications of these legislative changes, particularly their disproportionate and compounding impact on Māori wāhine, who remain overrepresented in low-paid, feminised, and undervalued sectors of the workforce—including health, aged care, education, and social services.

1. Te Tiriti o Waitangi Obligations and Systemic Equity

The Crown has a legal and moral obligation under ***Te Tiriti o Waitangi*** to uphold equity for Māori. Pay equity is a cornerstone of that commitment. The retrospective nature of these legislative amendments, rushed through under urgency, undermines both the intent and substance of ***Te Tiriti*** commitments by:

- Invalidating 33 current pay equity claims — many of which involve Māori workers;
- Elevating the evidential burden on claimants while reducing accountability for employers;
- Diminishing mechanisms for backpay and fair redress for historical undervaluation.

This legislative shift is not neutral. It curtails access to justice for Māori workers, particularly wāhine Māori who have long been at the sharp edge of economic inequity.

2. Impacts on Māori Health and Wellbeing

TIMPB's statutory purpose is to influence the health system and other determinants of wellbeing for Ngāti Tūwharetoa. Pay equity is not just a labour market issue — it is a determinant of hauora.

When wāhine Māori are denied fair pay for mahi that sustains our communities, the intergenerational effects are profound:

- Whānau incomes are suppressed;
- Housing, education, and nutrition are compromised;

- Whānau ora strategies are undermined by systemic underpayment of kaimahi who serve them.

As such, these legislative changes cannot be separated from their direct impact on Māori health outcomes and structural equity.

3. Crown Fiscal Responsibility Should Not Override Justice

We acknowledge the fiscal constraints faced by governments. However, justice cannot be suspended for the sake of balancing budgets. The notion that pay equity claims — many still in progress — must be halted or made more difficult because of cost signals a failure to value those whose work underpins essential services. The language of “savings” masks what is ultimately a political choice to devalue Māori and women-dominated workforces.

4. Call to Action

TIMPB urges the Committee to:

- Recommend that retrospective provisions in the new legislation be repealed;
- Reinstate a fair, accessible, and well-resourced process for pay equity claims, particularly for Māori-dominant sectors;
- Require government departments and funders to apply pay equity principles across contracted services, including Māori and iwi providers;
- Uphold *Te Tiriti o Waitangi* in all legislative reform processes by engaging in genuine partnership with iwi Māori and affected communities.

Closing Statement

This kaupapa is not about technical definitions or comparator hierarchies — it is about justice. It is about recognising and valuing the labour of wāhine Māori and all other wāhine who work in low-paid, feminised, and undervalued sectors of the workforce—including health, aged care, education, and social services—ensuring that government systems do not reinforce historical undervaluation under the guise of reform.

We would welcome the opportunity to elaborate on this submission in an oral hearing.

Ngā manaakitanga,
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