

IN THE WAITANGI TRIBUNAL

Wai 2700
Wai 2377
Wai 2382

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 by **Bryce Peda-Smith**,
Russell Owen-Smith, and **Steven Mark
Renata** on behalf of the late **Nuki
Aldridge** and members of **Ngāti Pakahi**

IN THE MATTER

of a claim by **Violet Eva Walker** on
behalf of the late **Nuki Aldridge**, and
members and descendants of **Te
Tahawai** and **Ngāti Uru**

BRIEF OF EVIDENCE OF VIOLET EVA WALKER

Dated: 28 July 2021

RECEIVED

Waitangi Tribunal

30 Jun 2021

Ministry of Justice
WELLINGTON

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MAY IT PLEASE THE TRIBUNAL

Introduction

1. My name is Violet Eva Walker, and I am the named claimant for the Wai 2382 claim, my partner, Bryce Peda-Smith, is one of the named claimants for the Wai 2377 treaty claim. These claims were filed by the late Nuki Aldridge on behalf of Te Whānau o Rātāroa, and members of Ngāti Pakahi (Wai 2377) and Ngāti Uru and Te Tahawai ki Whangaroa (Wai 2382).
2. This statement of my evidence is to support these Treaty claims in the Mana Wāhine Kaupapa Inquiry on behalf of Te Whānau a Rātāroa, Ngāti Pakahi, Te Tahawai and Ngāti Uru.

Pepeha

Ko Pukemaire te Maunga

Ko Reporua te awa

Ko Tu Auau te wharenuī

Ko Whakamaumahara te wharekai

Ko Anaru te whare Karakia

Ko Arowhana te pere

Ko Nga Konui, Kaitangata, me Kohai nga urupa.

Ko Apirana Ngata te Tangata

Ko Ngati Rangi te Hapu

Ko Ngati Porou te iwi

Ko Violet Eva Walker toku ingoa.

Background

3. I was born at Kaitaia Hospital on an evening that we experienced an eclipse in Aotearoa in 1965. My mum wanted to name me 'Calypso', but my Nanny, said 'no, we will name her Violet', after her sister.
4. The two most prominent women in my life were my mum and my Nanny. My Nanny was my maternal grandmother. Both women worked extremely hard during their lifetime. My Nanny raised "a Baker's Dozen" thirteen children, and my Mum raised six of her seven children, which I will discuss later in my evidence.
5. We learned great work ethics from both women during childhood. At my Nanny's we had to chop wood to light the copper to heat the water for bathing, milk the house cow that grazed the 'long mile', pick fruit for preserves, and tend the garden that grew an abundance of vegetables for the whānau.
6. My Mum packed our school lunches fresh each day with home-made biscuits that we traded for a packet of chippies or a fizzy drink with our friends.
7. Back in my childhood, children were seen and not heard. We never backchatted and when visitors came or when we went visiting, we only spoke when spoken to and we always used our manners.
8. Eventually I grew up and met my partner of 36 years, had four children, adopted (whāngai) our nephew at nine months old. We also have fifteen mokopuna, all of whom live less than a ten-minute drive from us. I am blessed.
9. I worked closely with the late Nuki Aldridge with his Waitangi Tribunal claims. He was my partner Bryce's dad. I was very close to Nuki. I was more of a daughter to him than an in-law. We got on so well that my partner Bryce's sisters, Nuki's daughters, saw me as their sister from another mother. I was Nuki's late wife Doreen's caregiver until she passed. With that, I was privileged to have Nuki's blessing and trust to speak for the peoples of Ngāti Pakahi.

