

**IN THE WAITANGI TRIBUNAL****WAI 2700  
WAI 1781**

**IN THE MATTER** of the Treaty of Waitangi Act 1975

**AND** claims in the Mana Wāhine Inquiry (Wai 2700)

**AND** a claim by Tracy Hillier and Rita Wordsworth on behalf of themselves and for the benefit of the hapū of Ngai Tamahaua (Wai 1781)

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**BRIEF OF EVIDENCE OF RAIHA RUWHIU  
ON BEHALF OF NGAI TAMAHAUA HAPŪ**

**DATED 31 MAY 2022**

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**RECEIVED**

Waitangi Tribunal

**7 Jun 2022**

Ministry of Justice  
WELLINGTON

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## **MAY IT PLEASE THE TRIBUNAL:**

### **Introduction**

1. My full name is Raiha Ruwhiu. I affiliate to Ngai Tamahaua hapū.
2. It is my duty, as one of my parents' eighteen children, to stand in the truth of my tupuna and recall their histories in this Kōrerō Mana Wāhine.
3. These are the practises of our ancestors and a cultural right. These practices allow us to transcend the present to deeper connections with passed generations.
4. I am sharing the truths that have been recorded in our ancestral house Muriwai, whom I will profile, He Wahine Tapairu.
5. Whakapapa recognises that our ancestors live on, in the spiritual realm and in the physical world, alongside the living. It is the living's duty to record our whakapapa, just as it is our ancestor's duty to guide us in the physical world.

### **Background and Upbringing**

6. My mother is Paea Tapae Biddle (b. 1918).
7. My great-grandmother is Hariata Parekaramu (aka Harriet Kirkham), who was married to Rewita Niwa Hohaia. She was the daughter of an early Scottish settlor.
8. My great-grandmother had 8 daughters including my grandmother, Tiria Rewita. A list of the Rewita whānau, along with photos and dates is attached and marked "A".
9. My Mother was coached and tutored by her mother, Tiria, and her seven aunties. Tiria cultivated my mother's academic potential and she went on to achieve the Ngārimu Scholarship and attend Turakina Māori Girls' College. She became a teacher's assistant at Omaramutu native school.
10. My mother gave birth to eighteen children with my father, her husband, who helped to deliver all of us. My parents celebrated 61 years of marriage together.

11. We lived the best of both worlds in Ōpape, which is a seaside haven and Toatoa surrounded by native bush. Our homes were humble and always too small, our food was either from the sea, bush or gardens and we were seldom sick. As a coastal sea side dwelling family, my mother had affinity with nature, a close association with Hinemoana and Tangaroa.
12. My mother had this big thick bible where she wrote all our Māori names, with birth dates and individual whakatauki. She came from a heritage that believed in the use of the stars and the moon as influential in determining the strengths and weaknesses of each individual character. Each child had a role and a responsibility to themselves and using their gifts and talents in service of others. Cosmology plays a lifelong influence in our lives, from birth until death.
13. Despite the business of motherhood, an important on-going role played by my Mother was as the recipient of Matauranga Māori. She was nurtured in this role by her parents. It was understood that she would hold these truths and make sure they were passed on to the right people. She and her brothers, along with her aunts, shared narratives and always remained connected with their hapū.
14. In her latter years, my mother regularly had whānau call on her seeking advice on matters of whakapapa. She was very protective of her knowledge and selective about who she shared it with; she would not give other people's whakapapa if it was not them asking.
15. I am thankful to have spent time with her putting the whakapapa into Ruamoko the ancestral house at Waiaua, which took two weeks, much korero and many wananga. I was present when a kaumatua came and began to contest one of the names on the pou in Ruamoko her reprimand for challenging her was '*Ko te take rerekē i ā tāua he uri tāku me tika te whakapapa kia ako kia tika, ēngari tou kāore āno kia tae ki te tūnga mātua kāore o uri, mēna ka hē te whakapapa kāore i aha*' (It matters that i am accurate with genealogy as i will pass it on to my descendants, as for you, you haven't experienced fatherhood, you have no issue, so it doesn't matter if it is wrong'). The kaumatua stood up quickly, picked up his hat and left. At first I was embarrassed, wishing the floor would open up and swallow me. However, I knew my mother spoke with integrity, honesty, and

transparency, standing strong and holding to the knowledge taught her. I marvel at her work, grateful for her example, and how she kept whakapapa all those years.

