

Wellington protest: Freedom and Rights coalition march on Parliament ends, roads to reopen

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Protesters led by Brian Tamaki descended on Parliament this morning protesting gender identity, politics, and everything in between.

An estimated 2000 people marched from Civic Square to Parliament this morning in the 'Abandon Agenda 2030' march. The march was billed as a protest against Agenda 2030 - a United Nations (UN) led movement which supports countries who voluntarily sign up to achieve 17 sustainable development goals. These goals range from ending poverty, to ensuring healthy living - but are not legally binding.

The conference was supposed to be held at Parliament on Thursday and included former Director General of Health Dr Ashley Bloomfield as a keynote speaker. However, concerns over safety due to the protest meant the conference was moved online.

This did not stop the crowds of protesters led by Hannah and Brian Tamaki. The pair spoke to the crowds at Civic Square and again at Parliament, largely about gender identity.

There was a huge police presence for the rally, and several roads throughout Wellington have been closed since Tuesday night in preparation for the disruption.

Once at Parliament Brian Tamaki once again addressed the crowd and encouraged them to vote in what he called "the election of New Zealand's lifetime".

Tamaki, along with his wife is the co-founder of the new Freedoms New Zealand political party.

"I want New Zealand again to rise up out of the ashes. . . I have a vision of a New Zealand that can be great again."

He called for a "ballot box revolution".

After his speech, the protest largely dispersed and fizzled out.

There were also bollards set up at the gates of Parliament.

Acting Superintendent Wade Jennings said the roads around Parliament will be reopened this afternoon now that the protesters have left.

Police reported no issues from the protest, he said.

"Police maintained a high presence in the city to manage traffic and keep counter-protest groups apart ... approximately 100 staff were on duty for the protest and march, which was uneventful."

Jenning said police were pleased things went well.

"The ability to protest peacefully is an important part of being a democratic community - but key for us is this activity remains peaceful.

"With protesters largely gone from the area, we are now keen to reopen the roads and restore people's ability to travel through the area."

Police will continue to have a presence around the Parliamentary precinct this evening and overnight.

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