

**I Te Roopuu Whakamana I Te Tiriti O
Waitangi**

In the Waitangi Tribunal

WAI 2575

WAI 762

Kei Raro I te Mana o te ture o te Tiriti o Waitangi 1975

In the Matter of the Treaty of Waitangi Act 1975

Me

And

I te Take o te pakirehua Wai 2575 moo ngaa
kereeme e paa ana ki te Health
Services me Outcomes

In the Matter of the Health Services and
Outcomes Kaupapa Inquiry (Wai
2575)

Me

And

I te Take o teetahi whakapae naa Te Urunga
Evelyn Aroha Kereopa moonā anoo,
moo toona whaanau, me ngaa mema
o te hapuu o Te Ihingarangi

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Waitangi Tribunal

4 Nov 24

Ministry of Justice
WELLINGTON

In the Matter

of a claim by Te Urunga Evelyn
Aroha Kereopa on behalf of herself,
her whaanau and members of Te
Ihingarangi hapuu

Reply Brief of Evidence of Evelyn Kereopa

Dated: 21 August 2024

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I, Te Urunga Evelyn Aroha Kereopa, of Taumarunui, state:

Introduction

- 1.** My full name is Te Urunga Evelyn Aroha Kereopa, but members of my whaanau call me Evelyn or Kaike. I like to start my evidence, by saying that I'm a mother, grandmother, and great grandmother. This claim is made on behalf of my whaanau who are members of Te Ihingaarangi. I am the named claimant for Wai 762 and, I am Te Ihingaarangi through my father and Ngaati Hari through my mother and father. I am also Ngaati Paahere, Ngaati Rae Rae, Ngaati Ruanui, Ngaati Paerangi and Ngaati Hinemihi.
- 2.** I am currently not working, while I try to set up my own charitable trust to support Maaori with succession planning for their whenua. I have been doing that mahi as a trustee anyway, but I want to set something up, that is more formal as I get so many requests for assistance
- 3.** My evidence will describe my experiences as an employee at IDEA Services in Taumarunui and respond to Amanda Bleckmann's #L12 Brief of Evidence, as she refers to cultural competency in that

evidence. However, my evidence is relevant to cultural competency in disability support services, in general.

Experience at Idea Services in Taumarunui

4. I worked at IDEA Services in Taumarunui (“**IDEA**”) from around 2009, for two and a half years. IDEA Services is a mainstream provider which provides support to tangata whaikaha and is affiliated to IHC. There was a daycentre, but also whare, where some clients lived. So, some clients came only for the daycentre, but some were live in clients. I worked as both a driver, and support worker for the daycentre, and stayed overnight to support those living in the whare. After I stopped working for the daycentre, I continued to support the live in clients overnight on a casual basis, just when the other staff members were unavailable.
5. When I worked with IDEA, I would be on the pahi to pick them up from their homes, because one of us would need to gather their lunch and medication, to make sure that they had everything that they needed for the day. Two of us would travel in the van and then we would take them to the daycentre.
6. The very first thing that we would do when we arrived at the daycentre, was a karakia. Of course, it was

difficult for some of our clients because they would be preoccupied with wanting to check their cubby holes or struggling with concentrating, but no matter what, we started every day with a karakia. It was very important to do that, because most of the clientele were Maaori. Because I live in the area, I would often know their whakapapa and wonder why they weren't with their families but some of their whaanau were gang affiliated, or very worried about giving them their medication. So, it was important for IDEA to be a safe place for them to come and be taken care of.

7. IDEA used to lease the big building near the rugby field in Taumarunui, but after so many clients left, I don't think it was profitable for them to keep it anymore.
8. I felt worried about clients not getting into the community enough. I really felt as though they needed to get out and about in the community more, and go shopping, or just enjoy themselves. I used to take clients out for lemonade so that they could get out and about. I used to hear a lot of complaints from taangata whaikaha about IDEA, and I would try to help them resolve their issues. For example, they wouldn't understand why they couldn't go out for dinner, and they had to cook every night. Even worse, they were told what to cook, and weren't even given options.

Whenever I was staying there, I would ask them what they wanted, so that they could have some choice.

9. While I was still working for IDEA, there was a protest about our pay. A lot of the staff members went to protest and were standing with placards. I stayed behind with the residents as someone needed to take care of them. I also don't really like to protest, and rather have my say in the Waitangi Tribunal.

Tikanga

10. In some areas, there wasn't any capacity for them to be in services where they lived. I remember one of the taane that was a live in resident, who I used to support at night, he was from Matamata but had to come to Taumarunui because of their capacity. So, for him, his tikanga was very different to the tikanga in Taumarunui. When he left he Taumarunui centre, things got better for him because he was with his whaanau, so I think that it is an issue when people are placed away from their whenua.
11. Of course, tikanga is different, depending on where you whakapapa to. That is true even within Taumarunui, there different areas with different tikanga. There are three main iwi in Taumarunui, each

with different tikanga. For example, the dialect where you don't pronounce 'wh' as 'f' and rather, as 'w'.