16. My mother and her cousins were like Māmā Whangai (aunties who stepped up to be our mum when she was absent). They all showed us another level of love and it cemented our role to care for our elders, as well. They would want us to be well behaved and well-mannered, in the public eye.
17. My mum was proficient, eloquent speaker in English and Māori. Her writing was cursive neat, tidy and very legible. With my dad, she would win every argument if they stuck to speaking English. If the language switched to Māori, it would be an equal argument. My mum figured that if she wanted to win the debate, she would switch to English. My dad would switch to swearing.
18. I have much to say about the lived experiences of my whaea tūpuna in the 19th and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, and the trauma they and their whānau suffered at the hands of the Crown, but I will save this for later in the Wai 2700 hearings.

### **Te Kauae Runga**

19. A full appreciation of this Kōrerō Mana Wāhine can only come through Te Kauae Runga (Upper Jaw) or things celestial. It requires a deeper understanding and higher knowledge in Taonga Tuku Iho.
20. It is fitting that the Kauae Runga is sought in reverence and respect.
21. Te Kauae Runga was practised on the island of Mauke from whence our eponymous ancestor Muriwai is descended, and thus dates back to a time that is even prior to Māori epistemology.
22. Muriwai travels the waimuri (The sacred waters) as she was pre-ordained to the Tapairu role. Her language was spiritual, kauae runga knowledge. She had the power to connect directly to the heavens.
23. Te Kauae Runga is contrasted with the particular level of existence we live in which is the Kauae Raro, where humankind is free to choose.

## **Muriwai**

24. Muriwai is the eponymous ancestor of Ngai Tamahaua and Whakatōhea.
25. I know the Tribunal is already familiar with Muriwai, from evidence given by others in this inquiry.
26. Muriwai was born to Irakewa and Wekanui on the island of Mauke.
27. Muriwai made a voyage to Aotearoa, specifically Whakatōhea, on the waka which landed at Whakatāne. Wekanui and Irakewa walked the ridge coming out at Waioweka where they met up with Muriwai and the rest of the whānau who came on the waka. Here they demonstrate how familiar they were with the land boundaries.
28. On the drowning of her children, Te Kauau and Tanewhirinaki, Muriwai was able to enforce a two and a half years rāhui from Ngā Kuri a Whārei ki Tihirau. From that time until the present, no other person has been able to command such discipline. An image depicting this story is seen on the walls of the Ancestral House of Muriwai.
29. Muriwai was more than a rangatira. She was a Tapairu.
30. Muriwai comes from a pre-colonised timeline, the time of Te Ao Wairua ā Mua.
31. Te Ao Wairua ā Mua is where Muriwai would have chosen her earthly parents, receiving the necessary gifts and talents to serve family, hapu Iwi. She was chosen to fulfil her role on earth, but all of her significant preparations were pre-ordained prior to her entry into this world.
32. It is recorded that Muriwai received instruction from her deceased father Irakewa. She was prepared through te whare wānanga with everything she would need to carry out her Tapairu role. Even her house had been prepared for her, made by the hands of God. This is what we know as Te Ana a Muriwai, in Whakatāne.
33. Her Tapairu role meant she held great responsibility for all the personnel within her confederation: for their health and well-being, psychological welfare and spiritual guidance. She was expected to be a strategist,

involved in warfare as well as implementing conflict resolution. Muriwai provides an example of the responsibilities placed on Tapairu.

