

IN THE WAITANGI TRIBUNAL

**Wai 2700
Wai 1940**

IN THE MATTER OF the Treaty of Waitangi Act 1975

AND

IN THE MATTER OF The Mana Wāhine Kaupapa Inquiry

AND

IN THE MATTER OF a claim by Jane Mihingarangi Ruka Te Korako on behalf of the Grandmother Council of the Waitaha Nation, including the three hapu of Ngāti Kurawaka, Ngāti Rakaiwaka and Ngāti Pakauwaka

**JOINT BRIEF OF EVIDENCE OF JANE RUKA, TE MIRINGA
HURIWAI, WITNESS A, TE RUNGAPU (KO) RUKA,
AND WITNESS B**

19 January 2021

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Waitangi Tribunal

28 Jan 2021

Ministry of Justice
WELLINGTON

We, **JANE RUKA**, Kuia, of Tāmaki Makaurau; **TE MIRINGA HURIWAI**, Kuia, of Otaua; **WITNESS A**, Kuia, of Whangarei; **TE RUNGAPU (KO) RUKA**, Kuia, of Whangarei; and **WITNESS B**, Kuia, of Tāmaki Makaurau state:¹

Enei nga korero tuāpapa Mana Wāhine o nga tupuna whaea o Waitaha.

Here are the basic Mana Wāhine stories of the Waitaha Grandmother Council.

Introduction

1. We present this joint Brief of Evidence (“BoE”) on behalf of the Waitaha Executive Grandmother Council, including the three hapū of Ngāti Kurawaka, Ngāti Rakaiwaka and Ngāti Pakauwaka (“the Grandmother Council”).
2. The Grandmother Council are a group of grandmothers who have come together under the banner of the Waitaha Nation. We whakapapa back to the three waka, Mamari, Ngatokimatawhaorua, and Uruao. Our aim is to address the needs of the Waitaha people, as well as the needs of our wider Māori community and to address, amongst other things, the systematic neglect of Te Tiriti o Waitangi (“Te Tiriti”) and the breaches by the Crown of this fundamental document.
3. We are a strong group of wāhine Māori, who work within our communities to try to bring about change for other wāhine, both Māori and non-Māori, and for Māori in general, who might need our help, whether this be due to the alienation from their culture that they face, through colonisation, or for other reasons.

Te Timatanga o te Ao Māori / The Beginning of the Māori World

4. Ranginui is our Sky Father and Papatūānuku is our Earth Mother.
5. We believe that in order to understand the roles of tāne and wāhine in traditional Māori society, we need to understand the context of the Māori world view. This view must acknowledge the natural order of the universe, the interrelationship or

¹ Please note, at the witnesses’ request, Counsel has used the pseudonyms: *Witness A* and *Witness B* to protect the identity of our wāhine witnesses.

whanaungatanga of all living things to one another and to the environment, and the overarching principle of balance.

The Māori World View in Relation to Wāhine Māori

6. We gather our knowledge about the traditional role of wāhine Māori from korero passed down from our ancestors to our whānau, and through other wāhine who have researched extensively on the topic.
7. In traditional Māori society, both tāne and wāhine were essential parts in the collective whole, and both formed part of the whakapapa that linked Māori people back to the beginning of the world. Wāhine Māori played a particularly key role in linking the past with the present and the future.²
8. The strength of wāhine Māori formed part of the core of Māori existence, and was sourced in the power of wāhine sexual and reproductive functions. Māori culture holds wāhine in high regard as we are the whare tangata. The wāhine reproductive organs and the birthing process are important as they create our whakapapa. This is sacred in Tikanga.³
9. This is reflected in the womb symbolism of Te Kore and Te Pō and in the birth of Papatūānuku and Ranginui's children into the world of light, Te Ao Mārama.⁴ The first human was a wāhine, she was from Papatūānuku. All of us have sprung from the womb of wāhine.
10. The children of Papatūānuku and Ranginui were bound in an eternal physical embrace. Tamariki Atua were born and confined to total darkness. In a moment of inattention, Ranginui lifted his arm and exposed them to light.

