

IN THE WAITANGI TRIBUNAL

**Wai 2700
Wai 2847
Wai 377**

IN THE MATTER OF the Treaty of Waitangi Act 1975

AND

IN THE MATTER OF The Mana Wāhine Kaupapa Inquiry

BY a claim by Michelle Marino, Errol Churton, and David James Churton, on behalf of the Ngati Wai hapū of Ngāti Tama

BRIEF OF EVIDENCE OF MICHELLE ROMAINE MARINO

25 July 2022

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I, **MICHELLE ROMAINE MARINO**, Self-employed, of Whanganui-a-Tara, state that:

Introduction

1. I was born in 1959. I am one of the descendants of Te Kaeaea, usually known as “Taringa Kuri,” a principal chief of Ngāti Tama from the mid-1830s until his death in 1871. He was a signatory of te Tiriti o Waitangi.
2. Under the leadership of Taringa Kuri, Ngati Tama moved to Whanganui-a-Tara in 1824/25 from Northern Taranaki. They took up residence initially at Ohariu, and eventually also moved back through to the inner Wellington Harbour. Ngāti Tama’s principle pā on the Wellington Harbour was located at Tiakiwai, present day Tinakori Road, and Kaiwharawhara.
3. I am a named claimant for the Wai 377 Claim, which relates to Crown Te Tiriti breaches by way of their acts and omissions over the lands and resources of Taringa Kuri and his descendants.
4. I present this Brief of Evidence (“BoE”) to support my claim in the Mana Wahine Kaupapa Inquiry.

Whakapapa

5. The *tupuna whaene* (ancestral mother) on both my grandparents’ sides was Ngarau Kawhena.
6. In our Ngati Tama Tikanga, whenua is passed down through the female line. The wahine have the responsibility of passing on the whakapapa, so that the land can continue to provide sustenance for generations to come. Three hapu that I belong to, Ngati Hine, Ngati Hinewaiata and Ngati Ruaiti of Ngā Rauru, are named after mana wahine tupuna.

7. I learned my whakapapa from my Nan. Through my mother's side, my siblings and I are the rightful successors to her land interests on both sides, my kuia and all those *tupuna whaene* (ancestral mothers) before them.
8. My father, Hori Ngatau Marino, descends from Ngāti Tama. My mother, Te Iti o Rauru Karipa, descends from Ngā Rauru.
9. My grandmother on my mother's side, Tauranga Pirikahu, is from Ngā Rauru. Nan was adopted out and raised by her uncle Te Hokio, and the way I remember her is that she was always looking after and caring for people. When my Kuia's biological father, Poutini Pirikahu fell ill, she cared for him until he passed.
10. My maternal grandparents lived on the ancestral lands of Nga Wairiki o Ngai Ariki, a people pre-Rauru, prior to relocating to Ngati Ruaiti, a hapū of Ngā Rauru. They always had visitors from the wider whānau. My koro, Rangituru Karipa, was one of very few that had paid work and land to live off. Koro and Nan supported the entire extended whānau.
11. Nan was in her nineties when she passed, according to the Māori Land Court records, although her birth certificate mentions that she was younger. Nan died quite some time after my mother. Right up until her passing, Nan was looking after my distant, third or fourth cousins, as well as their children. She was raising her great grandnieces and grandnephews. I do not know how she did it. Caring for and supporting so many whānau members over her lifetime must not have been easy. It must have taken a lot to feed the masses that would stay with her and my Koro before he passed in the late 1960s.
12. Whangai was common practice pre-1840. The whole community accepted responsibility for raising children, not just the mother and father. Grandparents would commonly assist with raising their mokopuna while their parents went out for mahinga kai. All worked collectively to feed hapu

members. Nan was always the homemaker, horticulturalist, nurturer, but not just that, she was a weaver, matakite and healer. A Mana Wahine of many talents.

13. My great-great-grandmother, Ngarau Kawhena, lived in the rohe of Ngati Pourua o Ngā Rauru. The ancestral land provided her livelihood, and along with her whanau, she grew her own food, and gathered eel and whitebait on the river nearby. My father used to go pig hunting there, as did the old people, and my ancestors before them. They were there to support the extended hapū whenever called upon. In those days, the land and water resources sustained the whanau. Everyone in the wider hapū had their role in day-to-day life. Kaimoana was collected, with certain whānau members responsible for fishing, eeling, cooking etc.
14. *Nga Pumanawa e Waru*. This is the name of a wāhine or person with natural talent such as a grower of kai or a horticulturist. The fishermen, or *tangata hii ika*, provided sustenance and well-being for the hapū. There are many whakatauki, or proverbs, used for food providers in pre-1840 Māori society. These whakatauki reflect strong leadership qualities, and are an expression of Mana Wahine. There are whakatauki for life bearers, as their tamariki and mokopuna are key to our future. Nga Wāhine are the house of humanity in the whanau, hapū and iwi worldview. They are respected for creating life. Some other whakatauki are as follows:
 - a. *Ko mahi Ko ora* (work brings prosperity);
 - b. *Moea he tangata ringa raupa* (marry a man with calloused hands);
 - c. *Nau te rourou, Naku te rourou, Ka ora ai te iwi* (with your food basket and my food basket, the guests will have enough);
 - d. *Te wahine I te ringaringa me te waewae kakama, moea te wahine whakangutungutu whakarerea atu* (the women with active hands and feet, marry her, but the woman with overactive mouth, leave well alone);

