

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 hapū of Ngāti Kurawaka, Ngāti Rakaiwaka and Ngāti Pakauwaka

BRIEF OF EVIDENCE OF PUTI CORBETT

Phoenix Law Limited
Barristers and Solicitors
200 Willis Street
PO Box 27400
Marion Square
Wellington 6141
Phone: (04) 384 1304
Email: mason@phoenixlaw.expert
Counsel Acting: Janet Mason

RECEIVED Waitangi Tribunal
18 Jan 2022
Ministry of Justice WELLINGTON

I, **PUTI CORBETT**, Retired, of Te Rāwhiti, state:

Introduction

1. I present this Brief of Evidence in support of the claim of the Waitaha Grandmother Council of Aotearoa New Zealand. I am a Māori wahine descended from Ngāpuhi Rangatira.
2. *Figure 1* below shows my whakapapa from Moka Kaingamata to my great-grandfather Rewiri Ahitapu, and then to my grandmother, Puti Rewiri Ahitapu. Moka Puru, one of Puti Rewiri Ahitapu's children, is my father's youngest brother. My father, Tutanekai Puru, is the fourth child on the list of the children of Puti Rewiri Ahitapu and Riiwi Noema Puru.
3. Frederick Edward Maning (top left) was the first Magistrate in New Zealand. At the top right hand side you can see Rewa and Moka (labelled Maanu Rewa and Te Kaingamataa), who are two of the sons of Te Auparo, my tupuna whaea. Te Auparo had two daughters. One, who I will talk about later, was killed. Sadly there is no information about the other daughter. It is very noticeable that Te Auparo's two daughters are not in the whakapapa chart. We do not have any charts that show them. However, I am basing my information on my grandmother's kōrero that Te Auparo had two daughters. I consider this omission on the whakapapa charts is typical of what has happened to a lot of our wahine matauranga. It has been ignored, left out of the early writing, or changed to suit the Pākehā who was recording it. This is how much of our kōrero has been lost.