10. Most of my adult working life has been in education, and environmental fields. I am currently National Programme Coordinator for School of Undergraduate Studies with a Maori Tertiary Institution. I also lecture a Level 5 Science Programme.
11. I am very interested in Genomics, Genomics is the study of whole genomes of organisms, and incorporates elements from genetics, and I am a member of Sing Aotearoa Alumni. I travelled to Tucson, Arizona in 2017 on a scholarship to attend an Indigenous Conference on Genomics. That experience was a once in a lifetime opportunity. It was there I learnt that a female baby is born with all the eggs that she will ever have. This is estimated to be around two million, but by the time a girl reaches puberty, this number has decreased to about 400,000 eggs stored in her ovaries. I remember calling home to Nuki and giving him that information, he replied, "Ae Marika, it all makes sense now, the korero of my tupuna Whaea". This I will address in my oral presentation.
12. I am also a member of Te Herenga within the Environmental Protection Agency ("**EPA**") here in Aotearoa. I have been privileged to be on many working groups within the EPA as a Maori Environmental Practitioner.
13. The most recent working group I was on was developing a Mātauranga Maori Framework for decision makers on Hazardous Substances to be able to probe Mātauranga evidence provided in submissions by Tangata Whenua and being delivered during the Hearings process.
14. The most important things in my life today are my mokopuna. They are taught to respect Papa-tu-a-nuku for the life-giving properties she so freely offers and to ensure they pass (tuku) that same message to their tamariki.

Wāhine in Traditional Māori Society

Atua influence

15. Traditionally, during Tangihana, karakia was not done in the darkness so as not to offend the atua of darkness, whiro. A more practical reason for not doing karakia in the dark was to not wake others during obscene hours of the night. However, this tradition has been relaxed. This was done as a

courtesy to visitors who come from afar after having travelled many hours. We will do karakia in the dark hours of the morning under these circumstances.

16. I think it entirely plausible and can't be disputed there was a maternal (mana wahine) influence in the minds of the chiefs when developing He Wakaputanga o te Rangatiratanga o Nu Tirene 1835 document. Why I say this is because when the name is broken down it could be likened to a woman giving birth. Waka means vessel. Putanga means passage, exposure, appearance, or exit. I agree with aunty Robyn's definition of Puta, which means to bring out or bring forth. I would call the 1835 document as an emergence, which also fits with the birthing of a child.

Wāhine Tipuna

17. Mana relates to wāhine in the same way as anyone else. Each person is responsible for their own mana. One cannot take someone else's mana. There are things that one can do to diminish their mana. My aunty, Robyn, can lose her mana, but I cannot take it from her. One can only do things to oneself that diminish mana.
18. Where there is a dispute, the aim is to seek resolution. Everybody walks away with their mana intact where no resolution is reached. Mana cannot be taken by another person.
19. Mana can apply to non-humans. For example, there is mana in rivers. Mana o te Wai. A polluted river has less mana than a pristine one. Mana applies differently in different contexts.

Wāhine influence

20. Wāhine Māori held positions of leadership throughout time. There was no reversal of leadership roles to men when they returned from fighting. Leadership functions were shared between the sexes.
21. Wāhine were the matriarchs in society. They had an equal voice with men. There are times where wāhine had greater authority than tāne. As the saying goes, happy wife, happy life. The role and responsibilities of Mana Wahine had certain tikanga that governed the daily living activities within the social structures of whānau, hapū and iwi.

22. The balance of gender roles was only tipped during a woman's cycle. The purpose of this was to allow the wāhine to rest. Other than that, there was no imbalance.
23. My understanding of the term mana wāhine is that of great female leaders. There is an inherent connotation of leadership in the term. It means having the ability to feed the people.

