

NGĀ TOKI WHAKARURURANGA

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For immediate release

New Trade and Climate Change Agreement (ACCTS) Fails Tiriti of Waitangi Test

Tiriti-based trade entity Ngā Toki Whakarururanga* condemns the new Agreement on Climate Change, Trade and Sustainability (ACCTS) with Costa Rica, Iceland and Switzerland for once again failing to meet the Crown's Tiriti o Waitangi obligations in both its process and substance.

Maui Solomon (Moriōri, Ngāi Tahu), a pūkenga/adviser to Ngā Toki Whakarururanga, is scathing about the government's failure. "There is nothing that more directly affects Indigenous Peoples at this time than the climate crisis, which threatens the very existence of the planet to which we are related and have responsibilities to nurture and protect for future generations."

But, as far as Ngā Toki Whakarururanga are concerned, the ACCTS is "business as usual - just like any other free trade agreement."

"Te Tiriti o Waitangi and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples recognise our self-determination and right to participate in decisions that affect us. Yet, once again, Māori and other Indigenous Peoples have been excluded from these negotiations. As a result, Indigenous values, responsibilities, and solutions to the climate crisis, are invisible in the ACCTS."

Instead, the ACCTS hijacks genuine concerns about the climate crisis to advance economic interests by liberalising goods and services.

"Even the government is not pretending that the ACCTS is really about the environment and climate change", says Mr Solomon. "Trade Minister Todd McClay has admitted as much in his press release yesterday: *"ACCTS is about opening new markets, growing domestic jobs, and adding value across the economy. As more countries join, the economic benefits will only grow."*

Ngā Toki Whakarururanga had confidential discussions with government officials during the ACCTS negotiations, as part of a mediation agreement with the Crown arising from the Waitangi Tribunal inquiry on the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement. But they were not privy to the text for most of this time, nor able to share what they saw or said with others.

According to Mr Solomon "these efforts came to zero. The Crown's trade agenda provided no space for the recognition and exercise of rangatiratanga, and the responsibilities of kaitakitanga, in relation to te Taiao, consistent with tikanga Māori, which could have helped to provide a meaningful outcome for the environment and the climate crisis."

Ngā Toki Whakarururanga's input to MFAT is annexed to the Crown's [National Interest Analysis](#). A full Tiriti o Waitangi assessment of the ACCTS can be accessed on ngatoki.nz from 18 November.

* Ngā Toki Whakarururanga was created out of the Mediation Agreement between claimants and the Crown in the Waitangi Tribunal inquiry on the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement (Wai 2522) with a duty and responsibility is to protect and advance Māori rights and obligations according to Te Tiriti o Waitangi me He Whakaputanga o te Rangatiratanga o Nu Tireni, and to hold the Crown to account to meet its responsibilities under Te Tiriti and He Whakaputanga in the arena of trade policy, negotiations and agreements.