NAOERO LANGUAGE AUTHORITY

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Naoero Language Authority Act 2025

TABLE OF AMENDMENTS

The Naoero Language Authority Act 2025 No 39 was certified and commenced on 19 September 2025.

Amending Legislation	Certified	Date of Commencement
Constitution (Amendment) (No 2) Act 2026 No 21	12 May 2026	s 5: 12 May 2026

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An Act to protect and preserve the Naoero language, to establish the Naoero Language Authority, to provide for its functions and for other related purposes.

Enacted by the Parliament of Naoero as follows:
[cl am Act 21 of 2026 s 5, opn 12 May 2026]

PART 1 — PRELIMINARY

1 Short title

This Act may be cited as the *Naoero Language Authority Act 2025*.

2 Commencement

This Act commences upon the certification of the Speaker.

3 Objective

The objectives of this Act are to:

(a) declare the Naoero Language as the national language of the Republic;
(b) protect and preserve the Naoero language;
(c) provide for the Naoero language as the national language of Naoero;
(d) promote the status and use of the Naoero language within the community and in the education system;
(e) standardise the interpretation and translation of the Naoero language;
(f) establish the Naoero Language Authority; and
(g) establish the Naoero Language Technical Committee.

[s 3 am Act 21 of 2026 s 5, opn 12 May 2026]

4 Interpretation

In this Act:

'Authority' means the Naoero Language Authority established under Section 6;

'Committee' means the Naoero Language Technical Committee established under Part 4;

'Director' means the Director for Naoero Language Authority appointed under Section 13;

'interpretation' in relation to Naoero language, means the oral expression in English or other languages of words orally stated in the Naoero language and the oral expression in the Naoero language of words orally stated in the English language or any other foreign language;

'Minister' means the Minister responsible for this Act;

'Naoero language' means the ordinary native language spoken by the Naoero citizens and where necessary as certified and approved by the Authority under this Act;

[def am Act 21 of 2026 s 5, opn 12 May 2026]

'school' has the meaning given to it under the *Education Act 2011*;

'Secretary' means the Secretary responsible for National Heritage and Culture;

'staff of the Authority' means a person under Section 16;

'translation' in relation to the Naoero language, means the written expression in English or other languages of words written in the Naoero language and the written expression in the Naoero language of words written in the English language or any other foreign language.

[The next page is 1,050,501]

PART 2 — NAOERO LANGUAGE TO BE THE NATIONAL LANGUAGE

5 Naoero language as the national language

The Naoero language is the national language of the Republic notwithstanding any other official language.

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PART 3 — NAOERO LANGUAGE AUTHORITY

6 Establishment of the Naoero Language Authority

(1) The Naoero Language Authority is established.

(2) The Authority shall have perpetual succession.

(3) The Authority may:
- (a) sue and be sued;
- (b) enter into contracts and other legal obligations;
- (c) acquire, hold, manage and dispose of real or personal properties; and
- (d) do all other acts that may be done in law by a body corporate.

7 Composition of Authority

The Authority shall consist of:
- (a) the Naoero Language Technical Committee; and
- (b) the staff of the Authority.

8 Chairperson of the Authority

(1) There shall be a Chairperson of the Authority.

(2) The Chairperson shall be elected by the members of the Authority.

(3) The Chairperson shall be appointed for a term of 3 years.

(4) An acting Chairperson may be:
- (a) appointed by the Chairperson in his or her absence; or
- (b) elected by the members of the Committee, where the Chairperson has not in his or her absence appointed an acting Chairperson.

9 Functions of the Authority

The Authority shall:
- (a) advise the Minister and the Secretary on policy matters relating to the Naoero language;
- (b) be the national authority on the Naoero language;
- (c) consider and make recommendations to the Cabinet on orthography, phonetics, vocabulary including developing new words, and standardisation of the Naoero language;
- (d) in carrying out the functions of paragraph (c), the Authority may adopt any work that has been carried out by an informal body existing prior to this Act;
- (e) assist the Department responsible for Education as and when requested by such Department;
- (f) assist any relevant Department in organising any Naoero language activity in the community;
- (g) develop standards and rules for spelling of words in the Naoero language;
- (h) develop standards and guidelines for Naoero language grammar and usage;
- (i) develop and promote standardised Naoero language;
- (j) promote the development and use of sign language, braille and other communication formats and technologies accessible to persons with disabilities;

