

ASPIRE Aotearoa Te Tiriti o Waitangi Position Statement

Embedding Te Tiriti into ASPIRE Aotearoa Practice

Brief statement:

ASPIRE Aotearoa is committed to upholding Te Tiriti o Waitangi in our research to eliminate tobacco and nicotine related harm through our collaborative structure where Māori and non-Māori members work together in genuine partnership. Our research collective acknowledges tino rangatiratanga, upholds Māori aspirations and prioritises research that contributes to their achievement; and conducts research that is led by, developed with, and accountable to Māori.

Longer statement incorporating values:

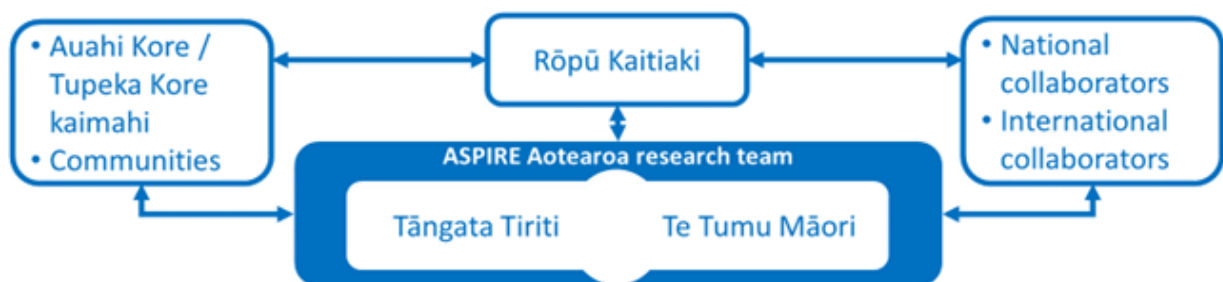
ASPIRE Aotearoa is a Te Tiriti o Waitangi-led research collaboration where Māori and non-Māori researchers work together as equal partners in sharing knowledge, expertise and decision-making. We recognise our obligations to Te Tiriti o Waitangi through our values and how they translate to *what* the foci of our research are, *how* we conduct our research and ASPIRE's *capability* and *capacity* to conduct our research.

Key underlying values relate to recognising Māori tino rangatiratanga (sovereignty) in our work and the importance of maintaining mana-enhancing relationships that facilitate whakaute (mutual respect) between the ASPIRE Aotearoa team and Māori communities, organisations and the people who we work with.

Our shared purpose is the elimination of tobacco and nicotine related harm. Definitions of tobacco and nicotine related harm are diverse. We understand harm through the lens of mauri ora (wellbeing) which recognises psychological, cultural, whānau and spiritual harms as well as physical harms. Health inequities among Māori in Aotearoa are a result of ongoing colonial practices, and addressing health inequities is central to our collective work. To this end we will implement practices to ensure that our research meets Māori needs, maintains connection to te Ao Māori (Māori worldviews) and upholds mana raranga (data sovereignty). Mahi tahi (collaboration and partnerships) with Māori-led organisations and communities is core to the way we conduct our work and as part of this we will ensure that we are takohanga (accountable) to them.

Finally, to uphold our Te Tiriti o Waitangi obligations, it is essential that we have the capability and capacity to conduct research with Māori communities that is responsive to community needs, ways of being, and whakarite (aspirations). This includes ensuring all ASPIRE Aotearoa members are equipped to work effectively in partnership, thus fostering a safe environment for Māori team members and supporting the development of Māori research capacity.

Figure 1: ASPIRE Aotearoa relationships and collaborations



ASPIRE Aotearoa

Te Tiriti o Waitangi Position Statement and Action Plan

ASPIRE Aotearoa is a collective of researchers working to inform and support policies and interventions that enhance the health and wellbeing of Māori, aiming to reduce and then eliminate harm from tobacco and nicotine.

The following position statement confirms and explicitly establishes ASPIRE Aotearoa's commitment to honouring Te Tiriti o Waitangi. This statement describes the aims and steps we will take for all mahi initiated under the korowai (cloak) of ASPIRE Aotearoa.

ASPIRE Aotearoa acknowledges the impacts of the ongoing process of colonisation on Māori health and wellbeing, including the impacts of racism and discrimination (inclusive of systemic, institutional, interpersonal and internalised racism), and trauma caused by the ongoing, and threat of, violations of Te Tiriti o Waitangi. Our work to foster health and wellbeing embeds us in a field that promotes rights, social justice, and equitable outcomes for all.