- e. *He aha te mea nui o te ao! He tangata, he tangata, he tangata* (what is the most important thing in the word? It is people, it is people, it is people);
- f. *Papatuanuku te matua o tangata* (Mother Earth is humanity's parent);
- g. *He puta taua ki te tane, he whanau tamariki ki te wahine* (as warfare is to men, childbearing is to women);
- h. *He wahine, he whenua, ngaro ai te whenua* (men die because of land and women); and
- i. *Ko te mana o ia tangata, he tapu* (the mana of each person is tapu).

Mahinga Kai

15. Prior to 1840 all of my ancestors practiced Mahinga Kai. They were dependant on the resources of the land and water. At Nga Wairiki o Ngai Ariki they had a thriving economy which later, over time, included orchards, peaches, and figs. There was beekeeping and pig rearing also.
16. When I was young, my siblings and I would go fishing with my mother, my Aunty Doreen, and their brothers. This was a type of seasonal fishing called Mahinga Kai. When we would go for Mahinga Kai, Mum would tell us stories about swimming with moray eels when she went fishing with Te Hokio (“Tata”), the whangai father, and uncle by blood, of my grandmother, Tauranga Pirikahu.
17. My siblings and I would go every year to gather mahinga kai from about November to March, which is the mahinga kai season. My grandparents did the same thing back in the day, as their ancestors did. Tata descended from a long line of fishermen. All the generations that came after him followed suit, and the knowledge, skills and experiences of these fishing practices prior to 1840 were passed down to my generation. My siblings and I learnt these practices when I was younger than 10 years old.

18. We would drag nets out to catch flounder. We would also collect paua, mussels and pūpū. At the mouth of the river is where the eels would come to spawn at Tapuarau Lake, and we would go spearing and catch eels for a kai. Mahinga Kai also included White baiting up the Waitotara River.
19. My great-great-grandfather would have learnt these practices from his parents and so on. These practices were passed down to both genders indiscriminately. There were no specified gender roles when it came to Mahinga Kai, and all the wāhine were taught skills such as how to mend the nets. Dad would have all of his daughters come along and help on his boat when fishing in the deep waters. We would put the nets out and then come back a day or two later.
20. This was an active lifestyle. We got out and we just did it. We learnt a lot, just as the previous generations did. My stories are a reflection of how life used to be pre-1840. Hence, when we get the opportunity, we will pass on to our kids these traditions, and in turn to our grandkids too, just as we got this from our ancestors. We don't want any of those traditional practices to be lost, even if some of the kaimoana is extinct.
21. Every year there used to be a flood, which changed the whole topography of the area. Following the flood, Maori would allow nature to take its course and let everything grow back. There was no disturbance to the kaimoana beds and the pingao undergrowth which was used for weaving. The pingao is now non-existent. Riparian planting has helped a little. The native regeneration has kept the floods at bay.
22. Bad farming practices and dam damage have blocked the River, preventing fish migration. This limits their ability to access spawning habitat, seek out food resources, and escape predators. The eels continue to come back, although they are not as big as they used to be. There are less mussels than there used to be, and the pūpū are extinct.

Role of Wāhine Pre-1840

- 23.** For Maori, Wāhine and Tane shared roles. Whether it was tiaki, tamariki and nga mokopuna, making the best rewena bread, cooking, growing vegetables, or housekeeping, the Maori attitude was based on encouraging these reciprocal relationships.

Tapu

- 24.** Giving birth is a tapu process, with the shedding of bodily fluids. My great-grandmother Taapu te Unahi gave birth to my Nan at Pakaraka, which in effect enhanced her mana and the mana of her respective hapu, Ngati Maika o Ngarauru, and her iwi, having given birth to a taonga tuku iho. My Nan was Tapu. Her mother passed away giving birth to her.
- 25.** Wahine were very tapu during menstruation due to its association with blood. They were kept away from food, cultivated areas, shoreline or food storage areas. We were taught that by our mother who was taught by her mother, and so on.
- 26.** To whakanoa, Maori were not allowed to step or walk over anyone, or stand or walk in front of anyone, of respect. If they did, they had to bend down lower than the speaker to show *mahaki* (humility). A puhi virgin would be selected to enter first to whakanoa a new whare, when we went to a house opening named after one of our tupuna. This was and still is common practice.
- 27.** Those who returned from the war were extremely tapu. Therefore, a whakanoa ceremony would be enacted. Some people have interpreted the wahine ability to whakanoa as noa, non-sacred, common or ordinary, yet wahine can also deem objects tapu.

