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IN THE WAITANGI TRIBUNAL

Wai 2700
Wai 3012

IN THE MATTER OF the Treaty of Waitangi Act 1975

AND

IN THE MATTER OF the Mana Wāhine Kaupapa Inquiry

BY Moerangi Potiki, on behalf of herself and her whānau, and hapū and iwi of Ngāti Whakaue mai Maketū

SUMMARY OF JOINT BRIEF OF EVIDENCE OF MOERANGI POTIKI AND LIAM TAPSELL

12 February 2026

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Phoenix Law Limited
Barristers and Solicitors
200 Willis Street
PO Box 27400
Marion Square
Wellington 6141
Phone: (04) 384 1304
Email: mason@phoenixlaw.expert
and: wiperi@phoenixlaw.expert
Counsel Acting: Janet Mason
Counsel Assisting: Nakita Wiperi

"E kore au e ngaro, he kākānō i ruia mai i Rangiatea"
"I will never be lost for I am a seed of Rangiātea"

We, **Moerangi Potiki,** Chairperson**,** and **Liam Tapsell**, Trustee, both of Maketū, state:

A: INTRODUCTION AND FOUNDATION

1. We provide this Joint Brief of Evidence in support of Wai 3012, filed by Moerangi Potiki as Chairperson of Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Whakaue mai Maketū ("Te Rūnanga").

2. The whakataukī above affirms that Māori are never lost. We are seeds sown from Rangiātea, carrying within us whakapapa, tikanga, and enduring identity. Despite harm, exclusion, and prejudice experienced as a result of Crown actions and inactions, we retain inherent strength and continuity that cannot be extinguished.

3. Our evidence speaks to the Crown's duties and obligations under te Tiriti/the Treaty concerning the exercise of rangatiratanga and tikanga by wāhine Māori in relation to their status, roles, responsibilities, practices, values, and beliefs.

4. We demonstrate that mana wāhine persists even where its exercise has been actively constrained. We show that wāhine Māori continue to uphold tikanga, rangatiratanga, values, and beliefs despite systemic barriers imposed by the Crown. The harm inflicted upon our tūpuna through colonisation, land alienation, and exclusion from governance has not ended. It is carried forward into the present, shaping who must step forward, who must compensate for Crown absence, and who bears the weight of keeping our people afloat.

B: MANA WĀHINE TINO RANGATIRANGA

5. We state that mana wāhine and tino rangatiratanga are inseparable. Mana wāhine is not symbolic or ceremonial. It is exercised through leadership, guardianship of whenua and wai, intergenerational transmission of tikanga and reo, and responsibility for collective wellbeing.

6. Tino rangatiratanga, guaranteed under Te Tiriti o Waitangi, is the collective expression of that authority. It cannot be realised where wāhine Māori are excluded from decision-making, under-resourced, or required to conform to governance models fundamentally misaligned with tikanga Māori.

7. Our understanding of mana wāhine is grounded in whakapapa and place. It is not theoretical or retrospective. It is inherited through descent lines that connect directly to Maketū and has been continuously exercised by wāhine within our hapū.

8. The wāhine we refer to are significant not only for what they did, but for who they are in relation to this whenua. Through them, we understand that mana wāhine in Maketū is inherited, practised, and enduring.

C: WHAKAPAPA FOUNDATIONS OF MANA WĀHINE IN MAKETŪ

Rangiuru

9. Through Moerangi Potiki's Tapuika whakapapa, Rangiuru stands as a foundational expression of mana wāhine in Maketū. Her presence within the physical and spiritual structure of the marae affirms wāhine as central to hapū identity, continuity, and authority.

10. We understand her recognition not as commemoration, but as affirmation. Her inclusion within the marae reflects tikanga Māori that locates wāhine authority as integral to leadership, whakapapa transmission, and spiritual balance. Through her, we see that mana wāhine has always been visible and structurally embedded within hapū governance.

Ngātai Tohi Te Ururangi

11. Through the whakapapa of Liam Tapsell, Ngātai Tohi Te Ururangi provides a clear example of wāhine rangatiratanga prior to and during early colonisation. She inherited mana whenua and standing within her hapū consistent with tikanga Māori recognising descent and chiefly authority through both wāhine and tāne.

12. She was a woman of considerable mana, a significant landholder, a dispute resolver, and one of the few Māori women to give evidence before the Native Land Court. She gifted land for hospitals, reserves, and schools, and materially enabled the construction of Whakaue Marae. Her leadership was exercised alongside her male contemporaries, not subordinate to them.

13. Despite increasing colonial legal constraints, she continued to exercise leadership grounded in tikanga and whakapapa.

D: ANI KANARA PŌTIKI

14. Ani Kanara Pōtiki, Moerangi Potiki's mother, exemplified mana wāhine through lived practice. She was a kaikaranga, kuia, matriarch, trustee, and holder of deep knowledge in tikanga, reo, and whakapapa.

15. As the eldest child in her whānau, she was entrusted under tikanga with responsibilities for the transmission of knowledge relating to whenua, whakapapa, and kawa. She participated in land planning and governance processes and exercised authority as kaitiakitanga rather than ownership.