(k) prepare and publish a dictionary of Naoero words, grammar, usage and other works on the Naoero language;
(l) provide interpretation and translation services;
(m) confer certificates of competency in the interpretation and translation of the Naoero language;
(n) provide advice to other Government Departments including the media and other public enterprises on the use of the Naoero language;
(o) establish national priorities and guidelines for research work on the Naoero language;
(p) promote and certify the publication of literature and materials in the Naoero language; and
(q) have such other functions conferred on the Authority by this Act or any other written law.

10 Powers of the Authority

The Authority has the power to do all things necessary or convenient to be done for the performance of its functions under this Act or any other written law.

11 Meetings of the Authority

(1) The Authority shall regulate the practice and procedure for its meeting.
(2) The meetings of the Authority shall be held at such time and place as determined by the Chairperson or at the request of the majority of the members of the Committee.
(3) The meeting of the Authority may include:
(a) a determination of matters relating to the functions of the Authority;
(b) upon the direction of the Secretary;
(c) upon the direction of the Minister; or
(d) for any other matters under this Act or relating to the Naoero language.
(4) The quorum for a meeting of the Authority shall not be less than half of the total number of the members.
(5) The decision of the majority of the members present at the meeting shall be the decision of the Authority and in the event of an equality of votes, the Chairperson shall have the casting vote.

12 Chairperson may invite other persons to attend meeting

(1) The Chairperson may invite any person to attend and participate in a meeting.
(2) A person who attends a meeting under subsection (1) shall not have a voting right.

13 The Director for Naoero Language Authority

(1) There shall be established the office of the Director for Naoero Language Authority.
(2) The Director shall be appointed by the Chief Secretary in consultation with the Secretary.
(3) The Director shall be responsible and accountable to the Authority for the performance of his or her functions and exercise of his or her powers under this Act.

(4) A person may only be appointed as the Director, where the person:
(a) is well-versed in the Naoero language, culture and heritage;
(b) has expertise in reading and writing in the Naoero language;
(c) has work experience in any one of the following areas:
(i) tertiary or secondary education;
(ii) culture;
(iii) heritage;
(iv) religious organisation; or
(v) civil society representing the interests of women, youth or persons with disabilities.

(5) The Director shall not engage in any other employment, except as a member of a board or committee established under any other written law.

(6) The terms and conditions of appointment of the Director shall be subject to the *Public Service Act 2016*.

14 Functions of the Director

The Director shall be responsible for:
(a) the management of the affairs and operations of the Authority;
(b) the formation and development of a strategic plan for the Authority;
(c) the organisation, management and administration of the staff of the Authority;
(d) implementing the directions or decisions of the Authority;
(e) establishing, keeping and maintaining the records of the Authority; and
(f) such other functions which the Authority may confer or delegate to the Director in order to achieve the objectives of this Act.

15 Powers of the Director

The Director has the power to do all things necessary or convenient to be done for the performance of his or her functions under this Act or any other written law.

16 Staff of the Authority

(1) The staff of the Authority shall constitute:
(a) the Director; and
(b) any other person appointed by the Chief Secretary on the advice of the Secretary in consultation with the Technical Committee.

(2) The terms and conditions of the appointment of staff shall be subject to the *Public Service Act 2016*.

17 Authority to certify interpreters, translators and publication of literature and materials in the Naoero language

(1) The Authority may confer a Naoero Language Certificate of Competency to a person who:
(a) applies to the Authority for that certificate; and
(b) satisfies the Authority that he or she is qualified to be a holder of such a certificate.

(2) A certificate of competency conferred under subsection (1), shall be one of the following:

(a) a certificate of competency in the interpretation of the Naoero language;
(b) a certificate of competency in the translation of the Naoero language;
(c) a certificate of competency for the publication of literature and materials in the Naoero language; or
(d) any other category of certificate of competency, which the Authority may approve.

[The next page is 1,050,901]

PART 4 — NAOERO LANGUAGE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

18 Establishment of the Naoero Language Technical Committee

The Naoero Language Technical Committee is established.