- 12.** There is a so-called cultural advisor with IDEA now, but they only know one tikanga. They only know where they are from, and not the tikanga for the different areas around Taumarunui. To be an effective cultural advisor, you need people who can speak to all of the tikanga. I still hear gripes from my cousins there, so I don't think that the cultural advisor has solved the issues.
- 13.** I recall several instances, where there were issues with tikanga between regions. For example, one support worker took taangata whaikaha to her own paapakainga and was trying to get it recognised as an official marae. But it wasn't the marae of that girl she took there, and so it wasn't appropriate.
- 14.** One non-Maori support worker, took a Maori client to a marae to learn karakia and kaikaranga. That client suffered from a traumatic brain injury from an assault, and it was very inappropriate for her to be taught to be a kaikaranga. Her whaanau wasn't even told first, and when they found out, they pulled her out of IDEA. That staff member still works there, and I wonder if she understands why the whaanau was so upset. The client loved to sing, so it is possible that the support

worker thought that she was doing something nice for the client, without fully understanding kaikaranga. Historically, at IDEA, no one was ever taken to a marae so it is positive that clients can go to marae. However, it needs to be done in a tikanga appropriate way, especially when you consider where people whakapapa to.

- 15.** I was extremely worried that there was a waahine taangata whaikaha living in a whare with three taane taangata whaikaha. There was another higher needs whare that had one taane and one waahine, and I could never understand why they didn't do a swap, and have the two waahine together. Even though it might have been a little harder because of the higher needs classification, it would have been possible and, more tikanga appropriate.
- 16.** Some of the other support workers and I were concerned about the lack of communication with whaanau of taangata whaikaha. I actually raised this with management during a training session in Kirikiriroa, but they didn't do anything. I tried to communicate with whaanau and I know that the senior manager didn't like that at all.
- 17.** There were also some issues with giving taangata whaikaha rongoa, without any consultation with

whaanau on what they wanted or thought was appropriate. I never felt like it was right to use our rongoa on someone who wasn't from the area, without any correspondence with the whaanau. I tried to inform whaanau, but my manager didn't like that.

- 18.** Another tikanga based issue that I saw, was that we weren't given any of the information about clients' disability. We weren't allowed to read their files, so we didn't know how to best care for them. Having that information would have helped us know what they needed.
- 19.** In my time, I also started noticing that post-settlement governance entities started interfering with IDEA and were coming in to talk with taangata whaikaha and would hold hui, which we didn't appreciate at all.
- 20.** With all these issues, there were quite a few taangata whaikaha that were pulled out of IDEA, and sadly, the daycentre has now closed. It has been empty for years. Some of my cousins say that there weren't enough clients to warrant that building by the rugby field; so it is a cost saving/ cutting thing. It is cruel, they just stay in their whare now. You don't see them in the community at all anymore.

Training

- 21.** It was also difficult for staff, because we didn't really have any cultural competency training. There was one training that I went to in Kirikiriroa, with some other support workers. We had all been with IDEA for at least a year at that point. We were giving a training booklet and at the end of it, there was a small section on cultural competency, and it said that we can reach out if we have questions. But the training was in Kirikiriroa, so I did not want to take any cultural competency advice from someone outside of the region, as they didn't even know the tikanga. I know that the support workers from Kawhia felt the same way.
- 22.** At the training, someone asked for the statistics on abuse in IDEA services, and they refused to tell us. We wanted to know, because we became aware of a waahine that had been abused by her carer. We found out because she didn't want us to help her in the wharepaku anymore and then we discovered what had happened. She had a wheelchair, because she couldn't walk but the carer would have her crawl to the van as the carer said that 'carting' the wheelchair to the van, was inconvenient. I know that there was plenty of room for her wheelchair in the van. Even with

this incident, I was never aware of any auditing or monitoring of IDEA.

- 23.** The very small amount of training that we did have, was general and not specific to any hapuu or iwi. Nothing was in the reo. The training was really just about our jobs, and the general requirements in our contracts.
- 24.** At the time that I worked there, most of the workers were also Maaori, and a few were Paakeha. Sadly, a lot of the workers have either retired or passed away in the years since, so they opened the job up to anyone. Now, the workers are largely immigrants who don't understand te ao Maaori or, tikanga. I am worried about their ability to understand the clients and te ao Maaori because there isn't really any training around that.
- 25.** I am not aware of any training or supports from any government agencies in terms of cultural competency, but from my experience, it was really needed. Something I think is very important, is that there is cultural competency training, but also that it is given by the appropriate people.

Conclusion

- 26.** A cousin of mine recently passed away, that was a great advocate for taangata whaikaha. I am sad that she can't provide evidence to the Waitangi Tribunal, because she would have done anything to try and make things better for taangata whaikaha. I just want to awhi her, for her mahi.
- 27.** I have been asked to come back over the years, but it feels like it would be a conflict, based on the views that I hold. So, I would rather provide evidence to the Waitangi Tribunal.

Dated at Taumarunui this 21st day of August 2024

Te Urunga Evelyn Aroha Kereopa