ASPIRE Aotearoa recognises the disproportionate harm caused by the exploitative practices of the tobacco and nicotine industry, which has impacted Māori more than other peoples. We also acknowledge the role played by successive governments of Aotearoa in allowing this exploitation to take place, despite knowing the harmful effects of smoking and disparities in smoking prevalence among Māori.

This document outlines ASPIRE Aotearoa's understanding of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, by focusing on the three core articles and derived principles (see the appendix). We have drawn on specific principles that are particularly relevant to our mahi. Furthermore, Te Tiriti o Waitangi principles are aligned with our values (as represented after our Te Tiriti statement below). Our values are a synthesis of the personal values of kaimahi ASPIRE Aotearoa, and guide how we work and conduct ourselves in ASPIRE.

The Position of ASPIRE Aotearoa on Te Tiriti o Waitangi:

When we refer to Te Tiriti o Waitangi, we are referring to the Te Reo Māori text as it is the version best understood and signed by the majority of Māori signatories. This also reflects the international law of *contra-proferentem*; the Oxford Dictionary states, "If any doubt or ambiguity arises in the interpretation of a document, the rule requires that the doubt or ambiguity should be resolved against the party who drafted it."¹

ASPIRE Aotearoa recognises Te Tiriti o Waitangi as a founding document of Aotearoa and the agreement that sets out the relationship between Māori iwi, hapū and whānau and the Crown as embodied by the government of Aotearoa.

Although the primary Te Tiriti o Waitangi relationship is between Māori and the Crown, ASPIRE Aotearoa acknowledges its own responsibilities under Te Tiriti with membership that includes tāngata Tiriti (Treaty people) and tāngata whenua (People of the land; Māori). Te Tiriti commitments will be upheld by all ASPIRE Aotearoa members.

¹<https://www.oxfordreference.com/display/10.1093/oi/authority.20110803095635656>, sighted 01/03/2024.

ASPIRE Aotearoa: Commitment to te Tiriti o Waitangi

In the following section, we reflect on the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, including partnership, governance sovereignty, protection, and equity. This section covers our aspirations for applying Te Tiriti o Waitangi principles in our mahi. We recognise Te Tiriti principles often overlap in their roles and implications. However, we endeavour to highlight key aspects related to each principle as a way of clarifying our commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

Principle of Mahi Tahi (Partnership)

Relationships are a foundational for the work of ASPIRE Aotearoa. We will partner with those whose aims and aspirations for Māori health and wellbeing align with our own, such as, collaborations with Māori researchers external to our organisation, those who can deliver services and interventions for Māori that we cannot, and those who should have access to our research findings for the purposes of advocacy and decision making. ASPIRE Aotearoa will be an authentic and honourable partner.

In collaboration with our partners, we will identify which actions need to be led by the kaimahi of ASPIRE Aotearoa and which aspects more appropriately belong to our partners and communities who have the expertise to lead.

We will continue to develop, maintain and reciprocate relationships with Māori through organisational relationships (for example, formalised agreements like memoranda of understanding [MoU]s) such as those ASPIRE Aotearoa has with Hāpai te Hauora, and the University of Otago has with Te Whanganui-a-Tara based iwi organisations. We will review agreements between ASPIRE Aotearoa and partners regularly to ensure they are working and are beneficial to all parties.

We define meaningful engagement as that which includes Māori voice and leadership early in research development and throughout all stages, such as, planning, implementation, feedback and translation. ASPIRE Aotearoa will weave tikanga through the engagement processes with a foundation of whanaungatanga. We will communicate evidence, materials, and resources to support and inform Māori to act in their own interests. We recognise that research should commence with Māori, where research priorities, aspirations or outcomes are determined either by Māori themselves or by issues of significance to Māori communities.

We will expand our networks and engage widely with Māori communities and organisations to keep connected to the goals and health aspirations of Māori and to keep ourselves accountable.

Principle of Kāwanatanga (Governance)

We will ensure there is always meaningful Māori leadership and representation at all levels of our mahi. There will always be at least one Māori co-director and at least 50% Māori membership on the Rōpū Kaitiaki.

