

Legislative statement

**Te Pire mō te Hararei Tūmatanui o Te Kāhui o
Matariki / Te Kāhui o Matariki Public Holiday Bill**

Second Reading

Presented to the House of Representatives

In accordance with Standing Order 272

Legislative statement for Te Pire mō te Hararei Tūmatanui o Te Kāhui o Matariki / Te Kāhui o Matariki Public Holiday Bill 2021

- 1 This legislative statement supports the second reading of Te Pire mō te Hararei Tūmatanui o Te Kāhui o Matariki / Te Kāhui o Matariki Public Holiday Bill 2021 (the Bill).

Objectives

- 2 The Bill establishes a public holiday that celebrates Matariki and acknowledges the significance of this period in te ao Māori.
- 3 As the first public holiday to distinctly recognise and celebrate te ao Māori, this is an important contribution to our evolving national identity and will serve to build a greater national understanding and value of Māori language, culture and heritage.
- 4 Mātauranga Māori was central to the development of this legislation. Advice was sought from an expert Matariki Advisory Group to determine when and how Matariki should be celebrated as a public holiday, according to times and values aligned with traditional observances of the Matariki period. The Matariki public holiday reflects the Government's desire to strengthen the Māori Crown relationship, including by better acknowledging events and occasions of importance to Māori.
- 5 The Bill has been reported back from the Māori Affairs Select Committee. The Committee recommended that the Bill be passed without amendment.

Dates of observance

- 6 The public holiday will be observed annually on the dates set out in the Bill for the next 30 years, from 2022 to 2052.
- 7 The Bill ensures that for the next 30 years the holiday will fall on the Friday adjacent to the week-end closest to the Tangaroa lunar phase (the point in the lunar month where the last quarter moon rises) of Pipiri (the Māori calendar period typically falling between June and July). This means the Matariki public holiday will create a long weekend and give people the chance to spend time with whānau and friends.
- 8 The Bill provides that future dates will be set by Order in Council. It provides that all future dates of the Matariki Public Holiday must be Fridays, and that future dates must be set at least 4 years before the final date listed in the Bill. This means that future dates must be set before 21 June 2048.

Significance to Māori and principles for observance

- 9 Establishing the Matariki public holiday reflects the Government's commitment to recognising and celebrating an important aspect of te ao Māori. None of Aotearoa/New Zealand's existing 11 public holidays explicitly recognise te ao Māori.
- 10 The Matariki Advisory Group (the Group) was appointed by Cabinet to provide expert advice on when and how the Matariki public holiday should be celebrated. The Group consisted of experts who have deep knowledge and understanding of both te ao Māori and the body of knowledge associated with Matariki and the Maramataka (Māori lunar calendar). The Bill includes a statement – provided by the Group – that outlines the meaning and significance of Matariki to Māori, and core principles and values to underpin Matariki celebrations. The Group advised that celebrations of the Matariki public holiday should focus on three principles of remembering those who have passed, celebrating the present, and looking forward to the future.
- 11 For many Māori, the eastern pre-dawn appearance of Matariki in the winter sky, during the last quarter of the lunar month of Pipiri, marks the beginning of te mātahi o te tau – the Māori New Year. Some iwi use the heliacal rising of other stars – such as Puanga – as their marker of the Māori New Year. The start of the Māori New Year launched the most significant celebration in the Maramataka, which continues to be honoured today with ritual and ceremony.
- 12 Matariki marks a period of reflection and remembrance, celebration, and focus on the promise of a new season. Matariki is part of an environmental calendar system that includes the position of the sun, heliacal rising of stars, lunar phases, and regional ecological events.
- 13 The Group has also emphasised the intrinsic connection between Matariki and environmental awareness. The long term vision is for Mana Taiao and positive environmental activities, such as planting trees and cleaning waterways, to be a hallmark of the Matariki public holiday.

Dual language

- 14 This is a dual language Bill in both te reo Māori and English. Matariki derives from a te reo Māori language base and it is important that this is reflected in legislation. The dual language status of the Bill will also further strengthen the Māori Crown relationship.

Administration of the New Act

- 15 Manatū Taonga, the Ministry for Culture and Heritage, will administer the new Act.