² Ani Mikaere *Mana Wahine Reader A Collection of Writings 1999-2019 Volume II Colonisation and the Imposition of Patriarchy: A Ngāti Raukawa Woman's Perspective* (Te Kotahi Research Institute, Hamilton, New Zealand, 2019) at page 86.

³ Tagan Wetekia Paul *Mana Wahine Critical Analysis of New Zealand Legislation Concerning Education: Implications for Addressing Māori Social Disadvantage* (Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand, August 2014) at 3.

⁴ Ani Mikaere *Mana Wahine Reader A Collection of Writings 1999-2019 Volume II Colonisation and the Imposition of Patriarchy: A Ngāti Raukawa Woman's Perspective* (Te Kotahi Research Institute, Hamilton, New Zealand, 2019) at page 7.

11. Tumatauenga (Atua of war) was first to notice. After discussion with his siblings, he suggested they kill their parents. Tāne (Atua of forests, humans, and land creatures) wanted to separate them. Tawhirimatea (Atua of elements of nature) wanted them left alone.
12. Tāne placed his head on his mother, his feet on his father and heaved them apart. As a result, light filled the Earth.
13. We recognise that all mana is sourced from the Atua. For wāhine Māori, the sources of this mana (mana wāhine) include: te ara uwaha o Tahu (the heavenly female path of Tahu), the primal parent Papatūānuku (the Earth Mother, and creator of all life) and other female deities.⁵
14. We consider that everything living and inanimate has whakapapa. Each godchild of Ranginui and Papatūānuku is responsible for some aspect of all that exists in the world. For example, Tangaroa (Atua of the Sea) is responsible for everything to do with the sea, and other waterbodies, such as lakes and rivers.
15. We recognise that the inevitability of progress will result in death and dying. Whiro (Atua of the Underworld) is the keeper of the dying and dead.

Atua Wāhine

16. After the British arrived and following the example of the patriarchy of the Taiwi Colonisers, Māori tāne in some whakapapa redesignated the majority of the pantheon of Māori Atua as masculine.
17. For example, Waitaha recognises Rongomaraeroa (Goddess of Peace), as being responsible for the matrilineal whakapapa of our Nation. Waitaha were, and are, a matriarchal society. Wāhine were, and are, highly respected for their wisdom and leadership. We believe that grandmothers, mothers, and sisters of the world are guardians of fertility, and nurturers of the next generation.

⁵ Rawinia Higgins rāua ko Paul Meredith, 'Te mana o te wāhine – Māori women', (5 May 2011, updated 1 Jun 2017) Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/te-mana-o-te-wahine-maori-women>.

18. Despite the rise of patriarchy, brought in by colonisation, we managed to retain Atua Wāhine. For example, Hineahuone, the first woman, became the Goddess, Hine-nui-te-pō. It was paramount to our Māori belief systems that she remained unchanged. Other examples include Hine Pū Kohurangi, the Mist Maiden.

Mana Wāhine

19. We believe that mana wāhine is about recognising the authority, dignity, and power (the mana) of wāhine Māori. We, the Grandmother Council, try to show mana wāhine in the manner in which we live our lives and to be role models for other wāhine Māori.
20. Mana wāhine is the ability to own individuality and have self-value, hapū-value and iwi-value. It is the ownership of life choices, independent from the patriarchal system brought here and generated and promoted by the British Colonials, that give no cultural or other consideration for wāhine Māori.
21. What we have learned from other wāhine Māori is that our wāhine Māori are often intimately entangled in multiple oppressions including: sexism, racism, and colonisation. Mana wāhine, as an extension of Kaupapa Māori, is located in the wider indigenous struggles that have emerged because ‘we’ were unwilling to continue to try and ‘find’ ourselves in the words, texts and images of others, namely the colonisers.⁶
22. We resonate strongly with what Dr Leonie Pihama, a Senior Researcher at the Te Kōtahi Institute, University of Waikato, and Director of Māori And Indigenous Analysis Ltd said:⁷

The struggles for our people, our lands, our worlds, ourselves are struggles that are part of our daily lives as Māori women, they

⁶ Naomi Simmonds *Women's Studies Journal, Volume 25 Number 2 Mana wahine: Decolonising politics* (The University of Waikato, December 2011) at page 13.