Roles and responsibilities of wāhine Māori

24. Wāhine were traditionally involved in making strategic decisions in addition to homemaking duties such as caring for children. Wāhine gathered food and did the cooking. It was not easy; there were no stoves in those days.
25. Wāhine shared in activities like *tuna* (eel) fishing. Traditionally, harakeke (flax) was scraped with a kutai (mussel) shell to expose the fibres of the harakeke. It was then used to harvest Tuna by holding the harakeke in the creek or river, above or below the carcass of an animal used to lure the Tuna. The teeth of the Tuna would get caught in the fibres of the harakeke, and the women would then flick the Tuna onto the banks of the river.
26. We practiced the technique of using the threads from a woollen jersey to haul them from the water. The teeth of the tuna would get caught in the fibres of the jersey. It made them easy to pull from the water. Wāhine were very good free divers. The tuna caught are much larger than the little ones that people are used to seeing. They are the big ones with the feelers growing from their snouts.
27. Our society was communal. Māori women played a critical role in whānau, hapū and iwi as whare tangata (procreators). Hibbs (2006:4) states that "the majestic procreating power and awesome reproductive energy of wahine; is a totally unique energy responsible for helping create the world". This is sentiment I agree with.
28. Pregnant wāhine were attended to by the men and the Tohunga of the village. The men assisted by providing food for pregnant wāhine. For Māori women, their bodies were treated with the utmost tapu during the times of menstruation, pregnancy, and childbearing (Metge, 1967a). Childbirth often

took place in a separate dwelling called the whare kōhanga. I agree with this description of our custom.

29. The traditional role of tohunga was carried out by women and men. They were the tribal elders who could foretell the destinies of children soon after the latter's birth. An example is where a tohunga foretold that a child's destiny was to become a fisherman. That child eventually grew up to work in the fishing industry for fifteen years.
30. Women would conduct all child rearing duties when the men went out to fight in wars. They had to assume all these duties in those circumstances. Wāhine conducted hunting and gathering activities while the men were away fighting. There were no cars then. The men travelled over long distances by foot. They walked to faraway places. Consequently, the men were absent for long periods of time. Wāhine had to be jacks of all trades and master them because of this social dynamic.
31. Wāhine hold specific knowledge pertaining to their roles and responsibilities. As the principal nurturer to their pēpē, they have a leading opportunity to provide this important knowledge to the next generation (Oriori). This is an apt description of my position of the same.
32. Māori is primarily an oral culture, and their knowledge is retained through narratives like stories, art, waiata, karakia and music.
33. Wāhine holding tohunga positions were knowledgeable. I would say, they knew it all. Tohunga had knowledge about making Rongoa Māori to relieve pain and to stop wāhine from bleeding during childbirth. Tohunga moved around and decided where the tribe made their home on the whenua. They considered such factors as soil fertility, water access, or sometimes kaimoana when scouting for pā locations.
34. Wāhine had to master everything when the men went to fight. Everything was learned. Leadership roles stayed within a whakapapa line. There was natural succession in the inheritance of leadership roles.
35. Wāhine would whāngai where they are unable to have children. The placement of whāngai and their destiny were discussed collectively in hui. Everything was discussed collectively in hui. The mana of a wāhine was not

reduced or diminished by her not being able to have children. They were not seen in a lesser light. They were loved all the same.

36. Hongi Hika's wife, Turi Katuku, was blind. That is like not being able to have children. Yet nobody dared to mess with her or to show her any disrespect. She derived her authority and respect from her prowess in warfare.

Care of Tamariki

37. Wāhine Maori's exercise of kaitiaki was primarily exercised over children. The care and aroha were shared with the extended whanau. Wāhine were not limited to caring and raising the children of their immediate whanau. This was important when the men went to fight in wars. The whole village partook in raising tamariki.
38. My dad is Ngāti Porou. My mother and Nanny are Ngapuhi. My Nanny took and adopted (whangai) my older brother from my mother when he was a baby. She never took him because my parents were not capable of caring for him, it was just her wish to adopt my brother. It happened fifty-seven years ago. He was made a whāngai. This caused a rift between my dad and my Nanny. The relationship between my dad and my brother was fractured by the separation. The relationship improved once my brother got married and fathered his own offspring. My dad cherished all his grandchildren.
39. My dad was not considered by anyone as a weak man. He was six foot tall and as black as the Ace of Spades. He was the Potiki of his 11 siblings. My Nanny was only five foot tall. She was a little woman. Yet, my dad gave in to her taking my brother. Other than acknowledging my Nanny at social events, my dad rarely spoke to my Nanny. He acknowledged her Mana and her "Ngapuhi ways" he would say. I viewed this as respecting the Mana of my Nanny.
40. Traditionally, it did not matter if you were a whangai, everybody was raising everybody's children. The children did not go anywhere once they were given away as whāngai. They lived locally as part of the commune. There was no concept of something being 'mine', there was just the collective. It took a village to raise a child.

