

**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 hapu of Ngāti Kurawaka, Ngāti Rakaiwaka and Ngāti Pakauwaka

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**BRIEF OF EVIDENCE OF JANE RUKA**

**15 August 2022**

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**RECEIVED**

Waitangi Tribunal

**16 Aug 22**

Ministry of Justice  
WELLINGTON

I, **JANE RUKA**, Kuia, of Tāmaki Makaurau, state:

*Enei nga korero tuāpapa Mana Wāhine o nga tupuna whaea o Waitaha.*

Here are the basic Mana Wāhine stories of the Waitaha Grandmother Council.

### **Introduction**

1. I present this Brief of Evidence (“BoE”) on behalf of the Waitaha Executive Grandmother Council, including the three hapū of Ngāti Kurawaka, Ngāti Rakaiwaka, and Ngāti Pakauwaka (“the Grandmother Council”), and as an extension of the Joint BoE dated 28 January 2021 which I have previously provided to the Tribunal.<sup>1</sup>
2. The Grandmother Council consists of a group of grandmothers who have come together under the banner of the Waitaha Nation. We whakapapa back to the three waka, Mamari, Ngatokimatawhaorua, and Uruao. Our aim is to address the needs of the Waitaha people, as well as the needs of our wider Māori community and to address, amongst other things, the systematic neglect of Te Tiriti o Waitangi (“Te Tiriti”), and the breaches by the Crown of this fundamental document.
3. We are a strong group of wāhine Māori, who work within our communities to try to bring about change for other wāhine, both Māori and non-Māori, and for Māori in general, who might need our help, whether this be due to the alienation from their culture that they face, through colonisation, or for other reasons.

### **Atua Whaea**

4. A long time ago for my daughter's benefit, I wrote down the atua for her, because she wanted me to make a list, and I said “do you know what you're asking me to do?” But she wanted to know, so I wrote a list of all the ones I could remember, and there were 53.

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<sup>1</sup> Wai 2700 #A53(a).

5. I can think of Papatuanuku, Hinetitama, Hinetewaiwa, Hinemoana, Hineraumati, Hinetahuru, Rona Whakamautae, and, Rongomaraeroa.
6. Waitaha recognises Rongomaraeroa (Goddess of Peace), as being responsible for the matrilineal whakapapa of our Nation. Waitaha were, and are, a matriarchal society. Wāhine were, and are, highly respected for their wisdom and leadership. We believe that grandmothers, mothers, daughters, and sisters of the world are guardians of fertility, and nurturers of the next generation.
7. After the British arrived and following the example of the patriarchy of the Tūiwi Colonisers, Māori tāne in some whakapapa, redesignated the majority of the pantheon of Māori Atua as masculine.
8. Despite the rise of patriarchy, brought in by colonisation, we managed to retain Atua Wāhine. For example, Hineahuone, the first woman, became the Goddess, Hine-nui-te-pō. It was paramount to our Māori belief systems that she remained unchanged. Other examples include Hine Pū Kohurangi, the Mist Maiden.

### **Tupuna Whaea**

9. Throughout anybody's genealogy you'll toss up one woman who stands taller than any male in amongst your group. These women pop up regularly in the generations, and they generally are the ones that cause change to happen in the whānau. The tupuna whaea I have selected to talk about are wāhine who stand taller than the rest.

### ***Waitaha***

10. When they hear genealogy and whakapapa, people tend to presume that everything they are hearing is from the time they landed in a place. But, it doesn't work that way. Families were already formulated way before they got here. Waitaha existed long before other waka came to Aotearoa. They formed from Nukutawhiti, the Chief five generations before the second Kupe.

11. Waitaha hadn't existed until those two canoes decided to travel together. In relation to the whakapapa of Nukutawhiti and Ruanui, Ruanui was the Rangatira of these two waka. Nukutawhiti was the Ariki, which is bigger than just the Rangatira. Nukutawhiti was the Ariki traveling out of Rai-a-tea. He had a sister who was called Niwa, but her real name is Atarangi.

#### *Te Waiariki*

12. Te Waiariki was a very powerful lady. We have her name all over Aotearoa. People tell us that Waitaha does not exist. My whakapapa tells me it is alive and well, and I am living, breathing proof of that.
13. There are very few matriarchs in our family. Waiariki hit that note. Waiariki was the first matriarch of Waitaha Aotearoa.

#### *Ngapuhi*

#### *Mahuri*

14. Mahuri is a very staunch lady. She kept her first son, and bequeathed her next child, Te Mahurihuri, to her brother, Te Whatairangi, who was responsible for the defence of local pa. Te Whatairangi chastises the child who is standing by an open fire, and the child falls into the fire, and dies.
15. This man became known as Kohuru, which means murderer. Since then, down through the whakapapa, he has always been referred to as Kohuru. Not his beautiful name, which is Whatairangi. They took the name away from him because he was careless enough to cause the death of the child gifted to him from his sister.
16. That sort of korero shows the power of his sisters. His sisters still named him a murderer, and it went into the whakapapa, through his name, Kohuru. Forever, he'll be known as the person who killed the child that was gifted to them. They had ways of treating him, so you would not want to blindly claim him as your

ancestor, because there is too much korero on his name. You cannot bring back the dead child, but with your authority, you can put a stymie on him.