⁷ Ibid at 13.

are never just about being Māori or just being women but are about a combination of what those things mean.

23. In our past, high ranking Rangatira Waitaha wāhine were used to combine whakapapa as a form of exchange of between hapū/Iwi, many of who whakapapa to us grandmothers.

Mana Wahine Pre Colonisation

24. Our ancestors have told us that prior to colonisation, wāhine Māori occupied significant leadership positions in traditional Māori society. Wāhine Māori held positions of great spiritual, tohunga, and political significance.

Wāhine Māori Rangatira

25. Our tribal histories and traditions regarded wāhine as being of high rank. The terms used to describe these women include: puhi/high-born, unwed woman, wahine rangatira/women of rank, Kahurangi/chieftainess and ariki tapairu/first-born in a family of note, depending on the woman.
26. First-born females of senior whānau were known as māreikura. They were seen as tapu, and as young girls their puhi (virgin) status was jealously guarded by the hapū so they could be betrothed to a suitable suitor from another community. Attendants were often assigned to such women to take care of their needs, as their special status prevented them from doing menial tasks.⁸
27. Because puhi wāhine were regarded so highly, these wāhine were instrumental in assimilating or connecting hapū and Iwi. One of the distinctive features of Māori tradition and law is the practice of utu. Utu was regarded as playing a fundamental role in traditional society, restoring and reciprocating, balance, and mana.
28. If one member of a tribe performed an action which damaged the mana of the whole tribe, the tribe would take action to restore the lost mana. This could be

⁸ Rawinia Higgins rāua ko Paul Meredith *Te mana o te wāhine – Māori women - Women of rank* (Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand, 5 May 2011, updated 1 Jun 2017) page 3.

done through presenting a suitable gift to an outside party.⁹ Often, it was puihi wāhine's responsibility to ameliorate utu.

Hēne Herengawaka Ngai Te Ranginui

29. Hēne and her two sisters were large landowners without brothers. She was the eldest. Hēne Herengawaka entered into a tomo/marriage three times. The first occasion was for Iwi relationship connections.
30. The second tomo was within the Iwi to share the land care.
31. The third tomo was to family in Ngāpuhi, a form of restoring their relationship with Ngāpuhi because a whānau member of theirs had been harmed when visiting our whānau. She was hāpu/pregnant with our Grandmother when she was bartered for peace.
32. At the conclusion of a war, or to restore balance where harm had been caused and mana had been lost, it was vital to make peace. Wāhine often had a role to seal the peace. Arranged marriages between victors and high-ranking wāhine of defeated tribes was common.
33. Wāhine retained this integral role as it was understood the 'wāhine' peace was a firm and durable peace, whereas tāne peace stood for treachery, deceit, and trouble.¹⁰

Te Miringa Te Rorarangi Ngai Te Ranginui

34. Te Miringa Te Rorarangi Ngai Te Ranginui entered a tomo to our grandfather to hold and connect two families in Ngai Tu.
35. In our ancestor's time, if a Waitaha hapū was involved in battle, wāhine Māori, who carried the knowledge of our people would often be quietly inserted into the conquering tribes. This was a means to ensure the survival of law, tikanga and

⁹ John Patterson *Utū, Revenge and Mana* (British Review of New Zealand Studies, 1989) at 51.