Manaaki

41. The concept of manaaki is everything because it determines mana. It involves concepts and the mindset of looking after everyone. This extended to the Europeans who were defeated in battle. Wāhine fed the defeated Europeans as they collected their fallen peers who were killed in battle. There are not many stories of Europeans killing wāhine. After all, wāhine kept them fed.
42. Mana was displayed in the hosting of visitors. Preparing a sizeable banquet showed the visiting tribes how much mana the hosting tribe possessed. The contributions of wāhine Māori was essential for this display. If the hospitality was good and the visitors were well fed, that is what they took with them.

Maintaining and Restoring of the Balance

Relationship between wāhine and tāne

43. First and foremost, wāhine Māori bore children and looked after them. They performed activities that are incidental to these responsibilities. They fed the children by conducting activities such as gathering kai, hunting game, and cooking it. Within a traditional Māori view of the world there was a balance of the roles between men and women. The responsibilities of child rearing and homemaking were equally shared with the men. One does not exist without the other.
44. Balance of tane and wāhine leadership existed during the pre-1840 time period. The woman's role was significant in ensuring the continuation of generations, where they were the *whare tangata*, the producers of the next generation. They also held a wealth of *te ao Māori* knowledge. The spiritual wealth or *wairua* that was knowledge acquired from female deities, the physical wellbeing of a woman when procreating surrounded by the practices associated with *tapu* and *noa* and surviving in the challenges of the environment (Durie, M., 2006). This is also my understanding of the balance between tane and wāhine.
45. Wāhine Māori in Ngāti Pakahi spoke on the *paepae*. They were fluent, but blunt. They got down to business. Wāhine were more efficient as they did

not exhibit the flamboyance and powerplays of the men. Wāhine did not partake in the men's nonsense of bollocks swinging, especially in Ngāti Uru. The men shuddered when wāhine spoke on the paepae. The wāhine speakers got to the point. They did not compete with a dozen or so men measuring each other up.

46. Wāhine Maori were warriors that fought alongside the men. One example of a formidable wāhine was Hongi Hika's wife, Turi Katuku. She was a warrior. She went into battle in wars where Hongi Hika fought. She was a fierce battlefield strategist. Her knowledge about the Europeans' war tactics was deadly effective in battle. She also happened to be blind. It is said that Hongi Hika would return to her at night and weep to her about what he saw in battle.
47. Although a warrior, Turi Katuku exhibited great compassion. This quality was displayed by her supporting and comforting Hongi Hika after battles. She was by his side as he wept and processed what he saw in battle. He was troubled, but Turi Katuku helped him manage his trauma, it was like PTSD. We know about this because there was korero by our ancestors who stumbled upon and overheard Hongi Hika's wailing at night which was accompanied by Turi Katuku's voice.

Traditional Birthing Practices: Tapu

48. An expectant mother continued to interact with whanau until birthing drew nearer. Tohunga wāhine were present at the birthing. They prepared and administered rongo to ease the pain, and recited whakapapa throughout the birthing process to relax the mother and welcome the new-born into the world.
49. Pregnant women were taken to a special whare for birthing (whare kohanga). I recall that they may have spent the month before birthing there.
50. There was tapu from childbirth. Blood, the placenta, umbilical cord (pito), and other material from the woman was collected in a basket to be buried in Papa-tu-a-nuku (whenua). Childbirth is a very tapu time. The umbilical cord was tied with vine. A mussel shell was used to sever the umbilical cord.
51. The new-born child would experience the rituals of the first kai and the first bathing. The destiny of the child was revealed the day after they were born.

