

BEFORE THE WAITANGI TRIBUNAL

WAI 2700
WAI 558

IN THE MATTER OF

the Treaty of Waitangi Act
1975

AND

IN THE MATTER OF

the Mana Wahine Inquiry

AND

IN THE MATTER OF

a claim filed by the late **Hone
Kameta, Te Rua Rakuraku,
John Terehita Pio, Paone
Goonan and Te Ringahuia
Hata** for and on behalf of
Ngāti Ira o Waiōweka (Wai
558)

BRIEF OF EVIDENCE OF ROBYN HATA-GAGE
Dated this 10th day of February 2021

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Waitangi Tribunal

10 Feb 2021Ministry of Justice
WELLINGTON

MAY IT PLEASE THE TRIBUNAL

Ko Matiti te maunga

Ko Tamatea (Waiōweka) te awa

Ko Opeke te marae

Ko Irapuaia te wharenuī

Ko Kurapare te wharekai

Ko Ngati Ira te hapū

Ko Te Whakatohea te iwi

Ko Mataatua te waka

Ko Hira Te Popo te tangata

Ko Muriwai te tīpuna

1. Ko Robyn Hata-Gage tōku ingoa. He uri ahau nā Muriwai. He urī a Muriwai nā Ranginui rāua ko Papatūānuku. Kua whakatakotohia kētia e taku teina a Te Ringahuaia Hata i Kerikeri, i tō mātou whakapapa mai i a Rangi rāua ko Papa.
2. Tokotoru ngā wāhine rongonui, ngā wāhine māia, ngā wāhine whai mana i roto i tōku whakapapa ka whakaaro ake ahau i ngā wā katoa, i ahau e mahi ana i taku mahi.
3. Ko te tīpuna whaea a Muriwai, ko tōku kuia a Rawinia, me tōku māmā a Te Aroha.
4. My name is Robyn Hata-Gage, older sister of Te Ringahuaia Hata who presented evidence for the Wai 2872 claim in the first tuāpapa hearing in Kerikeri. As she mentioned, our evidence is focussed on Whakatōhea and both parents hapū of Ngāti Ira and Ngāti Ruatakenga and relates to all four Pou of document Wai 2700, #2.5.36(b), Te Arataki.
5. I focus on three predominant wahine Rangatira in this brief, my tipuna Muriwai, my maternal grandmother Rawinia Wehi and my mother Te Aroha who have all played a significant role in shaping my life and that of my sisters as well. Their expressions and attitudes remained steadfast as all three women navigated though varying degrees of colonisation in different time periods,

and were highly successful in passing down our traditions, values and legacies to us despite all the barriers and struggles they endured.

MURIWAI

6. I tau mai a Muriwai i runga i te waka o Mataatua, me āna tūngāne a Toroa rāua ko Puhi. E kiia ana te kōrero he wahine Rangatira a Muriwai nā te mea, ko ia te mātāmua, ko ia te kaitiaki o te mauri o te waka a Mataatua, ā, nāna hoki te waka o Mataatua i whakarauora, ā, ka tōia mai ki uta.

*Ana Muriwai tō ringa te waka!
Hiko te uira, haruru te rangi, naoko te whenua, ika huirua
Tapu te wai, tapu te tai, ki te rā to
Te awa ā te Atua eke Arawa
Whakaheke matamoe Waipiko hurihia
Rūrīma tūtū tara no mua iho koe
Rukuhia te hāpuka, te wheke, tapu te moana
Tōia tō hope
Ngā matatū timu te koko ngā tamāhine o Te Whakatōhea
Takahia te pipi tahe aku Pōtiki
Pākihikura ki uta, kura ki waho
Kapakapa huki te wai, pāra takoto te one, kōpu e oho
Kai kirikiri tuatua 'Waiāua te kai' ā te karoro koa'
Kōeaea e
Tapu te paru tītiko e
Nukutere, Te Rangi, Awaawakino
Ngā Tainui, ngā Tairoa, kōpua pātiki huki te pakake
Kia kiia Tōrere kia nohoia kia pēnei ake hoki
Mirohia atu ngā wai Waiomahau hia te mure
Tokaroa kei waho, kei uta
Parinui tātahi whatawhata kahawai, pāraharaha ika iti
Ōhinemōtu
Aukati Pāhau pou, tū ana te ure, tapu te awa ō Hekōpara
Tōtōia atu, tōtōia mai
'Mai i ngā kuri ā Whārei ki Tihirau' e i te tapu ō Muriwai e¹*

