

IN THE WAITANGI TRIBUNAL

**Wai 2700
Wai 2377**

IN THE MATTER

of the Treaty of Waitangi Act 1975

AND

IN THE MATTER

**of the Mana Wāhine Kaupapa Inquiry
(Wai 2700)**

AND

IN THE MATTER

**of a claim brought on behalf of Ngāti
Pakahi, by Bryce Peda-Smith, Steven
Mark Renata, and Russell Owen-
Smith on behalf of te wāhine o Ngati
Pakahi**

BRIEF OF EVIDENCE OF ROBYN YORK

Dated: 30 June 2021

RECEIVED

Waitangi Tribunal

30 June 2021

Ministry of Justice
WELLINGTON

TamakiLegal

Barristers & Solicitors

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MAY IT PLEASE THE TRIBUNAL

Tāne = Hine Ahu One

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Hine Titama = Tāne

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Te Ira tangata

(Ngātikahu whakapapa) Te Patungahere = Te Uinga (Ngāpuhi whakapapa)

Te Rangatira ko Te Puhi = Korohu me Ngatiuru te Hapū

Tahawai = Patara

Te Korohu = Wilhelm Rudolph

Peti Rudolph/Rurawhe = Henare Kingi (o te Hapū Ngāti Pakahi)

Emere Kingi = Nopera Arano/Allen

Kingi Nopera Arano/Allen = Erana Mikaera Miru

Robyn Eleanor Arano/Allen = Richard Reynold York/ Paati

o ngā hapū Ngāti Pākau me Ngaitu

1. Tokowha a maua tamariki tamatāne. Te kau nga mokopuna me toko ono ngā mokopuna tuarua.
2. Tokowhitu o matou i whānau mai ki o matou mātua, a ko ahau to raua potiki.
3. I tupuake ahau i raro te maunga roa te maunga teitei ko te maunga Puhanga Tohora i waenganui nga hapū o Ngā Tāwake, Ngaitu te Auru me Ngaitu.

Maunga Emiemi te Maunga

Whaingaroa te Moana

Mātaatua te Waka

Puhi te Tangata

Mangaiti te Marae

Tau te Rangimarie te Tupuna Whare

Peti Rurawhe te Tupuna Whaea

Ngāti Pakahi te Hapū

Robyn York nee Allen tōku ingoa

He mokopuna tuarua o Peti Rurawhe raua ko Henare Kingi

4. I was conceived in Otaua and born in Rawene Hospital. As the youngest of seven children, four brothers and three girls, I did not appreciate what I had then as much as I appreciate it all now. I grew up on the brink of a te ao Māori and western world. We still did everything on the marae when I was growing up. I had many wāhine who demonstrated mana wāhine in my life and they had a significant influence on my upbringing.
5. I loved my upbringing, especially with my mother. I enjoyed being with her, and I still remember sitting on her lap in our car, getting my face cleaned with a lick on her handkerchief to rub the dirt (or hupe) from my face, and getting my cup of tea in her saucer watching her blow it to cool for me to drink.
6. Growing up I also spent time at Otaua Marae, learning to manaaki the manuhiri for any hui they had. All of those lessons were in the kitchen alongside other great mothers like Maude Harris and Wai and Maude Rogers. Wai and Maude Rogers were the daughters in law of Hira Rogers. They were wonderful teachers in the art of manaaki towards the manuhiri and the whanaunga of Otaua.

Mana Wāhine

7. A few words that come to mind when I think of mana wāhine are “goddess, strength, stability” and the “universe”. There needs to be stability and that creates mana wāhine. They are creators of life and are family orientated. Without mana wāhine there is no whānau. They are skilled in many things, including the arts. Another important aspect about mana wāhine is that they are the ones who hold the knowledge and pass it on to others. It is not that our men cannot hold that knowledge, it is more that our men have other things to remember or may die. Mana wāhine are always working together and working in harmony with their partners, whānau and hapū. They are well respected.

