IN THE WAITANGI TRIBUNAL

Wai 2700
Wai 2931

IN THE MATTER OF	the Treaty of Waitangi Act 1975
AND	
IN THE MATTER OF	the Mana Wāhine Kaupapa Inquiry
BY	Teina Boasa-Dean on behalf of her whānau, hapū, iwi, whanau whanui and whāngai

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SUMMARY OF BRIEF OF EVIDENCE OF TEINA BOASA-DEAN

13 February 2026

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I, **Teina Boasa-Dean,** Mana Rauhī Taiao, of Ruatoki, state:

1. This Brief of Evidence is provided in support of my Wai 2931 claim within the Mana Wāhine Kaupapa Inquiry. My evidence speaks directly to Issue 1 of the Tribunal's Statement of Issues for the Rangatiratanga Pou.

2. I provide this evidence to explain how Crown laws, colonial systems, and Crown policy settings have undermined rangatiratanga and mana motuhake, and have eroded the status, authority, and decision-making of wāhine Māori, including over tamariki, whānau, lands, and other taonga.

3. I discuss how rangatiratanga has been undermined over the last 180 years through the British Crown's imposition of foreign law, and how Crown legislation and policies have systematically eroded wāhine Māori rangatiratanga, affecting the rights and inheritance of our tamariki, whānau, whenua, reo, identity, and all other taonga associated with these matters.

4. I locate myself as uri of Ngāi Tūhoe and within the rohe of Te Urewera. I explain that my whakapapa and whenua relationships locate my mana and responsibilities, and that those responsibilities relate to rangatiratanga, mana motuhake, and mana wāhine. I provide my understanding of rangatiratanga and mana motuhake as a wāhine Māori, grounded in whakapapa, lived reality, and kaupapa Māori leadership, particularly where Crown mechanisms attempt to constrain, limit, and deliberately erase Māori rangatiratanga from Aotearoa.

5. In doing so, I address the Tribunal's inquiry into the Crown's duties and obligations under te Tiriti concerning the exercise of rangatiratanga and tikanga by wāhine Māori in relation to our status, roles, responsibilities, practices, values, and beliefs.

6. In Section A of my Brief, I describe my leadership, governance, and advocacy roles that relate directly to Māori authority and kaupapa Māori futures. I have held roles in Te Mātāwai, in Māori immersion education and kōhanga reo, and as Executive Manager of the Tūhoe Settlement Institute where I collected Māori oral histories to support 29 Tūhoe claims and Waitangi Tribunal hearings. I have also served in Crown-established and ministerial advisory contexts, including environmental

advisory work, and I have continued to work in roles that involve Māori governance and resource protection.

7. Through these roles I have seen how Crown systems often position Māori authority as something to be consulted on rather than recognised as an inherent and enduring form of authority.

8. This part of my evidence is relevant to Issue 2 of the Statement of Issues, which concerns the Crown's duties and obligations in relation to wāhine Māori participation in leadership and decision-making roles at local, regional, and central government levels.

9. It is also relevant to Issue 3, which concerns the Crown's role in creating conditions for wāhine Māori to participate in and hold leadership and decision-making roles within the wider community and non-governmental sector.

10. In Section B, I explain my understanding of rangatiratanga and mana motuhake. I state that the social, cultural, and political dispossession of wāhine Māori rangatiratanga began with the arrival of Pākehā to Aotearoa, and I describe mana motuhake as the right to live as free men and women upon the lands of Aotearoa.

11. I explain that rangatiratanga pre-exists colonial systems and the imposition of colonial government models, and that it is connected to iwi and hapū identity, freedoms, and liberties.

12. I affirm that both rangatiratanga and mana motuhake are sacred and inherent authority held by whānau, hapū, and iwi to govern ourselves in accordance with our own tikanga, reo, and mātauranga.

13. I state clearly that mana is not something given by the Crown, but something a person is born with through whakapapa, whenua, and atua. I also affirm that any legitimate framework which values and protects mana wāhine must be grounded in recognition of rangatiratanga and mana motuhake, and that Māori governance structures must stand alongside and not be subordinate to those of the Crown.

14. I explain that my mana motuhake responsibilities are inextricably linked to the natural environment and the mauri of all natural entities of Ranginui and Papatūānuku. I describe the environment as a living organism and as my tuakana or mātāmua. I state that my rangatiratanga and mana motuhake rights provide the context for me to exercise tikanga and kawa according to the laws of my tūpuna, and I set out whakapapa foundations that locate this authority.

15. I explain the cosmological and whakapapa origins of feminine authority, including Te Hereherenganui and Hineahuone, and I describe the nito kokiri as the life-giving essence granted to wāhine and located within the whare tangata. I explain that as a wahine Māori I understand my mana as principal, and that I am the creator and nurturer of life and the kaitiaki of those who pass to the spirit world.

16. This section of my evidence provides the foundational basis for Issue 1 of the Statement of Issues, which concerns the Crown's duties and obligations in relation to the exercise of rangatiratanga and tikanga by wāhine Māori. It sets out the standard against which I say Crown breaches must be assessed under Issue 1(b) and the prejudice considered under Issue 1(c).

17. In Section C, I describe Crown actions and colonial legal structures that systematically undermine wāhine Māori authority and autonomy. I explain that from the early twentieth century onward, Crown actions displaced tikanga-based systems where wāhine exercised rangatiratanga over land, knowledge, reproduction, whānau wellbeing, and resource management, and replaced them with foreign legal and political regimes imposed without the free, prior, and informed consent of Māori women or our tamariki.