34. As Tapairu, she had a confederation of tribes, possibly 6-7, which is a shared responsibility of Ahukiruku, Noawanui, Kaitahutahu, working alongside the Taiopuru, Ahupiri, Noaia and Konini. This group is known as the Ahupiri. Her role involved consultation with the Ahupiri.
35. Evidence of Muriwai Tapairutanga is still available today as we witness the place names throughout Aotearoa. Starting up north we have Muriwai Beach, Te Wai Mimiha a Muriwai, down to the Tauranga region we have Hiruharama Marae the poutokomanawa is Muriwai. Further down at Katikati at Tuapiro Marae, the dining hall is named Muriwai and the ancestral house is called Ngā Kuri a Wharei, which is synonymous to the rāhui that Muriwai placed on the sea following the drowning of her children.
36. Similarly, we have our ancestral house Muriwai He Wahine Tapairu the eponymous ancestor of Whakātōheā who holds the history of Whakātōheā. Whakātōheā was the name given, the name because of Muriwai's response, one thought to be her stubbornness. This is a colonised version or an opinion to her response, perhaps from a male with no rank and unable to converse at her level anyway. The saying is '*tohe te tohetohe*' (analyse the issue, know the origin of the issue, what is your understanding and knowledge of the issue, not just an opinion).
37. Muriwai travels the waimuri (the sacred waters). She was pre-ordained to the Tapairu role, her language was spiritual, kauae runga knowledge, power to connect direct to the heavens.

#### *Tamahaua*

38. There have been many discussions over the decades as to the origins of Tamahaua.
39. We know that Tamahaua was betrothed to Kuraawherangi.
40. Kuraawherangi is a daughter of Rangikurukuru who is the son of Muriwai, so Kuraawherangi is granddaughter of Muriwai.
41. Tamateamatangi is the father of Muriwai's children.

42. Tamateamatangi is the father of Rangikurukuru and would have been a Taiopuru (while Muriwai, a Tapairu). Taiopuru can only pass his ranking to his son therefore, Rangikurukuru would have received his ranking from his father in becoming a Taiopuru.
43. Tamahaua is also a descendant of Tarawa.
44. Tamahaua is the son of Tamatuhirae who has strong Tūhoe ties. This is very evident in the herstory within Te Whakatōhea. It is these strong whakapapa lines that come through.

### Tapairutanga vs Rangatiratanga

#### Rankings of Women and Men

	Women		Men
1	Tapairu	<i>1-4 work together As a Ahupiri. They make all the Decision for the tribes</i>	Taiopuru
2	Ahukiruku		Ahupiri
3	Noawanui		Noaia
4	Kaitahutahu		Konini
5	Mareikura	<i>Action the plan set by the Ahupiri</i>	Kaitahutahu Ariki Nui
6	Waitoto Mangatawhiti	<i>The are servants for the Ahupiri</i>	Kaitahutahu Ariki
7	Taotao Koharau	<i>strategists</i>	Rangatira
8	Mokai	<i>These two groups Get told what to do and how to do it</i>	Tutua
9	Taurekareka		Taurekareka

45. Tapairutanga, including the sacredness of women and the significance of her pre-ordained status to become the eponymous tipuna of Whakatōhea, is deliberate in identifying that male and female have equal mana with similar roles and responsibilities.
46. Muriwai was born in Mauke and comes from a line of Tapairu which is the highest ranking male status held by her father, Irakewa. Because Muriwai is the matāmua or first born she is exalted into the rank of Tapairu.
47. These rankings were distinguishable by their tāmoko. For both the Taiopuru and the Tapairu, who were the eldest children in line, it was all about genealogy, never gender. The distinction of rank is usually recorded in the tāmoko, enabling the mana and status of the wearer to be

reflected. These include warfare skills, ability to unite confederation of tribes, whakapapa, high birth and history.

