

Te Rā o Matariki Bill/Matariki Day Bill

Member's Bill

Explanatory note

General policy statement

It is important that, as a maturing and ethnically diverse nation, New Zealand recognises its indigenous origins through a designated national day to which all sectors of society feel able to connect and celebrate.

In recent years there has been an upsurge of awareness among New Zealanders of all ethnicities, of the place of Māori in both the history and future of the nation and in the development of a unique national identity. As an expression of this developing unique identity, this bill acknowledges a significant occurrence within the Māori calendar – the celebration of Matariki, the Māori New Year.

Traditionally, this was a time for planning, preparation and planting – activities which continue to have significance, and can be embraced by all.

The bill seeks to establish a public holiday to mark the time of Matariki.

The Matariki star cluster is seen in all parts of the world, where it is variously known as Pleiades, Seven Sisters, Makali'i, and Parveen, making it a particularly relevant event through which to connect all peoples together in the celebration of a national public holiday. In-

deed, the Japanese call the cluster Subaru, the meaning of which is ‘unite’.

There are many stories from around the globe about the significance of Matariki as a navigational star and as a signal of whether the coming harvests will be plentiful.

Although there is some variation between iwi of when Matariki is celebrated, the bill proposes that Matariki be observed as a public holiday on the day of the next new moon after the Matariki constellation has risen. The timing varies from year to year but usually occurs during the months of May or June.

Clause by clause analysis

Clause 1 is the Title clause.

Clause 2 provides that the bill comes into force on the day after the date on which it receives the Royal assent.

Clause 3 is the purpose clause.

Clause 4 provides for when Matariki is to be observed.

Clause 5 provides that Matariki is to be publicly notified in the *Gazette*.

Clause 6 and the *Schedule* relate to amendments to the Holidays Act 2001, to make the observance of Matariki as a public holiday fully effective.

Rahui Katene

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Contents

	Page
1 Title	1
2 Commencement	1
3 Purpose	2
4 Observance of Matariki	2
5 Matariki to be publicly notified	2
6 Amendments to Holidays Act 2003	2
Schedule	3
Amendments to Holidays Act 2003	

The Parliament of New Zealand enacts as follows:

1 Title

This Act may be cited as—

- (a) Te Rā o Matariki Act **2009**; or
- (b) The Matariki Day Act **2009**.

2 Commencement

This Act comes into force on the day after the date on which it receives the Royal assent.

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3 Purpose

The purpose of this Act is to make provision for the observance of Matariki—

- (a) as the Māori New Year; and
- (b) as a public holiday.

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4 Observance of Matariki

Matariki must be observed as a public holiday throughout New Zealand on the day of the next new moon following the day in which it rises in the months of May or June.

5 Matariki to be publicly notified

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The Minister of Māori Affairs, after consultation with such persons having knowledge and experience in tikanga and astronomy as the Minister considers appropriate, may from time to time, by notice in the *Gazette*, declare the day on which Matariki is to be observed.

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6 Amendments to Holidays Act 2003

The Holidays Act 2003 is amended in the manner indicated in the Schedule.

Schedule
Amendments to Holidays Act 2003

s 6**Section 32(a)**

Omit “11” and substitute “12”.

Section 44(1)

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Insert the following paragraph after paragraph (h):

“(ha) Matariki.”

New section 45A

Insert after section 45:

“45A Transfer of Matariki as public holiday

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For the purposes of this subpart, if Matariki falls on a Saturday or a Sunday, it must be treated as a public holiday falling on the following Monday or, if that is already a public holiday, the following Tuesday.”