7. Muriwai travelled to Whakatane on the Mātaatua waka with her brothers Toroa and Puhi-Ariki. When the Mātaatua waka arrived, the men left the waka to go exploring the new land without performing the correct karakia. While they were gone the Mātaatua waka slipped its mooring due to the rising

¹ Maruhia – a waiata composed by pakeke of Te Whakatōhea in the early 1950s.

tide and started drifting downstream as the tide went out. Seeing the danger to the waka Muriwai, decided she would have to secure the waka.

8. Although Muriwai was the mātāmua of her family, she approached the task with some trepidation because it was usually the role of males to perform the necessary karakia and ritual, she then fortified her courage by exclaiming ***‘Kia whakatāne au i ahau!’ (Empower me to take on the strength of a man!)*** Muriwai’s deed is commemorated in the name of Whakatāne bestowed on the landscape and retained today as the name of a town in the Eastern Bay of Plenty. Her action also set a precedent enabling subsequent generations of her female descendants to undertake male tasks with courage and fortitude when necessary.
9. Ngāti Awa and Tūhoe claim that it was Wairaka that saved the Mātaatua waka. But according to the traditions told by our kaumatua, it was Muriwai that saved the Mātaatua waka. Our kaumātua also state that Toroa was the captain of the Mātaatua waka but, it was Muriwai who was oldest and the ariki.
10. Furthermore, they argued and were very firm in telling us that Wairaka was only a child at the time of the arrival of the Mātaatua waka. It was during the migration of the Mātaatua waka she experienced her first ‘mate wahine’ at Te Awa o Te Atua, now Matatā.
11. There are also consequences for breaking tapu. Muriwai suffered greatly with the loss of her two sons Tanewhirinaki and Koau who both drowned during a fishing expedition as a consequence of breaching protocol. As a result a Rāhui was placed ***“Mai i ngā kurī a Whārei ki Tihirau”*** – the largest Rāhui ever placed across the sea domains of over 5 iwi and 30+ hapū. According to our history, the Rāhui was lifted by our Pou Tikanga around the late 1800s however the significance of this event of a wahine Rangatira remains in our oral traditions.
12. In contrast, Wairaka did not suffer any consequences for what others claim as her breaking of the tapu. Also, the notion of a niece putting her life in danger does not support a Tikanga view of that era, where the eldest held

these kinds of responsibilities for the tribe. This supports the view of Ngāti Ira and Whakatōhea that it was Muriwai who saved the Mataatua waka.

13. Muriwai's herstory is relevant to this Inquiry, as she was highly esteemed wahine Rangatira in her own right, who was consulted on by her two brothers in matters of warfare, tikanga and the survival of the peoples of Mataatua waka. In fact, she was so revered for the might of her mana and tapu, that she lived separated from the others in the tribe and dwelled in '*Te Ana o Muriwai*' – a small cave in Whakatane still there today.
14. Our whare tīpuna at Ōpape marae in Opotiki is named in her honour also so you can see that there are many place names, significant events and whare tīpuna named after this remarkable wahine Rangatira.