¹⁰ Basil Keane *Riri - traditional Māori warfare - Making war and making peace* (Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand, 20 Jun 2012) at 2.

whakapapa. Our wāhine Māori were the guardians of these important concepts for Māori.

36. An example of this survival by our ancestors can be seen in the story of a tūpuna, Hei, of Tāmaki Makaurau. A story that has been passed as kōrero through our generations.
37. Hei took as one of his wives, a Waitaha Māreikura and together they had a son, who they named Waitaha. From this tomo, the Waitaha people went on to populate the Tāmaki Makaurau, Whakatohia, Taupo, Taranaki, and Horowhenua areas.

Rights and Responsibilities over Land and Resources

38. Aside from ownership of land, our wāhine Māori rights, tikanga and law were generally determined by the Tohunga and rangatira of the hapū.
39. In our people's history, and still today, tikanga applies to land, waterways, forest, seashore, and all other sources of kai. These were all perceived as shared property, maintained according to law, which was discussed and set by each hapū. Associated whānau, hapū and iwi co-operated to co-exist peacefully. Our wāhine Māori were an influential party in these discussions.
40. Our ancestors tell us that the Waitaha people were a matriarchal and pacifist society. Our people had a history, particularly in Te Waipounamu in the South Island, of retreating or running, rather than participating in wars. In Te Waipounamu, our people, the Waitaha hapū, were slaughtered en masse.
41. In history, wāhine Māori were not seen as chattels or possessions. In our ancestral history, wāhine Māori kept their own names upon marriage, their children were free to identify with the kinship group of either, or both, their parents, and they dressed in similar garments to our tāne. We have been told by our ancestors and researchers that, before colonisation, and in line with the importance of wāhine sexuality to Māori existence, wāhine Māori empowered their sexuality with

confidence. Wāhine Māori were emboldened to both expect and exercise sexual autonomy.¹¹

Wāhine and Tāne

42. In our history, elders set the example of tāne and wāhine respecting and supporting each other. Researchers tell us that they worked alongside each other in equilibrium.¹²
43. Any form of assault on our wāhine Māori, whether sexual assault or otherwise, was regarded as extremely serious. If a tāne committed this heinous act, it could result in his death or he could be declared “dead” by his whānau, hapū and iwi, which was the most serious of punishments. Any abuse against wāhine Māori or their tamariki was regarded as a concern that needed to be addressed with the whānau imposing severe consequences.¹³
44. Prior to colonisation, mātauranga and tikanga promoted balance between wāhine and tāne. During peaceful times, law controlled both genders and there were no exceptions.

Customary Māori Maternities

45. Our customary wāhine Māori approached motherhood with a wide and holistic approach. Whānau, especially grandparents, shared this responsibility. This role was not confined to biology, all wāhine within the iwi were mothers. It did not matter whether they physically gave birth to the tamariki.¹⁴

¹¹ Ani Mikaere *Mana Wahine Reader A Collection of Writings 1999-2019 Volume II Colonisation and the Imposition of Patriarchy: A Ngāti Raukawa Woman's Perspective* (Te Kotahi Research Institute, Hamilton, New Zealand, 2019) at page 8.

¹² Joellee Seed-Pihama *Mana Wahine Reader A Collection of Writings 1999-2019 Volume II Kapohia Ngā Taonga ā Kui Mā: Liberty from the Theft of Our 178 Matrilineal Names* (Te Kotahi Research Institute, Hamilton, New Zealand, 2019) at page 183.

¹³ *Ibid* at 183.

¹⁴ Kirsten Gabel *Mana Wahine Reader A Collection of Writings 1999-2019 Volume II Poipoia Te Tamaiti Ki Te Ūkaipō: Theorising Māori Motherhood* (Te Kotahi Research Institute, Hamilton, New Zealand, 2019) at page 170.