18. I identify the Tohunga Suppression Act 1908 as a foundational Crown intervention that directly targets Māori systems of leadership and knowledge transmission. I explain that wāhine tohunga, including healers, midwives, and repositories of mātauranga Māori, were delegitimised and criminalised, and that this disrupted intergenerational knowledge transfer and dismantled wāhine authority within our communities.

19. I then address state control of birthing and reproductive autonomy. I explain that colonial health and birthing regimes remove childbirth from whānau and hapū control and place it under Crown and medical authority. I state that tikanga-based birthing practices were replaced by hospital systems that excluded tikanga and marginalised Māori midwives, and that these changes were imposed without informed consent.

20. I explain that this resulted in wāhine Māori losing decision-making power over reproduction, childbirth, and early child-rearing, and that this was not only a health intervention but a profound political act that severed wāhine from our roles as life-givers, knowledge holders, and leaders within whānau and hapū.

21. I also provide lived experience as a Māori birthing practitioner assisting wāhine navigating the imposition of foreign concepts that oppose traditional birthing and natural practice.

22. I further address conservation regimes and the dispossession of mana over kai and moana. I state that Crown conservation legislation, including the Conservation Act 1987 and related fisheries and wildlife regimes, constrains customary relationships with land, sea, and resources.

23. I explain that these laws reframe Māori as users of Crown-owned resources rather than rangatira with inherited kaitiakitanga responsibilities, and that wāhine Māori who traditionally held key roles in food gathering and ceremonial use were stripped of authority to harvest kai from our own whenua and moana.

24. I explain that this undermines economic and cultural wellbeing and erodes wāhine capacity to exercise leadership and transmit ecological knowledge to tamariki. I also describe my decades of work advocating for organic and toxin-free kai systems and the use of the maramataka Māori, and my opposition to extraction from awa and lands.

25. I explain that across these regimes the Crown imposes patriarchal governance structures that privilege male leadership models and exclude wāhine Māori from decision-making processes.

26. I state that colonial law fails to recognise Māori women as political actors in our own right, and decisions affecting wāhine and tamariki are made by the state without participation, consent, or recognition of tikanga.

27. I conclude that these Crown actions represent sustained control over Māori women's bodies, knowledge, labour, and authority, and that the effects are intergenerational. This section of my evidence directly addresses Issue 1(b) of the Statement of Issues, which asks whether the Crown has breached its duties and obligations, and it provides evidence of prejudice relevant to Issue 1(c).

28. In Section D, I describe the prejudice caused by Crown laws, colonial systems, and policy settings. I state that the Crown undermines rangatiratanga and mana motuhake and erodes wāhine Māori status, authority, and decision-making by failing to recognise and actively protect Māori women's authority over taonga, including tamariki, peoples, lands, and other taonga.

29. I state that the Crown imposes a regime of "care" for children which results in severe trauma to tamariki Māori and their whānau and contributes to the over-representation of tamariki Māori forcibly removed and held by the state.

30. I explain that the Crown continues to cause prejudice by destroying political and social structures that protected wāhine Māori as leaders, thinkers, strategists, and decision-makers, and by relegating wāhine Māori to a status lower than all other groups in society.

31. I explain that the Crown's imposition of foreign structures over wāhine Māori and tamariki without informed consent has shaped social norms and institutional settings that continue to affect wāhine Māori status and authority today. I state that contemporary issues cannot be viewed in a vacuum and that the historical context is vitally important.

32. I also critique mandate processes and Crown mechanisms such as consultation processes and funding arrangements, stating that these seek to contain, limit, or manage rangatiratanga and mana motuhake, and that such mechanisms are inconsistent with the nature of rangatiratanga, which cannot be subject to consultation or conditional approval.

33. I identify the ongoing exclusion of wāhine Māori from key decision-making spaces, including Treaty settlement processes, policy development, and professional spaces constrained by Crown policy settings.

34. I describe prejudice occurring where Māori authority is treated as advice only, tikanga-based solutions are constrained by Crown criteria, and wāhine Māori perspectives are sidelined or reframed by institutional norms.

35. This section directly addresses the prejudice and relief components of Issues 1(c), 2(c), and 3(d) of the Statement of Issues, and it also engages Issue 3(a) concerning the Crown's role in Treaty settlement negotiations.

36. In Section E, I set out the recommendations I seek. I support the Tribunal making findings that since time immemorial Māori women have collectively exercised mana and tino rangatiratanga in accordance with tikanga over our tamariki, peoples, lands, and taonga, and that the Crown has failed to recognise, give effect to, and actively protect Māori women's mana and tino rangatiratanga over those taonga.

37. I also support findings that Crown mechanisms, including consultation and funding arrangements, wrongly constrain rangatiratanga and mana motuhake, which must be recognised as constitutional and legal in nature, not discretionary.

38. I recommend solutions at a bigger-picture level. I recommend governance frameworks that recognise rangatiratanga and mana motuhake as non-subordinate authority alongside the Crown, decision-making structures and resourcing that embed wāhine Māori authority over matters affecting wāhine and tamariki rather than treating it as optional consultation, and accountability mechanisms that prevent Crown agencies from imposing regimes over wāhine Māori and tamariki without informed consent.

39. These recommendations respond to the relief components of the Tribunal Statement of Issues, particularly Issue 1(c), Issue 2(c), and Issue 3(d).

40. Overall, my evidence provides a tikanga-based and constitutional account of wāhine Māori rangatiratanga and mana motuhake, grounded in whakapapa and lived experience. It explains how Crown law, policy, and institutional systems have displaced tikanga-based authority and continue to constrain wāhine Māori leadership and decision-making. It addresses the Crown's duties and obligations under te Tiriti, identifies breaches and resulting prejudice, and seeks structural remedies that recognise mana motuhake as enduring, non-subordinate authority.

Dated: 13 February 2026

Teina Boasa-Dean