This gave the child an opportunity to get cleaned up before being presented. The child begins learning and practicing tikanga from their first breath. It is at that time when tikanga begins to apply to the life of the child.

Utu

52. Balance is emphasised in restorative justice. Where a child of one family was killed, the family of the killer would offer a child to the victim's family. It was in the interest of the killer's family to offer a replacement child. We would have gone to war and wiped the whole lot of them out if they did not collectively atone.
53. On the other end of the scale, chiefs of each hapu would engage in korero with their counterparts where members of hapu intrude onto and take kai from the rohe of other hapu. People knew the boundaries of their rohe where they exercised mana whenua and mana moana. Such intrusions were rare. I do not recall any examples of intrusions taking place.

Restoration of noa

54. To me whakamā means embarrassment, but we do not get embarrassed. We get even.
55. The restoration of noa was a matter addressed at hui. The elders deliberated and handed down the consequences. This depended on their korero and the nature of the debt. Their word was final. There was no appeal process like the courts. People did not run away from this process. To do so was bad for their mana.
56. The outcome could be severe at times. The possible penalties included death. Yet, it was more mana enhancing to face the consequences, whatever the tribal elders decided. This was even where death was possible. There was no such thing as running away. People faced the music and did not gap it. Both tāne and wāhine took part in the decision making in this process.
57. Whakamā comes to a wāhine if she was for example the victim of sexual abuse. The feeling of whakamā comes from within the wāhine. It is the result of becoming victimised. Noa is restored in collective discussions with

whanau. If the issue cannot be resolved within the whanau, it would be referred to the wider hapu and elders of the tribe.

58. The spiritual aspect for Māori women within the realm of te ao Māori was important within their lives because it was central to the way they lived. For example, tapu and noa concepts drove the functioning of everyday living and ensured that spiritual balance was related to survival and safety of the community (Marsden, 1992; Mikaere, 2003:24). Tapu and Noa can be likened to right and wrong, clean, and unclean, safe, and unsafe. This is definitely my view.
59. An example of Māori women practicing tapu and Noa concepts is through the delivery of Karanga. Karanga is a specialised art performed mainly by women. It is the realm in which the spiritual meets reality and the channel or passage is through the Wahine. Ferris (2004) likens the sound of the Karanga to the sound of a woman giving birth. This is my belief on the matter too.

Wāhine duties to the whenua

60. One does not desecrate the whenua. Doing so is to do wrong to Papa-tu-a-nuku, the earth mother. It would be the same as to denigrate and insult one's mother. Wāhine Māori exercised rights and responsibilities to the whenua. There was fluent practice in karakia before kai or rongoa was collected.
61. Most weavers are women. Basket weaving involved the custom in flax collecting. One does not cut flax from the centre of the plant. The making of objects with flax by wāhine was affected by their knowledge of the time of the year, weather, and purpose of the crafted object. The crafting of a basket for carrying kai was different from the construction of a basket for cradling tamariki.
62. Bad things befell those who desecrate the whenua. Children learn this from growing up and by learning alongside their parents. Children grow up knowing their responsibilities to the whenua. There is no ignorance about it.

Equality in Succession to Whenua

63. Whanau is about the bloodline. It is about continuing the bloodline. This is significant to keeping mana within the whanau.
64. Succession is not based on sex. It is based on whakapapa. There was a general equality of opportunity in succession. The chief's heiress has mana in her position.
65. Rangatira over land was not determined by sex. Kaumātua can be of either sex. It was the mana of wāhine that determined where people settled. Wahine were preoccupied with considering access to resources. This was due to their duties as primary caregivers of whanau in the provision of sustenance.
66. Men were more concerned about the strategic and militaristic qualities of the place of settlement. Men were preoccupied with thoughts about defensive positions in case of war.

DATED on this **28th** day of **June 2021**.



Violet Eva Walker