OFFICIAL

Wai 2700, #C39(a)

I TE RŌPU WHAKAMANA
I TE TIRITI O WAITANGI

WAI 2700
WAI 682
WAI 1464/1546

KEI RARO I TE MANA o te ture o te Tiriti o Waitangi 1975

I TE TAKE O te pakirehua, Mana Wāhine Kaupapa Inquiry (Wai 2700)

Ā

I TE TAKE O he kerēme nā Rewiti Paraone rātou ko Erima Henare, ko Pita Tipene, ko Waihoroi Shortland mō Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Hine mō ngā uri o Torongare and Hauhaua (Wai 682)

Ā

I TE TAKE O he kerēme nā Te Riwhi Whao Reti rātou ko Hau Hereora, ko Romana Tarau, ko Karen Herbert, ko Edward Cook, ko Pearl Reti mō Te Kapotai (Wai 1464/1546)

HE WHAKARĀPOPOTOTANGA O TE KŌRERO TAUNAKI A TUAKOI WHANGANUI ALICE OHIA

I tēnei rā i te 12 o Pēpuere 2026

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Dr Season-Mary Downs
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RECEIVED
Waitangi Tribunal
5 Mar 26
Ministry of Justice
WELLINGTON

TĒNĀ, E TE RŌPŪ WHAKAMANA I TE TIRITI O WAITANGI:

Hei tīmatanga kōrero

1. My name is Tuakoi Ohia. Nō Ngāti Hine me Te Kapotai ahau.

2. I am an actress, script writer and storyteller, and have been heavily involved in New Zealand film, music and theatre for seven years.

3. I provide evidence in this inquiry alongside my mum, Kate Cherrington.

He Whakarāpopototanga

4. My evidence shares my experiences as a wahine of both Ngāti Hine and Te Kapotai within the world of performing arts. My evidence focuses on my experiences in 'Kōpū' - a theatre play that I created and perform alongside five other wāhine Māori to showcase our experiences of wāhinetanga.

5. The key themes in my evidence, with reference to the relevant issues in the Tribunal's Statement of Issues, are as follows:

Theme	**Sub-theme**	**TSOI #**	**Paragraph reference**
Impacts of colonisation	Religion – impacts to our sense of mana and self as wāhine	1	5, 20
Impact of patriarchal perceptions - sexual stigma and gender role expectations on wāhine.	Impacts to social structures, diminishing the autonomy, mana and rangatiratanga of wāhine	1	11, 13-15
	Impacts to the recognition and interactions between ira wāhine and ira tāne	1	27
Colonisation and the entertainment industry	Gender and racial discrimination against wāhine, causing experiences	3	17-21

	of poor treatment and opportunities		
Feminism	Feminism does not account for our distinct cultural and racial experiences.	1	28-31

He tirohanga whānui

6. As a child, I was quite shy and did not always feel comfortable expressing myself. It was not until I attended Otago University that I developed a passion for acting, script writing and storytelling; it felt like it was my calling. That is where I found my sense of self as a wahine and I have followed that path since.

7. Kōpū came about in 2021. As a simple description, Kōpū is a celebration of te ira wahine and our wāhinetanga, and an experience in decolonisation.

8. Kōpū is a bilingual theatrical show filled with reo, waiata, dance, live music, poetry, haka, poi and comedy that provides a portrayal of Māori femininity and womanhood.

9. Kōpū contains a number of performances that allow our audience to share in the joy, dreams, love, heartbreak, power, humility and fun that comes with being a wahine. It is important to us to express ourselves in our own way during the show, particularly in terms of our sexuality, because it is in that way we take our mana as wāhine back.

10. I sit in quite a fortunate space in the entertainment industry because I have aligned myself with kaupapa Māori projects that have provided me cultural, artistic and feminine freedom; allowing me to thrive as a wahine Māori. However, that is not the experience for many, and certainly not for the majority. The entertainment industry can be a very disempowering space, disadvantaging wāhine both in terms of opportunity and treatment. This disempowerment comes from cultural disconnection that is rooted in colonisation and religion.

11. For me, being true to myself is a core expression of mana wāhine. It is about being able to choose how to express my mana and femininity and experience my culture in this space in time.

12. When I think of mana wāhine, I see my mum and the many other wāhine of Ngāti Hine. I see them so strongly because the mana of our wāhine lives so strongly in us as uri of Hineamaru.

13. My grandfather was born and bred in Waiōmio and passed his Ngāti Hine values on to my mum, who then instilled them in me. They are taonga tuku iho. Those values have shaped me into the wahine I am today, teaching me that there is always a balance; te ira wāhine and te ira tāne exist within all of us, regardless of gender. You need both to function.

14. I have thought a lot about feminism and where that sits for us as wāhine, coming to the conclusion that Western influences have shaped the definition and meaning of feminism today. We as wāhine have our own experiences and our own whakapapa of leadership; the need to define or prove ourselves as wāhine is not part of who we are. That is a colonial whakaaro and feminism sits within that space. It does not consider or understand our cultural experience.

15. We have our distinct roles as wāhine and tāne, but that does not mean we as wāhine are considered less than. We both have mana in our roles; they are of equal importance and of equal value, not to be viewed in a Pākehā paradigm where our role is considered inferior. We simply express our mana and rangatiratanga in a way that makes sense in our cultural landscape.