

EMBARGOED UNTIL 7.00AM 07 OCTOBER 2026

WHAKAATA MĀORI - CURIA POLL: WAIARIKI

Waiariki poll: Waititi leads as voters back joint Māori-Crown role on Treaty principles

The Whakaata Māori-Curia poll of voters enrolled in the Waiariki electorate found Labour, Te Pāti Māori and the Green Party close in party-vote support, on 24%, 23% and 21% respectively. NZ First and National each recorded 5%, followed by Animal Justice on 3% and Vision NZ on 2%. ACT and the Conservatives each recorded 1%. Fourteen per cent of respondents were unsure.

Excluding undecided respondents, Labour recorded 28%, compared with 44% at the 2023 election. Te Pāti Māori recorded 27%, compared with 38%, while Green Party support increased from 6% to 25%.

In the electorate vote, Rawiri Waititi of Te Pāti Māori recorded 42% support, followed by Green Party candidate Tania Waikato on 16% and Labour candidate Toni Boynton on 14%. Pāpā Wharewera of Opportunity (TOP) recorded 3%. Other responses accounted for 6%, while 18% of respondents were unsure.

Excluding undecided respondents, Waititi recorded 52% support, Waikato 20%, Boynton 18% and Wharewera 3%. Other responses accounted for 7%.

Forty-one per cent of respondents said incumbent Rawiri Waititi had done a good job as the local MP over the past three years. Thirty-one per cent said he had done an average job, while 13% said he had done a poor job. Sixteen per cent were unsure.

Asked who should define the Treaty principles in New Zealand law, 64% selected Māori and the Crown together. Twelve per cent were unsure, while the remaining responses were divided between a public referendum, an independent constitutional body, Parliament and the courts.

The cost of living was the most important local issue, selected by 32% of respondents. Hauora/healthcare followed on 11%, housing on 9%, and Te Tiriti o Waitangi and the environment on 6% each.

Thirty five percent of Waiariki respondents said the highest priority for the next government, when it comes to improving outcomes for Māori was 'Honouring Te Tiriti o Waitangi' followed by 'Reducing poverty and homelessness' (26%). Nineteen percent selected 'Improving health and education outcomes', while 13% thought the highest priority was 'Support for mental health and drug addiction'. 'Addressing the Māori unemployment rate' was selected by 7% of respondents.

Eighty-two per cent said it was important for their electorate MP to stand up to their own party on issues that matter to Māori. Forty-one per cent said this was very important and 41% said it was somewhat important.

Other findings from the poll included:

- Fifty-three per cent of respondents said there was not enough Government and local council support available to address housing issues and homelessness in the Waiariki electorate. Thirty one percent of respondents said there was enough support and 16% were unsure.
- Forty-three per cent of respondents believed international tourists should pay a bed tax to help fund growing infrastructure demands. Thirty-three per cent disagreed and 24% were unsure.
- Among four qualities respondents were asked to rank when choosing an electorate MP, "Gets the mahi done" was the most common first choice, selected by 34%. "Kanohi kitea" meaning being seen and present, was the quality most commonly ranked fourth among the four options, at 33%.

These poll results will be put to candidates in the Waiariki electorate debate hosted by Whakaata Māori, moderated by Maiki Sherman and Julian Wilcox and broadcast live on Whakaata Māori and MĀORI+ at 7.00pm on 7 October. It will also be streamed live on the Te Ao Māori News app, Facebook and YouTube channels.

The Whakaata Māori-Curia poll was conducted between 21 September and 1 October 2026 among 500 Māori adults aged 18 and over who reported being enrolled on the Māori roll in Waiariki. Of these, 420 participated by phone and 80 through an online panel. Results were weighted by gender and age, using census-based gender targets and age targets based on turnout in Waiariki at the 2023 election. The maximum margin of error for the overall sample is ± 4.5 percentage points at the 95% confidence level. Results for subgroups have a higher sampling error. Percentages may not total 100% because of rounding.

About Whakaata Māori: Whakaata Māori is the national Indigenous media organisation of Aotearoa New Zealand, dedicated to revitalising and advancing te reo Māori, culture, and identity through storytelling.

Guided by the vision, *kia mauriora te reo* - a future where te reo Māori is spoken everywhere, every day - Whakaata Māori creates an environment where te reo Māori and the cultural heritage it carries can thrive.

Established in 2004, Whakaata Māori connects audiences with stories that celebrate and uplift te reo Māori and Māori culture. *Whakaata* means 'to mirror', 'to reflect' or 'to display.'
<https://whakaatamaori.co.nz>

About Te Ao Māori News: Te Ao Māori News is the news and current affairs service of Whakaata Māori, delivering independent journalism through a te ao Māori lens. It elevates Māori voices and provides trusted reporting, analysis and context on the issues that matter most to Māori communities across Aotearoa and around the world.
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