ASPIRE Aotearoa will provide opportunities to develop the capabilities of team members and our organisational capability to honour Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

ASPIRE Aotearoa aims to develop and support Māori to senior leadership positions and provide equitable opportunities for professional advancement.

We will actively promote a culture of trust, empathy, and mutual respect, where everyone's voice is valued and heard to foster emotional and physical safety of all members of our team.

Principle of Rangatiratanga (Sovereignty)

ASPIRE Aotearoa embraces the principle of rangatiratanga and respects the importance of Māori self-determination and autonomy in relation to actions to prevent and eliminate tobacco and nicotine related harm.

ASPIRE Aotearoa supports and promotes Māori-led advocacy and research within a Māori worldview. For example, when conducting research that involves or impacts Māori, ASPIRE Aotearoa will create opportunities for kaimahi Māori to set or lead research streams/agendas, along with encouraging involvement of community organisations and people with lived experience of tobacco and nicotine harms.

We will provide opportunities and invest in Māori research capacity, for example by supporting people interested in joining ASPIRE Aotearoa research projects, funding applications, or via other actions such as top up post-graduate scholarships for Māori and Pacific students.

To the best of our abilities, ASPIRE Aotearoa will address attempts to undermine Māori self-determination; we are on a journey to find the most suitable ways for ASPIRE Aotearoa to identify and address racism.

ASPIRE Aotearoa embraces and enacts the principles of Indigenous Data Sovereignty. This means we recognise the significance of respecting the rights and interests of Indigenous people, especially Māori interests. Indigenous Data Sovereignty recognises Indigenous communities have the right to own, govern and control their data, and to ensure that the collection, storage, and usage aligns with their values and priorities.

Principle of Kaitiakitanga (Protection)

ASPIRE Aotearoa contributes to the care of three valuable taonga, 1. The wellbeing of Māori, 2. Policies and interventions that promote the Tupeka Kore vision (tobacco and nicotine free Aotearoa), and 3. Data, especially information and recorded kōrero.

Wellbeing - ASPIRE Aotearoa's research, outreach, teaching, and expert knowledge-creation activities aim to enhance the wellbeing of Māori, support the achievement of Tupeka Kore goals and challenge actors that promote harmful products.

Policies and interventions - ASPIRE Aotearoa cares for and furthers the Tupeka Kore vision by conducting policy research and advocacy within Aotearoa, also partnering with international collaborators including Indigenous collaborators. We acknowledge the leadership of Māori in developing smokefree goals and policies in Aotearoa, notably through the Tupeka Kore vision and the recommendations of the 2010 Māori Affairs Select Committee report.

Data – A key focus of ASPIRE Aotearoa is the deliberate and intentional elevation of Māori voices. For us, this means recognising that everything has whakapapa, the interconnectedness and ancestral lineage that everything possesses, including data. ASPIRE Aotearoa is committed to upholding the value of whakapapa and acknowledging its significance to individuals and communities. In line with this principle, we will be mindful when using Māori data that we protect Māori from poorly designed and interpreted research (e.g., deficit-based research and interpretations). We will ensure that Māori data collected by ASPIRE Aotearoa is stored in Aotearoa and its use is overseen by Māori researchers and our Rōpū Kaitiaki, thereby supporting Indigenous/Māori data sovereignty.

Principle of Rite Tahi (Equity)

ASPIRE Aotearoa recognises the importance of Māori wellbeing and supports the notion that what is good for Māori is generally good for all. ASPIRE Aotearoa operates within a public health framework to achieve equitable outcomes for Māori; for example, by using an equity lens to influence policy to achieve the Tupeka Kore vision. Additionally, ASPIRE Aotearoa will support Māori equity by monitoring and making visible tobacco related inequities.

Our commitment to equity for Māori requires us to acknowledge impacts experienced by Māori due to the introduction and perpetuation of tobacco and nicotine products, and the ongoing impacts of colonisation and racism. ASPIRE Aotearoa also acknowledges the broader determinants of health (e.g., income, housing, stress) that influence tobacco and nicotine use. ASPIRE Aotearoa acknowledges the whakapapa of inequities within our institutions (e.g., university, academia, healthcare) and our wider society. We recognise that inequities within our institutions are outside of ASPIRE's control, however, we support efforts to address these inequities.

