



The first Government Settlement on the Waitemata River, 1st October 1840. [Unsigned, Dr John Johnson 1794 – 1848]. By courtesy Archives New Zealand.

The Treaty of Waitangi & Immigration in 1840

The Treaty is recognised as the first immigration agreement between Māori and Pākehā (European settlers). The Treaty originally allowed settlers to emigrate peacefully to New Zealand under the British flag.

“But then we must not forget that the Treaty is not just a Bill of Rights for Māori. It is a Bill of Rights for Pākehā too. It is the Treaty that gives Pākehā the right to be here. Without the Treaty, there would be no lawful authority for the Pākehā presence in this part of the South Pacific.”

— Chief Judge Eddie Durie.

The Treaty was important, firstly, to control the thousands of future emigrants to Aotearoa New Zealand, and secondly, to protect the rights of Māori people. The benefits to both parties were clear—settlement rights for Pākehā and the natural rights of the *tāngata whenua* (the people of the land) would be respected and affirmed.