

IN THE WAITANGI TRIBUNAL

**Wai 2700
Wai 1541
Wai 1673
Wai 1917**

IN THE MATTER OF the Treaty of Waitangi Act 1975

AND

IN THE MATTER OF the Mana Wāhine Kaupapa
Inquiry

BY Louisa Te Matekino Collier and
Frederick Collier Junior, on
behalf of themselves, and on
behalf of Ruiha (Hinewhare) and
her descendants

BRIEF OF EVIDENCE OF LOUISA TE MATEKINO COLLIER

20 January 2021

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Waitangi Tribunal

28 Jan 2021

Ministry of Justice
WELLINGTON

I, LOUISA TE MATEKINO COLLIER, Kuia, state that:

- 1.** My name is Ruiha Te Matekino Collier. I am Ngāpuhi. My whakapapa is set out in the document attached as “**Annex A**”. I present this evidence with my sister, Anne Mary Davies.
- 2.** I was born in Rangiahua in 1942 and am 78 years old. I currently live in Whangārei.
- 3.** I present this kōrero as part of the Tūāpapa hearings in the Mana Wāhine Inquiry. These first hearings broadly concern how mana wāhine is understood and in Te Ao Māori, and in our Tikanga. I will speak to my own knowledge of mana wāhine, as it has been passed down to me from great tūpuna wāhine and as learnt through my Ngāpuhi whānau.
- 4.** In this, I wish to demonstrate to the Tribunal the central importance of wāhine to our Tikanga, and in particular, to our whakapapa lines of descent. The concept of the puhi line, and the role that the puhi within that line play, is at the heart of these ideas. This Tikanga emphasises the independent right of women to possess and watch over our own birth rights, passed down from our tūpuna.
- 5.** This BoE will first broadly explain our understandings of the role of the puhi line, and the contribution it has to understanding mana wāhine. Then, I will discuss our puhi tūpuna, Hinewhare and Kaiwhare, in order to give context and meaning to this discussion of our Tikanga. Finally, I will conclude with my own experiences growing up with these ideas and having them as a part of my life.

A: The Puhi Line

Genealogical Descent

- 6.** The concept of the puhi line is central to our Tikanga. In relation to mana wāhine, it is the most important element of our whakapapa.

7. A puhi is an important woman of great repute and of chiefly descent. She was given specific roles and seen as tapu. The puhi line descends through the senior female line, passed down from eldest daughter to eldest daughter. The whakapapa of the puhi shows their descent from the great Ariki, and from Te Puhi-Moana-Ariki, who is the great eponymous ancestor of Ngāpuhi.
8. Te Puhi-Moana-Ariki is accepted as the starting point of our whakapapa, illustrating a fundamental ritenga/custom of Ngāpuhi. The notion of the puhi line begins with the daughter of Te Puhi-Moana-Ariki, Te Hau.
9. A puhi had a fundamental role in the origination of hapū of Ngāpuhi. Each hapū group has a puhi line which creates the hapū, and demonstrates their whakapapa to the original Ariki. “Ngā Puhi” itself is the confederation of the puhi lines, with each individual hapū being protected by the whole tribe. Our whakapapa is centred around the descent of puhi.
10. A puhi carried great mana, which would then be attached to her whānau. Other whānau could also be close to the puhi lines. Even so, it was impossible in our society to live just within the whānau and hapū, as it was necessary to know and nurture our tribal connections to Ngāpuhi. This was all bound together by the descent of puhi.
11. The status of puhi is most usually passed from eldest daughter to eldest daughter, but it does not necessarily go that way. If there are no daughters for the puhi line to pass through, or if the eldest daughter is blind or infirm in some way, then the puhi could pass to some other descended wahine. This descent was very important, as the status of puhi carries with it great mana in our Tikanga.

Mana Whenua

12. Traditionally, puhi held integral roles for the strength and welfare of their hapū. Most significantly, the puhi held the mana whenua, that is, the powers and obligations in relation to the land, as circumscribed by our Tikanga. The holding of mana whenua would always be respected, and the land was always

returned to those who hold mana whenua. It was the wāhine who were bequeathed land and held mana whenua status, ensuring that lands were not lost through marriages.

