

You are here: [Home](#) / [Permits](#) / [Engaging with Māori](#) / Permit holder engagement with Māori

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Permits

- [Online Permitting System](#)
- [Minerals permits](#)
- [Petroleum permits](#)
- [Engaging with Māori](#)
 - [Permit holder engagement with Māori](#)
- [Permit contacts](#)

Permit holder engagement with Māori

New Zealand Petroleum and Minerals (NZP&M) encourages permit holders to engage with iwi and hapū in a positive and constructive manner.

Annual report requirement

All petroleum and Tier 1 minerals permit holders are required to provide annual reports on their engagement with iwi or hapū whose rohe includes part of the permit area, or may be directly affected by the permit.

This requirement has two main purposes:

1. encourage permit holders to engage with iwi and hapū in a positive and constructive manner; and
2. enable NZP&M to monitor progress of the engagement

Read our guidelines for [annual iwi/hapū engagement reporting \[PDF 409KB\]](#).

Māori environmental guardianship - kaitiakitanga

The environment is interrelated and essential to Māori culture, economy, identity, and well-being. Māori often speak of their role as kaitiaki (guardian), for the sky, sea, and land - the process and practices of protecting and looking after the environment are referred to as kaitiakitanga.

The Conservation Act 1987 and the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) provide for recognition of the Treaty of Waitangi and kaitiakitanga. Section 7 of the RMA requires all individuals involved with managing the use, development, and protection of natural and physical resources to have “particular regard” to kaitiakitanga.

- [The Resource Management Act 1991](#)
- The [Conservation Act 1987](#) on the New Zealand Legislation website.

Principles to consider during engagement with Māori

It is important to have these basic principles in mind when engaging with Māori:

- Talk to Māori as early as possible: this could be before a permit application is lodged but most certainly once an application has been accepted and granted.
- Provide sufficient information to enable Māori to be informed.
- Ensure the right people are talking to each other: this includes appropriate permit holder representatives talking to the right iwi and/or hapū representatives (i.e. CEO to CEO or manager to manager etc). Note that iwi and hapū groups might have shared geographic regions requiring permit holders to engage with different representatives who can advise on specific areas of significance.
- Be particularly aware of information that is provided on sites of local, cultural and historical significance, such as wahi tapū (burial) sites. Legends and parables can be based on environmental truths, e.g. the path of an ancestor's canoe can represent a major migratory route for fish.
- There may be serious concerns about the risk of an oil spill or the impact of sea bed mining operations, as the relationship with the sea is usually a fundamental part of Māori identity. Kaimoana (sea food) can be the main food source for hapū, and marine mammals may be considered taonga (treasures).
- It can be more difficult to ensure you are speaking with the correct representative of a group that has not reached a previous Treaty settlement. NZP&M is happy to provide advice in this regard – [please contact us](#).

Groups who have reached a Treaty settlement may be simpler to contact as they will have an established group who may be assigned to deal with issues such as the permitting process.

- Be aware of associated financial and resourcing constraints when seeking to engage with Maori. Requests for consultation (e.g. a Cultural Impact Assessment) can be a major resource strain for iwi. Some may feel generally under-resourced to appropriately engage with permit holders on issues.
- Consider how activities could be used to develop economic and resourcing opportunities for Māori groups in the operation region. For example, having local Māori trained as Marine Mammal Observers on seismic survey operations. This serves an immediate operational need while giving local Māori a skillset that can be used internationally.

Taranaki tribe Ngati Ruanui has developed a [best practice guideline for engagement with Maori \[PDF 1.4MB\]](#) providing an overview for permit holders on how to approach engagement with local iwi.

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