17. He left the Ngati Whatua people just below our marae, which is called Mahuri. Mahuri was powerful enough to have the hapū area named after her. Mahuri bequeathed children to her brother and sister to continue the Mahurihuri whakapapa.

### *Ngahuia*

18. Ngahuia lived just on the border between colonisation and Te Tiriti. She was a huge landowner in Hokianga, through her father. Ngahuia married a Welsh man, who could see the advantage of marrying Māori women. When Wāhine marry, they create ties of blood. If you married up in status, you got something back in return. The Welsh man married Ngahuia, and brought trading to her family. He could speak Te Reo, and was able to be a vital connection between Māori and pakeha colonisers.

### *Kararaina Heri*

19. Kararaina Heri was married to my great-grandfather, on Nuku-tawhiti's whakapapa, and they lived in Poroti, but they had a war. It was all about water. Kararaina's brother caused the war, because he was the opposing faction.
20. There was a family disagreement, which ended up with a big warfare. The whānau and hapū dispute Kararaina's relocation to the Hokianga, for the safety of her lineage. They moved her back onto the land of my great-grandfather where Mahuri stands.

### *Mahingarangi*

### *Ani Tanaha*

21. Ani Tanaha comes in from Tainui and Ngati Porou. She came from the chieftain lineage of Tainui, and we are now jumping from Hinerangi, about 14 generations

down, to Ani Tanaha. She sat in the Hokianga, married to the son of Christopher Harris. For the purposes of whakapapa, Christopher is called Kiri Topa. I whakapapa back to Kiri Topa. Kiri's son joined Ani Tanaha, and her immense influence. Her tribe centred into Hokianga because of my great-great-great, grandfather, Christopher Harris, who was Pakeha.

22. He married many others. Because of his standing, he allowed Māori to advance in trade. He gave ability to lots of areas. When marrying a Chief's daughter, he aided and abetted them in trading. So, they got things that other people had a hard job finding, because he had come across all the vessels, and he knew all the captains. He had an ability to speak Te Reo, and was a conduit between parties. Without him, there would be no trade in Hokianga, and the Māori wahine of standing stabilised pakeha influence in the area.

### *Hēne Herengawaka Ngai Te Ranginui*

23. Status was really meaningful. In exchange for the gift of a wāhine, which, because wāhine could have babies, is gift of continuing lineage, you did not expect that gift to be mistreated. That would allow the area to take offence, which very rarely occurred. With tomo, everyone agreed. It was an honourable thing when it was done with people of status, the whole whānau would korero and huihuinga. It was a mana wāhine thing to do, and everyone expected the recipient to treat it as an honour.
24. Hēne and her two sisters were large landowners. They had no brothers. She was the eldest. Hēne Herengawaka entered into a tomo/marriage three times. The first occasion was for Iwi relationship connections.
25. The second tomo was within the Iwi to share the land care.
26. The third tomo was to family in Ngāpuhi, as a form of restoring their relationship with Ngāpuhi, because a whānau member of that Ngāpuhi whānau had been harmed when visiting our whānau. She was hāpu/pregnant with our grandmother when she was bartered for peace.

- 27.** Herengawaka means “tying iwi together”. Hēne’s name indicated that she was something very important, and you would be unwise to treat the person gifted to you badly.
- 28.** At the conclusion of a war, or to restore balance where harm had been caused and mana had been lost, it was vital to make peace. Wāhine often had a role to seal the peace. Arranged marriages between victors and high-ranking wāhine of defeated tribes was common.
- 29.** Wāhine retained this integral role as it was understood the “wāhine peace” was a firm and durable peace, whereas “tāne peace” stood for treachery, deceit, and trouble.<sup>2</sup>
- 30.** My great-grandmother, Hene Herengawaka, had a tribal affiliation with Ngai Terangi. Ngai Terangi is part of Tauranga, including all around that area and its harbour, and the land masses around the harbour. There were no male siblings. These three sisters were used as co-marriage arrangements/tomo to other hapū to allow other hapu to come into those land areas. The three sisters, because there were no siblings, had the choice of what husband, and from where. So that hapū would get land on the Tauranga Moana.
- 31.** Te Miringa Te Rorarangi Ngai Te Ranginui entered a tomo to our grandfather to hold and connect two families in Ngai Tu.
- 32.** In our ancestor’s time, if a Waitaha hapū was involved in battle, wāhine Māori, who carried the knowledge of our people would often be quietly inserted into the conquering tribes. This was a means to ensure the survival of law, tikanga and whakapapa. Our wāhine Māori were the guardians of these important concepts for Māori.