13. In this way, customary ownership of our lands is demonstrated by our whakapapa, which is, in turn, determined by the toto/bloodlines. This bloodline is carried from the pito/the umbilical cord of the birth mother, and the burying of the pito under a tree in the region is symbolic of the mana whenua that is held. Specific groves of “pito trees” were used for many generations to establish this ownership, with some still being used today.
14. In some circumstances, a male retained his pito until the birth of his first child, which then allowed the two pito to be buried simultaneously in the whenua of the birth mother. This process allowed the birth father to be buried in the lands of the birth mother.
15. Because they carry the mana whenua, puhi were then the highly-regarded and protected heirs of Ngāpuhi. There was a great respect afforded to the position. The puhi were treated with reverence and protected by the tribe. The status of puhi was not to be challenged or fought over. Security was created by the vesting of mana whenua in one line of matrilineal descent.
16. Furthermore, the puhi possess through their descent the taha wairua, or strength in the presence of God’s will. This will guide the puhi in the exercise of their mana whenua, and their ability to see the unseen. It is another reflection of the great mana of these wāhine.

Puhi as Kaitiaki

17. In the old times, it was often the case that the men would move around and settle in unfamiliar lands, while the women remained on their own whenua. In this way, wāhine would develop a deep understanding of the land, which involved knowing all the locations for good kai, and how the land responded to the changing of the seasons. Wāhine were the keepers of this knowledge, and used it, with their mana whenua, to be kaitiaki of the land.

18. Therefore, as well as possessing mana whenua over their lands, the puhi would also be the tiaki/guards of the kai. Rights over the land were reciprocated through the fulfilment of obligations to it.
19. For these purposes, certain manu/birds are of central importance. A puhi would have domination over a species of bird, with the whakapapa of the women's line maintaining the hapū of the birds. A puhi and her hapū would be tied to the mana of this bird. It was usually a seabird, for example a kawau/shag or toroa/albatross, demonstrating our connections to the coast and the sea. I have whakapapa to the kawauiti/little shag and kotuku/white heron. In fact, our line gave the kawau to one of Kupe's daughters, who then held the mana over it.
20. The woman has dominance over the land through her mana whenua. As kaitiaki, she must also look after it. To fulfil this duty, the puhi carries the knowledge and the responsibility for the care of her environment.
21. A puhi will understand the movements of the birds over which they have mana, and how these movements interrelate with the rest of the natural environment, for example, with the coming of the fish, the seasons and the Maramatakaka/lunar calendar. The women of our puhi line protect the kawauiti and kotuku. The kawauiti signalled the commencement of the eel season, whereas the kotuku identified the return of the kanai/whitebait for breeding. This was important to our hapū because it identified our seasonal kai.
22. The role of our kaitiaki was determined by the whakapapa of those holding mana whenua. The puhi were the guardians of not only our manu, but of all living things within Te Ao Maori. They had the responsibility for maintaining the balance and health of our ecosystems, and of sustaining our people.

The Puhi and Tāne in Society

- 23.** Puhi status was intensely guarded by the puhi's hapū. As was the case in many societies, marriages were often arranged in order to secure alliances, resources or succession.
- 24.** Because they carried the mana whenua, it was essential that the puhi were protected in our society. Ngāpuhi tāne could only access the mana of the land through a connection to the puhi. In return, the puhi would call upon the tāne to protect them and their lands.
- 25.** Our eponymous ancestor, Te Puhi-Moana-Ariki, formed the arikitanga, or chieftain line of men, and this was done to protect the puhi. The arikitanga was known as the mana tangata or ringa kaha, and it was essential to ensure the practice of kaitiakitanga could continue.
- 26.** Many puhi were destined for tomo/arranged marriages. Those situated on tupuna land had predetermined tāne brought in for the tomo, usually from a reputable male line whose whakapapa and credibility could produce a powerful hapū. The existence of some hapū was sometimes reliant on the right alliances being formed through a tomo. Other hapū maintained security through inter-marriages within their whakapapa.
- 27.** The man that was selected would marry into the puhi line, and the whole whānau and hapū would have to provide for the puhi and protect her lands. In this way, the marriage of the puhi was integral to our societal structure. Whakapapa lines were strengthened through moetanga or tomo. There may have been strategic reasons in times of war, and the economic and cultural wellbeing of the hapū was also considered.
- 28.** In spite of moetanga or tomo, the puhi was always highly-regarded, and had power in deciding the men who would protect her and her whenua. This decision was made with the agreement of the puhi, her whānau and the Rangatira of that tribal grouping. The man she selected could be mana tangata,

or ringa kaha if he showed great prowess and strength but was not of the bloodline. The puhi even had the power to select who her sisters would marry.

29. Therefore, it was through her marriage, and who her society would moe or tomo her to, that a puhi maintained the strength to hold her position and her mana. The essence of the whakapapa was the maintenance of that mana, especially over the whenua.

B: Tūpuna of the Puhi Line

30. I wish now to discuss two great puhi tūpuna in my whakapapa. The first is Hinewhare, the youngest daughter of Hongi Hika, from whom I am directly descended. The second is Kaiwhare, one of the puhi with mana whenua over Whangaroa.

