OFFICIAL

IN THE WAITANGI TRIBUNAL

WAI 3325
WAI 3361

IN THE MATTER OF	the Treaty of Waitangi Act 1975
AND	
IN THE MATTER OF	the Climate Change Priority Inquiry (WAI 3325)
AND	
IN THE MATTER OF	the claim by Thomas Henry for and o behalf of the Ōtāhuhu Māori Wardens concerning the role of Māori Wardens in responding to climate change emergencies (WAI 3361)

Brief of Evidence of Thomas Henry

Dated 21 October 2024

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Waitangi Tribunal
22 Oct 24
Ministry of Justice
WELLINGTON

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Introduction

1. I am Thomas Henry.

2. My iwi is Ngapuhi.

3. I am a Māori Warden and am Chair of the Tāmaki Makaurau District Māori Wardens.

4. I have a strong background with Māori Wardens during emergencies and increasingly in climate emergencies. I have significant whanau networks throughout Tāmaki Makaurau and I currently live in Papatoetoe.

5. In preparation for participating in this Waitangi Tribunal Inquiry myself and Mereana Peka facilitated several hui of Māori Wardens over the past six months to better understand climate change and how it affects Māori. We have learnt more about the need to stop or slow down climate change by reducing the use of fossil fuels, but also how our hāpori and Māori Wardens can better respond to climate change emergency events. A Report on the discussions held at the hui is **attached** as Appendix 1 of the Brief of Evidence of Mereana Peka.

Climate Change Emergency Response and the role of Māori Wardens in animal management

6. The climate change emergency events over the Auckland Anniversary Weekend 2023 and during Cyclone Gabrielle were very traumatic for our community.

7. From what I understand, I do not believe the Government is doing enough to reduce our use of fossil fuels so that these climate change emergency events do not get worse in the future, nor enough to help us be more resilient to these events.

8. During the climate change emergency events over the Auckland Anniversary Weekend 2023 and during Cyclone Gabrielle, myself and other Māori Wardens became closely involved in helping with animal welfare/management and I wish to focus on this in my Brief of Evidence.

9. However, I also want to emphasise the importance of Māori Wardens assisting kaumatua or other Māori during emergency events as we are trusted to have the interests of our hāpori and kaumatua at the forefront. I also believe it is therefore important that Māori Wardens are involved in the command operations when an emergency event occurs.

10. Turning to animal management, I believe that during the recent emergency weather events the management of animals caught up in the weather was generally well organised due to prior strong connections with community organisations like the SPCA and animal management teams at Auckland Council.

11. During Cyclone Gabrielle, especially, thousands of pets were lost and needed help. This can be very traumatic for the animals, but also for their owners.

12. During both the Auckland Anniversary Weekend 2023 and Cyclone Gabrielle events, many elderly people wouldn't evacuate their homes because they felt they couldn't take their pets with them. There were instances where kaumatua were in need of medical care, but wouldn't seek help because they had a dog at home and wouldn't leave it. Sometimes it was because their animal was not registered.

13. The SPCA and animal management teams at Auckland Council collaborated with Māori Wardens in these emergency events to help people in the community microchip, register and provide vaccinations for their pets. However, it was not well known that this would be for free during the emergency. Māori Wardens especially assisted kaumatua.

14. Continuing to nurture these connections, networks and the kaupapa between these organisations will be very important in future. The success of the animal management response between the Māori Wardens and SPCA during the Cyclone Gabrielle event was a great example of how this collaborative relationship worked under stress.

What didn't work in these past emergencies

15. However, there is a lot to learn from the past responses.

16. For example, many people in the community have a cautious view about dealing with Council animal management (even during an emergency), especially if their animal (especially a dog) is not registered. Future work needs to be done to balance the need for pets to be registered in non-emergency times, but also allow for latitude during emergencies – but then also ensure this is not take advantage of.

17. An issue at present is that animal management and SPCA facilities are at full capacity and there is no space available to house animals if there was another emergency in the near future. This is a worry.

18. Another need is for more training so that Māori Wardens know how to handle dogs in emergencies. Dogs that are scared will often bite and having an open wound during a flooding event can leave people vulnerable to infections. So good ongoing training is vital.

19. Beyond domestic pets, there is also a need to consider the needs of farm animals in more rural areas of Auckland. Typically these are much larger animals and need special vehicles for their transport. During the Auckland flooding events, some farm animals were found carried by flood waters some distance from their farms. In Cyclone Gabrielle, this was even more pronounced.

20. Māori Wardens want to be involved with animal management during climate emergencies, but feel they need more training and the resources to do so effectively.

Recommendations for the future

21. Following our climate hui, I believe there are measures that should be taken to better do more to reduce our use of fossil fuels and be more resilient to climate emergency events.

22. On animal management, specifically, ongoing training sessions for Māori Wardens with Council animal management teams for how to support animal management during climate weather events would be a great start (for example, training on how to handle aggressive dogs and keep safe during flooding).

23. Informing the community generally that the Māori Wardens can offer help with animal management during an emergency would be another good initative.

24. Helping the community to practice preparing for emergency events (for example, by putting a muzzle on their dog, getting pets into crates quickly and packing supplies (e.g. leads, food, water bowls, etc) is another.

25. Nurturing the relationship between Māori Wardens, the SPCA, Council animal management teams and other agencies so that there can be an efficient, organised and supportive animal management response during emergencies would be an overall goal.

26. 'Te Pupu Tahi Tanga' – the Wardens Office (located at 117 Bairds Road, Ōtara) could be a place to store supplies for animals (such as foldable crates, dry food, leads. muzzles, pet bedding, bowls, water containers). There could

also be a list of contacts of people who could ‘foster’ pets if the SPCA and Auckland Council facilities are at capacity.

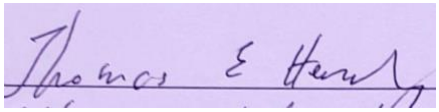
27. Also holding community initiatives to raise awareness about the importance of microchipping so animals can be returned to owners following emergencies if they get lost would be good.

28. Finally, it is important to remember that weather emergencies are not just one-time events. Climate change events affect communities long after the immediate civil defence response is over. The longer term effects can also be very traumatic (such as the loss of aloved pet).

29. It seems certain that Aotearoa/New Zealand will become more affected by tropical storms due to climate change in the future. This is going to be a lasting issue and one that is most common.

30. The focus should be on building climate change resilience for communities, but also to reduce reliance on fossil fuels.

Dated at Tāmaki Makaurau this 21st day of October 2024



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Thomas Henry

TO: The Registrar, Waitangi Tribunal, Wellington;
WAI 3325, The Climate Change Priority Inquiry