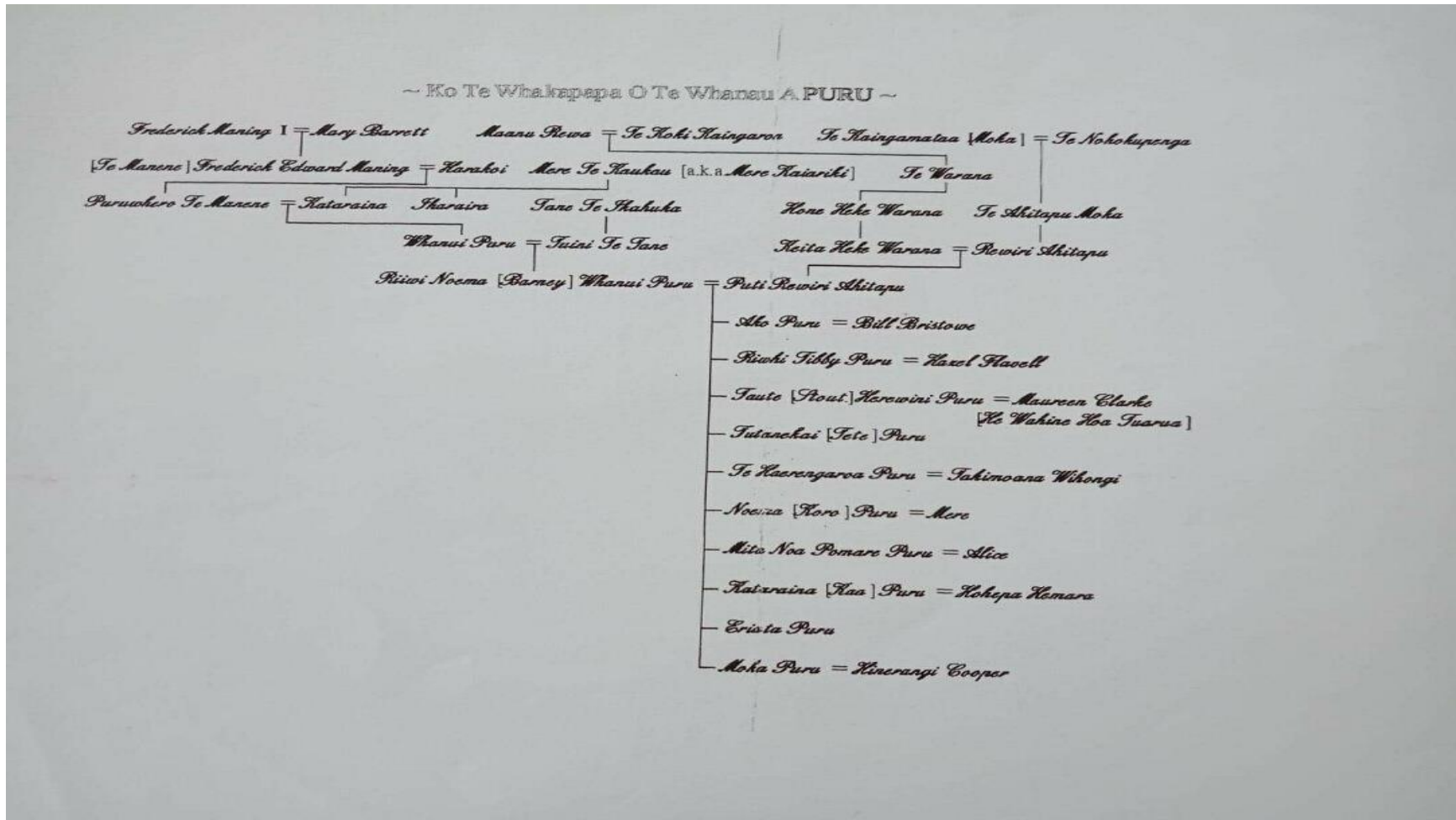


Figure 1: Whakapapa from Moka Kaingamata to Rewiri Ahitapu to Puti Rewiri Ahitapu.

5. I have been awarded an LLM (Hons) from the University of Auckland, and two undergraduate degrees, an LLB and a BSocSc from the University of Waikato.
6. I am a family violence and sexual violence specialist living in Te Rāwhiti in the Bay of Islands. I have spent 25 years in this field, initially working as a court clerk, and latterly, as a Court Services Manager for a team of 14 victim advisors managing 9 courts from Kaitaia to Pukekohe. Within this, I was part of a governance team that created a safer environment for victims giving evidence in sexual violence courts, in Whangarei and Northland. I also spent a short time managing Hon Kelvin Davis MP's office in Tamaki.
7. I belong to the Patukeha hapū.
8. I have read and understand the Tribunal's direction that these are tūāpapa hearings, intended to set the foundation of the Mana Wahine inquiry so that Crown breaches can be explored at a later stage. I will make reference in this BoE to some events post-1840, but this is always in order to provide some context and contrasting information to explain how the mana of Wahine was different pre-1840.
9. I want to talk about my taonga tupuna whaea, Te Auparo. She had two daughters and three sons. Te Auparo was of Ngai Tawake descent. This story was one that our grandmother handed down to us.
10. Te Auparo gave one of her daughters in early marriage to a tribe in Te Rāwhiti in the Bay of Islands called Ngare Raumati in the 1800s. Her daughter had then complained to Te Auparo that she was not happy in the marriage, because she was being assaulted, and there was a lot of domestic violence.
11. Te Auparo went over to where her daughter was living, picked her up and took her back home to where they were from, a little place called Te Waimate North, near Kaikohe. They went back there and her daughter remarried.
12. Ngare Raumati were so angry that they went and hunted Te Auparo and her daughter down, and found them in a turnip patch. They killed Te Auparo, and her daughter, and injured her other younger daughter, and another person who was with them.

13. Ngāpuhi were so incensed with the killing of Te Auparo and her daughter that they formed an alliance and came to Te Rāwhiti to avenge their deaths. They were at war for some 26 years before they conquered the land at Te Rāwhiti and took it over.
14. Te Auparo had such mana, and was so highly thought of, that her descendants came to be seen as a separate hapū. We had been part of Ngai Tawake, but became known as Patukeha, in memory of the killing of our whaea tipuna, Te Auparo.
15. So, this story, told to me by my grandmother, taught me that traditionally, for us, domestic violence was not acceptable. The way our people dealt with that sort of thing was to cast you out of the group. If you were cast out, that meant you were iwi-less, hapū-less, and land-less; you were nothing.
16. This story of Te Auparo can be likened to our original stories about Hine-titama, and how she became Hine-nui-te-po. She was ashamed that her father was the father of her children.
17. Even way back in our creation stories, her shame demonstrates that incest was unacceptable in our society. It shows that we had a system of values even if it was not identifiable to the colonisers, and the way they viewed the world. Domestic assaults and sexual violence have never been acceptable. This is our Tikanga. The actions of Te Auparo and her daughter are clear evidence of this. This kōrero is quite important to me as I have continued with this mahi of working in the area of sexual and physical violence.
18. Te Auparo was a woman of such great mana that an alliance was formed to avenge her death. Due to her actions in walking into her daughter's marital home and bringing her back to the whenua, Te Auparo is highly revered. She has great mana. We have a pou in our Marae that depicts her. Our people come home and they tangi and they hongī her with love and affection to honour her, for sacrificing her life to do what is tika, pono, and aroha, and for the whenua we now have.