46. We tautoko the kōrero of Professor Kuni Jenkins, a professor with Te Whare Wānanga o Awanuiārangi. Mr Jenkins describes the interaction of the parents with their tamariki, and with the rest of the whānau in the following terms:¹⁵

In her cultural role the Māori woman was part of a community. The home unit was part of the whole kāinga. Grandmothers, aunts and other females and male elders were responsible for rearing the children of the kainga. The natural parents were not the sole caregivers ... The routines of the whānau were such that couples could not be isolated to lead independent lifestyles. Their communal living required constant contact and interaction with other members of the tribe in a concerted effort to keep the affairs of the group buoyant and operational.

47. Pre-colonisation, Māori social structures gave our wāhine Māori the flexibility that nuclear family structures today do not have.
48. We know from our ancestors that wāhine Māori shared their whānau responsibilities as caregivers for their tamariki. This support from whānau gave wāhine Māori the opportunity to exercise a wide range of roles within their iwi, many of which involved leadership.
49. Our Iwi histories have been handed down orally though kōrero from generation to generation. This kōrero presents a picture of a society where wāhine and tāne were equal, a society where they featured in all aspects of life and fulfilled all the roles within the iwi.¹⁶

Mana Wāhine Post Colonisation

50. During the Māori Land Wars, where our people fought with Pakeha, wāhine in Ngāpuhi fought alongside tāne:

Ngāpuhi kowhau rau.

Mo te whenua me nga wahine, ka mate te tangata.

(For women and land men die).

¹⁵ Kuni Jenkins *Reflections on the status of Māori women* (unpublished paper, 1986) 12.

¹⁶ Ani Mikaere *Mana Wahine Reader A Collection of Writings 1999-2019 Volume II Colonisation and the Imposition of Patriarchy: A Ngāti Raukawa Woman's Perspective* (Te Kotahi Research Institute, Hamilton, New Zealand, 2019) at page 9.

51. For us and our ancestors, this common saying also refers to the essential and nourishing roles that wāhine Māori and our mana whenua played in Māori daily life. Without our wāhine and our land, the humanity of our people would be lost.¹⁷
52. When the missionaries and early settlers arrived in Aotearoa, they brought with them their own understandings of the role and status of wāhine.
53. The colonists taught us that there should no longer be an equilibrium within Māori culture for wāhine and tāne. Māori tāne very quickly followed Victorian concepts and began to betray our historical view, and began to consider wāhine Māori as lesser in value, and as a belonging, or a possession.
54. For our people, after the colonists arrived, the whole situation changed, only exceptional wāhine Māori owned land and had self-autonomy. It saddens us so much to know that our ancestral wāhine Māori lived in unison with their tāne, yet the colonists enforced their patriarchal view on our tāne Māori.
55. Again, we tautoko, Kuni Jenkins, who describes the conflict in values between Māori and the British as follows:¹⁸

Western civilisation when it arrived on Aotearoa's shore, did not allow its womenfolk any power at all - they were merely chattels in some cases less worthy than the men's horses. What the colonizer found was a land of noble savages narrating ... stories of the wonder of women. Their myths and beliefs had to be reshaped and retold. The missionaries were hell-bent (heaven-bent) on destroying their pagan ways. Hence, in the retelling of our myths, by Māori male informants to Pākehā male writers who lacked the understanding and significance of Māori cultural beliefs, Māori women find their mana wahine destroyed. [sic]

56. The pre-colonisation Māori social model, where wāhine Māori were leaders and spokespeople for their whānau, hapū and iwi, was not respected by coloniser, or by the Crown representatives who were sent to negotiate Te Tiriti.

¹⁷ Ako: Concepts and Learning in the Māori Tradition (1982) 17-18.

¹⁸ Kuni Jenkins Working paper on *Māori women and social policy* written for the Royal Commission of Social Policy and quoted in the Report of the Royal Commission on Social Policy (1988) Vol III, 161.