RAWINIA RANGITAKATU (nee Wehi)

15. Ko Rāwinia Rangitakatu (nee Wehi) tōku kuia. I whānau mai ia i te tau 1910, i tipu ake ai ia i Ruatoki. Ka haere ia ki Te Whānau a Apanui kātahi ka tau ki roto i Te Whakatōhea.
16. Ko Te Wehi tōna pāpā. Nō Ngāti Tawhaki ia, nō roto mai i te whārua o Tūhoe.
17. Tau ana a Te Wehi ki te papakāinga o Waioweka, ki te hapū o Ngāti Ira, Whakatōhea, ki reira tūtaki ai i tana hoa wahine a Tarere.
18. Nō Te Whānau a Apanui a Tarere. He wahine manaaki, he kaimanaaki hoki o te hunga māuiui, ki te marae o Opeke, Waioweka, ki te whare manaaki o Oropī.
19. I noho a Te Wehi rāua ko Tarere ki te papakāinga i Waioweka. Tokorua ā rāua tamariki. Ko Rāwinia te mātāmua, ko Tūwhiti te pōtiki. I tipu ake ai rāua i roto i Te Hāhi Ringatū.
20. Tekau mā iwa ngā tamariki a Rāwinia rāua ko Wereta.
21. He kuia taikaha, he wahine tohutohu, he wahine haka, he kaiako, he māmā, he kuia. Wahine mau taiaha, mau rākau hoki. Rite tonu tōna hanga ki tō te

tāne. He kaikōrero ia, he kaitito waiata, he kaitito haka, he kaiwero hoki o te hapū o Ngāti Ira.

22. He wahine rongonui tōku kuia i roto i te Whakatōhea. Kei te waiatatia tonutia āna waiata ki runga i te marae, ki Te Kura o Waioweka me Te Puna o Te Aroha Kohanga Reo.
23. My maternal grandmother, Rawinia was another force to be reckoned with. Born in Tūhoe to parents who trace their lineage back to Hine Pūkohurangi – the Tūhoe mist maiden, and Hine Moana – the maiden of the oceans, Rawinia was born in an era of colonial disruption of her language and culture.
24. Rawinia would soon go on to become a powerful leader in various art forms of kapa haka, as I mentioned, she was an expert in mau taiaha and mau patu and performed better than any male of her time. She composed and tutored the first kapa haka in Whakatōhea. She would travel with the roopu to support the annual Koroneihana (Coronation) at Tūrangawaewae Marae Ngaruawāhia.
25. Her life's work was to compose and teach these arts (Ngā mahi-ā-Rehia me Tanerore) to her hapū and iwi, and also other communities often came to get her to teach them as well such as Kawerau, Mangakino, Waharoa, Reporoa, and anywhere her children lived.
26. She could do anything a man could do in the household. She laid hangi down every Christmas, she tendered to all the maara kai and grew large gardens at the back of her house. She did all her own preserves from the fruit trees. She was up early when it was still dark, and went to bed last.
27. She was an expert weaver of piupiu of which I still have one of her piupiu and a few other whānau members from the first Waiōweka group do as well. She toured with the roopu to Australia which was a big deal back in the 50s.
28. Rawinia was a foundation member and Chair for the Māori Women's Welfare League in the early 1950s with Dame Whina as they discussed ways to protect, foster and maintain 'Maoritanga' (as it was called back then) for the

children. This led to the establishment of the first ever Cultural Festival for Primary Schools in Opotiki, and only 3 schools joined the very first competition Waiōweka, Kutarere and Ashbrook. The first taonga was an old unused rugby cup donated by Bill Delamere. The competition then became known as the ‘Delamere Cup. Now over 20 primary schools participate from Whangaparaoa to Waimana annually. I used to judge the Delamere Cup but now I have retired and my son Tama now judges alongside his cousins as the next generation protecting and nurturing the performing arts in the iwi.

29. Rawinia was renown, revered and fiercely admired for her strict disciplined style of teaching haka to men and women, teaching the art of karanga, and composing waiata and haka (often with modern tunes) so that our history of political struggle would remain. She is renown too for the love songs she composed, one of the most common ones known by our hapū and iwi is ‘E te tau” – Do you love me.
30. I could write an entire piece of evidence on our kuia Rawinia alone, and several whānau members would contribute all their difference learnings as well but for now, we leave you all with the imagery of Rawinia and how many hundreds of wahine Māori whom she taught and whose lives she touched so they would never stray far from their language and culture. The destinies she helped shape and mould most of all were her own children. The most influential woman whose gifts were handed down to her was her daughter and my mother, Te Aroha.