48. There may be occasions when tāmoko may be changed. An example of this is during the exploits of war, where the ultimate insult is for the enemy to change the tāmoko which will then see the wearer be relegated to the next level down.<sup>1</sup> As you observe in the ranking table above, Muriwai is a Tapairu. What is interesting here is that 'Rangatira' is conducive to the male line only, not the women, and it is ranked at number 7 - 1 step away from being a slave, totally demeaning, insulting. A replica pou in the Opotiki museum shows Muriwai had a full tāmoko, full facial, arms, buttocks, thighs, legs like that of a male, there was no differentiation, which confirms her role as a wahine whaikorero, wahine whai mana.<sup>2</sup>
49. What I have observed is that the last moko kauae in our whanau and the hapu of Ngai Tamahaua is my great grandmother Hariata Parekaramu's generation. There are many nannies with moko kauae in the photos that adorn the walls in our ancestral house Muriwai, but I am not sure of what generation they belonged.
50. From this, one can assume that Ngai Tamahaua had women that were deserving and skilled in matauranga Māori. My mother believed that moko kauae were reserved for those with the kauae runga, practise so she didn't see the relevance with the evolving culture, especially that the English language had changed the thinking and psyche of the individuals.
51. I often wondered whether the church had impacted her comments as well, or that the Anglican and Catholic Church were exerting their dominance through Christianity, telling Māori that tāmoko originates from the underworld and backing it with scripture.
52. The right to leadership was not one which was fought over, it was a birth right.

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<sup>1</sup> Dumont d'Urville, 1826

<sup>2</sup> Simmonds. T, & D



53. The balance between tāne and wāhine was necessary, so Muriwai being wāhine was important to the maintenance of balance in the system used by the confederation of tribes.
54. As stated earlier, the role of Tapairu is one which comes naturally. Muriwai was mataamua, the first one, which meant she was destined to be Tapairu. This means she knew her destiny to become a Tapairu upon birth. This came from living knowledge, it was pre-ordained before arriving on the whenua.

### **Ngā Whakatauāki o Muriwai**

*“Ko te ara o te Tāne, ki te ao marama kei ahau, te wāhine.”<sup>3</sup>*

55. Muriwai blood runs through my veins; her whakatauaki resonate with me. I have grown up with them.
56. Muriwai’s whakatauaki can be used during formal speeches, or part of everyday conversations. This is empowering for woman.
57. Muriwai’s whakatauaki encapsulate cultural values and wisdom.
58. Normally whakatauaki are short and succinct using symbolism and metaphors to project key messages such as bravery, leadership, work, co-operation, the fair allocation of resources, love, hospitality, land, identity, and belonging to family. The whakatauaki spoken by Muriwai acknowledge seasons, special events or the lived experiences of Muriwai.
59. Mihi Kotukutuku, a descendent of Muriwai, reiterated the origins of this whakatauaki when she stood up to speak at Tanatana Marae Waimana. Te Pari Tuterangi told her to be seated to which she responded by reiterating the above whakatauaki with mana o te wāhine and completed her whaikōrerō.
60. Another occasion occurred when Mihi Kotukutuku arrived in Te Arawa, Ohinemutu for a tangihanga. Before the ope from Whakatōheā arrived, she was directed by Mita Taupopoki to be seated. She refused, reciting this

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<sup>3</sup> A whakatauaki of Muriwai concerning te mana o ngā wāhine

whakatuaki and reminding the men of the haukainga that her genealogy was senior to theirs as she was of the elder son of Tutanekai whereas, they were off the younger son.<sup>4</sup>

61. When the waka capsized, Muriwai uttered “ Kia tū Whakatane aue ahau!” A deliberate and essential whakatauaki not only synonymous with her life experience as a Tapairu and just as important as a mother finding strength to upright the waka and rescue her children who had drowned.

### **Te Whare Tangata**

62. In pre-colonial times, wāhine had the same status as whenua wāhine.
63. They were the ones with the mana of the whenua. Women identified the same with Papatuanuku. That connection with Papatuanuku was part of their essence, their value. Papatuanuku is the giver of life and the nurturer of life.
64. The generational links that are carried in a woman are considered important. For example, all the eggs that will be implanted in the daughter and grand-daughter are with the grandmother at birth.