- 57.** Our historians tell us, that as a result, Māori tāne were the ones who the colonisers negotiated with, traded with, and eventually entered into Te Tiriti with.¹⁹ Te Tiriti was mostly signed by tāne. It is recorded that this greatly angered wāhine Māori. In response to this anger, missionaries allowed some wāhine Māori to sign Te Tiriti. But this was simply a token gesture and did not recognise the mana that wāhine Māori held within their whānau, hapū and iwi.
- 58.** One of the most damaging effects of colonisation for wāhine Māori was the destruction of the concept of the whānau, hapū and iwi. It was clear right from the outset that Māori collectivism was philosophically at odds with the settler's ethics of individualism.
- 59.** After the colonisers arrived, our Māori communities had their cultural and economic base and mana whenua wrested from them. They were also ravaged by introduced diseases and their social structures were inevitably undermined. For our ancestors, the disruption of Māori social organisation was not a mere by-product of colonisation, but an integral part of the process.
- 60.** The colonisers destroyed the principle of collectivism, which ran through Māori society. This was stated to be one of the twin aims of the Native Land Act, pursuant to which the Native Land Court was set up in 1865, but it failed to achieve this.
- 61.** The other aim of the Native Land Court was to access Māori land for settlement. We do not agree with this aim. Not only was the very concept of individual title to land destructive to the native Māori concept of collectivism, but as a result, our people suffered massive land loss, which was brought about by the workings of the Native Land Court. This meant that, when the Māori population stabilised at a low point towards the end of the century and then began to grow, Māori found that they had insufficient land left to support themselves. Whānau were eventually forced to do exactly what the coloniser told them to, but only because they had no

¹⁹ Ani Mikaere *Mana Wahine Reader A Collection of Writings 1999-2019 Volume II Colonisation and the Imposition of Patriarchy: A Ngāti Raukawa Woman's Perspective* (Te Kotahi Research Institute, Hamilton, New Zealand, 2019) at page 11.

other choice. As a result, they broke into nuclear families and moved to the towns and the cities in search of work.²⁰

62. The missionaries and the Church played a large part in enforcing the British view of what a whānau should look like on our wāhine Māori. We have been told that church schools trained young Māori girls to be domicile, and to become good wives in the context of the colonial concept of a nuclear whānau.
63. Hukarere Protestant Girls' School ("Hukarere") was established in 1875 by the Bishop of Waiapu, William Williams, "with the thought of providing good Christian wives for the boys of Te Aute".
64. We know that for our ancestral wāhine Māori, these denominational schools, in lieu of uplifting our wāhine Māori, actively discouraged them from becoming too academically orientated. For example, the Director of Education argued in 1931 that the aim of Māori education should be to turn our tāne into good farmers, and our wāhine into good farmers' wives. When we hear things like this, it causes us so much sadness. Our wāhine Māori had so much power and respect in our traditional society and the colonisers took this from us.
65. In 1906, the Principal of Hukarere described the daily routine of the girls as covering all aspects of domestic work. This included: cooking; washing; ironing; and mending clothes.
66. We tautoko the korero of academic Judith Simon, who notes that Māori girls were being fitted, not only for manual labour, but also to fulfil the subordinate domestic roles deemed, within European culture, as appropriate for females.²¹ This was never the role of our wāhine Māori prior to colonisation. The patriarchy that the colonists forced on us causes us so much pain.

²⁰ Ani Mikaere *Mana Wahine Reader A Collection of Writings 1999-2019 Volume II Colonisation and the Imposition of Patriarchy: A Ngāti Raukawa Woman's Perspective* (Te Kotahi Research Institute, Hamilton, New Zealand, 2019) at page 12.

²¹ Above n.