HOPE TE AROHA HATA (nee Rangiakatu)

31. Rawinia and her husband Wereta raised 19 children in a 2-bedroom wooden house at Waiōweka Pā. My mother Te Aroha Hope Hata was 6th in line of the surviving 9 tamariki. She was born in 1942. She was raised at Waiōweka Pā, a tight-knit Pā community at the gateway to the Waiōweka gorge. She was raised with her siblings and close cousins at a time when communal living at the Pā was a way of life, and large families were normal. She was surrounded by our pākeke at Opeke Marae and te reo was their first language. Their life was simple and yet fulfilling. Food source was plentiful. They had communal gardens, kai from the ngāhere (bush), kaimoana (seafood) from the sea and eels, mārearea (whitebait), watercress, fish from the Waiōweka river and the sea was 10kms way so kaimoana was bountiful and a staple part of their diet. They lived off the land, forest and sea and the Waiōweka and Otara rivers sustained their way of life for a time, they were superbly rich in kai, eating freshly caught kai in the warmer months, and living off preserved kai in the colder months.
32. Waiōweka Pā is pretty isolated from Opotiki, but close enough to access main supplies for survival, however Ngāti Ira have always remained quite independent and still today, do not rely on anyone else.
33. My mother was born in during a tumultuous era of ongoing world war, diseases, post-land confiscation and the emergence of Opotiki township beginning to thrive economically. Rawinia disciplined her four eldest girls hard, as her eldest son was taken by typhoid at the age of 12. All her daughters were taught various skill sets of survival of both men and women. Like her mother, she could do anything a man could do and in fact – she couldn't poi at all and couldn't really sing – she could just belt out the melody and drown everyone else out – a powerful strong voice.
34. Ngāti Ira are devout to Te Haahi Ringatū, so our mother and all her siblings were raised steeped in the teachings of the Ringatū faith. Because Ringatū is conducted all in te Reo Māori, te reo was the dominant language at home, and English only ever spoken at Waiōweka Native school.

35. Our mother emulated the skills, nature and gifts of Rawinia. She was a composer of haka and waiata and often established haka groups wherever she lived. Our mother was a gun fundraiser! She could turn anything into a fundraiser and make money for people. Mum had that skill and personality with people and was not shy. She was extremely confident in both walking in both worlds and loved people from all walks of life. She was also a healer, a visionary, a talented entertainer and an exceptional mother to me and my two sisters. I put this down to being raised knowing her whakapapa and her reo – it solidified who she was and so she never felt disconnected from her ūkaipō, continually returning home for tangihanga, holidays and significant events even though she left Opotiki at the age of 19. Maintaining that connection to one's tūrangawaewae is hugely important lesson we were all taught.
36. When I was a child we lived at Mangakino and Whakamaru because of employment of my father. She was a strong supporter of the Māori Women's Welfare and she lived her life on the principle of supporting all Māori women and their whānau in order to address the needs of their whānau at the time. She would often meet with people with authority within the local community including school principals, councillors, and mayors to seek their help for the benefit of whānau, hapū and iwi at the time. She would fundraise for the Mangakino community, usually gambling playing cards – *back then it was called fundraising!*
37. When we moved to Tokoroa due to our father's job, it did not take long for her to find out who the local hapū and community leaders were and make herself, and her skills known to them. Te Reo Māori and Kapa Haka was pretty much absent back in the early 70s so the local hapū and community welcomed her skills with open arms.
38. In the late 80s, the local church leaders approached her to help them fundraise to build a new marae. She established Papa o Te Aroha haka roopu to teach te reo and haka and put on a local performing arts concert to help the Tokoroa Catholic Māori Society fundraise. Our mother was well respected across all

the church denominations in Tokoroa, and all the Pasifika church congregations for this reason, even though she was staunch Ringatū.