Through ASPIRE Aotearoa's advocacy, we aim to centre the aspirations and concerns of Māori, prioritising and amplifying Māori voices and perspectives. ASPIRE Aotearoa aims to ensure our mahi incorporates a mana-enhancing and strengths-based representation of Māori, such as through explicit understandings by Māori of the tobacco system in Aotearoa and the worldviews and values that underpin this. Through these actions, ASPIRE Aotearoa actively works to affirm interests as expressed by Māori, and promoting positive change in tobacco and nicotine free and public health research.

ASPIRE Aotearoa – Our core values:

ASPIRE Aotearoa are united in our values, as described in the following:

Table 1: A synthesis of the values of ASPIRE Aotearoa staff collated in June of 2023.

Mahi Tahi: Our shared purpose	Manaaki: Our ethic of care & respect	Tapatahi: Our integrity
<p>We share a commitment to the elimination of tobacco and nicotine related harm and inequities.</p> <p>We are driven by a desire to help others and make things better for people and communities.</p> <p>We feel a sense of collective responsibility for the wellbeing of current and future generations (including nurturing the next generation of researchers).</p> <p>Our shared purpose unites us with other organisations and individuals with similar aspirations and values.</p>	<p>We are open to and respectful of others' ways of seeing and thinking and uphold the mana of all.</p> <p>We acknowledge that we are diverse and this brings richness to our work and the world.</p> <p>We are ethical in our research practices and treat colleagues and research participants with care and respect.</p>	<p>We acknowledge Te Tiriti o Waitangi as a founding document of Aotearoa New Zealand and strive to honour Te Tiriti through our work.</p> <p>We acknowledge Māori leadership and mātauranga Māori.</p> <p>We act with honesty, integrity and truthfulness.</p> <p>We stand up for what is right.</p> <p>We strive for excellence in all that we do.</p> <p>We are genuine in our search for answers that improve people's lives.</p>

In closing ASPIRE Aotearoa position statement on Te Tiriti o Waitangi:

ASPIRE Aotearoa is made up of people with diverse whakapapa. We have genealogical links that span Aotearoa and the globe. We bring rich experiences and varied personal and professional backgrounds. We hold many roles in our lives, we are parents, students, teachers, researchers, writers, and are fairly evenly split in our preferences for cats versus dogs (although, its possible cats are in the lead). We are people who have come together to further the aspirations of all the communities in which we work. Our differences and our similarities are a strength and create opportunities to grow together. We are grateful to work with and be supported by all our colleagues.

Appendix: Te Tiriti o Waitangi articles and principles

Te Tiriti o Waitangi is comprised of three core articles:	Principles articulated by the Waitangi Tribunal and the Courts provide guidance around how we can meet our obligations ² :
<p>Article 1 grants the Crown the right to govern, kāwanatanga, allowing for administrative control and law making³. However, the kāwanatanga was expected to be in partnership with tangata whenua, rather than absolute sovereignty.</p> <p>Article 2 refers to tino rangatiratanga which guarantees Māori the right to retain control and authority over their lands and taonga.</p> <p>Article 3 refers to ōritetanga which guarantees Māori equal rights and privileges, as citizens of Aotearoa New Zealand.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rangatiratanga: Māori self-determination and mana motuhake. Recognising the rights of Māori to make decisions concerning their people, including in the design, delivery, and monitoring of health services. • Partnership: Partnership means working with Māori communities using preferred structures (iwi, hapū, whānau) to support Māori aspirations. • Active protection: The protection of Māori rights and interests including the protection of tino rangatiratanga (which includes autonomy) and taonga (including culture and language) • Equity: Freedom from discrimination and the promotion of equity and pursuit of Māori defined aspirations.

² Waitangi Tribunal. (2019). Hauora: Report on Stage One of the Health Services and Outcomes Kaupapa Inquiry. Wellington. Waitangi Tribunal. pp. 163-164

³ We acknowledge ongoing debates about the meaning, particularly of Article 1 relating to what rangatira intended when they granted te kawanatanga katoa (governance), such as rangatira agreed to delegate authority for administering the country to the Queen, alternatively rangatira agreed to the Crown having authority over Europeans living in Aotearoa. We also acknowledge that the Waitangi Tribunal were tasked with determining the meaning of Te Tiriti, and the [Tribunal concluded](#) that Māori did not cede sovereignty. Summary of 2014 report on the meaning of Te Tiriti can be found [here](#).