31. This kōrero will give context to the ideas that I have discussed above, and provide real examples of how the qualities and dignity of the puhi were exemplified by our wāhine.

Hinewhare (1817 - c.1890)

32. Ruiha, or Hinewhare, was the last surviving daughter of the great Rangatira, Hongi Hika. She held the puhi line through her grandmother, Tuhi Kura and her mother, Turi Kotuku. Both were rangatira of the Ngāti Rēhia and Ngare Raumati. She took the mana of the kotuku/white heron. This line was passed down to her because her elder sister, Hareata Rongo had no surviving children.
33. Hinewhare was born in 1817 at her father's house near Kororipo Pā in Kerikeri. She attended the early Missionary School where she developed a passion for both reading and writing. She recorded detailed accounts of various events throughout her life in diaries that she kept.
34. Hinewhare was the youngest daughter of the great chief Hongi Hika, and she was of the puhi line. Therefore, she was afforded the greatest respect and the chiefly duties associated with the puhi.

35. The most tragic accounts of Hinewhare relate to her abduction. When she was 13 years old, after the death of her father, Hinewhare was captured and taken on a ship for ransom.
36. When Hongi Hika died, Kororipo Pā was under threat from other hapū. Hongi's people always knew that war was not going to break out because of other Rangatira staking claim to his land, but they were afraid of the threat posed by European settlers attempting to do the same.
37. Therefore, in an effort to protect Hinewhare, her uncle Ururoa made arrangements for Hinewhare to live at Rewa's Pā in Paroa Bay. She was to be transported by Captain Brind on his vessel.
38. En route, Brind stopped at Matauwhi Bay in Kororāreka to visit Pomare, who had promised him a bride. This did not eventuate. Frustrated, Brind held Hinewhare captive on his ship as a means of bargaining.
39. Hinewhare's true name was Ruiha, and she was given the name Hinewhare while aboard Brind's ship. The story involves Samuel Marsden, the Anglican missionary. Marsden knew that Hinewhare was the daughter of Hongi Hika, and questioned Captain Brind about why she was aboard his ship. Brind misrepresented the situation and told Marsden that Hinewhare was from the "girls' house", or a brothel. "Hine whare" is a literal translation of "girls' house", and the name was a major slur against the mana of Hongi Hika's daughter. Nevertheless, Hinewhare never gave up this name, as a symbol of the colonisation of her people.
40. Hinewhare's uncle Ururoa soon discovered the abduction of Hinewhare. Our kōrero is that he gathered a large taua/war party to retaliate against the actions of Brind, and any others that were responsible for her kidnapping. This was the beginning of so-called "Girls' War". Conflict arose among a number of high-ranked Māori women within Kororāreka as a result of recently exchanged insults. After someone was accidentally shot, things escalated into a violent outbreak.

41. Hinewhare was blamed for this. Due to the unrest in the area, Ururoa recognised the need for our people to adhere to our own body of governance, that would allow us to resolve matters independently from the Crown. An alliance was formed between Ururoa, Patuone, and Tamati Waka Nene, with the American Consulate, James Reddy Clendon. This was to ensure the safety and protection of wāhine, particularly one of Hinewhare's hapū, Ngare Raumati.
42. At this time it became even more apparent to our rangatira that there was a need for unity among our people. Ururoa saw the urgency to form the tribes into an alliance under Te Whakaminenga. He was actively involved in the organisation of He Whakaputanga, the Declaration of Independence, and was the first to sign the document at Waitangi, Whangaroa in 1835.
43. After the Kororāreka incidents, Hinewhare settled in Te Rawhiti, where she traded water at Kariparipa with many sailing vessels, maintaining her mana whenua to that area. She was gifted in horticulture and created many opportunities for her hapū. She produced mara kai/cultivated food in areas that appeared to be sheer rock faces. She also grew a certain type of harakeke on these faces, binding this into rope. This was used to hang native gourds which were used as the containers for the water she sold.
44. Furthermore, in inland areas such as Kāingahoa, Te Kokinga, and Wharau, Hinewhare grew extensive mara kai gardens which included taro, kūmara and rīwai, and which provided a source of wealth for the hapū. Ngare Raumati therefore had many successful trading ventures. This success, and the wellbeing of the hapū, was largely due to the knowledge, leadership and efforts of the wāhine, such as Hinewhare.
45. In the 1830s, Hinewhare married George Wells, an American Ship Captain, in the Waimate Anglican Missionary Church. They went on to have a large family and resided in Te Rawhiti, Mahurangi and Waimate-Taiamai. In the early part of their marriage, George Wells was involved in the production of oil barrels as a cooper, in many places such as Whangamumu at Te Rawhiti. These oil barrels were made from the bark of the kowhai and kohikohi trees,

which grew in the ngahere of Ngare Raumati. This industry allowed Wells to hold a major role in the community.