Personal Life Experience of Loss of Mana Wahine of Witness B²²

67. I whakapapa to Ngapuhi, Ngati Pakau, Te Hongihongi, and Tu Poto. My parents had 16 children. My father earned a low income as a road worker. He received wages weekly. This was only enough to provide four loaves of bread a day. My mother was never at home. She unable to cope.
68. At age 12, I left school to care for my siblings. After I left the education system, the School Principal and other teachers thought they were helping me by paying me to do their laundry and ironing for them. To do this, I was transported to their homes by the school bus.
69. My mother resumed her role as the caregiver of our whānau when I was 16 years old and made me leave our whānau home. When one of my younger sisters was 14 years old, she was given to a local Pākehā butcher, in exchange for food for our whānau, because they were hungry. After the tomo, my baby sister was pregnant at 14 years old and went on to have six children to this Pākehā man, who she never consented to marry. All my sisters' tamariki were whāngai'd by siblings or extended family.
70. A lack of education meant my only avenue to provide for my living expenses was through menial work. When I was 20 years old, I entered into tomo with my husband and suddenly, I became the whāngai parents of 30 tamariki, who were from both our extended families. I legally adopted seven of these younger children.
71. I have always lived in State Housing. After living in state housing for 48 years, at age 85, Housing New Zealand tried to evict my grandson, my son, and I from our home. I have a claim lodged with the Waitangi Tribunal about this. It is unfair, I am elderly and need a safe and secure home. We have done nothing wrong to warrant eviction. This is just the State wielding further power over us, wāhine Māori to make us vulnerable. It is disrespectful. I am an ancestor of Aotearoa. I do

²² Please note, at the witnesses' request, Counsel has used the pseudonym *Witness B* to protect the identity of our wāhine witness.

not understand how the colonisers think they can tell me where I can and cannot live and throw me out of my home.

Personal Life Experience of Loss of Mana Wahine of Witness A²³

72. My Māori grandmother was beautiful. When she was 15 years old, she was given to a 55-year-old Pākehā farmer, because he did not have a wife or heirs. As a result of the union, no contact was allowed with her Māori whānau.
73. After giving birth to four tamariki, my grandmother was put out of the house and denied contact with her tamariki. Her tamariki were subsequently raised by a Pākehā whānau. My mother was part of this whānau. She went on to marry an Air Force Defence staff member, who was Pākehā. My mother's husband became chronically ill in his mid-30's, and as a result, my mother focused on gardening, in order to ensure a self-sustainable lifestyle for herself and her failing husband.
74. My brother and I were fostered out because our mother became overwhelmed with her husband's illness and was unable to cope.
75. While in foster care, my brother and I were both subjected to sexual and physical abuse. My brother developed a mental illness and is today in a lockdown mental health care facility. The disassociation that colonisation caused for my brother and myself continue to traumatise me and my brother to this day. I am sure that if my brother had been raised within our whānau, everything would have been very different.
76. I will always remember my mother saying, "My cathedral is the ngahere and everything else doesn't matter."
77. My attempts to find my whakapapa has generated a huge sense of grief and loss which I epitomize as:

Haere, haere, haere atu,

²³ Please note, at the witnesses' request, Counsel has used the pseudonym *Witness A* to protect the identity of our wāhine witness.

Ki te po kirikiri, te po tango tango
Ki te po whakamutunga o te ao.