39. Our mother started the first kōhanga reo in Tokoroa in 1982 after a few hui with Māori women's welfare league members. The Cook Island community approached her to help them emulate the same model to establish the first Cook Island Puna Reo in Tokoroa.
40. She was fluent in te reo and had a strong background knowledge in tikanga Māori it was only natural that she would wholeheartedly support a Kōhanga Reo and of course with her fundraising skill, it would be self-sufficient for some 10 years before any so-called funding trickled down from National Trust.
41. She taught tamariki mokopuna during the day and would take reo classes for the parents in the afternoon as she believed that to support their children with the reo, they too needed to learn the basics. She embraced all whānau from all backgrounds and she wanted to make sure her parents did the same and show no prejudice to other parents. Her kaiāwhina at the time was Sarge McKinnon (recently passed), the president of the Black Power in Tokoroa. She led all fundraising initiatives which led to the cash purchase of an urban property in Tokoroa and they built two other properties on the site.
42. The next 25 years of her working life would be dedicated to the Kōhanga Reo movement and the composition of waiata for tamariki at kōhanga reo. She also developed Māori educational resources for Kōhanga. She would buy all the popular nurse rhymes and Disney books from second-hand shop and translate them all in te reo – placing a sticker across the words with te reo on it. It would be considered illegal now to do that!
43. At home however, her life was quite different. When friends, mothers of the Kōhanga Reo, and whānau were struggling with domestic violence and marital breakdowns our mother would open our home to them providing refuge from the daily struggles they faced as a result of urbanisation, lack of employment and poverty.

44. She provided that ‘safe house’, care for and manaaki them until such time they found strength to stand on their own. This was all possibly before Women’s Refuge homes were just beginning to enter into the communities. The violent partners would not dare come near our home because our father was another force to be reckoned with and no one messed with him!
45. Within our own extended whānau, she was the relationship glue between whānau hapū and iwi. She was the organiser of the first food bank in Tokoroa when Kinleith went out on strike to help to feed whānau and their tamariki.
46. Every single summer holiday of my childhood was spent with my parents camping on the east coast of Te Whānau a Apanui with my first cousins in tow. They would spend quality time away from the urban lifestyles they were used to in Auckland. For my mother it was about whanaungatanga and reconnecting us all to our whenua. I still carry on that tradition today.
47. The gap she left when she passed 31 years ago at the young age of 48, was indescribable. She left a huge hole in all our hearts who depended so much on her expertise, wisdom and unconditional love for everyone and even as she grew weaker falling victim to cancer, she was still composing waiata, naming the unborn child in my puku who she knew would be a boy, and leaving her instructions and advice to everyone who came to visit her.

INTER-GENERATIONAL STRUGGLES FOR WAHINE MĀORI

48. My kuia Rawinia was born into post-colonial struggle in the late 1800s. In 1865, all our lands were confiscated by the Crown in Te Whakatōhea and Tūhoe and the impacts that had on her parents were immense. They were left virtually landless, or if there was land left, it was given by Crown grants to those first-up best dressed participating in a Native Land Court regime that saw further theft of lands through ‘te kooti tango whenua’.
49. By the time she was born, her parents had been displaced off their traditional whenua at Tūhoe and Whānau a Apanui, and titles were individualised and she was born into dire poverty, historical trauma and fear of Pākehā and the government. Her whakapapa relationships keep her alive as her and her

brother would be raised by the village at Rūātoki, until she left at an early age to marry, never to return.