Atua Wāhine Māori

8. There are multiple atua wāhine who have had an influence in my conception of wāhine te ao Māori, for example Papatūānuku, Hinetītama and Hine-nui-te-pō. Most important of these is Papatūānuku. I believe that she is eternal. She supports whatever growth is on her whether it is good or bad, even if it may be detrimental to her. Hinetītama was our very first wāhine. Our very first creation in the human form and so from her comes our whakapapa. When she became Hine-nui-te-pō, she took her negative experiences and turned it into a good thing. Instead of being cruel she became the night and went into the darkness to wait for her children. These are the three main atua wāhine who demonstrate mana wāhine for me.

Whakapapa of mothers side

(Ngātikahu whakapapa) Te Patungahere =Te Uinga (Ngāpuhi whakapapa)

Te Rangatira ko Te Puhī = Korohu Ngatiuru te Hapū

Tahawai=Patara

Miriamā = Wilhelm Rudolph

Hone = H Honehana

Kataraina = Mikaera Manuka Miru

Erana Mikaera Miru = Kingi Nopera Arano

9. I watched my mother practise the mana o ngā atua by doing and calling upon them daily to take care of her whānau. Hira Rogers told my mother about her tupuna who was a tohunga. He told her that people throughout the motu called on him to heal whatever problem they had. Hira always had a kindness towards our mother.
10. Our mother was a practising Āwhina for the Haahi Ratana and went everywhere to help who ever needed it, even to the hardest of prisons.
11. Some of the whānau could not understand her methods of doing things and getting results. That was because they did not understand tikanga Māori and the mana o ngā atua. She worked through the mana of ngā Anahera pono which I believe was ngā Atua Wāhine me te Mangai TW Ratana to support her in caring for her whānau.
12. Whenever I had a dream, my mother was able to interpret them for me and she was always right. When she passed away on 29 June 2001, I was there to help her go into te ao wairua.
13. My mother-in-law Tonga Paati also known as Celia Reihana, was well known in the Hokianga. She was born and raised in Taheke of the hapū Ngatipākau. She told me that before her father died, he told them all to let go of their religion and return to the tikanga ō tātou tupuna. She was shocked at what he asked them to do but she did as her father suggested returning to ngā atua Māori and tikanga Māori, performing rituals handed down to her from her Karani Kaa. I would witness her using bread and or water to do blessings with her karakia
14. Karani Kaa was their tohunga. Mum Celia spoke of a tūpāpaku that was swelling. Her father told her to get their Karani. This was done and Mum said her and another girl had to hold the blanket up so her Karani could do the karakia and mahi to settle the tūpāpaku . She said it was amazing to see how her Karani worked to settle the tūpāpaku and the whānau pani.
15. Mum Celia said once when her father caught a big tuna he cleaned and cooked it, then told her to take the head of the tuna to their Karani Kaa, as demonstration of his aroha to their rangatira tohunga.

16. I live by all that has been handed down to me by these tupuna mātua in tikanga Māori. There are lessons that can be learnt from traditional atua narratives. We need to be learning all the time about our lore and culture as Māori because we are letting the colonised way of thinking take over. An example of this is money. If you do not have money then you are poor. But for those who know having the whenua is more important and if you don't have the whenua only then you are poor. When you have whenua, you have something to stand on, sleep on, work on, and grow on. Without whenua you have nothing. So, we need to be changing our way of thinking and teaching that to our children and those who are interested in learning.

The Traditional Roles of Wāhine Māori

17. Traditionally, wāhine Ngāti Pakahi were very strong, and they continue to be. They had many roles within their hapū and iwi. For many, these roles have been passed down through the generations. I have also heard that wāhine Ngāti Pakahi were warriors and went to war alongside their tāne. One of my nephews once asked me "Aunty do you know what Ngāti Pakahi means?" I said, "no" and he replied "women warriors".

Tohunga

18. Wāhine Ngāti Pakahi were also tohunga. My great grandmother, Karani Peti was the rangatira or matriarch of our hapū Ngāti Pakahi. She lived through the wars - pakeha and Māori - and died at the age of 114. Some say she was 116 years old; I only know she was very old. Her only daughter Emere passed during the flu epidemic in Ahipara. My father was the youngest and was only three at the time. Karani Peti betrothed her mokopuna Puti to Emere's husband Nopera. Karani Peti then raised my father in Kaeo until he was of age to return and support his father in Ahipara. She did this to keep the whānau and whenua in the same whakapapa line.
19. At times, in the early hours of the morning my father would recite whakapapa and do pao that I had not heard before. When I questioned him about it, he said Karani Peti would knock on the wall to wake him and start reciting the whakapapa through pao and karakia when he was younger. My father was

very well versed in te reo Māori and the tikanga o tātou tupuna. He lived the tikanga and we learnt by his kōrero and demonstration.