19 Appointment of a Member of the Committee

(1) The Minister on the advice of the Director and in consultation with the Secretary shall appoint a member of the Committee in accordance with the requirements under Section 21.

(2) A person appointed to be a member of the Committee shall hold membership for a period of 3 years and may be eligible for reappointment.

(3) The Director shall be a member of the Committee.

20 Termination of appointment of a member of the Committee

The Minister on the advice of the Director and in consultation with the Secretary may terminate the appointment of a member of the Committee where the member:

(a) fails to attend 3 consecutive meetings of the Committee;
(b) fails to attend more than 5 meetings of the Committee in a year;
(c) fails to or refuses to contribute to the role of the Committee;
(d) intentionally or recklessly obstructs the work of the Authority; or
(e) breaches the code of conduct or commits a misconduct under the *Public Service Act 2016*.

21 Qualification of a person to be appointed as a member of the Committee

A person may only be appointed as a member of the Committee, if the person:

(a) is well-versed in the Naoero language, culture or heritage;
(b) has expertise in reading and writing in the Naoero language;
(c) has interest in the Naoero language, culture and heritage;
(d) has worked or been involved in any one of the following areas:
  (i) Naoero culture;
  (ii) Naoero heritage;
  (iii) religious organisations; or
  (iv) civil society representing the interests of women, youth or persons with disabilities in Naoero.

[s 21 am Act 21 of 2026 s 5, opn 12 May 2026]

22 Disqualification of a person from being appointed as a member of the Committee

A person shall not be appointed as a member of the Committee where his or her appointment is terminated under Section 20 of this Act.

23 Remuneration

A member of the Committee is not entitled to fixed remuneration but shall be paid a sitting allowance of $200 for each meeting that a member attends.

[The next page is 1,051,101]

PART 5 — NAOERO LANGUAGE IN EDUCATION

24 Teaching of Naoero Language in schools

(1) The Department responsible for Education shall in consultation with the Authority develop the curriculum for teaching of the Naoero Language in a school.

(2) The Department responsible for Education shall have the sole authority to deliver, supervise and approve the teaching of the Naoero Language within a school.

(3) The Department of Education shall be responsible in:

(a) providing training and certification of relevant persons in the Naoero language including Naoero language teachers; and

(b) the preparation and implementation of a curriculum for the use of the Naoero language in education including providing Naoero language teachers to teach such curriculum.

[The next page is 1,051,301]

PART 6 — MISCELLANEOUS

25 Consultations

The Authority may where it deems necessary consult with the community on any matter for the purpose of achieving the objectives of this Act.

26 Funds for the administration and operation of the Authority

The funds for the administration and operations of the Authority shall be:

(a) as appropriated by the Parliament; and

(b) such other funds including any grant or aid given to the Authority.

27 Annual report

(1) The Authority shall submit an annual report of its activities to the Secretary and the Minister within 2 months after each successive financial year.

(2) The Minister shall table the annual report in Parliament by no later than 31 January each year.

28 Protection from liability

The Minister, Secretary or Authority or any other person authorised under this Act, shall not be liable for any act done or omitted to be done in good faith in the performance of a function or exercise of a power under this Act or any other written law in furthering the objectives of this Act.

29 Record keeping requirements

(1) The Director shall keep a record of all matters arising from the performance of the functions and exercise of the powers by the Authority or the Director under this Act.

(2) The records shall be kept and maintained in:

(a) electronic form or digital form; and

(b) manually or in the case of electronic or digital form, capable of being produced in printed form.

30 Confidentiality requirements

(1) Subject to subsection (2), a member of the Authority shall keep all matters arising from the performance of the functions and exercise of the powers under this Act, confidential.

(2) The Secretary may authorise the disclosure of any matter for the purpose of achieving the objectives of this Act.

31 Regulations

(1) The Cabinet may make regulations for all matters required or necessary to give effect to this Act.

(2) Without limiting subsection (1), regulations may be made to prescribe:

(a) procedures required for the conferment of a Naoero Language Certificate of Competency;

(b) procedures necessary for the Authority to perform its functions and exercise its powers;
(c) training, education and other criteria for the conferment of a certificate of competency;
(d) procedures for the approval of research conducted on the Naoero language; and
(e) fees for the purposes of the Act.

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