16. We observed that her leadership was grounded in marae-based tikanga and excellence in te reo Māori. Mana wāhine, as demonstrated by her, was not symbolic or performative. It was practised daily through service, decision-making, and intergenerational transmission. Her example continues to inform Moerangi's understanding of leadership as inherited duty rather than personal ambition.

17. Together, these wāhine establish the tikanga baseline against which Crown systems must be assessed.

E: MARIA HORNE: MANA WĀHINE IN ACTION

18. Maria Horne was an exemplary mana wāhine in all forms. She served as Manager of Te Rūnanga for nearly fourteen years from 2005 to 2019. She embodied mana wāhine through action rather than title.

19. Across governance, economic, environmental, and advocacy initiatives, she illustrated a central and indispensable role in advancing wellbeing, rangatiratanga, and long-term sustainability of the Maketū community.

20. She was repeatedly entrusted by ahikā and whānau to represent Maketū interests, including on the board of Te Komiti Nui. In that role, she scrutinised proposals, challenged decisions that did not align with Maketū values, and ensured community interests were not compromised.

21. Her contribution was instrumental in the recovery of approximately seven hectares of land at Tumukawa, now restored as wetlands. She leveraged relationships with local authorities to advance wetlands projects and embedded environmental care within community life. Following the Rena disaster, she was instrumental in gathering information and advocating for ahikā and whānau to ensure local knowledge informed recovery.

22. She led a cadetship pilot scheme that created employment pathways for rangatahi. She secured funding and partnerships, coordinated logistics, and provided hands-on support. Multiple participants progressed into supervisory and management roles, strengthening intergenerational economic resilience.

23. She provided sustained leadership in advancing Waitangi claims, including Wai 2147. She articulated grievances relating to land alienation, loss of authority, environmental degradation, and erosion of hapū rights. Her advocacy positioned the Rūnanga within a kaupapa of mana restoration and rangatiratanga.

24. The initiatives she led delivered tangible improvements in housing, employment, environmental restoration, disaster recovery, and historical redress. These outcomes were not the product of Crown systems operating effectively. They were the result of her sustained effort and commitment. Her work filled critical gaps left by Crown inaction.

F: MOERANGI POTIKI'S EXPERIENCES OF PREJUDICE

25. In my role as a Lecturer at Manukau Institute of Technology, I have experienced prejudice through institutional processes that disadvantage Māori and undermine rangatiratanga.

26. Despite meeting criteria for progression to Senior Lecturer, other lecturers were appointed directly without being required to demonstrate the same criteria. When I raised this with the Union, I was advised that there were insufficient grounds to escalate the matter. In my view, this reflected double standards and systemic racism. This diminished my mana and restricted my advancement.

27. I have also experienced the undermining of tikanga-based leadership within staff hui. Responsibilities grounded in tikanga were reassigned without consultation, disrupting established practices and diminishing my authority.

28. In Crown-funded training environments, I have witnessed Māori frameworks delivered without cultural competence. Basic errors in te reo Māori were made. Te Whare Tapa Whā was presented without a Māori worldview. These experiences highlight how Crown systems permit individuals without lived experience to deliver Māori frameworks, undermining tikanga and diminishing Māori authority.

29. Wānanga traditionally held in the wharenui were moved to the wharekai without regard for tikanga or consultation. I experienced this as prejudice because convenience and Western organisational preferences were prioritised over tikanga Māori.

30. In 2023, Te Arawhiti advised that mandate would not be granted without engagement with relevant groups, including the Rūnanga. However, following a change of government, mandate was approved without recognition of the Rūnanga. I experienced this as prejudice because it disregarded tikanga-based governance and sidelined established wāhine-led Māori authority structures.

G: CROWN ACTIONS AND ONGOING PREJUDICE

31. We state that the prejudice suffered by wāhine Māori in leadership roles arises from Crown action and sustained inaction that fails to uphold Te Tiriti obligations.

32. The Crown imposes Western governance and funding frameworks that displace tikanga-based decision-making while withdrawing responsibility for outcomes. Responsibility for housing, employment, environmental restoration, and disaster recovery is transferred to Māori entities without adequate authority or long-term resourcing.

33. The Crown fails to actively protect mana wāhine in governance spaces. Wāhine leaders, including Ms Horne, are exposed to hostility and resistance without protective mechanisms.

34. The Crown fails to sustain Māori-led cultural and economic initiatives. Programmes grounded in Te Reo Māori, environmental guardianship, and rangatahi development rely on unstable, short-term funding. The burden of continuity falls back on wāhine and community.

35. The Crown also fails to remedy historical and ongoing breaches relating to whenua, taiao, and rangatiratanga. Land alienation and exclusion from freshwater governance strip Maketū of its economic base. Wāhine Māori are required to shoulder historical recovery while delivering present-day services.

36. Taken together, these Crown actions and omissions create a structural environment in which wāhine Māori leadership is extracted, relied upon, and discarded, but not protected, resourced, or upheld through genuine partnership.

37. Ms Horne's experience demonstrates how the Crown's failure to actively protect mana wāhine transforms leadership into an inequitable burden, resulting in diminished mana, burnout, cultural erosion, and disproportionate responsibility borne by wāhine Māori.

38. This prejudice is a direct consequence of Crown systems that displace tikanga while withdrawing Crown accountability.

Dated: 12 February 2026

Moerangi Potiki

Liam Tapsell