Kaitiaki

20. Wāhine were also kaitiaki. My mother's sister Noki Tana was the kaitiaki for our whenua at Waiotea Tinopai on the Kaipara harbour. I consider Aunty Noki our rangatira, a mana wāhine. Aunty Noki was a rangatira through whakapapa to Te Puhi, Hongi Hika, Hone Waiti and many other rangatira of Ngāpuhi-nui-tonu and Ngāti whātua descent. I have many wonderful memories of our Aunty and Rangatira Noki Tana nee Miru.
21. She was a strict but fair woman. Nobody, not even her uncle, could get past her without showing her how much kaimoana they had in their bag. If she caught somebody with a lot of kaimoana she would tell them to put it back. She would use a shot gun to protect the kaimoana when fishermen came into the bay. Everyone knew not to cross that aunty. The wonderful thing about aunty Noki was that although everyone moaned about her, she did her job very well. Now that she is gone, the place has been raided with very little kaimoana left and one whānau has encroached on other whānau whenua area without a care for the whānau whaanui. That speaks volumes of the importance of her role as kaitiaki, and no one to this day has been able to fill her role as kaitiaki.
22. When aunty Noki lived at Waiotea, there was no metal road, only a dirt track. She looked after the place mostly by herself. Whenever she needed some work done, she would call in her brothers to do what she needed. They would come under her call but otherwise they would leave her be. Aunty Noki lived in a home that people nowadays would consider a shack in the bush. She lived a very frugal life, her toilet was a long drop, and there was no power. She chopped her own wood and got sick while doing this. She died in her 80's still taking care of the place.
23. These wāhine Ngāti Pakahi and aunties of ours were strong mana wāhine in themselves. They were the matriarchs. For me, they had an equal voice with the tāne, and in some circumstances, I would even say that their voices were more important. They were all-rounders and we continue to be like that

today. For example, Aunty Noki and my mother would speak on the marae at Waiotea and Te Kowhai marae, in the Ngati Whātua area because their brothers felt they could not or would not speak te reo Māori.

24. At our father's tangi, we were caught without a kaumātua, so my sister and I did the mihimihi to welcome manuhiri onto Mangaiti Marae because our brothers did not have the reo and they felt inadequate to kōrero on the marae. This continued until kaumātua arrived to take over. I was worried about this and spoke with my husband about it after the hui because I was the youngest. He said our dad wanted it that way, knowing who we were. Because Dad always said to me if I wanted to know te reo and the tikanga o tātou tupuna, to go to the marae, pay my respects, look listen and learn.

Key tikanga concepts in relation to wāhine

Mana

25. Mana is everything: it is my life force and connection to my tupuna. I can explain what I mean by this with an experience that I had. Once, I was asked to do something spiritual for a group of people from around the world that I met in Australia. I did my karanga and called in my spiritual ancestors. At the end of it, the group were asked what they experienced and how they felt. One of the group members said "she wanted to punch me" which made me giggle. Another woman, who was Italian, said to her "you wouldn't be able to, she has two warriors standing beside her." I was surprised at both of their comments. When I asked the first woman where she was from, she told me that she was from the Rotorua area. This showed me that she still carries the D.N.A of her Tupuna mātua which I acknowledged.
26. Mana of a wāhine helps her to care for her whānau whether they are near or far. But most times the wāhine forgets to care about herself, which is really the most important one to care for.

Tapu

27. Tapu in relation to wāhine is mainly related to her whare tangata. So, when a woman has her period or is hapū, she is tapu. Tapu and manaaki are

therefore reliant on a monthly cycle. It dictates when tāne and wāhine can do the mahi that needs to be done. What I mean by that is when you had your monthly cycle you could not go into the garden or swimming in the creek or the moana. I used to think that was a bad thing but it's not a bad thing; it was good. It was keeping the ground safe and you safe. I believe this was also to allow the wāhine to rest and recover from the loss of her toto. That is how our tupuna used to think. Some of us still practise that today. I remember when we were planting pine trees on Karikari Peninsula, our kaumātua asked where one of the workers was. He was told she went home because of her monthly. The kaumātua was really upset that she had come to work and worried that the trees would die. He was of the old ways, but the trees grew well.