Matakite

28. My Nan inherited many ancestral gifts handed down by her tupuna. Some of those gifts have been passed down to the next generations. The gift of Matakite undoubtedly came through from each successive generation. Hariata, alias Ngapikitanga, was my Nan's kuia. She was a matakite. The people came to her for wairua, tinana and hinengaro ailments and healing. She was convicted under the Tohunga Suppression Act 1903.
29. Nan was the last of the older generation that I knew. She belonged to the hapū of Ngati Hinewaiata and Ngati Hine of Ngā Rauru, both eponymous ancestresses.
30. Nan, like her predecessor, Hinewaiata and those who followed had strong personalities. Wāhine passed down their charisma, focus, energy, ambitions, courage, and were always looking out for the greater good of the whanau and hapū. Wāhine were accustomed to tackling difficult situations head-on, solve problems, and were forward thinking. It was not unusual for a wāhine to be a leader in her own right. Hinewaiata lived until 99, and looked after her health. My Nan was raised the same way, with great mental strength and the ability to make hard decisions when she needed to. These are all the qualities that were essential for pre-1840 mana wāhine.

Legacy of Mana Wāhine

31. As a pre-1840 tradition, some people are given names because of their character, their natural talent, or the gifts they inherited from their respective tupuna.
32. *Te korimako: Na te korimako te reka o tana waiata ka whakaritea nga tangata reo ataahua ki a ia He apu paru te parera, whai ano ka whakaritea nga tangata kaihorō ki a ia* (the bellbird sings beautifully, people with

beautiful voices are compared to it. The grey duck gobbles up and it follows that greedy people are likened to it).

33. *Rua-pū-tahanga* was a Sixteenth Century chieftainess of Ngāti Ruanui descent, and an ancestor of many tribes of Tainui. She can whakapapa to Ngati Pourua o Ngati Maika through her father. She travelled to the Waitara River before going around the east side of Mount Taranaki, back to Patea.¹ This trail, then used by iwi to travel between Taranaki, became known as *Te Ara Tapu o Rua-pū-tahanga* (the sacred path of Rua-pū-tahanga).
34. During this expedition, she stayed overnight on the bank of the Kahouri river. A spring where she sat and wept was named *Te Puna Roimata o Rua-pū-tahanga* (the spring of tears of Rua-pū-tahanga). Afterwards she fell asleep as she lay staring at the night sky, and thus the place was named *Whakaahurangi* (turn to the heaven), which is now the name for Stratford.²
35. Kewa was the younger brother of Turi, the captain of the Aotea Waka. Aokeyhu was the Taniwha slayer of Tutaeporoporo. Today his stone form lies at Kauhau o Kupe in Whanganui. At low tide, you can see his petrified form in stone. Rua-pū-tahanga had three husbands and begat a total of eight tamariki across these marriages.
36. Ngati Hinewaiata is a hapū named after the mana wāhine, Hinewaiata. Hine meaning girl, and waiata meaning to sing. Hinewaiata was an orator, singer and composer, who was said to have sung like a songbird and had a lot of mana. Hinewaiata would have possessed multiple *Puumanawa e Waru* (natural talents, expertise and leadership skills).

¹ Bruce Biggs and Pei Te Hurinui Jones *Ngā iwi o Tainui: The Traditional History of the Tainui People; Ngā Kooreero Tuku Iho a ngā Tuupuna* (Auckland University Press, Auckland, 2004) at 68.

² Stephenson Percy Smith *History And Traditions Of The Maoris Of The West Coast, North Island Of New Zealand Prior To 1840* (Alpha Editions, 2021) at 191.

Hinengākau

- 37.** There are three branches of the Whanganui River. Hinengākau's domain covers the upper reaches. Her younger siblings Tamaupoko and Tupoho cover the middle and lower branches. The intertwining nature of the river represents the entwining of Hinengākau's hair. This brought everyone together. There is a *pou whakairo* (carving) that depicts her looking to the people of the awa. The message there is of an entwining that connects us all together.
- 38.** *E rere kau mai te awa nui mai te Kāhui Maunga ki Tangaroa, ko au te awa, ko te awa ko au* (the river flows from the mountain to the sea, I am the river, the river is me). The river gives to you and you give to the river by keeping it healthy.
- 39.** The river is of huge importance to Ati Haunui a Paparangi, as it is their ancestral river, their arterial highway. It is a source of physical and spiritual sustenance, and remains a focal point. In 2017, the Whanganui River was officially recognised as a living being with legal personhood. It had been a long time coming for this to happen.

- 40.** There is an old chant that my great-great-grandmother's first cousin, Waikauri, composed. This chant has been passed on, and relates to the mana of wāhine.

Ko nga wahine I te whare tangata (women are the creator of life and are honoured for it).

Ko Papatuanuku te whare tangata Papatuanuku (the womb of Papatuanuku, creator of all life).

Te ara uwha o Tahu (the heavenly female path of Tahu).

Dated 25 July 2022



MICHELLE ROMAINE MARINO