BEFORE THE WAITANGI TRIBUNAL **WAI TBC**

IN THE MATTER OF	the Treaty of Waitangi Act 1975
AND	
IN THE MATTER OF	a claim brought by John Ruddock on behalf of his whānau, Māori born overseas and Māori generally
AND	
IN THE MATTER OF	the Citizenship Act 1977

AFFIDAVIT OF JOHN RUDDOCK

Dated 2025

RECEIVED
Waitangi Tribunal
24 Jul 25
Ministry of Justice
WELLINGTON

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I, **JOHN RUDDOCK**, of Porirua, swear:

Ko wai au?

1. Ko John Bryers Ruddock tōku ingoa. I am a New Zealand citizen by descent, born in Paddington, Australia in 1987, raised in Hawai'i, and now living in Aotearoa with my three tamariki. My whakapapa ties me to Ngāpuhi through my late mother, Rhonda Syrena Bryers, and to Scotland through my father, John Chapman Ruddock (known professionally as "The Black Scott").

2. My mother, Rhonda, was a celebrated Māori entertainer known across the Pacific as "The Voice of New Zealand". She was crowned Entertainer of the Year in 1981 and sang for the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh during their royal tour of New Zealand. My grandfather, Ronald Frederick Bryers, was an All Black and a decorated WWII veteran. My great-great-grandfather, Mohi Tawhai, was one of the original signatories of te Tiriti o Waitangi. These are not just names — they are legacies I carry and pass down to my tamariki.

3. My children are:

    a. Hohepa Ieremaia Ruddock who is 12 years old;

    b. Peatarangi Agelu Ruddock who is 9 years old; and

    c. Ihaia Ruddock, who is 8 years old.

4. Their names were chosen to reflect their whakapapa and honour our tūpuna. "Hohepa" and "Ihaia" tie to biblical and Māori heritage, while "Peatarangi" carries the mana of our wahine line and embodies strength, beauty, and legacy.

He aha te take?

5. I arrived back in Aotearoa in April 2025 with my tamariki after becoming their sole caregiver in May 2023. We left Washington State under urgent circumstances, and I brought them home to Aotearoa, where I believed they would be safe, connected to their whenua and whānau, and entitled to rights of citizenship through me.

6. I was shocked to discover that my New Zealand citizenship by descent did not automatically extend to my children, even though they are Māori, carry our whānau names, and have ancestral rights to the whenua through me. This was not just a surprise — it was devastating. I had always believed they were entitled to be recognised as tangata whenua here.

7. To make matters worse, I was told by Immigration New Zealand that in order to apply for visas or residency for my tamariki, I first needed to finalize custody proceedings in the U.S. Family Court in Hawai‘i. That process has cost me over $14,000 so far — in legal fees, documentation, translations, and filings — just to prove I am already their primary caregiver.

8. I have now applied for both residency visas for my children and for the relevant minister to grant citizenship in these circumstances. I have been advised that these processes could be very lengthy. I find it demeaning to go through these processes as I consider my children have a right to be here. We are tangata whenua, not tangata tiriti.

9. Despite all efforts, my children remain unlawful in the country of their ancestors and cannot even be enrolled in school.

He aha te whakahāweatanga?

10. The harm has been profound. My tamariki are currently unable to attend school. My daughter, Peatarangi, had just been accepted into a gifted HiCap programme in Washington before we left — now she sits at home, confused and feeling excluded. My youngest, Ihaia, constantly asks when he can go to school like other kids. They are isolated, anxious, and losing confidence in the very country I brought them home to.

11. It is painful to see them treated as outsiders in their own tūrangawaewae. The financial burden has nearly broken me, but the emotional toll has been worse. I brought them here to reconnect with their identity and whakapapa — to be surrounded by te reo, their iwi, and the whenua. Instead, we are in limbo, forced to beg for recognition from a government that seems blind to the Treaty obligations and Māori values it claims to uphold.

12. I feel as though I am being punished for being Māori born overseas. And my children — direct descendants of Mohi Tawhai, a man who signed the Treaty to ensure protection for his people — are now being told they have no place here. That is the mamae I carry every day.

SWORN at)

this day of 2025)

before me:)

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John Ruddock

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A Solicitor of the High Court of New Zealand