28. One of the things I remember from when we were hapū was that our father made sure that our cravings were satisfied, even if it meant he had to commit a crime by pakeha law. It was not a crime in māori lore to provide kai to a pregnant woman and her baby from ngā Atua Tangaroa or Tānemahuta. If anything it was a blessing! He also said to me that Māori see their children as he taonga i tuku iho.

Whakamā, utu and the restoration of noa

29. In traditional society, our tupuna would have dealt with any wrongdoing, especially in relation to violence amongst or against the hapū and whānau. The whānau and hapū would have dealt with any issues between themselves. It was about retaining the balance, known as *muru and utu*. Some people still believe in this, including my parents. I suffered from abuse when I was 3 years old. I carried that memory into my married years until I had to tell my mother, because my āhua had changed drastically. She asked why I did not tell her all those years ago. My reply was I was afraid my father would kill the perpetrator and go to jail. My mother understood and said she would deal with it. I can't remember how long after, but mum rang and said, "it's ok, kua mate a ia i nae anei", and we never spoke of it again. Another good example of this is the Boyd massacre.

Whānau, whāngai and living collectively

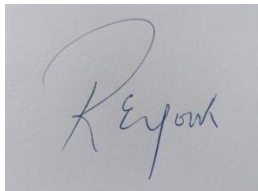
30. Whānau is everything in te ao Māori. It was a collective way of living. The way our tupuna did everything was so simple. It reminds me of the kōrero “get back to our footsteps”. They took everything into consideration. They used the maramataka to guide them and did everything for the collective good. When our people would get kai moana they would share the spoils amongst everyone. It is hard to do that nowadays, because of individuality. I remember watching the men of Otaua go down to the creek at a certain time of the year to catch tuna. They called this the tuna heke, when the eels were heading back out to sea. At that time, they would stand in the creek, hook them up onto the bank and someone would throw them into the drums. They then brought the tuna back and shared it with all the whānau back at the village who loved tuna. My husband was one of those catching tuna.
31. Whāngai happened in the time of our tupuna, and it is something that has continued. The logic behind it was that traditionally, children were raised collectively. So, for women who were unable to have children, it did not affect their mana. Their value as wāhine was not lessened. If anything, they still knew what these children needed and had all that aroha to give.
32. My Aunty Monica had many children and many of them were given away, not because she did not want them, but because other whānau were childless and asked for her babies. I was in awe of this aunty who had children and gave them away, in aroha for those asking and knowing her babies would be well loved and taken care of.

Tikanga in relation to Birthing

33. I recall my mother saying, my grandfather and grandmother were her help mates, tohunga healers when she was giving birth. Mum spoke more about her father helping, but I remember she also said Nana did certain things during the birth. Mum had two of her babies with their support.
34. I have also heard of other whānau where their father born all of them. I thought they were very lucky because I always wanted to have my children at home.

35. There was certain tikanga that took place during and after birthing. For example, after a mother had her baby, stones were heated for her to lay on to facilitate the healing process.
36. Mum said she waited for her mother and father to prepare the stones after she had her babies at Te Kowhai. They placed mats and leaves on the stones for her to lay on until she felt healed.
37. I also learnt about kawakawa baths from my mother and a healer in Kaikohe. I boil kawakawa leaves and then add it to the bath. It works in a similar way to Epsom salts and draws out all the toxins from the body. So, when my daughter in law gave birth, I prepared kawakawa baths for her after she returned from hospital. She said she enjoyed it so much that she felt alive again and she agreed to complete the healing for three days.
38. There was also karakia when a baby was born to give thanks for their safe arrival, to rejoice, to give thanks for the mother and for her wellbeing and to ask for blessing for the many days to come.

DATED at **Kaitaia** this **30th** day of **June 2021**.

A square box containing a handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Robyn York".

Robyn York

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