### *Pre-birthing*

65. The implanting of parenthood was given to women to procreate. The blood collates at a place where the child is forming, the shaping growth of the bones, sinews, veins, blood stream. When, the body is fully formed the mind is implanted, the child begins to move and stretches its arms, legs, head and body a sign that everything is healthy.
66. At the time of readiness to deliver it was very important to measure the physical, emotional, psychological wellbeing of the mother. This was an important role that belonged to the husband, taught through tikanga.
67. It was also the responsibility of the whole family to provide the best food in season from the bush, sea, the earth, for example, a kereru from the bush.

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<sup>4</sup> Stirling, A. M & A Salmond, Eruera 1976; also referred to in:  
<https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/3s36/stirling-mihi-kotukutuku>

The best part, which is usually the tau (backside), is reserved for the pregnant woman.

68. One example of the sacredness of the whare tangata is the belief that all the eggs that will be implanted in the daughter and grand-daughter are with the grandmother at the time of birth. This is an aspect of te ao Māori that emphasizes the generational links we all have.

### *Birthing*

69. Birthing was a sacred ritual that involved both male and female assistants with skills of whakapapa, karakia, and whanaungatanga. Karakia in particular was an essential part of the birthing process, and the mother is of the utmost importance throughout. Among those in attendance at the birth were those gifted in childbirth, and with an understanding of the anatomy for both mother and unborn child.
70. Those in attendance would observe the condition of the child at birth in terms of blood colouring. For example, if the blood within the umbilical cord is red pink the child is presumed to have a mum whose husband had nurtured her and fed her the best food which resulted in a healthy child and mother.
71. Whatever condition that arose from the birth, whether good or bad, the observers would be able to identify who is accountable for the role identified as lacking and discipline would ensue.
72. The day of the child's birth, date of birth, position of the moon and stars were all considered important indications about a child, such as when an infant kicks or stretches it could mean that they would be deemed to be strong minded.

### *Post Birth*

73. The duration of one month post birthing requires after care delivered by the team of helpers, to both infant and mum. This would consist of mirimiri (massaging) to help the mothers body recuperate from bringing a child into the world.

74. Again, all her and her child's needs are catered for and the father is kept informed. Eventually, the mother has her monthly period since birth she is bathed and only then she is returned to her family.
75. Communal living was the way of life, respect, kindness and support dwelled and normally, the family and extended families will be a part of rearing the child. *'It takes a tribe to raise a child'*. Some aspects of the birthing rituals continue to be observed within families to the present day.

#### *Burial of Pito and Whenua Wahi*

76. Of note is the significance of whenua returning to whenua, or the returning of the placenta to the earth. This is an example of how women had mana whenua.
77. Whenua Wahi refers to the practice of burying the placenta after birth. The placenta is referred to as whenua. This is because the placenta sustains and nurtures the development of the baby while in the womb, much like the land will once the child is born.
78. "Pito" refers to the remaining umbilical cord that hangs from a baby's navel. The practice associated with the pito involves burying this with the whenua or in another appropriate location. When buried in separate locations, the purpose is to keep the whakapapa/connections to those places strong, and enhance kaitiakitanga and rangatiratanga.
79. The areas where we, as a whānau, bury whenua and pito are waahi tapu/sacred places. The tapu associated with these areas, commonly pā sites, provide the whenua and pito with protection.
80. The continued burial of the whenua and pito of our tamariki, as recently as December 2019, whether separate or together, reaffirms the whakapapa connections we have to those sites.
81. What is notable about the returning of the whenua to whenua is that it confirms attachment, connection and belonging and having a place to stand. My mother believed in this sacred eternal ritual and stated that "women had mana whenua" like her grandmother, Kimohia.

82. When there was balance pre-colonisation there was recognition of male and female having equal mana and, at times, different responsibilities.

### *Menstruation*

83. One last example of the significance of women as *whare tangata* is the sacredness around the menstrual cycle. Monthly periods were treated with the importance of self-care. For the women, there was no stepping over anyone's head as the head is the most sacred.
84. During their menstruation, women didn't go to the beach or the garden as they were considered *tapu*.