Waitaha Grandmother Council Initiatives for Mana Wāhine

- 78.** As wāhine Māori, we have strived to address the prejudice our wāhine Māori face through several different ways. We do this through establishing awareness in our Marae, and within Ngāpuhi about the urgent need for gender equality. We encouraged the change of authority of claimant group leaders from tāne to wāhine.
- 79.** Even recently the disrespect that the Crown affords our young and vulnerable wāhine Māori was evident. I, Jane Ruka, had the honour of accompanying and supporting some of the courageous young wāhine Māori mothers who gave evidence during the Oranga Tamariki Urgent Inquiry in the Waitangi Tribunal. Many of the young wāhine Māori had suffered serious trauma at the hand of the State. I was overwhelmed by the grief of these mothers.
- 80.** What made the process more difficult was that the Hearing, which looked at the disproportionate Māori tamariki in State Care, was presided over by a Pākehā Judge. One strong wāhine Māori, who gave confidential evidence, wanted to start her evidence with a pepeha, but felt she could not speak in her native Te Reo language because of this. This Hearing should have been presided over by a Māori Judge, preferably a wāhine Māori. The evidence these wāhine Māori gave was harrowing, and giving it caused them much trauma.
- 81.** I feel the trauma could have been alleviated somewhat, had our wāhine Māori witnesses been talking to a wāhine Māori Judge. The symbolism itself, of a Pākehā male face looking down on her, while she wailed and wept about the theft of the one most precious taonga in her life, is one of degradation, humiliation, and oppression.
- 82.** There has never been a wāhine Chief Judge on the Waitangi Tribunal. The fact that a Pākehā Judge was appointed to preside over Māori wāhine and their

tamariki, highlights the disparities Māori wāhine continue to face, and the huge gap in equality. Appointments of inappropriate and inadequate Judges only continue to widen the gap we are continuously striving to close.

83. Other steps we have taken to enhance the mana of our wāhine Māori began with our own Taiwhenua in Hokianga. We continue to expose corrupt Rūnanga leaders who profit from financial theft, corruption, and/or the abuse of underage girls. This is disgusting and we feel a strong responsibility to make it stop.

84. These days, most of the administration of Ngāpuhi claims are conducted by wāhine, which is encouraging. Our wāhine are no longer looking to tāne to speak on our behalf.

85. We are also developing a Women's/Wāhine political party. This is currently on hold because we are waiting on one of our ex-wāhine politicians who is currently caring for an ill relation, to re-join us. We are appealing to all ex wāhine politicians, Māori and non-Māori, for advice.

86. We encourage all wāhine to participate in NGO groups, and other support entities, nationally and internationally. Being well informed prevents anyone from using your ignorance against you. These groups include:

- a. Māori District Councils (DMCs);
- b. Māori Women's Welfare League;
- c. International Caucus of Women;
- d. Ministry of Women;
- e. United Nations Women's support groups;
- f. International Women's Peace Group;
- g. Common Earth/Commonwealth Secretariate;
- h. Waitaha Executive Grandmothers Council members of various international podcast groups relating to care of the Environment;
- i. a collective to monitor central Government communication relating to Māori consultation; and
- j. a collective to monitor local government for the same reasons.

87. We strongly believe:

Ka tere te mohiotanga ka tū mohiohio pono a koe.
When knowledge flows, you stand informed.

Conclusion

88. The driving force of wāhine Māori is reflected in every sector of society. Wāhine Māori provide leadership in many ways: on marae, in voluntary community groups, through other initiatives, and in high profile professions.²⁴
89. The power of wāhine Māori is being re-asserted to establish the equilibrium that is needed in these modern times. The positive result of the shift in this consciousness will filter out from the individual, to our whānau, to our hapū, and to our iwi. It will extend to our natural surroundings. This includes to Papatūānuku and Ranginui, from whom we descend.
90. Diminished mana wāhine amounts to diminished mauri wāhine. Loss of this concept has resulted through the colonial, legislative theft of Māori resources and taonga.
91. As a final result wāhine Māori bear some of the worst comparative socio-economic statistics internationally. This must change, and we need to be the Wāhine who change it, not for ourselves but for our tamariki and mokopuna.

Dated 20 January 2021



Jane Mihingarangi Ruka Te Korako, on behalf of herself, **Te Miringa Huriwai**,
Witness A, **Te Rungapu (Ko) Ruka**, and **Witness B**.

²⁴ Aroha Yates-Smith *Mana Wahine Reader A Collection of Writings 1999-2019 Volume II Reclaiming the Ancient Feminine in Māori Society: Kei Wareware i a Tātou Te Ūkaipō* (Te Kotahi Research Institute, Hamilton, New Zealand, 2019) at page 53.