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<sup>2</sup> Basil Keane *Riri - traditional Māori warfare - Making war and making peace* (Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand, 20 Jun 2012) at 2.

33. An example of this survival by our ancestors can be seen in the story of a tūpuna, Hei, of Tāmaki Makaurau. A story that has been passed as kōrero through our generations.
34. Hei took as one of his wives, a Waitaha Māreikura, and together they had a son, who they named Waitaha. From this tomo, the Waitaha people went on to populate the Tāmaki Makaurau, Whakatohia, Taupo, Taranaki, and Horowhenua areas.
35. The next few sections are from the personal life experiences of some of our Waitaha grandmothers. I recount these here because they are not able to do this themselves, but I know that they would want me to tell their stories.

#### **Personal Life Experience of Loss of Mana Wahine of Miriama Soloman**

36. I whakapapa to Ngapuhi, Ngati Pakau, Te Hongihongi, and Tu Poto. My parents had 16 children. My father earned a low income as a road worker. He received wages weekly. This was only enough to provide four loaves of bread a day. My mother was never at home. She was unable to cope.
37. At the age of 12, I left school to care for my siblings. After I left the education system, the School Principal and other teachers thought they were helping me by paying me to do their laundry and ironing for them. To do this, I was transported to their homes on the school bus.
38. My mother resumed her role as the caregiver of our whānau when I was 16 years old, and made me leave our whānau home. When one of my younger sisters was 14 years old, she was given to a local Pākehā butcher, in exchange for food for our whānau, because they were hungry. After the arrangement, my baby sister was pregnant at 14 years old, and went on to have six children to this Pākehā man, who she never consented to marry. All my sisters' tamariki were whāngai'ed by siblings or extended family.



39. A lack of education meant my only avenue to provide for my living expenses was through menial work. When I was 20 years old, I entered into tomo with my husband and suddenly, we became the whāngai parents of 30 tamariki, who were from both our extended families. I legally adopted seven of these younger children.
40. I have always lived in State Housing. After living in state housing for 48 years, at age 85, Housing New Zealand tried to evict my grandson, my son, and I from our home. I have a claim lodged with the Waitangi Tribunal about this. It is unfair, I am elderly and need a safe and secure home. We have done nothing wrong to warrant eviction. This is just the State wielding further power over us, wāhine Māori to make us vulnerable. It is disrespectful. I am an ancestor of Aotearoa. I do not understand how the colonisers think they can tell me where I can and cannot live and throw me out of my home.

#### **Personal Life Experience of Loss of Mana Wahine of Heather Hallman**

41. My Māori grandmother was beautiful. When she was 15 years old, she was given to a 55-year-old pākehā farmer, because he did not have a wife or heirs. As a result of the union, no contact was allowed with her Māori whānau.
42. After giving birth to three tamariki, my grandmother was put out of the pakeha house and denied contact with her tamariki. Her tamariki were subsequently raised by a Pākehā whānau. My mother was part of this whānau. She went on to marry an Air Force Defence staff member, who was Pākehā. My mother's husband became chronically ill in his mid-30s, and as a result, my mother focused on gardening, in order to ensure a self-sustainable lifestyle for herself and her failing husband.
43. My brother and I were fostered out because our mother became overwhelmed with her husband's illness and was unable to cope.
44. While in foster care, my brother and I were both subjected to sexual and physical abuse. My brother developed a mental illness and is today in a lockdown mental

health care facility. The disassociation that colonisation caused for my brother and myself continue to traumatise me and my brother to this day. I am sure that if my brother had been raised within our whānau, everything would have been very different.

45. I will always remember my mother saying, “My cathedral is the ngahere and everything else doesn’t matter.”.

46. My attempts to find my whakapapa has generated a huge sense of grief and loss which I epitomise as:

Haere, haere, haere atu,  
Ki te po kirikiri, te po tango tango  
Ki te po whakamutunga o te ao.

## **Conclusion**

47. The driving force of wāhine Māori is reflected in every sector of society. Wāhine Māori provide leadership in many ways: on marae, in voluntary community groups, through other initiatives, and in high profile professions.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Aroha Yates-Smith *Mana Wahine Reader A Collection of Writings 1999-2019 Volume II Reclaiming the Ancient Feminine in Māori Society: Kei Wareware i a Tātou Te Ūkaipō* (Te Kotahi Research Institute, Hamilton, New Zealand, 2019) at page 53.

48. Diminished mana wāhine amounts to diminished mauri wāhine. The loss of this concept has resulted through the colonial, legislative theft of Māori resources and taonga. This must change, and we need to be the Wāhine who change it, not for ourselves, but for our tamariki and mokopuna.

**Dated 15 August 2021**



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**Jane Mihingarangi Ruka Te Korako**, on behalf of herself, **Te Miringa Huriwai**, **Heather Hallman**, **Te Rungapu (Ko) Ruka**, and **Miriama Soloman**.