### **Moko Kauae**

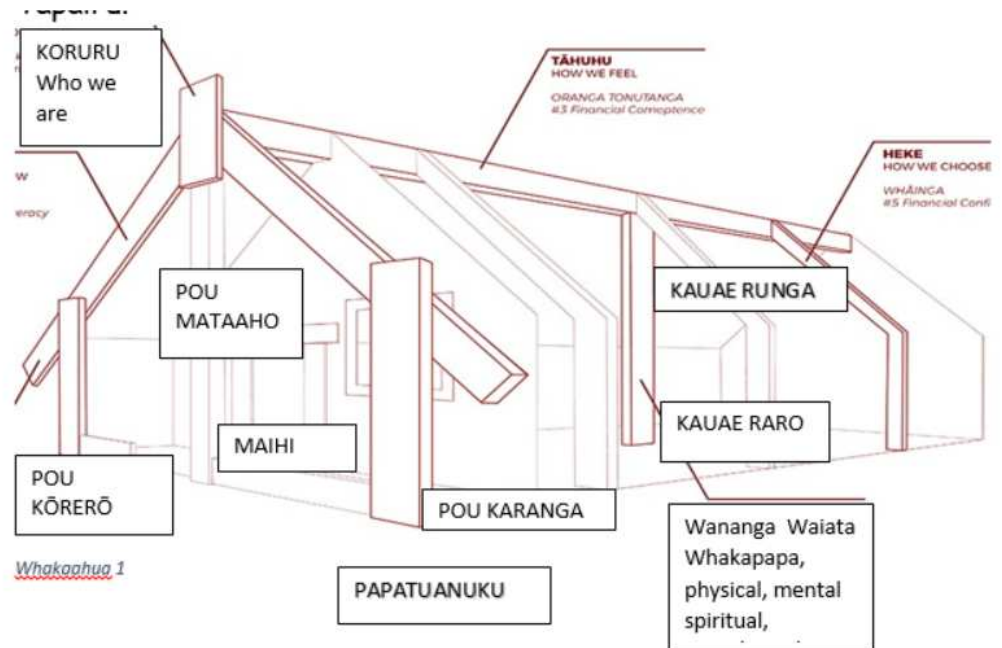
85. My great-grandmother Hariata Parekaramu (aka Harriet Kirkham) had a moko kauae. Her photograph is attached below:



86. I have observed that the last moko kauae in our *whānau* was in my great-grandmother, Hariata's generation.
87. There are many nannies with moko kauae in the photos that adorn the walls in our ancestral house Muriwai. One can assume that our *Ngai Tamahaua* definitely had women that were deserving, skilled, in *matauranga Māori*.
88. My mother believed that moko kauae were reserved for those with a *kauae runga* practise, so she didn't see the relevance of moko kauae with the evolving culture, especially given that the English language had changed the thinking and psyche of individuals.
89. I often wondered whether the church had impacted her comments, or that the Anglican and Catholic church were exerting their dominance through

Christianity telling Māori that tāmoko originates from the underworld and backing it with scripture.

### Our Ancestral House of Muriwai



90. The walls within this whare are hand painted, depicting the shared history of the descendants of Muriwai, along with symbols of her mana. Attached and marked “B” is a Powerpoint depicting some of these illustrations.
91. It is helpful to know that our ancestral house has been moved four times from Te Papa golf course Opotiki, Waiau, Gaskils farm area, Hinahinanui Te Repo, then lastly Te Pahau Opape in 1908, one would observe that despite the trials and tribulations, marae live on and wait for descendants to connect and belong.
92. Mountains are personified in Māori culture according to Biddle. P, T, (oral communication) to tell whether mountains were male or female was in the formation, if the peaks were high and pointed it was male, if it were more flat or rounded it was female. The identities of ancestral houses are also verified through the same method.

**DATED** this 31<sup>st</sup> day of May 2022

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Raiha Ruwhiu'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'R'.

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Raiha Ruwhiu