50. My mother was born into post-colonising, land confiscation era and in between world war I & II and bore the burdens of the historical trauma inflicted on both her parents who left their homelands to find a better life to raise their own family of 19 children. They took refuge at Waiōweka Pā purely due to the strong relationships forged between her father Te Wehi, a devout Te Kooti follower and the descendants of Hira Te Popo – Rangatira of Ngāti Ira in the 1860s.
51. Both the women had these strengths in common that contributed to their well-being as wahine Māori :
 - a) Native speakers of te reo me ōna tikanga;
 - b) Knowledge of their whakapapa;
 - c) Raised by their villages (Rūātoki and Waiōweka);
 - d) Steeped in the teachings of Te Haahi Ringatū;
 - e) Raised in the art of Ngā Mahi a Rehia me Tāne Rore (performing arts);
and
 - f) Political history of raupatu and war taught through waiata and haka.
52. Both women experienced these barriers and disruptions that hindered their ability to realise their full potential as wahine Māori :
 - a) Colonising native school curriculum that inflicted corporal punishment on them if they spoke Māori;
 - b) Diminishment of the status of wahine Māori in the community who once held land titles;

- c) Colonial settlement regimes in Opotiki, council by-laws and policies that were not Tikanga-based;
- d) Dividing up of and Individualisation of their lands so they could not build on their whenua;
- e) Urbanisation drift to towns and cities due to lack of employment;
- f) Social and Economic poverty;
- g) Poor social housing;
- h) Dismantling of large whānau units and whāngai by government agents;
- i) Alcohol addiction and domestic and sexual violence; and
- j) Post-war diseases, typhoid, flu epidemics and pandemics

IN CONCLUSION

- 53. As I mentioned in the beginning, all three wahine remained steadfast to their language, traditional knowledge and whakapapa navigating varying degrees of colonisation, sexism and racism in different time periods.
- 54. All three epitomised the term ‘mana wahine’ however back in their time, they would have just been getting on with what they were taught, the best they knew how, and to as many people as they could. They all share that trait in common – they didn’t just act locally, but globally as well.
- 55. They were repositories in the ancient ways, spiritual healing and knowledge passed down to them orally. In summary:

Muriwai

- a) Wahine Rangatira of Mataatua waka;
- b) Kaitiaki of Mataatua waka before her youngest brother Puhi took in north;
- c) Tikanga was law and Muriwai exercised it at all costs;

- d) Exercised kaitiakitanga over the sea domains of Te Moana-a-Toi;
- e) Guided her brothers and tribe in the art of warfare;
- f) Lived by the concepts of Tapu, mana, noa;
- g) Paid the price of utu (death of both sons); and
- h) Cause of death unknown.

Rawinia Rangitakatu

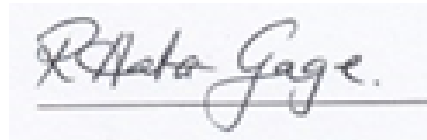
- a) Eldest of her and her brother Tuwhiti (also an exponent of kapa haka);
- b) Bore 19 children - whare tangata;
- c) Gender roles were of no consequence she did everything a man could do;
- d) Epitomises Tikanga concepts – especially manaaki;
- e) Knowledge keeper of traditional performing arts, composition and oratory;
- f) Taiaha, Patu and haka expert;
- g) Expert weaver of piupiu and all forms of weaving;
- h) Māori Women’s Welfare League foundation member;
- i) Lived by the concepts of Tapu, mana, noa; and
- j) Died of Pakeha diseases and heart failure.

Te Aroha Hata

- a) Expert in men’s haka, kapa haka;
- b) Composer of waiata haka and orator;
- c) Established the first Kōhanga Reo in Tokoroa, which was the third Kōhanga Reo in Aotearoa;

- d) Māori Women's Welfare League member;
- e) Epitomised the value of manaaki tangata;
- f) Lived by the concepts of Tapu, mana, noa; and
- g) Died of the Pākeha disease of cancer.

56. All confident, strong, and strident voices of traditional knowledge, their unwavering dedication to Tikanga Māori and Te Reo meant that their whakapapa history was safe from the external political influences of their era, and waiata and kapa haka was their salvation and saving grace during hard times of an ever-increasing colonial state oppression, and laws and policies slowly eroding the traditional foundations (tūāpapa) once left by our wahine rangatira Muriwai.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Robyn Hata-Gage." The signature is written in black ink on a light-colored background and is positioned above a thin horizontal line.

Robyn Hata-Gage