



# Modernising Māori Wardens



## **Hon Nanaia Mahuta**

Te Minita Whanaketanga Māori  
Minister for Māori Development

I want to acknowledge the huge contribution that Māori Wardens make to the wellbeing of our communities. At our major hui and significant events your presence is a stable assurance that in carrying out your duties there is a high level of trust and regard for the work that you do.

Growing up in my own community in the Waikato I saw the Māori Wardens at Poukai, birthday, tangihanga and they also attended important community and iwi events. And this presence remains true today in many more communities across the motu.

The legacy of the Māori Wardens is strong. And while it is evident that over time your role in the community has evolved, it is important that we build on the legacy of your foundation members and your organisation. As your Minister, I want to work alongside you to achieve your vision for the future.

# Modernising Māori Wardens

Our Society is continuing to evolve and change. Iwi are continuing to grow their aspiration as Treaty Settlements have been completed and the next phase of their development challenge takes shape in a post-settlement context. So too are our Māori organisations that also contribute to the social and economic wellbeing of our people.

All our Māori organisations have found themselves needing to adapt and change in response to where our whanau aspirations and needs are. The world today is quite different from the 1950s and 60s when the role and governance of the Māori Wardens was last formally set. With more than 150 years since being established, it is timely to consider what the future for the Māori Wardens looks like.

I am picking up the torch carried by previous Ministers of Māori Affairs who knew that more should be done to support your organisation. I am not starting from a blank page and I certainly hear your message to me calling for action.

As I have travelled around the motu I have heard of your interest and commitment to modernise the Māori Wardens Organisation. This includes issues such as better acknowledging the actual role and functions that you undertake, a desire for greater organisational control, and explore new approaches to governance arrangements.

I am keen to seek your views on these issues. In particular I want to hear what 'modernising the Māori Wardens' means to you and members of your district. My hope is that we can focus on where you would like to be and then we can map out the steps to get there.

I want you to engage with the issues that are most important as I am aware that while the JAG team had devised some options for further consideration, there has not been any dedicated time to discuss the pros and cons of each option.



## Proposed Options to support your consideration:

To help you through this conversation I have undertaken to set out a simple explanation so that you can use this summary to start the discussion in your district and formulate your own ideas.

- **Option A:**  
Status Quo Governance and Administration + updating the Māori Community Development Act to better reflect the actual roles and functions of Māori Wardens.
- **Option B:**  
New Māori Wardens Act to better reflect Māori Wardens actual roles and functions and provide for greater operational control by Māori Wardens
- **Option C:**  
Māori Wardens establish their own governance and operational structure, and look after their own affairs, outside of legislation



## Some questions to think about:

As you think about the types of options, you might ask yourselves:

### **Roles and Functions**

- What new roles are the Māori Wardens being challenged to perform?

### **Capability and Training**

- How can Māori Wardens be better to do your job?
- What training and support do the Māori Wardens most need?

### **Organisational Structure**

- What type of organisational structure would best meet the needs of the Māori Wardens?

### **Relationships**

- What should the relationship be between Māori Wardens and Te Puni Kōkiri and the New Zealand Māori Council?

## Whats Next

### Hui

As I travel around the motu I am trying to meet with as many Māori Wardens groups as I can. Before we move forward I want to have a clear understanding of Māori Wardens issues and thoughts about the future.

### More information

In early 2019 I will provide an outline of what each of the possible options means for Māori Wardens, the degree of change required for each option, and the implications of each option. This will assist you to consider the scope of change.

### National conference

I have been asked by several Māori Wardens groups to support and attend a national conference in 2019. I accept this invitation and see the national conference as a prime opportunity to settle on the future direction for the Māori Wardens.

## Contact us

If you have questions or kōrero please contact us:

**Email:** [Māoriwardens@tpk.govt.nz](mailto:Māoriwardens@tpk.govt.nz)

**Call:** 0800 991 882

I look forward to our continued kōrero and together modernising Māori Wardens into the future.

### Pai mārire