Figure 3: Our Poutokomanawa which holds our whareniui up.

19. Te Auparo's three sons, Te Wharerahi, Rewa, and Moka, who were all chiefs in their own right, were the ones who led the charge in the utu for the killing of my tupuna whaea as part of the alliance in Ngāpuhi.
20. Te Wharerahi was a peacemaker. He managed to convince his brothers, Rewa and Moka to sign Te Tiriti o Waitangi in 1840 alongside him.

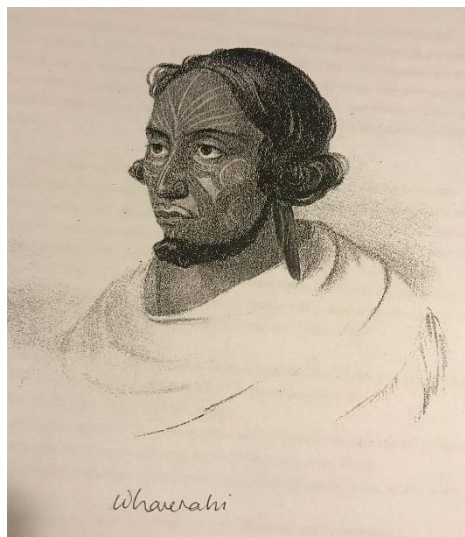


Figure 4: Wharerahi, Te Auparo's oldest son.



Figure 5: Rewa, Te Auparo's middle son.



Figure 6: Moka, Te Auparo's youngest son.

21. There must have been many, many stories of our wahine pre-1840, but they were never recorded by the colonists. They focused on recording events relating to tane because that is what their culture is like, being patriarchal. Our Tikanga was interpreted through their lens.
22. Because of the actions of my tupuna whaea, we now have all of the islands in the Bay of Islands, and a lot of land in Te Rāwhiti. I am now sitting on this beautiful land. We must never forget that this land was payment for killings which arose because our wahine stood up to domestic violence.



Figure 7: Our marae and schoolhouse, situated on Kaingahoa whenua.



Figure 8: Te Rāwhiti Marae, shared by Ngati Kuta and Patukeha.

23. I also want to talk about my grandmother, Puti Noema Rewiri Ahitapu. She was born in 1894 and died in 1974 at the age of 80. She was gifted with whakapapa (which some now say is supposed to be held only by our tane) and she fought fiercely for the whenua that our whanau own in Te Rāwhiti. Our whenua contained a school on it but when the school closed in the 1960s, the Ministry of Education leased the whenua to the public. Puti Noema went to the Māori Land Court to get our whenua back, but the Court returned it to all people in Te Rāwhiti, rather than to our hapū. So she went back to the

Court again to fight for the land, and now the whenua is held by nga uri o Rewiri Ahitapu, which means it is for the descendants of Rewiri Ahitapu.

24. I am aware these events post-date 1840. However, I want to refer to them to show that in Ngāpuhi Tikanga, it is the wahine who hold the whenua. Puti Noema was brought up by her mother who had a lot of knowledge of pre-1840, Te Tiriti and other events surrounding it. Her name was Kei Warana Heke. She was the daughter of Hone Heke II. My grandmother held authoritative matauranga in terms of whakapapa and Tikanga. I know that the hapū looked to her for guidance and karakia in times of trouble.
25. It has always been said to me that Ngāpuhi wahine were the Kaitiaki of our whenua. Our wahine were the ones who had primary responsibilities over our whenua, and the mana that wahine hold over the whenua prevails to this day. This mana they had over the whenua was not recorded by Pākehā writers of that time as it was a completely foreign notion to them.

Dated 17 January 2022

A handwritten signature in blue ink on lined paper. The signature is stylized and appears to read 'P. Corbett'.

PUTI CORBETT