46. Hinewhare and George Wells had at least 10 children, however I only know my own whakapapa from Hinewhare. Growing up, we were only told to talk of our own whakapapa descent. It was well-known that Hinewhare's children were kept secluded among other families. There was a huge reluctance from her uri to be recognised.
47. In Hinewhare's later years, she intended to return to Kerikeri. In her diaries, she referred to these lands as being near St. James. These lands were sold, and she spent her final years in Wharau, Omakiwi and Kokinga, near Te Rawhiti. Hinewhare passed away at Te Rawhiti and was buried at the bottom of Omakiwi, which was one of the original Ngare Raumati urupā.
48. As a result of erosion, the koiwi/bones from this wāhi tapu appeared, and a new urupā was established at the top of the hill, along the ridge of Te Kokinga. The tupuna, Turei Heke of Ngāpuhi, passed this kōrero on to Hinewhare's daughter, Ruiha, which has now been passed down to us, her uri/descendants.
49. Hinewhare's ancestral lands, inherited from her grandmother, Tuhi Kura, were never secured for her uri. Our kōrero asserts that Hongi's last ohaki/breath was with Ururoa, who told him to protect his lands for the uri of Kaiwhare.

Kaiwhare

50. Kaiwhare was of the puhi line, with mana whenua in the Whangaroa region. She is the originator of the Kaiwhare hapū, which is still recognised today, from Whangaroa into Hokianga, and down to Whāngarei and Kaipara.
51. Kaiwhare has a whakapapa that extends out from takutaimoana ki te tuawhenua – from the foreshore out to Hawaiki-nui, and returning back to the lands. We use the Tikanga of Kaiwhare to establish the puhi line in Whangaroa. She was the first of the women in our line to have the protection of Ngāpuhi.

52. Kaiwhare's Ngāpuhi-tanga is derived from her father, Hapete. Her mother, Rongopatutaonganui of Ngāti Awa, established the alliance to the Mataaua Waka witi in our whakapapa. We continue to affiliate strongly with our Mataatua confederated tribes.
53. In Matakaka in Whangaroa, there is a big rock in the main pā of the harbour. Kaiwhare's mother was given that rock, and Kaiwhare held mana all through that house. All the food for the people in the area was grown there.
54. Hinewhare also had whakapapa to Kaiwhare. Hongi's mother and his wife, Turi Kotuku, were direct descendants of Kaiwhare. Interestingly, Turi Kotuku became blind in her life, but this did not exclude her from the puhi line, as she was considered a tohunga matakite, and possessed her own mana.

C: Conclusion

55. I am a direct descendent of Hinewhare, and now carry the puhi line, inherited from my tūpuna wāhine. My grandmother was a wahine who was a puhi in her own right, and commanded a great presence. I remember that, while everyone else was fighting at hui, she would never need to argue but would always be listened to with respect. I grew up with my grandmother for the first seven years of my life. She would teach me that I had to behave and act well, and passed on to me, through her teachings, valuable and treasured ways of being.
56. I am not the eldest daughter in my family, however my older sister does not carry on the puhi line because of her religious convictions. My sister's religion has helped her and kept her strong, but taha wairua can only be of a single God, and so our family decided that I would take on the responsibility of the puhi line. Every morning I would go through the whakapapa with my uncle, and get water from the puna or some other special place.
57. When I was younger, I was reluctant to carry on this line, and did not feel that I had the qualities to do so. I did not feel I had the nature. As I have discussed,

the puhi line of descent carries great privilege but also many responsibilities, to our communities and to our lands.

- 58.** I was taught by my grandmother, and have slowly learnt throughout my life, how to be able to sense what is spoken to me and to know what must be done. There is an importance in knowing what I had to look for, and what work I had to do. I could hear this knowledge come to me through the line. I knew that the truth would always come out.
- 59.** Then through my life, I have stood up and made many arguments for our lands and for our people. I have been granted the strength to sit in the presence of something that cannot be seen as a reality. It is the quality of taha wairua that has allowed me to judge when I am in the right presence.
- 60.** Our puhi tūpuna sustained us for many generations, and through our descent from them we inherit our birth rights. Whenever my father would challenge anyone's right to land, he would ask, "What is your whakapapa? Where is your puhi?". Sadly, many of the younger generation do not know about this Tikanga, and so I am very privileged to be able to share this kōrero now. I hope the dignity and the mana of our wāhine has been well-understood.

Dated: 20 January 2021



Louisa Te Matekino Collier