

**IN THE WAITANGI TRIBUNAL
KEI MUA I TE TARAIPUNARA**

**Wai 2700
Wai 2655**

UNDER

**The Treaty of Waitangi Act
1975**

CONCERNING

**The Mana Wāhine Kaupapa
Inquiry**

AND

**Nga Kairauhii Nannies
Against P Claim (Wai 2655)**

BRIEF OF EVIDENCE OF BESSIE MANAENA

Dated: 16th October 2025

RECEIVED

Waitangi Tribunal

28 Nov 25

Ministry of Justice
WELLINGTON

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Introduction

1. My name is Bessie Manaena. I am part of the Nannies Against P rōpū and I am also a long service member of the Māori Women's Welfare League. I make this statement on behalf of the Nga Kairauhii Nannies Against P Claim and in loving memory of Anne Hakiwai.

Gradual burdening of mana

2. Growing up in Aotearoa has not been easy over the past 80 years. As a mother, aunt, nan and kuia, I have witnessed and experienced turmoil, injustice and hardship for Māori; a cocktail of epic disasters. Our mana has been sorely burdened by a governed bureaucracy year after year.
3. In the 1940s, it was a transition from Te Ao Māori practices to colonisation, causing a world of difference for wāhine Māori. Fathers, uncles, sons and brothers had joined a war not of their own making, but which left so many mothers on their own to bring up children.
4. From 1945 to the 1950s, our Māori Battalion soldiers returned, broken and mentally disturbed. They didn't know how to go back to their land. So many were landless and many migrated into suburbs leaving their rural lives. As women, we had to leave our marae and move into urban areas to look for jobs.
5. From the 1950s to the 1980s, we experienced a loss of language and culture, economic depression, gangs/violence, alcohol and drug addictions. Whānau were struggling to cope.
6. From the 1990s to the 2000s, we were inundated with illegal substances (drugs and alcohol), gangs, ongoing violence and family violence – all very destructive for the whānau. These changes drastically upset our cultural upbringing.
7. From 2010 to today, we are facing ongoing social issues that affect whānau, especially nannies and mokos. There has been an increase in gangs having a destructive influence on our youth. Homelessness, unemployment and economic hardship are on the rise. Mental health

issues and suicide are more pronounced. It is also the methamphetamine destruction era. This is not an ideal life for nannies as they are bearing the brunt of the violence caused by meth addicted mokos.

Nannies Against P

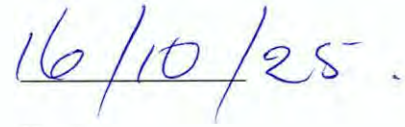
8. The rise of methamphetamine is why Nannies Against P was formed in 2017. The group had the help of 6 mana wāhine from their marae in Heretaunga, Kahungunu and Nga Kairauhii Trust. I went along to the hui held at Matahiwi marae. I was having trouble with my nephews at the time who were using meth. At the hui, I heard other nannies share their stories about the damage and violence that meth was causing them. After hearing what was happening, I decided to join the group—to support the kaupapa, but also to heal and help myself. From 2017 to today, Nannies Against P have been helping nannies be safe from the destruction that meth has caused in their families.
9. Within the Nannies Against P rōpu, I became the Police liaison person. I was a Māori warden in the 1980s in Heretaunga (Hastings). We went into homes and hotels to deal with young ones causing havoc. Sometimes we would work side by side with the police. More recently, I built a strong relationship with a police officer in Hastings who was dealing specifically with drugs-related issues. He was working directly with young offenders, including my grandnephews, and supporting them with rehabilitation. After seeing his work, I invited him to a Nannies Against P hui. I wanted the nannies to see that there is someone out there in the Police working with young people affected by drugs who the nannies could contact.
10. Today, the police officer is no longer in the role, and there is no one else in his place because of staff shortages. So, when any drug related issues come up, you get whichever police is available—but that doesn't mean that they know what to do or how to deal with the situation. Because of my previous role as a Māori warden, I understand the importance of having the right type of police officers to deal with drug related problems—especially for our Māori people. It's sad that our nannies don't have such a person to turn to anymore.

11. Within the rōpu, we also have nannies who are retired Māori wardens, and former staff from Oranga Tamariki and Ministry of Social Development. They use their skills and experience to help our kaumātua deal with their whānau who are using P. We support our kaumātua through the process of getting them to a safe place (as best as possible), advocate when required, and bring in social service providers to help support them.
12. Nannies Against P also has contacts with our iwi, Taiwhenua, Age Concern, Health HB, Heretaunga – Hastings District Council, Family Court, Police, Ministry of Social Development and our lawyer who supports our Waitangi Tribunal claim. We don't receive any ongoing funding from any government departments or organisations, but we are building these contacts as they come in handy.
13. Us nannies are very grateful to have each other, to be able to sit with each other, share our stories in a safe space and give support to one another. For me, my mother and my grandmother are mana wahine, but I can't call myself a mana wahine – I am a wahine mamae. I should be feeling good, but because of all the things happening in our whānau because of the drug, we feel at a loss as to what is our future. Having the Nannies Against P space to talk about our problems and frustrations helps to bring some healing to us.
14. It takes a lot for us to trust others, and to share our grievances, but the Nannies Against P are building that trust in our community. While we are helping the nannies in many ways, we also desperately need a safe house for the nannies when they have nowhere safe to go. For us nannies, the women's refuge is not the right option. It would be the easier option, as the systems are already set up, but it is not a culturally appropriate place for us. It wouldn't provide our nannies the strengthening of our mana or the healing of our emotional and physical health that the nannies need. We want to look after ourselves, not fit into another group. If someone else was leading this then nannies who need help would not feel safe participating.

15. He Ora Te Whakapiri. He Mare Te Whakatakiri. United we stand, and divided we fall. Let's strive for unity to be successful.



Bessie Manaena



Date